

Finnish Rural Policy Council: supporting integrated rural policy in Finland

SUMMARY

Finland's Rural Policy Council (fi. Maaseutupolitiikan neuvosto – MANE) is an advisory body appointed by the national government which supports integrated, place-based rural policy. Its members come from different sectors and levels of society, from local to national level.

MANE brings rural perspectives into decision-making, supports the government in matters concerning rural areas and promotes cross-sectoral cooperation. Its work includes delivering and tracking progress with Finland's Rural Policy Programme and supporting implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Finnish government's Rural Policy Report.



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Themes: Governance; democracy and participation

Country: Finland

Organisation:

> Finnish Rural Policy Council, public authority

Start & end date: 2016 - ongoing

Funding source:

> Public funding

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CONTEXT

Around 95% of Finland's land area is rural, with 1.4 million people and 40% of Finnish companies based in rural areas. A further 2.9 million people are part-time rural residents. To support integrated rural policy, Finland has built a permanent, ministerial-led governance system grounded in three principles: multi-actor engagement across the public, private and third sectors; a cross-sectoral, whole-of-government approach; and multi-level governance from village to national level.



OBJECTIVES

- > Support implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Finnish government's Rural Policy Report and its cross-sectoral action plan;
- > Monitor rural development trends, assess drivers of change and anticipate emerging challenges;
- > Deliver and track progress with Finland's seventh Rural Policy Programme (covering 2021-2027), engaging stakeholders in its implementation;
- > Prepare and implement the country's eighth Rural Policy Programme, mobilising stakeholders and monitoring progress;
- > Strengthen rural proofing and rural impact assessment across policy sectors;
- > Address key knowledge needs through research, development projects and participatory processes;
- > Improve the rural policy planning system, its governance, tools and working methods;
- > Advise on rural issues and contribute to shaping the EU's next programming and funding period.



ACTIVITIES, KEY ACTORS, AND TIMELINE

MANE has its roots in Finland's first Rural Policy Programme, drafted in 1991, which proposed establishing **a committee to coordinate rural policy**. The cross-sectoral Rural Policy Advisory Board was established in 1993, which two years later became the Rural Policy Committee. This was renamed the Rural Policy Council in 2016.

MANE is **appointed by the Finnish government** for successive terms of around five years (current mandate: 5 March 2026 to 28 February 2031). Its **38 members and 4 expert members** are drawn from ministries, national and regional authorities, the Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities, the Finnish Village Movement Association, the consultative parliament representing the Swedish-speaking minority, and national associations covering various sectors. These include entrepreneurship, agriculture, labour, social policy, youth, nature conservation, rescue services, LEADER groups, universities, rural research and culture. MANE **convenes approximately four times a year**.

The council is supported by a secretariat, coordinated by the secretary general at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and by **three thematic networks** that **deliver its work programme**: MAALLEKO (rural liveability, housing and integration), KERÄ (sustainable rural areas and just transition) and TUUMA27 (work and entrepreneurship in rural regions). The thematic networks implement key tasks of Finland's [Rural Policy Programme](#) for 2021-2027 and connect the council to the wider national rural policy field.

MANE produces Finland's **Rural Policy Report** as well as **blogs, policy briefs and peer-reviewed research** supported by council-financed rural research and development. The latest [Rural Policy Report](#) sets out the government's vision for Finland's rural areas for 2040, along with strategic objectives and recommendations for renewing rural vitality.

A complementary tool is Finland's urban-rural typology, used across government for rural proofing, common agricultural policy and LEADER eligibility, European Regional Development Fund assessments, the national village shop support scheme, and land use, transport and travel monitoring.



RESULTS

- > **Ministerial-led governance system** for integrated rural policy;
- > **Rural Policy Programme** for 2021-2027 being implemented across ministries and stakeholders with MANE support, delivered through its thematic networks;
- > Production of the Finnish government's **Rural Policy Report**;
- > **Cross-administrative decision-making** supported on rural issues, including legislation with rural relevance;
- > Rural **research and knowledge exchange** systematically financed and promoted nationally and internationally.



SUCCESS FACTORS/LESSONS LEARNT

MANE is chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, with three vice-chairs at minister and director-general level, ensuring that **rural policy issues reach the highest level of government** and are heard across ministries.

The council's **composition involves multiple different actors**. Its 38 members and 4 expert members come from eight ministries, national and regional authorities, municipalities, the village organisation, the consultative parliament representing the Swedish-speaking minority and national associations covering the whole spectrum of rural issues.

MANE's three thematic networks (MAALLEKO, KERÄ and TUUMA27) mean **the council is more than a coordination body**: they help implement Finland's Rural Policy Programme for 2021-2027 through workstreams focused on liveability, sustainability and entrepreneurship.

Finland's grid-based urban-rural typology, widely used across government, provides a shared factual basis for rural proofing and policy design.



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