

# Project on one-stop services: developing environmental permit procedures in Finland

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# Streamlined permit procedures promote the clean economy transition

- Clean economy transition and investments to support this require more streamlined and predictable permitting procedures.
- Permitting, supervision and guidance tasks related to the environment brought together into a national agency that in legal terms functions as one single authority.
- Actions prepared to streamline the permitting procedures include:
  1. Merging regional permitting authorities, from 17 → 1. Establishing national permitting, guidance and supervisory agency.
  2. a legislative project to draft legislation promoting one-stop services,
  3. a legislative project concerning the environmental objectives for river basin management and the marine and derogating from these,
  4. amending the regulatory framework concerning land use and construction with respect to permitting procedures and
  5. a number of other actions included in the Government Programme.



# Project on one-stop services started on 1 August 2023, new agency and legislation will be ready by 1.1.2026

## Monitoring group

### Establishing a permitting, guidance and supervisory agency

### One-stop service legislative project

### Environmental objectives for river basin management and the marine and derogating from these

### Reform of land use regulation (permit procedures)

### Separate measures, incl.

Preparation of legislation for the permitting, guidance and supervisory agency in the legislation of the administrative branch of the Ministry of the Environment (the Ministry of Finance responsible for the preparation)

Implementation of a permit procedure promoting the one-stop model: "The aim is that, as a rule, the combined permitting procedure will lead to one single official decision and request for review procedure."

"The Government will respond to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive with national legislation."  
  
"The national flexibilities allowed by the Water Framework Directive will be utilised."

"One way the Government will make it easier to invest is through industrial parks."  
  
"Processing of an environmental permit based on an approved decision on a plan without waiting for it to become final, etc."

Assessing the possibility to include compensation in environmental permit conditions  
  
Review of the precautionary principle  
  
Assessing the possibility to reintroduce conditions for the review of the permits in the permit regulations.  
  
Automation, target dates  
  
Assessment and development of the priority procedure, pumped storage power plants  
  
Assessing the possibility to enable the Government to fast-track the procedure (exceptionally important projects)

**Project on digital one-stop services started**

**Implementation project on the reform of the agency started**

# Project to support development of one-stop model (TSI)

- The one-stop legislative project receives support from the *Technical Support Instrument (TSI) Programme* (funded by the European Union)
- The Finnish project aims to speed up the permitting for renewable energy and green investments by providing support to introduce a single permitting authority, a single environmental procedure and better digital tools in Finland
- The ongoing project is implemented by PricewaterhouseCoopers EU Services EESV for the beneficiary (Ministry of the Environment) and DG REFORM. The project is to be completed by April 2025.
- Main expected outcomes:
  - As the Government Programme already provides the political outlines for a single permitting authority, the project will produce recommendations on how the single authority should support efficient renewable energy permitting procedures, based on the best practice country studies.
  - An analysis and recommendations for strengthening the digital transformation and integration of IT systems for environmental permit procedures and supervision, as stated in the Government Programme concerning the digitalisation of permitting processes. The aim is to support the integration of the proposed single environmental permit procedure into the existing digitalised one-stop model and to promote the overall digitalisation of environmental permit procedures and environmental impact assessment.



# REpowerEU and permitting

## Two reforms that are linked together (One-Stop Shop)

### 1. Establishing the new investment permit procedure.

- To promote investments, in particular renewable energy investments, procedures will move towards a one-stop-shop model, where the use of services and application for permits is centralised and digitalised into one effective and user-friendly permit process. The aim is to reduce the number of unnecessary requests for supplementary information through good cooperation and anticipation. An act on environmental permit procedures will be adopted by combining the Act on the Coordination of Certain Environmental Permit Procedures and other acts that promote the one-stop-shop model.

### 2. Merging 17 regional permitting authorities to single authority

- At present, barriers between government agencies (Regional State Administrative Agencies and Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment) make it difficult for permitting procedures to work effectively. To tackle this, the processing of environmental permits (including permit, supervision and guidance tasks) will be centralised to a new national body that will function as a single judicial authority. One single authority will be responsible for the progress and coordination of the permit process, including the relevant submissions at required stages



# Investments on permitting (REpowerEU + RRF)

- REpowerEU funding will be geared towards (a) the further development and deployment of digital processes, namely the Licensing and supervision -service and digitalization of environmental procedures and information systems; (b) speeding up permitting and licensing processes through necessary temporary staff allocation in regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY) the Energy authority and environmental authorities; and (c) supporting the necessary legislative and structural reform implementation via e.g. temporary (ministry) personnel.
- RRF funding has also been steered for speeding up permitting and licensing processes through hiring temporary staff



# Permitting and supervisory agency as the point of contact

- EU legislation requires a designated national **point of contact** to coordinate the permitting procedures (the procedure covers all permits required for projects and other administrative procedures). The point of contact would function as the only contact point towards the operators.(CRMA, NZIA, etc)
- As regards the one-stop service and authority, Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government Programme is in line with the EU legislation:
  - “...one single authority will be responsible for the progress and coordination of the permit process, including the submissions required. This authority will also have the responsibility for ensuring that the permit applicant has the opportunity to discuss the obligations, submissions and conditions related to the permit procedure in advance. The aim is to reduce the number of unnecessary requests for supplementary information through good cooperation and anticipation...”



# Priority for Green transition project (National laqw)

- Legislation on temporary priority treatment for certain green transition projects in the permit processing of Regional State Administrative Agencies in 2023–2026 and in the administrative courts in 2023–2028. *Came to force 1.1.2023*
- Operators can request priority processing for their water resource management or environmental permit applications in 2023–2026. The purpose of getting priority is to enable faster processing of a permit application at the Regional State Administrative Agency.
- The permit applications that shall be given priority treatment under subsection 1 above are applications concerning:
  - 1) energy production establishments that use renewable energy to produce energy, and offshore wind farms and the related water resources management projects;
  - 2) industrial projects based on renewable energy or electrification that replace the use of fossil fuels or raw materials;
  - 3) the production and use of hydrogen, with the exception of hydrogen production from fossil fuels;
  - 4) capture, utilisation and storage of carbon dioxide; and
  - 5) battery factories and the manufacture, recovery and reuse of battery materials. An application for a group of activities shall also be given priority treatment under sub
- Priority will be given to permit applications for green transition projects that take into account the Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle. The permit procedure and consideration will otherwise follow the normal process.
- Link to Guidance: [Guidance for priority treatment\(avi.fi\)](#)

# Digitalisation projects promote e-services

- The implementation of a one-stop service model requires a large number of major reforms in the information systems of environmental authorities.
- The digital service for environmental matters will be created in cooperation between several digitalisation projects.
  1. The project on coordinating the digitalisation of the one-stop service will ensure that the different development projects concerning specific information systems and organisations will serve the same purpose, the introduction of a one-stop digital service for environmental matters.
  2. The project on developing the information structures and interoperability of environmental protection will promote the interoperability of information on environmental protection to ensure that the information runs smoothly through the authorities' service chain.
- Some government permit procedures are already either based or integrated in the Licensing and Supervision Service, including RED II services
- We aim to have the Licensing and supervision Service (LSS) as a national digital one-shop for the new Finnish Supervisory Agency
  - RED III digitalisation will be developed based on RED II services in the LSS
  - Digitalisation of CRMA and NZIA will be scrutinized aiming to digitalization as well as in RED III

# Challenges in digitalization of public services - and a solution

- Challenges:
  - There are substantial differences between agencies in the adoption of digital services
  - There is little coordination between administrative levels
  - Processes are agency-specific
  - Focus in the development work is in agencies' needs
- Shift from an agency-oriented approach to client-oriented service pledge and service experience
- Providing services across administrative levels and organisational boundaries
- Focus on information
- Shared solutions and national service architecture



# Thank you!

Read more

[ym.fi/en/onestop](https://ym.fi/en/onestop)

[Gateway to Information on Government Projects:  
Project on one-stop services, YM046:00/2023 \(in  
Finnish\)](#)

[Gateway to Information on Government Projects:  
One-stop service legislative project, YM063:00/2023  
\(in Finnish\)](#)

[Ministry of Finance: Reform of regional state  
administration](#)



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