



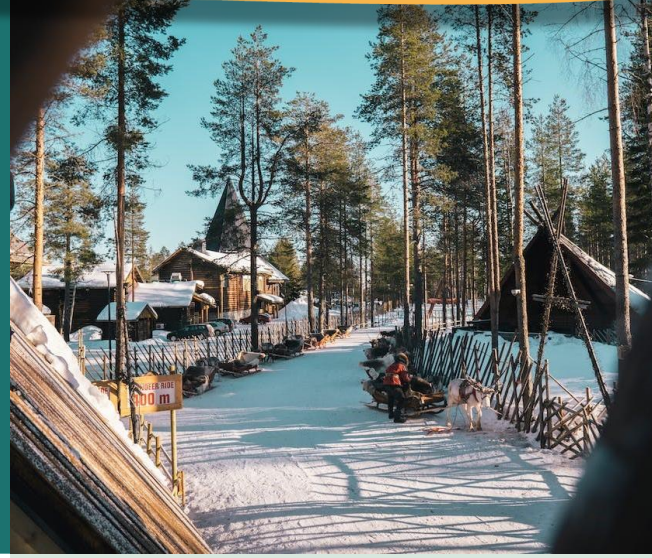
Stronger

The Rural Vision Platform in Finland



SUMMARY

Finland is one of the most rural countries in the EU. Balanced development in rural areas requires a diverse business and service structure beside sustainable food production. Yet the EU's long-term vision for rural areas and the Rural Pact are not very well known on the Finnish national level. The country's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Rural Policy Council and National Rural Network have collaborated to raise awareness about the EU's Rural Pact at national level and align actions with the long-term vision. A notable initiative is the creation of an [online platform](#) that consolidates all pertinent information on this. It encompasses various elements, including the fundamentals of the Finnish countryside, the policy framework with over 30 years of rural policy experience, practical project examples contributing to a more resilient and prosperous rural Finland, and national policy suggestions for the future. The objective is to refresh the website over time, providing an active platform to showcase Finland's progress towards the EU rural vision.



CONTEXT

The long-term vision for rural areas covers the whole of the EU's territory, but there can be big differences between Member States and therefore national, regional and local organisations working towards the vision's goals need to tailor their plans to the specific needs of their country. For instance, one significant difference between Finland and the EU is bioeconomic turnover. In Finland, forestry and industry represent 63% of bioeconomic turnover while agriculture and the food sector account for 30%. For the EU, the figures are 15% for forestry and industry and 75% for agriculture and the food sector. Also, **Finland is one of the few EU countries with a national holistic rural policy.** This is led by the national Rural Policy Council, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. The Minister of Employment acts as vice chair. Rural policy work is organised at a national level since research, rural proofing, guidance, dialogue and cooperation are key tools used to implement the EU rural vision, objectives and measures of Finland's [rural policy programme](#). In September 2023 a presentation was created as a part of the webpage to give a Finnish point of view for the EU rural vision.



OBJECTIVES

To offer a Finnish perspective on the rural vision and the measures taken to achieve its goals. The website is structured into five key elements:

- > Basics of the Finnish countryside: this section introduces the fundamental aspects of the Finnish countryside.
- > Policy framework: Finland has over 30 years of experience in shaping comprehensive rural policies. The cornerstone of its rural policy is the national rural policy programme.
- > Role of the common agricultural policy (CAP): this section explores the significance of the CAP and its contributions to advancing the rural vision.

Themes: Democracy and participation, governance. **Rural revitalisation**

Country: Finland

Organisation(s): Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, public authority - Rural Policy Council of Finland, public authority - Finnish Rural Network, National Rural Network

Start & end date: 09/23 - Ongoing

Funding sources: Own sources

Website: <https://maaseutu.fi/en/rural-vision-in-finland/>

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- > Practical project examples: the website showcases practical projects that demonstrate efforts to build a more resilient, interconnected and prosperous rural Finland.
- > Policy suggestions: this section presents Finland's perspectives on future policies that align with the rural vision.

The content is meant to give information and concretise the rural vision and Rural Pact on the national level and share the Finnish perspective with other Member States and EU institutions. The commitment is to continually update the website, ensuring it remains a dynamic platform that offers insights into Finland's ongoing efforts to contribute to the rural vision.

ACTIVITIES, KEY ACTORS, AND TIMELINE

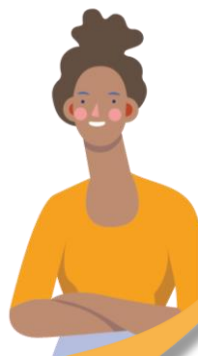
The platform's content was put together in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Rural Policy Council and the Rural Network Support Unit. The ministry's communication experts coordinated the process, while key rural policy and rural development experts developed the policy content. The process lasted a month and was part of the Finnish delegation's preparation for the High-level Rural Policy Forum held in Spain in September 2023, organised by the Spanish presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission with the Rural Pact Support Office.

RESULTS

The main result, the website, serves as a dynamic showcase of Finnish advances in the rural vision. It is updated regularly and offers a concrete manifestation of the concept from the Finnish perspective. The platform also functions as a resource centre for Finns participating in various EU meetings related to the rural vision and the Rural Pact. The concise website design process encouraged participants to refine their understanding and articulate the concepts of the rural vision and Rural Pact at the national level.

SUCCESS FACTORS/LESSONS LEARNT

The questions 'What do we want to tell others about our perspective of the rural vision?', 'How to clarify the Member State's point of view' and 'What are we doing to meet the goals of the rural vision?' were key to reflect on what was needed. These simple questions lead a process for **clarifying what the rural vision means on the national level**. The key conclusion drawn from this reflective process was that aligning communication about the Finnish perspective on the rural vision required a thoughtful consideration of the national standpoint and the specific actions taken to achieve the vision's goals. This exercise not only clarified the concept of the rural vision at the national level but also highlighted the value of regularly updated, concise information for both national and EU contexts. Having similar information from all Member States could be very useful, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of diverse situations and actions while fostering opportunities for peer learning.



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