

Strategy for Public Governance Renewal



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1. Strategy for Public Governance Renewal

The public governance strategy will guide and strengthen the renewal of public governance as a whole from 2020 to 2030. Well-functioning public governance is a key element of a well functioning democracy and welfare society. A consistent and determined renewal of governance as described in the strategy, will streamline everyday services, ensure legal certainty in society and create new opportunities for business and communities. The strategy seeks to strengthen good governance across the country and in both national languages. It strives to improve digital accessibility and encourage wider use of plain language in administration.

The success story of the Finnish society has been supported by capable public governance that has created the conditions for increased wellbeing. Finnish society and public governance are leading the way in numerous international comparisons.

In a globalising economy, the accelerating climate crisis, an ageing and spatially concentrated population, digitalisation and the consequent transformation of work, challenge the governance structures and practices created over the last century. In exceptional circumstances, such as the COVID-19 crisis of 2020, gazes turn towards public power and governance.

The global COVID-19 pandemic will not be the last societal crisis. Increasing crises and emergencies challenge the ability of a democratic system to function and guide the development of society. Meeting the emerging challenges requires goals and policies that transcend electoral terms.

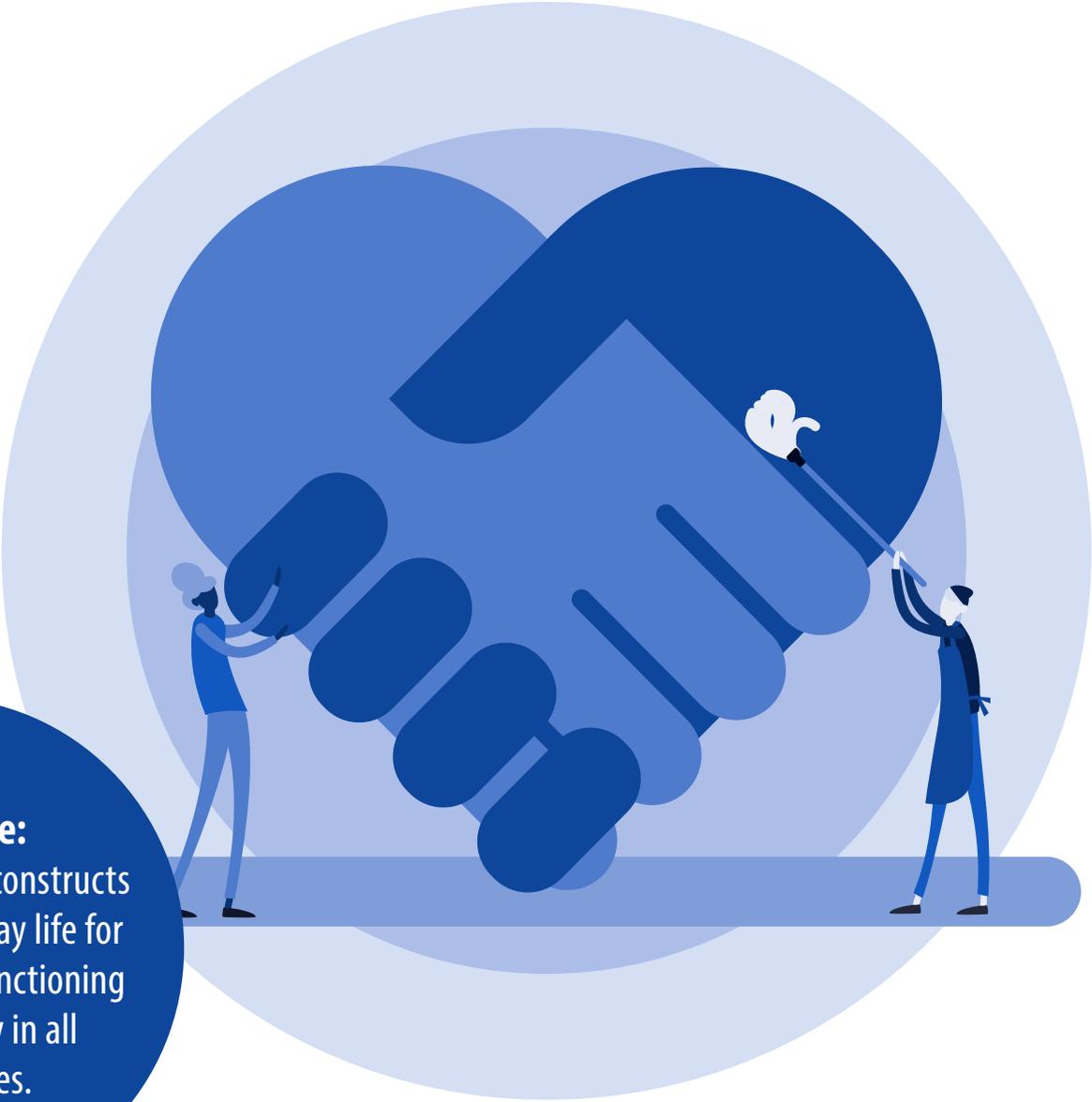
As pressure for reform – created both by the operating environment and internally within government – mounts, the key responsibilities of governance continue to be to safeguard constitutional rights and to build the conditions for societal development and wellbeing. At the same time, renewal of public governance has an impact on the fundamental questions in society about the relationship between government and people, the meaning of public power, and the future of the democratic rule of law as a whole.



2. Pledge to society

Public governance is expected to take action to build the conditions for a good life for all, and to strengthen confidence in a well functioning society and government as a promoter of goals set democratically. The pledge of public governance to society in the decade of 2020 is an answer to why public governance exists, and to strengthen confidence in its operational capability.

When governance is reformed according to common goals and policies, it will be able to deliver on its promises.

An illustration featuring a large, stylized hand in shades of blue, holding a white globe. Two small human figures, one in a blue shirt and the other in a dark blue suit, are positioned at the base of the hand, appearing to work on or support it. The background consists of concentric circles in light and dark blue.

The pledge:
Public governance constructs sustainable everyday life for the future and a functioning and safe society in all circumstances.

3. Belief in the future through common goals

The public governance strategy provides a common direction for government renewal in the 2020s. The strategy will enable public governance to meet the challenges of the decade and secure access to services for individuals and communities.

The strategy sets a target for 2030: Public governance builds sustainable wellbeing in the midst of upheaval.

The target is supported by the shared goals of public governance, which direct government renewal and joint action in the coming decade. These goals are based on enduring Nordic values and the principle of the rule of law.



3.1 Goals for governance actions in 2030

Acknowledging diversity strengthens equality

Governance strengthens equality by acknowledging the diversity of people and their everyday lives. It takes into account the needs of different people and groups using different languages, and builds a sense of cohesion and fairness.

Intergenerational responsibility ensures nature's carrying capacity

Global, intergenerational responsibility for the limits of resources and nature's carrying capacity creates sustainable wellbeing.

Ability to imagine guides change

The Government is able to systematically, and in a creative way, to imagine possible futures and new ways of carrying out the responsibilities of governance. Structures are renewed, new technologies adopted, and practices developed via bold experimentation and controlled risk taking.

Action is based on evidence

Preparatory work and decision making in government are evidence based. Information used for decision making is openly available. Government is able to make informed decisions and identify new opportunities for action, when it extensively seeks and utilises reliable and diverse data, and builds international partnerships.

Trust is built actively

Governance relies on practices creating continuity and bears comprehensive responsibility. Empathetic governance fosters social capital rooted in trust.

Open government works together

Open government reinforces dialogue in society and promotes everyone's right to understand and be understood. It serves, communicates clearly and creates opportunities to participate. Government operations are consistent and transparent. Working together internally, more broadly with the rest of society, and internationally is a requirement for success in the 2020s. Finland actively promotes open government on the international level.



4. This is how we reform public governance in the 2020s

Policies describe how governance will be renewed in practice. They are interpretations of what the pursuit of the goals means in public governance in the 2020s.

Policies are a tool for public governance leadership, management, developers and staff to guide activities and prioritise. They help us build a well functioning and adaptable government that is renewed over time and is an attractive employer.

4.1 Policies

1. We will organise our services in a people centric and diverse way.
2. We will expand opportunities to exert influence and encourage people to participate in policy preparation and decision making.
3. We will bear responsibility for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
4. We will cooperate willingly with the rest of society.
5. We will work consistently and together.
6. We will utilise and provide information in a proactive and diverse manner.
7. We will act agilely and challenge ourselves.



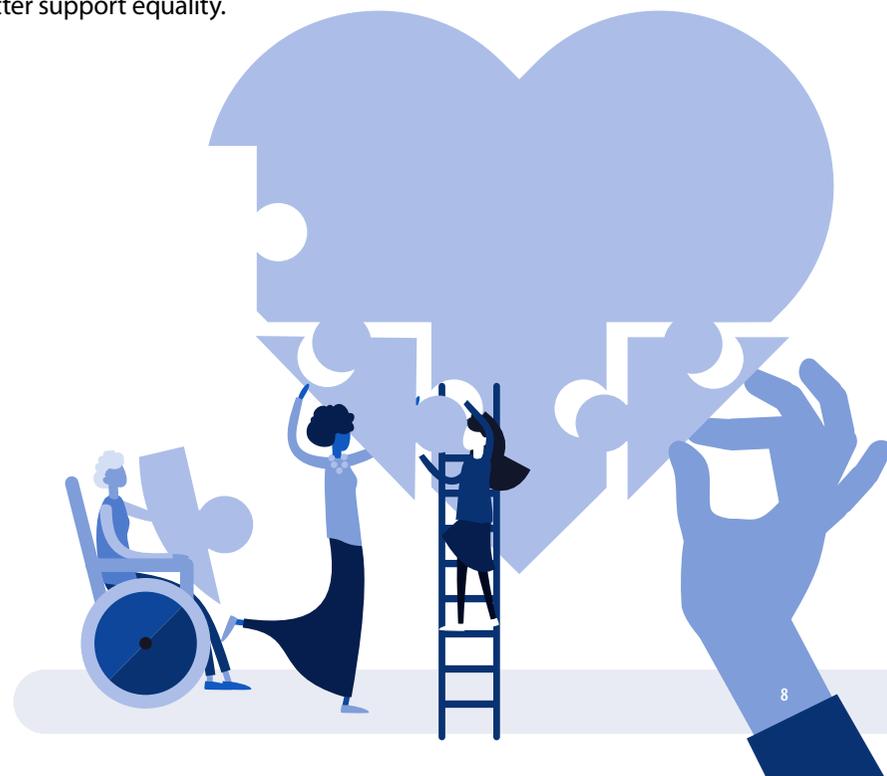
Policy 1

We will organise our services in a people centric and diverse way.

People oriented and diverse services mean proactive, effective services that take into account the needs and circumstances of different people, businesses and organisations. We will develop services together with our clients by identifying different life courses, habits and circumstances as well as considering linguistic rights. We will secure people oriented and equal services in a diversifying society throughout Finland in an economically sustainable way by making extensive use of knowledge and digitalisation. We are responsible for ensuring that the various public services and benefits are easily accessible, understandable, interoperable, safe and reliable.

Implementing the change will require at least the following actions from government:

1. We will build services around life and business events in a proactive and evidence based manner. We will utilise high automation to reduce the need for transactions.
2. Through digital information, we will increase the ability of people and communities to control and influence their service paths.
3. We will strengthen the government's capability to identify and modify structures and processes that cause inequality. Among other things, we will develop the use of language and communication in public governance to make it easier to understand and better support equality.



Policy 2

We will expand opportunities to exert influence and encourage people to participate in policy preparation and decision making.

Building a governance that is meaningful to people requires that we develop and utilise new ways to bring a wider scope of people into realm of society's functions. Trust in one's own possibilities to participate and exert influence, trust in the authorities and the experience that democracy functions well have a significant impact on the stable development of society. We will expand the possibilities for participating and exerting influence by introducing new ways to participate in democracy. We will work for people to feel heard and understood in society. We will pilot various digital means of participation, and especially at the local level utilise methods of e.g. participatory budgeting. We will safeguard the operating framework of democracy through reliable and open information and by supporting the civil society. We will strengthen our role in building the international rules based system.

Implementing change will require at least the following actions from government:

1. We will strengthen co creation processes and openness in policy preparation, strategic projects and the planning of major policy programmes. In this way we will make visible the impacts of participation.
2. We will make full use of digitalisation in developing ways to participate and exert influence. We will also intervene in the dissemination of false information through international cooperation.
3. We will strengthen an operating culture that supports and appreciates participation and open dialogue, both domestically and internationally.
4. We will strengthen, among others, service design and network management capabilities.
5. We will use language that is understandable to those involved.



Policy 3

We will bear responsibility for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Achieving intergenerational justice and safe societal development requires us to move towards carbon neutrality and respect for biodiversity. Therefore, we will assess the ecological impact of reforms and decisions also in sectors where we have not been used to doing so before. We will strengthen a climate smart society and biodiversity, for example through information, incentives and versatile guidance, as well as by making smart use of new technologies. We will actively take part in international climate work.

Implementing the change will require at least the following actions:

1. We will carry out impact assessment of decisions in a more comprehensive and diverse way, for example by utilising digitalisation systematically.
2. We will take the climate crisis and biodiversity loss into account in the Government's strategic and budgetary processes, in order for environmentally sustainable practices also to support social and economic sustainability.
3. We will ensure that administrative branches and local government receive adequate support for environmental impact assessments. We will utilise models of responsibility reporting.



Policy 4

We will cooperate willingly with the rest of society.

Central and local government must significantly increase cooperation and division of labour with the rest of society so that we can solve new societal challenges and ensure the sustainability of public finances. Strengthening willingness to cooperate means, for example, that we will use more diverse ways to interact and reinforce partnerships with the private and third sectors. We will create the conditions for diverse cooperation through legislation and flexible administrative structures. In a global world, there is also a need for well-functioning and confidence building international cooperation. We need new models of cooperation to achieve our goals, as different actors must be able to incorporate their expertise into the operating models of public governance. Examples exist, such as e services shared across sectors, performance based guidance models and innovative public procurement.

Implementing the change will require at least the following actions:

1. We will launch and develop practices and processes enabling cooperation, such as dialogue and activities within networks.
2. We will build trust between different actors, for example through leadership that nurtures cooperation and interaction, and through clear communication.
3. More strongly than at present, we will incorporate continuing interaction into the fundamental processes of governance, so that different sectors of government can examine issues broadly and in a people centric way.
4. Together we will develop digital solutions that enable smooth cooperation.



Policy 5

We will work consistently and together.

We will review our operations so that we can improve the way we work across internal structures and borders more smoothly and coherently, for example through guidance and management systems. Siloed thinking in government has been highlighted in many studies as one of the weaknesses of public governance. Administrative branch specific and government agency specific performance management, the authorities' own service networks, management structures, resourcing, traditions and narrow-minded attitudes for their part support limited cross-facilitation and do not adequately encourage working together across administrative boundaries. We will promote cohesion across government, for example by increasing phenomenon based policy preparation, and by building electronic transactions as online services and shared customer service points of public governance. We will strengthen smooth cooperation between central and local government as well as the Government's coordinating role in facilitating cohesion. We will ensure that the communications in Swedish between the central government and the autonomy authorities in Åland continue to work well. Where necessary, we will increase incentives and focus guidance to overcome obstacles critical to working together.

Implementing the change will require at least the following actions:

1. We will create and monitor inter administrative strategic goals and expand the public governance 'At work for Finland' line of thinking.
2. We will strengthen the shared operating culture of public governance and expand shared support services.
3. We will manage and develop the national level of shared central government customer service cross administration.



Policy 6

We will utilise and provide information in a proactive and diverse manner.

In a changing operating environment, the government's operational capability is enforced by utilising high quality information in a diverse manner. We will develop foresight systematically, so as to quickly be able to form a reliable information base when needed. In preparing for long-term decision making, aside from up to date and evidence based information, we will also utilise foresight. We will make better use of and produce diverse, reliable information in government and society. We will create close links with the broad research community to meet our information needs. This means, for example, that we will open government data resources and we will link foresight more strongly to preparation and budgeting. We must prepare increasingly for new ways of using information. Opening and utilising information also require international cooperation.

Implementing the change will require at least the following actions:

1. We will make systematic foresight and future thinking a key part of management and also of policy preparation and decision making processes.
2. We will strengthen and diversify the databases and networks to be utilised, for example by evaluating people's experience of the legitimacy of public governance actions.
3. We will be more active in international networks, to prevent the spread of unreliable information.
4. We will develop capabilities to open and utilise information and real time data.



Policy 7

We will act agilely and challenge ourselves.

The traditional starting point for government activities has been to ensure stability and predictability, for which reason its operating methods are designed in part to be rigid. However, the rapidly changing operating environment requires us to renew our expertise and adopt more agile and flexible practices. We will develop governance by systematically utilising strategic experimentation, flexible processes and rapid learning between different functions of government. Flexibility is built, for example, by making more versatile use of guiding mechanisms, good personnel policies, introducing digital solutions, examining the possibilities of new technologies, and by impact based regulation and rapid iterative planning processes.

Implementing the change will require at least the following actions:

1. We will plan and organise governance actions in line with assessment indicating where the greatest impact can be achieved.
2. In government, we will increase the ability to think systemically and review operations, as well as to continuously renew expertise.
3. We will strengthen our experimental culture and our ability to conduct strategic and practical experiments. We will implement agile and iterative design processes.



5. Implementation and follow up of the strategy

The strategy will be implemented extensively in public governance during the 2020s. For implementation in 2021–2022, the Ministry of Finance and the Association of Finnish Municipalities will prepare an implementation programme in cooperation with stakeholders. The continuously updated implementation programme will be published on the website publicgovernancestrategy.fi.

The political management group for public governance reform, consisting of ministers, will monitor the implementation of the strategy. Progress in line with the strategy will be monitored and evaluated continuously as implementation advances, and more comprehensively at the end of 2022.



Background



6. Why must public governance change?

Smooth public governance is a key element of a well-functioning democracy. Finnish society and public governance are at the forefront of numerous international comparisons. The public governance's digital services have been rated as the best in the EU, the administration the second-best in the world and Finland is in third place in adhering to the rule of law. However, the accelerating climate crisis, an ageing and concentrated population, digitalisation and the resulting transformation of work, and the globalising and changing economy are challenging governance structures and measures mostly created over the last century. Increasing crises and emergencies challenge the ability of a democratic system to function and guide social development. They highlight tensions, for instance, between democratic decision-making and development curves extending beyond electoral terms, as well as between the knowledge of experts and political decision-making. Therefore, new ways of ensuring well-being in a sustainable way are needed.

The need for large-scale development of public governance practices has long been recognised. For example, OECD publications and country assessments shed light on how the increasing complexity of both the operating environment and governance is challenging the ability of the current type of public governance to function appropriately and efficiently. The need for change arises not only from resolving tensions but also from seizing new opportunities. For example, full-scale use of new technologies requires reforming public governance structures and building new capacity.

As the pressure for reform, both created by the operating environment and within governance, increases, governance must continue to safeguard constitutional rights and build the conditions for social development and well-being. To achieve them, the administration must constantly seek new ways of acting, identify the most effective tools and strengthen its capabilities. In this way, Finland also strengthens its international position. At the same time, it must be recognised that renewal of public governance also has an impact on society's fundamental questions about the relationship between government and people, the meaning of public power and the future of the democratic rule of law as a whole.

The public governance strategy builds the framework for Finnish public governance reform so that Finnish society has the capacity to develop answers to the big questions of principle in this decade and to strengthen the future of the democratic rule of law. The six goals of the strategy define a common direction for the reform of Finnish governance. Its policies, in turn, identify concrete targets for change that will increase the administrative preconditions and capabilities of governance so that Finnish society is ready to respond to the acute challenges and changes of this decade. Both of these perspectives and levels of reform are needed for Finnish governance to be able to create sustainable prosperity even in the 2030s.

The pledge, the goals and the policies of the Strategy for Public Governance Renewal



THE PLEDGE

Public governance constructs sustainable everyday life for the future and a functioning and safe society for all circumstances.

The strategy sets a target for 2030: Public governance builds sustainable wellbeing in the midst of upheaval.

GOALS

What are the goals for public governance actions in 2030?

Acknowledging diversity strengthens equality

Intergenerational responsibility ensures nature's carrying capacity

Ability to imagine guides change

Action is based on evidence

Trust is built actively

Open government works together

POLICIES

What does the reformation of the public governance mean in the 2020s?

We will organise our services in a people centric and diverse way

We will expand opportunities to exert influence and encourage people to participate in policy preparation and decision making

We will bear responsibility for climate change mitigation and adaptation

We will cooperate willingly with the rest of society

We will work consistently and together

We will utilise and provide information in a proactive and diverse manner

We will act agilely and challenge ourselves

7. This is how the strategy was drawn up

In accordance with the Prime Minister Sanna Marin's government programme, a project was set up in the autumn 2019 to prepare a common strategy for public governance and services.

The strategy was drawn up under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. Project Steering group: Chairman Päivi Nerg (Ministry of Finance), Vice Chairman Minna Karhunen (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities), Arto Haveri (University of Tampere), Seppo Määttä (Prime Minister's Office, Mikael Grannas (Sipoo Municipality), Anna Similä (Ministry of Transport and Communications), Riitta Kaivosoja (Ministry of Education and Culture), Jukka Aalto (Ministry of the Interior), Kari Hakari (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health), Outi Ryyppö (Ministry of Employment and the Economy), Leena Ylä-Mononen (Ministry of the Environment). A project office consisting of experts from the Ministry of Finance and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities was set up to support the work, and support for the preparation process was obtained from Demos Helsinki.

The basis and starting point of the public governance strategy is an analysis of the operating environment, which assessed, among other things, the effects of climate change, digitalisation, the working life revolution, and economic and demographic changes on public governance. Four different scenarios of public governance and Finnish society in 2030 were created from the analysis of the operating environment in the strategy work. These future scenarios serve as a tool to identify the need for change in the current governance and to find the ethos of common governance.

The direction and means of administrative reform were defined together with various administrative sectors, municipalities, civil society, researchers and various stakeholders as the **pledge, goals and policies** of public governance in the 2020s. Dozens of workshops and joint events were organised during the process (list of co-development events at the end of the document). The questionnaire on otakantaa.fi, which received hundreds of responses, helped to identify the types of meanings assigned to public governance. The participatory process of preparing the strategy has therefore played an important role in strengthening cooperation between the state, municipalities and future welfare regions, as well as the interaction between governance and the rest of society, and in building a common understanding of the need and direction of public governance development.



Identifying the need for administrative change through future work

Public governance actions are guided by many national and international statutes and commitments, from the Constitution and EU founding documents to the Administrative Procedure Act. These form the basis for the enduring values and functions of public governance. This strategy work identified governance roles and practices that require change and reform in particular, as opposed to roles and practices that require continuity and stability in particular. As a tool, four future scenarios of public governance were created, which were formed on the basis of an analysis of the operating environment. In different scenarios, the key questions for the development of public governance have been answered in different ways.

Examples of questions:

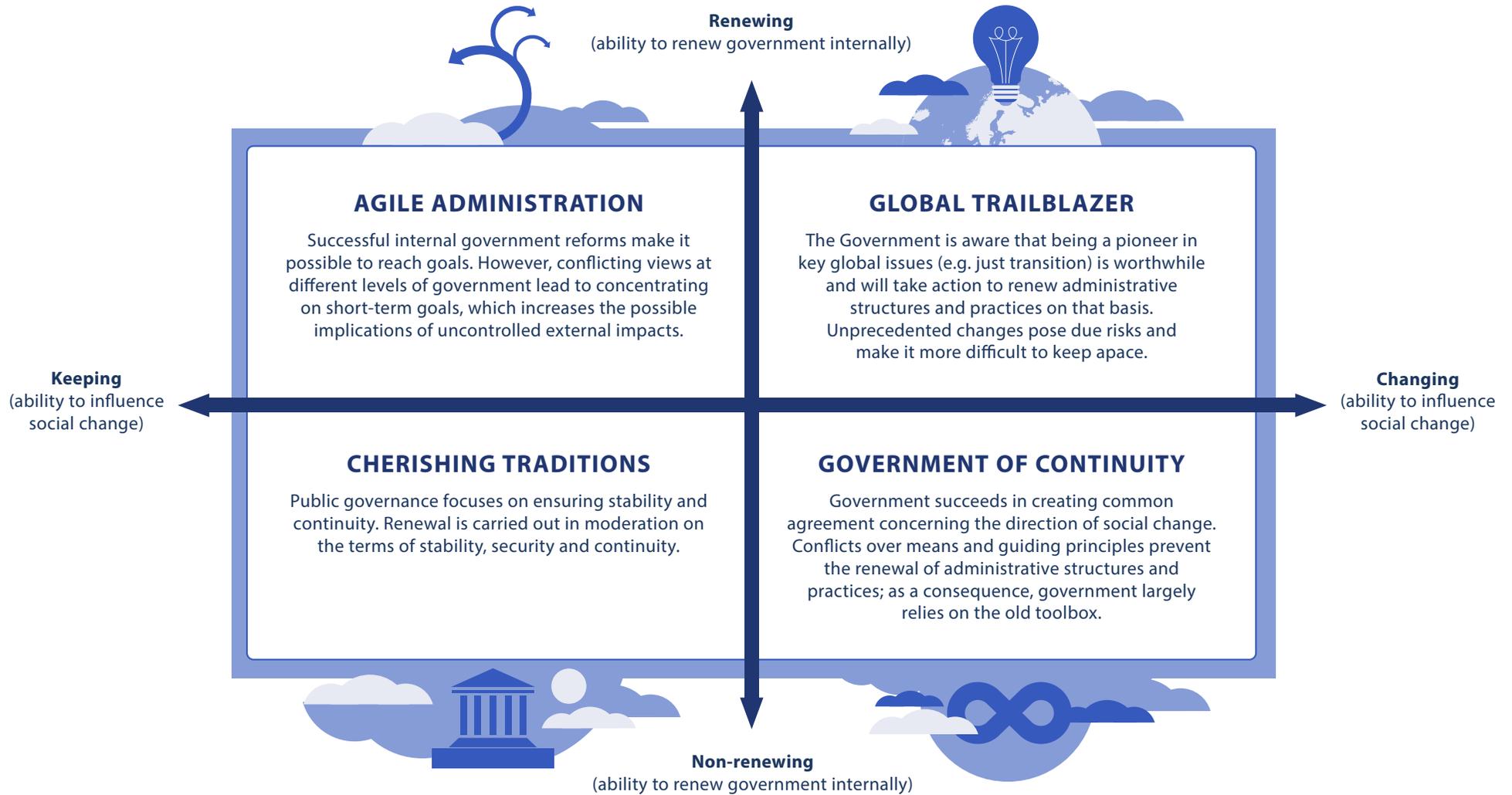
1. How are the welfare state services produced with financial sustainability as the population ages?
2. How can the principle of equality in different parts of the country be maintained?
3. How can it be ensured that everyone stays involved in the rapidly changing society?
4. How to take care of social cohesion and targeting of public services as the population and lifestyles diversify?

The future scenarios made it possible to envisage different possibilities for resolving key issues and thus highlighting alternative directions for the development of public governance, such as people-to-government relations, the knowledge base of government decision-making, ways of engaging and the instruments which the strategy covers.

Alternative future scenarios describing the ability of public governance to change are structured on two axes: the ability of public administration to influence social change and direct social renewal, and the ability to renew government internally.



Future scenarios of the capabilities of public governance for change in 2030



The future of public governance outlined in the strategy work is not based on a single vision of the future, but the scenarios were used to identify the three dimensions of change in which the tasks and meanings of governance can be placed.

This is how the elements of the strategy were formed:
 1) Relatively enduring promise and goals for the administrative reform, 2) Policies that identify the necessary conditions for change and 3) An implementation plan that puts the strategy into practice.

Dimensions of change in governance and segments of the strategy



8. Public governance strategy preparation, co-creation events

2019

- 6 Sep Suunnannäyttäjät event
- 30 Oct JUHTA workshop
- 6 Nov VM-Akatemia event

2020

January

Joint events of the regional strategy project (4)

Feb–Mar

- 4 Feb Julkisen johtamisen päivä event
- 5 Mar Think tank of the university administrative trainees at the co-working space Työ 2.0 Lab
- 9 Mar Meeting of the Joint Service Advisory Board
- 11 Mar Public governance strategy on display at the co-working space Työ 2.0 Lab
- 11 Mar Regional tour on open governance and public procurement in Salo
- 13 Mar Regional strategy event in Helsinki
- 26 Mar Discussion with the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy

April

- 20 Apr–4 May SOFI research training in writing
- 23 Apr Open workshop with stakeholders, involving public governance developers and business representatives
- 27 Apr Discussion with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's equality programme
- 28 Apr Workshop with the Department for Regions and Growth Services of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
- 29 Apr Open workshop with stakeholders, involving public governance developers and business representatives

May

- 7 May Discussion with researchers of the Youth Barometer
- 13 May Remote break dialogue with young people and influencers from Lahti and the Ministry of Justice
- 19 May Remote break dialogue with young people and influencers from Kaarina and the Ministry of Justice
- 19 May Discussion with the National Democracy Programme by the Ministry of Justice
- 26 May Discussion in the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities' city expert network
- 27 May Presentation at the Ministry of Education and Culture's administrative management meeting
- 28 May Launch of the joint experimental workshop series of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the Ministry of Education and Culture

June

- 3 Jun SOFI research training in conversation
- 9 Jun Discussion with the Youth Agenda 2030 group
- 11 Jun Presentation in the network of ministries' headquarters
- 11 Jun Presentation in the joint ministerial forecast working group
- 17 Jun Discussion with the Prime Minister's Office's Kortteli project
- 23 Jun Discussion with the National Democracy Programme by the Ministry of Justice
- 23 Jun Discussion on the draft strategy with the special advisers to the Ministers
- 24 Jun Discussion with National Audit Office of Finland on governance development
- 30 Jun Presentation in the Nordic governance development network

August

- 15 Aug Municipal-state workshop
- 26 Aug Discussion with the secretariat of the Six Cities, the biggest cities in Finland
- 26 Aug Discussion on the draft strategy at an informal government meeting, Evening session

September

- 1 Sep Discussion in the Executive Board of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
- 2 Sep An open discussion for those working in public governance
- 3 Sep Exchange of views with the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy
- 7 Sep An open discussion for those working in public governance
- 10 Sep Presentation of the draft strategy at the Kuntamarkkinat event
- 11 Sep Discussion with the State Administration HR Steering Group
- 11 Sep Discussion with the City of Tampere's strategic management
- 16 Sep Discussions in the network of ministries' headquarters
- 17 Sep Discussion in the Group 44 municipal management network of the Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities
- 18 Sep Discussion in the network of the Health and social services reform regions (welfare regions)
- 23 Sep Discussion with the Digi arkeen project Advisory Board
- 23 Sep Discussion with the State Administration Information Management Cooperation Group
- 24 Sep Presentation of the draft strategy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' administrative management meeting
- 25 Sep SOFI research training
- 28 Sep Discussion in the Permanent Secretary meeting
- 28 Sep Discussion with the Joint Service Advisory Board
- 29 Sep Discussion with the secretariat of the Six Cities, the biggest cities in Finland
- 30 Sep Municipal-state workshop

October

- 6 Oct Discussion at a meeting of Chief Information Officers of cities
- 23 Oct Pöhinäperjantai, Friday event Public governance strategy and welfare economy



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