

Getting more from less

Finnish initiatives on sustainable consumption and production

Through a new national programme Finland is seeking new ways to reduce the harmful environmental impacts of citizens' everyday lives.

As in other Western countries, households in Finland typically have a large environmental footprint due to their consumption patterns. Since Finland is a sparsely populated country with cold winters, environmental impacts related to domestic heating and personal transportation are particularly high. Material consumption per capita in Finland is about twice as high as the EU average. Energy- and material-intensive export industries like metallurgy and papermaking also add to Finland's environmental impacts.

Finland's new national sustainable consumption and production programme, launched in 2013 under the name **More from less - wisely**, aims to give people new ways to reduce the environmental impacts of their everyday lives, especially in three key areas: housing, food and transport.

Government resolutions

The Finnish Government passed two resolutions based on the new national sustainable consumption and production programme 13.6.2013:

- Resolution on Finland's sustainable consumption and production programme: More from less – wisely
- Resolution on the promotion of cleantech solutions (sustainable solutions in environment and energy) through public sector procurement

Helping people to save energy and materials

Initiatives relating to food particularly aim to reduce waste and promote environmentally friendly foods by informing consumers about impacts along the food production chains.



Key goals for housing and other buildings especially endeavor to reduce energy consumption and encourage the use of renewable and hybrid energy solutions. Policies related to transport are designed to encourage people to use their cars less, and instead travel by bus, rail or bicycle – or work from home. One way to do this could be to shift taxation away from car ownership to car use.

The programme strives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful environmental impacts; but it also considers how favourable changes in consumption patterns could improve the quality of life and create new business opportunities and jobs, as part of Finland's long-term goal of building a Green Economy.

The programme also incorporates eight ground-breaking

pilot projects that have been set up to test innovations designed to reduce the environmental impacts of production and consumption.

Public sector pioneers

Finland's national and local authorities purchase about 30 billion euros worth of goods and services every year. Choices made in the public sector help to shape markets, support the development of environmentally friendly solutions, and set a good example for the private sector to follow.

The new Finnish programme calls on public sector organisations to play a leading role by purposefully making environmentally friendly choices. It sets specific targets and recommendations for many aspects of public sector purchasing.

Carrots and sticks for car users

Transport accounts for about a fifth of Finland's greenhouse gas emissions. The national climate and energy strategy targets a 15% reduction in transport-related emissions by 2020.

Positive and negative economic incentives can encourage people to choose more environmentally friendly means of transport. Taxation policies play a particularly vital role. Variable vehicle purchase tax rates favouring low-emission models have been quite successful in Finland, for instance.

One key idea in the new programme is to shift taxation away from car ownership to car use. This shift would make the costs of driving more closely reflect its harmful impacts from emissions, safety and road maintenance costs

and costs of noise, traffic jams and other issues that affect everyone's quality of life. This could be done with the help of various technological solutions for pricing road use, possibly based on satellite data on vehicles' movements.

Measures for accessible transport

The programme aims to make public transport more attractive by increasing subsidies. Public transport networks must also be better inter-linked to enable smooth interchanges. Public transport,



walking and cycling will additionally be promoted among consumers through marketing campaigns and user-friendly information services.

Through improved spatial planning new homes and workplaces will increasingly be built in locations with good access to public transport and attractive routes for walking and cycling, particularly in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

Greener work-related journeys

Certain benefits enjoyed by employees in Finland such as free parking spaces, company cars, and kilometre-based expenses and tax deductions for work-related journeys all serve to encourage car use instead of greener options. The taxation of such benefits will be revised.

Few Finnish employers have so far joined schemes through which they can provide free public transport tickets or travel cards. There is a need to make such benefits more attractive to both employers and employees.

One challenging issue in a country with many sparsely populated rural regions is that measures making the use of private cars more costly need to be targeted to ensure that people living in rural regions with no decent alternative means of transport do not suffer.

Pioneering project

Capital ideas for promoting public transport

Helsinki Region Transport is striving to get more people to use buses and rail transport instead of private cars in and around the Finnish capital, by making it easier for residents to obtain travel cards via the internet free of charge — with two weeks free travel thrown in as a special offer.

A four-week marketing campaign using radio, newspapers and outdoor advertising in spring 2013 was a great success, encouraging more than 30,000 new customers to get travel cards.

The project is also building up cooperation with property developers, real estate

agents and the Population Register Centre to ensure that when people move to a new home they get information about local public transport routes and timetables — and even a free travel card waiting for them when they move in.

From the field to the table – more sustainably

Food accounts for about a fifth of consumers' environmental impacts.

Studies have shown that consumers would be keen to reduce these impacts, but that a lack of information makes this difficult. Finland aims to develop ways to give consumers understandable information on the origins of food ingredients, food safety and animal welfare issues, as well as on environmental impacts along the food production chain.

Public sector catering services in schools, hospitals and administrative offices serve around 800 million lunches a year – meaning an average of 150 meals per person. Public sector kitchens represent fertile soil for spreading such information and promoting environmentally friendly foods such as seasonal produce, organic foods and vegetarian dishes. Kitchens run by local authorities across the country will be encouraged to provide such meals more frequently.



Health benefits of green dishes

During 2013 and 2014 a scheme promoting climate-friendly lunches will be run in many public sector lunch restaurants across Finland by MTT Agrifood Research Finland and WWF. Criteria for assessing the climate impacts of meals will be developed as part of this scheme.

Greener food options also tend to be healthy choices. Promoting healthier eating could help to reduce widespread lifestyle diseases and related health care costs.

The Finnish authorities aim to create a model for “good eating” meals that are healthy, tasty and environmentally friendly.

In Finland lunch vouchers are widely provided to employees as a fringe benefit. These popular schemes could also be adapted to encourage green choices. Making value added tax variable for different kinds of foods is another way to affect food consumption patterns.

Pioneering project

Reducing food waste

About 5% of the food bought by Finnish consumers currently ends up being thrown away. Around 500 million euros worth of perfectly edible food is wasted in this way every year. Leaving food uneaten generates as much carbon dioxide as 100,000 cars.

Everyone agrees that it is a pity to throw away good food. Restaurants and canteens around Finland will receive guidelines on ways to reduce waste. Advice will also be provided for households.

In a pilot scheme recently run in Helsinki 200 residents of a housing estate were encouraged to pass on unused food to their neighbours. Such schemes can also build up a sense of community. New ways for restaurant kitchens to pass on surplus food to charitable organisations are also being found.

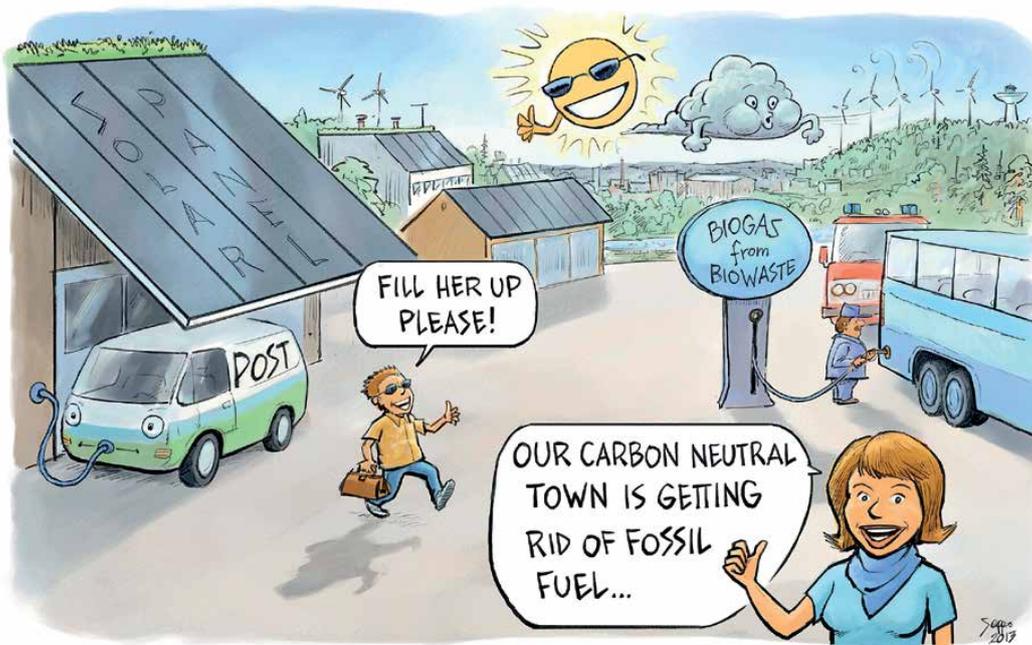


Emission scenarios

Show that Finland will not be able to reach climate targets without changing the consumption patterns of households and the public sector.

Housing, food and transport together account for more than 70% of Finnish households' total

climate impact and more than 55% of their other environmental impacts. The global nature of modern production chains means that many of the impacts of goods consumed in Finland, in practice, occur in other countries where they are produced.



Setting an example through green public procurement

Finland's programme emphasises the pioneering role that public sector organisations can play as major purchasers by favouring more sustainable goods and services.

A separate Finnish Government resolution on the promotion of cleantech solutions through public sector procurement has been passed to complement the consumption and production programme.

The resolution defines cleantech solutions as products, services and processes that

are favourable because they use lower amounts of materials and energy, and generate fewer harmful environmental impacts. Areas where such solutions should particularly be promoted within the public sector include construction, energy use, transport and waste management.

Targets for central government organisations

Specific targets are set for purchases made by national government organisations.

Procurement officials will be obliged to follow a new set of environmental purchasing principles, including energy efficiency considerations and the use of life-cycle analyses when assessing the impacts of alternative products and services. Progress towards these targets will be closely monitored.

- Purchased electricity should come from renewable sources. By 2017 new public buildings should all be near-zero-energy buildings.
- Finnish public sector workers are striving to rearrange their working routines so that they will travel 10% less in 2015 compared to 2010. By 2015 all vehicles purchased for mass transport should have emissions lower than 100g/km; or at least 30% of vehicle fleets should use electric, ethanol, gas or hybrid solutions.
- Catering facilities should systematically save energy, reduce food waste, and increase the share of organic food to 10% by 2015 and 20% by 2020.

Pioneering project

New helpdesk for public sector purchasers

Detailed advice on key criteria and guidelines for environmentally favourable goods and services is now freely available to all purchasers working for the national and local authorities. A new helpdesk has been set up for this purpose within the state-owned material and energy efficiency company Motiva.

The helpdesk provides green public procurement guidance while also developing and disseminating tools and best practices for small or large scale public purchasers. Help and guidance is provided for both pioneers and beginners. The helpdesk also promotes related networking.

www.motiva.fi/en

Support for local authority initiatives

Municipalities will be given recommendations for adopting cleantech solutions rather than obligatory targets; but the national authorities will actively support efforts to pilot innovative cleantech solutions at local authority level, especially through schemes that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Reshaping energy policy in the nation's living rooms

Finland aims to reduce the energy use of buildings by 60% by 2050.

New buildings will have to meet increasingly strict energy requirements, while existing buildings must be widely renovated in ways that improve their energy efficiency.

The construction and use of buildings accounts for as much as 40% of Finland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Existing tools such as energy audits and energy certificates for buildings will be increasingly utilised. Real time water and energy use monitoring systems will also be developed to help householders to follow their consumption and find ways to achieve savings.

Subsidies and tax deductions will be made more easily available to encourage energy-saving building renovations. Information related to all aspects of buildings' energy use and the availability of financial support must be made easily accessible and understandable to home-owners and property managers.

Encouraging hybrid energy solutions

National planning guidelines will be drawn up to promote local and property-specific hybrid energy solutions that exploit low-carbon energy sources such as solar energy and wind power.

The benefits of encouraging the distributed generation of energy from renewable resources on a local scale are currently being investigated. If prospects look promising, steps can be taken to make it easier for small firms and even individual households to sell relatively small amounts of surplus energy to local grids.



Pioneering project

Clubbing together to pioneer sustainable business ideas

The independent think tank Demos Helsinki has set up a peer incubator for innovative energy-smart startup companies. Known as the Peloton Club, members of this dynamic community of entrepreneurs, organisations and experts help each other to realise business ideas. They also get advice and motivation from experts to help them develop start ups that provide consumers with products and services that will improve their well-being while also enabling them to reduce their use of energy and material resources.

Members of the Peloton Club collaborate and network at club nights and longer "camps". The main goal is to help people with promising ideas to set up businesses, focus their efforts and kick-start pilot schemes. Members especially focus on concepts that will improve people's housing, transportation and nutrition.

The many innovations created by the start-up teams include a car-sharing scheme enabling car-owners to rent out their own vehicles (Weegos), a scheme that finds ways for users to deliver goods for other users to save time and fuel (PiggyBaggy), and a virtual food circle connecting farmers and consumers around the country.

www.pelotonclub.me

Finland's second national programme

More from less – wisely, Finland's new national sustainable consumption and production programme, follows up on an earlier programme launched in 2005. Entitled Getting more and better from less, this was one of the first such national programmes launched anywhere in the world.

The new programme has been designed to put into practice ideas from the 2012 Rio+20 sustainable development summit and the EU's Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan.

The measures within the programme on transport, housing and food could together reduce Finland's greenhouse gas emissions by more than 5% of projected levels.

Pioneering projects

Eight innovative projects have so far been set up under the national programme to test new ways to reduce the environmental impacts of transport, buildings, food consumption and public sector procurements.

- Attracting new public transport passengers for Helsinki Region Transport
- Setting up an environmental management system to help households reduce energy consumption and environmental impacts
- Devising criteria for climate-friendly lunches for workplace canteens and restaurants.
- Focusing on sustainability and climate impacts along the food chain from the farm to the table in Southeast Finland
- New advisory services to support green public procurement
- Working towards a carbon-neutral future in Western Uusimaa by improving material and energy efficiency through the wider Carbon Neutral Municipalities (Canemu) scheme
- Establishing a Peloton Club to help start-up companies develop innovative green business ideas related to housing, food and transportation
- Encouraging neighbours in a Helsinki residential district to reduce food waste by sharing leftover food and ingredients

A truly participatory programme

Finland's new national sustainable consumption and production programme is the result of a uniquely wide-ranging participatory process.

The working group that created the programme under the leadership of the Ministry of the Environment also included representatives from several other ministries, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, Tekes - the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, MTT Agrifood Research Finland, the Finnish Environment Institute, and the National Consumer Research Centre.

Related workshops organised in collaboration with the independent think tank Demos Finland also involved 190 representatives from many interest groups.

Pioneering project

Going carbon neutral

Fourteen Finnish towns have so far joined the Finnish Environment Institute's Carbon Neutral Municipalities (Canemu) Project.

First launched in 2008, this scheme targets ambitious greenhouse gas emission reductions to be achieved

through wide-ranging and creative collaboration between local authorities, businesses, researchers and citizens.

Some of the Canemu municipalities will serve as testing grounds for pioneering projects on sustainable consumption and production.

The Canemu municipalities aim to cut their emissions by 80% by 2030, well ahead of national and EU targets.

Many actions involve switching to renewable energy sources such as wind power and fossil-free biofuels like woodchips. Publicity campaigns have helped residents to reduce

emissions from their homes by 20% or more. Creative ways to reuse waste materials for new forms of production have also been found.

www.hinku-foorumi.fi/en

