

The New Zealand Sustainability Dashboard Framework

Building practical tools for sustainability assessment, auditing, reporting and learning is the main aim of the New Zealand Sustainability Dashboard (NZSD) project.



Figure 1: The overarching goal and the four pillars of the NZSD framework.

NZSD pillars and goals

Globally and nationally, consumers and producers are interested in knowing about the sustainability of the goods and services they purchase or sell. There are dozens, even hundreds, of schemes worldwide that offer information and rankings of the sustainability credentials of individual products and industry supply chains. The NZSD offers a **structured framework based on international best practices** that has identified the four pillars of sustainability set out in Figure 1.

The overarching goals and goal per pillar have been developed in alignment with

Government strategies, Māori cultural values and international sustainability assessment systems, especially the SAFA framework¹

NZSD Framework Structure

Within each pillar a hierarchy of five levels (Figure 2) has been created. The first describes the goal for the pillar, which is broken into the outcomes if that goal is achieved. Each outcome is further divided into objectives, or the intent of these outcomes. The achievement or movement towards the objectives will be shown by indicators for which measurements can be developed by each end-user of the Dashboard in consultation with the Dashboard team and other stakeholders.



Figure 2: Outline of NZSD framework structure

The four pillars' goals and their structure are detailed below.

¹ United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organisation's Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agricultural systems

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GOOD GOVERNANCE – Ensures sound decision-making and implementation

Good governance facilitates an active participation of all stakeholders. It ensures the legitimacy or the rights of an enterprise to operate and it determines how rigorous sustainability management is incorporated into the operation and culture of an enterprise. Hence good governance will contribute to growth and financial stability by underpinning market confidence, financial market integrity and economic efficiency.

Economics is about maximizing social welfare subject to resource constraints. The NZSD is attempting to serve enterprises at many levels – owner-operated farm business, agribusinesses such as wineries and packhouses, to provide audit and quality oversight, and to possibly generate sector, regional and national information. Therefore, while there is a focus on the ‘enterprise’ level in this report there is a need to keep in mind that there is an overall generic quality to the NZSD framework. Hence, it must be emphasized that the economic pillar is about resilience, and not just about financial performance

AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY - Sustains natural capital, enhances natural heritage values and meets global environmental obligations.

Agro-environmental integrity is defined as the state which sustains the full potential of land and its natural capital, ecosystem processes and services to efficiently and indefinitely produce healthy, high quality food and fibre while enhancing natural heritage values and meeting global environmental change obligations.

There is very little consensus on how to define ‘social sustainability’, beyond the fact that it varies with the social and cultural context within which it is being defined. This has obviously led to many issues regarding its measurement and therefore its usefulness to enterprises and governments, especially in international and cross-cultural situations. The concepts of quality of life and social well-being have more recently emerged as common aspects of sustainability, leading to even further debate regarding the realization and measurement of such goals.

Governance is one of the overarching dimensions proposed for the NZSD framework. The inclusion of governance alongside the other key pillars of social, environmental and economic sustainability in the NZSD framework is in line with SAFA and other business approaches, such as the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the UN Global Compact and the GRI G4 Guidelines.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE – sustains an economy through change and shocks

To be economically resilient an enterprise’s financial well-being is maintained, its vulnerability minimised, the products it produces are of good quality, accompanied by adequate information, and efficiently produced, and it creates value in the local community.

The environmental pillar has been defined taking into account several special features of New Zealand’s ecology, including the need to safeguard threatened indigenous species, maintain biosecurity for production and conservation systems, enrich relatively new soils (derived recently from forests) for agriculture, or prevent erosion. In addition, special features of New Zealand’s society and economy need to be recognized if these ecological challenges and opportunities are to be achieved, especially the highly intensive form of agriculture that is already very efficient, the low level of regulation for what happens (or does not happen) on private land, or the inclusion of Māori.

SOCIAL WELL-BEING - Ensures livelihood opportunities and respects social and cultural principles of all society.

Social well-being is achieved when the respect for rights of equal access to employment and participation in the value-chain and of safe and healthy working environments and the development of supportive communities facilitate the pursuit of the livelihood aspirations of all members of society.

GOOD GOVERNANCE



OUTCOMES

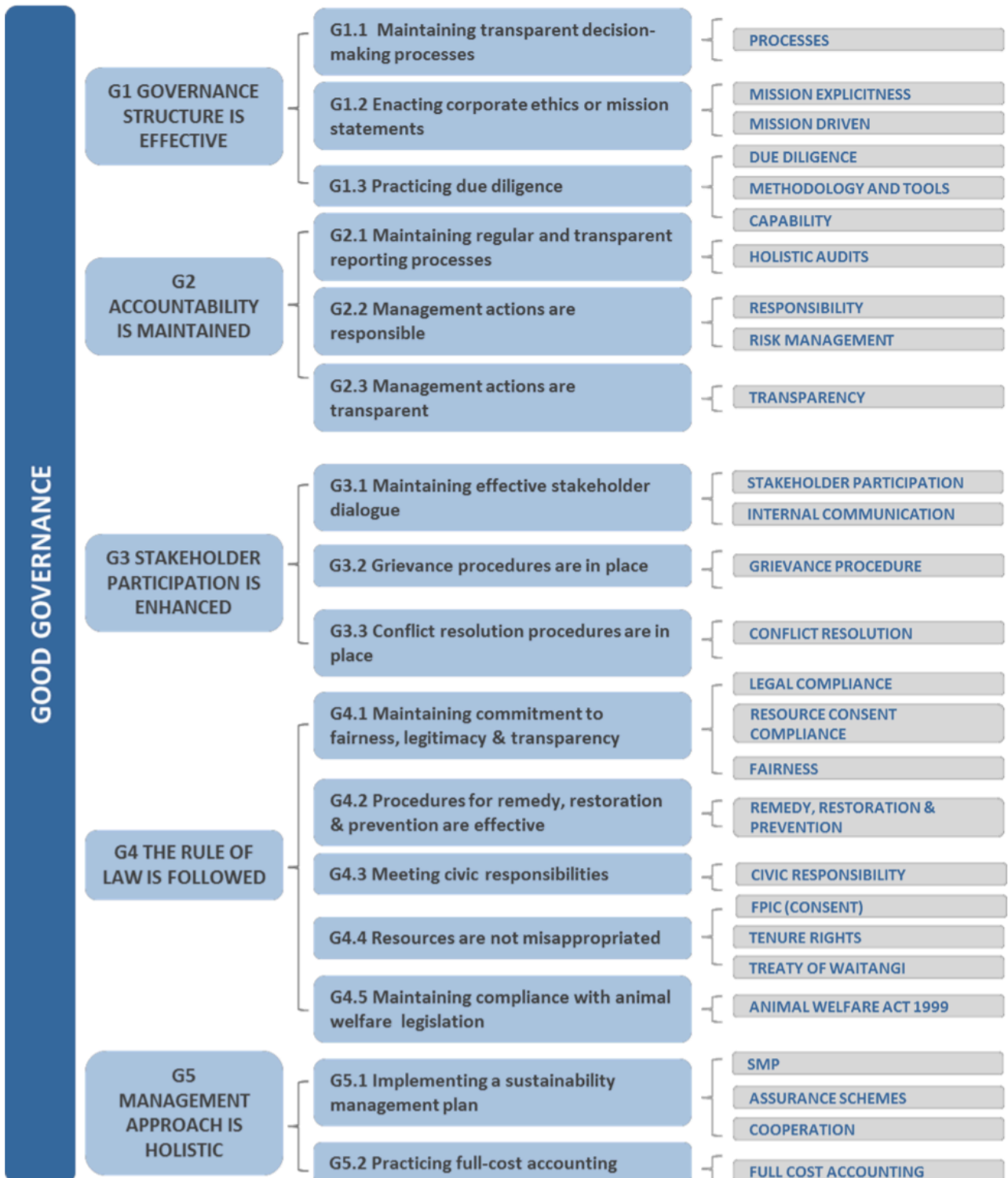
Critical components for achieving goals

OBJECTIVES

Key factors contributing to targeted national outcomes

INDICATORS

Parameters that can be assessed in relation to an objective



ECONOMIC RESILIENCE



OUTCOMES

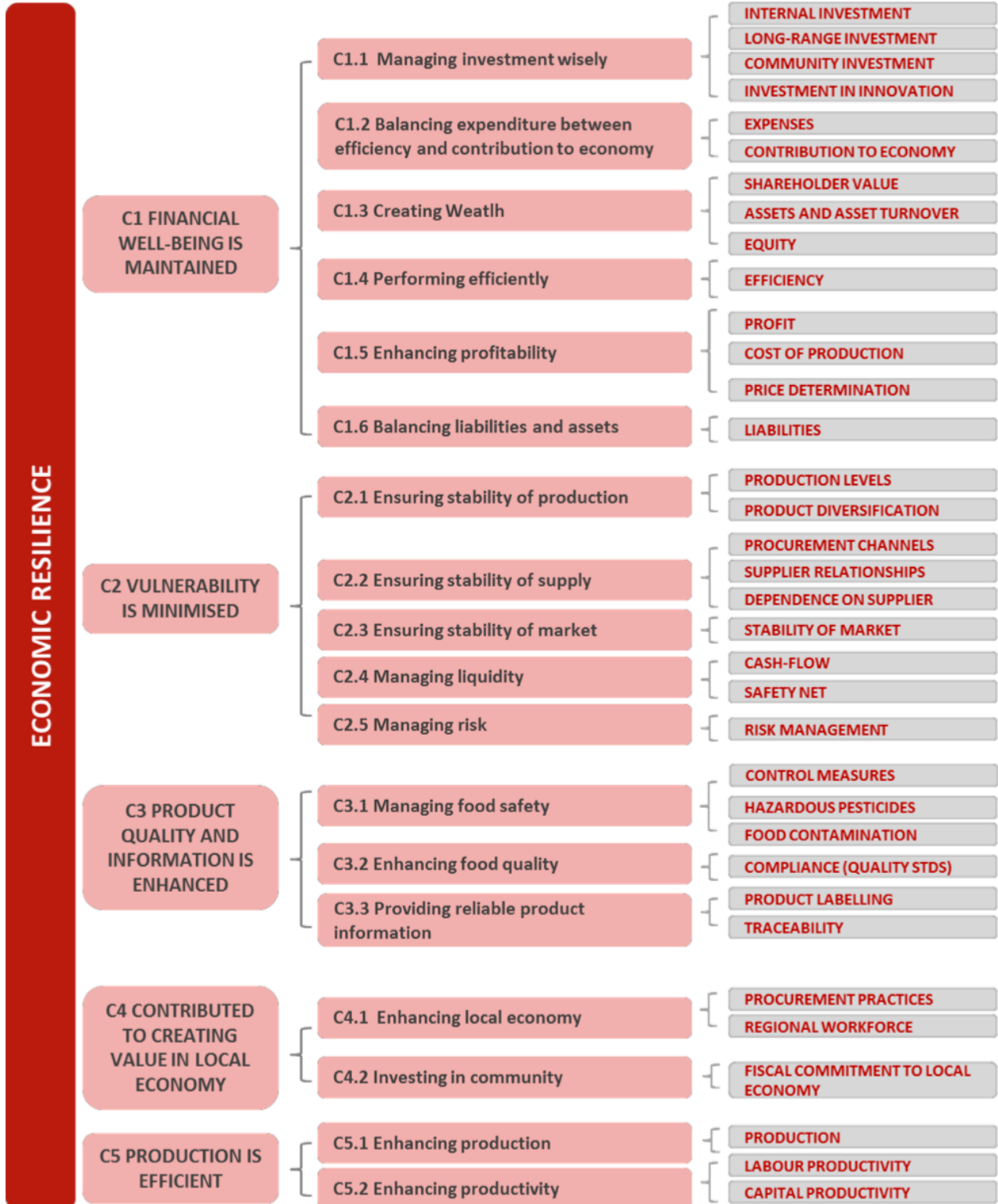
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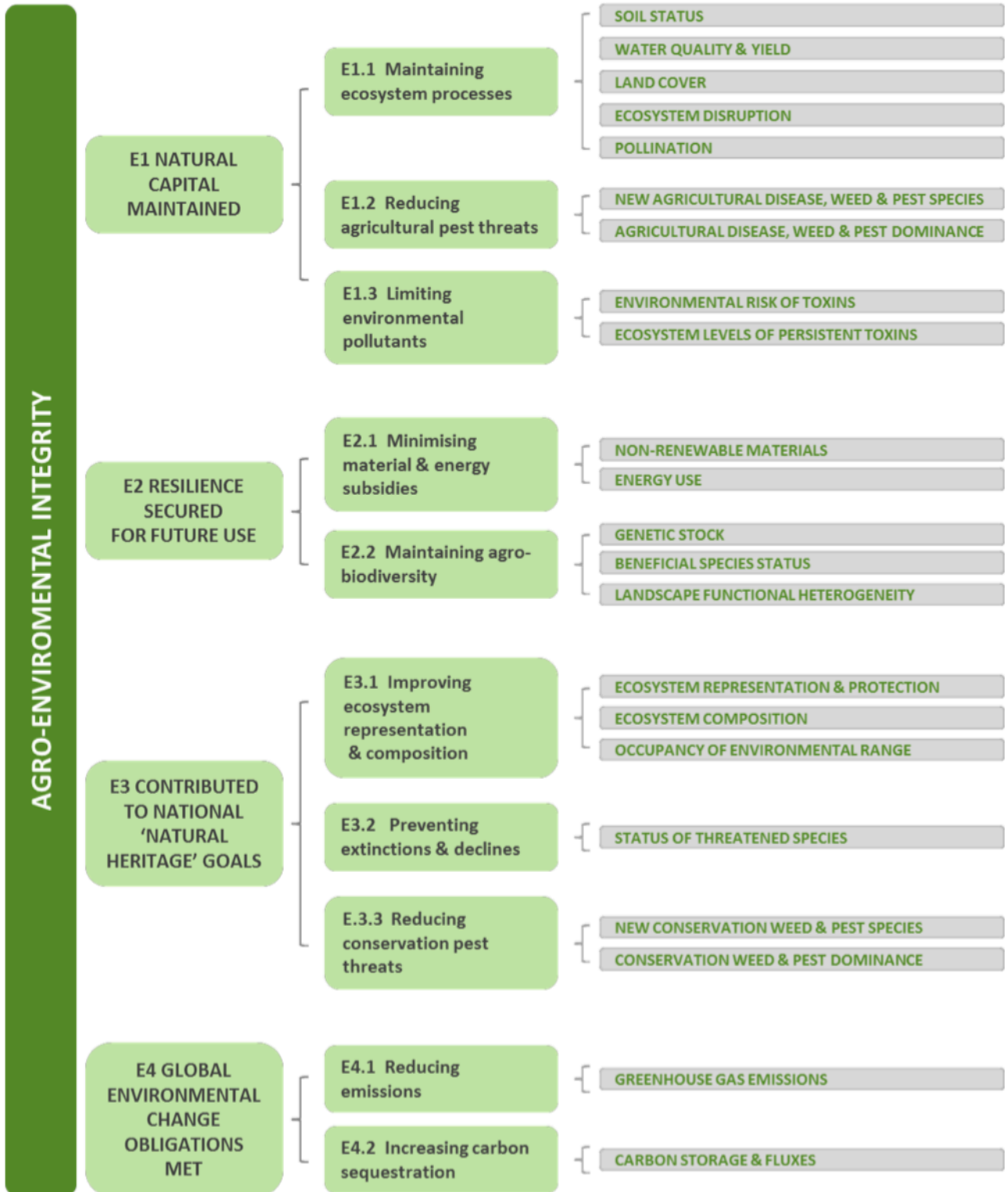
AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY



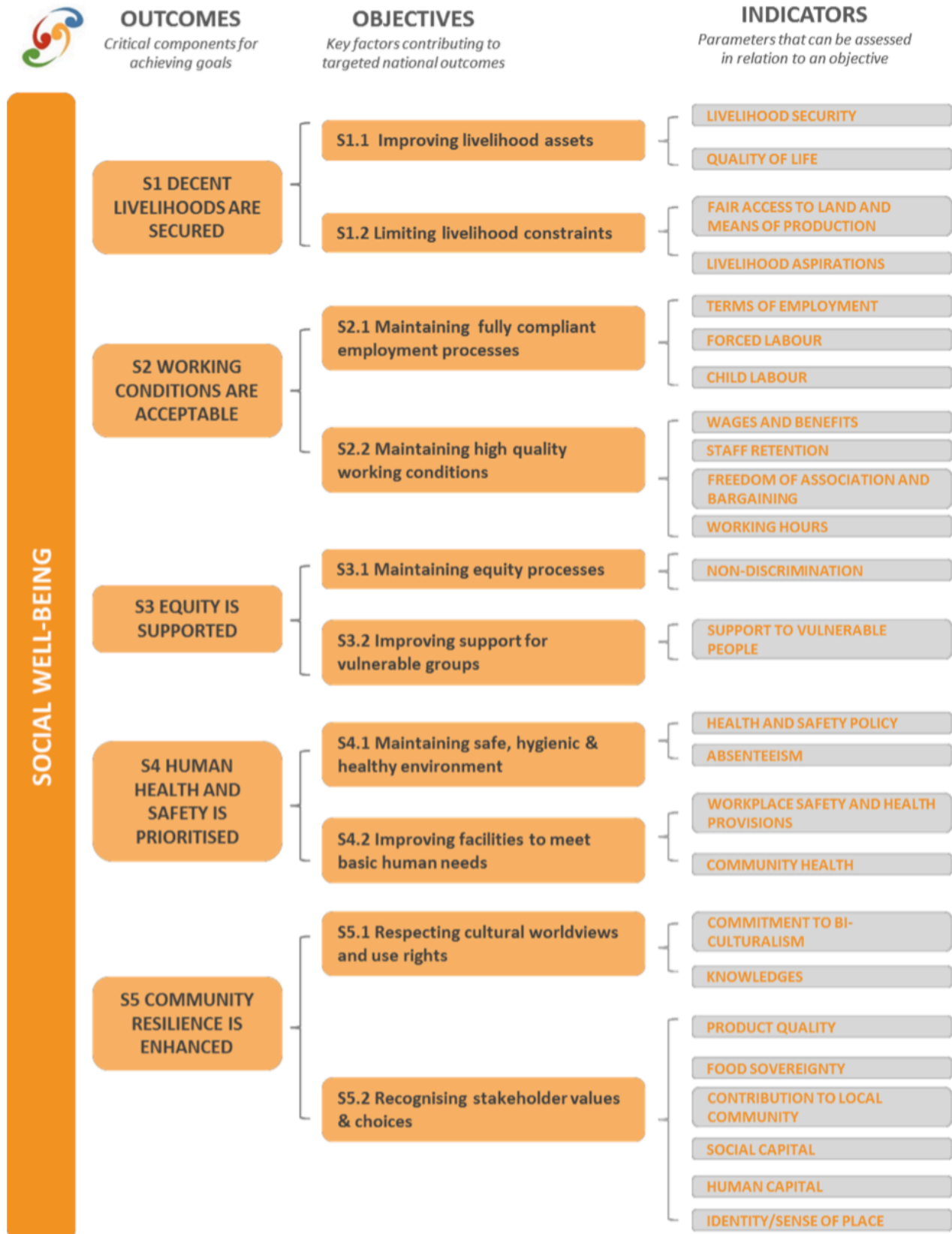
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SOCIAL WELL-BEING



Further Information

For more information on the definition of each outcome, objective and indicator, please refer to the full research report (13/09) on the New Zealand Sustainability Dashboard Website:

<http://www.nzdashboard.org.nz/>