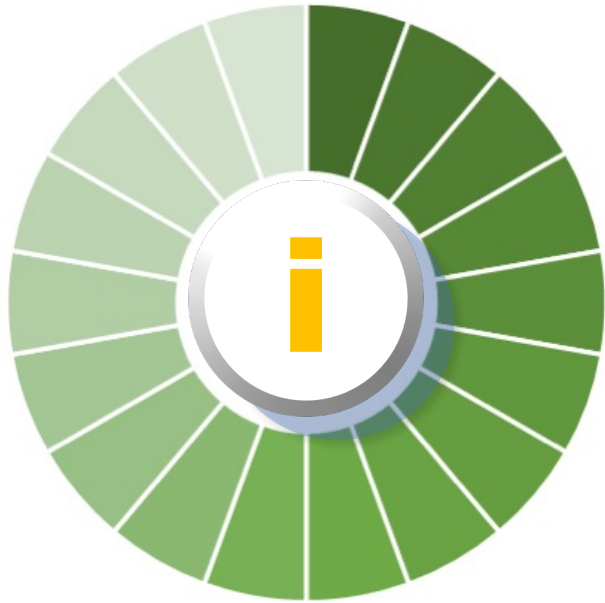


**Evaluation
to connect national
priorities with
the SDGs**

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



Welcome from organizers



Introduction

Evaluation to connect national priorities with the SDGs

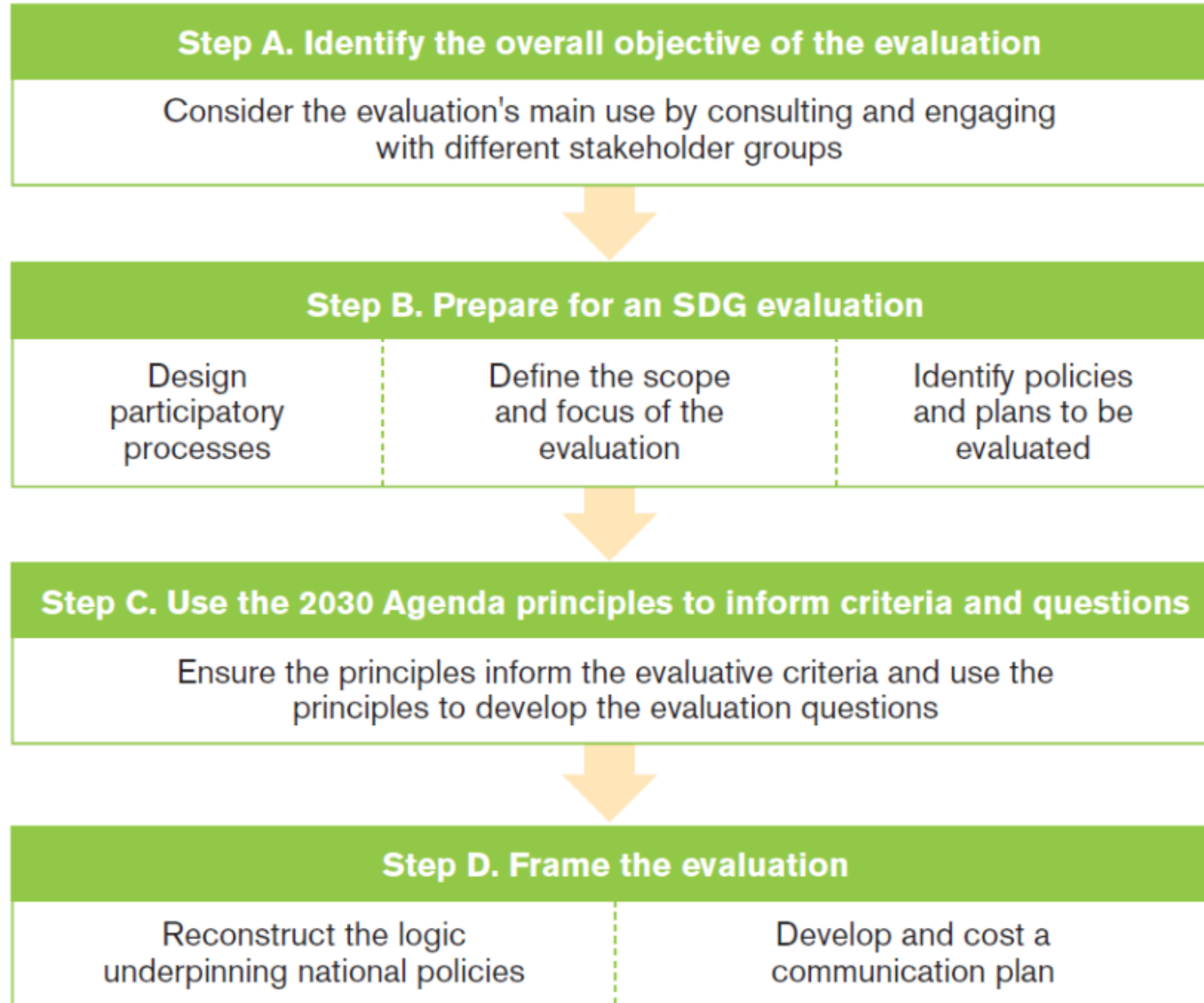
A guide for evaluation
commissioners and managers



Evaluation must be tailored to specific country needs and context and built around existing national political and assessment systems

- Informed by emerging national practice (Finland, Nigeria, Costa Rica)
- Offers provisional guidance, ideas and examples that countries can use to design and implement their own evaluation of the SDGs

Main steps to plan SDGs evaluation





Workshop plan

Day 1	1: Identifying the overall evaluation objective
	2: Designing participatory processes
Day 2	3: Defining focus and scope of evaluation
	4: Deciding on evaluation criteria and questions
Day 3	5: Framing the evaluation
	6: Methodological considerations
	Recap for the workshop materials

Session structure

Presentation of
key ideas and
approaches



Country
cases



Group
reflection



Introduction of guest speakers

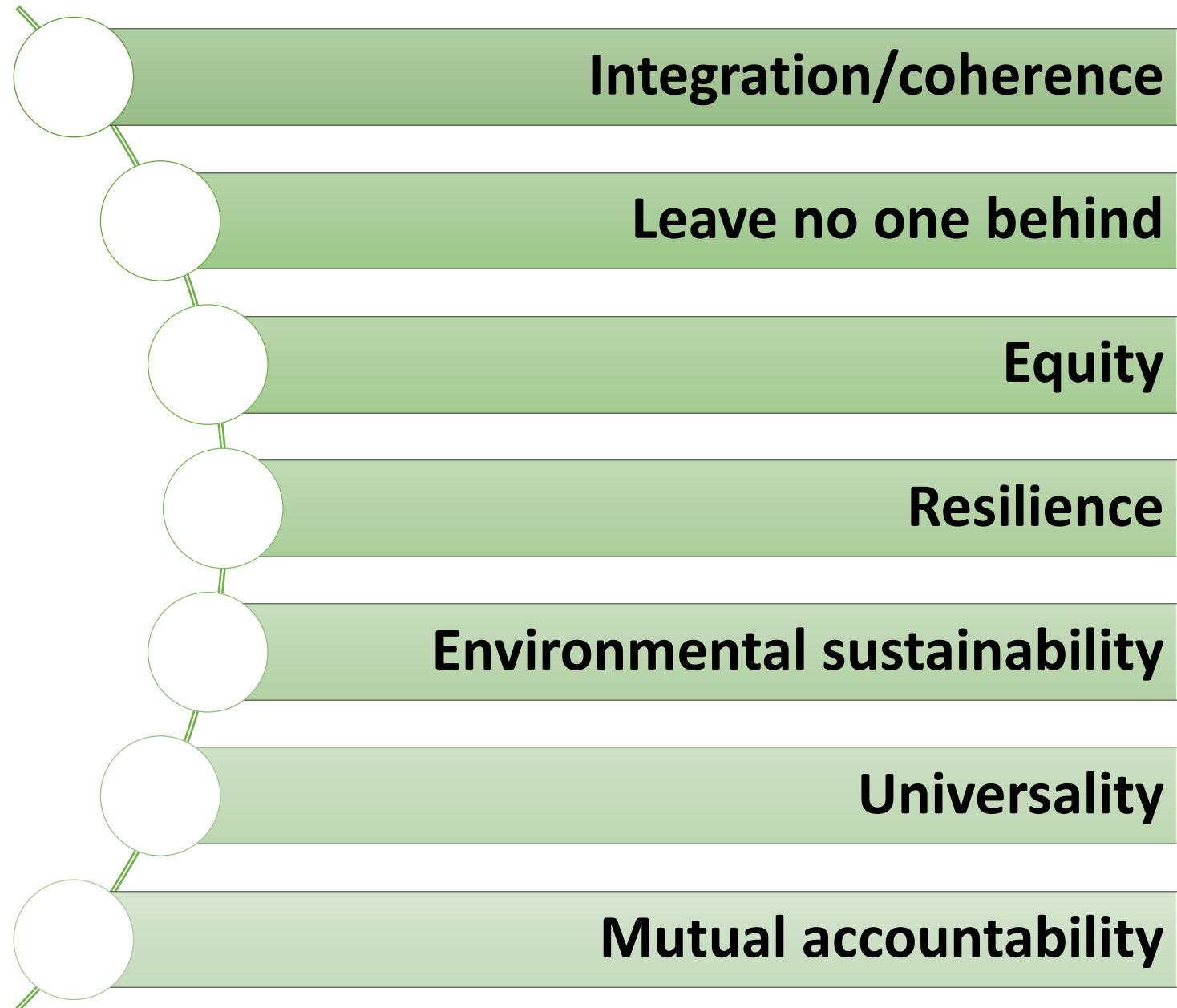


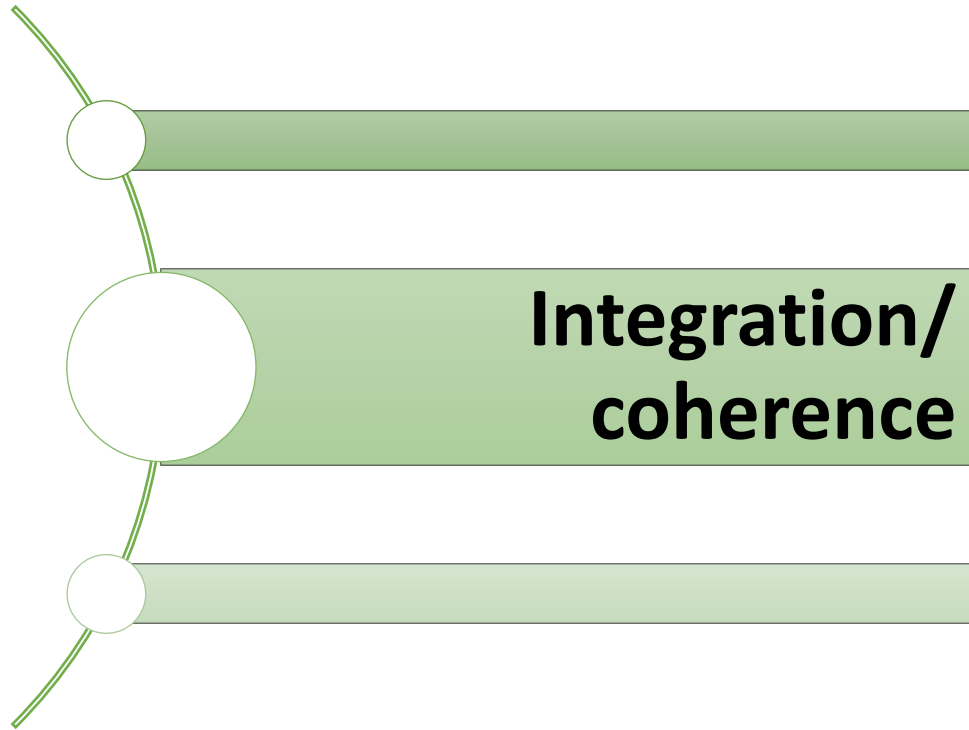
**Identifying the overall
evaluation objective**

What is SDGs evaluation?

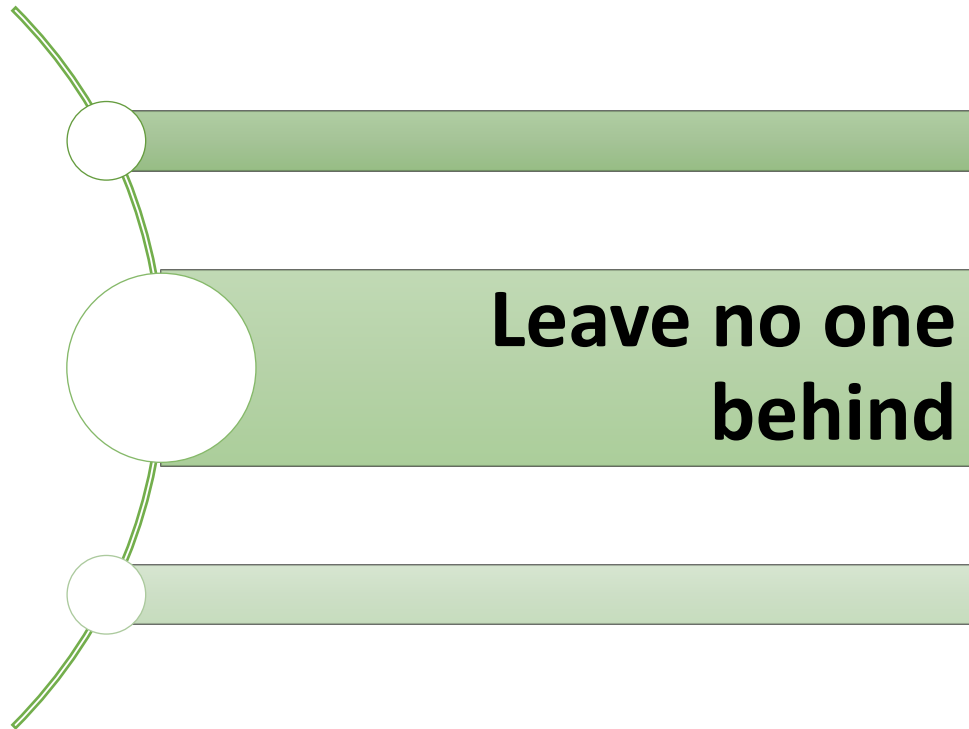
- Determines the **merit, worth, significance** and **sustainability** of national strategies, policies and programmes that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.
- Investigates the **complex interactions** between the human, economic and natural systems.
- Explores potential **trade-offs** between sectoral priorities.
- Looks at the **effects of laws, regulations** and **procedures** within and beyond the geographic boundaries in which they are adopted.

**2030
Agenda
principles
useful in
evaluation**

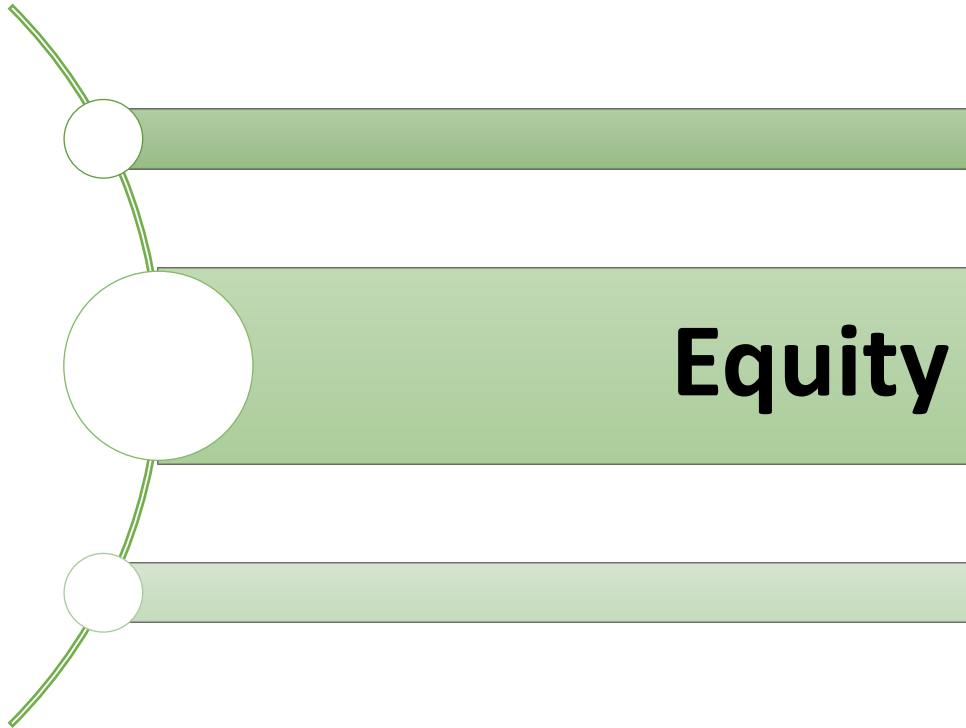




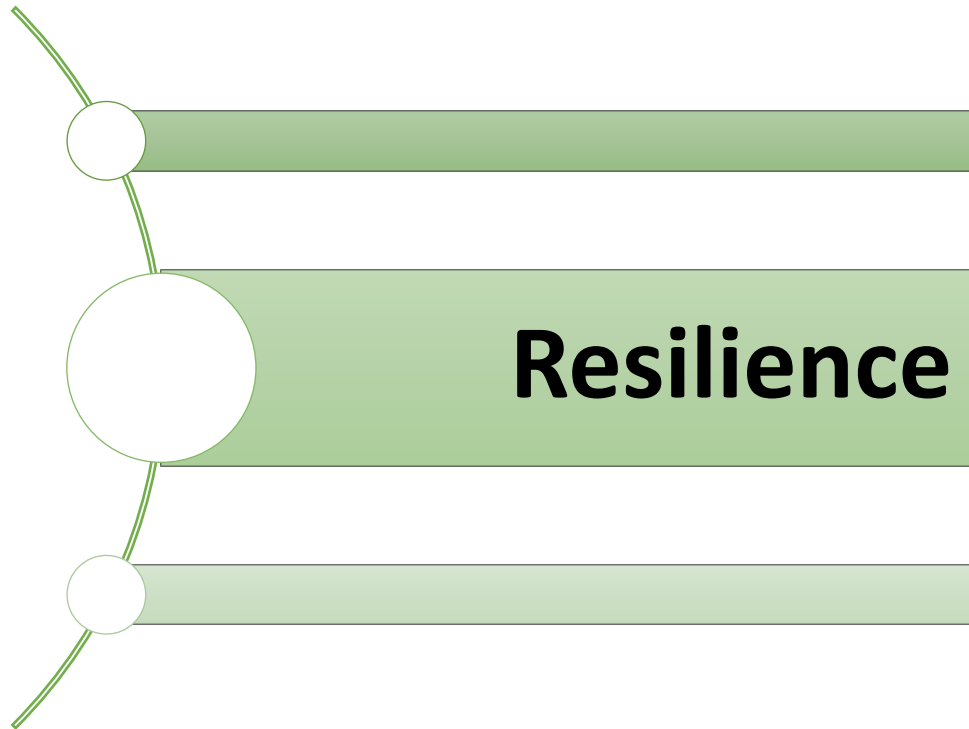
None of the SDGs can be fully achieved without the achievement of all SDGs.



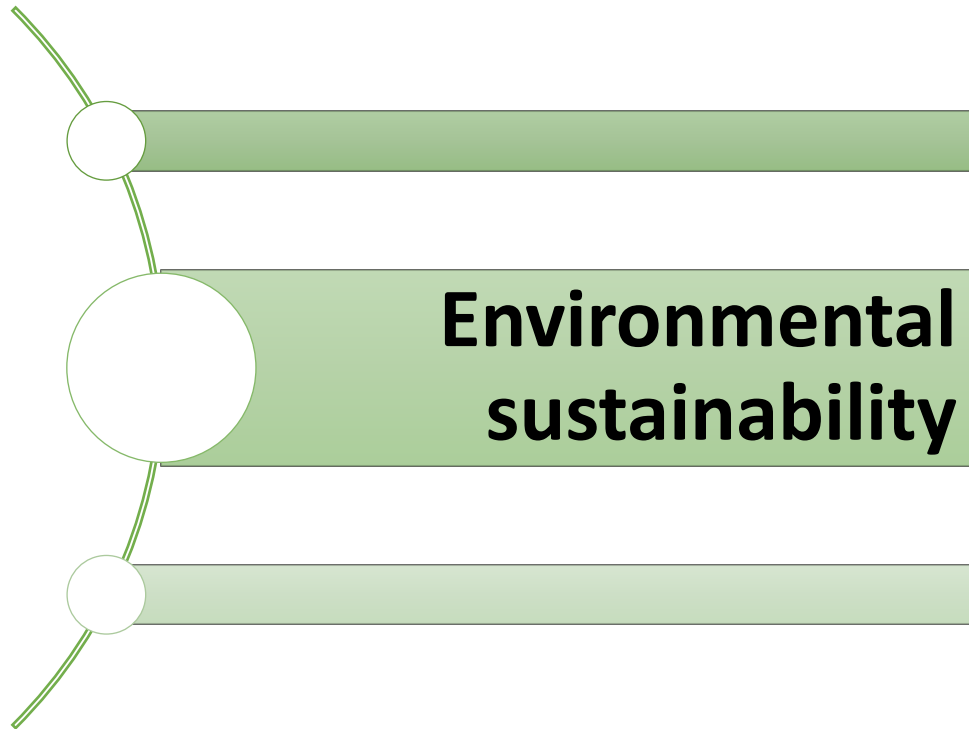
No goal is met unless
it is met for everyone.



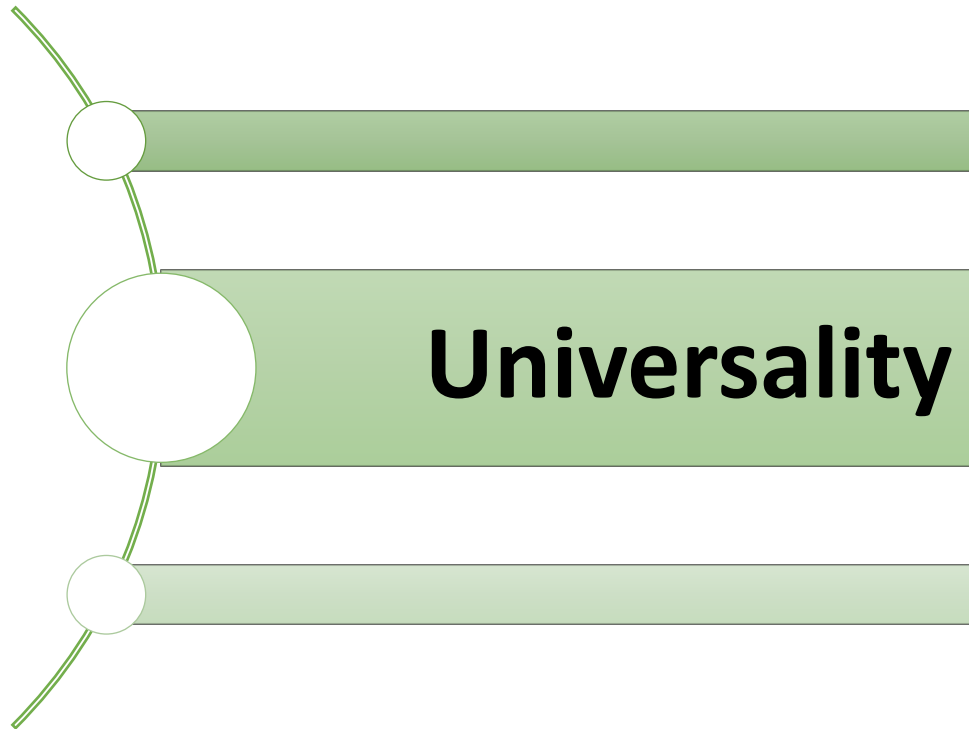
Rights, opportunities and access to benefits and services are provided to all.



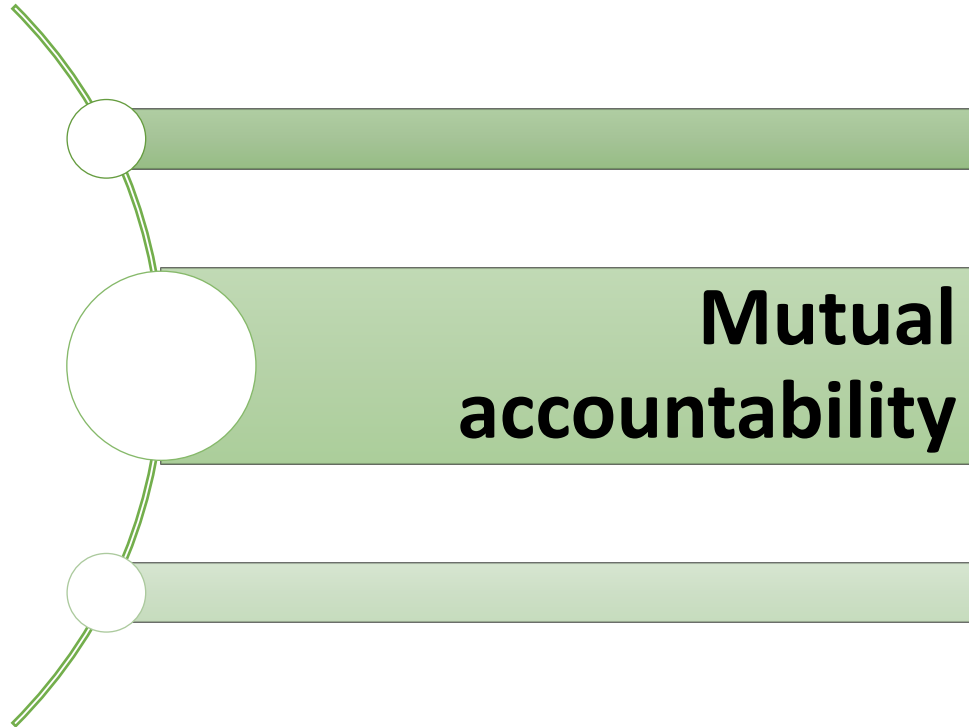
Individuals, human and/or ecosystems have the capacity to withstand stress and thrive under adverse conditions.



A continuous flow of environmental goods and services is maintained and enhanced over the long term.

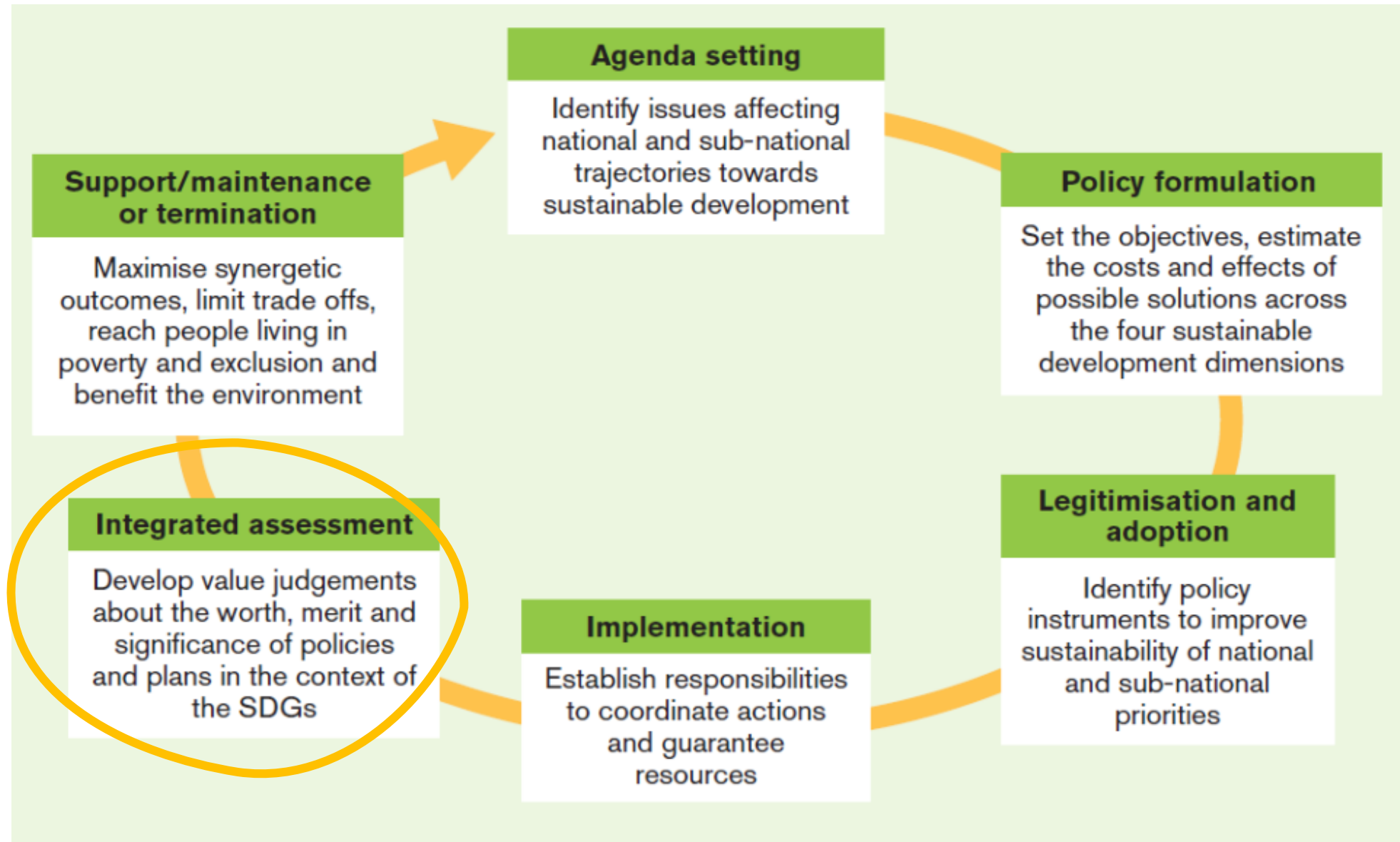


Countries shall strive to make progress on SDGs within their own borders as well as to support the efforts of others.



Roles and responsibilities are commonly agreed and equitably allocated.

Use of evaluation in the SDGs policy cycle



Three types of evaluation purpose



Informing policymakers and feeding into the strategic and planning cycle



Influencing the national political debate and policy discourse



Informing the countries' VNRs



Informing policymakers and feeding into the strategic and planning cycle

- Evaluation serves the **needs of executive branch** of government.
- Evaluation should ask questions about **fundamental aspects** of sustainable development policies and programmes, including:
 - **unintended** positive and negative **consequences**,
 - their environmental, economic, social and political **sustainability**,
 - their **relevance** to the needs of intended beneficiaries.



Influencing the national political debate

- Evaluation users – **parliamentarians, civil society and private sector.**
- Evaluation findings can inform the discussion about **political priorities for the next election cycle.**



Informing the countries' VNRs

- National follow-up and review processes should be informed by **country-led evaluations**.
- Need for **coordination** between internal policy cycles and global reporting.



Country cases



During presentation of country experiences please kindly take a note of **what has worked well** – in your opinion - and **might be useful within the context of your country**. You will need these notes for the group discussion later within this session.



Finland

PATH2030 - An evaluation of Finland's sustainable development policy

18-20 May 2021

Satu Lähteenoja | Annukka Berg | Kaisa Korhonen-Kurki

**DEMOS
HELSINKI** 

HELSUS
HELSINKI INSTITUTE OF SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE


S Y K E

Country cases – notes for presenters (this slide is not part of the deck) - Sami työstää tämän osion

For this session please kindly cover the following aspects:

- Evaluation context (is there a national entity in charge of SDGs implementation and coordination, how SDGs are integrated in the national plans, how and when the decision to conduct SDGs evaluation was made);
- What was the evaluation purpose and what process was used to decide on this purpose;
- For completed evaluation – how evaluation results were used;
- In conclusion – what worked well and what you would have done differently?

Key questions for evaluation planner

Why evaluate?

- Justifying the need for evaluation

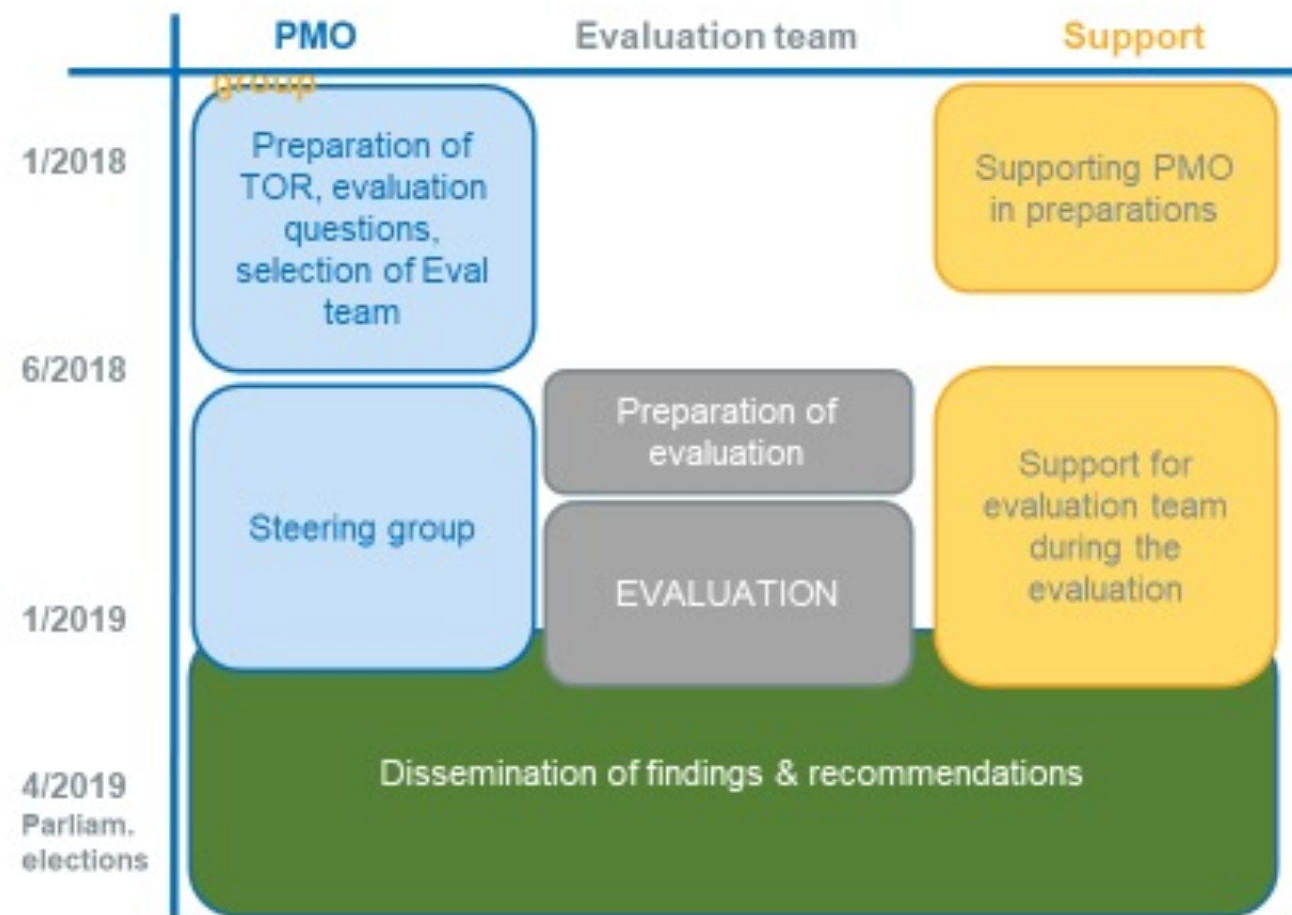
When evaluate?


- Linking evaluation to other key processes and their timing

How to ensure commitment to evaluation?

- Integrating the evaluation to national implementation structure

Path 2030 evaluation 2018-2019





**Include a commitment
to evaluation in key
political documents**

**Key lessons
learned from a
policy
planner's
perspective**

**Design a participatory
process for the
preparation and
implementation of the
evaluation**

Focus on impact:

Timing is a key success
factor

Create ownership among
political decision makers
and civil society

Make a dissemination plan
at an early stage

Government programme of Finland (June 2019)



"Our aim is to transform Finland into a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society by 2030.

"Achieving the sustainable development goals will only be possible if we are able to stop the warming of the climate and the decline of biodiversity."

"The Government will work to ensure that Finland is carbon neutral by 2035 and carbon negative soon after that."

Nigeria

Costa-Rica



Group reflection

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



Designing participatory processes

Participatory evaluation process

- SDGs follow-up and review processes shall be “open, inclusive, **participatory** and transparent for all people”
- When preparing an SDG evaluation, commissioners shall conduct a **stakeholder analysis** and reflect when and how representatives of various stakeholder groups may be involved in the evaluation process.

Cross-sectoral participatory bodies

Steering group

- Made of representatives from different ministries and government departments

Reference group

- Made of representatives from civil society and the private sector

Expert groups

- Made of evaluation specialists to provide quality assurance
- Made of sustainable development experts

Possible role of a Steering Group

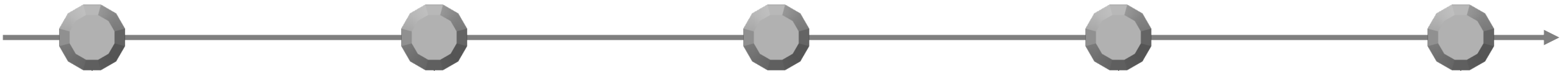
Preparatory
phase

Inception
phase

Data collection
and analysis

Interpretation
(findings, conclusion,
recommendations)

Dissemination
& Use



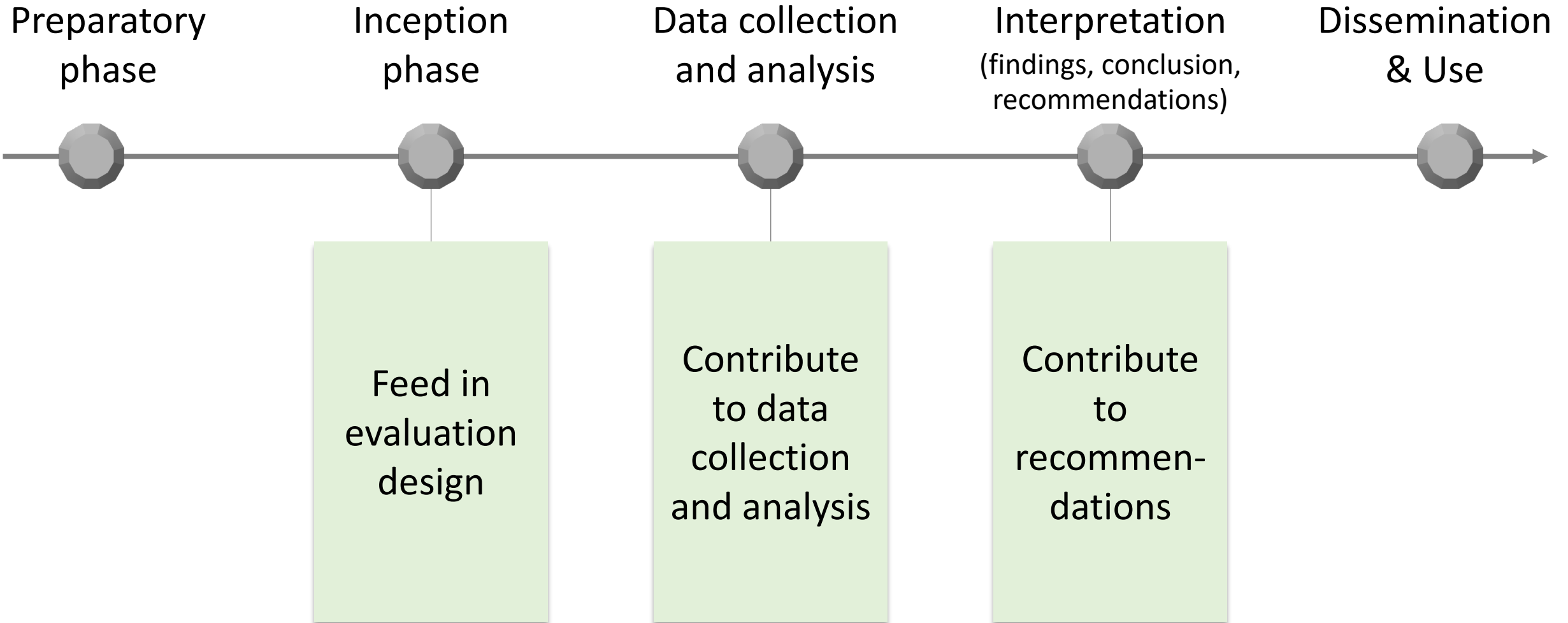
Approve
evaluation
focus and
scope,
evaluation
questions

Review
evaluation
design and
approve
inception
report

Review
findings and
recommen-
dations;
approve
evaluation
report

Facilitate
uptake of
evaluation
findings

Possible role of a Reference/Support Group



Possible role of an Evaluation Expert Group

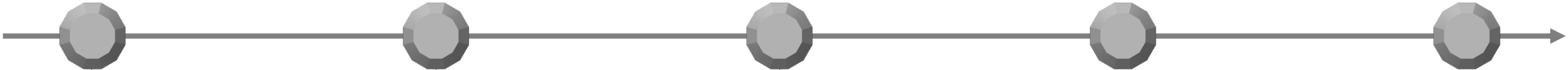
Preparatory phase

Inception phase

Data collection and analysis

Interpretation (findings, conclusion, recommendations)

Dissemination & Use



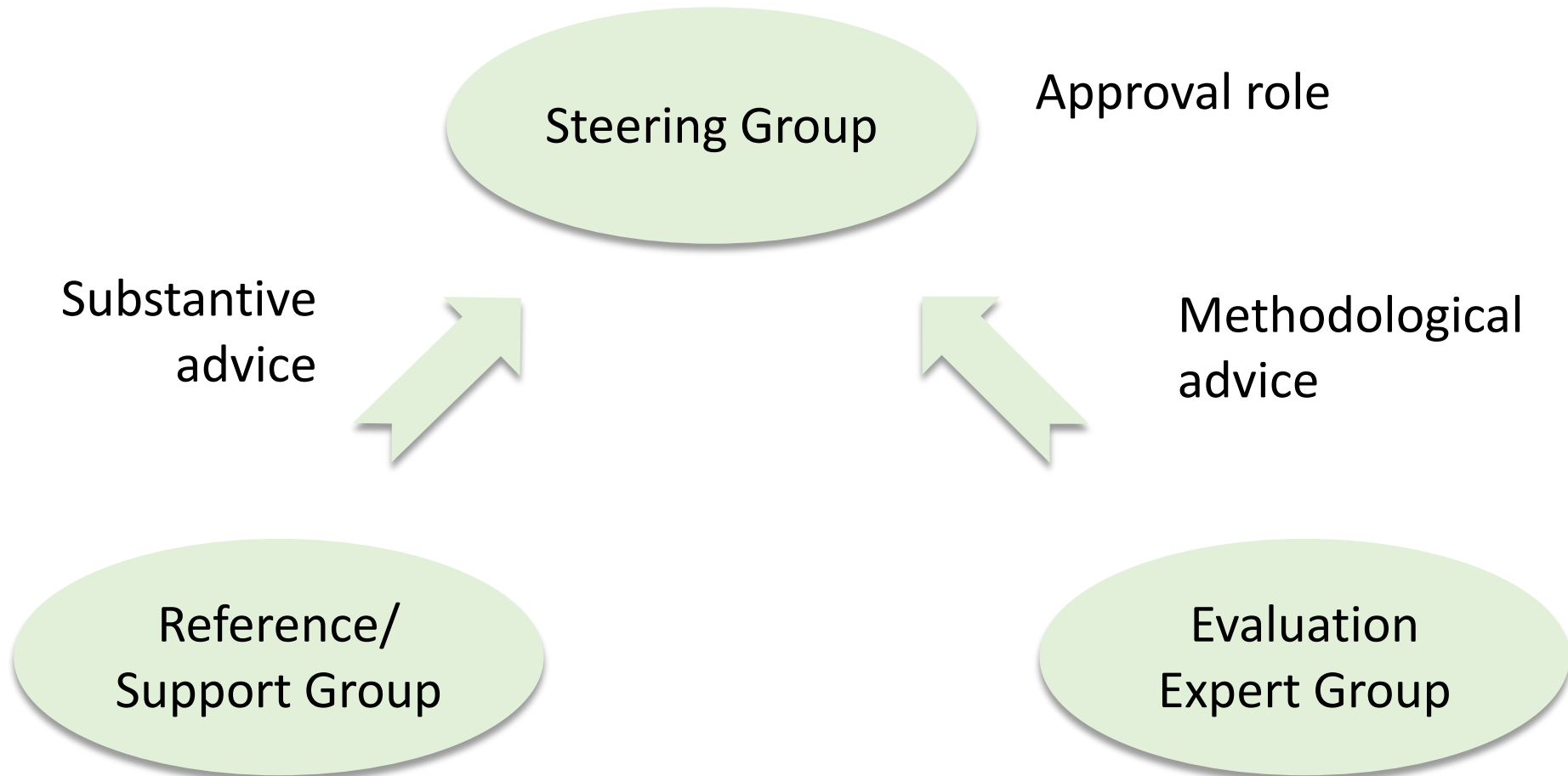
Review evaluation ToR

Review evaluation design and methodology

Review quality of evaluation data collection and analysis

(findings, conclusion, recommendations)

Relations between different groups





Country cases

Please kindly note that each country was using its own names for participatory bodies.



During presentation of country experiences take a note of **what has worked well** – in your opinion - and **might be useful within the context of your country**. You will need these notes for the group discussion later within this session.



Finland

The evaluation team was large and multi-disciplinary

Demos Helsinki: Independent think tank

Satu Lähteenoja, MSc, Project Manager

Tyyra Linko, MSc, Researcher

Kirsi-Marja Lonkila, M.Soc.Sci, Specialist

Helsus: Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science

Kaisa Korhonen-Kurki, Docent, PhD, (HELSUS)

Matti Ylönen, PhD, Researcher, (HELSUS)

Paula Schönach, PhD, Docent, (HELSUS)

Anna Salmivaara, M.Soc.Sci, Researcher (HY)

Ira Suutarinen, Trainee (HY)

SYKE: Finnish Environment Institute

Annukka Berg, D.Soc.Sc., Senior Researcher

Jari Lyytimäki, PhD, Senior Researcher

Eeva Furman, PhD, Director, Research Professor

Hanna Salo, Researcher

Participatory bodies

Participatory body	Group composition	Contribution
Steering group	Ministry representatives from several relevant ministries	Official steering group
Support group	20 experts from different fields: sustainability, evaluation, civil society.	Commenting the evaluation work and the process during the work, giving advice.
International experts	Sustainable Development Solutions Network & Stockholm Environment Institute	Joined an international expert workshop, gave valuable remarks and comments to the preliminary results.
Sustainable development stakeholder community (open)	Large and open group of stakeholders who are interested in sustainability: researchers, CSOs, civil servants, interest groups, active individuals.	Answered the survey, participated the workshops, supported in communicating the results.
Committee for the Future, the Finnish Parliament	The Committee consists of 17 Members of the Finnish Parliament.	Gave input, organised a joined committee meeting with 4 committees to discuss the results

PATH2030 evaluation is based on extensive participatory approach

Indicators	SDG Index and Dashboards -indicators National SD indicators (10 indicator baskets), Helsus Policy Dialogues -material (expert evaluation and workshops)
Survey (N = 238)	Closed survey to key SD actors and practitioners. Open survey to all interested
Interviews (around 80 interviewees)	Key professionals in SD Representatives of all ministries Scientific advisory panel for SD Key process stakeholders
Workshops (3)	Two open stakeholder workshops (around 80 and 40 participants) International evaluation workshop

PATH2030 evaluation is based on extensive participatory approach

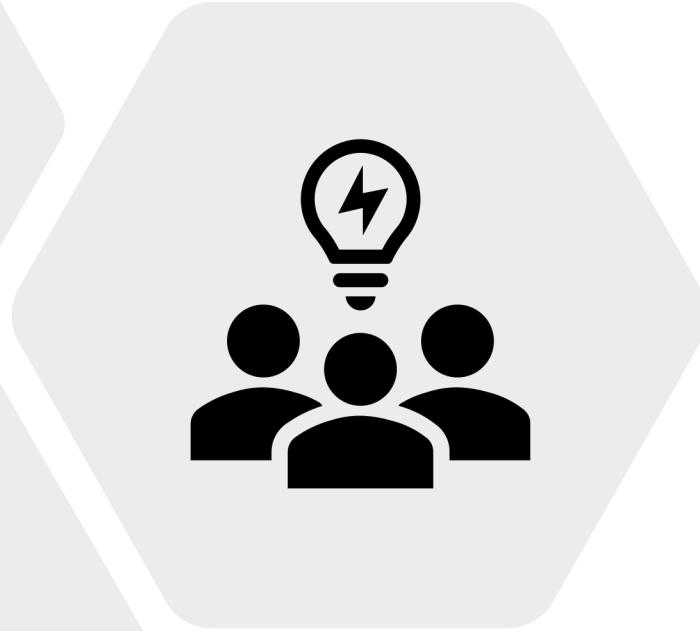
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Participatory process - Lessons learned

1. **Participatory process:** It is very important that stakeholders participate, through that they have the ownership also to the results and recommendations. **Especially co-creating the recommendations together with the stakeholders was useful.** However, participation requires time and efforts from all.
1. **Steering group and support group:** There were mixed tensions and power relations. Some methodological choices and (initial) findings were difficult to accept for some members of these groups. On the other hand, they provided important comments and contacts. It is good to discuss well the role of these groups and to have an open process to cope with the challenge of (contradictory) expectations related to the evaluation.

Nigeria

Costa-Rica



Group reflection

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



Defining focus and scope of evaluation

All SDGs vs selected SDGs

Issues to consider:

- Are there an **SDG implementation plans/frameworks** and **strategies**?
- What **costs and resources** are needed to conduct the evaluation?
- What is the **timespan** of the exercise in relation to key policy moments?
- What **data** are available for use in the evaluation?

Decision process

Consult stakeholders to identify need and purpose

Design participatory processes

Assess feasibility of the exercise especially in relation to presence of SDG implementation strategy, time and availability of data

Assess priority goals linked to priorities in national plans and governments' agenda

Define criteria to identify regional, national and sub-national priority goals

Select relevant SDG principles for the assessment

Identify the level(s) of assessment and select policies, plans and implementation strategies to be evaluated

Comprehensively assess sustainable development policies

Select relevant SDG principles for the assessment

Identify the level(s) of assessment and select policies, plans and implementation strategies to be evaluated

SDGs implementation dimensions

Level:

- National
- Sub-national
- Local

Aspect:

- Policy/framework
- Implementation strategy (e.g. coordination mechanisms, monitoring)
- Interventions



Country cases



During presentation of country experiences take a note of **what processes were used to make decisions about evaluation focus and scope** 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.



Finland

Focus and scope of the PATH2030 evaluation

The focus and scope of the evaluation defined in the **Terms of Reference (ToR)** that included also the evaluation questions.

Published as a part of an open invitation to tender written by the ministries, in particular PMO & Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Max. amount of the available appropriation 250k€

Time span 7/2018- 2/2019.

Path2030 evaluation aimed...

- 1) To produce **an independent and comprehensive evaluation on sustainable development policy** in Finland, especially regarding Finland's national policy, the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Finland's foreign policy.
- 1) To produce **concrete recommendations** on the future directions of Finland's sustainable development policy (taking into account different time spans and levels of ambition) as well as ways to evaluate it.

Terms of Reference (ToR) (1/2)

“The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent and comprehensive view on sustainable development policy in Finland”

“developmental evaluation...will provide...information on whether the current sustainable development policy promotes the **achievement of...the 2030 Agenda** and what kind of impact pathways are related to sustainable development policy.”

Terms of Reference (ToR) (2/2)

“...information on whether the chosen policy measures are **cost-effective and efficient** compared with the alternatives; whether the **changes** brought by the current policy are **sustainable**; and how **policy coherence** for sustainable development is realised in Finland’s activities.”

“Based on the OECD DAC’s evaluation criteria, the main emphasis in the evaluation is on the **relevance, efficiency and sustainability** of the national efforts.”

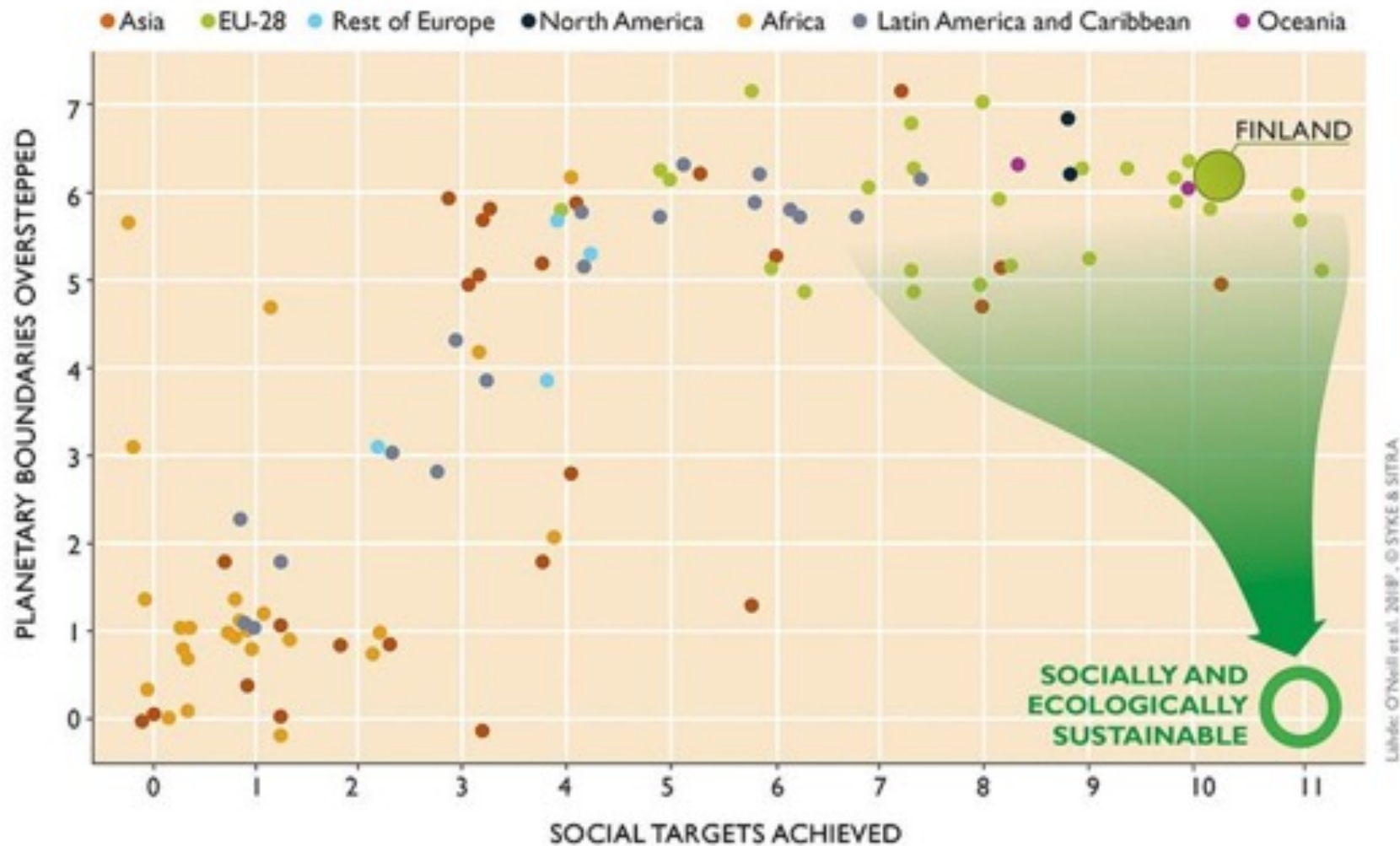
Sharpening the focus of the evaluation

The conducted evaluation are supposed to match the criteria set out in the invitation to tender. Thus, the scope could not be changed.

However, the evaluation team decided to suggest that **more focus** will be put on the **effectiveness** of the policy, the **impact pathways**, and the means to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Meanwhile, less emphasis put particularly on the cost-efficiency of the SD policy as a simultaneous study on SD policies was conducted by the National Audit Office of Finland

Which sustainability questions should we focus on?



Lüdeke O'Neill et al. 2018P, © SYKE & SITRA

Seeking the “stumbling blocks” for sustainability

A key challenge for the PATH2030 evaluation was the following: How to cover the key substance issues in adequate depth with the restricted resources?

- This is a general concern in sustainability evaluations!

The solution was to find the **top 5 most burning sustainability concerns** by indicator analysis, surveys and expert interviews.

- These issues - that were later named “stumbling blocks” for sustainability - were analysed more in depth by using ministry interviews, expert workshops and various policy documents.

From stumbling blocks to key issues of sustainable development

As stumbling blocks were detected e.g. sustainability of the energy system and, in particular, the global footprint of Finnish consumption

However, it turned out to be politically sensitive that certain issues were labelled as stumbling blocks and the labelling caused internal contradictions within e.g. the steering group of the evaluation.

Thus, it was decided that **also positive issues and themes** will be raised

→ All these substance issues/themes called “key issues of sustainable development”

From stumbling blocks to key issues of sustainable development

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Thus, it was decided that **also positive issues and themes** will be raised

→ All these substance issues/themes called “key issues of sustainable development”

Reflecting the choices made

Concentrating more thoroughly on certain sustainability issues - instead of trying to cover e.g. all SDGs in equal depth - a good choice.

- Use **robust methodology** for tracing these questions by e.g. indicator analysis but also expert interviews, surveys and/or workshops

However, in addition to detecting problems, attention should be attached also to the strengths and, in particular, themes and questions in which a **clear sustainability contribution could be made**

- **Global sustainability handprint!**

Focus & Scope - Lessons learned

Keep the ToR simple

In best case the detailed process would be negotiated in the beginning and corrected when needed

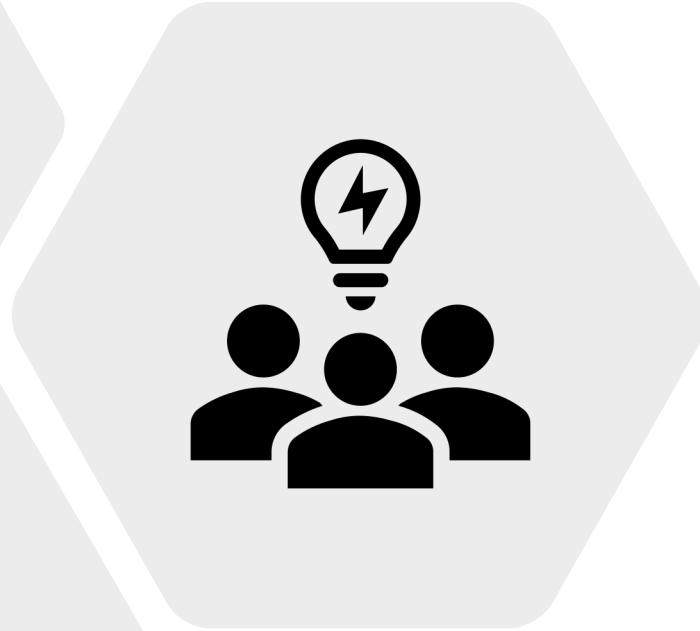
→ Learning by doing

Good points to focus on

- 1) Priority areas/questions/SDGs
- 2) ToC/s and how it/they work in practice
- 3) Key systemic challenges & opportunities
- 4) Suggestions for policy development

Nigeria

Costa-Rica



Group reflection

What evaluation focus (which SDGs) might be **more appropriate** in the context of your country?



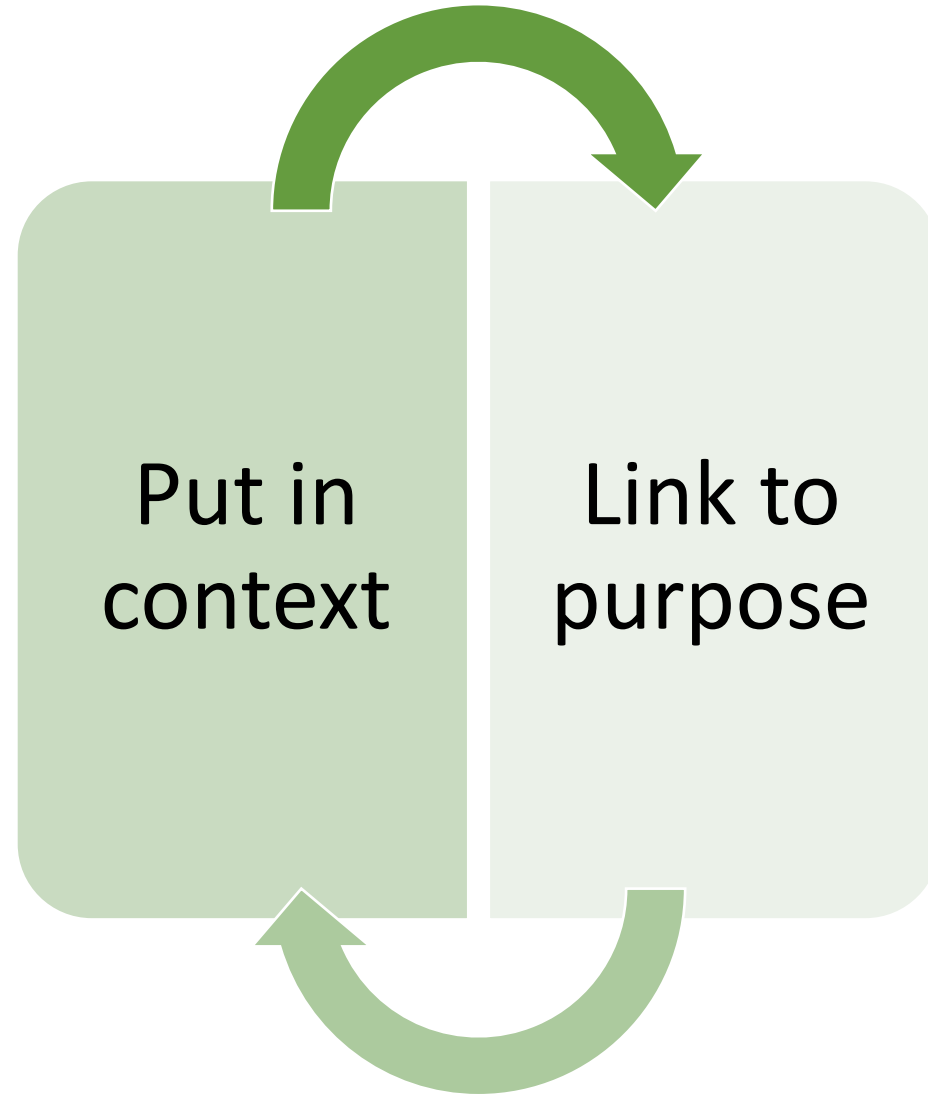
Deciding on evaluation criteria and questions



Evaluation criteria

- Criterion is a **lens** or **perspective** through which the evaluated policy or intervention can be viewed.
- Criteria describe the **desired attributes** of policies and interventions.
- Using a set of criteria provides a more **comprehensive picture** of the evaluated policy or intervention.

Principles for using the evaluation criteria



OECD-DAC Evaluation criteria

Relevance	Is the intervention doing the right things?
Coherence	How well does the intervention fit?
Effectiveness	Is the intervention achieving its objectives?
Efficiency	How well are resources being used?
Impact	What difference does the intervention make?
Sustainability	Will the benefits last?

2030 Agenda principles as criteria

Integration/ coherence	Do national policy frameworks consider the interconnected nature of sustainable development?
Leave no one behind	What public policies and plans have been adopted to leave no one behind? Who is benefiting from national priorities? Are they increasing inequality?
Equity	What groups or individuals have benefited? What groups have experienced negative effects?

Resilience	Does the policy make individuals, communities and ecosystems vulnerable to social, economic and/or environmental shocks?
Environmental sustainability	Does the policy contribute to the depletion or degradation of any natural resources or environmental services?
Universality	Does the policy support or undermine other countries' efforts to contribute to the SDGs and national progress towards sustainable development?
Mutual accountability	Are the roles and responsibilities of all partners clearly stated and agreed?



Country cases



During presentation of country experiences take a note of **what has worked well** – in your opinion - and **might be useful within the context of your country**. You will need these notes for the group discussion later within this session.



Finland

The process of defining criteria and questions

Evaluation questions

- 1) A list provided in ToR
- 2) The list was specified together during the evaluation (see more in the next slides).

Evaluation criteria

The focus areas and policy principles of Finland were used as the criteria (see more in the next slide). It was reasonable to evaluate the policy against its principles and priorities.

The focus areas and policy principles of Government's 2030 Agenda Report

Focus areas

- 1) Carbon-neutral and resource smart Finland
- 2) A non-discriminating, equal and competent Finland

Policy principles

- 1) Long-term action and transformation
- 2) Policy coherence and global partnership
- 3) Commitment and participation

Original evaluation questions (from ToR, 1/2)

Original questions

- Are the activities coherent from the sustainable development point of view?
- Are the measures comprehensive, relevant and proportionate in relation to the goals?
- Are measures cost-effective compared to alternative measures? What added value does the policy model bring to the cooperation of the administrative branches?
- To what extent does the policy model work in the desired way?

Theory of change:

- What are the most important aims and methods of Finland's sustainable development policy?
- How are these understood in practice among the most central stakeholders?
- What is the theory of change underpinning Finland's sustainable development policy?

Status quo and key questions:

- What is the state of sustainable development in Finland in the light of the indicators?
- What are the most central key issues to focus on in sustainable development policy?

Original and specified evaluation questions: policy actions (2/2)

Original questions

- What kind of impact pathway thinking/theories of change is Finland's sustainable development policy based on?
- Will the current sustainable development policy and measures help achieve societal changes that promote permanent socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development?

Specified questions

- How will the central aims and methods of Finland's sustainable development policy be realised?
- Do the central policy actions have an impact on the status of sustainable development?
- Does the achievement of central aims pose challenges?
- What are the challenges and existing strengths?
- How can policy be evaluated with regard to **coherence, coverage and relevance**?
- What is or what could be the additional value of sustainable development policy?

Evaluation criteria and questions - Lessons learned

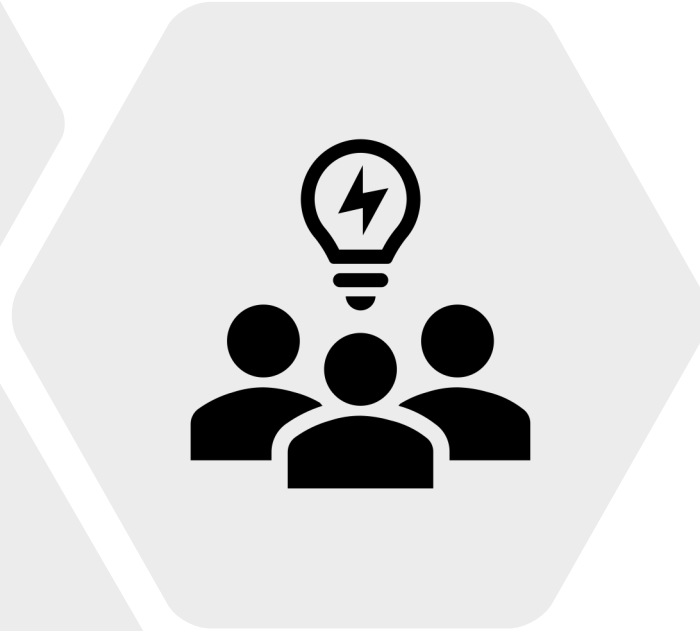
Evaluation criteria worked well.

A long list of evaluation questions made the evaluation task hard. Answering many of the evaluation questions required de facto that many other questions were answered first.

Explicit discussion on the evaluation scope and questions would have been fruitful in the beginning.

Nigeria

Costa-Rica



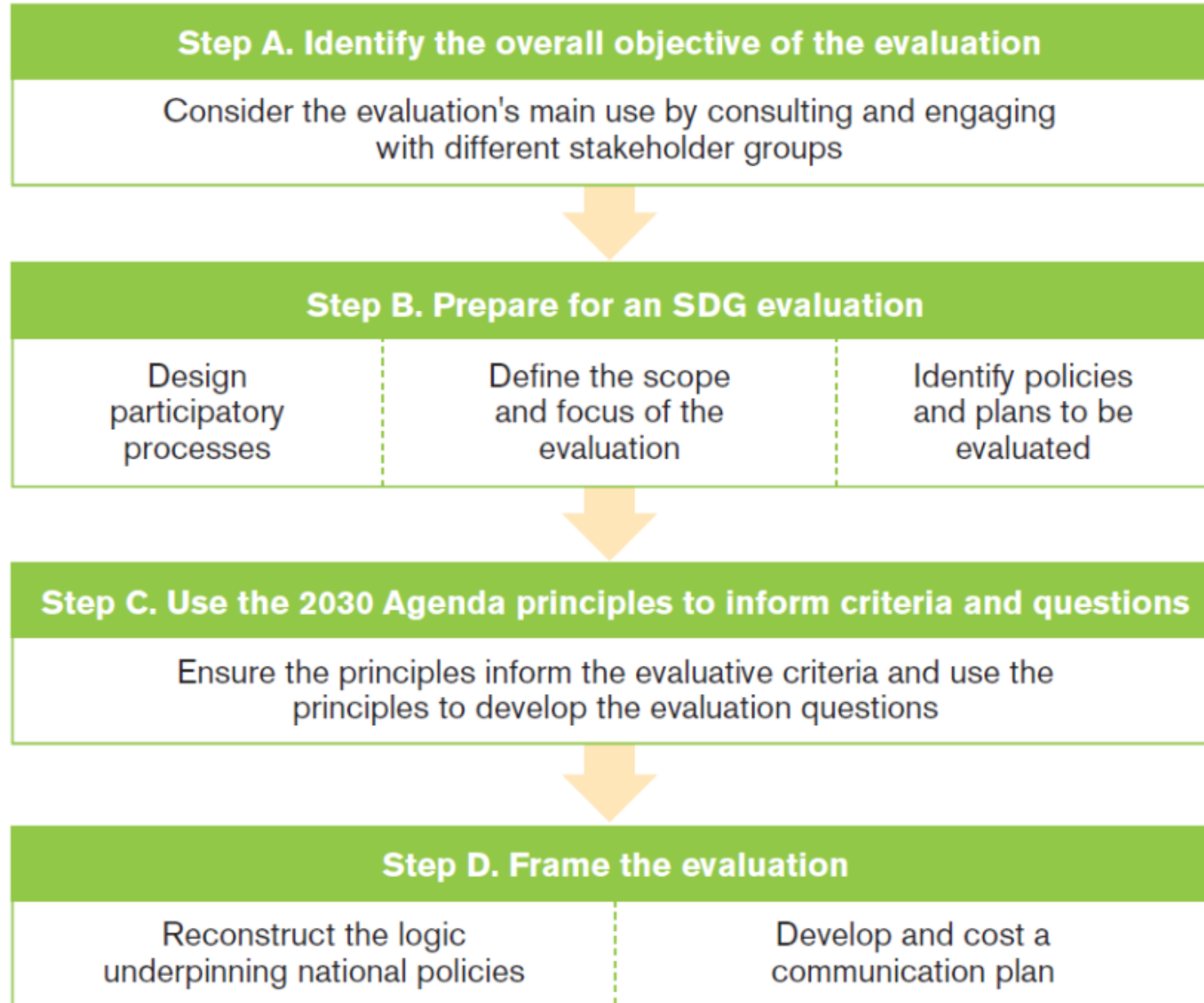
Group reflection

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

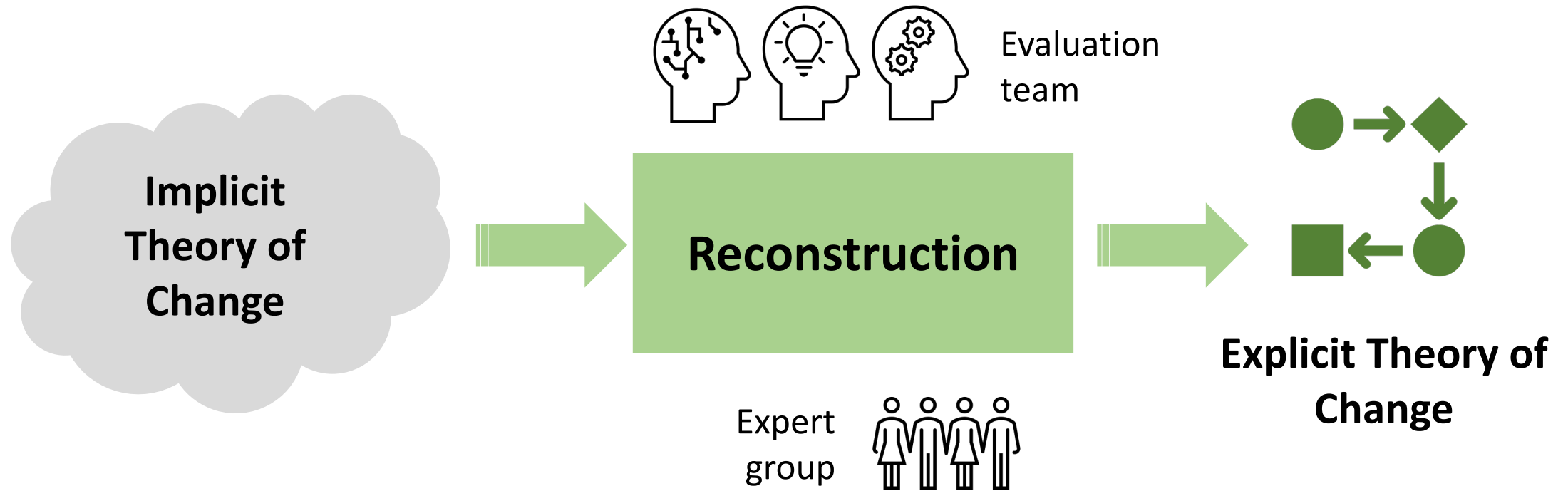


Framing the evaluation

Main steps to plan SDGs evaluation

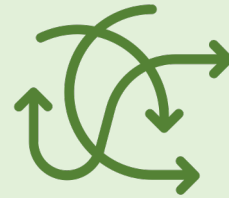


Reconstructing the logic underpinning national policies



Using systems thinking and complexity lens

Multi-site and multi-governance issues



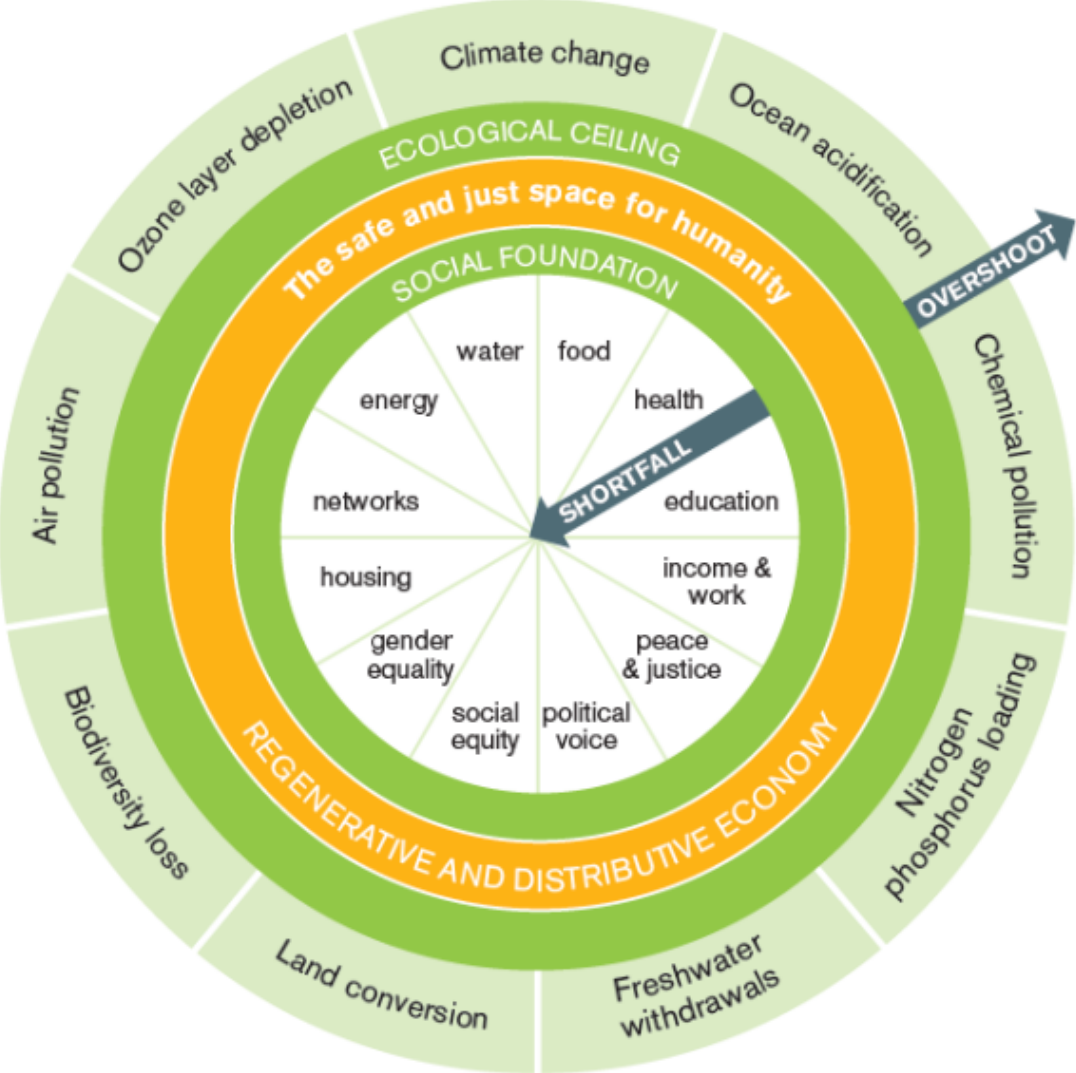
Simultaneous or alternative causal strands

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.



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.



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
- 1) **Interviewing the key experts** on how they understand Finland's SD policy
- 1) Paying attention particularly to the **key goals and means**

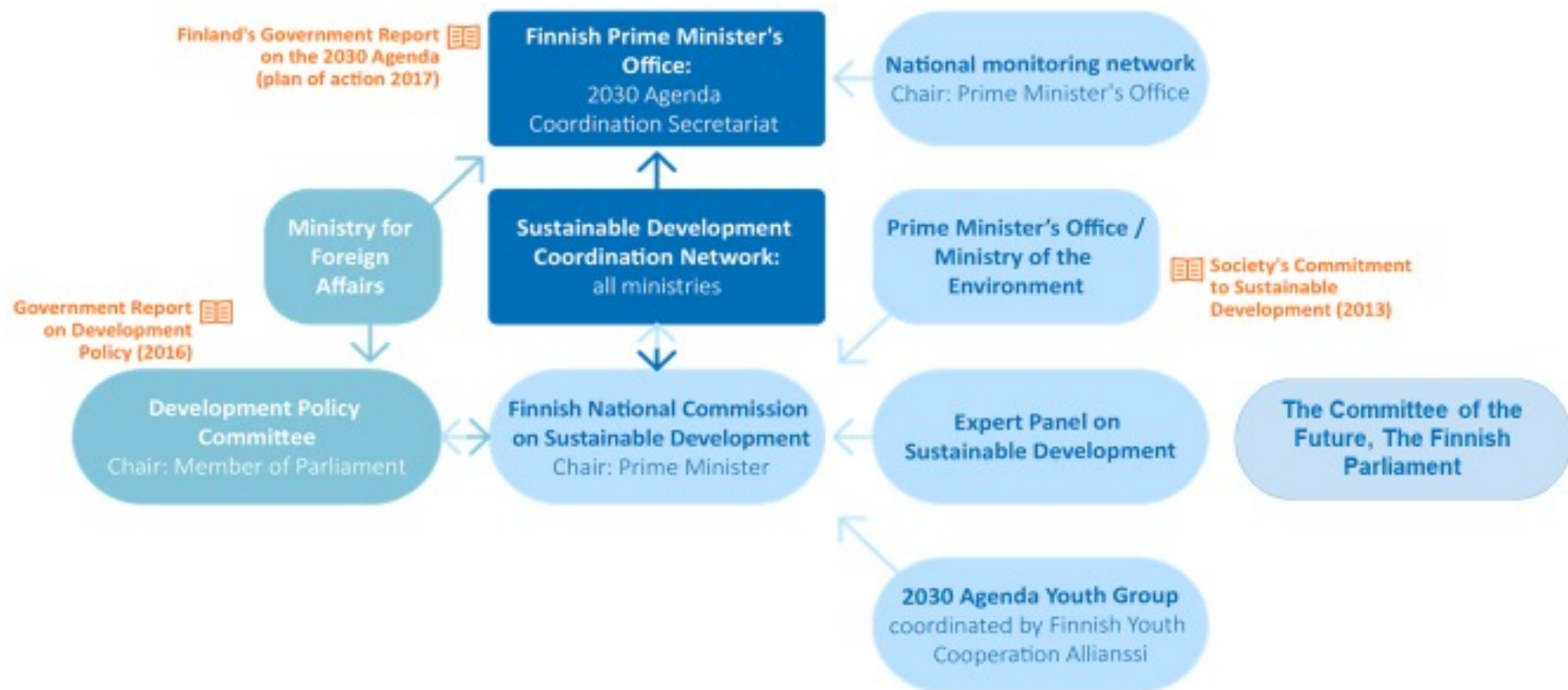
Theory of change (ToC)

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.

Nigeria

Costa-Rica

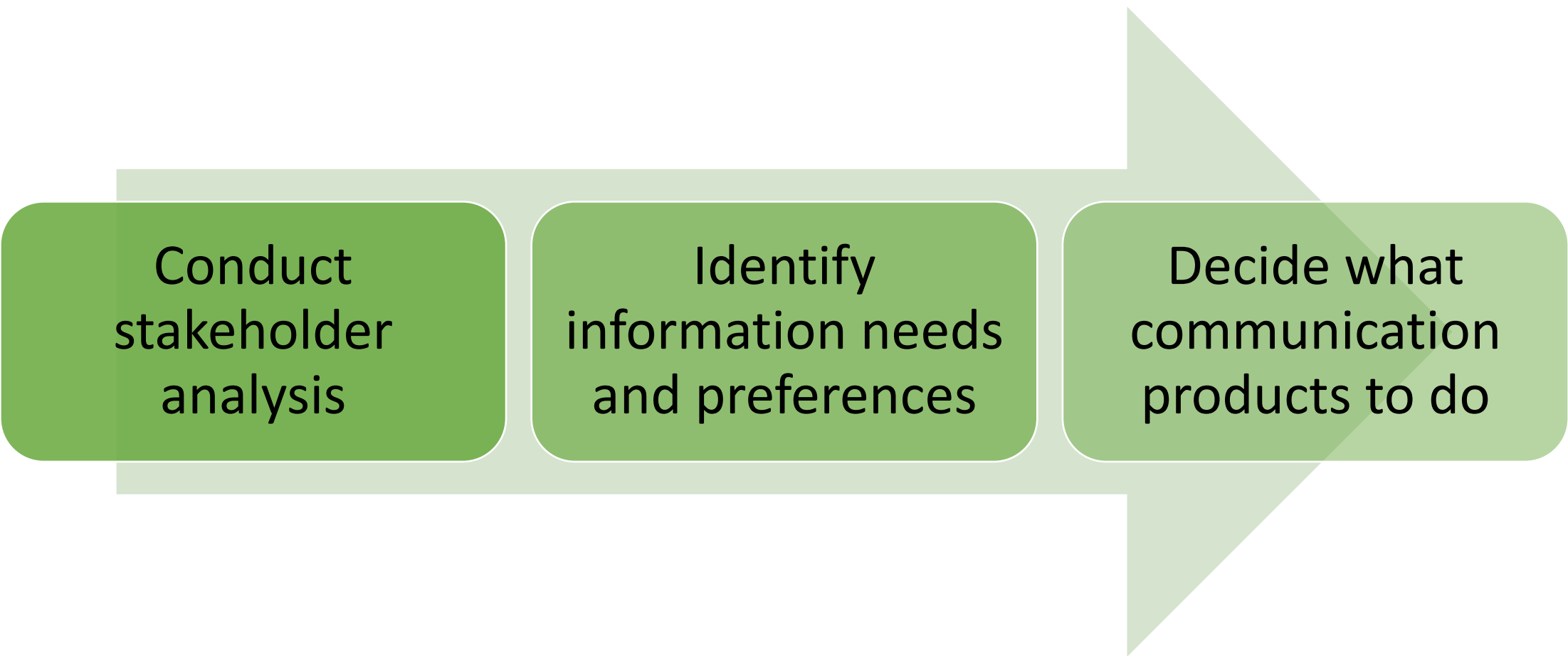
Communication of evaluation results

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 **how evaluation results were communicated** 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.



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

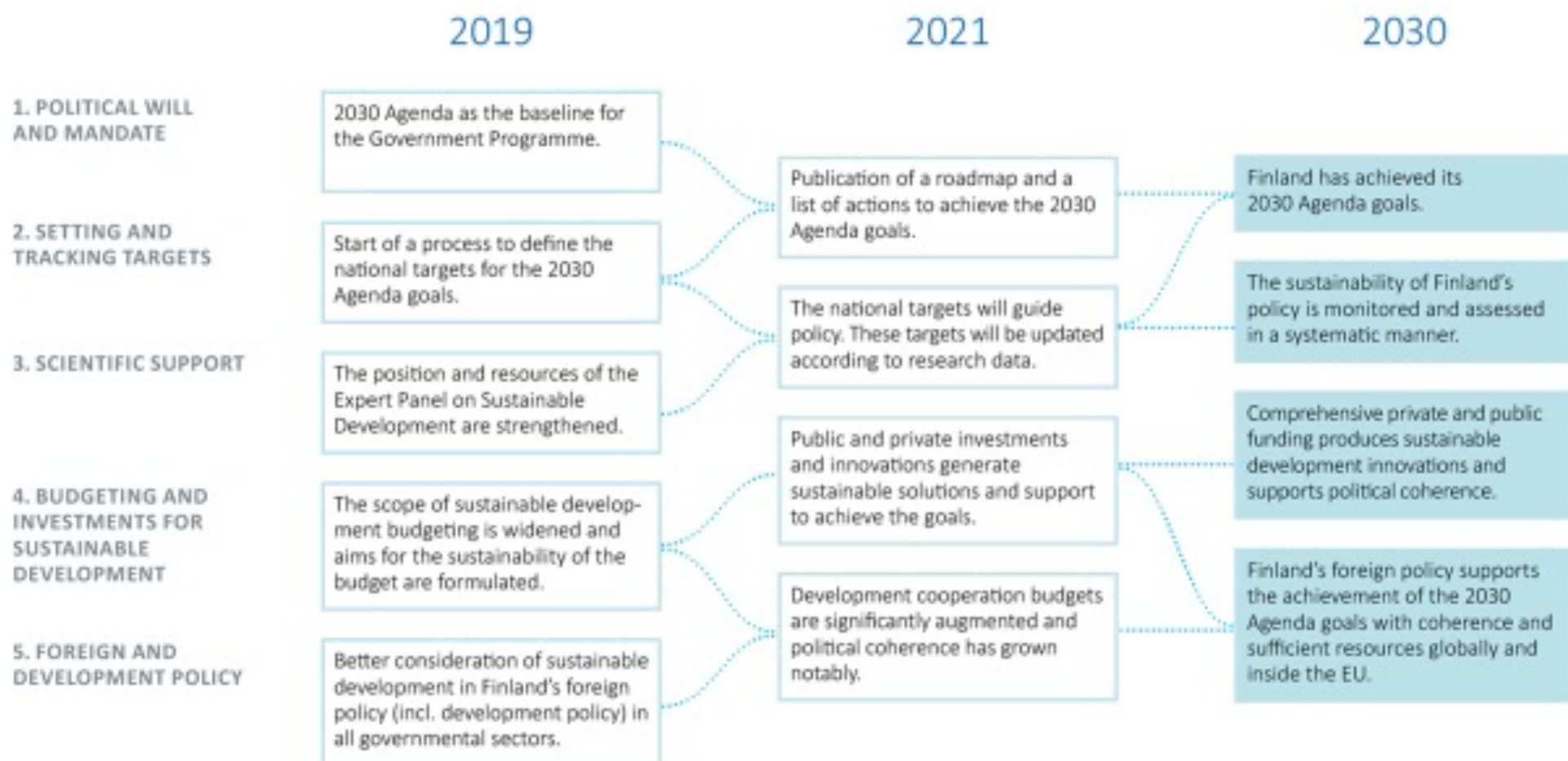
Example of communication: the state **budget promotes sustainability in a contradictory way**

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

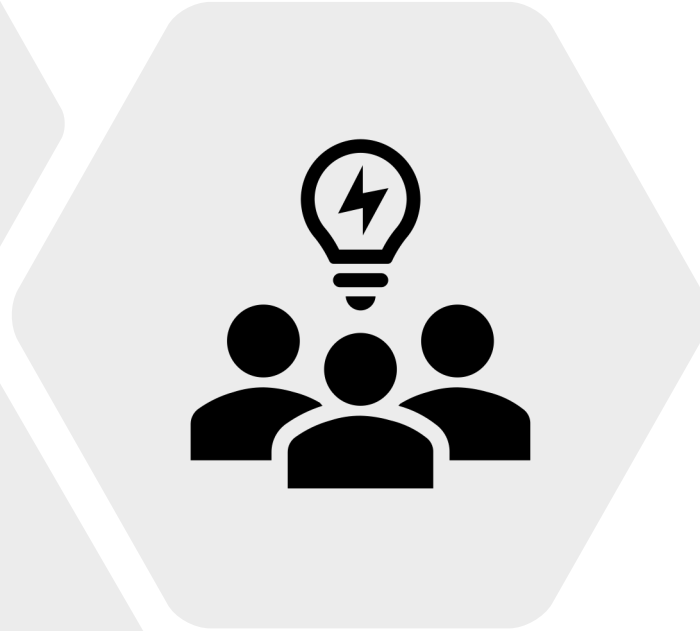


Framing the evaluation - Lessons learned

- **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

Nigeria

Costa-Rica



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.



Evaluation data – A case of Finland

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

▼ CURRENT ASSESSMENT – SDG DASHBOARD



Towards
The Finland
we want by 2050

The state of sustainable
development in 2020
in light of indicators and
comparative studies

STATE
OF SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

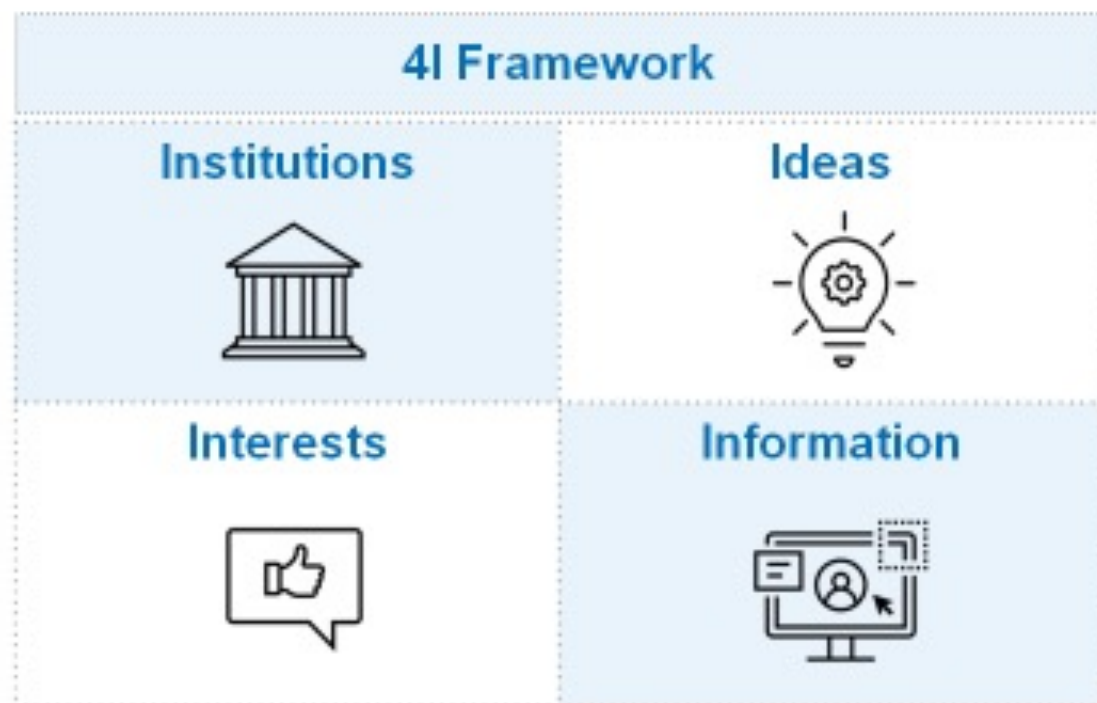


Framing the evaluation - Lessons learned

- **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

Using systems thinking as an analytical lense for qualitative analysis

- **Institutions** arise from norms, regulations and institutional arrangements;
- **Interests** refer to different SD actors and their material interests;
- **Ideas** refers to ideological beliefs;
- **Information** refers to knowledge and its use in sustainable development policy processes.



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

Analysis based on 4Is-framework

(Brockhaus & Angelsen 2012)

Institutions

(rules, path-dependencies or stickiness)

How do structures restrict/promote sustainable development policy?
(issues that are hard/possible to change)

Interests

(potential material advantages)

Actors' interests. Why does an actor lobby a certain issue? Is it somehow beneficial? Are different opinions heard? Who can participate?

Ideas

(policy discourses, underlying ideologies or beliefs)

What ideologies guide the action of different actors? What new ideas are emerged?

Information

(data and knowledge, and their construction and use).

What kind of information is used in politics? Who has produced it?

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.

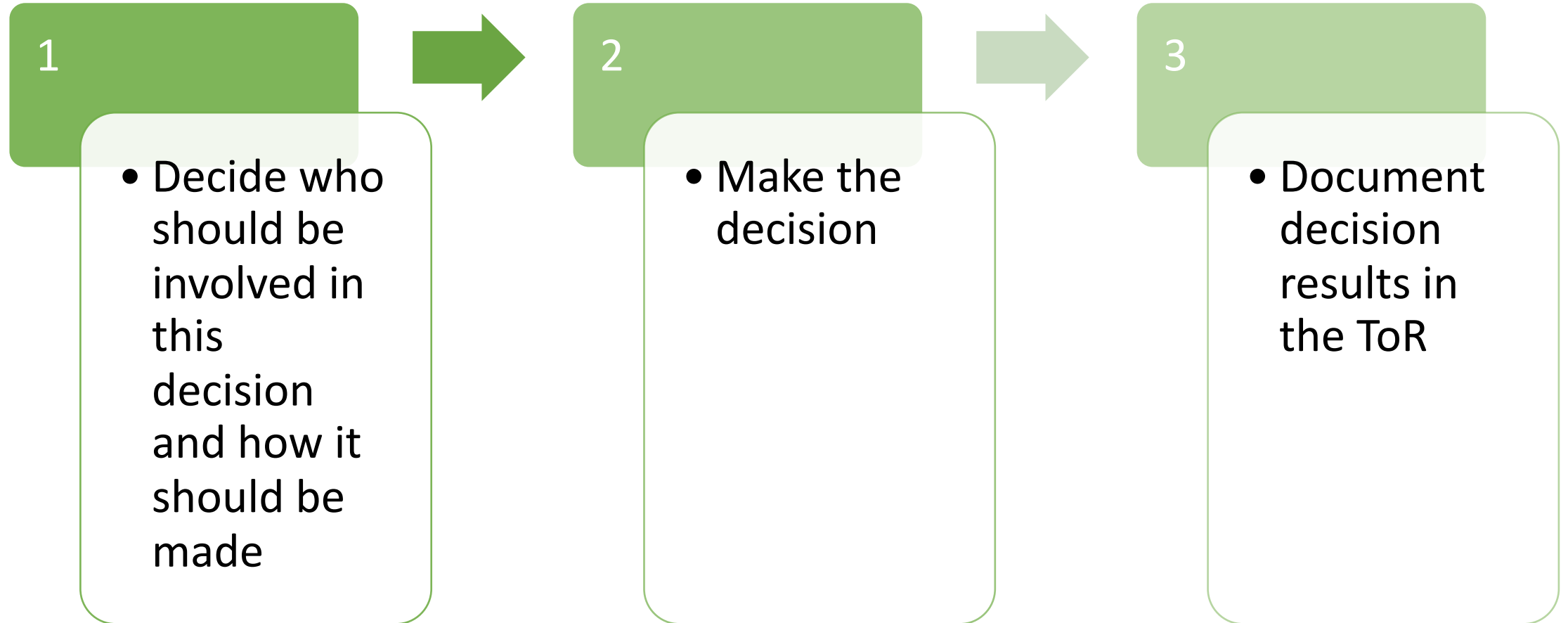
Nigeria

Costa-Rica



**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

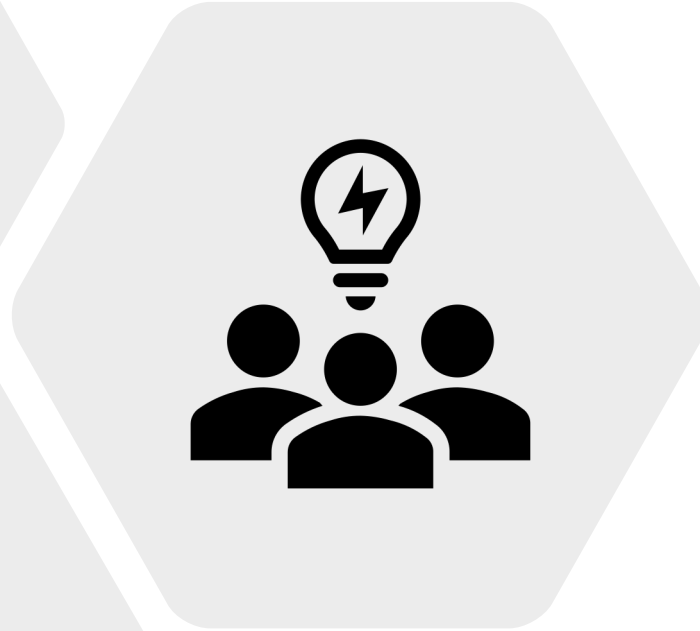
Finland

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.

Nigeria

Costa-Rica



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