

# **Evaluation to connect national priorities with the SDGs**

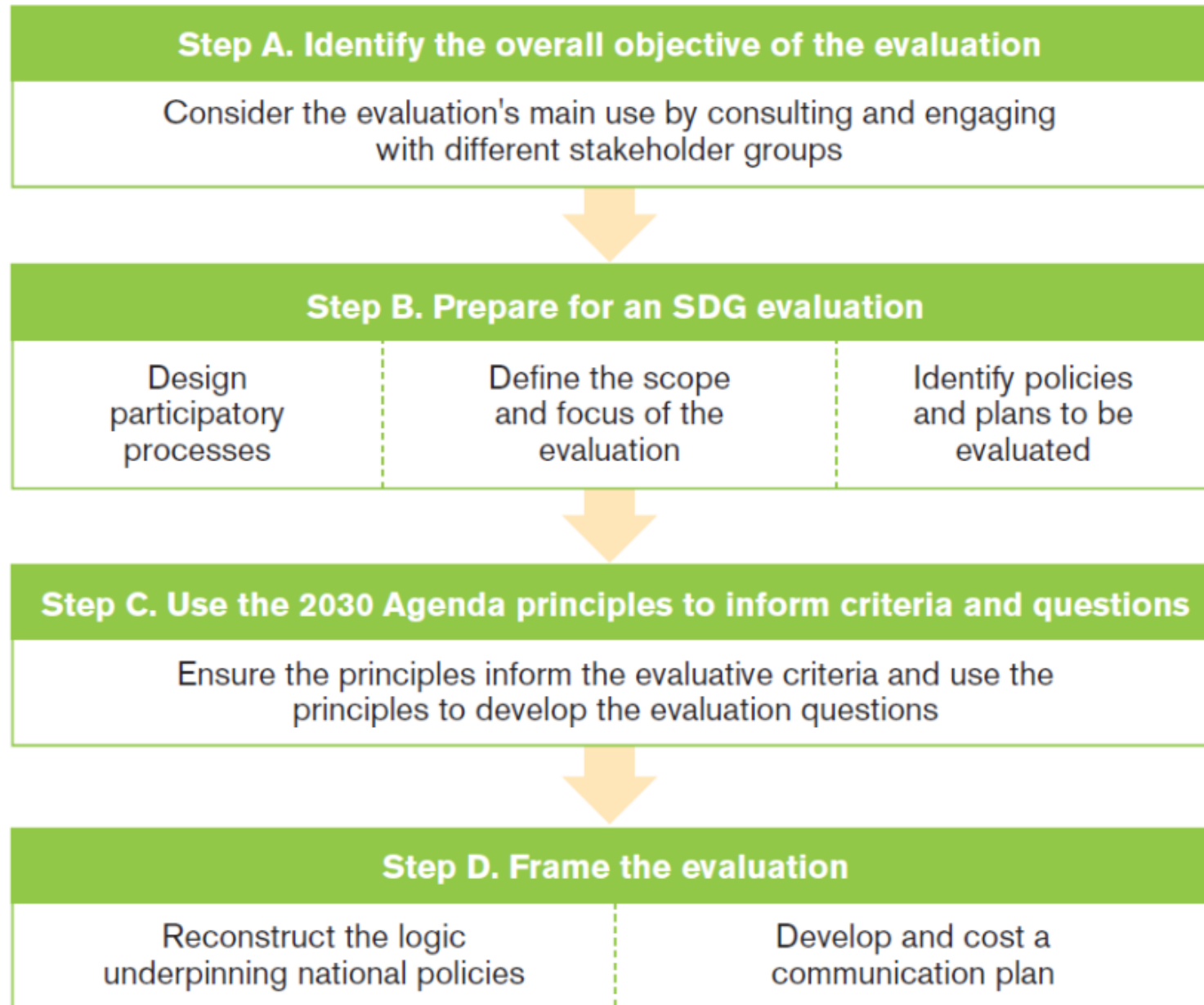
**International Workshop  
May 18-20, 2021**



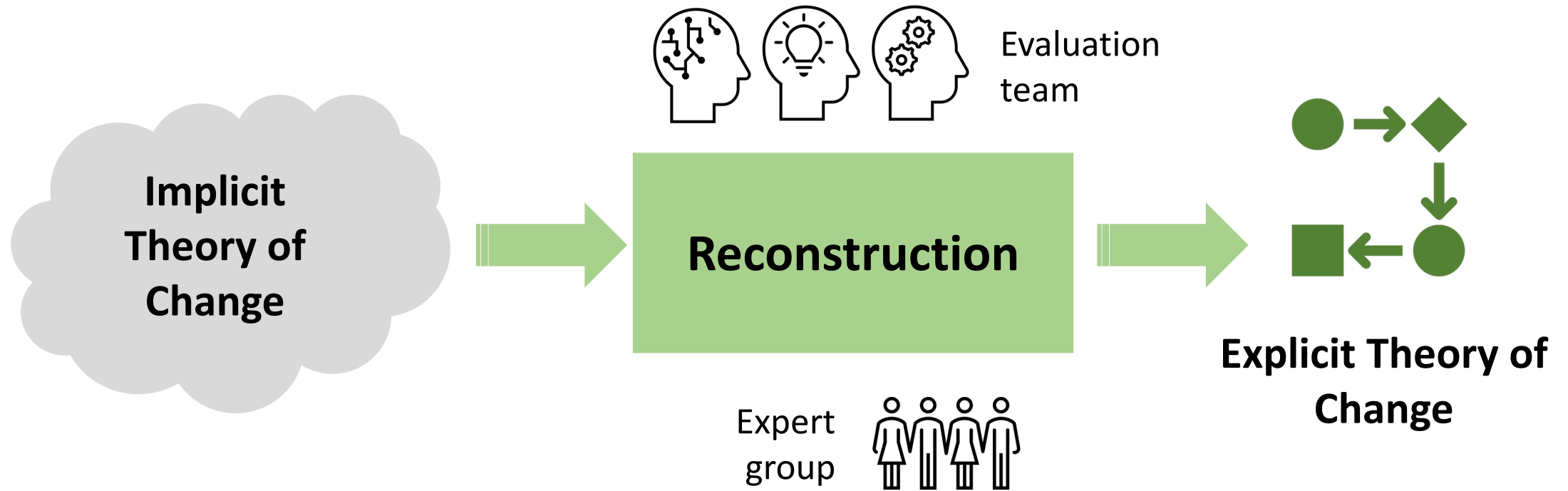


# Framing the evaluation & Communicating its findings

# Main steps to plan SDGs evaluation

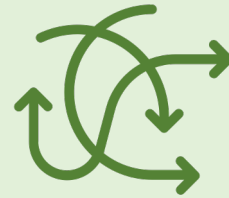


# Reconstructing the logic underpinning national policies



# Using systems thinking and complexity lens

Multi-site and multi-governance issues



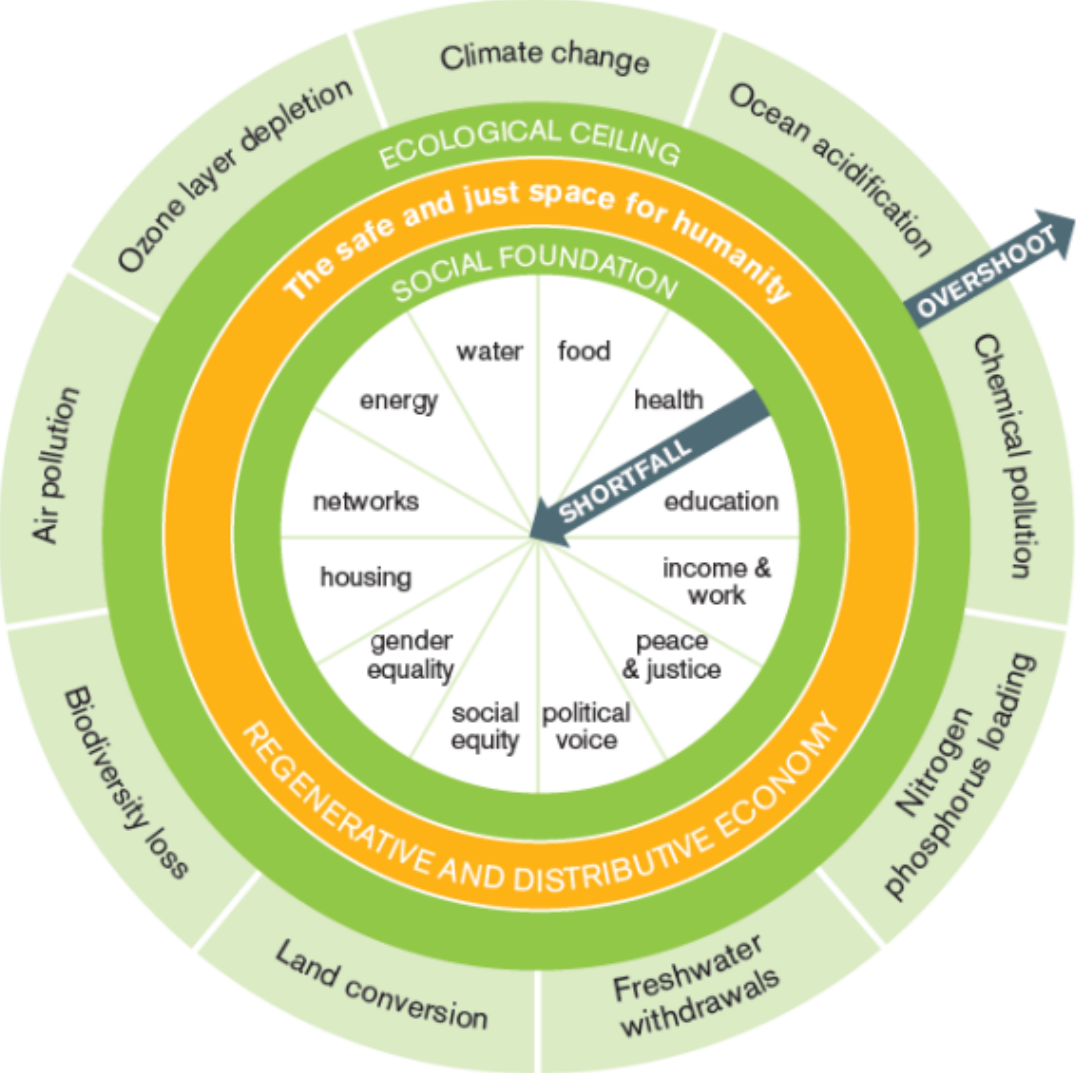
Simultaneous or alternative causal strands

Tipping points and emergence



Recursive causality





# The Doughnut model of social and planetary boundaries\*



\*Adapted from "A safe and just space for humanity: Can we live within the doughnut?" – Kate Raworth – Oxfam 2012

# Using systems thinking – experience of Finland

## 4I model\*\*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Institutions</p>  | <p>Ideas</p>          |
| <p>Interests</p>   | <p>Information</p>  |

4Is model is a political economy framework developed by Brockhaus and Angelsen.

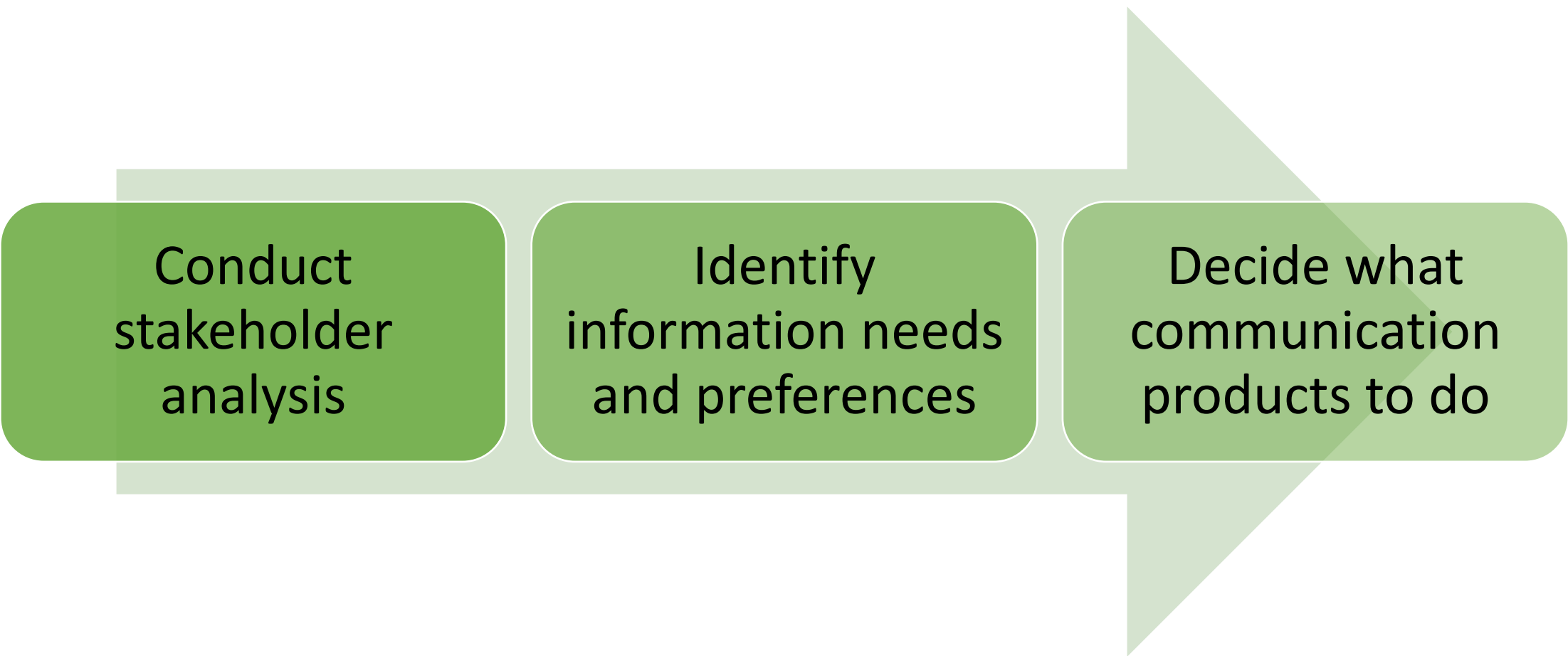
# Communication of evaluation results

**Different stakeholders have different information needs and hence require different communication products.**

Communication options:

- Detailed reports with substantial technical appendices
- Short reports written in plain language
- Short briefings with recommendations
- Interactive webpage
- Videos
- Joint conference presentations

# Developing communication plan





Conduct  
stakeholder  
analysis

Identify  
information needs  
and preferences

Decide what  
communication  
products to do

# Matrix for stakeholder analysis

| Stakeholder group | Interests in relation to SDGs and evaluation  | How to engage this group in evaluation | Information needs and preferred formats  | Relevant communication products |
|-------------------|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
|                   |   |  |   |                                 |
|                   |   |  |   |                                 |
|                   |   |  |   |                                 |
|                   |   |  |   |                                 |
|                   |   |  |   |                                 |



## Country cases



During presentation of country experiences take a note of **what processes were used to reconstruct the policy Theory of Change** and **what approaches might be useful within the context of your country**. You will need these notes for the group discussion later within this session.





# Framing the evaluation: The experience of Finland

# The process of drafting the Theory of Change

- 1) Analysing the **key SD policy documents** (particularly the Government Report on Agenda2030) to trace the idea how change is supposed to happen towards sustainability/the SDGs
- 2) **Interviewing the key experts** on how they understand Finland's SD policy
- 3) Paying attention particularly to the **key goals and means**



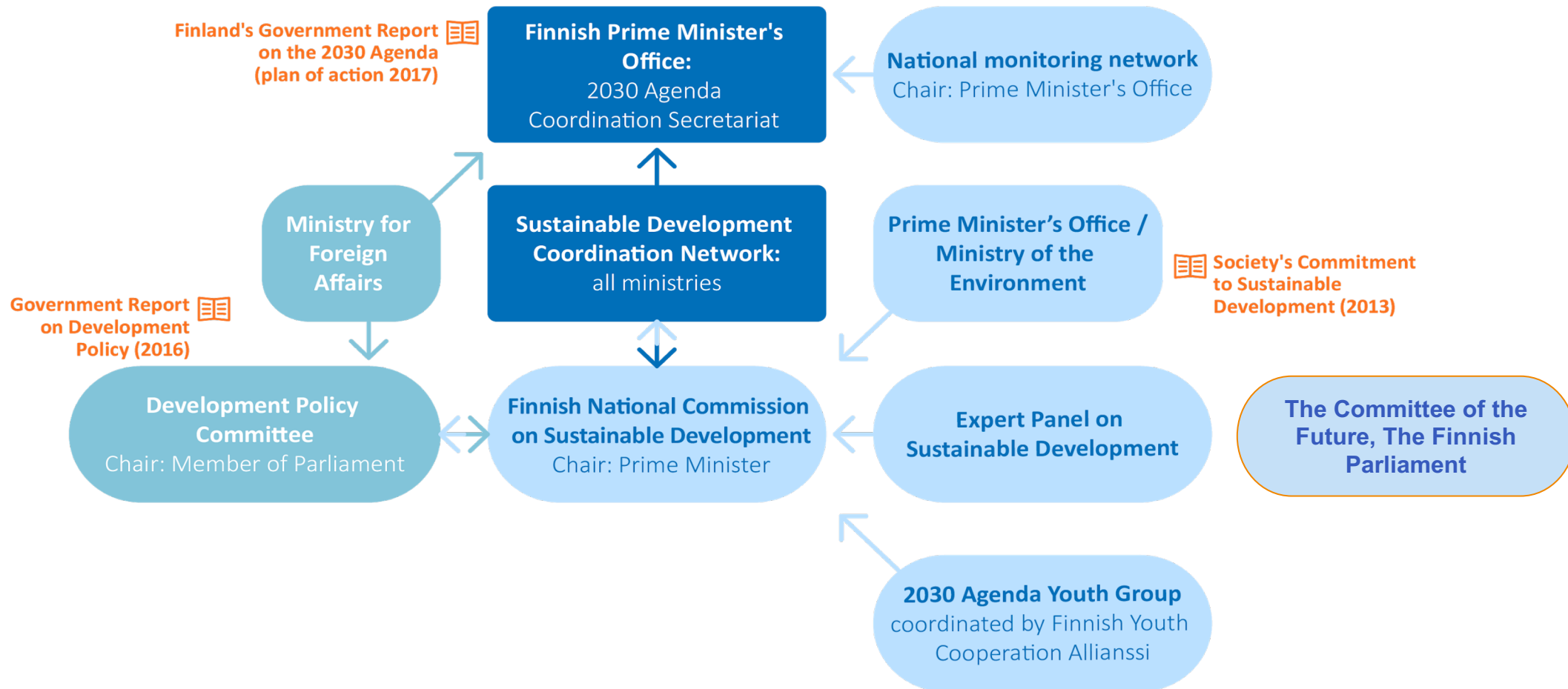
# Theory of change (ToC)

In Finland, the ToC is very much based on having sustainability as **broadly accepted and mainstreamed societal goal**. The ToC is based on small wins, empowering voluntary action and wide participation through the society.

However, the objectives of the Finnish sustainability policy are very broad and general. A variety of measures listed, but **no plausible path created between measures and objectives**. Thus, **the ToC is unclear**.

There is **a need for more transformative policies** for sustainable development.

# Sustainable development policy coordination model



# Lessons learned

- **Understanding ToC is important** and it is good to put efforts on it.
- In the case of Finland's sustainable development policy, the key lesson was the unclarity of the ToC. This understanding **lead to a process that seeks to clarify Finland's path towards sustainability** and e.g. the current drafting of the 2030 Agenda roadmap.
- Generally speaking, **balancing between wide societal acceptance and transformative policies is challenging**. How interaction between sustainable development policy arenas and other policy arenas works as a part of the transformative process towards sustainability could have been analysed more.



# Communicating the evaluation: The experience of Finland

# Communication – case of Finland



Communication products developed to disseminate evaluation results included:

- An **80-page report** with appendices in Finnish and English
- A shorter **policy brief** in Finnish and English.
- Several **blogs**
- **Twitter** material, and
- **PowerPoint** presentations

# The results and recommendations were widely discussed with the stakeholders

- 6 discussions with **political parties**
- 4 **parliamentary committees** discussed the results together
- Presentations and discussions in several **ministries**
- Workshop of the **National Commission on SD**
- The results were also discussed in the government negotiations in the spring 2019. The current **government programme** of Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš has sustainable development as a basis of the programme.

# Visualisation and key numbers important





For communication, we used. e.g. the Doughnut model of social and planetary boundaries.

The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries



\*Adapted from "A safe and just space for humanity: Can we live within the doughnut? – Kate Raworth – Oxfam 2012.

# Example of communication: Summarising the key results of the evaluation

|  | Strengths  | Weaknesses   |
|--|--|--|
| Institutions<br>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>multi-faceted and inclusive</b> operating model</li> <li>• Sustainability thinking is quite visible in the strategies of the ministries</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable development is <b>not integrated enough in throughout the administration</b></li> <li>• Consider the amount of work, sustainable development is poorly resourced.</li> <li>• Silos are problematic</li> </ul> |
| Interests<br>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Conflicts of interests</b> are settled through broadly shared goals and processes, such as the Agenda2030-report and budget evaluations</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicts of interests <b>challenge policy coherence and impact</b></li> </ul>  |
| ideas<br>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable development has become a <b>societally accepted and mainstreamed goal</b></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In practice, there are many <b>varying opinions regarding the solutions</b></li> </ul>  |
| Information<br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a <b>lot of information available</b> regarding the state of sustainable development and different solutions</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The use</b> of indicators and research in decision-making is <b>insufficient</b></li> </ul>  |

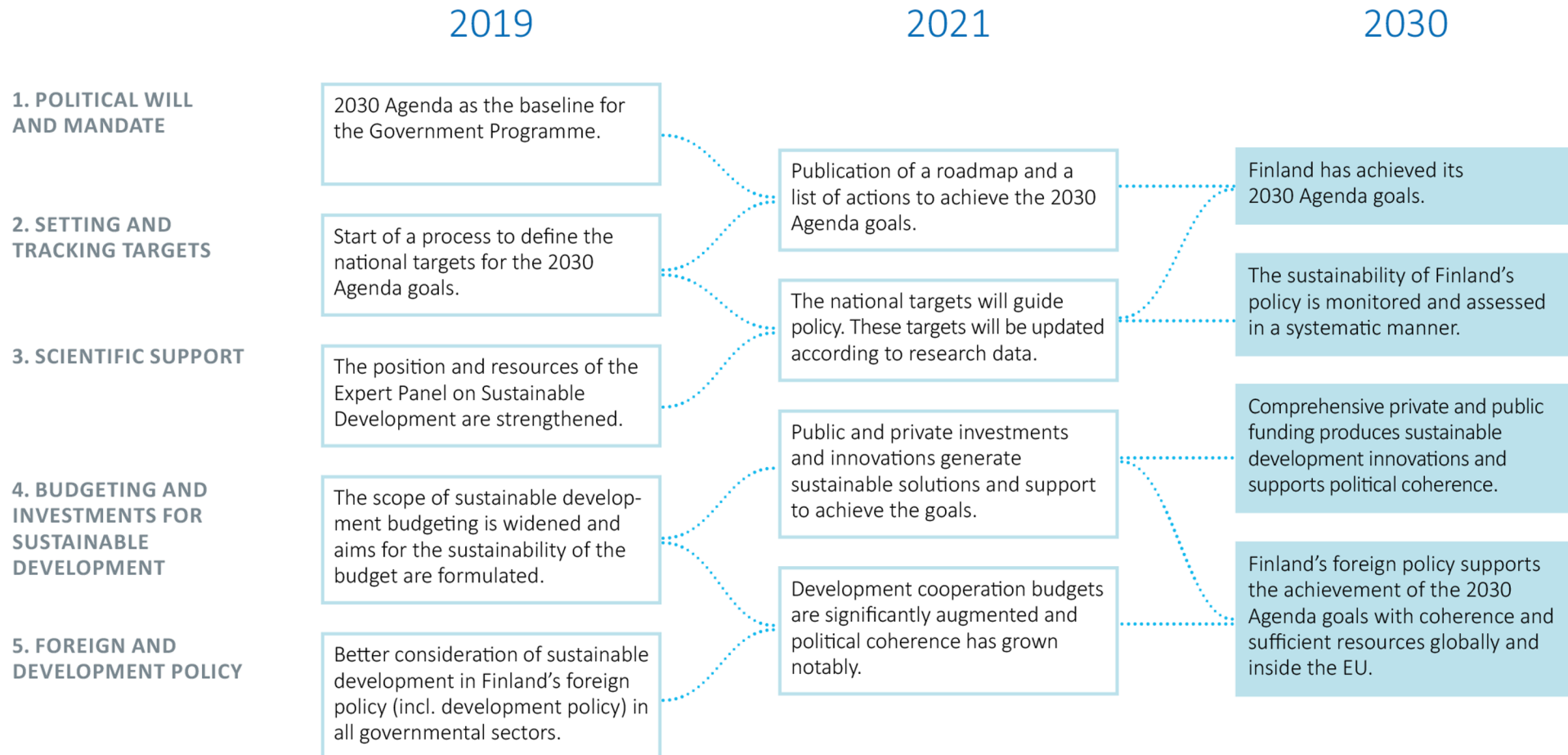
# Example of communication: the state budget promotes sustainability in a contradictory way

The budget proposition of 2019 was the first one to include assessments regarding sustainability as a part of the rationale.

**The budget proposition of 2019** advances carbon neutrality with around 1.7 b. euros, while around 3.5 b. euros are paid to environmentally harmful objectives (VM 2018).

# Example of communication: recommendations for action

## Transformation pathways to more impactful sustainable development policy

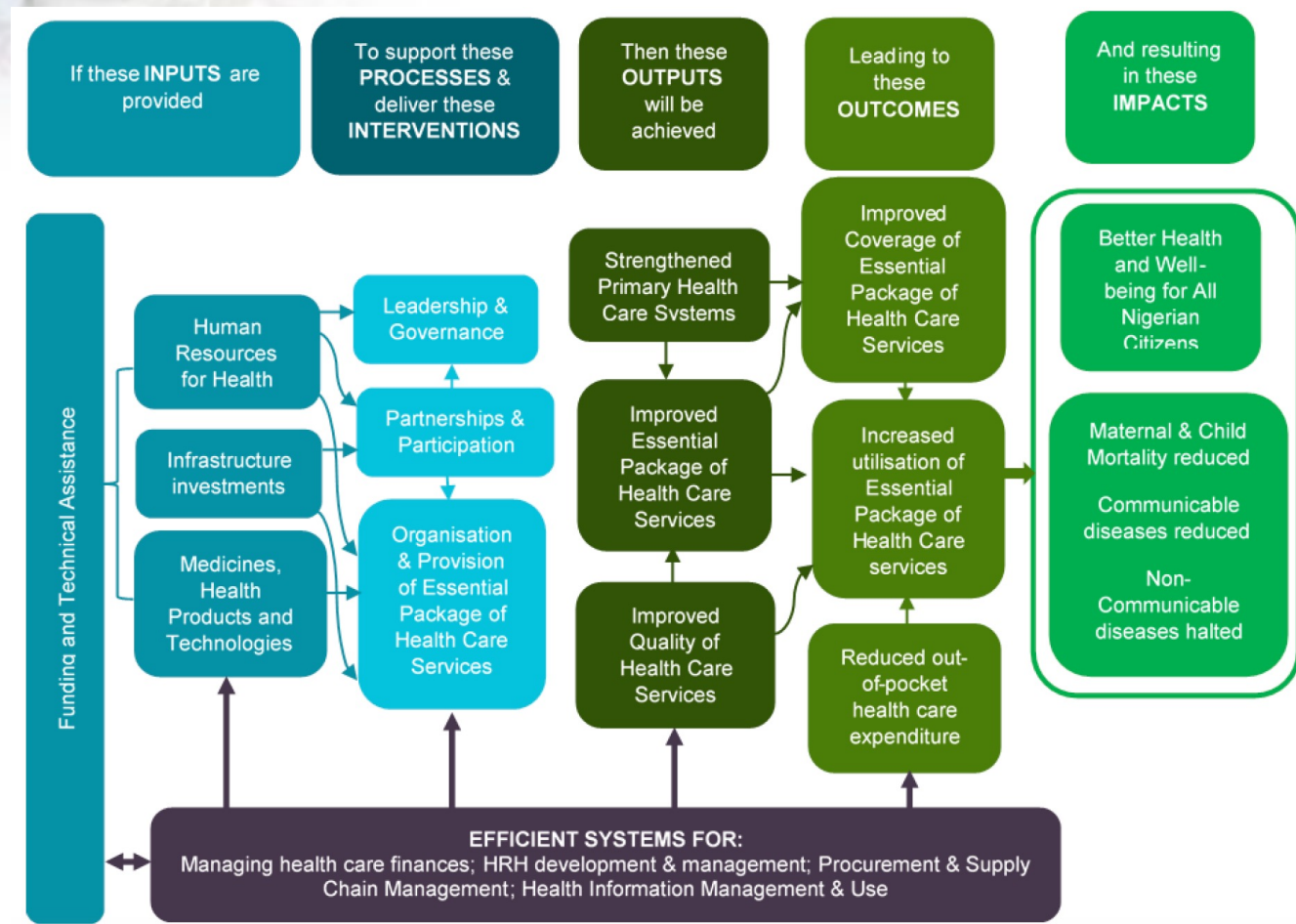




# Framing & Communicating the evaluation: The experience of Nigeria



# NSHDP II 2018-2022: Theory of Change



# SDG-3 Healthy Lives Evaluation Calendar

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



- Data collection at Federal and State levels (January-February 2021)
  - Health System Assessment
  - Health Situation Assessment at Health Facility
  - Key informant interviews at Federal and State levels
- Preliminary Findings (March 2021)
- Data Analysis March (April 2021)
- Evaluation Report – Draft 1 (June 2021)
- Evaluation Report – Draft 2 (July 2021)
- High Level National Launch Event (August 2021)

# SDG-4 Education Evaluation Calendar

4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



- Data collection at Federal and State levels (January-March 2021)
  - Learning outcomes assessment in case study states
  - Key informant interviews in case study states and at Federal level
- Preliminary Findings (May 2021)
- Policy Analysis and Education Public Expenditures (May 2021)
- Evaluation Report – Draft 0 (June 2021)
- Evaluation Report – Draft 1 (End June 2021)
- Evaluation Report – Draft 2 (July 2021)
- **High Level National Launch Event (August 2021)**

**S5**

**1**

# Framing & Communicating the evaluation: The experience of Costa Rica



# Framing the evaluation

## Constructing Theories of Change



## Decisions taken from the ToC



Direction to focus the evaluation.



Prioritisation of some topics of analysis for the evaluation matrix (on country priorities)

# Framing the evaluation

## What worked well?

The Evaluator Team started with a prior understanding of the thematic contexts.

The ToCs were fed back during the evaluation implementation.

They constitute an input that can be improved, in order to make decisions on generating new public policy.

They allowed the Technical Team to have more clarity on the themes.

## What could be done differently?

To create a single integrated ToC, reflecting the link between Biodiversity and Climate Change.

Add a ToC on the topic of Non-Reimbursable International Cooperation.

Contract the construction of the ToC, in view of the scope and specificity of the topics.

# Communication of evaluation results



## Three presentations

Managers, work teams, and general public (cooperating partners, academia, NGOs, evaluator networks, national and international independent evaluators).



## Transparency

The report was published on the Mideplan website and shared with different stakeholders.



## Regional Evaluation Platform

The experience was shared in this multi-stakeholder space.



## Conference

Different presentations were prepared in conference spaces in 2020, and more are planned for 2021.



## Publications

Publications in English on the evaluation (2 in 2020, and more in 2021)

# Communication of evaluation results

## What worked well?

Took advantage of online format and achieved very good attendance for all the presentations.

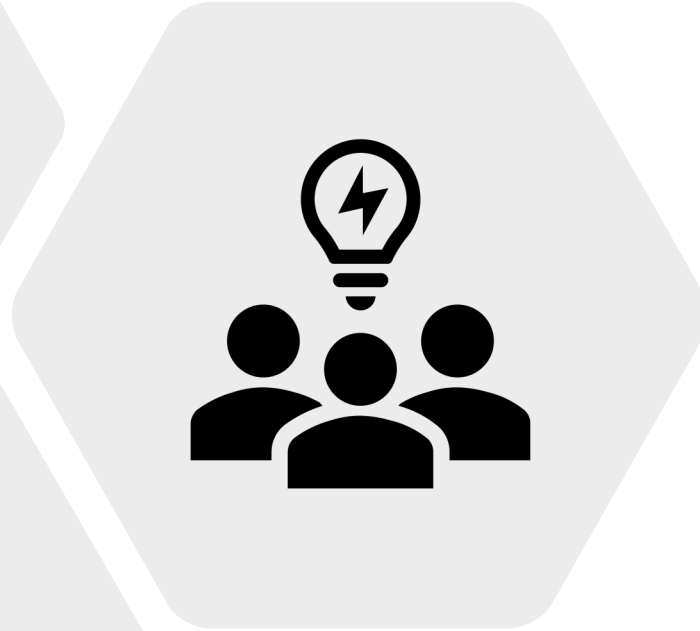
Public commitment by decision makers: Mideplan and MINAE.

Other stakeholders interested in the evaluation have knowledge and can request accountability as well as put the results to use.

## What could be done differently?

Small, more personalised sessions with key stakeholders (project managers, cooperation partners, and other international cooperation sectors).

Generation of visual material (infographs, videos).



## Group reflection

Which aspects of the presented experiences might be **useful** in the context of your country?



# Methodological considerations

# Evaluation deliverables

Preparatory  
phase

Inception  
phase

Data collection  
and analysis

Interpretation  
(finding, conclusion,  
recommendations)

Dissemination  
& Use

ToR

Inception  
report

Presentation  
of preliminary  
findings

Evaluation  
report

Communica-  
tion  
products

# Triangulation

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Information sources | Collect data from several sources of information   |
| Methodological      | Collect and analyze data using several methods   |
| Evaluator           | Evaluator is an important evaluation tool, so it's better to have a team of several evaluators bringing various perspectives |
| Theoretical         | Consider alternative explanations of evaluation data   |



## Country cases



During presentation of country experiences take a note of **used methodology** and **what approaches might be useful within the context of your country**. You will need these notes for the group discussion later within this session.





# Methodological considerations

# Evaluation data – A case of Finland

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>SD Indicators</b>                | SDG Index and Dashboards indicators<br>Ten indicator baskets of the State of Sustainable Development monitoring system<br>Helsinki Policy Dialogues material (expert reviews on indicators and workshops) |
| <b>Key policy documents</b>         | Government programmes and strategies<br>Preparatory documents for development cooperation projects, EU-related governmental position papers   |
| <b>Survey (N=238)</b>               | Closed survey for key actors in sustainable development policy (27) Open Poll (211)   |
| <b>Interviews (78 interviewees)</b> | Key experts<br>Representatives of all ministries<br>Expert Panel on Sustainable Development<br>Key stakeholder representatives related to the preliminary results   |
| <b>3 stakeholder workshops</b>      | Two open stakeholder workshops (about 80 and 40 participants)<br>International expert workshop  |

# Analysis of several sets of SD indicators

- 1) Systematic analysis of SD indicators - SDG index and national SD indicators - no target levels set - interpretation of status based on trends.
- 2) An assessment of the sustainability of the current state.
- 3) An assessment of the challenges of measuring.



# Framing the evaluation - Lessons learned

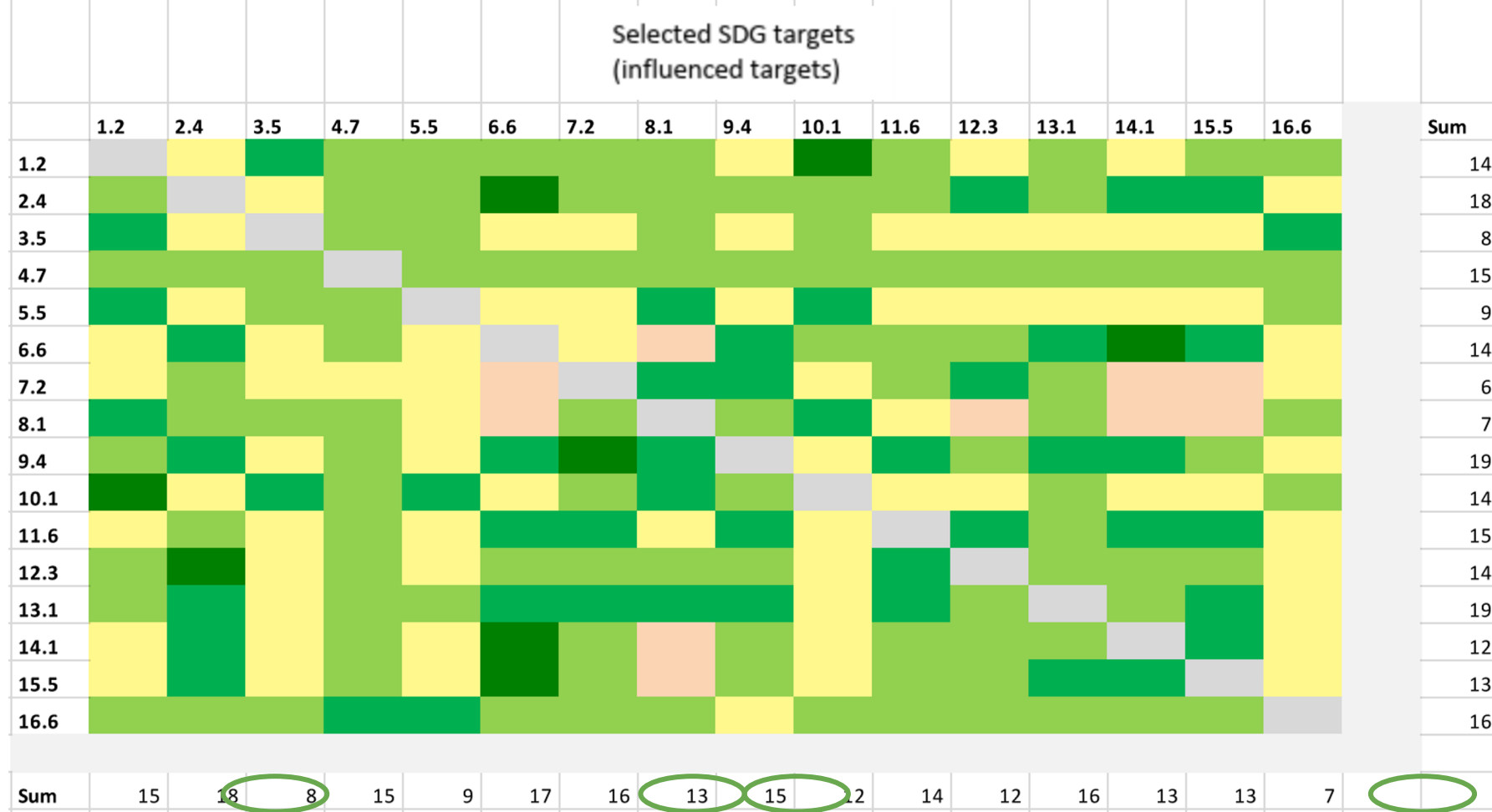
- **Timing** of the evaluation was good, the results were published under the Parliamentary elections.
- **Visualisations and key numbers** are important
- Leave time and **resources for communication after the publication** of the results

# Policy coherence analysis: two approaches used

- **Analysis of the interviews and documents:** title level vs decision level, coherence challenges in the budget and use of public funds, long-term (ecological and social) goals vs short-term (economic) goals
- **SDG coherence mapping exercise** (based on Weiss et al 2017)

# Our policy coherence mapping in short

- Testing the assessment framework and typology proposed by Nilsson et al. 2016; following the cross-impact matrix approach by Weitz et al. 2018
- Only one sub- target selected to represent each SDG.
- Focus on future: *"If Finland succeeds to achieve the target by 2030, how this influences the possibilities to reach other targets?"*
- Consensus view built based on independent expert evaluations (N=6)



### Cross-impact matrix of 16 SDG targets and their interaction in Finland

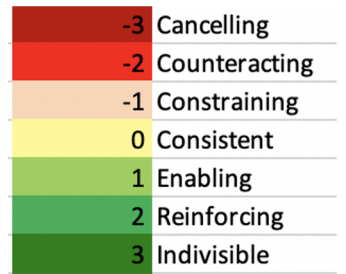
Our evaluation question was identical to that of Weitz et al (2018): “If progress is made on target x (rows), how does this influence progress on target y (columns)”?

How to read the table:

Row-sum: the net influence from a target on all other targets

Column-sum: how much a target is influenced by all other targets in total.

More: Lyytimäki, J., Lonkila, K-M, Furman, E., **Korhonen-Kurki, K.** and Lähteenoja, S. (2020). Untangling the interactions of sustainability targets: synergies and trade-offs in the Northern European context *Environment, Development and Sustainability*





# Windows of opportunities?

## **Synergistic targets that make it easier to achieve other targets**

9.4 Infrastructure

13.1 Climate change adaptation

2.4 Food production / agriculture

16.6 Effective institutions

4.7 Education

11.6 Environmental impact of cities

## **Targets that are most positively influenced by other targets**

2.4 Food production / agriculture

6.6 Water-related ecosystems

7.2 Renewable energy

13.1 Climate change adaptation



# Methodological choices - Lessons learned

## Benefits

Multitude of views gathered, creating **shared understanding and policy recommendations that are easier to implement**, supporting the interaction; the process itself was empowering for many stakeholders

## Challenges

Variety of participants (representativeness), **dominant vs. silent participants (possible bias)**, managing expectations and wishes- challenges in interpreting the workshop materials , interpretation of indicator data - no clear target values set.



# Methodological Considerations from Nigeria



# Overview Mixed Methods of SDGs Evaluation



## Policy Analysis

- Coherence, Gender, Equity, Universality, Leave No One Behind, Child Rights of Policies/Strategies; Lessons Learned from existing Evidences
- Adequacy of Sector Strategic Plans TOC with SDGs Framework and Principles

## Performance Measurement

- Trend Analysis and Regression Causal Analysis using existing Secondary Data: NDHS 2013, 2018, MICS 2017+ MICS2021, SMART Health-Nutrition Surveys 2018, 2019, 2021 Food Consumption & Nutrient Survey
- Performance Data/LQAs, Progress Report; Field Visits & Reviews Report

## QED - Impact Measurement

- Quasi Experiment Design: Comparison States in 6 states (Treatment and Control Group): Impact Analysis using DID, PSM
- Primary Field Data Collection: Quantitative Students-School Based; Primary Health Care Assessment + Qualitative FGD & KIIs using Newe Techn Digital Platform



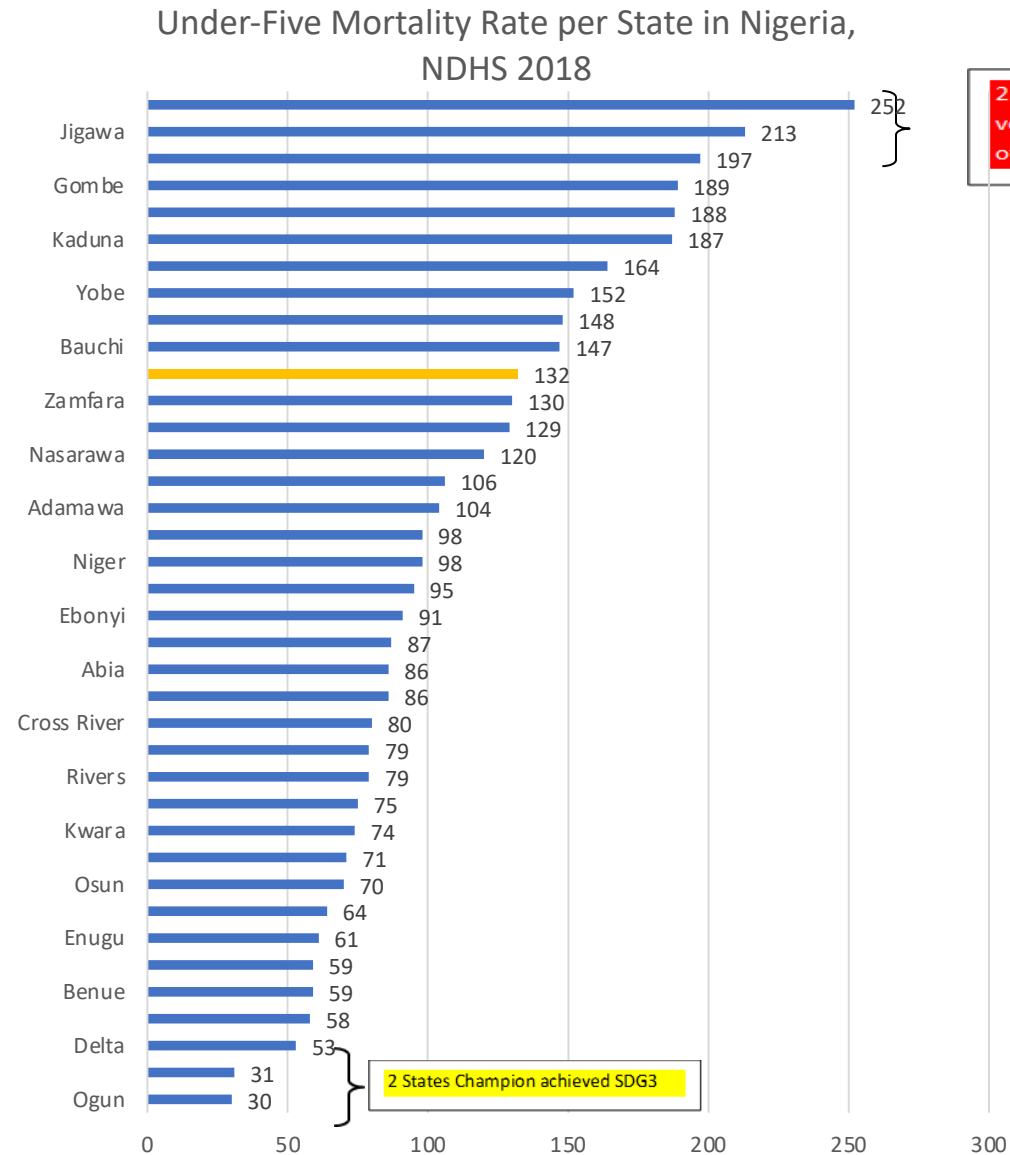
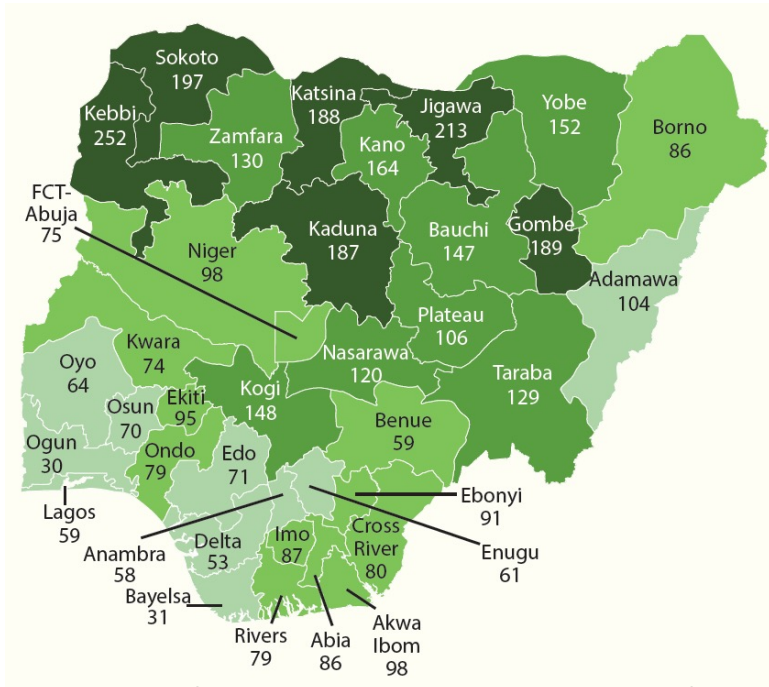


# CASES STUDY IN 6 COMPARISON STATES

The QED approach will consider the assessment of the NSHDP I & II and their flagship programmes in six (6) carefully selected states (based on MICS 2016-2017 U5MR data), for comparative analysis, causal analysis (drivers determinants factors) and diversity:

- **Two (2) 'High performing' states in terms of progress towards achieving SDG-3 in Nigeria (i.e. low level U5MR)**
- **Two (2) 'transiting states' (from bad to good and vice versa) on SDG-3**
- **Two (2) 'Low performing' states in terms of progress towards achieving SDG-3 in Nigeria (i.e. high level of U5MR)**

# U5MR per States (QED selection of States)



2 States in worst situation very far from SDG3 Target of 25 U5MR in 2030

2 States Champion achieved SDG3

- Significant variation of U-5 mortality rate across the country
- 30 deaths per 1,000 live births in Ogun
- 252 deaths per 1,000 live births in Kebbi

# BOOTLENECKS ANALYSIS OF DETERMINANT FACTORS

| Determinant framework, MoRES |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Enabling Environment</b>  | Social Norms  |
|                              | Legislation/Policy  |
|                              | Budget/expenditure  |
|                              | Management /Coordination  |
| <b>Supply</b>                | Availability of essential commodities/inputs                      |
|                              | Access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information |
| <b>Demand</b>                | Financial access  |
|                              | Social and cultural practices and beliefs                         |
|                              | Continuity of use   |
| <b>Quality</b>               | Quality   |



**S6**

# Methodological Considerations from Costa Rica



# Summary: lessons



## Methodology and Design

- Importance of existence of methodological instruments.
- Delimit the scope to tailor to possibilities.
- Resources and commitment of counterparts is central.
- Adjustment of expectations.
- There is still a need for experience and more information on the best way to evaluate SDGs



## Information management

- Find out how to manage the information with the counterparts.



## Policies, plans and instruments

- Alignment of planning instruments with 2030 Agenda.
- Political backing is a major boost.
- Balancing feasibility with an ambitious approach.



## Interinstitutional Coordination

- Importance of one department acting as evaluation coordinator.
- Induction of participants is important.
- Creating technical teams.

# Summary: 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the evaluation

---

## Main aspects



From the way that the projects describe their alignment with the SDGs, they do not demonstrate a clear understanding of its importance, because there is still no awareness that the NRIC should help advance the country's targets.

---

This evaluation, due to its broad scope, findings and conclusions constitutes a starting point that can be developed in subsequent evaluation exercises fulfilled.

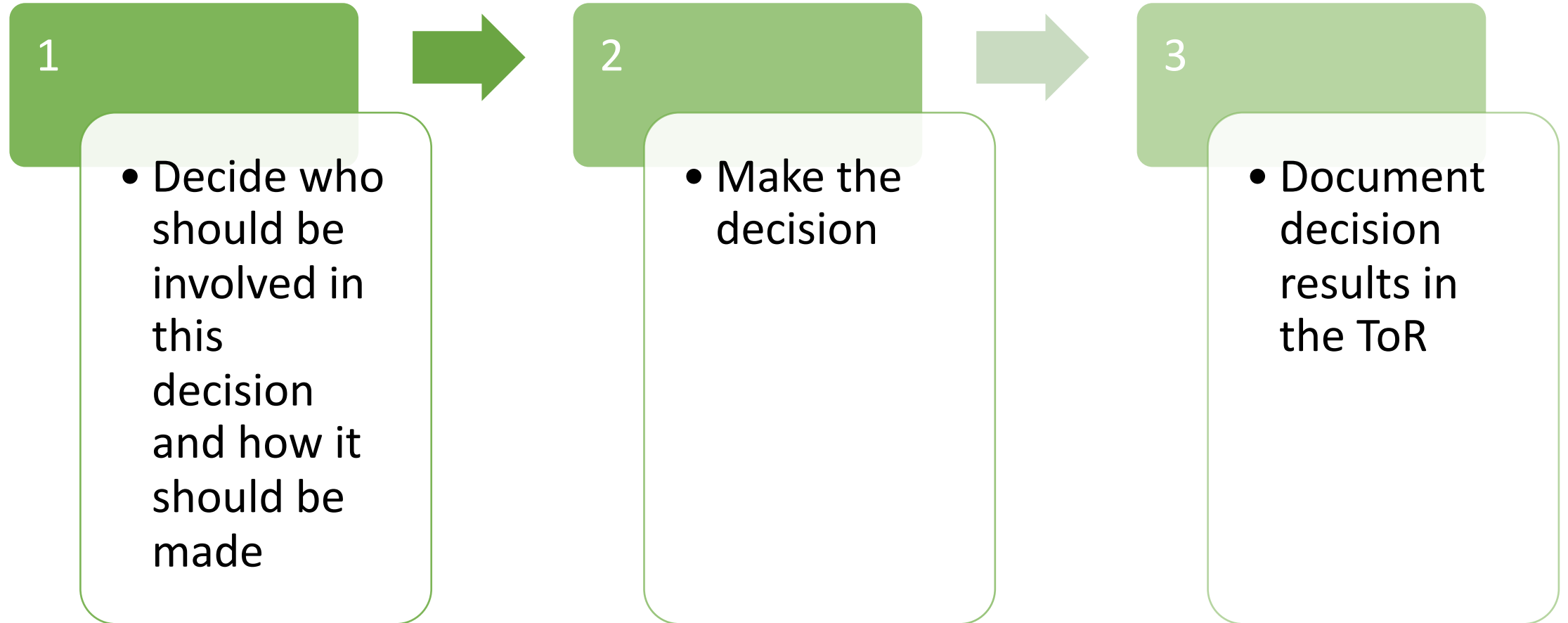
---

The way this evaluation is put into use (this has only just started) will reveal how the planning of cooperation projects will improve in this regard.



**Recap – evaluation  
preparatory phase**

# Participatory decision-making process



# 1: Analysis of the evaluation background

- Does your country have a national development plan (or equivalent)?
- What are the priority SDGs and targets for your country?
- When is the next election? Is there explicit political interest in the SDGs?
- Has your country already submitted a VNR?
- What entity is in charge of SDGs implementation in your country?
- Does your national statistical system collect data on SDGs indicators?

Answers to the questions of this block shall inform the **Background** section of the ToR.

## 2: Deciding on the Evaluation Purpose

What is the purpose of the SDGs evaluation?

- Inform the policymakers and feed into the strategic and planning cycle
- Influence the political debate
- Inform the VNR

Answers to the questions of this block shall inform the **Evaluation Purpose** section of the ToR.

# 3: Setting up cross-sectoral participatory bodies for management and advice

- What participatory bodies shall be established to perform the following functions in the course of this evaluation:
  - Manage this evaluation
  - Perform advisory support function
  - Quality assurance
- What stakeholders shall be part of these bodies?

Answers to the questions of this block shall inform the **Evaluation Management** section of the ToR.

# 4: Deciding on scope and focus of evaluation

- What shall be the focus of evaluation?
  - To focus on all SDGs
  - To focus on few SDGs that are linked to national priorities
- What are the relevant SDG principles which application shall be evaluated?
- What are the policies, plans and implementation strategies that shall be evaluated?

Answers to the questions of this block shall inform the **Scope & Focus** section of the ToR.

# 5: Deciding on evaluation criteria and questions

- What participatory bodies shall be involved in selection of evaluation criteria and questions?
- What processes shall be used to make this decision?
- What evaluation criteria was selected?
- What evaluation questions have been formulated?

Answers to the questions of this block shall inform the **Evaluation Criteria and Questions** section of the ToR.

# 6: Deciding on the approach to reconstruction of the logic

- What participatory bodies shall be involved in making decision regarding approaches to reconstruction of the logic that underpin the evaluated policies, plans and implementation strategies?
- What approach was selected?
  - Theory of Change
  - Systems thinking/ Complexity considerations

Answers to the questions of this block shall inform the **Evaluation Approach** section of the ToR.

# 7: Development of the communication plan

- What participatory bodies shall be involved in making decision about dissemination and communication of evaluation results?
- What are the stakeholders that should be targeted in the process of dissemination and communication of evaluation results?
- What communication products shall be developed for each of the priority groups of stakeholders?

Answers to the questions of this block shall inform the **Dissemination & Communication** section of the ToR.



## **Country cases – key lessons learned from the SDGs evaluation**



# Quisk Lessons Learned from Finland

# Recommendations for similar evaluations

- 1) Keep the **list of evaluation questions short** - in best case, the questions would be negotiated in the beginning.
- 2) Try to keep up **participatory spirit** - by simultaneously dealing with the fact that **all expectations cannot be met** by a single evaluation.
- 3) Using **external experts** (from other countries) helped and raised the level a lot - use your networks to get more perspective.
- 4) Focusing on **well-developed recommendations and extensive interaction** important for the political influence of the evaluation and the implementation of the Agenda 2030. Focus also on the **possibilities** - not only the challenges.



# Quick Lessons Learned from Nigeria





SDG3 Evaluation Inception Workshop held in January 2020 out of the Capital, in Uyo/Akwa Ibom funded by Government

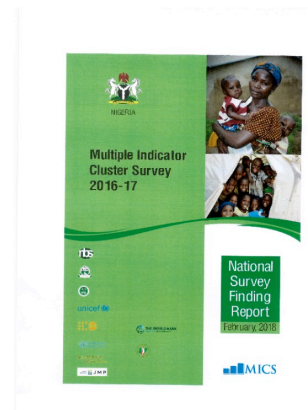
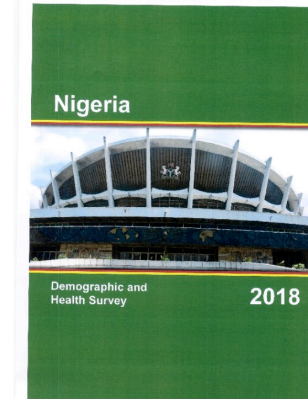
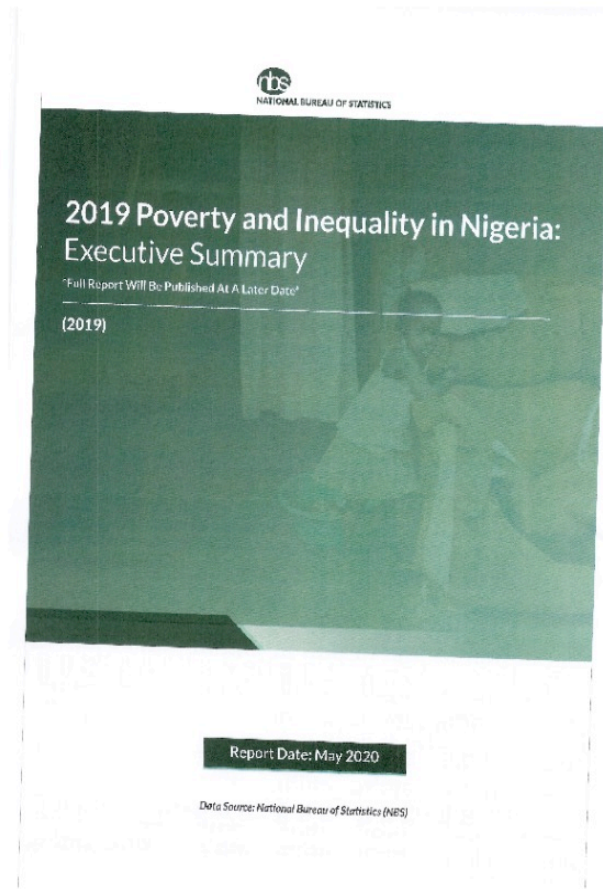
## Importance of National Ownership of SDGS EVALUATION Through A Large Participatory Consultations Process

- **Engagement of Ministries and Donors Partners;**
- **Technical SDGs Evaluation Working Group**
- **Key Role of Academia**
- **Consultations with Civil Societies Organizations – key active role of VOOE**
- **Key Role of Youth Group for SDGs in Nigeria (qualitative Opinion assessment)**
- **Consultations with UN Agencies co-chaired by UN RCO and OSSAP-SDGS;**
- **Consultations with Civil Society**
- **High Level National STEERING COMMITTEE**

## Availability of statistics:

Alignment of statistical system with the need for measuring SDGs  
PROGRESS

- **Mapping of Reliable Statistical Data Sources by the National Bureau of Statistics against SDGs Indicators**
- **Strategic Selection of Indicators for VNR based on the availability of reliable Statistics**



**Challenges:** Limited Period of Statistical HH Surveys; Gap of recent data for other SDGs Areas

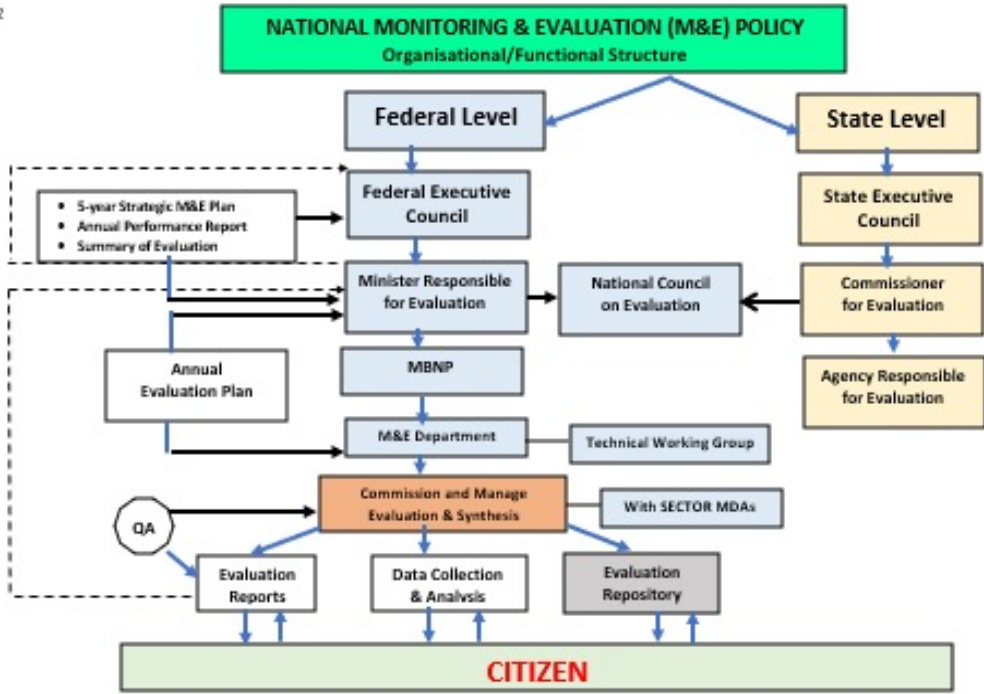
# Institutionalization of evaluation endorsed by NEC in March



## NATIONAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION POLICY OF NIGERIA

September 2020

2



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Establishment of Global UN SDGs Evaluation Framework Umbrella – UNGA Resolution**
- 2. Capacity Building on Institutionalization of Evaluation for increasing Demand and Use ( Evaluation Policy) and High Level Advocacy for Engagement of Policy Makers**
- 3. Cultural Shift to embrace Strategic Evaluation – To promote Policy Evaluations – To move beyond donors driven projects and program evaluations: Need of Standard Guidance and catalytic initiative**
- 4. Standard Capacity Building for adequate Knowledge on Evaluation and to promote innovations in Evaluation and Communication of Evidence**
- 5. Knowledge Sharing: i) Pool of timely support to countries for evidence-based VNR and ii) to document & Share Nigeria’s experience of SDGs Evaluation**

**S6**

# Final Notes from Costa Rica



# Summary: 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the evaluation

---

From the way that the projects describe their alignment with the SDGs, they do not demonstrate a clear understanding of its importance, because there is still no awareness that the NRIC should help advance the country's targets.

---

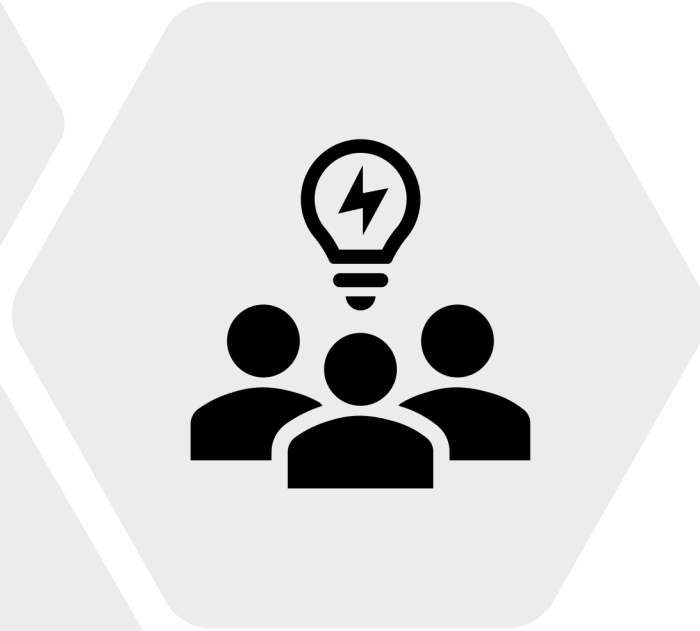
## Main aspects



This evaluation, due to its broad scope, findings and conclusions constitutes a starting point that can be developed in subsequent evaluation exercises fulfilled.

---

The way this evaluation is put into use (this has only just started) will reveal how the planning of cooperation projects will improve in this regard.



## Group reflection

Which aspects of the experiences presented in this workshop might be **useful** in the context of your country?



## In conclusion

- SDG evaluation can make a difference only if it is **integrated into what countries are already doing**.
- Building SDG evaluation into **existing policy and programme cycles** can be a useful way to achieve sustainable development.
- To maximise benefits of the SDGs evaluation, **every country should develop tailored approaches to evaluation** that work for their own journey towards sustainable development.

# **Closing remarks from organizers**