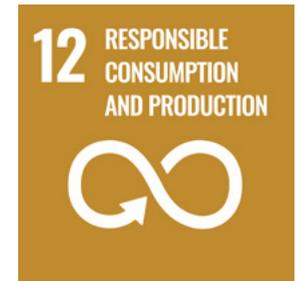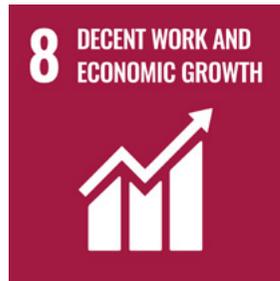# Accelerating Sustainable Development

–

Agenda 2030 Handbook for Municipalities

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO POVERTY	**2 ZERO HUNGER**	**3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	**5 GENDER EQUALITY**	**6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	**8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**	**9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**	**12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**
13 CLIMATE ACTION	**14 LIFE BELOW WATER**	**15 LIFE ON LAND**
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	**17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**	**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Contents

Introduction to the handbook

What does this handbook cover?

The UN Agenda for sustainable development Agenda2030 is a politically binding document for member states. It was adopted by Member State leadership at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 in New York. The timeframe of the agenda is 2016-2030 and it contains 17 main goals, which are based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that came to an end in 2015 and sustainable development policy stemming from the Rio process.

This handbook was originally prepared for Finnish municipalities and cities that wish to implement Agenda 2030 in their own activities. This English translation is a slightly abbreviated and updated version of the handbook.

In Finland, as in many other countries, municipalities have a key responsibility in the organisation of basic services and the implementation of land use solutions.

The promotion of sustainable development is very wide-ranging work, but it is often carried out in a silo-like manner, focusing for example on the environmental sector. To support the comprehensive work, we need not only a stronger strategic and coordinated approach, but also practical tools for promoting sustainable development in municipalities and achieving the SDGs outlined in Agenda 2030.

This handbook contains tools, approaches and inspiring examples that will help municipalities promote the attainment if the goals set out in Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

> »
> *Cities play a significant role in promoting sustainable development not only locally, but also nationally and even internationally.*
> »

Although the context and several examples are from Finland and the other Nordic countries, we believe that these will also be useful elsewhere.

The field of sustainable development is developing and changing rapidly, and new tools, approaches and experiences are constantly growing in number. The examples and tools included in the handbook are therefore a list of tools that the workgroup saw most useful at the time the handbook was written, not the final truth about useful tools. Even so, we hope that the handbook will inspire and help in moving forward with sustainable development and encourage you to try out new approaches!

Who is this handbook intended for?

The handbook is intended for all municipal actors who are interested in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, whether you are a pro at SDG work or you are just getting to know the world of SDGs for the first time. The handbook contains examples, tools and inspiration to support strategic work on sustainable development as required by Agenda 2030 as well as implementation, communication and monitoring. The handbook was written as part of the Ministry of the Environment-coordinated Sustainable City programme.

The handbook was made by

The SDG Handbook for Municipalities was prepared by think tank Demos Helsinki in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities during the spring and summer of 2020. The updated English version was written in summer 2022.

How to use the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 Handbook

This handbook is divided into four sections:
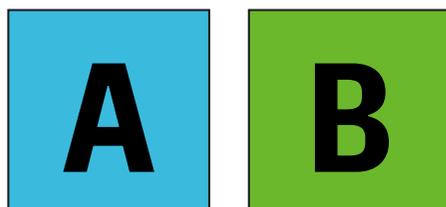
Sections A and B provide the necessary basic information for the SDG work (Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals) and examples of SDG work already carried out both in Finland and abroad, as well as a list of useful city networks.
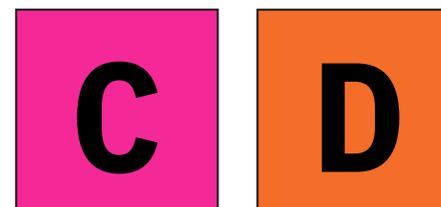
Sections C and D contain more concrete tools, services, methods and examples that you can use to initiate or continue your municipality's SDG work.

See the following pages for more detailed descriptions of the sections.

A

Section A of the handbook (the SDGs in brief and current status of SDGs in Finland, pages 10-24) provides basic information on SDGs and a concise description of the current state of Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in Finland.

- What are the objectives set out for Agenda 2030 i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? **p. 12**
- SDG key terminology. **p. 15**
- The Sustainable Development Goals in Finland - where are we at the national level? **p. 18**

B

Section B discusses the role of the SDGs in municipalities (pages 25–64). You'll find different perspectives on the important role of municipalities as part of sustainable development work and its inspiration as well as examples of the ways in which Finnish and foreign municipalities link SDGs to their municipal strategy work. This section also contains a list and descriptions of useful urban networks from which you can draw inspiration, ask for peer support, find partners and get help in organising sustainable development work in your municipality.

- What is the role of municipalities in sustainable development? **p. 27**
- How are SDGs integrated into municipal strategy work? **p. 30**
- What city networks exist, and how and why should your municipality become a member? **p. 35**

C
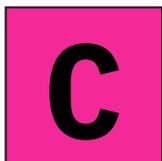
Section C (Getting a start, pages 65-96), includes tools, tips and inspiration for starting SDG work, whether it is related to the preparation of a new municipal strategy or communicating SDG goals to stakeholders and colleagues. Therefore, if you are starting or planning a new project and would like to include the SDGs, or the SDGs are still completely foreign to you or your colleagues, start with the materials and tools in this section.

D

Section D (Monitoring and communication, pages 97-113) is devoted to the monitoring, measurement and setting up indicators of the progress of the actions to be implemented and those still on the planning table. In this section you will learn about terms and tools such as VLR (Voluntary Local Review) and MayorsIndicators. In addition, the section also contains ideas on the role and significance of communication as part of work on sustainable development.

A

SDGs in brief and the current state of SDGs in Finland

A1 What are the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

In September 2015, the UN Member States agreed on the SDGs and Agenda 2030 at a UN Summit held in New York. The goals and the agenda are to steer the world's development efforts until 2030. Agenda 2030 aims at eradicating extreme poverty as well as sustainable development, which takes the environment, the economy and humans into account equally.

The Sustainable Development Goals entered into force at the beginning of 2016. They are universal meaning they obligate both poor and rich countries. They take into account the development of environmental sustainability, the economy as well as international cooperation and human rights. The aim has been to ensure the well-being of all population groups worldwide: we do not want to leave anyone behind in development.

17 goals

In all, there are 17 SDGs and 169 targets within these. The aim is to turn global development onto a path on which human well-being and human rights, economic prosperity and the stability of societies are safeguarded in an environmentally sustainable manner. In addition,

Photo: Mikael Ahlfors / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

extreme poverty in all its forms will be eradicated worldwide.

It was not at all easy to decide on the goals: they were prepared for several years by UN Member States, civil society, the private sector and the scientific community.

To monitor the progress of the goals, a set of indicators was compiled under the leadership of the UN to monitor the achievement of each goal and target. There are currently 243 indicators.

All the SDGs are important and closely linked to one another: none of them may be pursued at the expense of another. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will require action from states, decision-makers and citizens alike.

Info

For more detailed descriptions of each goal and a PDF that can be printed in two-sided card format please see UN website Sustainable Development Goals

Read more on the SDGs at the following sources:
- UNDP Nordic office, Agenda 2030
- United Nations website

Sustainable Development Goals

A2 Key sustainable development terminology

Agenda 2030 is a global sustainable development action plan agreed by state leadership at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York on 25 September 2015. The Agenda is a document that politically obligates countries. Its implementation period is 2016–2030.

Commitment 2050, or the Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, is a national strategy for sustainable development agreed upon by the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development. At the same time, it is a concrete tool in which organisations, companies and private individuals can provide a concrete commitment to sustainable development measures for the implementation of common objectives.

In this framework, **materiality assessment** refers to a tool for identifying the most effective approaches in municipalities and cities. The interpretation of materiality takes place cross-administratively by examining which activities have the greatest impact on the achievement of the goals and which objectives are particularly relevant for municipal residents and other parties operating in the municipality. The same term is also used in companies' responsibility reporting, where its meaning is slightly different.

Phenomenon-based budgeting is a method of administration that emphasises an overall approach. Phenomenon-based budgeting aims at e.g. the better management of entities,

increasing cooperation across administrative boundaries and promoting solutions, such as sustainable development, to multidimensional societal problems. Phenomenon-based budgeting may have varied impacts of differing scope, for example, to the structure of a budget and its preparation, the organisation of administration and the management of entities. SDG budgeting is often phenomenon-based.

SDGs refer to the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (see above). There are 17 SDGs and a total of 169 targets within these. They aim to turn global development onto a path on which human well-being and human rights, economic prosperity and the stability of societies are safeguarded in an environmentally sustainable manner.

An SDG impact assessment is a self-assessment of the effectiveness of measures. The assessment enables a simple and structured approach to the realisation of SDGs in an organisation. An impact assessment is above all a learning experience and a good first strategic step towards developing sustainability.

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) is a UN organisation that builds a global network with universities, research centres and civil society organisations to support the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is a tool intended for local use by municipalities and cities, to monitor the achievement of the Agenda

2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Above all else, a Voluntary Local Review supports goal-setting and monitoring, but it is also a popular way to communicate the importance of the local level in promoting sustainable development.

A Voluntary National Review (VNR) is a report to the UN that is voluntary in nature on the monitoring of Agenda 2030 goals. Finland reports to the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) every four years, most recently in August 2020.

A3 SDGs in Finland

»

Along with the other Nordic countries, Finland ranks at the top of international sustainable development comparisons.

»

Finland's situation is good with regard to several of the Agenda 2030 goals related to social sustainability, the economy and work

Finland has achieved or is close to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to the reduction of poverty, ensuring health, education, water and energy, reducing inequalities as well as peace and the rule of law. Finland's greatest challenges are related to climate change, consumption and production methods, biodiversity and the level of development cooperation funding it provides.

Headed in the right direction, but we still have some way to go

Finland's most important challenges concern the need to change consumption and production methods, the strengthening of climate measures, halting the loss of biodiversity and supporting other countries in the implementation of Agenda 2030.

Agenda 2030's guiding principle is that no one should be left behind in development, and Finland has succeeded well in combating inequality with our extensive social security and good educational opportunities. Even so, many visible minorities experience discrimination in Finland.

Implementation of sustainable development in Finland

In Finland, the Government is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2030.

The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for coordinating its implementation. The National Commission on Sustainable Development is a forum of influencers that brings together significant actors in society and is led by the Prime Minister. The commission promotes the implementation of society's commitment to sustainable development titled "the Finland we want by 2050" and its voluntary undertakings. The work of the commission is both supported and challenged by Sustainability Panel consisting of experts from different fields of science and the Youth Agenda2030 group, which consists of young people.

In 2022, the commission published an updated national Sustainable Development Strategy for 2022 - 2030. The strategy aims to ensure that Finland will achieve all the SDGs by 2030. It is based on six systemic areas where changes must take place in order for Finland to achieve the goals and help other countries achieve theirs.

THE SIX SYSTEMIC AREAS OF CHANGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Economy and work promoting wellbeing and sustainable consumption

Sustainable energy system

Education, competence and sustainable lifestyles

Forest, water and land use promoting biodiversity and carbon neutrality

Wellbeing, health and social inclusion

Food system promoting wellbeing

Support for the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda

A4 Sitoumus2050

In 2013, the National Commission on Sustainable Development prepared Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development "the Finland we want by 2050". As part of Society's Commitment, public administration together with other actors commits to promoting sustainable development in all its work and activities.

Society's Commitment contains an agreement on operating methods and objectives that enable a good life now and for future generations. The objective of the commitment is to increase the impact and effectiveness of sustainable development policy and to respond to the implementation challenge presented to national governments in the final document of the United Nations 20th conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

Towards goals through action commitments

The different actors in society, including municipalities, can formulate and give their own action commitments for the achievement of common goals. Private companies and other

organisations and communities, as well as private individuals, may also make commitments concerning measures.

»
Society's Commitment contains an agreement on operating methods and objectives that enable a good life now and for future generations.
»

When making action commitments, the actors commit themselves, for their part, to promote the the objectives set out in Society's Commitment. The action commitments aim for concrete measures, changes in operating practices and innovative experiments that will be implemented over a period of five to ten years and promote jointly agreed objectives.

Read more about the commitment here:
Sitoumus 2050 website

MITÄ MUUALLA TEHDÄÄN?
ESPOO

»

We have challenged the city's different sectors to give their own sustainable development commitments. For example, the pupils of Jupperi elementary school have jointly committed to reducing food waste, and in the technical sector we are increasing the number of charging points for electric buses.

»

Sirpa Hertell
Chair of the Sustainable Development Programme Steering Group

1 City of Espoo: Sustainable Development Programme
2 Espoo's commitment: Espoo is a responsible pioneer

In Espoo, office holders and decision-makers work together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Espoo's commitment is a sustainable development programme that includes climate work, the promotion of natural values and innovative mobility and energy solutions[1].

Strategic sustainability work in Espoo

The City of Espoo strives to be one of the leading sustainable development cities. Espoo is committed to being a pioneer[2] in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2025. The objective is to achieve an economically, ecologically, socially and culturally sustainable city. As one of instruments for promoting a pioneering approach and the achievement of the SDGs, the City of Espoo prepared and published a Voluntary Local Review (VLR).

In Espoo, all of the city's activities are guided by a strategic framework titled the Espoo story. The Espoo story is Espoo's strategy, directing the city's activities in line with common objectives. In 2012, the city outlined that all of Espoo's activities should be economically, ecologically, socially and culturally sustainable. The City of Espoo representatives find that the Agenda 2030 goals are exceptionally well suited as part of the strategic management of cities. According to Mayor Jukka Mäkelä, the Espoo story and the strategy for Agenda 2030 work are becoming closely linked with each other". The Mayor has pointed out that VLR reporting also forms an important globally commensurate network of local sustainability work, which makes good practices available to local decision-makers around the world in a "common language".

"We need to work together on Agenda 2030. Cooperation between cities is really good, but it is particularly important that work is carried out together with people, residents, communities, companies and universities," Mäkinen emphasises.

You can browse the commitments through a portal. The full amount of municipality level commitments is available in Finnish only here, but for English examples see here.

B

The role of municipalities in sustainable development

B1 The role of municipalities in sustainable development

> *More than two thirds of the Agenda 2030 goals are implemented in municipalities.* »

Municipalities are key implementers of sustainable development

Municipalities are directly linked to the broad spectrum of SDGs in such areas as education, care, clean water, energy, waste management and sustainable transport. In many countries, more than two-thirds of Agenda 2030 goals are implemented locally.

Municipalities must invest significantly in the cross-sectoral content matters where the municipality has the opportunity to leap forward in development. Sustainable development work should focus on themes in which there is still much work to do and for which municipalities have executive powers. The next page includes a picture of such themes in the Finnish context.

KEY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THEMES OF FINNISH MUNICIPALITIES

ECOSYSTEM

REDUCING THE CITIZEN AND MUNICIPAL CARBON FOOTPRINT

Transition to renewable energy

Transition to zero carbon mobility

Sustainable consumption

Sustainable public procurement

SOCIOCULTURAL SYSTEM

DECREASING INEQUALITIES

Equal opporturnities

Prevention of segregation

Access to services

ECONOMIC SYSTEM

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Capacity to attract and retain
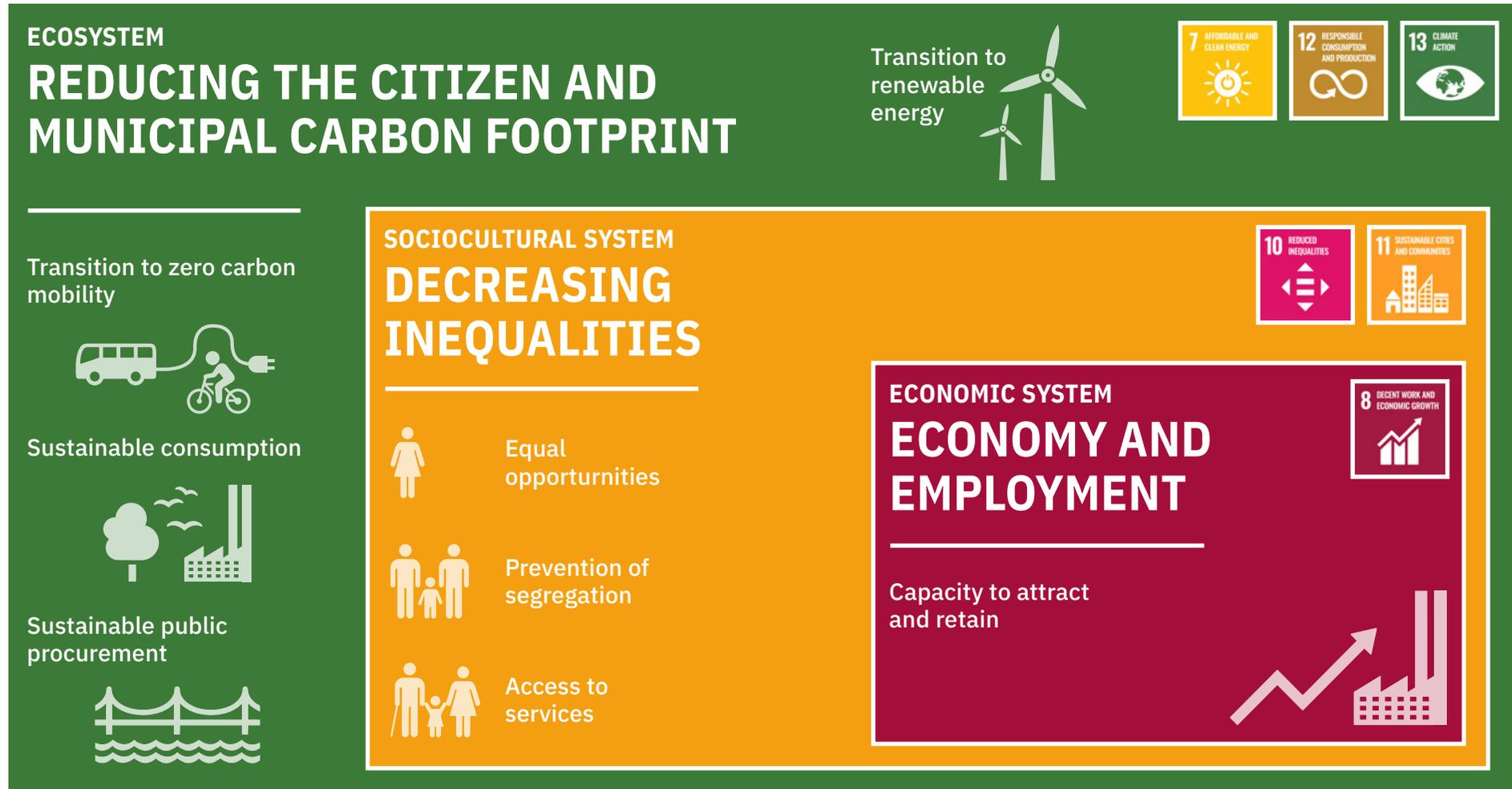
Photo: Susanna Kekkonen / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

Sustainable development requires strategic measures from municipalities

In order for sustainable development to really gain a strong foothold in a municipality, strategic management of the whole is needed. It is not enough to state that sustainable development is a principle to be taken into account in all activities. Instead, the principles of sustainable development must guide the contents and operating methods of work carried out in municipalities. The practices of municipalities in monitoring and reporting on sustainable development should also be developed. Currently municipalities do not have a uniform policy for monitoring.

B2 An SDG-based municipal strategy

A municipal strategy can be based on the goals set out in Agenda 2030 in many ways

One option is to build the strategy on the SDGs, so that the municipality selects from the 17 goals or their various targets those that are important to them and defines the desired target level for each of these. In this case, various SDG-based indicator services can provide support for monitoring the effectiveness of strategy work.

Another option is to use the SDGs indirectly in strategy work by comparing the development themes considered of key importance in the municipality to the global sustainable development agenda. Interpretations of key contents made at the municipal level can also be used to assist in this (see figure in the previous chapter). In this case, the SDG framework supports the selection of cross-administrative key themes in particular.

The first of these methods, which many private companies have followed in their responsibility strategies, has not become common in Nordic municipalities. The latter, on the other hand, seems to gained popularity, as it has been applied in municipalities of different sizes for example in Sweden and Finland.

Next, we will outline the decisions made by Växjö and Malmo in strategy work to integrate the SDG framework into the strategy work by municipalities.

VÄXJÖ AGENDA 2030 MODEL

»

We were one of the first cities in Sweden to introduce the new framework and received a grant already at the beginning of 2016. We have a sustainable development agenda that is fully based on the SDGs. We have also approved our budget process to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. We take this very seriously.

»

Bo Hjälmefjord
Toimeenpanotoimisto, Municipality of Växjö

Agenda 2030 steers all activities

The City of Växjö has outlined that the SDGs will form the basis for all its activities. In the local hierarchy of guiding documents, only the Swedish Local Government Act is higher than the Växjö Sustainable Development Programme.

The Hållbara Växjö 2030 programme was completed when the City Council adopted it in winter 2019. The preparation of the programme consisted of three stages: A description of the initial situation, cooperation with researchers and a dialogue event for citizens. The programme includes a declaration, five sets of goals, nine challenges and three implementation principles.

"Sustainable Växjö 2030" should be seen as a long-term and comprehensive administrative

document in which the objectives are concretised through the City Council budget, but also in programmes, plans, strategies and other guiding documents. The objectives and challenges were selected by drawing up a materiality assessment (väsentlighetsanalys) with an assessment model used by Sweden at the national level.

The goal is for Växjö **1)** to possess climate and environmental wisdom **2)** to be safe and trusting **3)** to be fair and responsible **4)** to continue growing and be inclusive and **5)** to be green and healthy.

The challenges are also accompanied by measures that Växjö needs to take. For example, the challenge of developing skills is responded to by providing lifelong learning opportunities, inspiring and democratic learning environments that support fruitful debates, and by fostering cooperation between schools and research institutions.

In practice, Agenda 2030's steering impact can be seen in, for example, budgeting. The 2020 budget follows Hållbara Växjö's themes and outlines key processes as combinations of SDGs. A strategic direction has been defined for each one, on the basis of which the key task entities have been prioritised and development resources have been allocated.

MALMÖ'S MODEL

Photo: Charley Litchfield /
Unsplash

Goals from Agenda 2030

In 2018, Malmö City Council adopted the city's long-term strategy[3] for the implementation of Agenda 2030. The city decided to implement this by making Agenda 2030 part of the ordinary steering and management processes, through five significant development undertakings. One of these was to organise the budgeting in a goal-oriented manner and emphasising a long-term target meaning the Agenda 2030.[4] Thus, the 2020 budget was built on the basis of SDG goals[5].

Malmö draws up an annual sustainability report, structured directly in line with Agenda 2030's 17 SDGs[6]. The aim is for the report - together with other important decision documents - to form the basis of the policy making for each parliamentary term, in which case

3 Malmö stad 2018: Localising the SDGs
4 Malmö stad 2019: Official letter
(in Swedish)
5 Malmö stad: Budget 2020 (in Swedish)
6 Malmö stad: Sustainability report
2019 (in Swedish)

Agenda 2030 would direct the room for manoeuvre of the Council's decisions. The report also provides regularly updated information on the development trends in which the city should next intervene from the perspective of work on the agenda.

One special feature of the Malmö model is the visibility of global responsibility in the city's operations. The city has cooperated very extensively with African and Asian cities. The work carried out in these bilateral urban partnerships funded by ICDL initially focused on environmental issues and the development of local democracy - in Malmö as well as in each of the partnering cities. More recently, cooperation has been built more clearly around Agenda 2030.

Within the framework of the ICDL, partner cities have included Swakopmund in Namibia[7], Cape Town in South Africa and Lusaka in Zambia[8], as well as Tangshan Malmo's long-time sister city in China[9].

7 ICLD: Cooperation Malmö-Swakopmund
8 ICLD: Malmö and Lusaka
9 ICLD: TangMa Learning

B3 City networks as support

Photo: Nasa / Unsplash
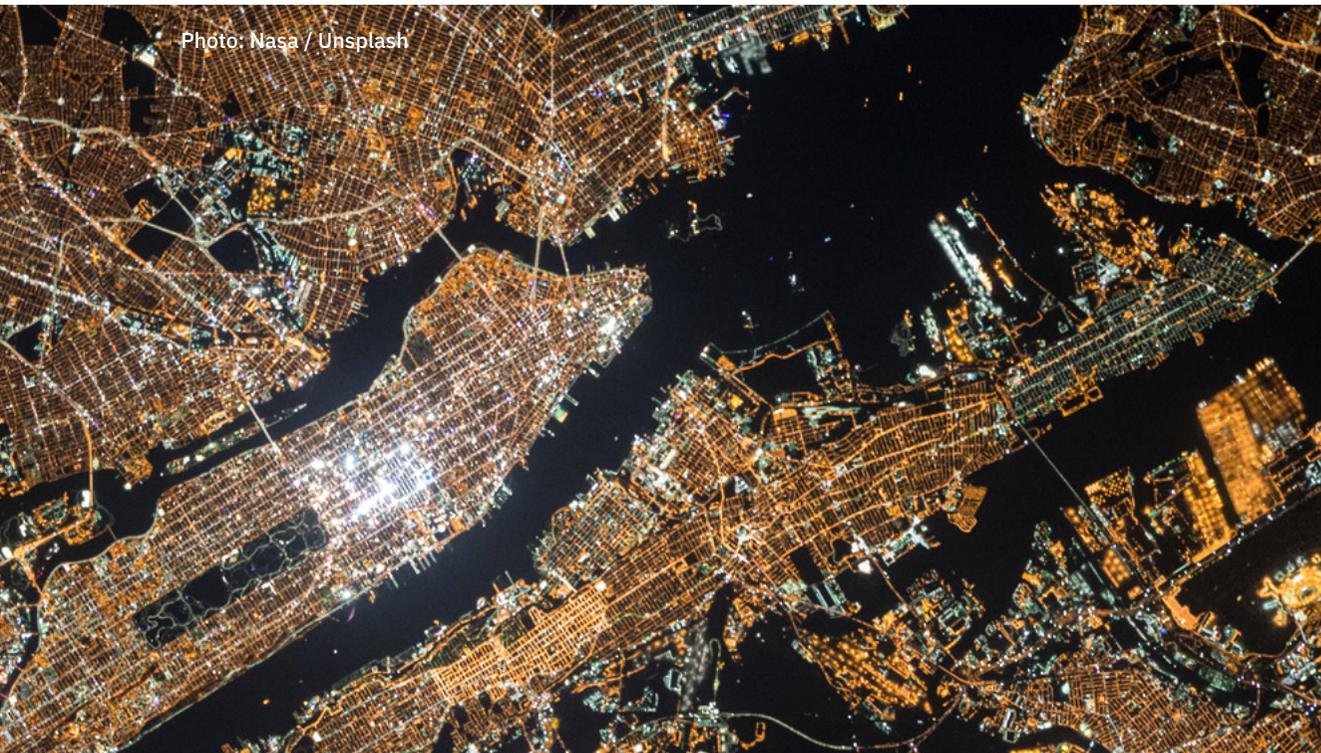
The 2030 Agenda goals have many links with the activities of several national and international city networks. These networks established to promote sustainable development, municipal climate work, healthy living environment and sustainable vitality can also support work on SDGs in municipalities.

What added value can we get?	What needs to be taken into account?
Municipalities can learn from one another's work and apply the good practices they have observed elsewhere in their own activities.	The superficial benchmarking of others' activities does not necessarily bring added value: understanding the local context takes time.
Municipalities can promote matters they consider essential together, for example in relation to EU institutions or national decision-making.	Organisations with a strong focus on lobbying are often as good as their leaders. Long-term development can be diminished by power struggles.
International projects launched through networks can provide additional resources for more in-depth work on themes a municipality feels are important or for entirely new openings.	Obtaining and managing external funding is often laborious, but at best the projects will create local portfolios and continuum of development work.
Networks bring international visibility and help you see the value of your work.	Recognition must also be earned; joining networks will not necessarily help in building a brand.

When municipalities consider the added value of the networks in relation to such things as network membership fees and working hours used in the activities of the network, the following factors may be decisive.

This handbook provides a brief introduction to the following networks:

- FISU - Finnish Sustainable Communities **p. 39**
- Hinku Network **p. 41**
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability **p. 43**
- Covenant of Mayors **p. 45**
- Climate Alliance **p. 47**
- Energy Cities **p. 49**
- ERRIN **p. 51**
- OASC **p. 53**
- European Green Cities **p. 55**
- UBC - Union of Baltic Cities **p. 57**
- Eurocities **p. 59**
- Healthy Cities **p. 61**
- LHT Network **p. 63**

The presentation focuses on established networks, most of which are international. Examples of Finnish national networks have also been included.

Cooperation established specifically for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and support materials produced within them are also available to local actors. One interesting peer group is being made up of cities that are beginning to report to the UN on their own efforts to achieve the SDGs (see Voluntary Local Review). Other available resources include:

- A guide written by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), in which the most relevant viewpoints and targets with regard to specific cities have been picked out from each SDG[10] in the form of a guide.
- Guidance and support materials prepared by the OECD for local work and mapping of SDG pioneers[11].
- Online tools developed by the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC)[12] specifically for the SDG needs of European cities.
- Nordregio Agenda 2030 project material collection on SDGs locally[13]

10 UCLG: The SDGs - What local governments need to know
11 OECD Programme on a Territorial approach to SGSs
12 RFSC
13 Nordregio on Agenda 2030

FISU

https://www.fisunetwork.fi/en-US

The Finnish Sustainable Communities (FISU) network aims for a carbon neutral approach, a waste-free society and globally sustainable consumption by 2050. The network shares best forerunner practices and develops operating practices with the support of a peer network and service centre. The network includes eleven municipalities: Forssa, Hyvinkää, Ii, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Riihimäki, Turku and Vaasa.

The network's aims

FISU municipalities strive to be pioneers in resource-smartness. The aim of cooperation between actors is to highlight local strengths and thus promote sustainable well-being in the region and increase employment. The FISU Network provides cities with tools and means for making sustainable business and well-being policies that are renewable.

The network's operating practices

The network aims for resource smartness with the help of a vision and roadmap developed jointly by the municipality, companies and other local actors. The Finnish Environment Institute SYKE and Motiva form a service centre that supports FISU municipalities and channel up-to-date information and exper-

»

The promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals requires strong strategic management. With the help of the FISU Network, we in Lappeenranta have developed joint management of climate and other sustainable development phenomena and gained extensive knowledge of comparisons and indicators. It has been a pleasure to share experiences and brainstorm with Finnish pioneering cities. Together with companies, we promote various sustainable development experimentsl and demo projects.

»

Markku Heinonen
Development Manager, City of Lappeenranta

tise to municipalities and other stakeholders and promote the FISU network. The FISU Network's activities are guided by an advisory board, which decides on the development of the network's activities and approves new members on the basis of a separately agreed application procedure.

Why join?

The added value of membership is associated with opportunities to strengthen local and regional economy and sustainable well-being.

HINKU NETWORK

https://www.hiilineutraalisuomi.fi/en-US

The Hinku network's members strive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions faster than the rest of society. With a decision by the local council, each member municipality must commit to cut greenhouse gas emissions in their entire area by 80% from the 2007 level by 2030. The network comprises more than 70 municipalities and four regions. The network is coordinated by Finnish Environment Institute SYKE. The network also includes other actors, often companies operating in the climate sector.

The network's aims

The Hinku network was launched in 2008 on the basis of project cooperation with the aim of supporting work to reduce climate emissions in municipalities, promoting local well-being and improving the operating conditions of business life. Today, the network is primarily profiled as pioneers in climate change mitigation.

The network's operating practices

In addition to the targets for greenhouse gas emissions in the near future, municipalities must identify the most important means of achieving the goals. In practice, measures that aim at emission cuts focus on improving energy efficiency and saving energy, the production of energy based on renewable sources and improving material efficiency.

Photo: Mikael Ahlfors / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

Why join?

The network provides the exchange of information and communication cooperation, emission calculation services and support for the preparation of separate projects. The network's operating methods are flexible and the level of ambition is high.

ICLEI

https://www.iclei.org/

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) is an international network whose members are committed to building a sustainable future. The network comprises more than 2,500 cities and sub-regions from some 125 countries.

The network's aims

ICLEI aims to influence its member organisations' operating models as well as Member States' legislation in order to formulate more sustainable solutions, in the thematic areas selected by the network, which are called paths to a sustainable future: a path to emission cuts, a nature-based path that safeguards biodiversity, a path to a circular economy, a path to resilience and a path to equality.

The network's operating practices

The network supports the role of its members as pioneers on sustainable development paths. The network's operating practices include separate projects, conferences, sharing of research data and other expertise, and protecting the interests of the network. For example,

Photo: Laura Rautjoki / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

coalitions based on mutual competition and peer support may emerge through this work.

Why join?

Membership can bring added value from the viewpoint of development, reputation and impact work, and, for example, support cities in achieving their carbon neutrality goals.

COVENANT OF MAYORS

https://www.eumayors.eu

The EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy is a municipal network in the field of climate policy, comprising municipalities and cities of different sizes mainly from Europe. In total, the network, established in 2008, has nearly 8,000 member organisations. In recent years, non-European members in particular have joined.

The network's aims

The network supports cities in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with measures such as disseminating good practices among members and developing joint monitoring of the achievement of targets. The network's ambition level is characterised as high.

The network's operating practices

The signatories commit themselves to an integrated approach to the mitigation of and preparation for climate change. During the first two years of their commitment, they must present an action plan for energy and climate objectives aiming for at least a 40% drop in CO2 emissions by 2030.

Photo: Susan Yin / Unsplash

Why join?

The network is the largest of the cooperation initiatives implemented to achieve the climate and energy targets of cities. The members of the network have set quite ambitious carbon neutrality targets, which will also challenge other parties to increase the pace of their climate action.

CLIMATE ALLIANCE

https://www.climatealliance.org/home.html

The Climate Alliance is an extensive urban network focusing specifically on climate action. The alliance's 1,850 member cities have clear objectives, which are pursued by supporting climate and energy plans.

The network's aims

The Climate Alliance has developed a comprehensive methodology to support member cities in drawing up, implementing and monitoring climate and energy plans. All members must complete the decision to achieve 95% emission reductions from 1990 levels by 2050. In some countries, the work is also supported by a national level network unit.

The network's operating practices

The main principles of climate action are fairness, a nature-based approach, locality, resource wisdom and diversity. From 2002, the network has awarded the Climate Start award to its member municipalities for their most ambitious projects to highlight examples of committed and successful climate work.

Photo: Susanna Kekkonen / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

Why join?

The network is particularly well suited for those who appreciate clear target setting. The network has a strong representation from German-speaking European countries.

ENERGY CITIES

https://energy-cities.eu/

Energy cities strengthens the role and skills of local governments in accelerating energy transition. It is a learning community for cities engaging in future-proofing their economies.

The network's aims

Energy Cities is the European Association of local authorities in energy transition. It is a community of approximately 1,000 cities and towns from 30 countries. Energy Cities triggers a trustful dialogue between local leaders and EU & national institutions to accelerate the energy transition in Europe.

The network's operating practices

Energy Cities empowers cities and citizens to shape and transition to futureproof cities. It showcases concrete alternatives deployed by cities, advocates to change governance at all levels and fosters a wide cultural change in matters of energy. Activities are organised through five action-oriented hubs that include

Photo: Susanna Kekkonen / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

local governance, fossil-free cities, community energy, food systems and fair economies.

Why join?

Energy Cities' community gathers frontrunners and energy transition beginners, city officials and technical experts. There are no conditions to join other than the ambition and the commitment to share experiences. The largest number of members are from France, followed by Portugal and Belgium.

ERRIN

https://errin.eu/

ERRIN supports regional and local stakeholders to develop their innovation ecosystems and to enhance related capacities. It brings a bottom-up place-based perspective to the European research and innovation policy and funding programmes.

The network's aims

European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) is a Brussels-based platform of more than 125 regional stakeholder organizations from 22 European countries. Established in 2001, ERRIN supports members to enhance their regional and local research and innovation capacities and further develop their R&I ecosystems. The network also seeks to shape research and innovation policy, to reinforce the regional/territorial dimension in the funding programs.

The network's operating practices

ERRIN offers a platform for knowledge exchange and facilitates regional collaboration, supporting its members through the project development process and providing project

Photo: Susanna Kekkonen / Ministry
of the Environment Image Bank

opportunities. ERRIN currently has 13 Working Groups, all led its members. The WGs are based on members' priorities and grouped in clusters that reflect the structuring of the current funding landscape, including the Horizon Europe programme.

Why join?

The network maintains a long-standing relationship with the EU institutions in strengthening the regional and local dimension in EU Research and Innovation policy and programmes. The working groups offer opportunities to exchange information, present regional examples, build new partnerships to develop joint projects, among others.

OASC

OASC (Open and Agile Smart Cities) is a city network that supports local public administrations in their digital transformation journey. The mission of OASC is to unite cities and communities around the world to build a global market for solutions, services, and data based on the needs of cities and communities.

The network's aims

Open & Agile Smart Cities (OASC) is a global network of over 160 cities from 31 countries with the goal to shape and create a market for smart city data and services based on open standards. OASC is promoting the use of open mechanisms to achieve digital interoperability for scale and replication of digital solutions for the benefit of cities and the local innovation ecosystem.

The network's operating practices

The networks wants to create sustainable impact for its member cities by working towards a common technical ground for cities and communities, based on open standards, open APIs, and shared data models. This common technical ground is referred to as Minimal

Photo: Susanna Kekkonen / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

Interoperability Mechanisms. The organisation started as a grassroots forum in 2015 and became a not-for-profit in late 2017.

Why join?

Via the network your city can learn to drive digital transformation with open systems and procurement, following tomorrow's global smart city standards. Thereby you may accelerate the launch of local technologies to a global scale.

EUROPEAN GREEN CITIES

http://greencities.eu/about

The European Green Cities Network is a forum on sustainable urban planning and housing to ensure collaboration and share knowledge across borders. It links cities with experts and project opportunities.

The network's aims

The European Green Cities Network consists of municipalities, social housing organizations, institutions, companies and universities. It is run by a Denmark-based non-profit organization European Green Cities, and has members from 57 different cities in 19 countries across Europe.

The network's operating practices

The network is a forum for displaying good examples of European innovation projects and for disseminating knowledge on sustainable urban planning and housing. The supporting non-profit drives the sustainable city development processes within five different areas: SDGs and holistic urban development, inclu-

Photo: Susanna Kekkonen / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

sive green mobility, energy efficiency, stakeholder engagement and project management.

Why join?

Through the network you get access to a European group of sustainable city specialists that is explicitly linking its work with the SDGs. Joining a platform on sustainable cities provides an acces to curated information in the field and opens up project opportunities. The network also organizes study trips to the member cities.

UNION OF BALTIC CITIES

https://www.ubc.net/

The Union of Baltic Cities is a city network, which promotes joint projects between cities in the Baltic region and works to protect the interests of its members in the EU. The network has around 100 member cities. The network has promoted the development and integration of the Baltic Sea Region since 1991.

The network's aims

The network wants to maintain and develop safe, smart and sustainable cities. Cooperation between member cities is considered an important channel for promoting the implementation of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy.

The network's operating practices

Thematic commissions play a key role in the network's activities. Of these, the Sustainable Cities Commission led by the City of Turku has been very active. The network's Secretariat General is located in Gdansk.

Why join?

The Sustainable Cities Commission, which focuses on environmental issues, is active and attractive. However, the cities that have been active participants have also gained many benefits from other cooperation.

»

The UBC network has provided small cities with limited resources such as Kemi, development resources, many new ideas and development areas. One concrete souvenir was related to the adoption of Agenda 2030 as the basis for municipal strategy work and now later being among the first in Finland, if not the first also to use it as a tool for monitoring the strategy's objectives.

»

Jukka Vilen
Chief of Staff, City of Kemi

EUROCITIES

http://www.eurocities.eu/

Eurocities is a network of large and medium-sized European cities established in 1986 as a forum for the exchange of information and sharing of experiences between cities. The network has 140 member cities, and 45 partnership cities in 39 countries.

The network's aims

The network strives to improve the quality of life in cities and influence EU urban policy. The network considers the economic development of cities and the perspectives of mobility, the environment, culture and the information society to be key contents. The network has the opportunity to influence things such as the targeting of funding programmes to themes relevant to cities.

The network's operating practices

Thematic forums for policy makers and office holders, which are divided into working groups, are a key form of action. Network members also have a large amount of joint project and event activities. Many of them link with sustainable development and climate work.

»

The Espoo Environment Centre operates in the Eurocities Environment Forum's noise pollution working group, which discusses the noise situation in member cities in a versatile manner from the perspective of urban planning, building design, technical competence and supervision. For the residents of Espoo, the work of the Environment Centre in the noise working group is made concrete, for example, in the noise prevention work carried out in Espoo or work to preserve a quiet environment in recreational areas that have been experienced as quiet.

»

Milla Ovaska
Head of International Affairs

Why join?

For those interested in strategic development and lobbying, membership of the network can be very useful. Especially when chairing a thematic forum, interesting opportunities for learning and exerting influence can open up for a city.

HEALTHY CITIES

https://www.who.int/europe/groups/who-european-healthy-cities-network

https://thl.fi/en/web/management-of-health-and-wellbeing-promotion

The Healthy Cities network, maintained by the World Health Organization (WHO), was established in 1987. It covers over 1400 European cities or other regional organisations from thirty countries. Many countries also have activities linked to the network at the national level.

The network's aims

The network develops well-being management and health promotion between municipalities interested in the theme. The network emphasises that responsibility for promoting wellbeing rests with the municipality's senior management, and wellbeing should be the basic principle guiding the activities of municipalities.

The network's operating practices

The activities are divided into themes that change each four-year period. The work is also linked to the WHO programme work related to nutrition, substance abuse education, healthy lifestyles and disease prevention. For each four-year period, the network also designates Flagship Cities from among its members

»

My work in Kuopio in the Healthy Municipality network was strengthened by the WHO's Healthy Cities themes, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and testing of new tools (e.g. Place Standard Tools).
There is also a cross-administrative perspective on the promotion of well-being and health.
The more members commit to the Healthy Municipality network and gives to others. the more they get out of it
The network has been enthusiastic about co-creation, peer support and exchange of good practices in the context of network meetings.

»

Säde Rytkönen
City of Kuopio

which have shown a particular commitment and interest in the work of the network.

Why join?
The network's activities are well-established and the commitment of cities is emphasised.

LHT NETWORK

https://mal-verkosto.fi/finnish-national-land-use-housing-and-sustainable-transportation-network/

The LHT Network is a national land-use (L), housing (H), and transport (T) development network. Its activities are based on a common urban policy between the state and large urban regions, which means that in addition to 17 cities and urban areas, four ministries and other authorities as well as the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities are involved. The network is coordinated by the Joint Authority of Tampere Central Region.

The network's aims

The LHT Network aims to develop urban regions with an integrated approach in order to create the prerequisites for sustainable development and vitality. Its aim is to promote the planning of its members' land use, housing, transport, services and livelihoods and cooperation between administrative branches.

The network's operating practices

The network's work focuses on dialogue between the member regions themselves and the member regions and central government parties with joint workshops, studies and development projects, as well as on sparring and piloting the current planning challenges of the regions.

Photo: Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

Why join?

Thus far, only the four largest urban regions have entered into LHT agreements between urban regions and the state. A report on extending the agreement procedure to the Jyväskylä, Kuopio and Lahti regions also recommends that these three areas be included in the procedure. However, the LHT network activities are more informal than the procedural process and thus open to other municipalities: For example, the events of the network are free and open to all cities and urban regions.

C

Getting started on SDG work

Photo: Adrian Williams / Unsplash

C1 Identify yourself from the management models of sustainable development

»

In order to ensure that sustainable development work in municipalities is as fruitful as possible and that resources can be utilised efficiently, municipalities should identify how sustainable development work is currently managed in municipalities and, on the other hand, how it could be managed in the future.

»

Municipalities to identify their starting points and to select a model suitable for further development

The wide-ranging, cross-administrative and complex nature of sustainable development poses new challenges between the various municipal institutions, personnel and the municipal community while legal provisions on jurisdiction must be adhered to.

At the same time, sustainable development management should be based on knowledge of the municipality's operating environment and tradition, and should be built from the mu-

__What management models do you recognise from your municipality?__ Try to identify the special features of your municipality in the management models and familiarise yourself with the prerequisites for the functionality of the models. Remember that each municipality has features from several models!

nicipality's own challenges, opportunities and resources.

Essential resources include skills and capabilities, access to relevant networks and the mandates of different experts.

In order to ensure that sustainable development work in municipalities is as fruitful as possible municipalities should identify how sustainable development work is currently managed in municipalities and, on the other hand, how it could be managed in the future. In this, you can rely on the management models
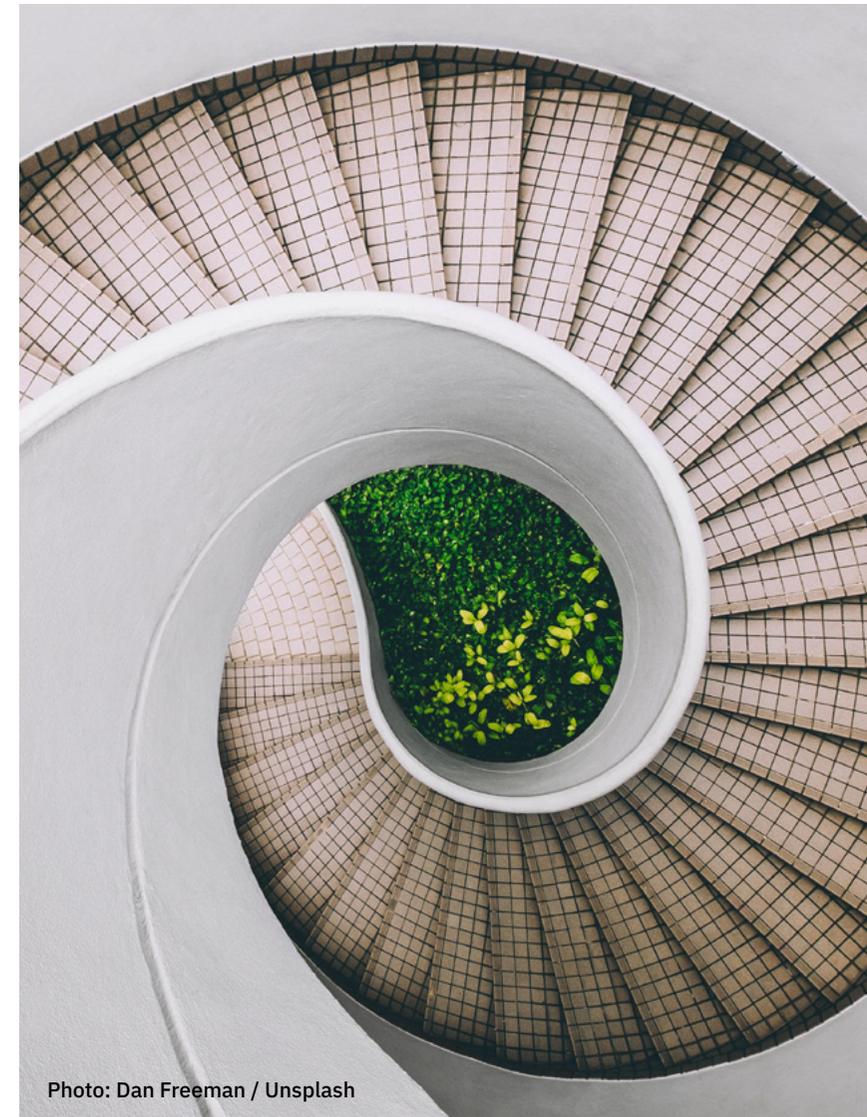
Photo: Dan Freeman / Unsplash

created as part of the project Leadership and implementation of sustainable development at the local level[14].

Three management models of sustainable development for local government:

Guiding Stars, Power of Networks and Active Individuals

Each model has not only its own features, strengths and weaknesses, but also its own prerequisites for success. In addition, no individual municipality matches one particular model, but rather each model represents a collection of more generic features of municipalities. In other words, the models are abstrac-

[14] Leadership and implementation of sustainable development at the local level. Government Publication, Schmidt-Thomé et al, 2020, in Finnish with a summary in English

Lähteenoja, S., Schmidt-Thomé, K., Päivänen, J. & E. Terämä (2021) The Leadership and Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Finnish Municipalities. In: Nhamo, G. (Ed.) Sustainable Development Goals for Society, Vol. 1. Springer.

tions for which there are likely no full matches in an individual municipality.

The ways in which municipalities are managed should be examined as a hybrid of these three models. Therefore, the utilisation of the models should be based on identifying the initial situation. **What features of the models can be identified in your municipality?**

Once a municipality has identified itself in a model or as a combination of models, it is easy and natural to continue on from there to determine the **direction in which the management of sustainable development in the municipality should be developed in the future**. There could be two distinct directions; strengthening the most recognisable model or working to implement another model.

MODEL 1
GUIDING STARS

High-level commitment to sustainability
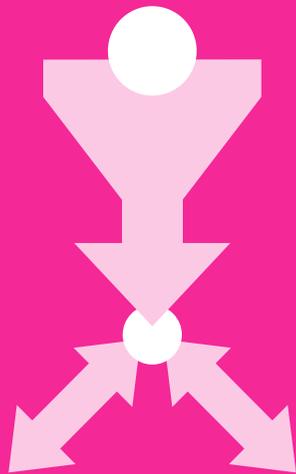
Clear responsibilities

Direct link to strategy

Political mandate

Project portfolio

Programme work

+ *Monitoring of results motivates and energizes*

! *Give your experts freedom to shine*

– *Risk of overemphasizing image work and neglecting critical voices*

Co-design to make sustainability a shared issue and to ensure communication between projects

Align all projects and empower experts as "owners" of sustainability initiatives; co-design these across the organization

Model 1
Guiding Stars

In the Guiding Stars model, the municipality implements the principles of sustainable development in a fairly straightforward manner. Sustainable development leadership is concentrated in one line, starting with top management, and clear targets have been set for sustainable development, the progress of which are monitored. Work may also be carried out in cross-administrative programmes or via project portfolios with external funding.

Photo: Jeremy Bishop / Unsplash

The SDGs can play a role, for example, as a direct link to the municipal strategy or as a tool for knowledge-based management in the work of the management team.

In the Guiding Stars model, the SDG framework supports, above all, target-setting and monitoring. In practice, this can happen, for example, through Voluntary Local Reporting (VLR, **see page 99**) launched by New York and applied by numerous cities. Of course, VLR can also be used in other municipal contexts than the 'top down management' model. For example, in municipalities closer to The Power of Networks model, the benefits of implementing VLR are related to support for the structuring of interaction.

MODEL 2
POWER OF NETWORKS

Cross-sectoral coordination of sustainable development
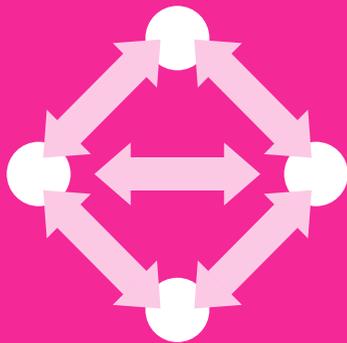
Shared ownership

Cross-sectoral goal setting

Elbowroom for independent work

Centrality of informal networks

+ *Shared discussion of goal-setting engages all to implementation*

! *Define management board responsibilities and reporting practices*

Secure high-level support for operationalisation of sustainability

– *Knowledge may remain tacit*

Co-design to engage the network in building of shared strategy

Crystallize the networks' results and co-design a shared strategy

Model 2
The Power of Networks

The Power of Networks model portrays shared ownership of sustainable development work, with shared responsibility for attaining goals. The municipality is a matrix of experts collaborating for sustainability. They are empowered to direct their work with a higher degree of self-organisation than in the former model. Sustainability is led by example, sometimes by a committed mayor but more often by a senior official experienced in negotiation,
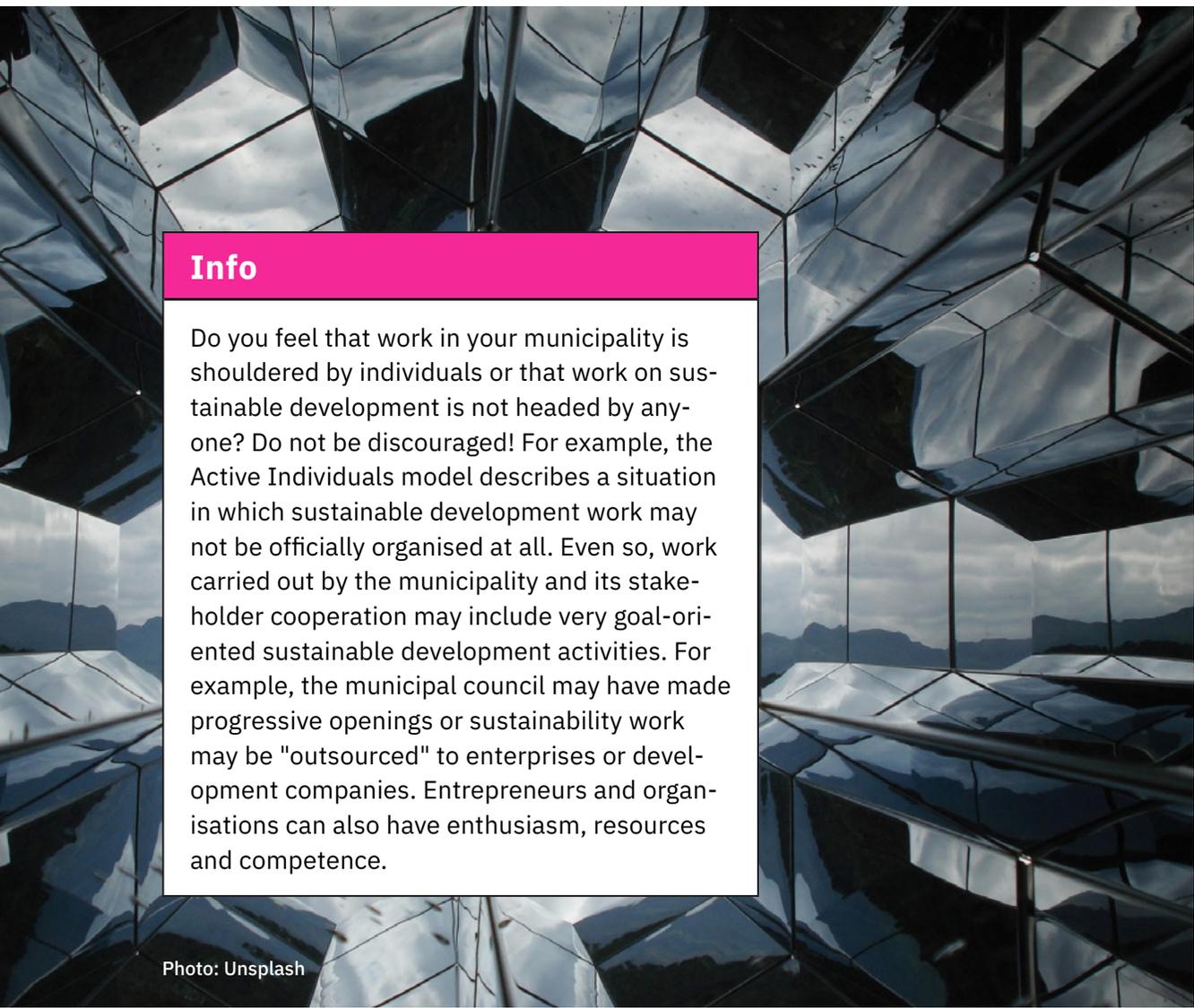
Info

Do you feel that work in your municipality is shouldered by individuals or that work on sustainable development is not headed by anyone? Do not be discouraged! For example, the Active Individuals model describes a situation in which sustainable development work may not be officially organised at all. Even so, work carried out by the municipality and its stakeholder cooperation may include very goal-oriented sustainable development activities. For example, the municipal council may have made progressive openings or sustainability work may be "outsourced" to enterprises or development companies. Entrepreneurs and organisations can also have enthusiasm, resources and competence.

Photo: Unsplash

instead of leaning on formal, hierarchical power. The model emphasises coordination, knowledge flow and knowledge sharing within the matrix.

Within the Power of Networks model, the SDG framework is at its strongest as a heuristic tool, for example when compiling a materiality assessment. In other words, it can help in perceiving those cross-administrative sustainable development work entities that have great impact potential. It has added value in locating the co-benefits and mutual discrepancies of objectives.

MODEL 3
ACTIVE INDIVIDUALS

Visionary individuals take responsibility for sustainable development
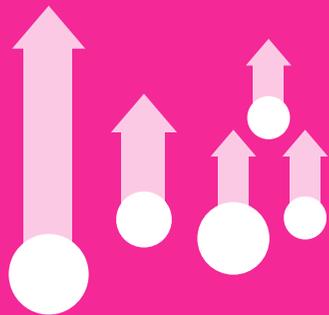
Distinct initiatives

Grass-roots engagement

Room for surprises

Plugs into larger social capital

+ *Passionate people may accomplish breakthroughs*

! *If sustainability work is "outsourced", beware not to marginalize it*

– *Dependency on individual activists narrows down strategic reach*

Co-design aims at strong deliberative democracy

Broaden the scope of participation, present initiatives and accelerate decision-making

Model 3
Active Individuals

Within the **Active Individuals model** sustainable development work may not be officially organised at all. Even so, work carried out by the municipality and its stakeholder cooperation may include very goal-oriented sustainable development activities. These may include individual openings received e.g. through the council or the outsourcing of sustainability work to unincorporated enterprises or development companies. Entrepreneurs

and civil society can also have certain informal responsibilities. Acting in accordance with the model may also be a strategic decision to allow sustainable development solutions to develop through the local innovation ecosystem. However, it is challenging to strive for system-level sustainability transition through bottom-up initiatives.

In the third model - "Active individuals" - SDGs link individual initiatives to the global framework. Agenda 2030 acts as an open invitation to participate in work to achieve sustainable development in a self-organised manner, each in their own way promoting a common goal. To support this, Finland has the voluntary Commitment 2050 tool. In the societal commitment each organisation, community, or individual can give a concrete commitment to sustainable development action to help in implementing the shared goals. Ready commitments will be published on the sitoumus2050.fi website. The National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Secretariat General and the expert panel monitor and support the commitments and their progress.

Next, consider the direction in which the management of sustainable development in the municipality should be developed in the future. For example: Which of the model's features should be strengthened? What sort of changes would be needed for this? How and with whom could the changes be achieved?

Where and when can the tool be used?

You can and should always use the Identify yourself from the models tool at the **beginning of planning work**, whether the municipality's strategy is being updated or individual projects and measures linked to sustainable development are being developed. By identifying municipal management models and features, **you can get an idea of how your municipality organises and manages sustainable development**, which facilitates the coordination and planning of work. At the same time, it opens the way for a critical review and further development of current management practices to better serve the achievement of the SDGs.

Who is the tool intended for?

Management models can be utilised by all parties interested in and actively involved in sustainable development management, from municipal strategy leaders to representatives of individual sectors as part of project and co-ordination work.

This is what you will need for implementation

Examination of and discussion of the models will require time. You can ask participants to consider the issue in advance and give them advance reading on the subject. You can also request an external presentation related to the topic for the beginning of the event.

»

Using the models will allow you to quickly discuss the key issues related to the strategic management in the city. Using the models, we were able to identify Tampere's current features and to understand how strategic management can be developed in the future.

»

Nina Mustikkamäki
City of Tampere

You can also write down the key features of the models (see black-coloured boxes in the sample images) on separate cards and put them in a well-shuffled decks of cards. The discussion participants select the cards from their own deck (or in groups) that correspond to the management of sustainable development in their own municipality. After these selections, the cards are turned over and the model-specific markings/colours on the reverse side are revealed. A comparison of the selection will launch a discussion on why each person (group) decided to select specific cards and which management model currently seems to best describe the situation in their municipality. The cards can also be used to kick off a second round of discussions, during which the participants consider what features the current management model seems to need, i.e. the model for developing their own municipality's work in the future and what it would require (cf. Example images +/-/!-characters).

C2 Materiality assessment and key themes

Achieving the Agenda 2030 goals will require changes at the local level, but municipalities may find it difficult to understand which global targets are essential for their own municipality. The interpretation of materiality takes place by examining which activities have the greatest impact on the achievement of the goals and which objectives are particularly relevant for municipal residents and other parties operating in the municipality.

You can proceed as follows:

a. **Determine the municipality's starting point** using around ten key indicators. You can use the indicators already in use in the municipality (e.g. indicators for monitoring the municipal strategy) or familiarise yourself with the Mayor'sIndicators service. Try to select variables describing both the vitality of the municipality and the well-being of residents and environmental loading.

b. **Examine the municipality's most important strategic documents** and development programmes in relation to the SDGs. You can cross-tabulate documents and the SDGs in the handbook and mark the identified links in the table.

**c. Convene cross-administrative represen-
tation** of the municipality's key experts
and present them with the results of
phases a and b. Instruct groups made up
of experts to complete phases d and e and
schedule time in calendars for phase f.

d. In cross-administrative groups, **examine**
the municipality's **strengths and weak-
nesses** from the perspective of sustainable
development. From the examination of
the starting point and the municipality's
strategic objectives, highlight both sources
of pride and possible blemishes.

**e. Form the spearheads for the municipali-
ty's SDG work** Select two or three entities
that will be the most effective in acceler-
ating the sustainability change in your mu-
nicipality and will require cross-admin-
istrative cooperation. Write down the key
themes for each group and present them
briefly to the other groups.

f. Put the materials together and draw up
an easy-to-approach summary of them,
which enables the experts involved in the
work to share the results of the materiality
assessment with other experts.

TEMPLATE
CROSS-TABULATION OF DOCUMENTS (MATERIALITY ASSESSMENT AND KEY THEMES, STAGE B)

	1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Examine the municipality's most important strategic documents and development programmes in relation to the SDGs. You can cross-tabulate documents and mark identified links in the table below.

In the left-hand column, fill in the names of the documents and development programmes that you have identified (one per cell) and tick the same row next to the SDG goals that are covered in the document or development programme.

Where and when can/should the tool be used?

The materiality assessment can be used either when the municipality adopts the SDGs for the first time or when a development process requiring cross-administrative cooperation is launched in the municipality (e.g. preparation of the municipal strategy). The tool also helps get a good idea of the work and activities already carried out in municipalities linked to the SDGs.

Who is the tool intended for?

The tool is intended for persons responsible for strategic development in municipalities and the coordinators of sustainable development work.

What you will need for implementation

The work is carried out as cross-administrative cooperation, which means that you primarily need time for planning and communicating collaborative work and the working time of representatives of different administrative branches for cross-administrative internal workshops. The instructions, tips and materials required for planning and implementing the work are available on the following pages.

C3 SDG Impact Assessment Tool

The SDG Impact Assessment Tool helps in assessing the impact of actions on the SDGs. The online platform provided by the tool allows you to add the actions carried out or supported by your municipality to the service and to assess their effectiveness in achieving the Agenda 2030 goals.

The SDG Impact Assessment Tool makes it possible to quickly create an idea of how your municipality's measures and solutions are related to the Agenda 2030 goals. At the same time, you will be able to identify the **opportunities, risks, positive and negative impacts and possible shortcomings** of various actions and solutions.

The SDG Impact Assessment Tool does not provide ready answers on what should be done in the municipality to achieve each of the Agenda 2030 goals, but provides a systematic **method for assessing measures already carried out or those planned in the municipality**, thus helping to evaluate their impact in

Impact Assessment Tool

Register and log in to the service at sdgimpactassessmenttool.org
After registering, you can add the desired action or solution to the service and assess its impacts in relation to the Agenda 2030. Additional instructions for the tool are available on the service's website.

NB! As the tool does not provide ready answers on what should be done in your municipality to achieve the Agenda 2030 goals, but requires reflection and expertise in evaluating actions, the **tool works best when used and complemented together with the various municipal actors and experts**.

Even so, you can start using the tool yourself and invite colleagues and stakeholders once you get started!

relation to the Agenda 2030 goals and to plan future actions: What actions and operating models should be strengthened in your municipality? How could the actions and policies that are detrimental to achieving the goals be reduced or eliminated? What and who do we need to advance certain matters?

IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Direct positive				4					9		11						
Indirect positive		2					7	8									
No impact			3									12	13		15		
Indirect negative																	
Direct negative	1																

More knowledge needed

				5	6				10				14		16	17

The tool will help you in structuring and communicating easily what the current state of the matter you are looking at is and which goals still require additional information.

Where and when can the tool be used?

The Impact Assessment tool is a useful tool for examining (alone or together) the impacts of your municipality's actions in relation to the SDGs. In other words, it can be used to assess old or new projects and to support a new municipal strategy. With the help of the tool, you can easily produce assessments of your municipality's actions with a large group of stakeholders and update information as information accumulates and the operating environment changes.

Who is the tool intended for?

The tool is intended for all those interested in the assessment of the SDGs. It will make it possible for anyone to produce assessments on the effectiveness of the measures and solutions in relation to Agenda 2030. The tool produces the greatest benefits when assessments are produced together with as many experts and other key stakeholders as possible.

What you will need for implementation

Use of the tool requires nothing more than an idea or ideas on measures and solutions to be examined with the tool. The information and assessments you add to the service are automatically saved, so it will be easy for you to return to these later when you want to edit them. You should also utilise, e.g. your municipality's responsibility report, which provides a good foundation for starting the work and for the impact assessment and further development of the measures described in it.

C4 Phenomenon-based budgeting as part of municipal sustainable development work

Many challenges related to sustainable development are so complex that they cannot be solved by a single administrative branch. A need for new financial management tools for the strategic management of cross-administrative entities, such as climate change, has emerged. Phenomenon-based budgeting is one of the new ways of budgeting.

Phenomena at the core of budgeting

The municipal budget is one of the most important strategic management entities, and, thus, it also plays an important role in achieving the Agenda2030 Sustainable Development Goals. In phenomenon-based budgeting, phenomena (such as climate change) and related goals (such as carbon neutrality by 2035) are taken to the core of budgeting. The idea is that by defining them as well as related indicators already at the time when a budget is prepared,

Benefits of phenomenon-based budgeting

Phenomenon-based budgeting can provide many benefits to the municipality. It can help in:

- the promotion of solutions to multidimensional societal problems
- making more effective use of municipal funds and improving the effectiveness of the funds used in relation to the objectives set
- the creation of a better knowledge base for decision-making
- increasing continuity over government and parliamentary terms
- the creation of a better overall picture of the goals, the actions to be taken and the impact of the actions
- increasing cooperation across administrative boundaries
- Increasing transparency and accountability

the budget can be drawn up and allocated more clearly in a manner that supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The (numerous) ways of implementing a phenomenon-based budget

Like a municipal budget, a phenomenon-based budget can also be put together in several different ways and there is no single correct method or model. For this reason, a municipality should examine existing models and look for lessons on phenomenon-based budgeting from municipalities that already use it or are currently testing it. In Finland, phenomenon-based budgeting is already implemented in Tampere, where the city has adopted a climate budget (read more about Tampere's experiences at the end of this section, **page 91**). In the Nordic countries, the City of Oslo is

Tips for starting the work

Before starting the work, it is a good idea to analyse the municipality's initial situation. First, ask these questions: How do we currently draw up the municipal budget? What measures, stages and parties are involved in the work? For example, you can draw a diagram on these to help you understand the processes and the parties involved.

Only then should you consider: In what different ways could phenomenon-based budgeting be incorporated into the activities of the municipality and what kind of changes would it require in the activities of the municipality?

There is no one correct answer to these questions, so have a look at the work of municipalities that already utilise phenomenon-based budgeting and with the tools and reports that support planning work, for example:

- Oslo's Climate budget 2020
- Policy brief with examples from Tampere, Växjö and Oslo
- Gender budgeting

a pioneer of phenomenon-based budgeting. It has been implementing phenomenon-based budgeting for three years. Read more about Oslo's phenomenon-based budgeting - Climate budget 2020 - here.

Although there is still relatively little experience of phenomenon-based budgeting at the municipal level in both Finland and around the world reports produced by Sitra and the Prime Minister's Office provide a good basis for planning a phenomenon-based budget.

SITRA-PROVIDED TOOLKIT FOR PHENOMENON-BASED PLANNING

WORK STAGE ——————— **WORK-BASE** ———————

Perceiving the phenomenon → **1.** *Perceiving the phenomenon and setting goals*

Understanding the phenomenon → **2.** *Framing a phenomenon*

Solution planning → **3.** *Framing of change potential*
4. *Brain-storming to find solutions*
5. *Mission plan*

Organisation of implementation → **6.** *Situation room - organisation of the operating model*
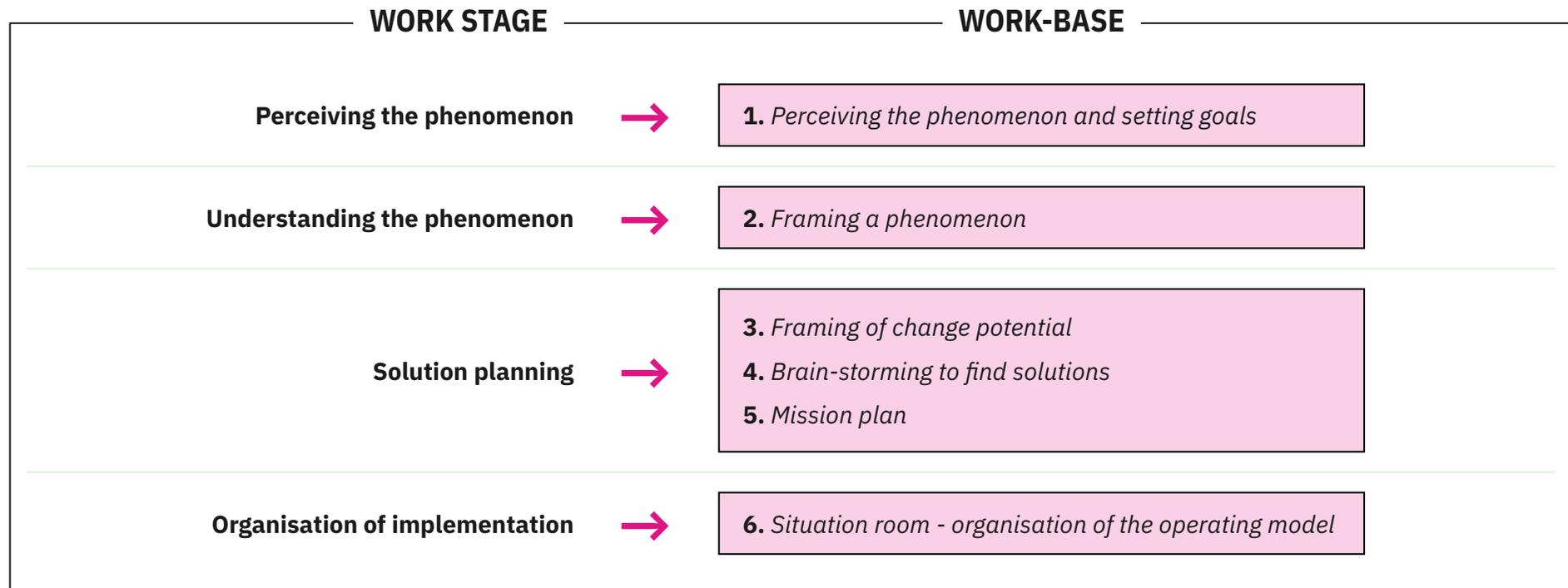
The Toolkit for Phenomenon-Based Planning produced by Sitra contains six tools that help to perceive, understand, plan and organise work around phenomena.

Sitra's Toolkit for Phenomenon-Based Planning (in Finnish) contains six work-bases that support the understanding of the phenomenon, its solutions and the measures required to achieve these. The toolkit should be used to work together with stakeholders to identify and define the most important phenomena for the municipality before planning the actual budget.

The report by the working group examining aspects related to phenomenon-based budgeting (Prime Minister's Office 2019) uses five models to describe how phenomenon-based budgeting could be implemented at the national level. The models are presented in the order in how broad-scoped an administrative or legislative change they require. Although the models cannot be directly applied to municipal management and budgeting work, they can be looked to for support and ideas for planning the budget work of one's own municipality and for alternative ways of implementing it. For more information on the models, see the report on Aspects Related to Phenomenon-Based Budgeting here.

WHAT IS BEING DONE ELSEWHERE?
TAMPERE HAS INTRODUCED A CLIMATE BUDGET

»

Investments will be at the forefront of the climate budget. We are currently discussing how large a share of various investments we can define as climate action.

»

Emmi Nieminen
Planning Officer for the City of Tampere

Tampere is Finland's first city to adopt a climate budget. It has gained ideas from places such as Oslo, where a climate budget, which has attracted global interest, has been drawn up for three years. The Tampere climate budget will not increase the amount of money spent on climate action, but its purpose is to increase the transparency of climate policy and to stimulate public debate. The budget gives city residents a more direct view of the amount of money spent on climate action. At the same time, the city is able to monitor how its climate action is proceeding in relation to the carbon neutrality goal. The first climate budget only includes emissions from different sectors. The amount of money spent on various climate measures is to be included in the 2021 budget.

Investments emphasised in Tampere's climate budget

Tampere is preparing the drafting of its 2021 budget and the specifying of which measures will be included in the climate budget is still pending. The climate is often not the only reason an action is taken. Instead these combine many different objectives. For example, transport is being developed primarily to enable the smooth movement of city residents. At the same time, increasing sustainable modes of transport has major climate impacts. When examining the climate budget, it is important to be aware of all the factors that have been taken into account.

For example, Tampere has introduced tramways in the city and now expands the network. Whether the tramway investments in their entirety can be counted as climate action will have a significant impact on how large the climate budget will be. Instead of precise costs, making things transparent is an essential part of the climate budget. The Tampere climate budget is an excellent tool for discussion on how the city's money should be allocated in the future.

C5 SDG partnerships: Cooperation with partners in the municipality

»

For public actors in municipalities, cities, central government and universities, the implementation of the SDGs and the framework will create opportunities for cooperation across sectoral boundaries, accelerate innovations and strengthen a shared understanding of the major global societal challenges of our time.

»

Sitra report Pathways to Goal-Oriented Sustainability Reporting (5/2020)

Agenda2030 provides a natural route for building partnerships with local actors. Many companies have a responsibility strategy based on the SDGs, and many other actors have also been able to use the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development to assess their operations. In other words, there is a common language and goals that can be used to seek synergies and build cooperation, for example to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the municipality's area. A municipal emission calculation system developed by SYKE is one of the options that can be used to support this (see e.g. Hiilineutraali Suomi: Emissions and indicators)

It will give an idea of such things as the climate load generated by local business life.

Where and when can the tool be used? Municipalities can use the Agenda 2030 goals to define criteria for sustainable public procurement. Through these, the municipality can communicate its own requirements and demand extensive demonstrations from the suppliers it uses. The municipality may also allocate resources or obtain external funding for better attainment of certain SDGs, together with partners.

Who is the tool intended for?

Partnerships concluded under Agenda 2030 are a natural way forward for parties responsible for municipal business policy and municipal procurement as well as for local/regional development companies.

Things you will need for implementation

You can start by familiarising yourself with the responsibility work of the key companies in your municipality. If there are no companies using the SDG framework, examine the matter through another company (e.g. Kesko's responsibility work, Ylva's SDG-tied budget, strategy work by Y-säätiö).

WHAT IS BEING DONE ELSEWHERE?
VANTAA

Vantaa has an advisory board on responsibility with members from within the city and from external stakeholders. The advisory board appointed by the mayor meets a few times a year. The advisory board on responsibility creates preconditions for cooperation and hastening goals and considers the impacts of the UN Sustainable Development Goals or the Paris Climate Agreement on the city's operations. The group also monitors the progress of sustainability action and the city's own priorities in that respect.

Read more on Vantaa's responsibility work in Vantaa's Voluntary Local Review here.

WHAT IS BEING DONE ELSEWHERE?
UTRECHT

In Utrecht, the implementation of SDG work has focused on activities that are as inclusive as possible. Instead of creating a new top-down policy, the aim was to provide a common framework that would facilitate broad stakeholder participation and inclusion. The implemented framework had two main objectives: to create and support coalitions with local actors to address the international challenges of sustainable development and to convene and support local stakeholders and citizens' initiatives to raise and inspire awareness. In both cases, the idea is to use the SDGs as a connecting framework that stimulates the exchange of ideas and cooperation and allows existing initiatives to extend their scope. The first phases under this framework were already carried out as part of the three-year plan (2017-2019).

Within the scope of this framework, Utrecht established the Utrecht4GlobalGoals association (U4GG), which the municipality of Utrecht sponsors and which aims to inspire local residents, organisations and companies to actively take part in work to promote sustainable development. The association has launched four main initiatives: HEELUTRECHTU highlights and supports citizens, grassroots initiatives and companies that contribute to the SDGs;

Fairtrade Utrecht promotes fair trade, especially in food and clothing sectors; Here & There is an aid scheme to support local grassroots initiatives that contribute to Agenda2030, and Utrecht 4 Global Gifts is an online shop that sells socially, environmentally and economically sustainable products from Utrecht-based companies.

Read more about Utrecht's SDG work here.

D

Monitoring and communication

Photo: Mikael Ahlfors / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank

D1 Voluntary Local Review i.e. Agenda2030 reporting

Even if municipalities set ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), these can be an empty gesture unless their implementation is ensured or their achievement is monitored.

While countries must regularly report on the progress of the Agenda 2030 targets to the UN, municipalities do not have a similar obligation. However, many municipalities - especially large cities - have started to draw up Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR). The City of New York was a pioneer and Helsinki was one of the first to follow.

Where and when can the tool be used?

Above all else, a Voluntary Local Review supports goal-setting and monitoring, but it is also a popular way to communicate the importance

of the local level in promoting sustainable development. Locally, the process for doing this can be as significant as the reported end result: The comprehensive mirroring of municipal activities against SDGs serves as both an internal audit and a way to reinforce cross-administrative discussion. When communicated to international arenas, a VLR's results can support the construction of the municipality's international networks. The municipalities that have already drawn up a VLR can compare their approaches to one another's, and the municipalities that are just starting this work can ask pioneers for advice. Helsinki applied the reporting method launched by New York and has challenged other Finnish cities to follow the example set by New York.

Who is the tool intended for?

The reporting of measures is aimed especially to municipal managers and parties coordinating cross-administrative work on sustainable development. As it is multidisciplinary, the reporting of measures forces municipal sectors to engage in extensive cooperation, which requires a strong mandate from management. For those participating in the process, the tool familiarises them with Agenda 2030 and offers them the opportunity to produce content for a shared entity based on their own expertise.

Things you will need for implementation

The reporting of measures is voluntary, so municipalities can individually decide on the

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Good to keep in mind when drawing up a VLR

- Avoid the impression of reporting on actions being an assessment of the work performed by municipal employees. Highlight reporting as a learning process in which everyone participates equally, including senior management.
- If it is not possible for the municipality to utilise meaningful monitoring data on the effectiveness of the reported measures, different indicator frameworks can still be useful in supporting cross-sectoral discussion.

</div>

priorities of reporting and focus on examining the SDGs that are essential to them. Even so, reporting requires cooperation between a multidisciplinary team, on which the municipality should communicate on consistently within its organisation. Above all, the process will require the time of key experts to work together on the entirety and collect the necessary information from sectors in a well-planned and thus clear manner, in interaction with the representatives of each sector. If the municipality has its own statistical production or access to a suitable information service, it is also advisable to add concrete indicators to work on the VLR, against which the measures of the municipality can be mirrored.

You can proceed as follows:

a. Read at least three existing VLR processes. You'll notice there are many common features, but also differences. In many municipalities, the focus of the work has been on grouping local work into groups of measures under which all sector-specific measures for each SDG are examined in detail. In addition to this, some municipalities have conducted an indicator-based examination with the aim of perceiving the current situation and development that has occurred over the past few years. Some municipalities have actively focused on communicating that the municipality is assertively involved in the Agenda2030 work, even though the reporting itself has been carried out quite lightly. However, all the approaches include points that can help you in your planning.

b. Prepare the most suitable process for the municipality together with others and check the adequacy of resources in relation to the targets set. It is not a good idea to start the work at the last minute, such as just before an event that will stimulate publicity but also not without a clear timetable. Management must be involved in the process and communicate the purpose of the work well within the municipality. If a coordinator has been appointed for the work, he or she may not be left alone, but must be supported by at least a close-knit steering group that is responsible for the work within the organisation.

Photo: Pentti Hokkanen / Ministry of the Environment Image Bank
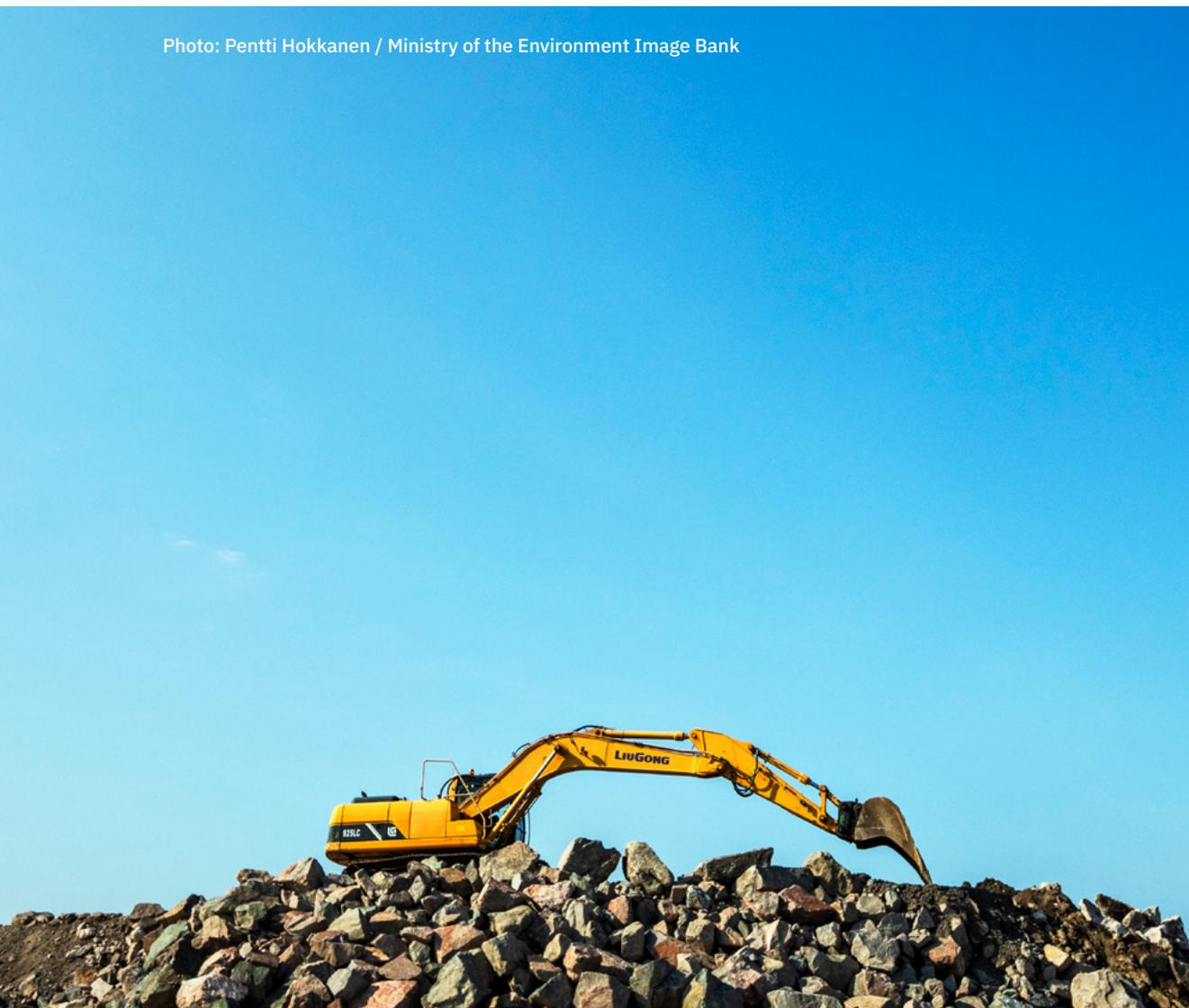
c. **Contact other municipalities that are reporting or have reported,** if you need advice or benchmarks. At the same time as you gain valuable information on how other municipalities ended up with certain processes and end results in their work, you will create a joy for those who have paved the way. Also make sure that the materials produced by your municipality are easily distributed to those interested in them.

d. **If you want your municipality to be a trendsetter, link the work to a definition of concrete objectives:** What requirements must the municipal measures meet, for example, by 2025? What fundamental changes would be needed to achieve all the SDGs by 2030? Most VLRs have not used this perspective.

WHAT IS BEING DONE ELSEWHERE?
EXAMPLES FROM FINLAND AND AROUND THE WORLD

The City of Helsinki was among the first in Finland to launch reporting, inspired by New York City's example. Helsinki implemented a VLR in two parts. In April 2019, a summary of the first phase of the implementation report[15] was published, in which the city's strategy and the Agenda2030 objectives were examined in parallel. In the second phase, an extensive publication[16] was prepared describing Helsinki's measures that are linked to the SDGs. In connection with the descriptions of measures, some indicators were also used to describe the current state or progress towards achieving the goals.

Soon after Helsinki also Espoo and Turku produced their action reports, both with their own slightly unique model. Turku's report[17] focused on examining urban strategy and the key projects implementing it as well as the key measures of the sectors and selected group companies. In addition to the report, the process produced a package of communication materials for communicating sustainable development work also to city residents and other stakeholders. Turku's report presents the 17 main objectives one at a time, highlighting themes that are important from the city's perspective and presenting the related measures selectively. After this, the progress towards the goal will be reviewed using the indicators included in the urban strategy and other indicators related to the goal.

Espoo's Action Report[18] is more similar to that of Helsinki than to Turku's. Its focus is on describing the city's operations under three main themes. The report first published in English includes the themes are Leave no one

15 City of Helsinki: First part of city level implementation reporting
16 City of Helsinki: From Agenda to Action; Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Helsinki in 2019
17 City of Turku: A Voluntary Local Review 2020
18 City of Espoo: Espoo Voluntary Local Review (VLR)

> »
>
> *It is also worth looking for inspiration for the preparation of VLR reports from further away. The international database contains good examples of the approach in reporting, and the content and printing of reporting.*
>
> »

behind, Let's do this together and Accelerated Action. These describe the actions aimed at implementing the Espoo story, i.e. the urban strategy, in relation to the SDGs for each sub-chapter. The report also includes a section in which indicators describing each SDG are used to assess the current state of sustainable development in Espoo and its development over recent years.

Inspiration for the preparation of VLR reports is available in an international database (IGES: Online Voluntary Local Review (VLR) Lab). It contains good examples of the approach in reporting, and the content and printing of reporting. A detailed guide book drawn up on the basis of the successful and effective process carried out by the small Japanese town of Shimokawa is also available.
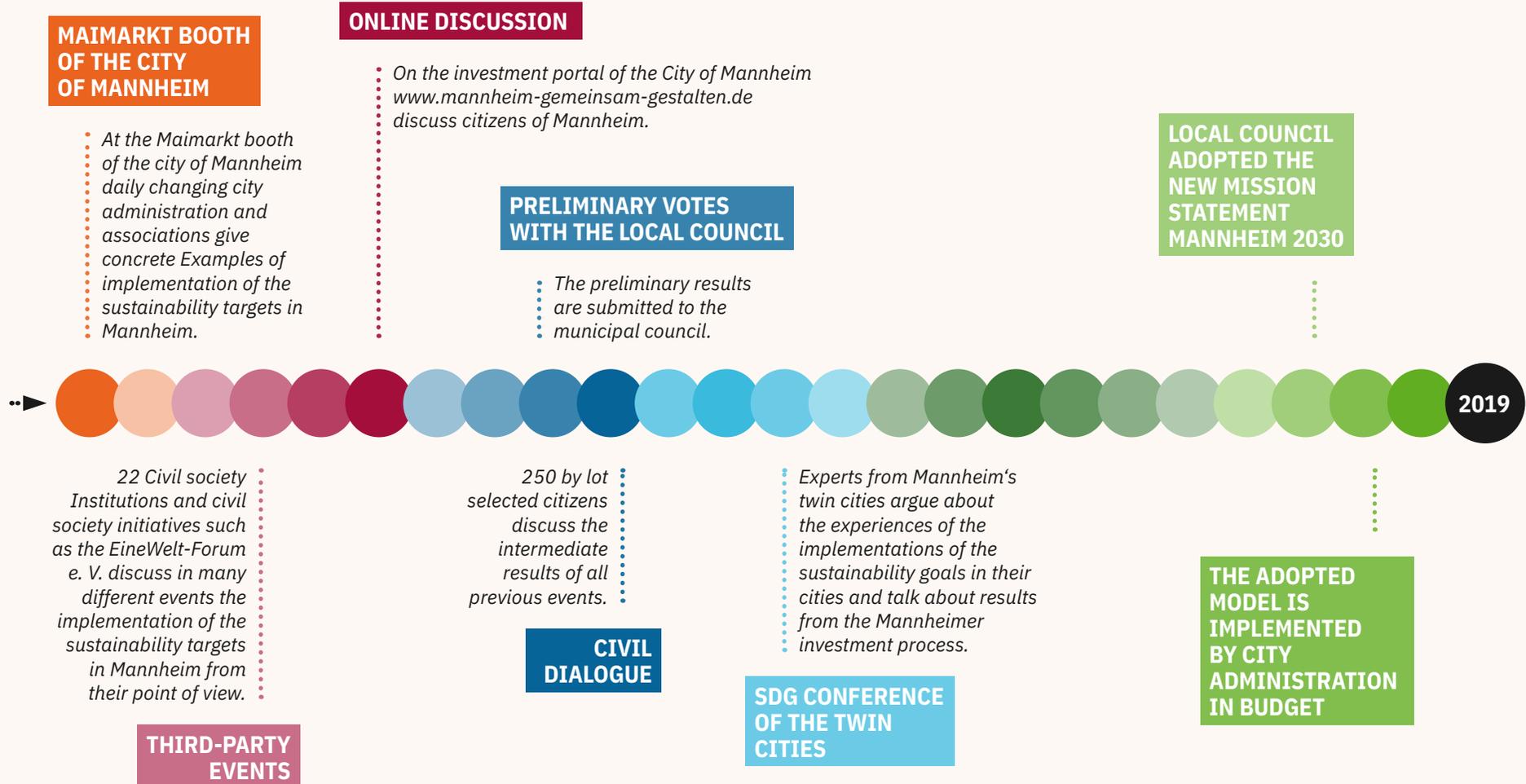
TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKING WITH MUNICIPAL RESIDENTS

In Mannheim, work on sustainable development was initiated by first creating a shared vision of the direction in which people would like the city to be developed, taking the Sustainable Development Goals into consideration. The work was not carried out behind closed doors; instead, the work was carried out in a long-term and open manner together with residents and organisations. The resulting Mannheim 2030 Mission Statement describes how the city will implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals at a local level and how this should look by 2030.

Read more about Mannheim's SDG work in Mannheim's VLR here.

IDEAS AND PRE-PROCESS

In first surveys and events collects the City ideas for implementation the sustainability goals of citizens.

NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION

At the New Year's Reception of the City of Mannheim, the citizens will be presented with a first interim result of the discussion on the implementation of the sustainability goals in Mannheim and given room for feedback.

PHOTOBOX

Mannheimer women and men are announced with the sustainability goals by making them known to the public have the possibilities, in the photo box with her favorite sustainability goal to have oneself photographed and to have it on social media.

2017   **2018**

In an Urban Thinkers Campus, over 500 men and women from Mannheim discuss with international experts how the sustainability goals of the United Nations can be implemented in Mannheim.

The local councils, district advisory councils and the Migration Advisory Board discuss in a written exam the results of the Urban Thinkers Campus and the intermediate results from the process of citizen participation to date.

The Mayor discussed in two workshops with by lot selected Mannheimer women and men the Sustainability goals and their Importance/prioritization for Mannheim.

URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS

WORKSHOP OF THE LOCAL COUNCIL, OF THE DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCILS AND THE MIGRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

DIALOGUE WORKSHOPS OF THE MAYOR WITH CITIZENS

MAIMARKT BOOTH OF THE CITY OF MANNHEIM

At the Maimarkt booth of the city of Mannheim daily changing city administration and associations give concrete Examples of implementation of the sustainability targets in Mannheim.

ONLINE DISCUSSION

On the investment portal of the City of Mannheim www.mannheim-gemeinsam-gestalten.de discuss citizens of Mannheim.

PRELIMINARY VOTES WITH THE LOCAL COUNCIL

The preliminary results are submitted to the municipal council.

LOCAL COUNCIL ADOPTED THE NEW MISSION STATEMENT MANNHEIM 2030

2019

22 Civil society Institutions and civil society initiatives such as the EineWelt-Forum e. V. discuss in many different events the implementation of the sustainability targets in Mannheim from their point of view.

THIRD-PARTY EVENTS

250 by lot selected citizens discuss the intermediate results of all previous events.

CIVIL DIALOGUE

Experts from Mannheim's twin cities argue about the experiences of the implementations of the sustainability goals in their cities and talk about results from the Mannheimer investment process.

SDG CONFERENCE OF THE TWIN CITIES

THE ADOPTED MODEL IS IMPLEMENTED BY CITY ADMINISTRATION IN BUDGET

D2 MayorsIndicators

MayorsIndicators is an entirely online tool for monitoring sustainable development and supporting knowledge-based management. The service is based on the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, producing information on the development of different areas, such as the environment, economy and well-being in municipalities.

Info
The MayorsIndicators website provides a comprehensive, constantly growing list of comparable indicators for monitoring the Agenda2030 goals in your municipality. The service is available for 1000 cities in Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Visit the website and register for MayorsIndicators here: https://mayorsindicators.com/index.cfm

The indicators included in the MayorsIndicators service enable municipalities not only to monitor their progress in different areas of sustainable development but also to compare their development to that of other municipalities in Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The service can be used to examine, such things as the municipality's dependency ratio, pay equality, carbon sink potential and the diversity of workplaces. All in all, the service includes more than 70 comparable indicators in all areas of sustainable development. The service contains information on all Finnish municipalities from public sources.

» *The service includes more than 70 comparable indicators in all areas of sustainable development.* »

Comparable indicators for monitoring sustainable development and supporting knowledge-based management

In order to monitor progress towards sustainable development reliably, the work carried out in municipalities must be measured using comprehensive and comparable indicators. The methods for the monitoring and benchmarking of the progress of sustainable development used in MayorsIndicators are based on reliable data sources and comprehensive indicators that can be used to assess the impact of measures taken in different municipal sectors.

In addition, the indicators enable up-to-date statistical information and facts describing the situation or phenomenon to be taken into account in management and decision-making; in other words, the service can be utilised in a versatile manner in knowledge-based management and in bringing the sustainable development goals to the municipal strategy.

Tools to ensure more efficient monitoring and communication

The MayorsIndicators service facilitates the monitoring of the municipal development in different areas using time series and in relation to other municipalities in Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The indicators' various descriptor types as well as your municipality's database will support the communicating about and monitoring of sustainable development. The reporting tool makes it easy to print custom or standard reports and presentations.
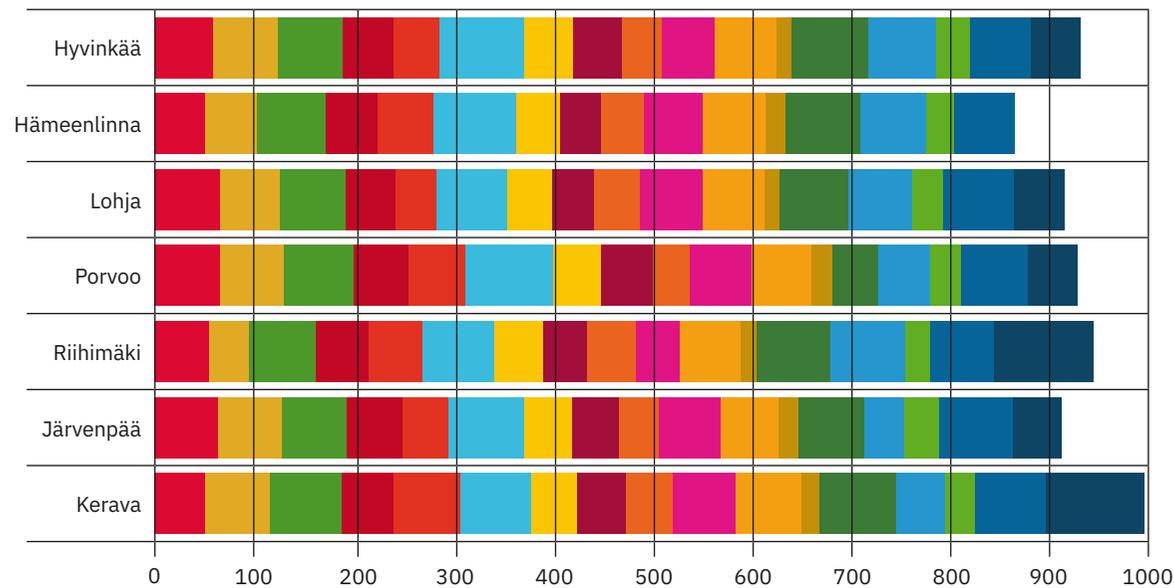
The MayorsIndicators service allows you to easily compare your municipality's ranking in different areas of sustainable development to the reference municipalities you have selected.

With the introduction of the service, municipalities will have access to the following functions and features:

- 140 sustainable development indicators: comprehensive time series and comparative data for other municipalities
- A reporting tool
- A municipal ranking tool
- Language versions in Finnish, Swedish and English
- Webinar format user training
- Email and telephone support

D3 The role of communication in sustainable development

Communication naturally also plays an important role in the work municipalities perform to achieve the SDGs. Clear and inspiring communication not only improves the comprehensibility of the planned tasks and the SDG work already carried out in the municipality, but also increases the potential for success, and for building the municipality's brand.

More than just responsibility reporting

When communicating about and planning work on sustainable development in municipalities, it's worthwhile to bear in mind that communication plays an important role not only in building perceptions about your municipality but also in coordinating and promoting the municipality's internal work as effectively as possible.

As is noted in Sitra's report Pathways to Goal-Oriented Sustainability Reporting (5/2020, in Finnish):

"For the most part, responsibility reporting is seen as a tool for external communication that

strengthens societal acceptability, but SDG assessment and reporting is also at its best strong internal communication."

In other words, communication about sustainable development should not only be considered as the production of a high-quality responsibility report (even though this plays an important role), but also as a continuous and constantly evolving dialogue between municipal employees and residents.

Cross-border cooperation through communication

Sitra's report also finds that according to a survey conducted in Finland, 86 per cent of Finnish companies consider the UN Sustainable Development Goals exceptionally or fairly relevant to their business operations. When communicating about sustainable development it is a good idea to bear in mind that companies also see sustainable development as an important part of their business development. In other words, municipalities should also actively communicate with companies about their plans and actions for sustainable development and strive to find ways to achieve the goals in cooperation with companies.

Rainbow-washing or concrete actions?

Clear and inspiring communication on sustainable development can also be used to build a municipal brand and thus attract new residents, companies and investors - or at least to keep a hold of old ones. However, when planning and implementing communications it is good to bear in mind that words alone are not enough, these must be accompanied by actions.

For example, the municipality of Ii has received a great deal of attention - even internationally - for its determined sustainable development work, which has also produced results. With regard to climate action, the municipality reported on, for example, a 62% (60,500,000 kgCO$_2$) emission reduction achieved in 2007-2017. This accounts for approximately the annual carbon footprint of approximately 5,500 Ii residents. When the BBC reported on the 'climate heroes' in the municipality of 10,000 residents, Ii's example was also used to highlight the economic benefits of investments in renewable energy sources.

The City of Lahti has gained fame, for example on the pages of the German weekly news magazine Der Spiegel. Both the city's climate action and its profile as an environmental city were highlighted as a pioneer at the local level, of which there is also concrete evidence.

On the other hand, links to SDGs have also been criticised as "rainbow-washing" if action and communication do not go hand in hand (Sitra, 5/2020)

The Agenda2030 SDGs have been a popular communication tool that can easily be used to create the impression of the role and significance of sustainable development in the activities of an organisation or a municipality, without concrete actions. To ensure that sustainable development communication is credible, concrete actions and plans, as well as cooperation agreements and projects in which the objectives are actually implemented or will be implemented should be prioritised.