



# Accountability Report of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2023 – summary

Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland



The aim of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' responsibility report is to provide an idea of how the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has succeeded in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN's 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development and how it will develop its activities in the future. The report describes both the positive outcomes (handprint) and negative impacts (footprint) of the Ministry's activities, taking into account the ecological, social and economic dimensions. The report is now published for the second time.

The report has been prepared based on the [State Treasury guidelines on accountability reporting in central government](#).

Finland's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda are strongly linked to our foreign and security policy objectives: sustainability is the foundation of Finland's foreign and security policy. At the same time, the SDGs support stability and security both in Finland's neighbouring areas and globally.

Sustainable development generates security and income; it improves health and education, decelerates climate change and biodiversity loss and reduces extreme poverty. Sustainable development is also a means of reducing inequalities and promoting gender equality.

Finland is committed to achieving all the goals set in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the deadline. Accountability is governed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as part of the Ministry's normal steering of operations and the responsibilities of departments and units in accordance with the rules of procedure.

## **Handprint**

Since spring 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the achievement of the SDGs and international development policy. Most of the key development paths in developing countries (democracy, equality, education, health care, including reproductive health and rights, employment) have slowed down or taken a downward turn. The breach of peace resulting from the war initiated by Russia in Ukraine is the latest major step backwards in the implementation of sustainable development.



## **SDG 4 (quality education)**

Inclusive and high-quality education is one of the priorities of Finland's development cooperation. In its development cooperation in the field of education, Finland aims at

- providing teachers and schools with improved opportunities to promote learning and learning outcomes;
- better realisation of the right of girls, children with disabilities and the most vulnerable to Inclusive and high-quality education; and
- enhancing young people's skills, competences and life skills of relevance for finding employment.

One of the key achievements in 2022–2023 was the launch of innovation centres related to teaching in Finland. The Global Learning Innovation Hub of the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF aims to improve the quality of learning and learning outcomes through new technologies and innovative solutions. The Finnish Centre of expertise in Education and Development, FinCEED, has strengthened the role of Finland in providing solutions for the global learning crisis and promoted the utilisation of Finnish expertise in development cooperation in the field of education.

## **SDG 5 (gender equality)**

The aim of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is that 85 per cent of its new development cooperation programmes and projects include objectives promoting gender equality. According to preliminary calculations, 72% of development cooperation funding in 2022 was targeted at measures that included objectives promoting such goals.

Finland has promoted comprehensive sexual education, contraception, maternal health, and the right to safe sex and safe abortion. Other important themes have included the right to bodily integrity, the prevention of gendered violence and helping victims. We have targeted support for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities in particular.

Key partners in promoting equality, women's and girls' rights, and sexual and reproductive health and rights have included the United Nations agency for gender equality and women's rights UN Women and the UN Population Fund UNFPA.



### **SDG 13 (climate action)**

In both the EU and the UN, Finland is one of the countries advocating ambitious climate diplomacy. The Finnish climate diplomacy has promoted a just global green transition; brought Finland's climate, environmental and circular economy solutions to international attention; promoted the enhanced integration of climate change, biodiversity loss and water issues into the European and international security policy; and supported developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change and halting biodiversity loss. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has emphasised a human rights-based and inclusive approach in all climate work.

### **SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions)**

Finland has strengthened its efforts to promote democracy, human rights and the freedom of action of civil society in Finland and internationally through the UN, the EU and international initiatives. Finland has invested in the promotion of the rights of vulnerable persons and anti-discrimination activities in particular.

Finland is committed to actively supporting human rights defenders and to strengthening the operation of international and regional human rights monitoring systems. At the core of Finland's comprehensive crisis management activities lies the aim to strengthen the stability of societies by supporting inclusive peace processes, peaceful conflict resolution, rule of law development and democratic decision-making as means of building lasting peace.

### **SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals)**

According to preliminary data, Finland's Official Development Assistance (ODA) amounted to EUR 1.534 billion in 2022, corresponding to approximately 0.58% of Finland's gross national income. Some of Finland's official development cooperation has been implemented as loan-based and investment-based financial investments, which can be used to mobilise more funding from several different sources, including in the least developed countries.

Finland has been maintaining and strengthening the functioning of a multilateral, rule-based trading system. Through development cooperation, Finland has also supported the efforts of developing countries to integrate better into the international trade system and to gain more benefits from trade opportunities in order to promote sustainable development.



One of the key objectives of Finland’s development policy is to make more comprehensive use of technology and innovation activities. This objective has been supported through the UN, the EU and the private sector and by strengthening the innovation activities of international organisations and developing countries.

Finland has supported civil society partnerships and promoted a human rights-based approach. We have emphasised the activities of NGOs in the least developed countries and in fragile regions.

## **Footprint**

### **Ecological**

The first environmental programme for the Foreign Service was published in 2013. Since then, the Foreign Service has made systematic efforts to pursue environmental goals in its operations. The latest update was made for the period 2021–2030.

A voluntary group, ekotiimi (“eco team”), operating under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, is tasked with monitoring and coordinating the progress of the implementation of the programme in relation to set objectives and, if necessary, submitting proposals for new measures.

### **The social dimension**

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs Human Resources Strategy for 2021–2025 supports the implementation, management, wellbeing at work and development of the Ministry’s strategic objectives.

The HRS focuses on:

- 1.** Our work will focus on the most important goals.
- 2.** We support the development of expertise and wellbeing through team and group work practices and reorganising work.
- 3.** Through good interaction, listening and respectful dialogue, we strengthen the sense of togetherness. Equality and diversity are interlinked.



Finland is committed to preventing and eliminating sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The prevention of sexual exploitation and harassment has been strengthened, for example, by developing risk management and training personnel.

### **Economic dimension**

In the 2023 budget proposal, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' administrative branch will promote the carbon neutrality target globally by an amount estimated to total EUR 364 million, which is almost equivalent to the 2022 level.

The procurement services of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs comply with the obligations set for public procurement under the EU directive, legislation and government resolutions in order to promote accountability objectives.

### **Description of how the report was prepared**

At its meeting on 27 April 2021, the steering group of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs confirmed which Sustainable Development Goals the Ministry's report will include (SDGs 4, 5, 13, 16 and 17). The same goals were also chosen as the themes of this report. For the purpose of drawing up the accountability report, a group was set up to agree on the practical arrangements for preparing the report. The work to prepare this report involved the input of the Department for Development Policy, the Political Department, the Department for International Trade, the Department for Communications, Administrative Services, the Legal Service, Protocol Services, Financial Management Unit, and the Unit for Policy Planning and Research.