

Country summary for Finland

The Finnish rural development policy is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. In Finland there is one National Strategic Plan which provides the overall policy framework for rural development, complemented by 2 Rural Development Programmes, one for mainland Finland and one for the region of Åland. The Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland has been prepared by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, also appointed as the Managing Authority for the overall coordination and implementation of the programme. The Managing Authority's tasks for the Åland region's programme have been delegated to the Government of Åland. For both programmes the Agency of Rural Affairs is the accredited Paying Agency.



Map of Finland
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General socio-economic situation in rural areas in Finland

Finland is Europe's most northern and rural country. According to the OECD classification of rural areas based on population density, the whole country is predominantly or significantly rural. Mainland Finland, which is Finland's first region, is very sparsely populated (5.2 million people, with a density of 17 inhabitants/km²), whose natural features, long distances and remoteness, are reflected in its history, traditions, regional and industrial structure and government. Interestingly, the north of Mainland Finland is inhabited by the only indigenous people of the EU, the Sami people. Finland's second region, The Province of Åland (population 26,766), is an autonomous region and forms an archipelago, situated in the Baltic sea.

Compared to urban areas, the population in rural areas is composed of a greater share of elderly people, which can pose problems in terms of the provision of appropriate services and the continuation of economic activities. In addition, rural educational levels, particularly in terms of higher education, are not as high as in urban areas. However, forestry and agriculture advisory services are well organised and cover the whole territory.

According to the National Strategy Plan, the structure of the Finnish economy is dominated by the service sector (69% of the total number of jobs). Agriculture and forestry account for 4% of employment, with processing accounting for 25%. Comparing the gross value added (GVA) in different sectors shows that the share of both primary production (3.5% in Finland, 2.1% in EU-27) and processing (30.9% in Finland, 26.6% in EU-27) was above the

EU average, indicating that despite the growth of the service sector, they still significantly impact on the Finnish economy and especially on economic activity in rural areas. With regard to Åland, the service industry again dominates, generating 80% of the value added and providing 70% of the employment locally. The shipping industry also provides 40% of the islands GDP. Despite this, agriculture does play an important role, as primary producers (which have modest earnings) provide raw materials for the local food industry, which is the main land-based industry. There are roughly 2,000 processing type businesses in Åland, in addition to the 700 or so agricultural enterprises.

In recent years, the industrial structure of rural areas has become increasingly diverse, but the number of jobs has decreased as a result of the growth in productivity of agriculture and forestry, as well as structural change in the public sector. Only just over 30% of jobs are located in urban-adjacent rural areas, rural heartland areas and sparsely populated rural areas. 11.2% of the total number of jobs (724,000) in rural areas are in primary production, 29.2% in processing and 56.9% in the service sector. The fact that most private services are in urban areas is a problem. In Åland, the rate of employment is high (according to the NSP, just 2.9% are registered unemployed) and job opportunities are relatively abundant; but the share of agricultural jobs (primary industries account for 15%) is shrinking.

Finland is the most forested country in Europe, which means that the forestry industry is particularly strong and significant (and more activity in this area could take place). The productivity of Finnish forestry labour is the highest in the EU, (€119,000/employee in Finland as compared to an EU-27 average of €38,300/employee). However, in the food industry, productivity is just slightly above the EU average (€50,200/employee as compared to an EU-27 average of €46,700/employee), and in agriculture the productivity of labour is the second-lowest among the old Member States (€13,545/AWU in agriculture, index 79 as compared to 100 for the EU-27). In addition, in Åland, given that agriculture operates on a small scale, the industry lacks competitiveness and struggles to keep up with the demands of an increasingly globalised food industry.

The special characteristics of Finnish agriculture (agricultural land covers 8.9% of the total surface area) include the northern climate and peripheral location, relative to core markets. These less-favoured production conditions constitute a permanent handicap for Finland, which is reflected in the production structure and methods, and especially in the high production costs and low yield levels.

In many parts of the country, farming suffers from a fragmented and scattered land structure, which makes it particularly difficult to increase farm size. The average size of parcels is only 2.4 ha. Because of the differences in production conditions across the country, various regions specialise in certain areas including: cereals, special crop or livestock production. In Åland, there is a greater focus on crop production than livestock breeding, and the sector also operates on a fragmented and small scale. Hence, in order to retain and grow the market share, initiatives need to be embraced so as to introduce new processes, innovations, and infrastructure.

The position of the agricultural industry could also be weakened as a result of reform of the CAP and EU enlargements, both of which could lead to further structural reform and inhibit gains in profitability. Developing productivity for the food processing sector (where employment levels have been shrinking) is also a key issue, if the industry is to remain competitive. In addition, the average age of farmers is rising, and in northern and eastern Finland many farmers have quit production, without having arranged for the farm to be

taken over.

Agriculture plays an important role in maintaining and managing the rural landscape. Agriculture has created and maintains farming landscapes with significant historical, cultural and landscape values. Traditional farming landscapes are characterised by the alternation of open and managed arable areas and forests, water bodies and other types of landscapes. Rural landscapes in Finland vary in different areas, ranging from large, open farmlands in Ostrobothnia to the small-scale and varied landscape created by fields, forests and lakes in eastern Finland. However, increases in production efficiency in the past decades, have led to a decrease in traditional landscapes and biodiversity across the country.

According to the classification of Finnish waters, 80% of lakes and 73% of the sea area was deemed excellent or good. However, water quality in rivers is poorer, with only 43% of them classified as excellent or good, as a result of farming or settlements concentrated along the rivers. In recent years, the condition of rivers flowing to the coasts and coastal waters has declined. Farming accounts for more than 60% of phosphorus loading and 50 per cent of nitrogen loading. In addition, Åland is in a cold temperature zone, which means that the natural environment is especially sensitive to pollution. Worryingly, most of Åland's land surface and lakes are poor in nutrients, and are therefore vulnerable to acidification and eutrophication.

Reducing non-point source pollution has been a key concern in recent years, but remains an issue that needs to be addressed. However, efforts have been made to reduce nutrient loading, surface runoff, and erosion through headlands, filter strips, riparian zones, and plant cover, as well as to secure better methods to store animal manure. Acidification of the soil is also a problem and it negatively affects agriculture's production capacity.

There is strong growth in the bioenergy sector but further investments are necessary in order to develop production opportunities in relation to biomass, biofuels and biogas. As well as providing a more sustainable energy source, the development of the sector would also have wider economic benefits, including the strengthening of the forestry industry.

Rural development challenges

According to the economic, social and environmental analysis of rural areas, the key challenges that need to be addressed include:

- Ensuring that the small agricultural land area (relative to the total surface area of the country) stays open and managed, as well as ensuring biological diversity is preserved;
- Decreasing environmental load from agriculture;
- Improving the productivity and competitiveness of agriculture as well as the whole food production chain;
- Ensuring basic rural industries continue to develop in the changing operating environment;
- Improving the diversity of economic activities in rural areas and increasing their competitiveness;
- Decreasing regional disparities between economic development and welfare, especially in sparsely populated rural areas and rural heartland areas;
- Promoting the utilisation of a strong community spirit and joint action, in rural development work.

Finland's national strategic objectives

The National Strategy Plan outlines the following National Rural Development Strategy and objectives:

1. Agriculture and forestry are practised in a way that is economically and ecologically sustainable as well as ethically acceptable, in all parts of the country:

- Ensure the preconditions for the operation and continuity of multifunctional agriculture in the northernmost country of Europe;
- Preserve the active and sustainable use of agricultural land, paying particular attention to maintaining the open, cultivated rural landscape;
- Promote environmental protection in agriculture and forestry, biodiversity and the welfare of production animals;
- Improve the structure and productivity of agricultural production by introducing new production technology, which lowers the unit costs;
- Improve productivity by increasing the business management skills of farmers;
- Ensure the production and processing of pure, high-quality products which meet consumer expectations;
- Promote the production and use of bioenergy.

2. Action favouring and furthering the competitiveness of businesses, new entrepreneurship, and networking among entrepreneurs, to diversify rural economies and improve employment:

- Encourage innovation in the development and introduction of production methods and processing of raw materials;
- Improve the opportunities for farmers to earn a living from other rural industries;
- Improve employment opportunities, especially amongst women and young people;
- Contribute to the development of basic services and the complementary private service sector, so as to ensure they take care of the ageing population and attract new residents.

3. Strengthening local initiatives to improve the viability and quality of life in rural areas:

- Enable rural residents to participate in the development of their own living environment through the local action groups (LAGs), whose work covers the whole of Finland, as well as strengthen village action; and
- Promote cooperation between different actors through regional, national and international networks.

The following principles apply to all key areas of the strategy: local initiative and action; cooperation and networking; equal opportunities for participation and economic activities for different population groups; human capacity and skills and utilisation of research information; innovation and introduction of good practices; sustainable development; and especially environmental protection.

Given that the strategic objectives for the RDP's are formulated at regional level, the strategic objectives for the Finnish RDP's include the following:

- The strategic objectives for the Mainland Finland RDP include, ensuring that agriculture and forestry are practised in a way that is economically and ecologically sustainable. A particular focus is placed on introducing new technologies to improve production processes and develop high quality products. Action favouring and furthering the competitiveness of businesses will also be targeted, so as to diversify rural economies and improve employment. Services will be developed to assist the elderly and attract new residents. LAGs will be established to encourage local project preparation and enhance the quality of life in rural areas. Bioenergy production and consumption will also be developed.
- The Åland government's overarching objective for the RDP is to ensure that rural and archipelagic areas retain their attractiveness for successful business and residency, whilst also preserving the environment. Farming and forestry production, combined with food processing, will remain key industries, alongside the development of a diversified rural economy. The achieving of a high degree of competitiveness, based on productivity, quality and sustainable practices will be focused upon. Hence, the goals underpinning this objective include: sustainable development of agricultural and forestry production, preservation of the open landscape and biodiversity, enhanced competitiveness, wider income opportunities, the promotion of entrepreneurialism, the development of organic production and better living conditions in rural areas.

RDP amendments

Taking into account the additional funding provided by the CAP Health Check, the European Economic Recovery Package (EERP) and Modulation, greater strategic priority is given to 'new challenges' outlined below although these differ between the two regions:

- The amendments for Mainland Finland have been directed towards RDP activity which supports improved water management (receiving 46% of the additional finance), renewable energy (5%), biodiversity (2%), innovative actions linked to all the aforementioned RDP activity (3%), milk restructuring (3%) and broadband (37%).
- For Åland, the amendments have placed more strategic priority on initiatives that improve water management and biodiversity (and specifically to enhance extra wide riparian zones, organic production, the maintenance of wooded meadows and prioritised natural pastures). Some 52.35% of the additional finance from the EAFRD, agreed in 2009, is being allocated to activities which enhance water management; the remaining 47.65% is being allocated to support biodiversity in the RDP area.

Expected outcomes of the policy

In the NSP, baseline and impact indicators have been established to assess Finland's Rural Development Strategy. These include indicators for economic development (at the start of the programme, Finland scored 114% of EU-27 average for GDP per capita, and it is expected that this figure will reach between 114% and 120% at the end of the programme) and employment rates (at the start of the programme the rate was 67.6% and it is expected that this will reach 68% to 72% by the end of the programme).

The indicators used to assess the individual rural development measures, have been defined at the RDP (i.e. regional) level, rather than within the Finnish Rural Development National Strategy Plan. As such, each regional RDP has individual targets related to socio-economic outcomes, environmental outcomes and outcomes and targets in relation to the 'new challenges'.

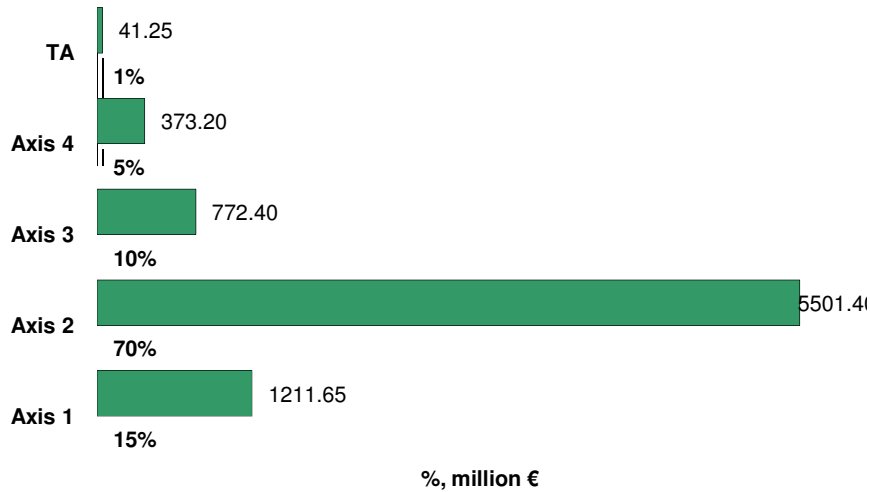
For example, for Mainland Finland, the result and output indicator targets which are being used to assess the measures within axis 2, include measure 214 – 'agri-environment payments' (a total area of 2.260 million ha will receive support); measure 211 – 'natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas' and 212 – 'payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas', which work alongside one another (65,921 farms receive support for natural handicap payments).

With regard to Mainland Finland's indicators, which assess the RDP's amendments in response to the 'new challenges', this relates to all measures within all four axes and includes measure 111 – 'vocational training and information actions' (21,000 people to receive training for activities to reduce climate change); measure 214 (350 holdings supported for more efficient reduction in nutrient load); measure 321 – 'basic services for the economy and rural population' (20 actions supported for upgrading the existing broadband infrastructure); measure 413 – 'quality of life/diversification' and 311 – 'diversification into non-agricultural activities', which work alongside each other (100 beneficiaries supported for processing of agricultural/forest biomass for renewable energy).

In relation to Åland, the result and output indicator targets, which are being used to assess the measures within axis 1, include: measure 112 – 'setting up of young farmers' (8 enterprises supported each year); measure 121 – 'modernisation of agricultural holdings' (70 enterprises receiving support per year for modernisation of agricultural enterprises); and measure 123 – 'adding value to agricultural and forestry products' (5 enterprises receiving support per year).

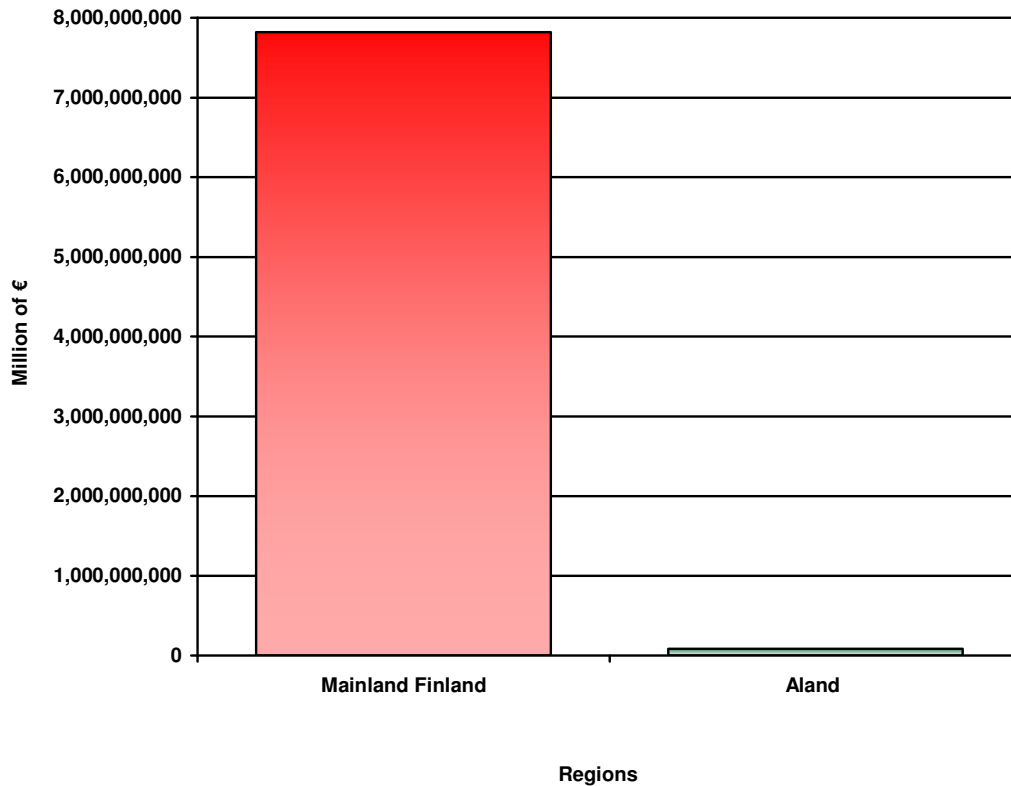
With regard to Åland's indicators, which assess the RDP's amendments in response to the 'new challenges', this relates to measure 214 only, and includes: 70 holdings assisted for enhanced soil management practices, including organic farming production; 50 holdings supported for targeted actions on natural pastures in relation to construction / management of biotopes / habitats within and outside 'Natura 2000' sites; 5 holdings supported for the maintenance of wooded meadows in relation to construction / management of biotopes / habitats within and outside 'Natura 2000' sites; 80 ha supported in relation to assistance for perennial field and riparian boundary strips and biobeds.

Total country budget breakdown by axis: Total expenditure (including national/regional + EAFRD + private funding), of €7,899,798,631



The RDP budget allocations are broadly divided into four main areas of expenditure, known as axes, (namely: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector; Improving the environment and the countryside; Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and 'leader'). Axis 1 (€1211.65 million), represents 15% of the overall Finnish RDP budget. Axis 2 (€5501.40 million), represents 70% of the overall Finnish RDP budget. Axis 3 (€772.40 million), represents 10% of the overall Finnish RDP budget. Axis 4 (€373.20 million) represents 5% of the overall Finnish RDP budget and 'technical assistance' (€41.25 million) represents 1% of the overall Finnish RDP budget.

Regional break down of the country budget



The Finnish regions receive differential proportions of the funding, with Mainland Finland receiving 99% (€7817.76 million) and Åland 1% (€83.81 million).

Axis Information

Axis 1 objectives - Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector

In Finland, objectives are set at the RDP (i.e. regional) level, rather than within the National Strategy Plan. However, the latter sets the overall axis 1 strategic priorities for the RDPs as:

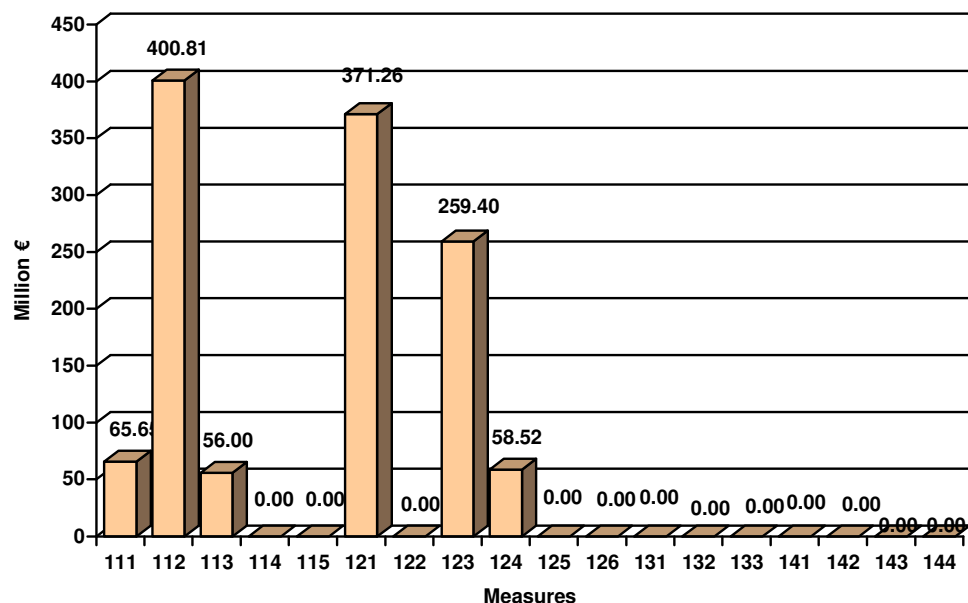
- Developing productivity and competitiveness of the main agricultural production sectors and preventing the weakening of the age structure of farmers, by supporting structural development of family farms; and promoting the diversification of agricultural practice and farming operations.
- Improving the competitiveness of small enterprises processing agricultural and natural products (meat and meat products, milk and dairy products, vegetables, berries, wild berries and mushrooms); developing the production and use of wood

energy and other forms of renewable bioenergy; increasing the value added of small-scale wood processing; increasing the development and utilisation of new products, production methods and technologies, based on innovation.

- Developing business management skills, environmental awareness and awareness of the welfare and health of farm animals among agricultural entrepreneurs; improving the knowledge and skills of forest owners on the use and management of forests; and maintaining the diversity of forest nature.

The general approach under axis 1 is similar for both Finnish regions, with an emphasis on: creating a competitive agri-food industry; utilising new technologies and innovations; supporting small enterprises, business skills and new entrepreneurs; improving quality and value added products; supporting new forms of collaboration; strengthening diversification; introducing environmental adaptations; tackling the weakening age structure and improving animal welfare. However, Mainland Finland's axis 1 strategy has a stronger focus on forest management, and targeting bioenergy.

Axis 1 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €1,211,592,264



With regard to the allocation of funding nationally: measure 111 received 5% of axis 1 funding; measure 112, (33%); measure 113 - 'early retirement', (5%); measure 121, (31%); measure 123, (21%) and measure 124 - 'cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector', (5%).

The budget allocation is distributed to all of the measures in both regions, with the exception of measure 113, which is targeted at Mainland Finland only.

In terms of the proportion of the budget allocation to key measures in the two regions, it appears that there are similarities, as Mainland Finland allocates 39% of its funding to measure 112 and 33% to measure 121 whilst Åland allocates 33% to measure 112 and 31% to measure 121.

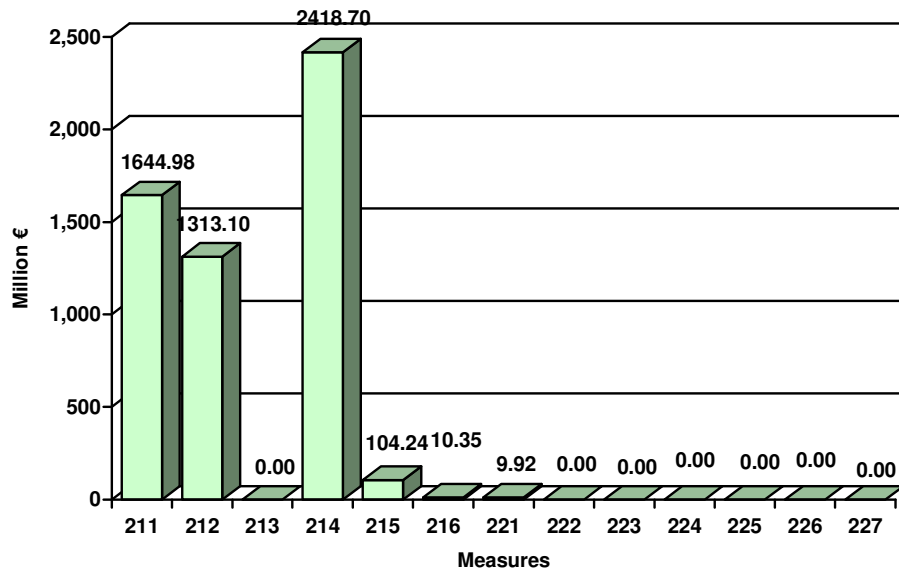
Axis 2 objectives - Improving the environment and the countryside

In Finland, objectives are set at the RDP (i.e. regional) level, rather than within the National Strategy Plan. However, the latter sets the overall axis 2 strategic priorities for the RDPs as:

- Maintaining valuable, open, cultivated agricultural landscapes, as well as meadows and pastures, regardless of whether they are used to produce food, food raw materials, renewable energy or managed without cultivation.
- Reducing environmental load to the soil, surface waters, groundwater and air, from agricultural sources, through the promotion of environmentally-friendly production methods; supporting the reduction in greenhouse gases and the preservation of organic matter in the soil as well as the carbon sink effect, through renewable bioenergy that is produced on agricultural and forest land.
- Preserving biodiversity in agricultural and forest environments, placing special emphasis on the preservation of the 'Natura 2000' network of agricultural and forest areas.

The general approach under axis 2 is similar for both Finnish regions, with an emphasis on: seeking to protect and enhance agricultural landscapes and biodiversity; supporting organic farming and preserving soil quality; and reducing the negative environmental impact of agriculture. The Mainland Finland strategy also underlines the importance of support for bioenergy and preservation of 'Natura 2000' sites.

Axis 2 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €5,501,396,036



In terms of financing, the main emphasis of Finland's RDP strategies is to support axis 2. With regard to the allocation of funding nationally: measure 211, received 30% of axis 2 funding, measure 212, (24%), measure 214, (44%), measure 215, 'animal welfare payments', (2%), measure 216 - 'non productive investments', (less than 0.02%), and measure 221 - 'first afforestation of agricultural land', (less than 0.02%).

With reference to the above measures, some are targeted only at Mainland Finland, which includes measure 211, measure 215, and measure 221.

In terms of the proportion of the budget allocation to key measures in the two regions, it appears that there are similarities, as Mainland Finland allocates 44% of its funding to measure 214, 30% to measure 211 and 20% to measure 212, while Åland allocates 57% to measure 214 and 43% to measure 212.

Axis 3 objectives - The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

In Finland, objectives are set at the RDP (i.e. regional) level, rather than within the National Strategy Plan. However, the latter sets the overall axis 3 strategic priorities for the RDPs as:

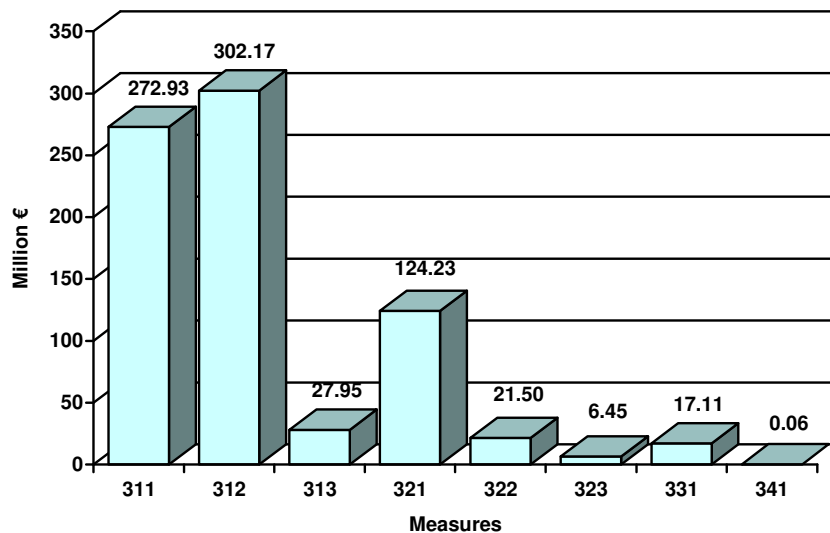
- To slow the decrease in the population of sparsely populated rural areas and rural heartland areas; and to contribute to the improvement of employment at the same pace as the whole country.
- To support the increase in the number of rural enterprises and jobs, as well as the diversification of economic activities; to reinforce the share of women and young people involved in economic activity; to promote new innovations and product

development, as well as their utilisation for employment creating opportunities in rural areas; to improve the capacity and skills, in both entrepreneurship and in the fields of information and other technology in rural areas.

- To improve the attractiveness of rural areas as places of residence and leisure; and to contribute to efforts aimed at maintaining the activity and vitality of villages.

The general approach under axis 3 is similar for all Finnish regions, targeting diversification of the rural economy, the support of small businesses, the development of tourism activities, strengthening the skills base as well as improving the quality of life in rural areas. The Mainland Finland strategy also emphasises slowing the decrease in depopulation, strengthening the participation of women and young people in economic activity and promoting innovations and product development.

Axis 3 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €772,402,888



With regard to the allocation of funding nationally: measure 311, received 35% of axis 3 funding, measure 312 'support for business creation and development', (39%); measure 313 'encouragement of tourism activities', (4%); measure 321 'basic services for the economy and rural population', (16%); measure 322 'village renewal and development', (3%) measure 323 'conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage', (1%); measure 331 'training and information, (2%); and measure 341 'skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing local development strategies', (0.0001%).

With reference to the above measures, some are targeted only at Mainland Finland which includes measure 313, measure 321, measure 322, measure 323 and measure 331. In addition, Åland is the only region which targets measure 341.

In terms of the proportion of the budget allocated to key measures in the two regions, it appears that Mainland Finland allocates the majority of its funds to three measures, namely

35% of its funding to measure 311, 39% to measure 312 and 16% to measure 321, whilst Åland allocates the majority of its funds to just two measures, namely, 19% to measure 311 and 80% to measure 312.

Axis 4 objectives - Leader

In Finland, objectives are set at the RDP (i.e. regional) level, rather than within the National Strategy Plan. However, the latter sets the overall axis 4 strategic priorities for the RDPs as:

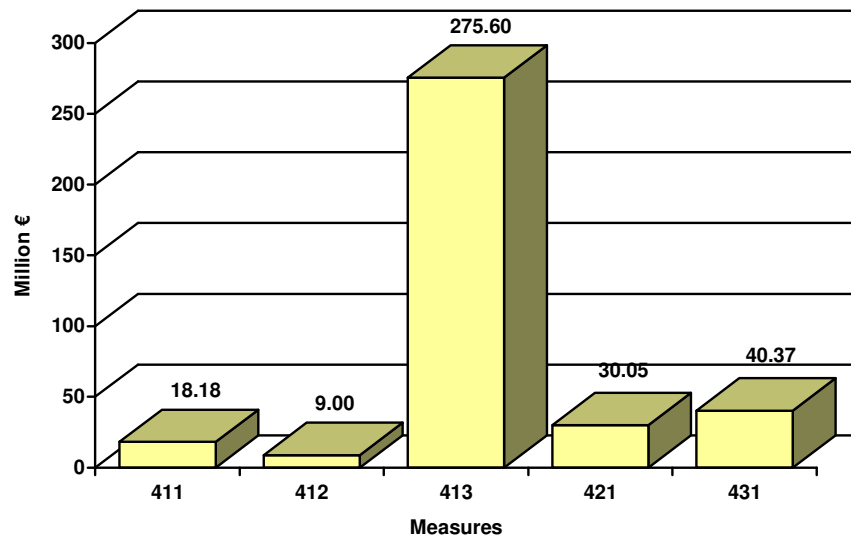
- Implementing strategic, systematic rural development driven by local needs, in accordance with the bottom-up principle, which provides each rural area with precise solutions for improving the opportunities for employment and earning a living. The 'leader' approach is applied in the whole country and in all axes of the Rural Development Programme.
- Bringing together and activating new people and groups of actors in terms of rural development work; strengthening local rural communities and improving living conditions, quality of life and the environment.
- Developing cooperation between civic society and public administration and creating new modes of operation; improving the opportunities for rural residents to participate and gain influence.

Networking and creating cooperation between different kinds of actors at local, regional, national and international level; using the networks to disseminate new, innovative solutions and know-how, which improve the competitiveness of rural actors.

The general approach under axis 4 is similar for all Finnish regions, namely that 'leader' will be used to facilitate stronger local governance and local development strategies and in particular will support the delivery of initiatives under axis 4.

Number of LAGs operational in the RDP areas as of March 2010 was 56.

Axis 4 indicative budget breakdown by measure: Total allocated budget (including regional/national public funds + EAFRD + private funds) of €373,198,369



With regard to the allocation of funding nationally: measure 411 'competitiveness', received 5% of axis 4 funding; measure 412 'environment / land management, (2%); measure 413 'quality of life and diversification, (74%); measure 421 'implementing cooperation projects', (8%); and measure 431 'running the local actions groups, skills acquisition, animation', (11%).

With reference to the above measures, some are targeted specifically at Mainland Finland which includes measure 411 and measure 412.

In terms of the proportion of the budget allocated to key measures in the two regions, it appears that Mainland Finland allocates the majority of its funds to three measures, namely, 74% of its funding to measure 413, 8% to measure 421 and 11% to measure 431, whilst Åland allocates the majority of its funds to just two measures, namely, 85% to measure 413 and 13% to measure 431.

The National Rural Network

The national rural network for Finland works with both RDP territories and stakeholders from across the country, for the duration of the programming period.

The priority objectives of the rural network are:

- To increase information available to the actors, potential beneficiaries and the public at large, regarding the opportunities and results of the Rural Development Programmes.
- To improve the flow of information, between the authorities and interest groups, implementing the programmes.

- To increase human capacity and skills through the exchange of experiences.

The rural network consists of the main stakeholders in programme implementation, from both public administration and society. The authorities involved include: the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Agency for Rural Affairs, Provincial Government of the Åland, Employment and Economic Development Centres, Environment Centres and municipal rural business authorities dealing with rural affairs. Authorities responsible for the implementation of Structural Funds and research institutes working in the fields of agriculture and rural areas also participate in the network. In addition, NGOs working in various fields such as the environment, animal protection and rural and village development, participate and are also active members.

The rural network transmits information between the parties implementing the programmes, beneficiaries and interest groups, as well as the public at large. The network communicates on measures, good practices and achievements of the programmes, and organises training and events on current rural development themes.

In addition, the network maintains contact with rural networks from across the EU, thus contributing to improved communication between rural development practitioners from Finland and other parts of Europe.

Monitoring and evaluation strategy

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are set up at the regional level in Finland, to monitor and evaluate the regional RDPs.

In both regions, the Monitoring Committee, which is responsible for the M&E system, is composed of key stakeholders from government, business, labour-market organisations, environmental authorities and other NGOs. Each of the M&E systems ensures continuous assessment of the RDP performance and outcomes, against specific targets and indicators, and uses the European Commission's Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF).

The Monitoring Committee assesses the results and impacts of the RDP, and plays a significant part in directing its implementation and resolving problems. The Monitoring Committee will provide continuous information on the implementation of the RDP through summary, annual, mid-term and ex post reports and evaluations. The raw data that will be collected for reporting, will be obtained through applications for funding, various administrative computer systems, registers collecting data regarding RDP implementation, publicly available statistics and through *ad hoc* commissioned reports

Communication and publicity

The communication strategy for both RDPs is implemented at regional level and is the responsibility of key governmental bodies. The main emphasis driving the strategy is to ensure all relevant actors who can benefit from the RDP, are aware of the potential opportunities, and are fully informed of the application process and necessary support. In tandem with this, the RDP implementation results will be disseminated, along with debate on the various approaches to rural development.

The target groups for the communication strategy include regional and local authorities, rural development organisations, farmers, rural entrepreneurs, private individuals, NGOs and other stakeholders. The communication strategy will make use of multiple communication tools. Importantly, the Internet will play a key role in alerting stakeholders to relevant opportunities and the application process. Moreover, information bulletins, newspaper advertisements, databanks, publications and brochures will be used to illustrate RDP activities.

Annex I – Measures

Axis 1 - Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	<i>Promoting knowledge and improving human potential</i>	111	Vocational training and information actions
		112	Setting up of young farmers
		113	Early retirement
		114	Use of advisory services
		115	Setting up of management, relief and advisory services
	<i>Restructuring and developing physical potential and promoting innovation</i>	121	Modernisation of agricultural holdings
		122	Improvement of the economic value of forests
		123	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products
		124	Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector
		125	Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry
		126	Restoring agricultural production potential
	<i>Quality of agricultural production and products</i>	131	Meeting standards based on EU legislation
		132	Participation of farmers in food quality schemes
		133	Information and promotion activities
	<i>Transitional measures</i>	141	Semi-subsistence farming
142		Producer groups	
143		Providing farm advisory and extension services	
Axis 2 - Improving the environment and the countryside	<i>Sustainable use of agricultural land</i>	211	Natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas
		212	Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas
		213	Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC
		214	Agri-environment payments
		215	Animal welfare payments
		216	Non-productive investments
	<i>Sustainable use of forestry land</i>	221	First afforestation of agricultural land
		222	First establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land
		223	First afforestation of non-agricultural land
		224	Natura 2000 payments
		225	Forest-environment payments
		226	Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions
		227	Non-productive investments
Axis 3 - Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	<i>Diversify the rural economy</i>	311	Diversification into non-agricultural activities
		312	Support for business creation and development
		313	Encouragement of tourism activities
	<i>Improve the quality of life in rural areas</i>	321	Basic services for the economy and rural population
		322	Village renewal and development
		323	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
		331	Training and information
Axis 4 - Leader	<i>Implementing local development strategies</i>	341	Skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy
		411	Competitiveness
		412	Environment/land management
		413	Quality of life/diversification
		421	Implementing cooperation projects
		431	Running the local action group, skills acquisition, animation