



# Finnish Environment Institute's operational equality and non-discrimination plan



Suomen ympäristökeskus  
Finlands miljöcentral  
Finnish Environment Institute

We build hope through knowledge. | [syke.fi](https://syke.fi)

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>2. Syke as a Provider of Services and Operations</b> .....	3
2.1. Syke's Key Customers and Stakeholders .....	5
2.2. Promoting Equality and Non-Discrimination through Funding Projects.....	5
<b>3. Syke's Current State Regarding Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination</b> .....	6
3.1. Implementation of the Survey .....	6
3.2. Current State Analysis: Overview of Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination at Syke.....	8
3.3. Structured Collection and Monitoring of Feedback .....	9
3.4. Linguistic Diversity in Syke Services and Operations.....	9
3.5. Realisation of Digital and Linguistic Accessibility.....	10
<b>4. Objectives and Measures</b> .....	13
Sources .....	14
Appendix.....	15
Syke's Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination .....	15

# 1. Introduction

The Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986) obliges the authorities to promote equality between women and men in a goal-oriented and systematic manner. The purpose of the Act is also to prevent direct or indirect discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression. Direct discrimination refers to less favourable treatment of an individual based on a personal characteristic. Indirect discrimination, on the other hand, refers to various practices or rules that may put a person at a disadvantage based on their personal characteristics. Gender identity refers to a person's experience of their own gender. Gender expression denotes the way a person expresses their gender, such as behaviour or clothing.

The Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014) prohibits discrimination based on age, nationality, origin, religious beliefs, language, political activity, trade union activity, state of health, sexual orientation, disability or other personal reason. The Non-Discrimination Act obliges the authorities and employers to assess and promote equality in their operations to promote the realisation of equality. The purpose of the promotion measures is to ensure that all individuals have genuine opportunities to participate in activities.

Legislation requires the authorities to systematically promote equality and non-discrimination. The Act on Equality between Women and Men requires the promotion of equality in working life. Section 5 of the Non-Discrimination Act requires a separate plan for promotion measures. The preparation of the plan helps to identify potential challenges related to equality and non-discrimination in services, to define the objectives of their promotion and to put them into practice in operations and service practices.

Non-discrimination and equality are an important part of the operations of the Finnish Environment Institute (Syke). The aim of this plan is to promote equality and non-discrimination in all Syke operations and services. At Syke, the latest statutory Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan for 2023–2025 was drawn up in 2023. The plan in question focused on an internal review of the organisation. The Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan is separate from this and applies especially to the realisation of equality and non-discrimination among external customers and stakeholders. The plan combines the promotion of equality and non-discrimination into a single entity to be examined.

Based on the current state analysis, the plan identifies the key areas for development and sets concrete goals in the action plan on how the themes of operational equality and non-discrimination can be both promoted and established (or monitored) more strongly as part of Syke's operations. The plan consists of a current state analysis, the selection of development targets, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

## 2. Syke as a Provider of Services and Operations

The Finnish Environment Institute is a multidisciplinary research and development centre with extensive operations, both in Finland and internationally. Syke's principle is that genuine dialogue and participation are part of all operations.

Syke's operations are divided into five solution units, two cross-sectional units, three facilitating units and three different functions supported by management. The main tasks of the units include research and development work and the provision of various services. The official duties of the Finnish Environment Institute are carried out in a separate public services function.

## Syke's organisation 2026

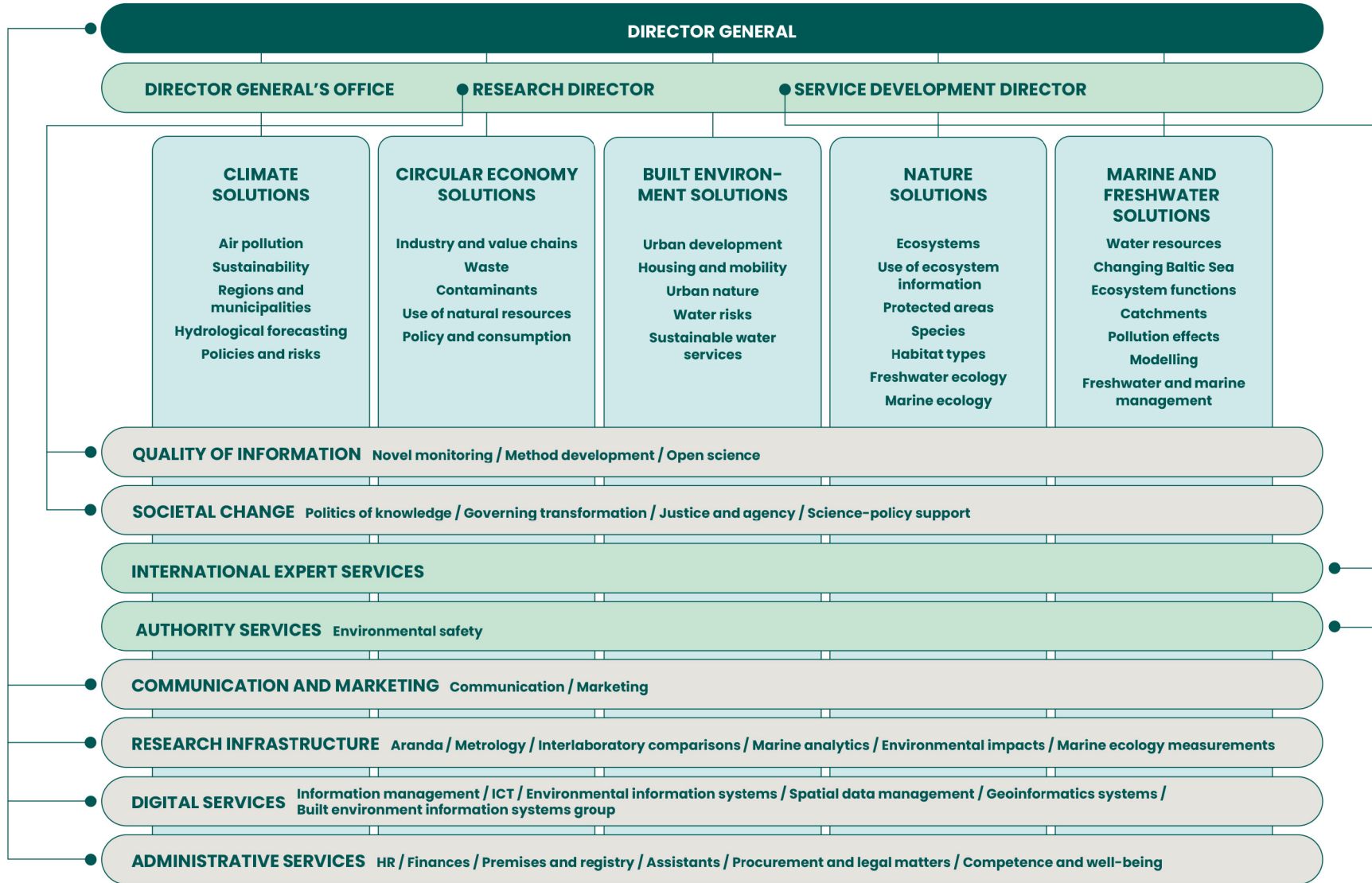


Figure 1. Management organisation of the Finnish Environment Institute 2023–2026

As Syke's operations are extensive, in order to examine operational equality and non-discrimination, it is essential to first identify the services and functions in which external customers and stakeholders are systematically encountered. In Syke operations, these include public services, laboratory services, digital information services, information services, research activities and projects, as well as communications. This plan specifically examines the realisation of equality and non-discrimination in these areas of responsibility.

## 2.1. Syke's Key Customers and Stakeholders

Syke's key stakeholders in public administration are the Government, Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, municipalities, other research institutes, universities, government agencies, as well as public R&D funders. At the international level, the main contacts are the various institutions of the European Union, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the research institutes that are part of the PEER network. Syke also participates in the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UNECE activities. The media and several non-governmental organisations are also important customers for Syke.

**Table 1. Syke's identified services and operations in which external customers and stakeholders are systematically encountered**

Services and activities	Key customer groups and stakeholders
Public services	Private customers Enterprises (where the business field is diverse)
Laboratory services	Individuals (representatives) Environmental experts Ministries
Digital information services	Citizens Representatives of organisations Authorities
Information services	Various experts Media Individual citizens Data users
Research activities and/or projects	Citizens' juries People Various authorities
Communication	Individual citizens, users Authorities Media

## 2.2. Promoting Equality and Non-Discrimination through Funding Projects

Many funders require that funding applications describe how gender equality or non-discrimination is to be promoted during the projects. These include Horizon Europe (HE) and the Research Council of Finland.

Beneficiaries of Horizon Europe must respect and comply with the horizontal principles. These include the fundamental rights and principles of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, gender equality, non-discrimination and sustainable development, considering the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle. All public organisations are also required to have a Gender Equality Plan. In addition, depending on the project, some HE applications must describe how gender is considered in the context of research innovation.

The Research Council of Finland requires that the research it funds promotes gender equality and non-discrimination, with a particular focus on ensuring gender balance, promoting an active gender perspective and equality in research, as well as eliminating and preventing structural inequality.

Syke is also involved in implementing development cooperation projects. The cross-cutting objectives of Finland's development policy are gender equality, non-discrimination, climate-resilient and low-emission development, as well as environmental protection, with an emphasis on safeguarding biodiversity. At the project level, the principles must be incorporated at least to ensure that the Do No Significant Harm principle is realised.

## 3. Syke's Current State Regarding Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination

### 3.1. Implementation of the Survey

The plan is based on a report on the current state carried out at Syke in 2023–2024. The report on the current state describes how equality and non-discrimination are realised in different services and operations. The report will be used to identify key development targets in the realisation of equality and non-discrimination and to draw up an action plan to promote these identified development targets in a goal-oriented manner.

Various assessment methods and material describing the operating environment can be utilised in the assessment of the current state. Syke's operating environment was examined based on guide<sup>1</sup> of the equality assessment tool, and the Equality Act and the Non-Discrimination Act were closely involved in each part of the current state assessment. The report also utilised Syke's external website, Syke's strategy for 2021–2025 and Syke's Sustainability Report for 2022.

In addition to the written material, to gain a broader perspective, key persons responsible for the operations were interviewed and surveys were prepared for a wider group of experts. The interviews were conducted as individual interviews with representatives of Syke's core functions and services, and based on these, more detailed information was obtained on what kind of customer groups are encountered in the operations and services, what are the key themes of equality and non-discrimination, and what kinds of successes and areas for development may be identified. Based on the key topics identified in the interviews, self-assessment surveys were prepared with the aim of gaining deeper insights and broadening the perspective on how equality and non-discrimination are realised for external clients and stakeholders. The first survey was targeted at a small group of representatives of Syke's operations and services<sup>2</sup>, and the second survey was targeted at the entire staff<sup>3</sup>. The survey for the entire staff was prepared in both Finnish and English.

The questions are based on the questions in the equality assessment tool guide. The questions have been modified to describe Syke's services and operations. The concepts used in the interview situation

have been explained in the surveys, and they have been discussed in more detail in the interview situation. In addition, the questions in the interview template may have been modified according to the interviews so that they are relevant to the function or service in question. For example, not all Syke's operations or services involve face-to-face encounters with customers or stakeholders or profiling, which means that more detailed questions about origin, sexual orientation and gender have been omitted in these respects.

1. Ministry of Justice. Tool for the assessment of equality.
2. A total of 17 SYKE employees responded to the short survey, representing public services, quality and laboratory services, communications, expert work, research and international services.
3. A total of 67 Syke employees responded to the survey.

**Table 2. Background questions to help assess equality and non-discrimination**

**Background questions for mapping operational equality and non-discrimination**

What kind of external stakeholders and customers are encountered in your services/operations?

What kind of themes of equality and non-discrimination do you think are central to your services/activities?

How are equality and non-discrimination considered in your services?

Have you noticed any shortcomings or areas for development in services/operations related to non-discrimination and/or equality?

Do you think that other means/tools should be introduced so that the services would better support equality and non-discrimination?

Are your operations/services impartial and neutral from the perspectives of non-discrimination/equality?

Are the different needs of different clients considered from the equality and non-discrimination perspective?

Are the services able to meet and identify representatives of a minority group when necessary?

Do the service/operation providers and customers understand each other?

Is there cooperation with different population groups if necessary?

Are the different needs of different customers considered when necessary?

Is material produced in different languages if necessary?

Will one-sided or incorrect information (concerning minorities, special groups) be addressed, if necessary?

Does everyone have the opportunity to give feedback on the operations?

What are the methods used to collect feedback?

Is the feedback received in the services utilised when necessary?

The preparation of the Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan has been actively communicated within Syke in various ways, in Finnish and English. A separate intranet news item was published about the start of the preparatory work, and another communicative news item will also be published about the end of the preparatory work. During the preparatory work, the plan has also been discussed with Syke's legal representative, communications and HR policy representative. The plan and its key contents have been presented to the management groups, and the Cooperation Committee (YT-komitea) has been consulted. Communication about the plan will continue in the future so that every SYKE employee can identify and apply the content of the Non-Discrimination Act and the Equality Act, as well as promote the realisation of operational equality and non-discrimination in the best possible way.

## 3.2. Current State Analysis: Overview of Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination at Syke

Based on the survey aimed at Syke staff, Syke employees have a good understanding of the concepts of equality and non-discrimination and their content (3.9 on a scale of 1 to 5). Although Syke employees have a good understanding of equality and non-discrimination, some perceive that they are not necessarily a systematic part of services or activities in every unit. Equality and non-discrimination were also seen as broad concepts to be taken into consideration.

The key themes of equality and non-discrimination identified based on the interviews were non-discrimination, independence, accessibility, inclusiveness, impartiality, openness, language and citizenship. According to the survey respondents, all of these were almost equally important principles describing the operation or service. Independence (73%) and openness (79%) were considered to describe services and activities most closely, while citizenship (0.10%) was perceived as a principle that had less impact on services or operations from the equality and non-discrimination perspective. This is probably partly explained by the fact that Syke is a bilingual organisation, and most of the units serve in more than one language. In addition, in some services and operations, the clients are often not met face-to-face, which means that the significance of citizenship remains minor.

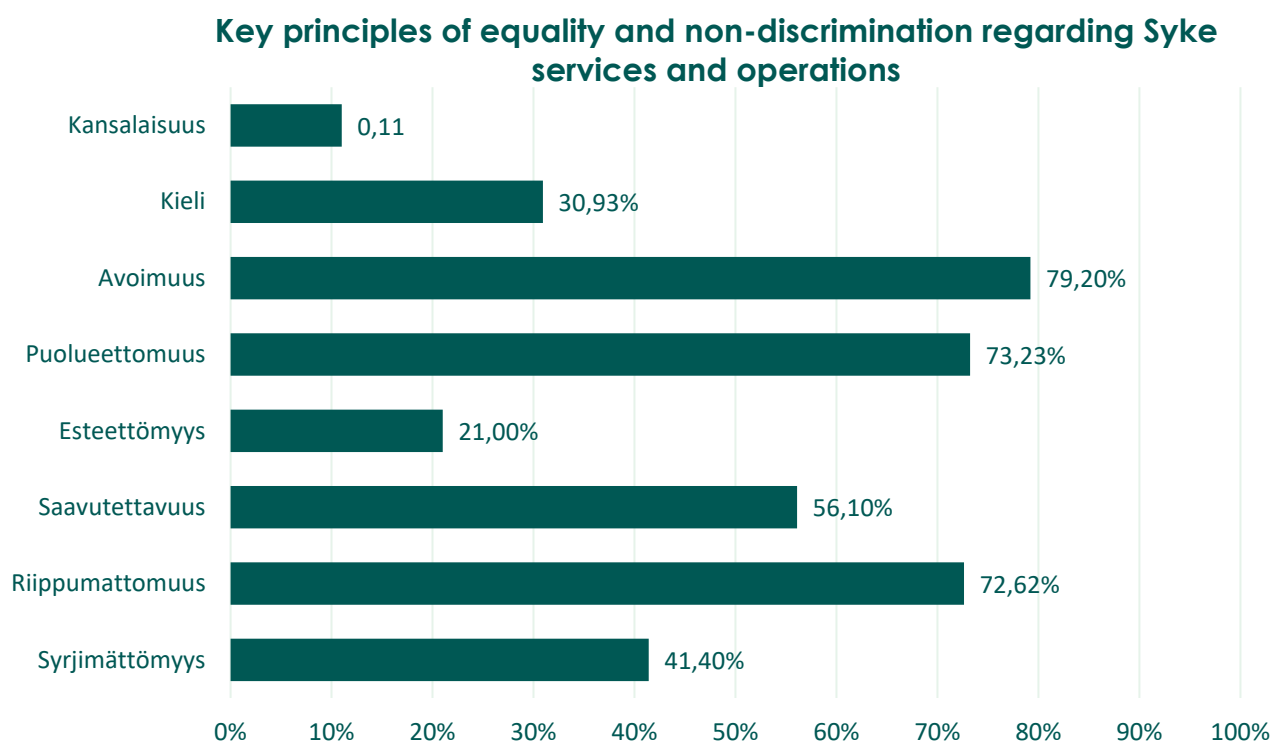


Figure 1.

### Key principles of equality and non-discrimination regarding Syke services and operations

. 82 respondents.

### 3.3. Structured Collection and Monitoring of Feedback

Syke has feedback response practices that provide instructions on the processing time and method of feedback and the style of feedback. There are some differences between units in how feedback is collected, and feedback is indeed gathered through multiple channels, such as Syke's own websites, social media, separate feedback surveys and as oral feedback. Each feedback channel is managed by its designated responsible person, and a summary of the feedback is compiled, which is discussed by the management groups of the operating units or the Syke management group. A plan must be drawn up for feedback that requires immediate action, specifying the measures, schedule and responsible persons. The feedback survey on the websites does not include a separate question related to equality or non-discrimination, but the open response field provides an opportunity to bring this up as well. Feedback can also be provided in Swedish and English.

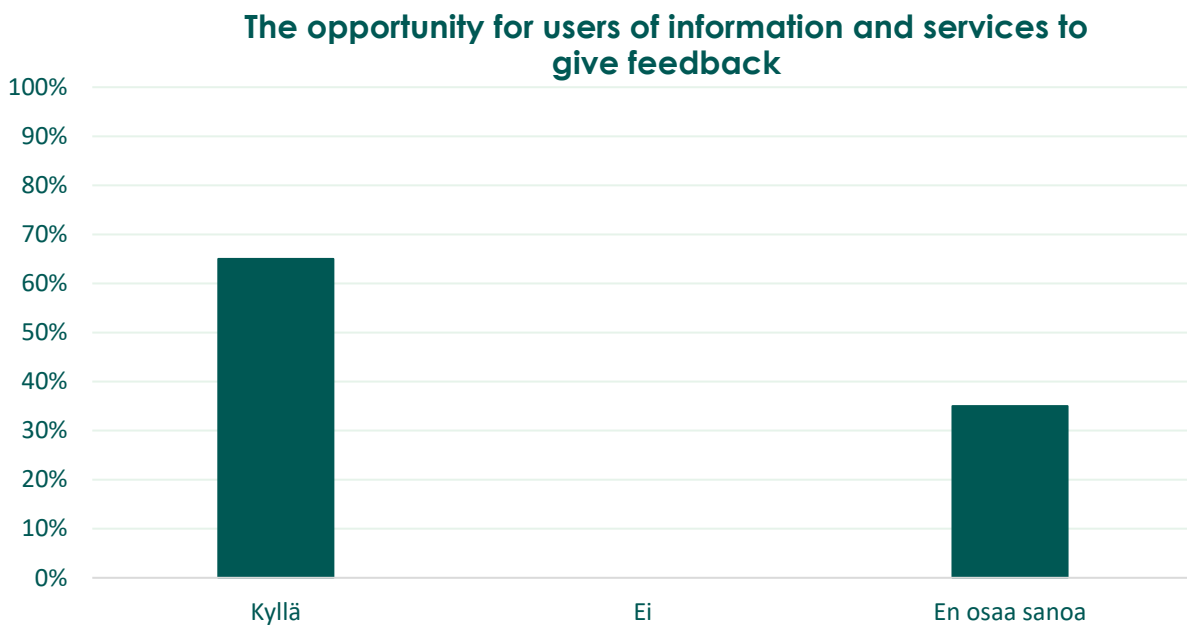


Figure 2. The opportunity for users of information and services to give feedback. 17 respondents.

Feedback should guide operations. Based on the survey, representatives of Syke's core services and functions felt that feedback can, in principle, be given by everyone Syke encounters (65% of respondents). However, Syke does not have a uniform feedback system or structured monitoring of feedback. Syke employees feel that feedback is not monitored very systematically (2.6/5). The lack of feedback monitoring in certain units is partly due to the lack of external feedback, which means that there has been no need for structured monitoring. Structured monitoring is also seen as a question of resources, as it is a time-consuming process and changes can be slow to implement. The need for structured monitoring and more efficient use of feedback has been identified.

### 3.4. Linguistic Diversity in Syke Services and Operations

Syke is a significant player both internationally and in Finland. For this reason, linguistic diversity is a key part of Syke operations. As an agency, Syke is also bound by the Language Act (423/2003) and the Act on the Use of the Sámi Language before the Authorities (46/2003). Syke invests in multilingualism in various ways, both in internal communications and in the production of services and functions. In Syke services and

operations, the aim is to serve the customer in the desired language, and special emphasis is placed on providing services in English and Swedish. Among other things, Syke has hired an English-language reporter and is tendering for language translations. In addition, Finnish and English language skills are supported through measures such as language training, with particular emphasis on enhancing English proficiency among support services staff.

Languages offerings have also been targeted in different units, for example in Russian, Chinese and Spanish. There are differences between the units in the operating languages, i.e. whether the main languages used are, for example, English and Finnish, or Finnish, English and Swedish or some other language. Syke units also produce a wide range of written material in different languages. Of these, the main languages are Finnish (76%), Swedish (76%) and English (94%), but also others as needed.

### In which languages is the material produced?

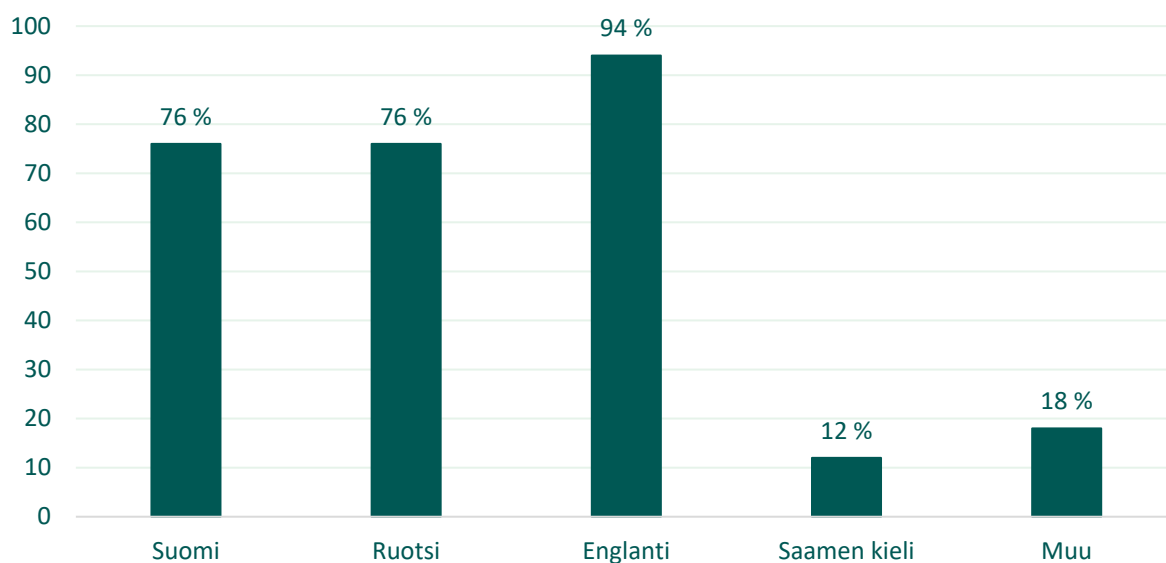


Figure 3. The languages in which the written material is produced. 17 respondents. The sample has mainly consisted of representatives of public services and communications, which may partly explain the high reading of written material in English.

Some shortcomings have been observed in language rights, especially with regard to Swedish-language services. The Swedish-language service is not considered to be sufficiently comprehensive in all operations, and the language versions are often felt to be lagging behind. Syke's own websites contain partly incomplete content in Swedish. For example, staff profiles have not been created in the other official language at all. Also, relatively little information and publications directed outside the organisation are produced in Swedish.

The status of the English language was perceived to be better, but there were also some shortcomings in its use, for example, in the content of information systems and metadata. Linguistic perspectives, especially regarding Swedish, have been discussed for a long time in many units. The main difficulty in offering multilingual services was a shortage of resources.

## 3.5. Realisation of Digital and Linguistic Accessibility

Accessibility is a key part of Syke services and operations. The accessibility of Syke services and operations is guided by, among other things, the European Accessibility Act (EAA) and the requirements set by it, as

well as the Act on the Provision of Digital Services (306/2019). Accessibility can mean both the accessibility of digital services and the accessibility of content.

The accessibility of digital services means that online services have been created in such a way that everyone has equal opportunities to use them. The use of digital services must not be hindered, even if they are used with assistive devices or with different main devices.

Accessible content means considering different user groups and providing clear and understandable content so that everyone can take care of their matters and get the information they need. The accessibility requirements apply to texts, videos, podcasts, websites, forms, infographics and images.

Syke's goal is to produce content that is equally accessible to all external actors, customers, stakeholders and other users. There are internal instructions on accessibility for the staff, and online training related to accessibility can be found in the internal channel. Syke also applies accessibility requirements to content that Syke publishes or makes available for publication in another organisation's online service. The aim is to pay a lot of attention to accessibility, for example, on websites and in various communication products. In the interviews with the units, the consideration and promotion of accessibility emerged as a key theme of equality and non-discrimination, which is actively sought to be considered in the design of websites, events, content and various publications.

Although efforts are made to enhance accessibility in various ways, there were also questions and concerns about how well accessibility is actually realised from the users' perspective.

### Do you feel that Syke services and operations are easily accessible to everyone?

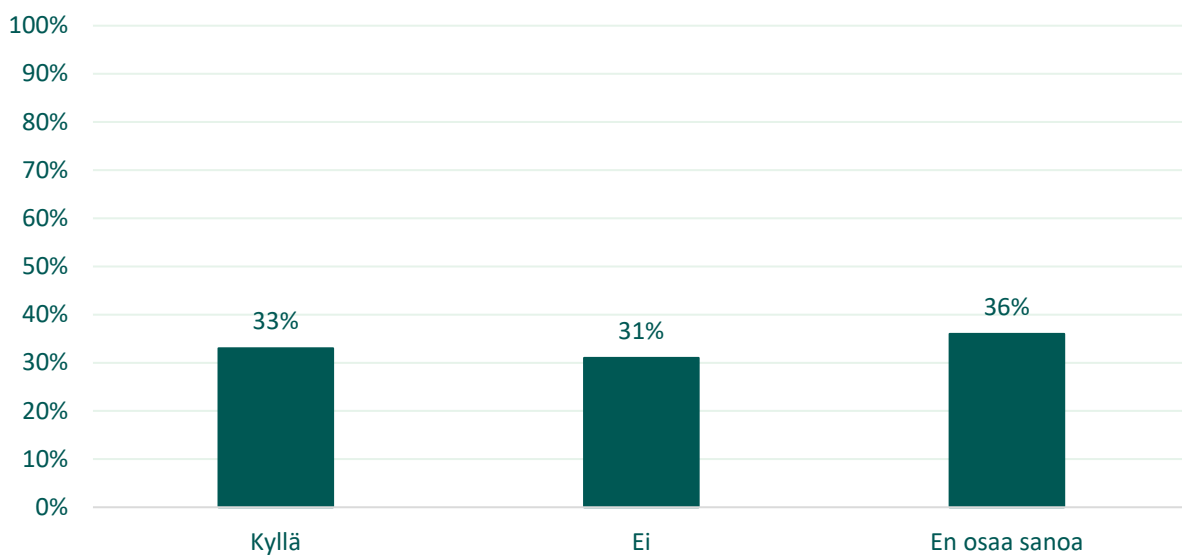


Figure 4. Are the services and operations accessible to everyone? 82 respondents.

According to the survey conducted among Syke employees, approximately 31% (20 persons) of the respondents felt that Syke services and operations are not easily accessible to everyone. In addition, 27% (18 persons) felt that Syke does not offer enough tools to promote accessibility.

### Do you feel that Syke as an employer offers enough tools to promote accessibility?

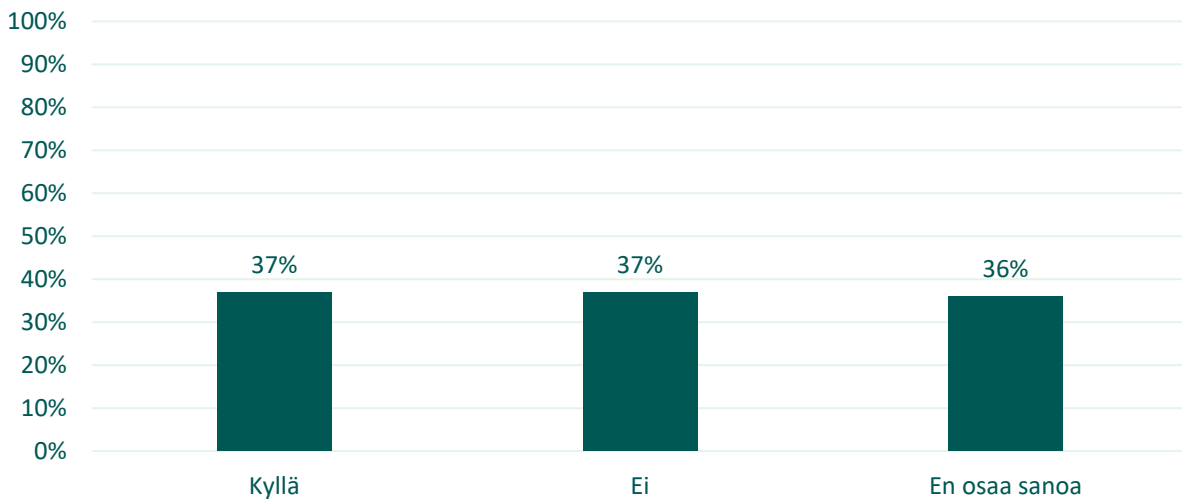


Figure 5. Does Syke as an employer offer enough tools to promote accessibility? 67 respondents.

In particular, the accessibility challenges of using websites and services were highlighted; Syke's external websites contain a wide range of information, but it is difficult to obtain information about individual projects. The websites were also perceived as challenging to navigate. According to the survey, more resources and support from communication experts were requested to further address accessibility.

Syke has agreed on a common way of speaking, to facilitate the preparation of messages and communications and to harmonise the language used by Syke. In its activities, Syke also strives to present various societal phenomena in an easy-to-understand way. In the current state analysis, the language used by Syke and the need to make the Syke language more understandable emerged as the second key area for development in terms of accessibility. This was highlighted in both interviews and surveys.

### Do you feel that Syke uses sufficiently clear and understandable language, considering customers and stakeholders?

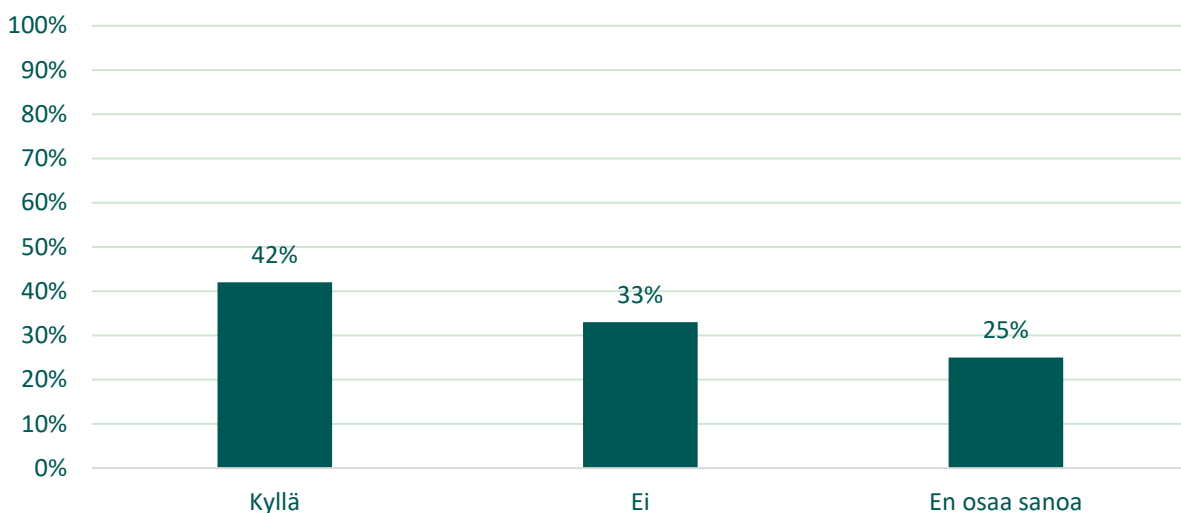


Figure 6. Do you think that Syke uses sufficiently clear and understandable language, considering customers and stakeholders? 67 respondents.

The survey responses highlighted the need to create clearer and more understandable content in general, as well as the need to avoid unclear official language. The language used should be clear standard language and, in some cases, possibly even plain language. The language would speak to different target groups and be genuinely accessible to everyone. Syke produces information and services extensively for everyone, which is why it should be ensured that the content produced by Syke can be read and understood by anyone, not just people of a certain social class or socio-economic status, for example.

## 4. Objectives and Measures

Syke maintains and will continue to maintain the practices and measures that promote equality and non-discrimination that have already been tried and tested, as well as monitors the legislation on equality and non-discrimination in all its activities. The identified development targets will be promoted systematically. This means setting goals for development targets and taking clear measures to achieve them. Below is a description of the objectives and measures that will be taken to promote the development targets that emerged in the current state analysis.

**Table 3. Development objectives and measures**

Subject area	Objective	Measures
<b>1. Collection and structured utilisation of feedback</b>	<b>Bringing the user perspective as a development tool to improve equality.</b> By structuring the collection and utilisation of feedback, Syke can gain insight into potential shortcomings and address them.	<b>Pilot services will be selected for the first year, for which structured feedback collection and utilisation will be created. An assessment will be made on whether to expand the collection of feedback.</b>
<b>2. Language issues</b> Standard language, plain language, Swedish	<b>Improving linguistic equality</b> The language of research and experts is often difficult to understand. The use of different languages in communication promotes equality.	<b>Plain language will be tested in a chosen topic, and attention is paid to using standard language. Common guidelines for the use of languages will be established and ensured.</b>
<b>3. Accessibility</b>	<b>Improving accessibility</b> Improving the staff's competence in implementing accessibility in practice.	<b>Accessibility training and information are provided to all staff.</b>
<b>4. Monitoring of measures and systematic promotion of non-discrimination and equality</b>	<b>Continuous improvement of non-discrimination and equality</b>	<b>A monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the plan is established (considering the monitoring of the corresponding Human Resources Plan)</b>

The aim of this plan has been to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of equality and non-discrimination in Syke services and operations. Operational equality and non-discrimination are central yet very complex issues. Therefore, this plan cannot address everything associated with these issues. However, this first plan will provide a knowledge base for future work. Going forward, involving representatives of certain stakeholders in the preparatory work would be advisable, as well as including questions about anti-racism and vulnerable groups more strongly in the current state assessment.

## Sources

The Finnish Environment Institute Strategy for 2021–2025

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Finnish Environment Institute for 2022

Syke.fi

Syke Operations Manual

Syke Sustainability Report 2022

Equality Checklist for the Authorities – THL

Equality Planning – Equality

Equality Guide

Ministry of Justice. Non-Discrimination Act. Yhdenvertaisuuslaki-suomi.pdf

How to assess? | Assessment of Equality (finlex.fi)

# Appendix

## Syke's Operational Equality and Non-Discrimination

Syke launched operational equality and non-discrimination planning in October 2023. At the core of the plan are the Equality Act and the Non-Discrimination Act, which oblige the authorities and employers to systematically promote equality and non-discrimination in all their operations. The Non-Discrimination Act requires the preparation of a plan to promote equality. The operational plan examines how equality and non-discrimination are considered in the organisation of Syke's external functions and services, and identifies challenges and successes related to the themes. The Human Resources Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan has been drawn up separately and approved in June 2023. The aim of this survey is to gather information on the successes and development areas related to equality and non-discrimination in Syke operations. Responding to the survey takes about 5 minutes and is open until 22 January 2024. The responses will be processed anonymously. Thank you in advance for your response!

Total number of respondents: **67**

### 1. How well do you feel you know the concept and content of equality?

Equality Act (609/1986): Prevents discrimination based on gender and gender identity or expression and promotes gender equality.

Number of respondents: 67

Minimum value	Maximum value	Average	Median	Sum	Standard deviation
2,0	5,0	3,9	4,0	263,0	0,8

### 2. How well do you feel you know the concept and content of non-discrimination?

Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014): No one may be discriminated against based on age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or any other reason related to the person.

Number of respondents: 67

Minimum value	Maximum value	Average	Median	Sum	Standard deviation
1,0	5,0	3,9	4,0	263,0	0,9

### 3. Which of the following principles of non-discrimination and equality do you think are most central to Syke services or operations?

Number of respondents: 67

	n	Percent
Non-discrimination	25	37,3%
Independence	51	76,1%
Accessibility	38	56,7%
Inclusiveness	14	20,9%
Impartiality	51	76,1%
Openness	55	82,1%
Language	21	31,3%
Nationality	8	11,9%
Other, please specify	4	6,0%

Replies to the additional text field

Other, please specify	Political neutrality
Other, please specify	Independence, impartiality, openness and accessibility are probably the most at the heart of our work, but <b>I think these include everything else</b> , i.e. non-discrimination, language, citizenship and inclusiveness, etc.
Other, please specify	Fairness

### 4. Have you noticed shortcomings in Syke services or external operations related to non-discrimination and equality?

Number of respondents: 65

	n	Percent
Yes	18	27,7%
No	22	33,8%
I don't know	25	38,5%

### 5. Do you feel that Syke uses sufficiently clear and understandable language, considering customers and stakeholders?

In Syke's current state analysis, the themes that emerged were multilingualism, standard language and plain language, as well as the status of different language versions.

Number of respondents: 67

	n	Percent
Yes	28	41,8%

No	22	32,8%
I don't know	17	25,4%

**6. Do you feel that Syke as an employer offers enough tools to promote accessibility?**

In Syke's current state analysis, the themes that emerged were the implementation of accessibility, related training, as well as stakeholders' and customers' experiences of accessibility.

Number of respondents: 67

	n	Percent
Yes	25	37,3%
No	18	26,9%
I don't know	24	35,8%

**7. Do you feel that Syke services and operations are easily accessible to everyone?**

Number of respondents: 67

	n	Percent
Yes	22	32,8%
No	21	31,4%
I don't know	24	35,8%

**8. If you like, please share an example of where you believe equality and non-discrimination are handled especially well in Syke, or an area that could be improved.**

Number of respondents: 27

**Answers**

Equality and non-discrimination must be self-evident values in a government organisation, even so clear that they do not need to be brought up separately. Our task is to remain a neutral producer of information, and to avoid overemphasising the idea of equality with rainbow flags.

The processes of harassment and bullying are outdated. Notifying the supervisor doesn't fit today's context. Does the intranet have good instructions for filing an occupational safety report, for example? Are they brought forward as part of equality and non-discrimination work?

For example, producing accessible content/material requires much more time than has ever been allocated for it. I know that some interesting stories have even been left unpublished because the project simply has not been able to afford to make them accessible. Language: we produce hardly anything in Swedish, again, because we usually can't afford to have anything translated, and we don't remember to reserve resources for translations in the applications, because they are done so rarely... I'm sure the level of English is quite varying, again, because there is no budget for translation or even proofreading... Who knows what quality of translated material the company sometimes publishes...

I particularly appreciate the production of public reports and open data services (e.g. co2data), which benefits everyone outside Syke as well.

Statistics on the gender composition of the staff indicate a clear distortion in achieving gender balance. The number of women differs from the normal distribution.

It is the employer's duty to ensure that the distortion is corrected in recruitment guidance.

There is no support for subtitling videos. Why do good online stories have to be removed from the web if they are not subtitled. Support for this, please, if you have to subtitle. So much is wasted

## Answers

Accessibility is often discussed, but it often refers to the technical accessibility of PDF files, such as adding alt texts. Equality and non-discrimination are something much bigger. Language would be an easy thing to start with, for example, ensuring that at least all the metadata of the materials is in Finnish and English. This is currently not the case, and the absence of an English version is constantly justified by a lack of resources.

Accessibility issues are required to be considered in the publications, which is great.

In terms of accessibility, many things could be improved and clarified, for example, the plain language of instructions and guidelines should be improved, and for example, visual instructions or different text styles should be tested. There are a lot of instructions, in many different forms, as there are a lot of different operating systems, devices, programmes and who knows what administrative twists and turns. As a neurodivergent person the instructions are sometimes useless because they don't seem logical to me, and they are difficult to follow. Or you can't find an answer to the question in the instructions, or the instructions you receive raise more questions than answers. Fortunately, at Syke, you do get help you if you are willing to ask.

(Financial) independence is an important value to be preserved for Syke's credibility: even if funding is obtained from outside, the operations must be open and perceived as impartial.

Limited resources should be allocated more precisely to improvements: If all the sections are handled just to scrape by, no service will be accessible to the extent necessary. For example, map services are not subject to regulation, so it is not worth investing too much in the accessibility of related information materials when few professional users are visually limited.

Attention to be paid to the accessibility of the website.

Inside and outside Syke, the language is almost always Finnish.

Nowadays, non-Finnish-speaking Syke employees are clearly better considered than before. At the information system level, there is a need to supplement the English texts and menus.

At least on the level of theory and policies, it seems that these issues are well considered, but as a Finnish-speaking, white, healthy heterosexual person, it is difficult to say whether these issues are realised from other perspectives. At least not all our results are produced in multiple languages, and there is certainly still room for development in many areas. Personally, I have tried to invest in and always remember accessibility, but many colleagues do not know anything about it, and I would like to be even more informed about it myself and also about other equality issues.

In addition to Finnish, services are available in English, but the website, for example, is very challenging to navigate. The organisational chart and information about employees, employee placement in the organisation, etc. are challenging even for Syke employees themselves, not to mention for those outside the organisation. In other words, certain information about services and their providers is not openly displayed or accessible. Sometimes, when describing services, the language is not easy-to-understand plain language.

Syke's website contains a lot of information, but it is difficult to search for information on individual projects, for example (accessibility, language). Syke as an organisation is not very well known among ordinary people. Could communication be made more understandable and consciously offered to e.g. people living in remote areas and less educated citizens (non-discrimination, accessibility, impartiality)?

I am pleased with the realisation of equality and non-discrimination at Syke and especially in my own unit. My supervisor takes everyone into account very well as individuals and treats us equally.

In my opinion, UVT's activities do not leave an equal impression. As I understand it, the committee's activities should offer recreational opportunities to all Syke employees, but at the moment, it feels like the focus is only on exercise and increasing the physical activity of Syke employees. For some, like me, this is not possible, no matter how much I would like to. Many activities and events also require physical presence, which is not necessarily possible due to various everyday situations. Could UVT also organise, for example, remote activities (e.g. home yoga, home stretching) or lectures on a wellbeing theme via Teams with cameras off? In this way, the programme would be inclusive, accessible to everyone and more approachable.

Operations and communications related to the fairness aspects of the sustainability transformation should be improved and expanded at the level of the entire organisation. Syke must do its part to reduce the development of social polarisation related to sustainability issues, for example by conducting more comprehensive social foresight.

## Answers

Equality is not realised in Syke's remote work practices! The remote work policy is determined by the place of residence. If you live far enough away from the Syke office where your main colleagues are, you don't have to do any on-site work, but you can focus on working remotely as you want and you don't even have to bother with the nearest Syke office. In this situation, the supervisor does not require on-site work. If you ever come to work in Viikki, you will get travel allowances, daily allowance and a hotel breakfast. Employees who live closer to the office must visit the office every week. There are no benefits, you must pay for everything yourself. (Direct impact on net salary.) The reasons for office visits are usually irrational, i.e. it is not meaningful. You have to come to the office for a one-hour meeting. There are also employees who live close enough to the Syke office to visit the office every week, but the supervisor just never demands on-site work. These people visit the office once every 1-2 years.

The management has declared that the practice is the same for everyone, the rules are the same for everyone, but in practice, it doesn't seem that way. Could I get a list on the intranet of Syke employees and the number of days per week each person has spent at the office? Can we say from the list that everyone has done the same number of on-site days? In this way, we could transparently monitor how equality is realised, but I assume this will not happen, because the matter is being hidden, as always when we know that we are doing something wrong. The issue is no longer even discussed, but it is swept under the rug. In addition, the "team decides" policy on remote work is completely wrong. The management decides, that's what they get paid for, not a team. The management cannot hide behind the team's back and say, "You decide", so that their reputation is not damaged. The issue is simmering under the surface and may well have a significant impact on staff turnover.

Bilingual staff briefings do not consider the fact that not all employees speak English. In addition, hundreds of people waste time when information is distributed bilingually, while briefings in two different languages would only waste time for managers.

In my opinion, Syke should not have any political stance, i.e. it should also tolerate other political positions and political views that differ from Syke's own stance. Now it seems that there is only one correct political stance that cannot be criticised. Such enthusiasm is frightening, especially when it is communicated in a very one-sided way, even from the top levels.

These issues are at least well addressed in discussions, which is a good first step. Based on the salary review, equality seems to be realised relatively well in this regard.

In recruitment, both external and internal. Job postings could be in three languages, and they could state that Syke uses English in meetings and staff briefings. But this is also a problem in internal operations, for example. Those who speak Swedish as their mother tongue do not receive texts or information in Swedish, but then those who speak English do. The staff could be offered training opportunities in all EU languages, as there are also researchers who speak other native languages, in which case they could be served in their own language, for example. A bit like in stores. Just include the language in contact details.

There are accessibility challenges in the use of websites and services. But for example, the premises are quite accessible, people are treated equally and non-discriminatorily, communication

We are a Finnish organisation, so it is quite natural that the everyday languages are Finnish and English, but I think it would be worth remembering that we also have another national language, which is usually dismissed with the attitude "well, if you don't know Finnish, English is enough". I once looked at Syke's Swedish-language website and yes, we have a nice website in Swedish and a list of experts, but I couldn't find an expert profile in Swedish from anyone, only contact information translated into Swedish, maybe a list of publications, but no general introduction, not even from Leif. For me, this is a bit embarrassing, because I think that the same information should also be available in Swedish. Of course, I understand that it can be difficult for Finnish-speaking experts to translate their texts into Swedish, but couldn't we hire a Swedish-language communication intern or interpreter service, etc. to translate at least the introductory texts of the main authors into Swedish and also otherwise look at the communication from the perspective of Swedish?

The accessibility requirement for recordings has led to a deterioration in the service level, as there are no resources for subtitling the recordings. Therefore, the recordings will only be available for a maximum period of time (2 weeks), after which they are removed. This is unfortunate.

## Answers

An expert often becomes blind to the slang of their own field and does not understand that, even within the organisation, there are people who do not know what the person, in question, does for a living and are not familiar with the terminology of the field.

Open datasets should also be available in English, as an increasing number of people need information. It should also be noted that researchers do not always have time to work on accessibility, but they should get help from communications. It is a waste of time if researchers must compile a large number of e.g. subtitles and ALT texts.

Syke's website and reports, etc. designed to be accessible. However, the linguistic expression is often a bit too jargon-like. This would require the help of communications, because it is difficult to see one's own text clearly and the concepts are familiar to experts, even though not for others.

**If you like, please leave positive or negative feedback.**

Number of respondents: 16

## Answers

This survey paid very little attention to the mapping of Syke employees' experiences and everyday concerns.

Accessibility is not always the number one priority, but making something work in the first place. This is often also a question of budget.

From a survey design perspective, it's not ideal that the distribution in the questions at the beginning of the form was even (0-5, i.e. 6), meaning that the respondent can't choose a completely neutral option in the middle, but had to be leaning in one direction or the other... And there wasn't even the opportunity to answer I don't know, for example... :-/

Q4: It's a bit tricky as it has been formulated for non-discrimination AND equality. OR would have been better, although it would have been even better to ask these separately so that you could see which of these might have experienced bigger problems... After all, the solutions are probably quite different depending on which one is the problem, but it is not really clear now that they have been put together... I was also surprised that even though I chose "yes", there was no open section: "Here you can specify what kind of shortcomings". I think it would have been worth adding a possibility of clarification to such a question. Based on the Yes answers alone, it is not yet clear what kind of shortcomings there are, but it would have been easy to put them together with an open-ended question...

Syke has a lot of experts who carry out all kinds of research surveys. One of us should always be consulted in these internal surveys as well, because fresh eyes always notice things that the person preparing the survey doesn't notice, and thus the survey and especially the clear interpretation of the results improves...

There is still room for improvement in multilingual staff briefings, and it is an understandable problem to offer information in both Finnish and English without discriminating against anyone. But the current system makes sharing information quite confusing, even though they try to translate Finnish comments into English. Could this be done by e.g. Mentimeter wall or similar comment field, where you could write questions instead of/or in addition to the microphone that circulates in Viikki? Or perhaps two separate staff briefings.

Not all goals can be achieved, because some of them are so difficult to define that no matter what we try, they are not good enough for someone. So, we should choose the most important ones and take care of them as a priority, e.g. openness and impartiality or science-based approach.

In my opinion, multilingualism is still a problem in the work community. I see that it is difficult for Syke to retain employees who do not speak enough Finnish. From the competence and non-discrimination perspective, it would be very important that the expertise of our organisation does not rely on native Finns alone.

Bilingualism doesn't work well in certain situations, and Finnish speakers who do not speak English well enough miss out on information. Bilingualism or multilingualism must also take equal account of personnel who speak Finnish as their mother tongue.

## Answers

Nowadays it is difficult to know what the concepts of equality and non-discrimination entail, because no matter how you do things, you always seem to be doing something wrong in someone's opinion.

It may not be immediately clear from the survey whether this is specifically about the equality of Syke services and products, or perhaps also about equality and non-discrimination within Syke. I was expecting the latter, but it was more about the former.

It is great that this issue is being promoted!

An idea regarding question three of the survey. I think the question is strange, because all the principles of non-discrimination and equality certainly apply to Syke's services and operations in some way. I couldn't figure out which options I could even leave out. Or whether I should choose which goals Syke specifically wants to promote. I think every principle is equally important and you shouldn't have to choose between them.

The working language must be Finnish, and it is also the right of non-native speakers to learn national languages, because it is important for integration into society. In my opinion, there has long been a misunderstanding at Syke that if there is even one person who speaks better English, the Finnish language is not used, and thus the vast majority is silent, as they cannot work in English. Over the years, there have often been embarrassing situations when a person who is just learning Finnish has been asked, at mass events, which language is suitable to use: sometimes they have answered Finnish, and it has seemed honest, sometimes peer pressure may have forced this answer. Lunch and coffee discussions and staff briefings are a different matter; they are handled well by everyone in a mixed language. In order for Finnish to remain a tool for high professional competence, we need new speakers of the language!

SYKE does not hear the voices of those groups of people whose future is greatly affected by the implementation of SYKE's recommendations without large compensations. Are fishermen, peat producers, forestry workers and farmers the new Sámi, whose mistreatment will be heard of decades from now, when their descendants tell what was done to them? It would be worthwhile to hear them now in the advisory board and in other contexts.

It's terribly difficult to answer a survey like this, so when interpreting the results, it's probably worth noting that the questions are a bit difficult...

These surveys tend to focus only on certain things. For example, freedom of opinion and tolerance of opinions other than one's own are ignored in these equality surveys. I wish that more attention would be paid to political neutrality and freedom of opinion. It should be possible to express your own opinion and discuss things, even if your opinion is different.

Thank you for this survey. This would also have been good in the preparation of the equality and non-discrimination plan for personnel. And not in the group where administration is most represented. The administration is not quite aware of what is happening elsewhere.

The answer to questions 4, 6 and 7 would have been only minor problems if there had been a finer scale, now the minor problems turned into full problems when there was no alternative