

Rural & Urban

SYMBIOSIS



MTK



What does symbiosis between rural and urban areas mean?

Symbiosis between rural and urban areas refers to multidimensional interaction that benefits both parties. The juxtaposition between rural and urban areas slows down the symbiosis between them, preventing flexible service and raw material flows. The symbiosis is essential for society.

In this project, the symbiosis between rural and urban areas is studied in the light of ten elements. The elements are cross-sectional, but each of them includes unique perspectives. All elements share the same feature of active interaction between rural and urban areas.

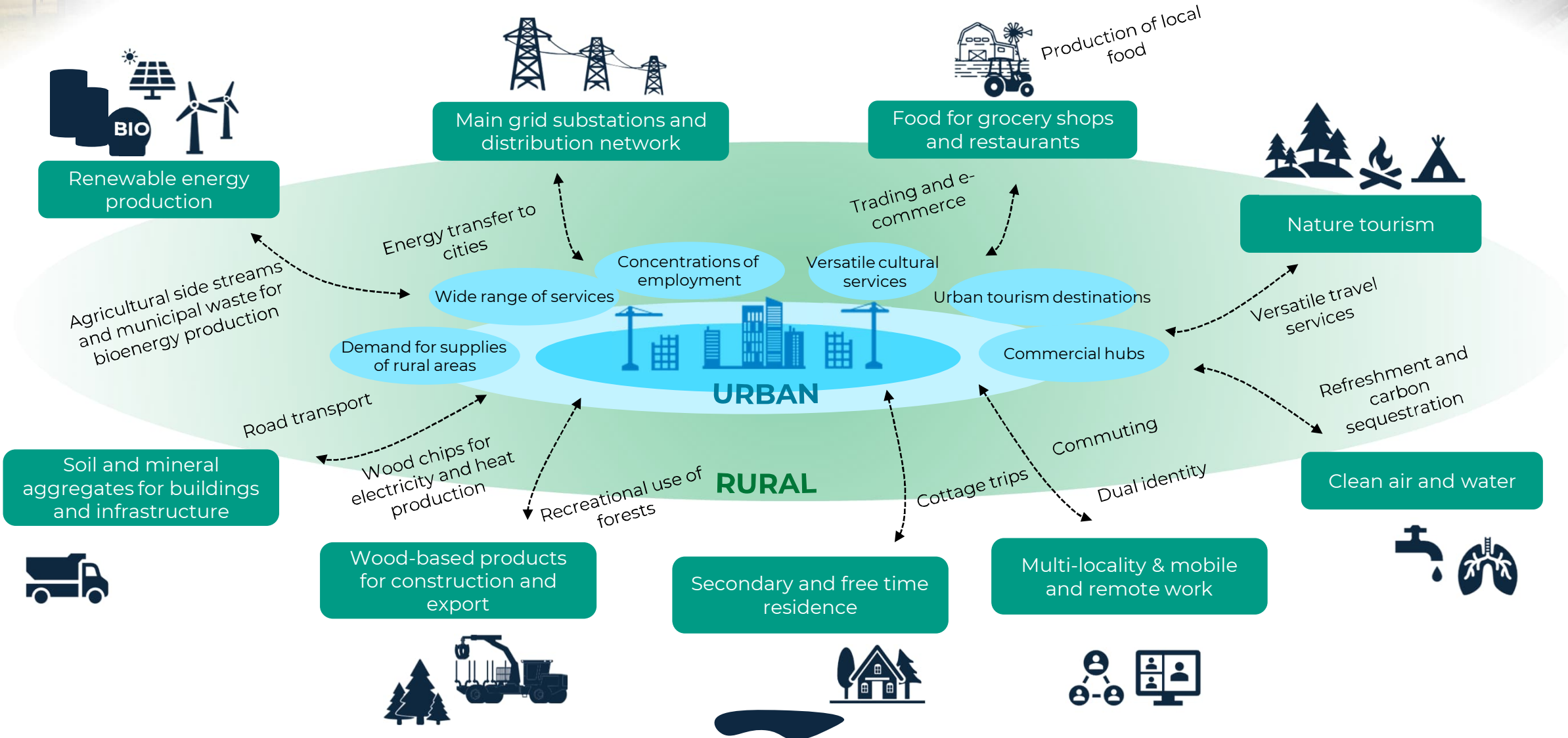
In the changed geopolitical operating environment, the importance of Finland's security of supply and self-sufficiency has grown even more. Rural fields and forests are important sources of raw materials. A populated and vibrant countryside that attracts industrial investments is important in securing the external border of Finland and the EU.

The vitality of the countryside is increased by improving the competitive conditions of the natural resource industries and by genuinely promoting the operation of the internal market. Cities, on the other hand, are important producers of trade and services for rural residents and companies. Labour mobility exists in both directions. The countryside can be used as a residential area, even if the workplace is in the city and vice versa. The increasing prevalence of remote work makes the choice of housing and workplace more and more flexible.

The report has been carried out by Destia Oy's Strategic Transport Systems unit on behalf of MTK in autumn 2024.



Rural & Urban SYMBIOSIS



MESSAGES ABOUT SYMBIOSIS

Energy and nutrition are at the heart of symbiosis

The role of the rural area as a producer of renewable energy and food is getting stronger

As the population of cities grows, so do the needs for energy and food

Self-reliance and security of supply are emphasized as the geopolitical operating environment becomes more uncertain

The green transition is realized by strengthening symbiosis

The green transition requires rural raw materials and urban labour

Forests are at the center of change: carbon sequestration, energy, export, wood construction, new uses for wood and recreational use

Finnish lifestyle supports symbiosis

The dual identity of Finns is still strong: urban and rural

Nature values and recreation are important in everyday life and in tourism

A high quality of life and experiences are increasingly important

10

ELEMENTS OF THE SYMBIOSIS



Housing and lifestyle



Energy



Food



Water and air



Employment



Bioeconomy



Raw materials



Construction



Services



Tourism



URBAN AREAS

HOUSING AND LIFESTYLE



Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE); urban-rural classification 2018
 Statistics Finland, Väestö asuinpaikan kaupunki-maaseutu-luokituksen sekä sukupuolen ja iän mukaan, 2000–2023

☺ = share of population
 ◇ = share of land area

Finnish lifestyle is linked to both rural and urban areas. More than one third of the people in Finland have a dual identity : they feel that they are "city-rurals" or "rural-urbans". It is possible to live in the city or in the countryside flexibly, depending on one's life situation. Regardless of where one lives, nature is a significant part of Finns' identity and lifestyle.

The coronavirus pandemic accelerated remote work

- Remote work is done more than before the COVID-19 pandemic among working-age people with remote work opportunities.
- About half of working-age people (25–65-year-olds) worked remotely at least sometimes at the end of 2023.
- Half of working-age teleworkers work remotely most of the week.

Traficom 2024

Multi-location is becoming more common

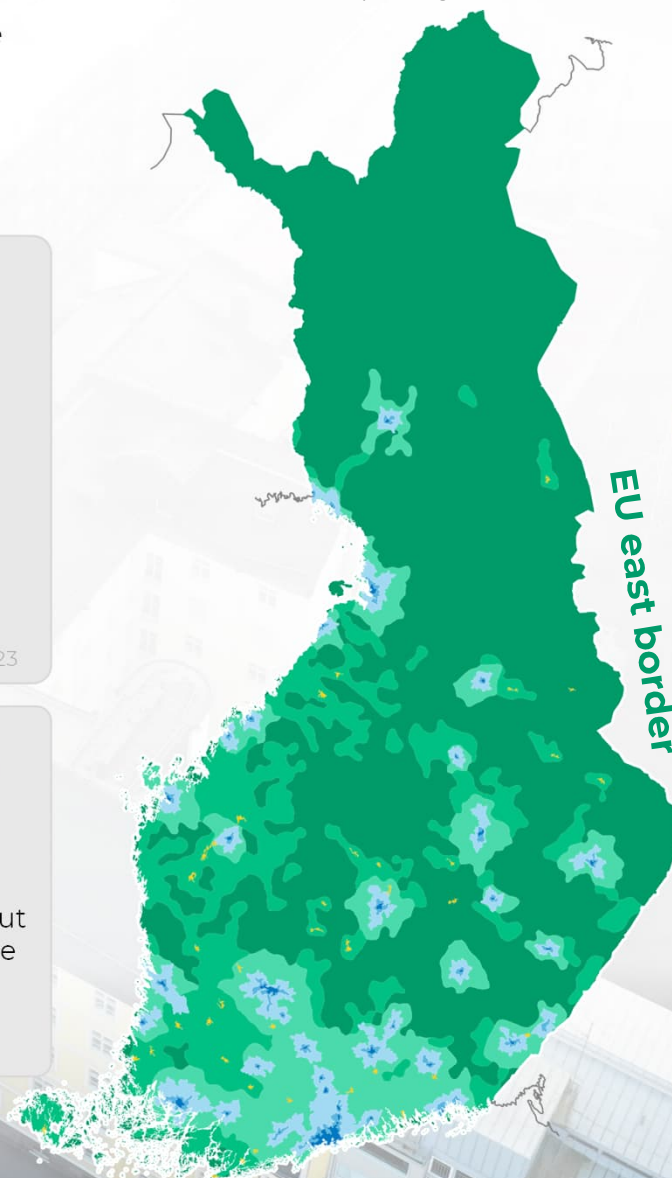
- As remote work opportunities have become more common, multi-location housing has increased.
- The multi-location of leisure time is usually aimed at sparsely populated rural areas.
- Multi-location enables many rural municipalities to have better services than what a year-round population base would be sufficient for.

Mökkibarometri 2021, HybridiSuomi 2023, Lehtonen et al. 2023

Finns hope for balanced development

- 4/5 of Finns believe that the countryside and cities can be developed in a more balanced way than at present.
- Especially the older age groups believe this, but even 2/3 of the people under 25 years old share this opinion.

HybridiSuomi 2023



Sparsely populated rural areas
 0,25 milj.
 ☺ 5 %
 ◇ 74 %

Rural heartland areas
 0,5 milj.
 ☺ 9 %
 ◇ 8 %

Rural areas close to urban areas
 0,4 milj.
 ☺ 7 %
 ◇ 13 %

Local centers in rural areas
 0,3 milj.
 ☺ 5 %
 ◇ 0,2 %

Peri-urban area
 0,6 milj.
 ☺ 11 %
 ◇ 4 %

1,4 milj.
 ☺ 24 % ◇ 1 %
Outer urban area

2,1 milj.
 ☺ 39 % of population
 ◇ 0,3 % of land area
Inner urban area

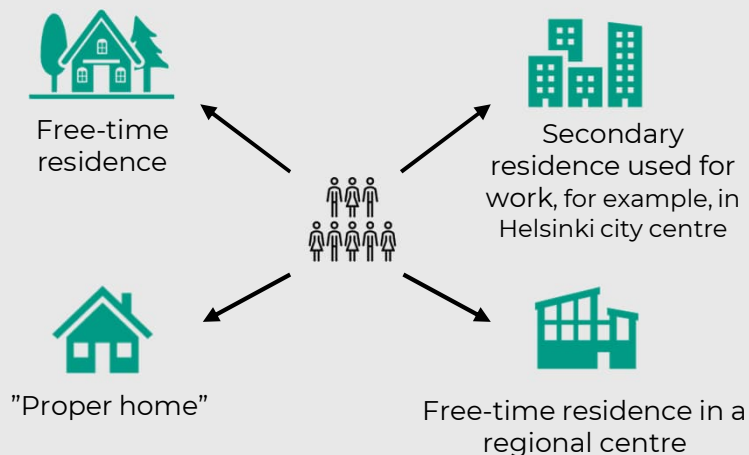


Current phenomena



HOUSING AND LIFESTYLE

Instances of multi-locality

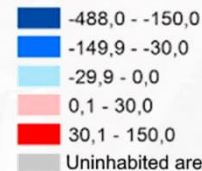


In July, the number of the rural population multiplies and correspondingly decreases in the cities

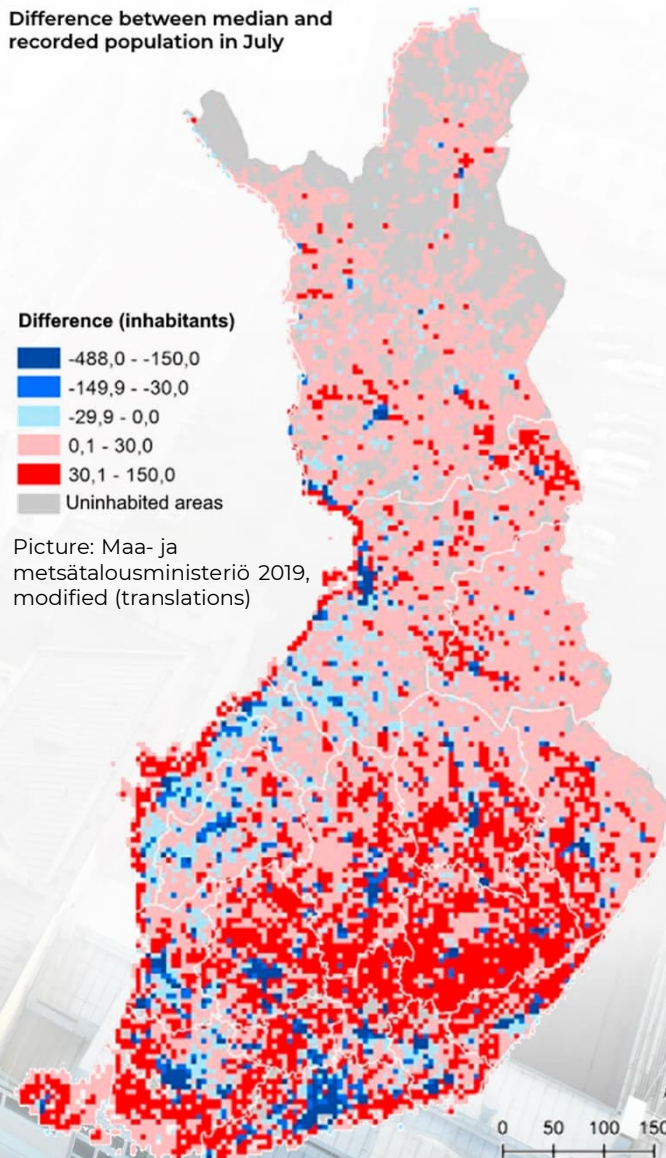
This should be taken into account when planning the services

Difference between median and recorded population in July

Difference (inhabitants)



Picture: Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö 2019, modified (translations)



Dynamic population of Finland

Urbanisation does not necessarily cause depopulation of rural areas

In 2005-2016, the seasonal population of sparsely populated rural areas has increased by 37%. The population of rural heartland areas and sparsely populated rural areas in July is over 10 times more than the population in January.
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland 2019

Population statistics do not tell the whole truth of demographics

On a regional level, for example, there are approximately 32,000 more people in South Savo in July than there are permanent residents in the region.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland 2019

Design of the fibre-optic network is inadequate

At the end of 2022, over 50% of the recorded population of rural areas had access to the fibre-optic network. Traficom granted state support of 27 million euros for the construction of fiber optic networks during the years 2022-2023.

Traficom 2023



Energy is at the heart of symbiosis. The majority of energy production takes place in rural areas, from where the energy is transferred to urban consumption centers. The total employment in the industry is more than 42,000 person-years.

Wind and solar power in rapid growth

- About €90 billion worth of investments in onshore wind power and €100 billion in offshore wind power are planned.
- According to the forecast, the capacity in 2030 is already 18 GW (2024: approx. 7 GW).
- The construction of industrial-scale solar power is also on the rise. According to the forecast, Finland will have up to 7 GW of solar power in 2030 (2022: 0.6 GW).
- The power plants are located in the rural area, from where the transmission networks direct the electricity to the consumption centers in the cities.

Fingrid 2024, EK investointi-ikkuna 2024

Getting rid of peat and fossil energy increases the demand for wood fuels

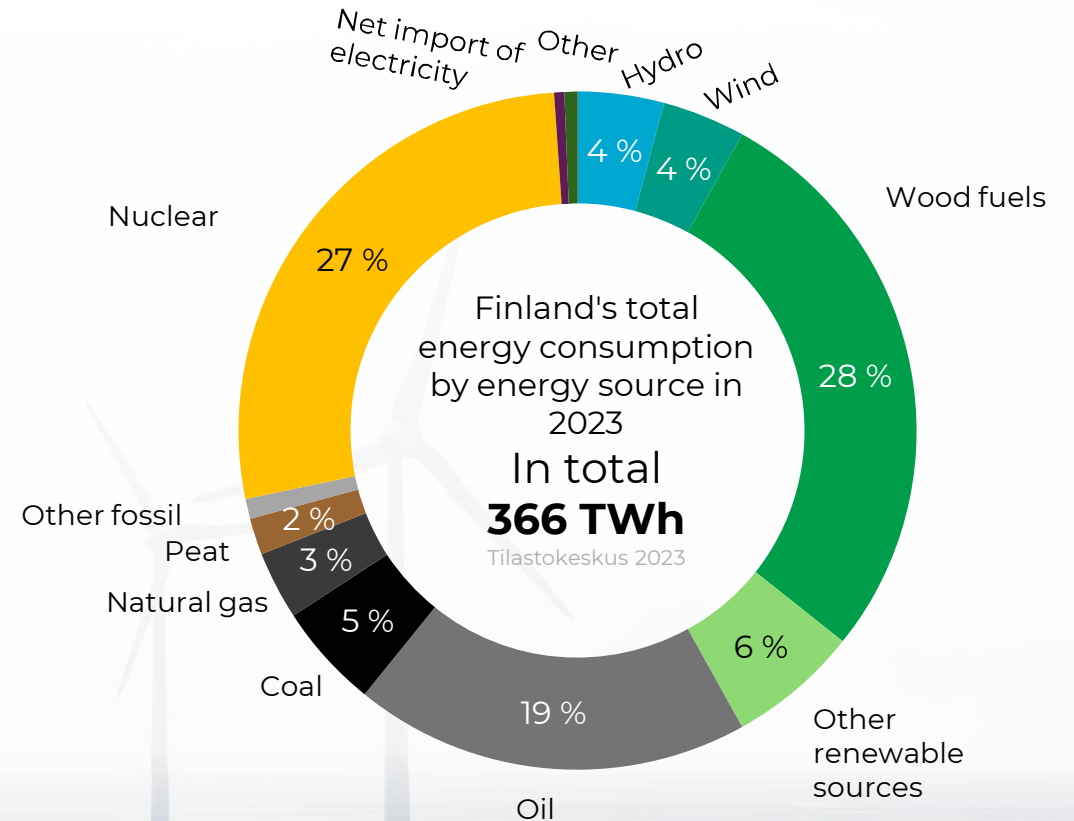
- The replacement of peat and coal will increase the demand for solid wood fuels throughout Finland.
- The greatest scarcity of solid wood fuels occurs in the south and west.

AFRY 2021

The energy system is in transition

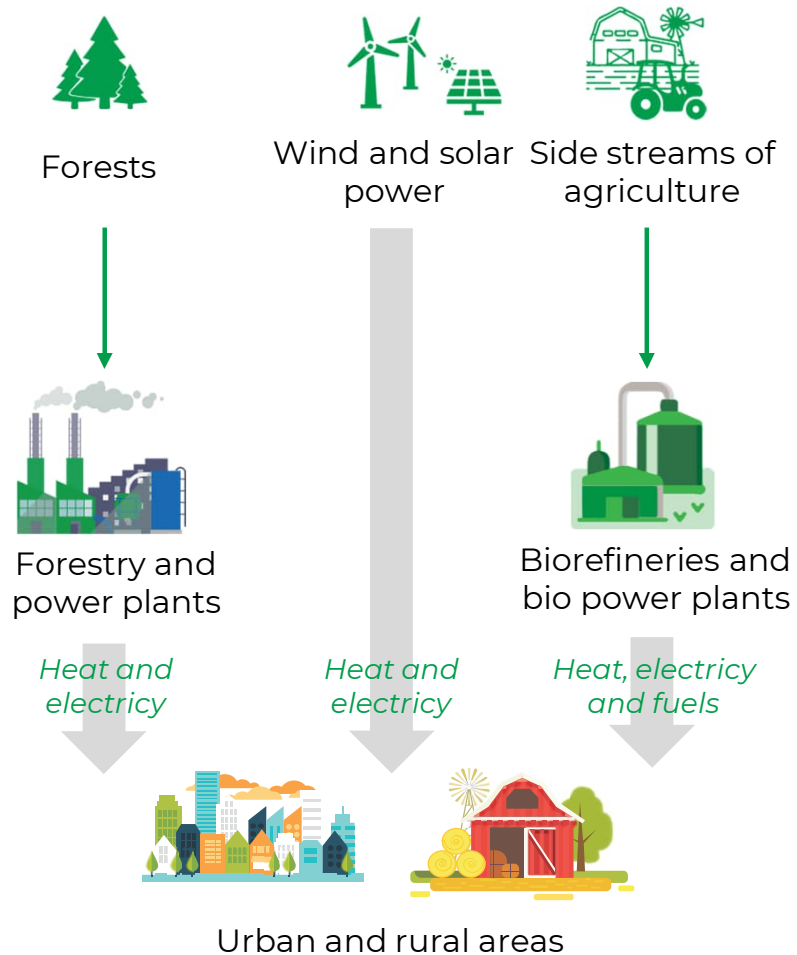
- Waste heat from hydrogen plants located near cities is used in the city's district heating networks.
- The need for battery systems to balance the power grid is increasing. These need the minerals of the rural areas.

Note! The graph shows the consumption of all energy incl. industry and transport. Only when looking at electricity consumption, e.g. the role of water, wind and solar power is significantly greater.



Current phenomena

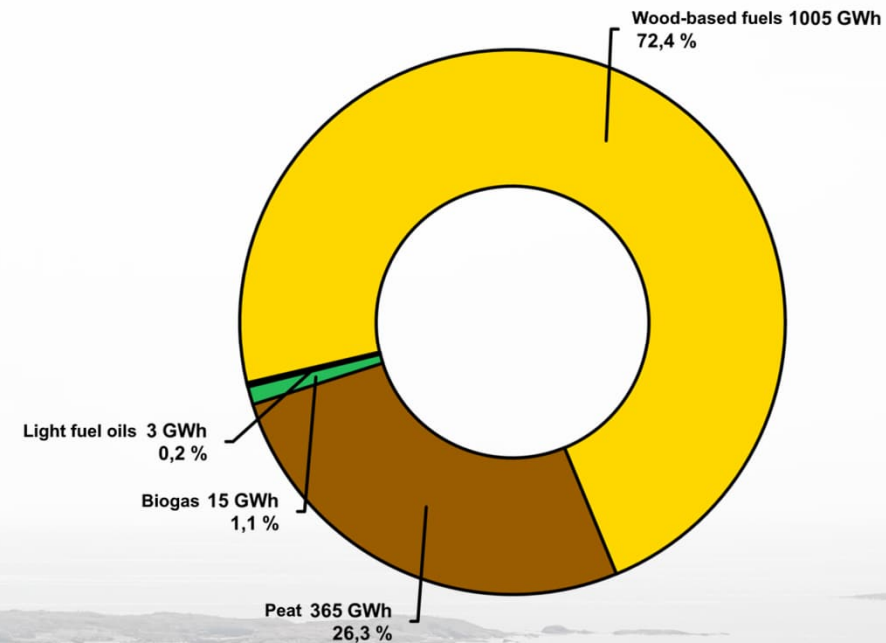
An example of the origin of renewable energy



Kuopion Energia's Haapaniemi power plant

Energy service company Kuopion Energia produces more than 70% of electricity and heat with domestic bio-based fuels. The main fuel is created as a by-product of the forest industry, and the fuel is delivered to Kuopio from a radius of 150 km. Efforts are also made to utilise waste streams from energy production in other applications.

Picture source: Kuopion Energia 2024, modified (translation)



FOOD



The entire food chain employs around 320 000 people in Finland.

One job in the food industry supports at least three jobs in other sectors.
Elintarviketeollisuus 2024

Food comes from the countryside, while consumption mostly takes place in cities. In addition to primary production, a significant share of Finland's food companies are located in rural areas. Food production is part of security policy, and the food industry is an integral part of Finland's supply security and self-sufficiency. The symbiosis between rural areas and cities is also evident in activities such as berry picking, mushroom picking, fishing, and hunting.

Opportunities and challenges for Finland in climate change

- Extreme weather conditions are reducing yields in many EU countries, with Mediterranean countries being in the most difficult situation.
- In Northern Europe, yields may increase as the growing season lengthens. In Finland, extreme weather conditions are also becoming more common, leading to seasonal variations in yields and increasing the risk of plant diseases.

Atria 2024, K-Ryhmä trendikatsaus 2023, EU Agricultural Outlook 2023-2025

Objective to double food exports by 2031

- Globally, Finnish expertise in nutrition and the high quality of food products are highly valued
- In 2023, food exports amounted to 2.2 billion euros. 60 % of exports are directed to the EU area.

The Finnish Government 2024

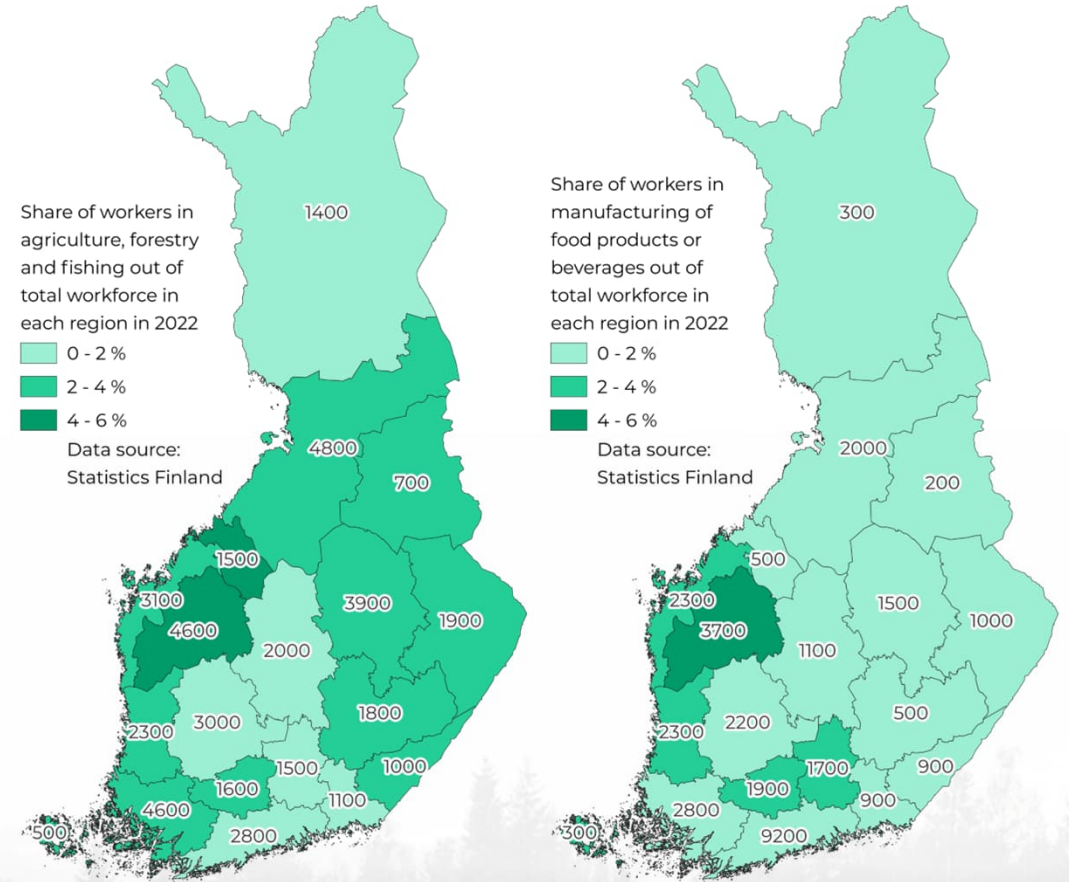
Latest changes in consumer behavior

- 3/4 of Finns consider the domestic origin of food important. Over 60 % choose domestic options despite rising food prices.
- There is an increasing attention to well-being and healthiness.
- In the EU, the consumption of plant proteins has increased fivefold since 2011.

Atria 2024, K-Ryhmä trendikatsaus 2023, EU Agricultural Outlook 2023-2025



Current phenomena



South Ostrobothnia is a particularly strong region in primary production and food production. The most food production jobs are located in Uusimaa.



CASE: Restaurant Nokka

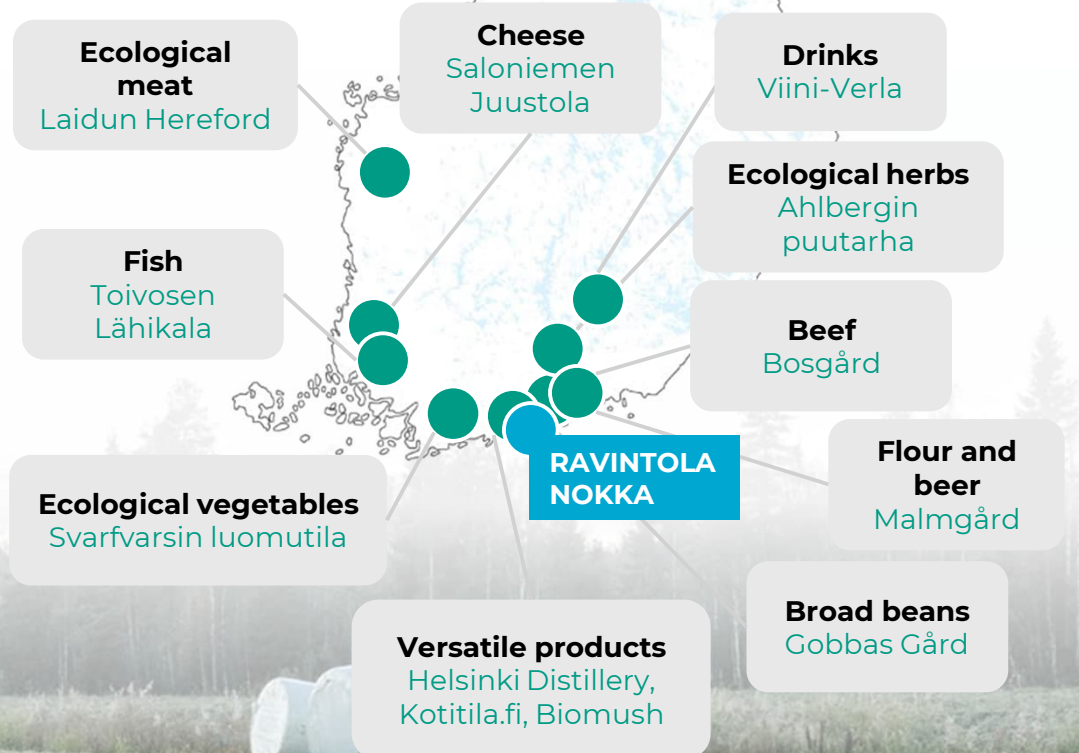
The highly regarded seasonal food served by Restaurant Nokka in Katajanokka, Helsinki, comes from numerous small farms around Finland and the forests of Salla.



Head chef and restaurateur Ari Ruoho is an active hunter and participates in sourcing the game used in the restaurant. The elk meat comes from Ostrobothnia, and the deer meat from Häme.

Promoting local food, including in public food procurements, supports rural employment and enables high-quality restaurant operations in cities that attract international tourists. Local food can only be provided if the well-being of the countryside is secured.

Highlights of the restaurant's food origins



WATER AND AIR



WATER

In Finland, there are about 168 000 lakes and ponds that are at least 5 acres in size, as well as over 100 000 kilometers of rivers and streams. Freshwater formations cover 9 % of Finland's surface area. Compared to many other EU countries, the state of waters is generally good. Over 87 % of the surface areas of lakes and 65 % of the river length in mainland Finland are in at least a good ecological condition. 73 % of the coastal waters are in a moderate condition (2019). The biggest problems are caused by eutrophication, but efforts are being made to improve the situation through various measures.

Drinking water is mainly supplied to cities from rural areas, often over long distances. About 65 % of water for household consumption distributed by water supply services is groundwater or artificial groundwater, which is being used approximately 0.7 mil. m³/day. Finland's lakes, rivers, and coastlines are important for recreational activities such as swimming, boating, and fishing. Sewage treatment plants are usually located in larger cities and urban areas. They process the waste water from urban areas as well as the surrounding rural areas.

Improving water quality and protecting water resources

- Water conservation is an integral part of the responsible and sustainable Finnish agriculture and forestry.
- Agriculture, food production and forestry depend on water, its cycle, quantity, and quality.
- According to MTK's Ympäristöluotain-survey conducted in 2020, over 90 % of farmers and forest owners identified water conservation as an important part of their operations.

MTK:n ja SLC:n vesiohjelma 2020



AIR

According to monitoring, air quality in Finland is among the cleanest in Europe. The aim is to maintain the high quality and continue to reduce emissions and pollutants.

During summertime, heatwaves have also been milder compared to many other countries. Clean air is a significant attraction for international tourists.

The air is particularly clean in rural areas. The air quality varies in cities, which has led to increased attention being paid to local traffic emissions, among other factors.

The shortage of water is expected to increase globally

- The urban population suffering from water scarcity is projected to double from 930 mil. in 2016 to 1.7-2.4 bil. people by 2050.
- Extreme and prolonged droughts stress ecosystems, with serious consequences for both plant and animal species.
- Finland should preserve its water resources and recognise them as a scarce resource.

Unesco 2024

Climate change has many effects on field cultivation

- Shorter and warmer growing seasons bring more high-yielding species and varieties into use.
- The risk of destructive insects and plant diseases increases.
- Heatwaves and drought may cause significant yield and quality losses.
- Autumn and winter precipitation is expected to increase.

Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE) 2023



Current phenomena



CASE: Päijänne water tunnel – raw water for the Helsinki metropolitan area

The Päijänne water tunnel transports raw water from Lake Päijänne to the Helsinki metropolitan area. It ensures the supply of clean water for over one million residents. The tunnel starts at the southern end of Lake Päijänne, from Asikkalanselkä. It ends at the Silvola artificial lake, close to the water treatment plant in Pitkälampi, Vantaa. The water quality of South Päijänne is close to its natural state and is a good example of the results of decades of water conservation efforts. There is plenty of water in Lake Päijänne, as the tunnel only takes about one percent of the average flow that would otherwise go to the Kymijoki river.

A marketplace for climate actions: luontoarvot.fi

The Luontoarvot.fi service is a marketplace for sites where nature's biodiversity can be safeguarded and nature conservation promoted. The service allows both the acquisition and offering of natural values. In its initial phase, the service functions as a bulletin board for nature sites, but the goal is to develop it into a versatile platform for securing natural values.



HOW IT WORKS

- With the Luontoarvot.fi service, landowners have a new business opportunity: producing natural values.
- Through the service, land or forest owners can offer and sell ecosystem services, such as protecting valuable nature sites or enhancing biodiversity.
- Similarly, individuals, companies, and other actors interested in natural values can publish procurement notices or purchase offers for desired nature sites, structural features, or even restoration activities.
- The service also opens doors to obtaining financing in line with the EU's sustainable finance taxonomy.

The new ecological compensation regulation under the nature conservation law, overseen by authorities, provides credibility and certainty. The service strengthens the symbiosis between rural areas and cities. For example, environmental damage caused by construction can be transparently and concretely compensated through sites found via the service.



In the labour market, symbiosis is evident in that educational and job opportunities offered by cities attract young people from rural areas, creating new experts in various fields. Educational services have shifted from smaller towns to larger ones, especially cities. Specialised training requires a sufficient population base. Educated labour is also needed in rural areas.

Rural areas provide cities with vital resources and labour, especially in the primary production and tourism sectors. This two-way relationship strengthens the economic and social sustainability of both, forming the foundation for the development and well-being of the entire country.

Increase in work-related multi-location presence

- Out of the working population:
 - 806 000 (35 %) work in another municipality
 - 262 000 (11 %) work in another sub-region
 - 148 000 (6 %) work in another region
- Seasonal workers spend weeks or months in the region they work at.
- Seasonal work is common in agriculture and forestry, tourism, and mining.

Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) 2024

Labour shortages threaten the functionality of the symbiosis

- Many rural areas are experiencing a growing shortage of skilled labour, especially in the fields of bioeconomy and tourism.
- From the perspective of Finland's supply security and economic success, it is important that labour is available broadly across the country.
- Commuters from cities to rural areas, as well as seasonal workers, are essential for the continuity of many rural activities.
- This phenomenon highlights the need for flexible labour markets and efficient transportation links to ensure easy movement of labour between regions.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2023, MaRa 2022

Increase in remote work

- In 2023, 45 % of employees worked remotely, with over half of them doing so at least weekly.
- In many sectors, employees can now live in rural areas and work for companies located in cities through remote connections.
- This can bring new residents and vitality to rural areas, while cities benefit from skilled labour without the need for employees to relocate to the city.

Työolobarometri 2023

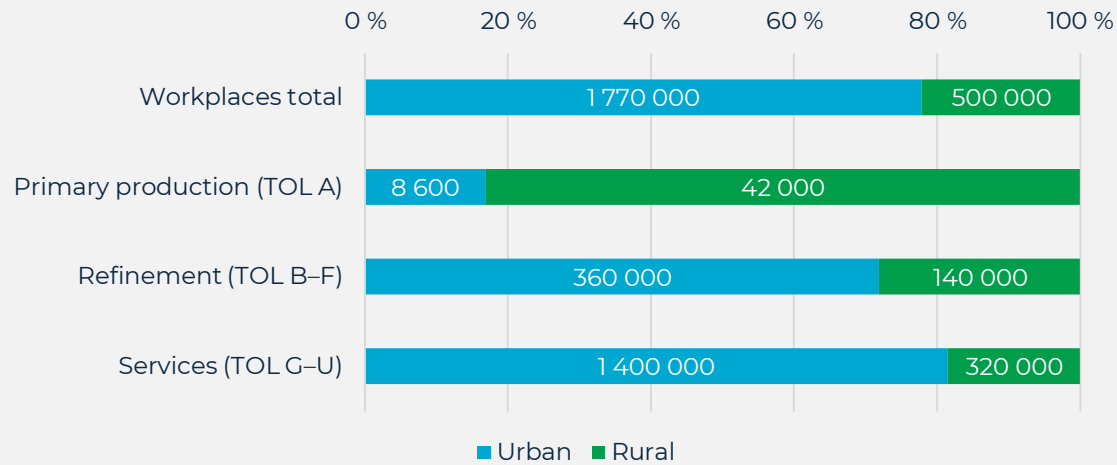


Current phenomena



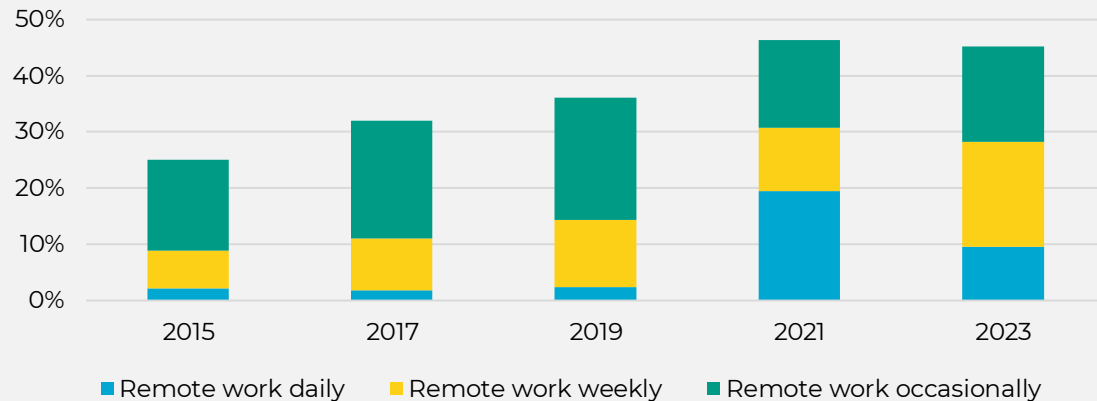
EMPLOYMENT

Workplaces in urban and rural areas



Combination of Statistics Finland's Paavo postcode data 2024 and SYKE's urban-rural classification; analysis Destia.

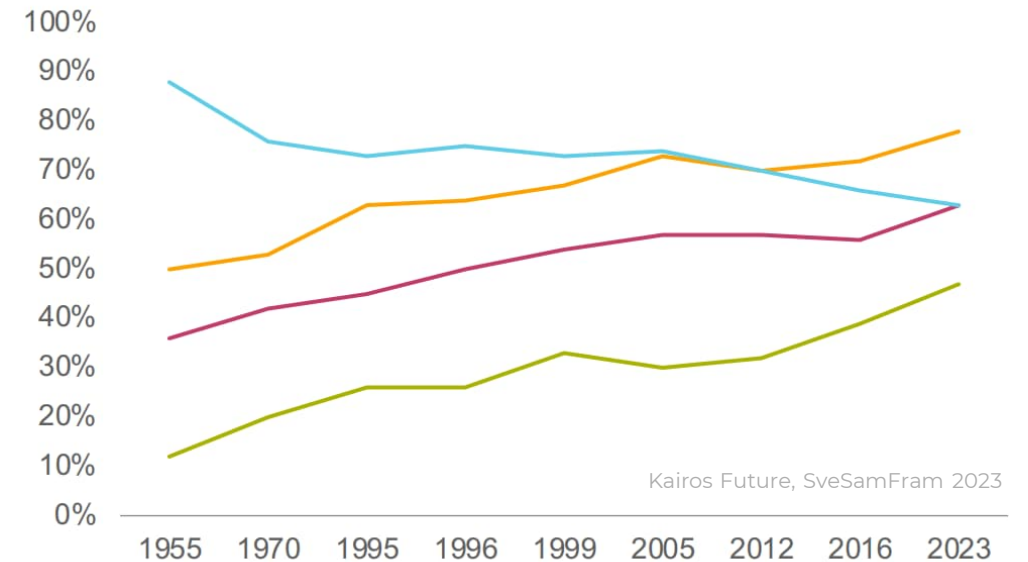
Shares of remote working in Finland



Working condition barometer 2023

Attitudes have shifted in Sweden

How important do you consider the following factors in order to feel good about the place where you live? The chart shows the percentages who rated them as extremely or very important (Sweden).



Kairos Future, SveSamFram 2023

- Calm environment
- Close to shopping
- Good opportunities for work
- Good recreational activities (restaurants, theaters etc.)

- In Sweden, job opportunities are no longer considered as important as they once were when choosing a place to live.
- People value both a peaceful living environment and good services.
- **By combining the strengths of rural areas and cities, both can be achieved.**

BIOECONOMY



The aim of Finland's bioeconomy strategy is to achieve a value addition of **50 billion euros from bioeconomy by 2035.**

In Finland, bioeconomy refers to an economy that uses renewable biological resources wisely for producing food, energy, products, and services. Bioeconomy forms a cohesive whole with circular economy, as it is based on the sustainable use of renewable natural resources and efficient resource utilisation. Bioeconomy generates the new raw materials needed for the biocircular economy, offering renewable solutions to replace fossil raw materials in combating climate change, and creating a new business opportunity in both rural areas and cities.

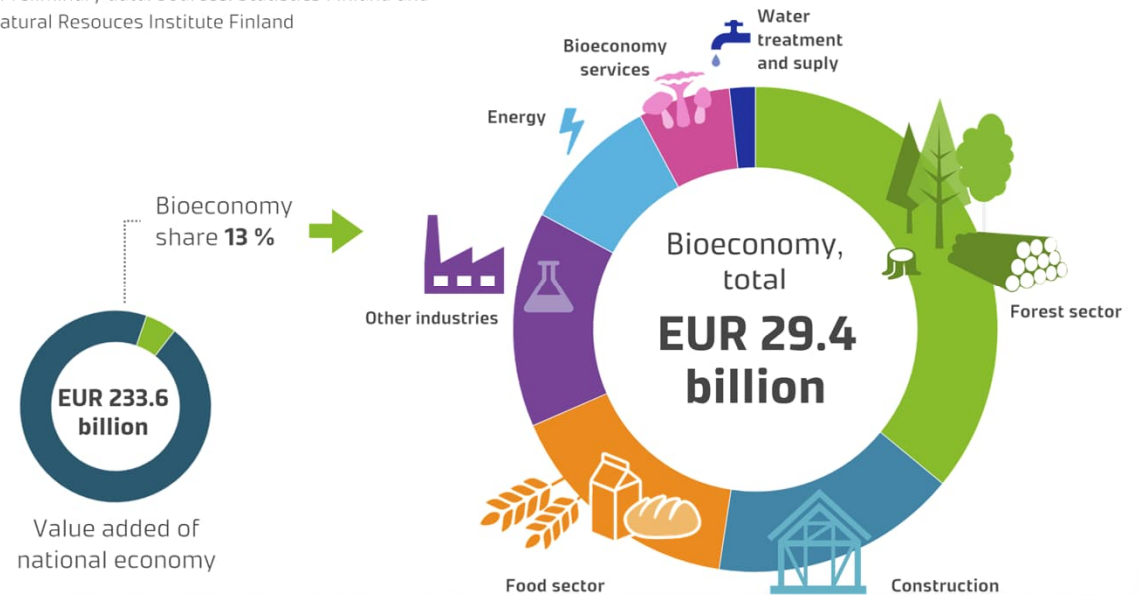
Finland's updated bioeconomy strategy 2022

- An aim is to create economic growth and jobs based on sustainable solutions by producing high value-added products and services, and to generate well-being for all of Finland.
- An another aim is to increase resource-efficient use and recycling of materials, utilise by-products, and reduce dependence on non-renewable raw materials.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2022

Value added of bioeconomy 2022*

* Preliminary data. Sources: Statistics Finland and Natural Resources Institute Finland



Current phenomena

Bioeconomy is expanding to many sectors

- Wood-based bioproducts, biodegradable plastics, and biochemicals are replacing fossil-based products.
- Sustainable agriculture and food production are on the rise.
- The decarbonisation of energy sources is progressing, and advanced biobased fuels and biochar can be produced from biobased products.

European bioplastics, FAO, IEA 2022

In 2023, bioeconomy sectors employed approximately **300 000 people**, accounting 11 percent of all employed individuals.



Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE) 2023



Planned biogas projects exceeding **€450 mil.**

Biogas projects are mainly located in urban areas.

In Finland, the demand for biogas and biomethane could range between 4 and 11 terawatt hours by 2030.
Biokierto 2024

The largest areas of use are estimated to be heavy transport, ships, and industry. Many transport companies are already utilising biogas.

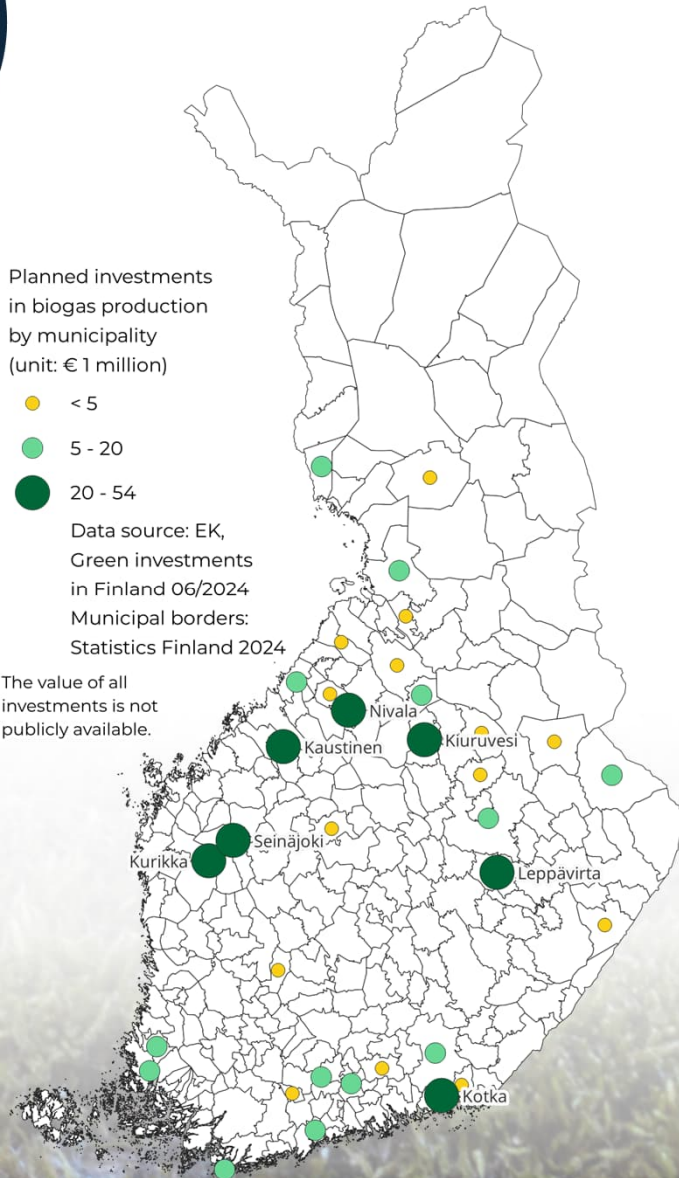
Finland is a significant producer of many bio-based fuels.

Planned investments in biogas production by municipality (unit: €1 million)

- < 5
- 5 - 20
- 20 - 54

Data source: EK,
Green investments in Finland 06/2024
Municipal borders: Statistics Finland 2024

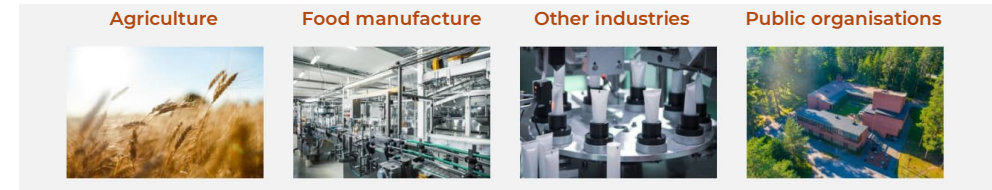
The value of all investments is not publicly available.



A marketplace for side streams: KiertoaSuomesta.fi

KiertoaSuomesta.fi is a digital marketplace that connects buyers and sellers of materials, with a special focus on trading bio-based side streams. The platform creates new business and revenue opportunities, while also providing comprehensive information on how side streams can be utilised in business.

Main target groups



HOW IT WORKS

- Various industries generate a large amount of side streams that are not yet being utilised efficiently.
- The platform allows users to create sales and purchase listings for different bio-based streams.
- A bio-based side stream refers to any biomass not utilised in the main production of a farm, such as manure, grass biomass, and plant waste.
- Users can register for free using their email and their business ID. Registered users can create listings and view detailed information about other listings.

The service strengthens the symbiosis between rural and urban areas and supports bio-circular economy. Companies of various sizes operating across Finland can connect more efficiently, allowing supply and demand to meet.



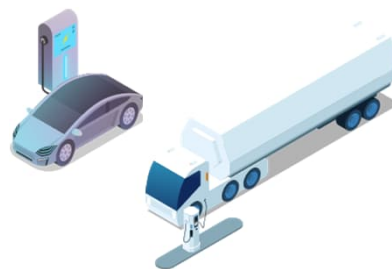
Finnish raw materials largely come from the forests, fields, and mines. Nearly 70 % of the raw materials for export industries are located in rural areas, from where they are transported to factories for processing, and the products are then sent to export ports or domestic markets. The export industry creates jobs throughout the supply chain: sourcing raw materials in rural areas and knowledge work in urban areas. Forest products are continuously present in the daily life of urban residents as heat in radiators, as wood fibers in clothing, as cellulose derivatives in food, as parquet flooring in homes and as paper in toilets. Finns are constantly connected to forest-based products.

The transition from a fossil-based society towards a mineral and bio-based society

- Phasing out fossil products will significantly increase the demand for minerals and bio-based products. The global net-zero target will require six times the amount of minerals currently mined.

IATA 2024

- The transition requires a significant effort in Finland to strengthen the symbiosis. Bioeconomy and the efficient use of minerals are key to future success.
- This shift could bring substantial job growth to both rural and urban areas in Finland.



The electrification of transport and the increasing use of bio-based fuels

- Raw materials for batteries and bio-based fuels are sourced from rural areas. The largest user groups are located in cities.
- Road transportation is becoming electrified, with Finland aiming for 500 000 fully electric cars by 2030, which would be 18 % of all cars. In the EU, it is estimated that about 10 % of heavy vehicles will be electric by 2030.
- Over the long term, bio-based fuels are expected to be more prominent in maritime and air transport.

Autoalan tiedotuskeskus 2024, Arthur D. Little 2024, Traficom 2024



Photo from spring 2024

Keliber will start producing battery-grade lithium for its own ore in Kokkola starting in 2025, making it the first company in Europe to do so. The company's own concentrating plant is expected to be completed in the coming years. Following this, Keliber will be able to utilise the ore mined from the mines in Kaustinen.



Current phenomena



Renewable forest industry

The winner of the Uusi Puu 2023 competition is a growth medium for green construction made from biochar.

The advantages of biochar include:

- Balancing moisture conditions
- Carbon sequestration → combats climate change
- Using sawmill or forest industry waste as raw material



Graphite used in batteries can be replaced with hard carbon made from lignin.

The advantages of lignin include:

- Renewability and the bio-based nature
- Can be produced in Finland as a by-product of pulp production



Sources:
[Stora Enso 2024](#), [Uusi Puu 2023](#)

The transition to a bio-based and circular economy promotes symbiosis

- To ensure that virgin materials are sufficient, all materials must be circulated as efficiently as possible throughout the value chain.
- For example, a battery mineral used in an electric vehicle can be recycled and reused in another vehicle's battery.
- The value chain from rural to urban areas becomes stronger.
- Effective markets for various raw materials are essential to utilise materials efficiently in the most suitable applications.

” The transition to a circular economy is a prerequisite for the renewal of our economy and thus a significant factor in national security as well as the maintenance and development of overall security.”

The Finnish Government 2024 -
Kiertotalous ja resilienssi

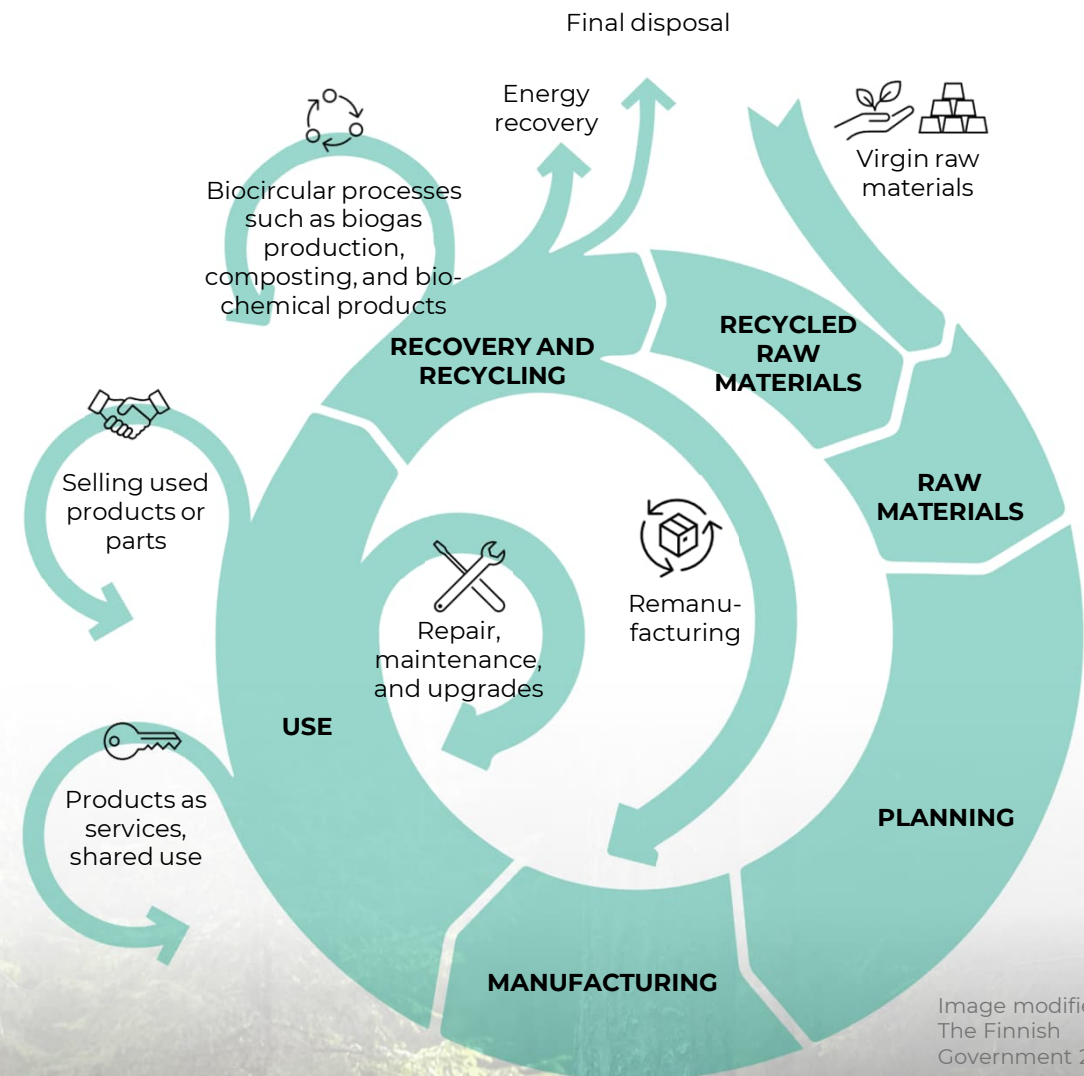


Image modified
The Finnish
Government 2023



Urbanisation has increased the demand for construction in growth centers. Construction requires increasing amounts of building materials, which are being sourced from ever more distant locations, primarily from rural areas. As the demand for building materials grows, the importance of rural raw materials rises as well. The reuse of materials is also becoming more common, extending their lifespan. Urban demand creates a need for rural construction projects, such as bioenergy plants, wind farms, and data centers.

Urbanisation increases the need for infrastructure and real estate

- As more people move to urban areas, the construction of properties and infrastructure expands, driving up the demand for soil, rock, and timber.
- Dense and growing cities require investments in areas such as public transport and street infrastructure. Urbanisation increases intercity traffic, and improvements to the transportation network can also meet the mobility needs of rural residents and businesses.

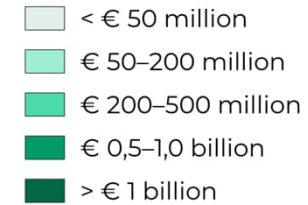
Wood construction is becoming more common

- A wooden single-family house stores an average of 30 tons of carbon dioxide, equivalent to the emissions of one passenger car over more than 10 years. [Metsä Fibre](#)
- The construction of wooden apartment buildings has been concentrated in the capital region and other growth centers. Urbanisation is shaping the industry and creating additional demand. [University of Oulu](#)
- Wood can be extensively utilised in the construction of buildings, apartment blocks, halls, and bridges. [Puuinfo](#)

Industrial and energy construction

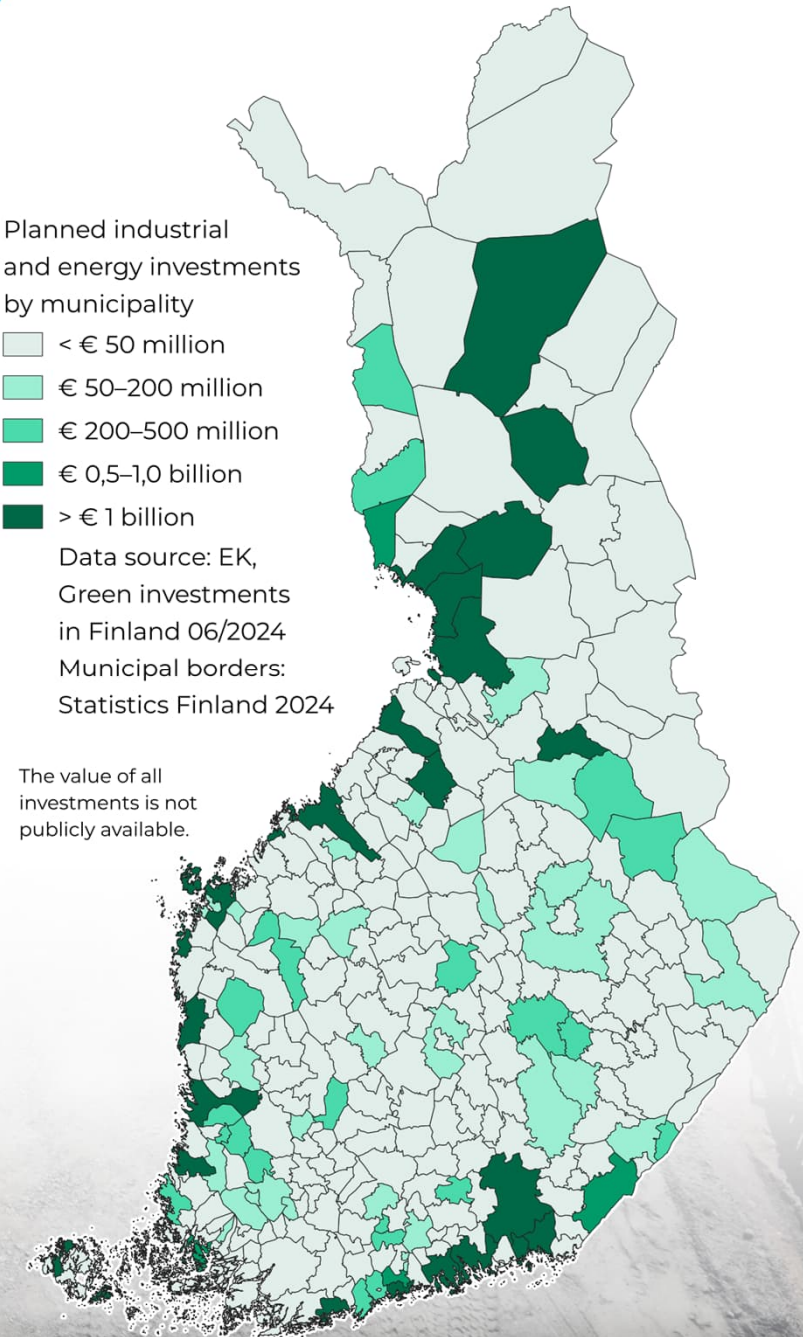
- Industrial and energy investments worth €270 bil. are planned for Finland
EK investointi-ikkuna, situation in June 2024
- Construction is mainly focused on areas outside the cities.
- Industrial investments, in particular, require a significant amount of new labour. There is a growing need for both urban workforce and seasonal workers.

Planned industrial and energy investments by municipality



Data source: EK,
Green investments
in Finland 06/2024
Municipal borders:
Statistics Finland 2024

The value of all
investments is not
publicly available.



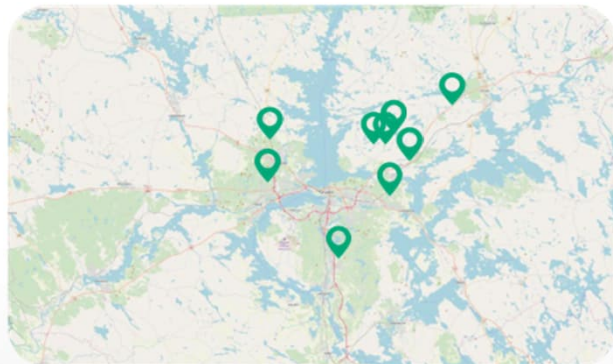
Current
phenomena



CASE: THE MATERIALS OF EARTH CONSTRUCTION IN THE CITY OF TAMPERE

Aggregates are sourced from rural areas surrounding the urban region of Pirkanmaa for property and infrastructure projects. While circular economy practices are becoming a stronger trend in earth construction, increasing the use of recycled construction materials does not completely eliminate the need for extracting bedrock aggregates.

Some of the aggregate extraction sites used by the city of Tampere



The city of Tampere / OpenStreetMap

15–30 kilometres

Transport distances for bedrock aggregates

30–50 kilometres

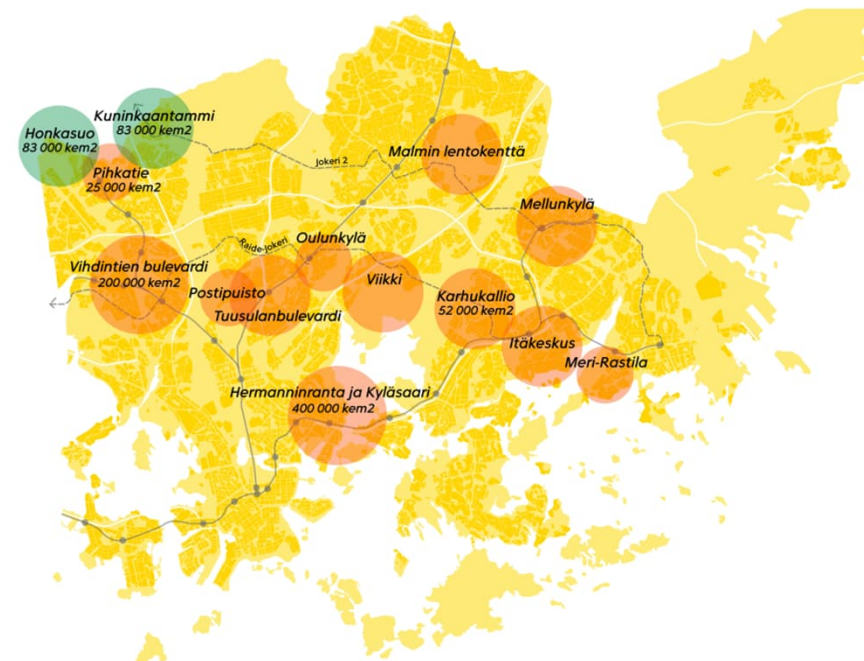
Transport distances for fine aggregates

 Aggregate extraction site

CASE TIMBER CONSTRUCTION

In Helsinki, the goal is for 20 % of all new apartment buildings to be wooden apartment blocks by 2029. Increasing wood construction is also part of the MAL agreement between the municipalities in the Helsinki region and the state.

The city of Helsinki has developed a wooden model apartment building specifically designed for infill development. The first buildings based on this model are planned to be constructed in Mellunkylä. Helsinki also has some wooden public or commercial buildings. For example, Stora Enso's wooden headquarters is set to be completed in Katajanokka in 2024.



Picture: City of Helsinki, [Future wood construction areas](#). Note: kem2 = floor area in m²



Services enable people to live and reside both in rural areas and cities. Typically, rural areas or small town centers do not offer all services, so some services must be sought in the nearest city. On the other hand, dynamic populations in busy tourist or vacation areas create conditions for a better service offering compared to the permanent resident population of the municipality.

Distance learning opportunities are evolving

- Higher education, in particular, is increasingly available fully or largely online in many fields.
- With the rise of location independence, moving away from one's home is no longer necessary for studying.
- On the other hand, it is now also easier to live in a different location than the city where one is studying due to family reasons, for example.

Ageing and services

- Population ageing is increasing the demand for health and care services in both urban and rural areas.
- One new opportunity is remote home care, where a client can live in a rural area while the caregiver works elsewhere, with visits conducted via video connections.

Electronic commerce brings new opportunities

- Smaller businesses are increasingly moving to online sales, which means that rural areas now have access to a wider range of goods than before.
- Rural businesses can sell their products through online stores across Finland and even internationally.

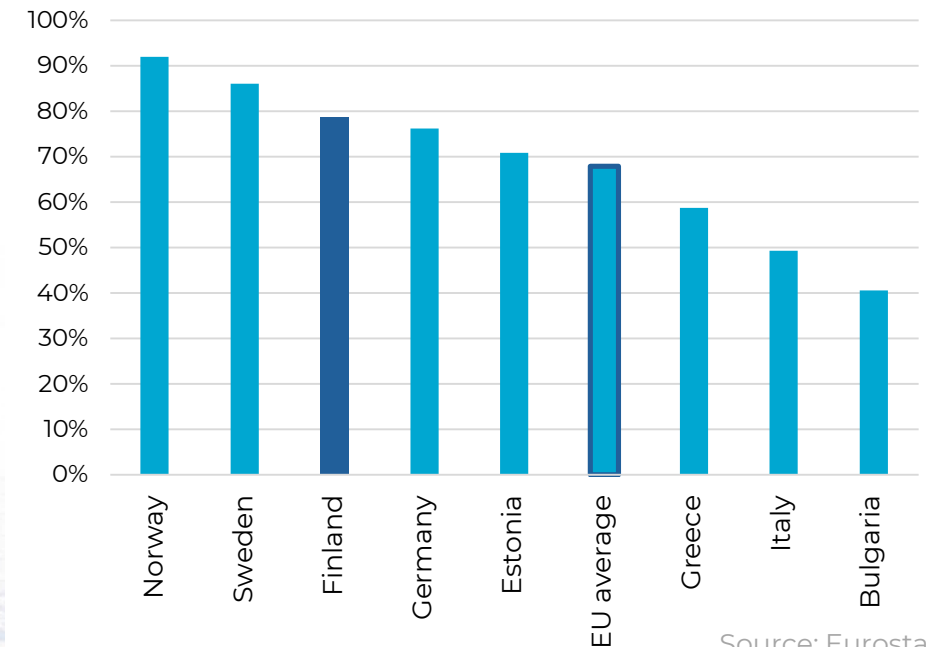


Current phenomena

By the end of 2022, fiber optic connections were available to over half of Finnish households. Connections with a download speed of at least 1000 megabits per second were available to 65 % of households.

Source: Traficom

The proportion of the population making online purchases in the last 12 months across different countries in 2023



Source: Eurostat



CASE MÄNTYHARJU

5 500

permanent inhabitants

18 000

population during summer
vacation season

200 km

from Helsinki

4 800

summer cottages

9th

largest amount of free-time residences
compared to permanent homes in Finland

70 %

of summer cottage users live
outside Mäntyharju



In Mäntyharju, the standard amenities in cottages has increased, and more of them are now suitable for year-round living. Typically, people reach their cottages by car, but the municipality has also been marketed as a vacation spot for car-free households from the capital region. There are available properties in the town center, which are well-served by train connections. Older couples have also purchased central apartments as vacation homes. These couples, due to health reasons, have had to give up their more remote cottages but still wish to remain as holiday residents in Mäntyharju.

Services

- ✓ Three grocery stores
- ✓ A high number of consumer goods stores relative to the population
- ✓ The Kino cinema and the library's hobby equipment rental
- ✓ Extensive recreational opportunities, including athletics fields, padel courts, tennis courts, baseball fields, beach volleyball courts, a disc golf park, a skate park, and an artificial ice rink

Tourism

- ✓ In Mäntyharju, tourism is largely focused on sports and culture
- ✓ Key attractions include Repovesi national park (130 000 visitors annually) and the Salmela art center (30 000 visitors annually)

Thanks to leisure residents, the municipality has been able to maintain a good level of services, despite a decrease in the permanent population. For cottage owners, the slower pace of life in Mäntyharju is important as it contributes to their mental well-being.



TOURISM



Cities, along with the countryside, make Finland an attractive destination for both domestic and international travellers. Cities offer services and cultural experiences for tourists, but for most international visitors, Finland is a nature destination, admired for its clean and tranquil natural landscapes. Nature and urban environments complement each other. Finland's exceptionally broad right of access allows everyone to enjoy the outdoors.

Cottages as a year-round attraction factor

- Cottage ownership remains popular, but shared use cottages have become more common.
- Rental cottages, accessible via good transportation links, attract city dwellers looking to spend their vacations in nature.

Combining nature and urban tourism

- Finland's advantage in tourism is the combination of urban and nature holidays, in which both regions benefit.
- For example, one might spend a weekend in a southern Finnish city attending cultural events, followed by a trip to the surrounding countryside for a nature vacation, or take an overnight train to Lapland.

Sustainable tourism

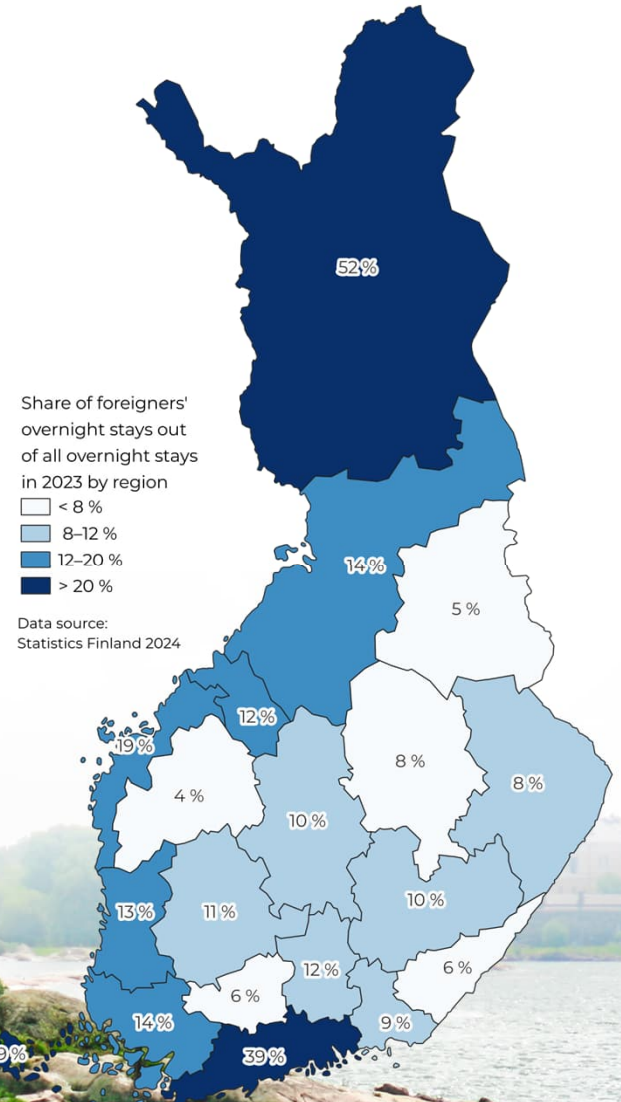
- Domestic travel offers a sustainable alternative to travelling abroad.
- The countryside provides activities for families, such as exploring farm and forest animals, hiking, kayaking, and mountain biking.
- Discovering products and services from local small businesses as part of the travel experience generates income for local entrepreneurs.

Getting to know Finnish food culture

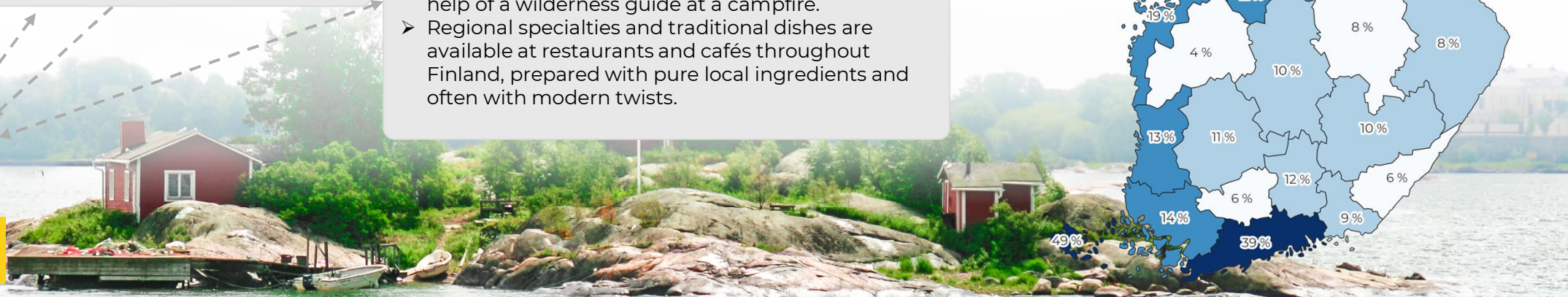
- Experiencing the Finnish food culture includes activities like foraging for berries or mushrooms and fishing for ingredients to cook with, all with the help of a wilderness guide at a campfire.
- Regional specialties and traditional dishes are available at restaurants and cafés throughout Finland, prepared with pure local ingredients and often with modern twists.

In 2022, there were a total of 29 100 businesses in the tourism industry, employing 66 400 people. The industry's businesses generated a turnover of **€10.4 billion.**

TEM 2024



Current phenomena

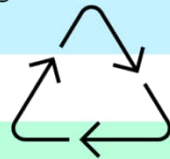


TRAVELLING IN FINLAND

The appeal of international tourism can be enhanced by strengthening the symbiosis within the tourism sector as well.

City tourism attractions

Sights and landmarks
Cultural offerings and events
Restaurants
Maritime scenery
Urban environment
Commercial services



Rural tourism attractions



National and nature parks
Other nature spots and activities (boating, hiking, berry picking, hunting, fishing, mountain biking, photography, safaris)
Rural tourism and accommodations (venues for weddings, meetings, events, and retreats)

Rural tourism services are gathered on platforms such as www.matkamaalle.fi

Different types of traveller groups interested in Finland



Nature lovers

Natural tranquility and recharging

- National parks
- Archipelago
- Mushroom and berry picking



Outdoor explorers

Unique nature experiences

- Northern lights
- Midnight sun
- National parks



Active hobbyists

An active vacation in natural landscapes

- Extreme sports
- Water, snow, and outdoor activities



Lifestyle travellers

Exploring the local lifestyle

- Events
- Sauna bathing
- Food culture



Culture travellers

Holistic well-being and time for one self

- Well-being services
- Husky and reindeer safaris
- Special accommodations



City life enthusiasts

Urban experience and attractions

- Urban culture
- Museums
- Food culture



Rural & Urban Symbiosis
09/2024

