



Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development

New National Sustainable Development Strategy in Finland, 2006

- Premise, process and principles -

11 October 2005

UN Expert Meeting on NSDSs

Contact: annika.lindblom@ymparisto.fi

More information:

www.environment.fi/sustainabledevelopment



“Finnish model” of sustainable development

- Leadership on high political level (PM leading the National Commission on Sustainable Development)
 - Continuous vertical and horizontal coordination (inter-ministerial Secretariat for the NCSD)
 - Bottom-up approach: broad-based political dialogue between the government and the stakeholders (40 members from ministers and administration to business, trade unions, science community, local authorities, various NGOs, churches etc.)
 - **“Process is as important as the outcome!”**
-



Long history of strategies and programmes for sustainable development in Finland:

- 1990: Sustainable development in Finland
- 1995: Finnish Action for Sustainable Development
- 1998: Finnish Government Programme for Sustainable Development
- 2000: Signs of Sustainability: Finland's indicators for SD
- 2003: Evaluation of sustainable development in Finland
- (- 2006: National Strategy for Sustainable Development)





Background for the new Strategy

- Government Programme for Sustainable Development, 1998
 - Focus on the environment while recognizing the economic, social and cultural preconditions
 - No quantitative targets and timetables
 - Stakeholders prepared their own SD programmes in close dialogue with the government process (1997-1998)
 - Evaluation of the Government Programme and Finnish SD policy, 2001-2002; report 2003
 - Main SD challenges were identified
 - Themes for the NCSD work-programme were set
-



Implementation of Government Programme

- Central goal: integration of sustainable development in sectoral policies and programmes
 - Sectoral programmes significant national instruments in, e.g., solving environmental problems or promoting and implementing policies and measures
 - Integration policies have also strengthened the involvement of civil servants from different policy areas in sustainability issues and generated a sense of ownership among different sectors.
 - Principle of sustainable development is present in legislation and norms, as well as in various flexible instruments
-



Need for a new national strategy

- Main challenges in horizontal policy-areas where joint objectives and measures are needed
 - Interlinking the indicator and strategy work
 - National indicator-network as a tool
 - Revised national SD indicator set adopted in Dec. 2004
 - Interlinking the national SD strategy with the EU SDS
 - Proceeding side by side, synergy benefits
 - National Programme for Sustainable Consumption and Production; proposition issued in May 2005
 - Further elaboration of the proposals in the National SD strategy
-



Follow-up of sustainable development in Finland

- The first Finnish set of SD indicators published in 2000: “Signs of sustainability”
 - Reclassification of indicators in 2004 to broaden the meaning of SD to better adapt to the changing environment and national priorities
 - 68 indicators in 8 categories:
 - Intergenerational equity
 - Human health and well-being
 - Distributional equity
 - Adapting to the future
 - Global responsibility
 - Environmental pressures
 - Preserving natural resources
 - Eco-efficiency and community structure
-



Evaluation of SD in Finland, 2003

Main MACRO level challenges:

1. Global changes and the new economy
 - Position in global distribution of work – what is our global “eco-competitiveness”
 2. The need to change production and consumption patterns
 - Decoupling economic growth from negative impacts on the environment, while ensuring people’s basic needs and preconditions for welfare
-



Evaluation of SD in Finland, 2003

Main MACRO level challenges:

3. Sustainable use of natural resources and reducing environmental problems
 - Prosperity can be achieved with less material intensity
 4. Increasing social capital
 - Strengthening the civil society and societal & regional cohesion
 5. Strengthening democracy
 - Improving citizen participation, minimizing social exclusion
-



Evaluation of SD in Finland, 2003: CONCRETE challenges:

1. Economy and the natural resources

- Promotion of eco-efficiency and innovative materials
 - Greater role for renewable natural resources in total energy consumption
 - Ecological tax reform on the political agenda
 - Economic instruments supporting climate policy
 - Effective execution of the Baltic Sea programme
 - Balance between the use and protection of forests
-



Evaluation of SD in Finland, 2003: CONCRETE challenges:

2. Regional and community structure

- Sustainable community development
 - Pleasant and socially functional communities providing adequate services, incl. public transport
 - Creating safe environments for all and combating exclusion
 - Equality between different population groups and regions

3. Health and security – full citizenship

- Increasing the number of active years in citizens' lives
 - Major health challenges created by lifestyle choices
 - Main responsibility on citizens' security on high political level
-



Evaluation of SD in Finland, 2003: CONCRETE challenges:

4. Joint and corporate responsibility

- Genuine multiculturalism and dialogue between cultures
- Fulfilling the global commitments
- Integration of social and ecological considerations in business activities
- Greening the public administration and procurement

5. Innovation and education

- Social innovations to support the information society
 - Cross-sectoral research and development
 - Integration of SD into all educational systems
-



Holistic approach in the new national strategy-making process

Strategy architecture:

- Strategy Group (SG) composed of 20 members from Ministries and stakeholder organisations
 - Term: 1 September 2005 – 31 May 2006
 - Objective: to prepare a proposal for a National Strategy for Sustainable Development which is an **over-generational joint transition programme of Finnish administration and Finnish civil society towards a sustainable society.**
 - **STRATEGY, NOT AN ACTION PROGRAMME**
-



National SD Strategy Group

- **Chair:**

Ministry of Finance

- **Vice-chairs:**

Ministry of the Environment
Ministry for Social Affairs
and Health

- **Secretariat:**

Secretariat of Sustainable
Development in Ministry of
the Environment

Members:

- Ministries of Transport, Energy, Agriculture & Forestry, Education, Labour, Foreign Affairs;
 - Business and Industry
 - Entrepreneurs and Commerce
 - Local Authorities
 - Agricultural Producers
 - Environmental organisations
 - Youth
 - Development cooperation
 - Labour Unions
 - Province/Lapland
-



Themes of the New Strategy

Main themes:

- Sustainable use and protection of the environmental capital
- Citizen wellbeing and social (and regional) cohesion
- Sustainable global economy

Overlapping themes (indicative):

- Public attitudes, know-how and innovation leading to sustainable development (education)
 - Finland as an active and responsible actor in regional and global fora (joint responsibility)
 - Sustainable development governance (institutions in place)
 - Follow-up and impact assessment (indicators)
 - Linkages to the EU policy objectives (e.g. EU SDS, Lissabon, Cardiff process)
-



Visions

- General vision + theme visions
 - Twofold time horizon:
 - over-generational, long-term visions (2025) +
 - strategic guidelines for upcoming (2?) governments
 - Basic rule: all SD dimensions are dealt with in each of the three main themes (out of sectoral thinking)
 - Each guideline/objective must contain environmental, social and cultural, and economic impacts from SD perspective
-



Holistic approach in the new national strategy-making process (work plan)

1. Inter-ministerial Secretariat identifies the emerging challenges and SD deficiency areas by July 2005
 2. The core Secretariat compiles and identifies the findings and produces a background document to the Strategy Group (SG) by September 2005
 3. A broad-based high-level seminar on the challenges is arranged in September; preliminary debate
 4. The SG convenes in September-October and chooses the themes and visions
 5. The themes are introduced to the FNCSD which discusses the proposal and accepts the themes in October 2005
-



Holistic approach in the new national strategy-making process (work plan)

6. The Strategy Group sets up smaller workshops to work with specific themes in detail; the workshops convene during the autumn 2005 and report their findings back to the Strategy Group at certain intervals
 7. National Indicator Network is integrated into the work of the SG from the very beginning
 8. The draft outcome of the work of the workshops are presented to the FNCSD by the SG in January 2006.
 9. Broad national consultation is arranged via Internet in early spring 2006
-



Holistic approach in the new national strategy-making process (work plan)

10. Proposal for the National SD Strategy is finalized by the SG by June 2006
 11. Approval of the Strategy by the FNCSD in summer 2006
 12. Council of State reading
 13. Treatment in stakeholder organisations
 14. Parliamentary reading
(to be decided)
- National learning process as important as the end result
 - Commitment of "old" and "new" stakeholders
 - Creation of new partnerships and joint programmes
-