



# FINLAND

**Population:** 5.3 million  
**Capital:** Helsinki  
**Languages:** Finnish (92%), Swedish (5.5%)  
**Currency:** Euro €  
**GDP per capita:** \$46,327 (2007)



## WATER & WASTE WATER

Water services infrastructure is relatively new and well maintained. Major investments, at least in built-up areas, have been made in recent years. Water supply plants deliver high quality drinking water to the majority of Finns, while most of the waste water is purified. The largest cities and towns use surface water as raw water. Two-thirds of public water service is based on natural and artificial ground water supplies, and the share is increasing. The plants extract ground water about seven million cubic meters of ground water a day. People who live in the more sparsely populated regions use mainly well water and ground water from natural springs. The quality of water in piped water supply systems meets European Union norms, but in rural areas many wells fail to meet the criteria. Waste water treatment in population centers and by industry are of a high European standard, and about 80 percent of the population is connected to the centralized sewage systems.

## WASTE & RECYCLING

A total of 120 million tons of waste of various types is generated in Finland yearly. Construction, forestry, agriculture, and mining account for about 87 percent of all waste. There are some 200 waste handling facilities in Finland where waste is received, separated, and either reused or destroyed. Collecting municipal waste is based on source separation and treatment of the sorted materials separately. Municipal waste is composed of household and commercial waste paper, packaging, and electronic waste. In 2007, over 2.6 million tons of municipal waste was produced, over 1,114 lbs per inhabitant. Over 40 percent of this is recycled as material or energy. Household recycled materials mainly include waste paper, packaging, and electronic waste. Finland is among the leaders in Europe in paper collection and recycling of glass bottles. Separate newspaper and other waste paper collection operate throughout the country, and paper waste that is collected is utilized by the paper industry. The refund system for beverage bottles and aluminum cans assures a high recycling rate for these items. Finnish waste legislation is also largely based on EU legislation and covers all waste except certain special types of waste such as radioactive waste, which is covered by separate laws.

## SOIL PROTECTION AND CONTAMINATION

There are no specific laws on soil protection in Finland. However, legislation controlling the various activities that affect soils, such as construction, sand and gravel extraction, farming and forestry take into consideration soil protection. In addition, land use planning, EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment), environmental permit procedures, and official supervision and monitoring are used to protect soils and their sustainable use. Legislation on pollution, nature conservation, and landscape conservation also

helps to protect soils. In all aspects of Finnish environmental legislation, the precautionary principle, the polluter-pays principle, and the concept of shared responsibility are applied.

### **INDOOR & OUTDOOR AIR POLLUTION**

Supply and exhaust ventilation systems are common in public buildings due to tough Finnish building codes, and requirements for supply air filtering in new constructions have been tightened. So far, the focus of regulations has been on coarser particles, but will gradually move to ultra-fine particles. The demand for solutions to improve indoor air quality is growing due to the increased awareness of consumers and active marketing by different equipment manufacturers. Building users and owners are also paying more attention to health and productivity. New information on the adverse health effects of fine particles and measures introduced to reduce exposure to them are likely to create new market potential for filters in ventilation systems and air terminal devices, room air cleaners, and supply and exhaust ventilation systems. Air quality measurement instruments represent another market opportunity.

Gaseous pollutants, such as sulfur dioxide, ozone and nitrogen oxides, and fine particles caused by emissions from industries, power stations, and smaller combustion plants continue to be the main air pollutants in Finland. However, due to well-planned measures taken to combat pollution, harmful emissions and acidification have both declined in Finland considerably over the last 20 years. Urban air quality remains a challenge even though traffic emissions and emissions from other sources that cause fine particle concentration have been restricted.

### **TRADE EVENTS**

Infratech; May 27 – 29, 2009, [www.yhdyskuntateknikka.fi](http://www.yhdyskuntateknikka.fi)

Environmental Technology; October 6 – 10, 2010, [www.suomenmessut.fi](http://www.suomenmessut.fi)

### **AVAILABLE MARKET RESEARCH**

Water Services (2009)

Environmental Technologies Overview (2007)

Indoor Air Quality (2007)

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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