Statistics Finland

Using key indicators in SDG communication

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SDG indicators

Background

- The framework of 247 SDG indicators are developed by experts for the use of experts. As such it is far too broad for political discussion and goal setting.
  - SDG indicators fail to capture overall sustainability: The indicator framework currently also emphasizes social and economic aspects, equality, global responsibility and neglects ecological sustainability.
- Although Finland is at the top of the global sustainability comparisons, it is far from sustainability. The fundamental challenge is ecological sustainability. Finnish economy produce social and economic welfare by consuming country's ecological capital.
- Key challenges, currently not captured by Agenda 2030 and SDGs:
  - Climate Change: Nationally Finland aims to be carbon neural by 2035. This outside Agenda 2030 commitments.
  - Loss of biodiversity (especially wetlands): It has been proposed that 30 percent of the Earth's land and sea areas should be protected by 2030.

Search for SDG key indicators

- In Finland the owner of the Agenda 2030 sustainable development process is the Prime Minister's Office with the exception that Statistics Finland is independently responsible for SDG-indicator monitoring.
- In the SDG database of Statistics Finland there exists currently data for 188 SDG-indicators (coverage of 76,1%). Of these some 20 SDG indicators were selected for closer examination that might describe overall sustainability.
- The scientific sustainability expert panel is an independent body of experts set up by Prime Minister's Office to support sustainable development decision-making and social debate in Finland. It is the voice of science, initiator dialogue and support for decision-making. The panel consists of 14 experienced and respected scientists, who represent their own independent expertise.
- Expert panel's idea was not to develop completely new metrics, but to suggest better utilization of existing metrics in decision-making processes. Also, the measures of overall sustainability and related measures are to be taken into account alongside with GDP.
- The sustainability expert panel started looking at overall sustainability indicators by examining existing datasets in 2023.

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First list of key indicators analysed

- Social dimension:
  - SDG 1.2.2 Share of the poor in the population (national definition), %
  - SDG 3.2.1 Mortality rate of children under 5 years of age
  - SDG 3.4.2 Suicide mortality (per 100,000 inhabitants)
  - SDG 3.6.1 Fatality rate in road traffic accidents
  - SDG 5.5.2 Share of women in management positions, %
  - SDG 10.1.1.a Annual change in average income, %, low-income 40% of the population
  - SDG 16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Healthcare data)
- Environment:
  - SDG 7.2.1 Share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption, %
  - SDG 8.4.1.a and 12.2.2.a Material footprint (RMC, million tons)
  - SDG 8.4.2.a Domestic consumption of materials, tons
  - SDG 9.4.1 Energy production CO2 emissions per value added unit, kt CO2/million euros
  - SDG 11.6.2.a Average levels of small particles in cities (PM2.5)
  - SDG 12.5.1.a National recycling rate; Municipal waste (%)
  - SDG 15.1.2.a Protected sites by ecosystem type of land areas and surface waters, %; IBA sites
- Economic
  - SDG 7.3.1 Energy intensity as a ratio of primary energy to GDP
  - SDG 8.5.2.a Unemployment rate, %; In total
  - SDG 8.6.1 Young people outside education, work and training (15-24 years old), %
  - SDG 9.2.1.a Share of industry in value added, %
  - SDG 9.5.1 Share of research and development expenditure in GDP, %
  - SDG 17.1.2 Share of the state budget to be covered by domestic tax revenues, %
  - SDG 17.2.1.a Net amount of public development aid (total) in relation to gross national income, %

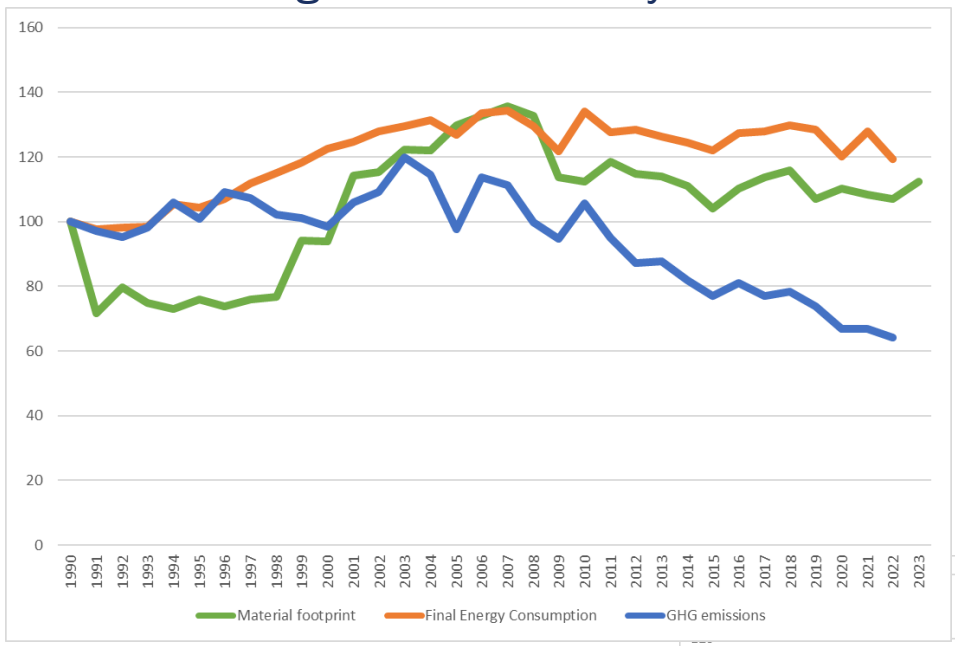
Proposal by the Finnish scientific sustainability panel: Overall sustainability measures

ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY	SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY
Material footprint (SDG 8.4.1./12.2.2.a)	**Share of the poor (national definition) (SDG 1.2.2)**	**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**
Final Energy Consumption	Mortality rate of children under 5 years of age (SDG 3.2.1)	Gini coefficient
Green House Gas emissions (GHG)	Suicide mortality (SDG 3.4.2)	Employment rate
	Young people outside education, work and training (SDG 8.6.1)	

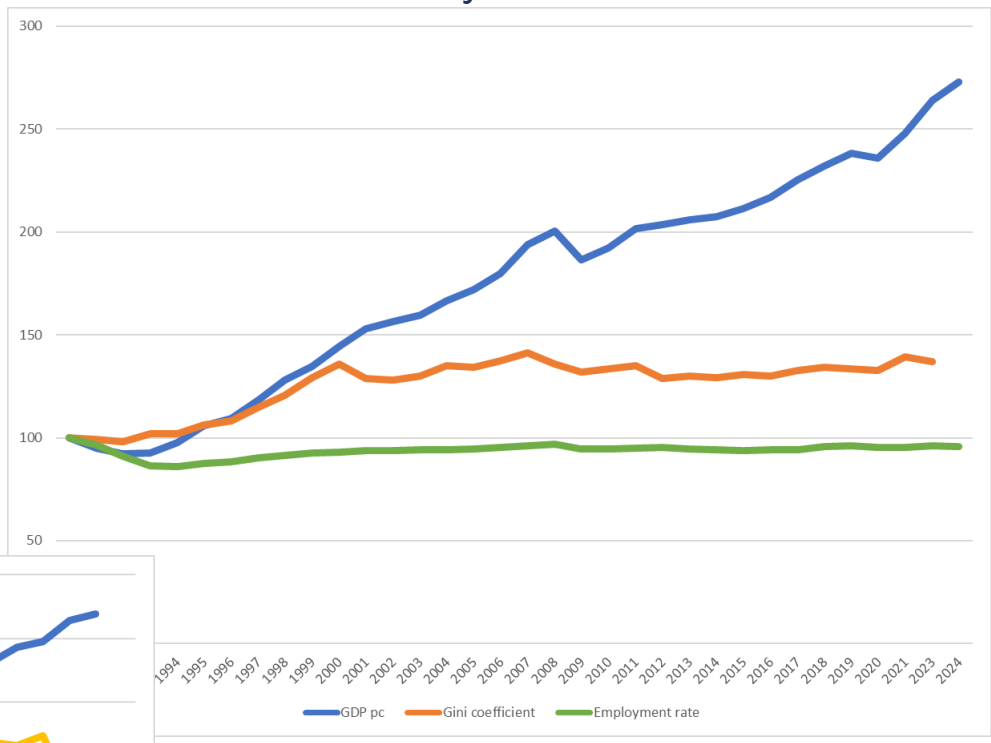
- Indicators with long timeseries data are preferred. The metrics are ready-to-use and are based on existing and constantly updated information. The most important key indicators are in bold.

Development of sustainability measures

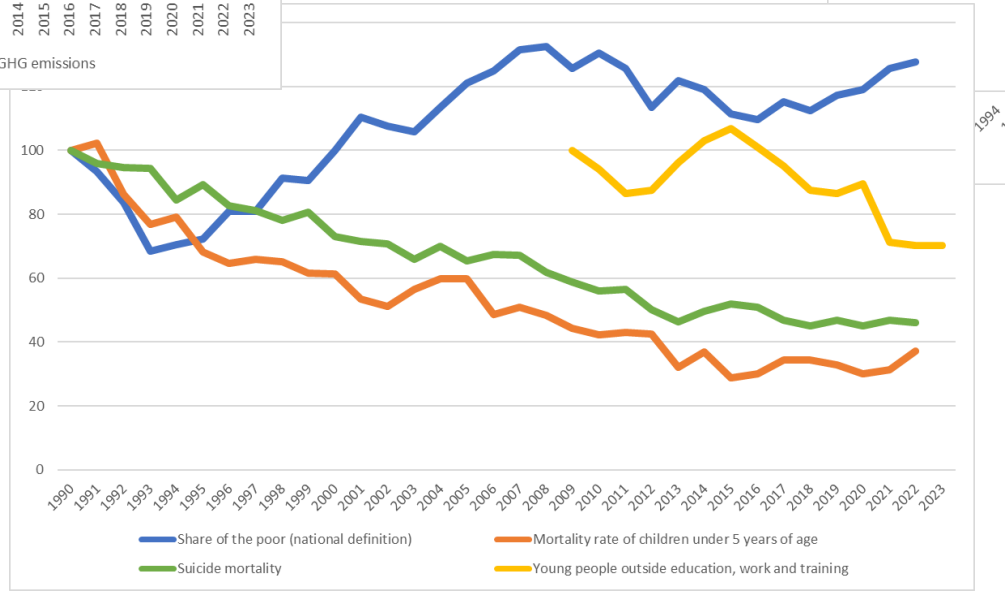
Ecological sustainability



Economic sustainability

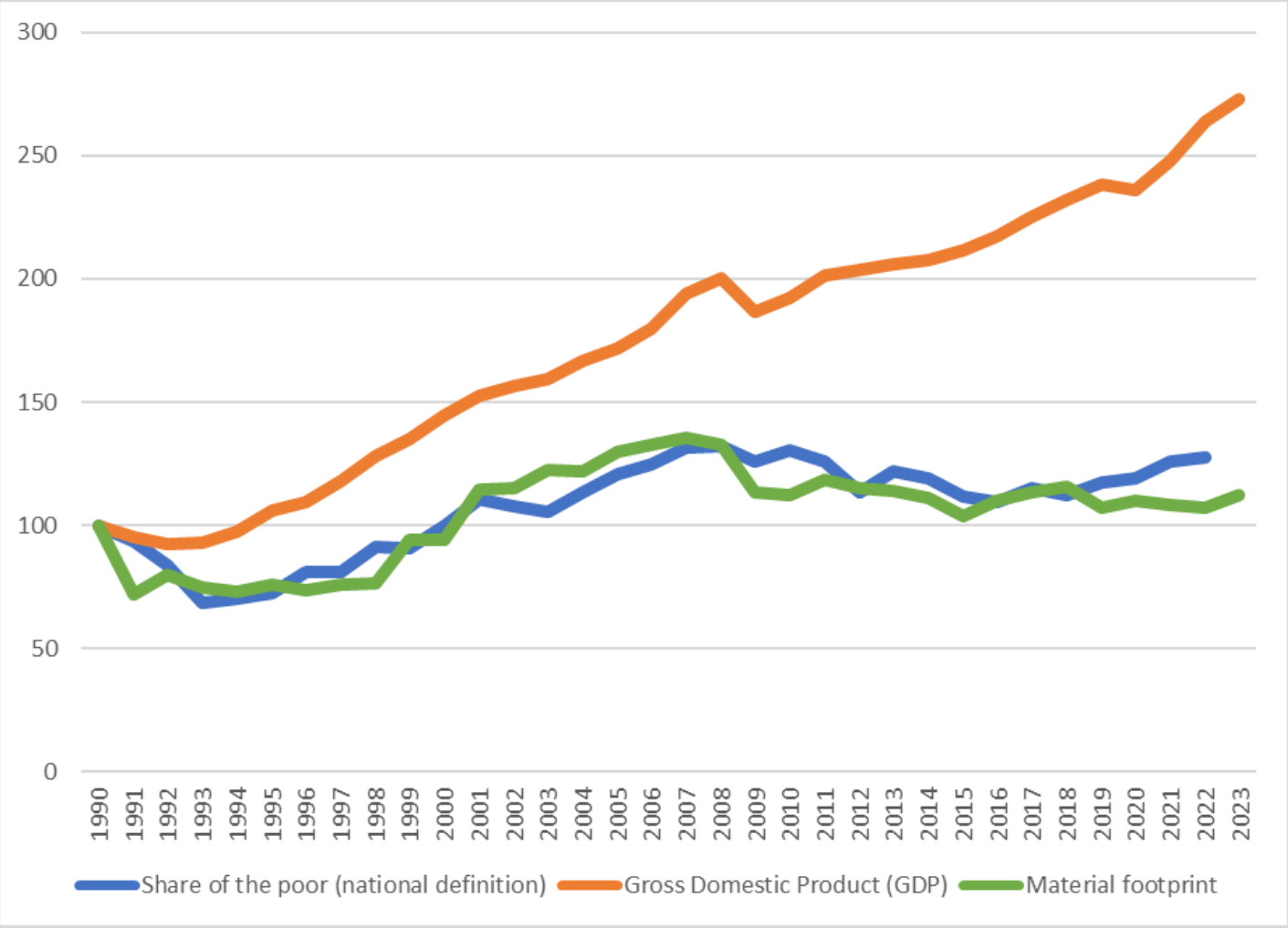


Social sustainability



Source: Kestävyyspaneeli (2024). Kestävän talouden mittarit Suomelle. Kestävyyspaneelin taustamuistio 1/2024.

Selected 3 primary indicators



GDP in Finland has grown more than 2.5 times compared to 1990. Despite this the share of the poor among Finns is higher than in 1990, and in recent years the share of the poor has increased. The material footprint, which describes our environmental load, decreased during the 1990s recession, but increased quickly at the turn of the millennium and it has not been possible to reduce it much in the last 15 years during. Finnish economy consumes the most natural resources in Europe.

Further considerations: We are used to the fact that it is good when the time series in the graphs grow and bad when they decrease. In the graph GDP, Gini coefficient and the proportion of the poor are growing. How to represent this graphically?

Source: Kestävyyspaneeli (2024). Kestävän talouden mittarit Suomelle. Kestävyyspaneelin taustamuistio 1/2024.

Next steps

- Policy recommendation Succeeding in the sustainability breakthrough from Finland: Nature as a limit, people as a force for government officials was presented 20 May 2024. It includes proposal for measures of overall sustainability.
  - Instantly and easily to be implemented actions: Total sustainability indicators to be introduced alongside the GDP measure in decision-making.
  - Proposed measures should be used in decision-making in all government sectors and communicated publicly in the same way as GDP and economic growth.
  - Recommendation have been presented at the world's largest sustainability conference (Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress SRI) held in Helsinki in June 2024 as well as to Prime Minister and in the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development meeting 11 September 2024. Commission is an influential forum that promotes cooperation in order to achieve the sustainable development goals.
  - The proposals for sustainability measurement were presented 11 October 2024 to the Parliament's Committee for the Future. The Committee consists of 17 Members of the Finnish Parliament, and it serves as a Think Tank for futures, science and technology policy in Finland. The counterpart cabinet member is the Prime Minister.
- SDG target 17.19: Develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement Gross Domestic Product, recognizes this these deficiencies. We urgently need metrics that summarize the SDG information into a composite indicators.

KESTÄVYYSPANEELI

Suomen kestävän kehityksen toimikunta
Finlands kommission för hållbar utveckling
Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development

MINISTRY OF FINANCE FINLAND

EDUSKUNTA RIKSDAGEN

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Thank you for your attention

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