

VIABLE COUNTRYSIDE

– our joint responsibility

**Rural Policy Programme
2005–2008**
Summary

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SUMMARY			
<p>The Rural Policy Programme is a methodology adopted in Finland which draws attention to the rural impacts of central government decisions. Many decisions made in sectoral policies have strong impacts on the regional and rural policy, and the actions taken cannot always be positive from the regional perspective. This is why the Rural Policy Programme seeks to identify means to reduce the negative impacts and to construct and reinforce genuine cross-sectoral action. In many issues the Rural Policy Programme supports and complements the decisions taken in the government sectors, but it also offers alternatives to the key areas of the sectors for the decision-makers.</p> <p>The previous Rural Policy Programmes were published in 1991, 1996 and 2000. Experiences gained in their preparation and implementation were utilised in the preparation of the fourth programme. This time the process was started by regional seminars and negotiations. Networking is essential in the rural policy practices. The preparation of the Rural Policy Programme was also mainly based on the work of regional and national networks. The same parties will be implementing the 133 proposals of the programme in 2005-2008.</p> <p>The Rural Policy Programme is drawn up by the Rural Policy Committee, which also assists the Finnish Government in the implementation of the proposals presented in the programme. The Special Rural Policy Programme to be adopted by the Government towards the end of 2004 is an essential element of the political process. The outlines will influence the policies mainly in 2005 and 2006. In many ways they support the development work needed for the implementation of the quite detailed proposals. The extended version constitutes the action programme for the Rural Policy Committee.</p> <p>This publication is a summary of the main elements of the programme "Viable Countryside - our joint responsibility".</p>			

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Content

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAMME AND VISION OF A VIABLE COUNTRYSIDE	8
FOUNDATIONS OF RURAL POLICY	11
RURAL AREAS IN RURAL POLICY	14
RURAL POLICY SYSTEM	16
First 15 years	16
Towards better and better results	19
Rural Policy Committee	20
Rural policy thinking in Finland	24
EU-PROGRAMMES AS RURAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS	26
OUTLINES OF RURAL POLICY	29
PROPOSALS OF THE RURAL POLICY PROGRAMME	32
System and practices of rural policy	32
Reinforcing the operative structures of the rural areas	33
Reorganisation of industries and work	34
Maintenance and construction of basic services	36
Raising the level of know-how	36
FUNDS NEEDED	39
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RURAL POLICY PROGRAMME	43
Main strategies	43
Government decides, Ministerial Working Group steers and Rural Policy Committee assists	44
Common priorities of regional and central government	45
ANNEX Preparation process of the Rural Policy Programme	47



Preface

“VIABLE COUNTRYSIDE - our joint responsibility” is the fourth comprehensive rural policy programme which involves a large number of stakeholders, covers the whole country and aims at positive impacts on the rural areas in different sectors. Rural policy is not a sum of the objectives and means of different economic and administrative sectors, but it rather complements these and, in some cases, offers alternative modes of action. Rural development work has become increasingly difficult in a situation where the business sectors and organisations aim to develop their operations by cutting down jobs, increasing their scale or moving operations to population centres. One possible way of combating such, often inevitable, solutions is to reinforce the objectives shared by different sectors, organisations and groups. Working methods which bring together local and regional forces are the core of rural policy.

The preparation of the programme began in May 2003 by a series of seminars and negotiations with the local actors in different regions. The process continued through negotiations with the central government, relevant organisations and political parties. In the autumn a Strategy Group consisting of the professors for rural affairs was involved in the negotiations. In December 2003 the Coordination Group appointed by the Rural Policy Committee started to compile the proposals, their grounds and other information into a policy programme. The contribution of the theme and work groups of the Rural Policy Committee in drafting the proposals and their grounds for their own specific fields was extremely important.

Since winter 2004 the process was steered by a Ministerial Working Group, which decided to apply the new Regional Development Act so that, as before, the Committee first draws up an extensive and quite detailed policy programme which is used as the basis for drawing up the Special Rural Policy Programme outlining the rural policies to be applied. This means that there will be the two versions of the programme, an extensive and narrow one, which correspond to each other in terms of their essential and common elements.

The contribution of the Strategy Group can mainly be seen in Part I, that of the theme groups in Part II and the Secretariat of the Rural Policy Committee in Part III. Various sections of the programme were complemented on the basis of comments and proposals from the negotiation partners and members of the Coordination Group. On the whole the preparation of the Rural Policy Programme was a broadly-based and open process, and we are highly confident that the proposals will be realised.

The extensive version of the Rural Policy Programme constitutes the action programme of the Rural Policy Committee for 2005-2008, as well as lays the foundation for the Special Rural Policy Programme which provides the main outlines for the development work. This is the summary of the extensive action programme.

Helsinki, 25 August 2004

RURAL POLICY COMMITTEE

Ilkka Ruska
Director-General
Chairman

Eero Uusitalo
Rural Counsellor
Secretary-General

Purpose

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAMME AND VISION OF A VIABLE COUNTRYSIDE

Because of the numerous definitions for rural areas, the ingredients of viability are also manifold and highly varied. The vision of a viable Finnish countryside contains both issues which evolve on their own terms in their own time and factors which can be steered through policy action.

A viable countryside

- has a diversified population, industrial and occupational structure
- is inhabited by people with strong will and sense of responsibility
- is competitive in terms of know-how and technology
- provides attractive residential environments and supports entrepreneurship
- cherishes its cultural environments
- networks and interacts with urban areas
- comprises many different types of areas
- has strong local communities
- produces several basic commodities: food, wood and industrial products
- has good transport routes and competitive communication links
- has well-functioning welfare services
- offers contact with nature, recreation and peace to all citizens.

The countryside is something permanent, but rural policy as a policy sector is very young. The countryside comprises houses and villages, long distances, fields and forests and, depending on the definition used, it is the home of every second or every fifth Finn. Because of the vast, sparsely populated countryside and northern location, Finland is quite an exceptional country in Europe. Perhaps this is why the Finnish agriculture or the basic features of our country are not sufficiently understood in the European Union. In Finland there is a great need to develop policies which are specifically targeted at the rural areas, while they take account of the opportunities offered by the interaction between rural and urban areas. Even if the criteria for a viable countryside are very strict, all these elements can be influenced through the means of the various policy sectors and the rural policy.

The strategic objective of rural policy is to incorporate the rural areas more closely to the other national development work. Regional development must be based on strong rural and urban policy as well as interaction policy combining the two. Such rural policy setting guarantees the best regional structures, which are a precondition for Finland's means of success in the increasingly global context.

The great changes in the population, occupations and technology have strong impacts on the countryside. Structural change as such need not mean that the rural areas are always and everywhere the ones to lose the most. The prevailing trends can be combated and new opportunities can be searched for through new kinds of objectives, solutions, arrangements and organisations. How this is done in each individual case is one of the core questions in the rural policy. One necessary but not sufficient condition is that the rural residents assume more responsibility for regional development, which also means that they will have more influence. Because the changes in the conditions have been

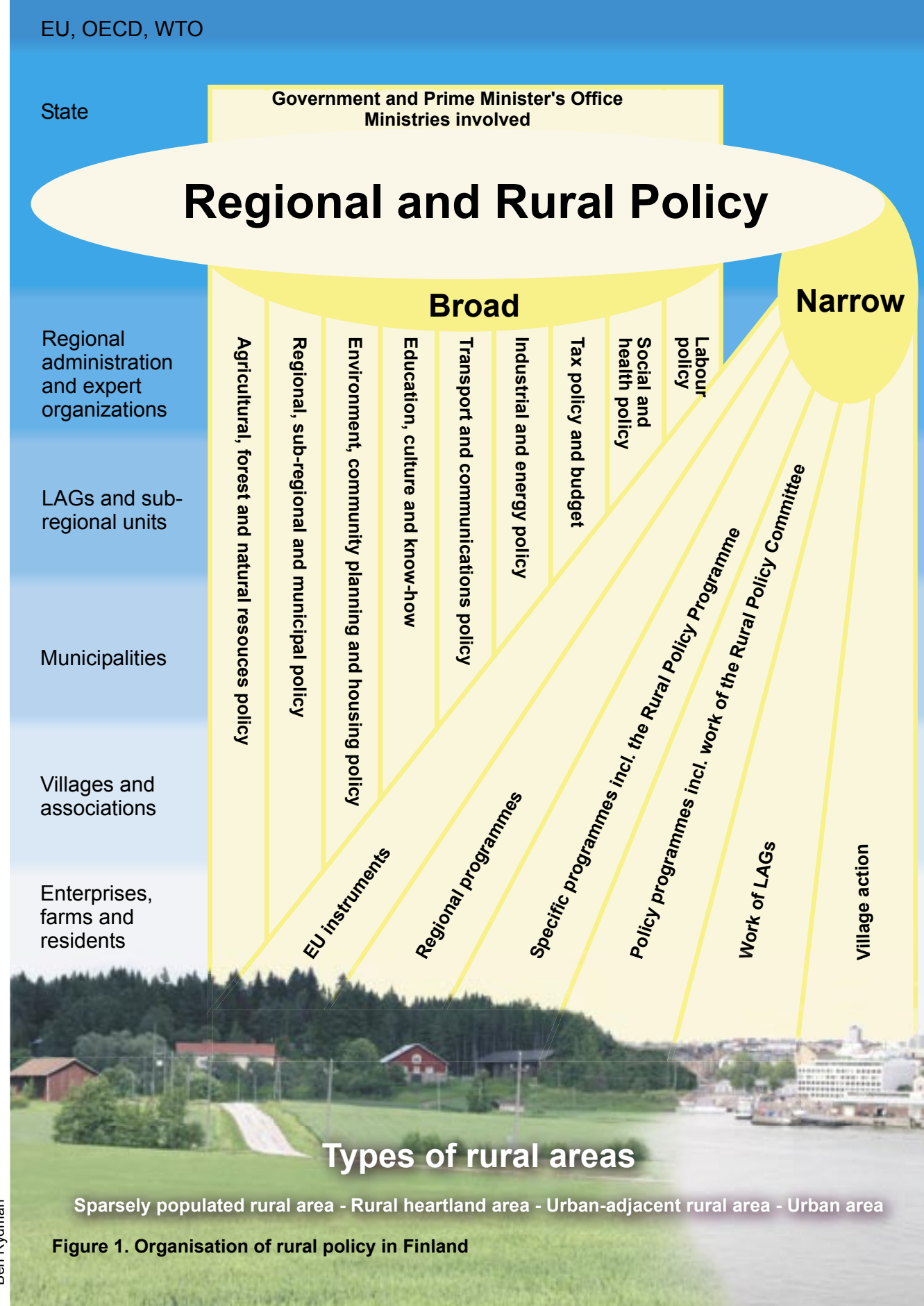


Figure 1. Organisation of rural policy in Finland

quite radical, the old organisations and modes of action no longer apply. The development of the rural areas calls for new mechanisms which bring together the strengths of the countryside. At present the support funds of the State and municipalities may be scattered among old organisations whose actions are no longer sufficient. The new conditions have also led to pressures for change concerning the ownership and responsibility for the maintenance of the necessary facilities. A reform of the operative and organisational structures of the countryside is inevitable.

The programme of the present Finnish Government headed by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen contains a commitment to updating the Rural Policy Programme. The implementation of the previous, i.e. third, Rural Policy Programme is closing to its end, and almost all proposals included in it have been realised. Now we need a new programme to steer the rural development measures. The Rural Policy Programme and the Special Programme drawn up on the basis of this focus on the broad rural policy issues and development of the rural policy system as a whole.

According to the revised Regional Development Act, the Government approves the so-called special programmes, including the Special Rural Policy Programme. However, due to its particular nature, the Rural Policy Programme as a whole contains various elements and proposals directed at parties other than the State administration, which also cannot be decided by the Government. This is why a separate Special Programme is drawn up on the basis of the Rural Policy Programme to present the outlines and decisions concerning rural development relevant to the State administration. The sections concerning issues which are shared by the two programmes correspond to each other. To make the matter fully clear, we will talk about a Rural Policy Programme, which is a comprehensive programme and functions as the action programme of the Rural Policy Committee, while the Special Rural Policy Programme (Special Programme) is the policy section concerning the central administration which provides the outlines for the Government's rural policy in the next few years.

The countryside is not only hinterland or region affected by the positive or negative forces deriving from the population centres. The countryside offers an alternative to the urban regions and lifestyles, and its very existence and availability is an important social value - for a number of reasons. It is also a region with a will and vision of its own, but just like the population centres it needs active development measures of the public sector. The objective of the rural policy is to guarantee the existence of a viable and functioning countryside.

Finnish countryside consists of very different kinds of areas, both socially and environmentally. The population and occupational structure have become increasingly diversified, and this trend continues. Cultural diversity has increased in the rural areas as well. All the other points in the vision are matters which can be influenced through political will and understanding. The countryside has full potential to offer a physically and socially attractive residential, consumption and business environment, but such positive potential does not appear from nothing. All the elements included in the vision call for strong will and faith in the future. The Special Programme is a concise and goal-oriented strategy. All the decisions involved are such that they can either be implemented or the work can get off to a good start during the next four years.

Foundations

FOUNDATIONS OF RURAL POLICY

Rural policy is targeted at the development of the sparsely populated regions and population centres with fewer than 30,000 inhabitants. The policy is founded on the acknowledgement and recognition of the variation in the needs, strengths and opportunities in the countryside, depending on the special characteristics of each region.

Rural policy is an extensive and comprehensive entity. One important distinction to be made is that between the broad and narrow rural policy. The **broad rural policy** refers to the efforts to influence all actions with impacts on the rural areas implemented within and by the different administrative sectors as part of the development of the society. The narrow rural policy consists of the measures and development instruments targeted specifically at the rural areas. The **narrow rural policy** involves legislation, economic resources, special expertise and official staff, and it calls for special organisation, programmes, acts and decrees, budget items of the State and regional administration and research. The concepts broad and narrow do not refer to the extent of the measures or their significance as such. For example, in this thinking a single internal norm of a certain administrative sector belongs to the broad rural policy, while an EU programme involving extensive processes and funding is an instrument of the narrow rural policy.

Functioning rural policy calls for the use of the means available under both broad and narrow rural policy. Further means are needed especially in the broad rural policy to harmonise the impacts of the actions undertaken by different administrative sectors and to reinforce the positive impacts. The Special Programme mainly focuses on issues which belong to the broad rural policy.

Rural policy includes both sector-specific and regional actions and strategies. The sectoral operations concentrate on their own specific tasks which are national in scope but concern a certain sector of the society (work, health, education, etc.). **Sectoral policies** which have evolved in different fields maintain the basic structures of the society, but they recognise quite poorly the special regional characteristics. Often their strategies are expected to work despite the differences between the regions and target groups. In



Kati Leppälähti

addition to being blind to the regional aspects, sectoral policies tend to neglect the holistic perspective on rural development. Sectoral work needs to be complemented to an increasing extent by horizontal and cross-sectoral planning and activity.

One important strategic point of departure for functioning rural policy is that each level of the rural policy system aims to focus on tasks pertaining to that level, whether we are concerned with State administration, regions, municipalities or local communities. Too strict top-down policies lead to a dead end. The research literature has for decades stressed the importance of using cross-sectoral and regional development tools based on partnership and empowerment of local actors, and recently these ideas have also been applied in the narrow rural policy. The rural policy will be developed further along these lines.

The approaches based on regional and local action highlight the need for more careful targeting of the development work according to the special characteristics of each region and district. They also stress stronger own initiative, both regionally and locally. Examples of this are the local action groups and village actions which have evolved in recent years.

The previous Rural Policy Programme was entitled Countryside for the People. This still describes quite accurately the basic foundation of the rural policy: the countryside is developed as a competitive residential and operational environment for the people. Rural policy cannot be based only on arguments which highlight global competitiveness and economic growth.

Competitiveness and economic growth are only tools for promoting the fundamental values of the society, such as welfare. For instance, the improvement of the competitiveness of the national economy does not automatically lead to desired welfare effects on all regions and population groups alike. This is why the countryside itself needs to be developed as a competitive place of residence and business. Competitiveness of the rural areas includes the functioning of services produced by both the public and private sector and the infrastructure so that living and working in these regions continue to be possible and the countryside is genuinely within the reach of all citizens.

The focus on the influence and autonomy of the citizens does not mean that the rural population alone should carry the responsibility for their welfare. The choice of the place of residence is a right which the society must protect and reinforce by ensuring that the countryside genuinely offers a true alternative.

Promoting and guaranteeing justice to all citizens is just as fundamental as supporting their own initiative and influence. Justice culminates in the compliance with the principle that all citizens are equal. In terms of, for example, the availability of the basic services of the information society, it is not fair and just if a certain part of the population is excluded from the broadband connection because they live or work in a certain area.

Rural policy aims to construct means which promote justice to the citizens and equality between regions. Balanced regional development work cannot be achieved only through the centres, but funds must also be allocated to the areas outside the centres. The economic competitiveness of the countryside is promoted on the basis of its own strengths.



Rural Areas

RURAL AREAS IN RURAL POLICY

The research and discussion have resulted in the following typology of municipalities to be applied in the Finnish rural study and policy. According to the development prospects, the types of rural areas can be characterised as follows:

- (i) *Urban-adjacent rural areas.* These areas have the most favourable development prospects. The residents have the opportunity to work in the nearby towns and population centres, and there is a diversified near market for farmers and other entrepreneurs. Most of the urban-adjacent rural areas are located in southern and western Finland, where the conditions for farming and diversification of rural industries are the best. Many municipalities in such regions are also gaining population as especially families with children favour these. Thanks to the positive population trend many municipalities in urban-adjacent rural areas, including small towns, are capable of improving their services and investing while they maintain their economic latitude. The standard of welfare is the best in the country.
- (ii) *Rural heartland areas.* These areas are dominated by primary production, but in certain places there are also small concentrations of manufacturing industry and specialised primary production, such as pig husbandry, fur farming, cultivation under glass and poultry farming. Close to the rural heartland areas there are several medium-sized population centres. The activities of the municipal centres are highly diverse and most of the villages are viable. Most of these municipalities are also located in southern and western Finland.
- (iii) *Sparsely populated rural areas.* These areas are threatened by a vicious circle of negative development trends: young people are moving out, services are declining, agriculture is losing its diversity, there are not enough new jobs to compensate for the disappearance of the traditional ones, the number of old people is growing and the pressure on the economic carrying capacity of the municipalities is overwhelming. The short growing period and other natural conditions make it very difficult to develop primary production. These municipalities are located in eastern and northern Finland, and after Finland joined the EU the majority of the municipalities representing sparsely populated rural areas have been covered by either Objective 6 or Objective 1.

In this context the urban areas have not been classified according to the type of municipality they represent, but on the basis of the type of settlement, structure of industries and population density. The 44 Finnish cities and towns are either the centre of urban districts (most of them) or local centres.

In Figure 2 the urban-rural interaction area is presented as a type of its own. This interaction area replaces the urban-adjacent rural area, but it also includes a few tens of municipalities of the rural heartland areas. Through the definition of the interaction area an effort was made to stress the partnership of the countryside and population centres and the cooperation projects derived from this. In particular, the interaction area is the arena for the cooperation between urban and rural policy.

Countryside is a diversified community of sparse, village and small-town settlement with skilled and purposeful people, variety of occupations and close contact to nature which interacts with the population centres and is linked to the national and international trends.

Distribution of municipalities (urban-rural, November 2001)

- Population centres (44)
- Common interaction areas (148)*
- Rural heartland areas (178)
- Sparsely populated rural areas (129)

* The common interaction area comprises 37 municipalities representing rural heartland areas and 14 municipalities of sparsely populated rural areas.

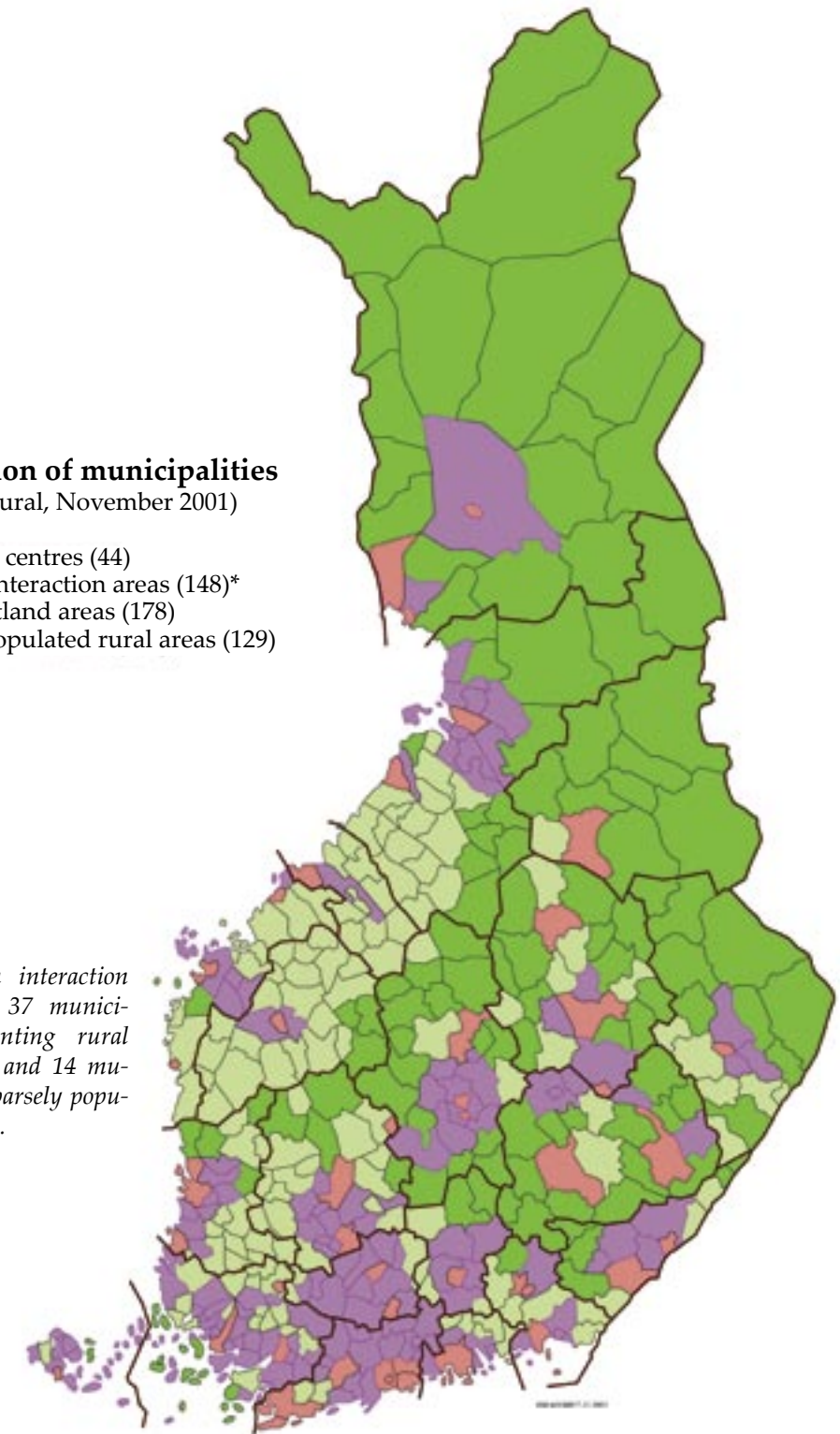


Figure 2. Finnish municipalities along the rural-urban dimension

Policy

RURAL POLICY SYSTEM

Finnish rural policy is about halfway through its construction process. Many of the working methods have been introduced and the policy sector has become fully institutionalised, but it still suffers from the label of project work as something temporary in nature. The Rural Policy Committee, with its predecessors, had functioned for 12 years before it was recognised in the legislation and rules of procedure were drawn up for it. It has been very difficult to obtain State funding for the new methodologies, but significant progress has been made.

First 15 years

The industrialisation of agriculture became topical in the early 1950s. In 1951 a small appropriation for granting loans to small-scale industries in the rural municipalities was included in the State budget based on a proposal of the Rural Industry Committee ("Maaseudun elinkeinokomitea"). Towards the end of the 1950s agricultural support policy became increasingly regionalised.

For a long time the Finnish agricultural policy included special features which were justified by the functioning of the rural areas. In the 1960s and 1970s regional policy was also mainly directed to the rural areas. During the post-war construction period several administrative sectors were using the rural development needs to justify their decisions and actions.

However, in many sectors the development work started to have negative impacts on the countryside. Processing and trade began to move to larger units and population centres, and the same was happening to public services. Structural change in agriculture reduced the number of farms by thousands each year and the rapid mechanisation of forest management work resulted in the disappearance of tens of thousands of full- and part-time jobs. These changes in the society had serious consequences on the viability of the countryside. Later on the accession to the European Union accelerated the negative trends.

In the public discussion all kinds of development work directed at the rural areas may still be considered to contribute to the preservation of a viable countryside. The European Union has reinforced this confusion of matters and attitudes by incorporating various kinds of elements which do not lead to positive rural development to the rural development concept. Narrow rural policy was needed to combat the strong negative trends experienced in the 1990s, and the regional development programmes of the EU offered the opportunities for this. Industrial and administrative sectors continued to protect their own territories instead of viewing the rural areas as a whole. A comprehensive rural policy had not yet evolved, only parts of it.

During the 1980s rural policy was still seen as part of regional policy. The rural development committee and broadly-based regional development committee highlighted the concept of preservation in the rural context. Later on using preservation to justify the actions proved insufficient, and preservation as the main strategy was no longer producing any results. The committees also stressed extensive administrative cooperation but failed to put forward the concrete proposals for actions needed for this.

As long as a certain policy sector is based on the outlines and strategies of other policy sectors, its foundation is not solid and there is not enough understanding to carry through practical solutions. This argument was proven in the 1980s and especially 1990s when the positive regional impacts of the sectoral means for rural policy ran dry. Conscious construction of a narrow rural policy got started in the 1980s, but some elements of this were present already in the regional policy of the 1970s. The words rural policy began to appear in reports concerning the construction of policies and, in accordance with the prevailing custom, people called for the "development of a holistic rural policy". In many ways the 1980s was a decade of a quest for rural policy. The objectives were evolving but the means to implement the rural policy were scarce.

The eyes of the political decision-makers were opened by the rural campaign launched on the initiative of the Council of the European Union. The campaign was highly successful despite the critical public discussion and mostly disparaging treatment in the media. The ten principles for rural development presented by the campaign committee were realised very well during the following years. However, the most significant outcome of the campaign was the launching of the rural development project, which started to carry out rural development work on a more systematic, long-term basis. The development project led to the drafting of the first Rural Policy Programme, which was completed in 1991. The project also started the financing of national development projects in 1989.

In the Rural Policy Programme the objectives with impacts on the countryside and its viability of different administrative sectors were for the first time put together and adjusted to each other. Compared to the earlier committee reports the Rural Policy Programme was more broadly-based, but the means of the broad and narrow rural policy remained obscure. The necessary synergy was still missing, because the programme continued to respect the key areas of different policy sectors. The impression of a broadly-based programme was created by putting the proposals of the different sectors one after the other.

After two years a Government report to the Parliament concerning rural policy was drawn up on the basis of the programme (1993). This report and the Parliament's reply set a solid political foundation for rural development for several years.

The rural development project was followed by the Rural Policy Advisory Committee from the beginning of 1992 until May 1995. The committee consisted of administrative sectors whose decisions have significant impacts on rural development. The rural development project was based on individual active persons, but this was considered insufficient in terms of political and social influence. The composition of the committee was specifically targeted at more direct influence. However, it became evident that there were two different views on the work of the committee: to some it was a forum for direct influence, while others were satisfied with a more passive role as representatives of their own administrative sector in affairs with little significance in terms of the rural policy.

The years 1993 and 1994 were particularly difficult. There was a great deal of uncertainty, even direct opposition to the construction of rural policy, also within the committee. The problems were founded on political scepticism which arose from old structures and working methods. In such conditions rural policy could not become sufficiently politicized. For example, discussion on the rural policy report was carried out from the perspective of policy sectors other than rural policy itself. The membership in the European Union led to further conflicts: some considered that the work of the committee overlapped with the work done in the EU context, while others saw that the committee

supplemented the EU work, which alone would have been insufficient. The recent history has proven that the latter view was the correct one.

The work of the Advisory Committee structured the preparatory work on rural policy and the system began to take shape. Theme groups were set up as the working method, project activities increased considerably and research funding became part of the development work in 1992

The Rural Policy Committee, which has continued the work of the Advisory Committee since 1995, consisted of civil servants. The Rural Policy Committee was a more broadly-based working method and forum for cooperation for different administrative sectors to deal with issues which could have been neglected as the public and private organisations were focusing on their own key activities.

The programme group appointed by the Government drew up the second Rural Policy Programme "Active Countryside" adopted in 1996. The programme group functioned as a small expert group distinct from the Rural Policy Committee, but at the same time it took the preparatory work done in the Committee into account in its own work. The proposals of the programme were more concrete than in the earlier programme and in certain respects they conflicted with the views of some more traditional policy sectors. "Active Countryside" highlighted the local and regional development and networking more strongly than the earlier documents. Of the 96 proposals put forward in the programme 84 were realised, which must be considered an excellent outcome. The good results were based on the more developed and focused proposals and stronger rural policy mechanisms.

During the terms of the first Rural Policy Committee and the new committees appointed in 1999 and 2002 the research and development project work has expanded and the number of theme and work groups has grown to 10-15. In the beginning of the programming period 2000-2006 the theme and work programmes expanded to the regions, and the number of programmes per region varies between 4 and 12. The Rural Policy Committee is a horizontal network, forum for interaction and learning organisation.

At the end of 1999 the Rural Policy Committee set up a Coordination Group to prepare the third Rural Policy Programme. The multistage process led to the adoption of the programme "Countryside for the People - Rural Policy Based on Will". In August 2004 84 of the 108 proposals put forward in the programme had been implemented and 11 were almost completed.

The third Rural Policy Programme introduced the concepts of broad and narrow rural policy. Towards the end of the past decade the view that the EU programmes alone were insufficient started to gain ground. However, the documents laying down the objectives of different ministries showed that they were not yet ready to recognise the regional impacts of decisions made in different administrative sectors. Economic growth received more emphasis than regional balance. Another significant element in the third programme was that it introduced a definition for the viability of the rural areas. The programme stated quite clearly and unambiguously that the viability of the countryside is defined through the people and their welfare and changes in these.

The third Rural Policy Programme emphasised living in the countryside more than earlier, as well as concentration of expertise for developing rural research. The programme contained several proposals concerning these, most of which have been implemented. The drafting of the Government Resolution on Rural Policy started immediately after the programme was completed. The resolution and the Rural Policy Programme are implemented side by side. The resolution laid down the objectives and positions concerning the issues it dealt with. Other issues are promoted as proposed in the Rural Policy Programme. More than half of the proposals do not fall within the scope of the Government or any ministry, but the parties responsible for these are municipalities, universities, associations or companies.

Towards better and better results

The assessment of the results must focus on two distinct perspectives, the achievements and the instruments needed to implement the rural policy. The development of the rural policy continues and several new, active elements have been created for it.

The work on the narrow rural policy is still more advanced than in the broad approach. The narrow rural policy comprises the regional development programmes part-financed by the EU and the national rural policy which has evolved around the Rural Policy Committee. Based on numerous evaluations these must be considered to have succeeded quite well. Instead, in the broad rural policy further means are needed to increase the positive elements in the regional impacts of different administrative sectors. The Rural Policy Programme, Special Programme and their preparation processes aim to reinforce the broad rural policy. The regional development strategies submitted by different ministries in summer 2004 made a significant contribution to this work and provided tools to the Employment and Economic Development Centres and Regional Councils.

The first 15 years of Finnish rural policy include great economic fluctuations, economic depression and joining the new EU practices which differ in many ways from the earlier ones. The EU programmes and projects and the funding for these made available to the countryside were something quite new. At the same time the State economy was tightening and the funds directed at the rural areas were reduced. The evaluations cannot be founded on the practices and allocation of funds before joining the EU, because these would have changed into a more negative direction even without the involvement of the EU. This is why conclusions can be made only from evaluations concerning the different rural policy instruments.

The narrow rural policy can be considered to have achieved what could reasonably be expected in terms of enterprises, jobs, training and networks promoting cooperation. The countryside has been mobilised to the development work, which is why positive results concerning the relevant parties directly have been reached more than without rural policy actors and actions. Instead, within the broad rural policy, i.e. in terms of regional impacts of sectoral policies, the achievements have been quite moderate. The development instruments linked to the EU suffer from their temporary nature, which may quite needlessly also affect the rural policy using them.

From the perspective of the rural policy instruments the results can be evaluated as follows:

- The number of organisations and people carrying out rural development work on a full-time basis has increased.
- The rural research units cover the regions and to some extent the different fields quite well. A network of rural professorships has been created. The production of information has increased and deepened, but it is not yet sufficient.
- There has been a considerable increase in different types of training of rural developers and in the best cases the developers constitute a cooperation network needed in the programme and project work.
- The instruments of the narrow rural policy have developed: objective programmes part-financed by the EU, work of local action groups, theme programmes and groups, national research and development projects and village action assuming responsibility for development work.
- The methodology and content of the Rural Policy Programme influencing the broad rural policy have been developed.

Incompletion and negative elements in the instruments and system still remain in respect of the following:

- The funds available for rural development have decreased. The membership in the EU introduced new types of funding for development work under the rural policy, but this was not enough to substitute for the cuts in other public and private funding directed at the countryside.
- The conditions for the viability of the rural areas are not sufficiently taken into account in agricultural and regional policy, but the right of rural policy to function as an independent policy sector is still not clearly acknowledged.

Changes in work, industries and technology lead to pressures for change in the policy practices as well. More and more often cross-sectoral preparation is needed to find appropriate solutions. The core of the rural policy is networking across the borders, even if most of the human and financial resources continue to be channelled through sectoral administration and businesses. Cross-sectoral preparation bodies mean growing responsibility for own actions and tasks where cooperation is the key. These contribute to the construction of positive actions for the rural areas to be implemented through several administrative sectors.

Rural Policy Committee

The Rural Policy Committee appointed by the Finnish Government prepares the national rural policy and develops the rural policy system. Its work supports both regional and local rural development work and contributes to more efficient utilisation of the programmes part-financed by the EU and other development instruments. Work is done in cooperation with the State, municipalities, companies and associations, and the rural policy measures are directed at all residents independent of their occupation, age or gender.

The Rural Policy Committee works as a cross-sectoral policy programme with the help of extensive networking. The members of the Committee represent nine ministries and several organisations working together to the benefit of the countryside. The Government has appointed the present Rural Policy Committee for the term 15 May 2002-15 May 2005. With its predecessors the Committee has existed since 1988. In recent years the tasks have increased, for example, international cooperation and exchange of information have become integral parts of the activity.

Tasks

- To promote cooperation in rural policy
- To draw up and implement the Rural Policy Programme and, based on this, to assist the Government in drawing up the Special Rural Policy Programme
- To prepare means to promote programme and project activities for rural policy
- To prepare actions to improve rural entrepreneurship and employment
- To promote the creation of network projects which cross the thematic and regional boundaries especially in the wood product sector, small and medium-sized food companies, rural tourism, teleworking and village action taking advantage of the funds of the EU objective programmes and Community initiatives
- To reinforce the operative basic structure of the countryside and rural research and know-how
- To prepare the statements on rural policy issues concerning several administrative sectors and issue statements relating to rural policy
- To develop joint services for rural areas and forms of reorganising the services
- To launch programme and project activities which increase the interaction between rural and urban areas and control migration in cooperation with the urban policy actors.

Development fields and practical methodologies

Rural development covers the rural regions and the majority of Finnish towns, which in general are quite small. The national and EU programme policies are utilised in the work. The activity consists of research and development projects, work of rural development associations (action groups), village associations and various special associations, construction of various kinds of networks and work of the theme groups. The development fields are: teleworking, manufacturing of foodstuffs, welfare services, interaction between urban and rural areas, culture, development of villages, natural products sector, rural tourism, rural advisory services, rural research, rural women, young people, work of local action groups and different forms of work and entrepreneurship.

Rural Policy Programme

- The Rural Policy Programme focuses on broad rural policy issues, i.e. regional impacts of the actions of different sectoral policies and means to alleviate the negative impacts and reinforce the positive consequences. The proposals of the programme consolidate the rural policy system. The programme is revised about every four years, and it contains a strong strategic perspective combined with concrete proposals for development measures. The Rural Policy Committee carries forward the proposals of the action programme through negotiations, projects, work of the theme

groups and influencing various kinds of processes. The Rural Policy Programme brings the tasks of the rural actors closer together and harmonises their actions to gather the strengths and improve the impacts.

Special Rural Policy Programme

- The preparation of the Rural Policy Programme includes the preparation of the policy outlines, i.e. the Special Rural Policy Programme, which must be approved by the Government. The Special Programme lays down the outlines and decisions concerning the rural policy for the near future. In the common aspects the Rural Policy Programme and Special Programme correspond to each other. The Rural Policy Committee prepares both programmes and assists the Government in the implementation of the Special Programme.

Rural Policy Committee and its Secretariat

- The Rural Policy Committee has 21 members representing different organisations and they all have deputy members. Over 50 staff members of the organisations involved work as part-time secretaries of the Committee. Genuine cooperation and networking call for a cross-sectoral approach also in the organisation and working methods of the bodies.

Theme and work groups and theme programmes

- Some of the theme and work groups are temporary while some work for longer periods of time. In the latter case the composition and tasks of the group are revised at least every three years.
- At all times there are 10-15 theme groups of the Committee working in the fields listed above. These outline the national development work on their own specific theme and constitute the national party in the network of the field. Many of the themes already have development programmes of their own and the work of the theme groups in the regions is becoming increasingly intensive.
- In some cases the theme or work group is a kind of laboratory where an idea is matured to a stage where the relevant parties begin to take interest in the matter. The parliamentary Island Committee is responsible for the affairs of the Finnish archipelago, village development work is carried out by the strong and independent village network, i.e. Finnish Village Action Association, and teleworking is promoted by a working group steered by the Ministry of Labour. Of the theme groups of the Committee especially the Work Group for the LAGs, Theme Group for Rural Tourism and Theme Group for Welfare Services are important actors in their own field.

National research and development projects and publication series of the Rural Policy Committee

- In recent years the Rural Policy Committee has used 3.3 million euros per year for about 70 research and development projects. These funds have been used, among other things, for the eight rural professorships and numerous doctoral theses. Each year the Rural Policy Committee publishes about 10 programmes or innovative reports concerning the different fields.

MAF photo archive

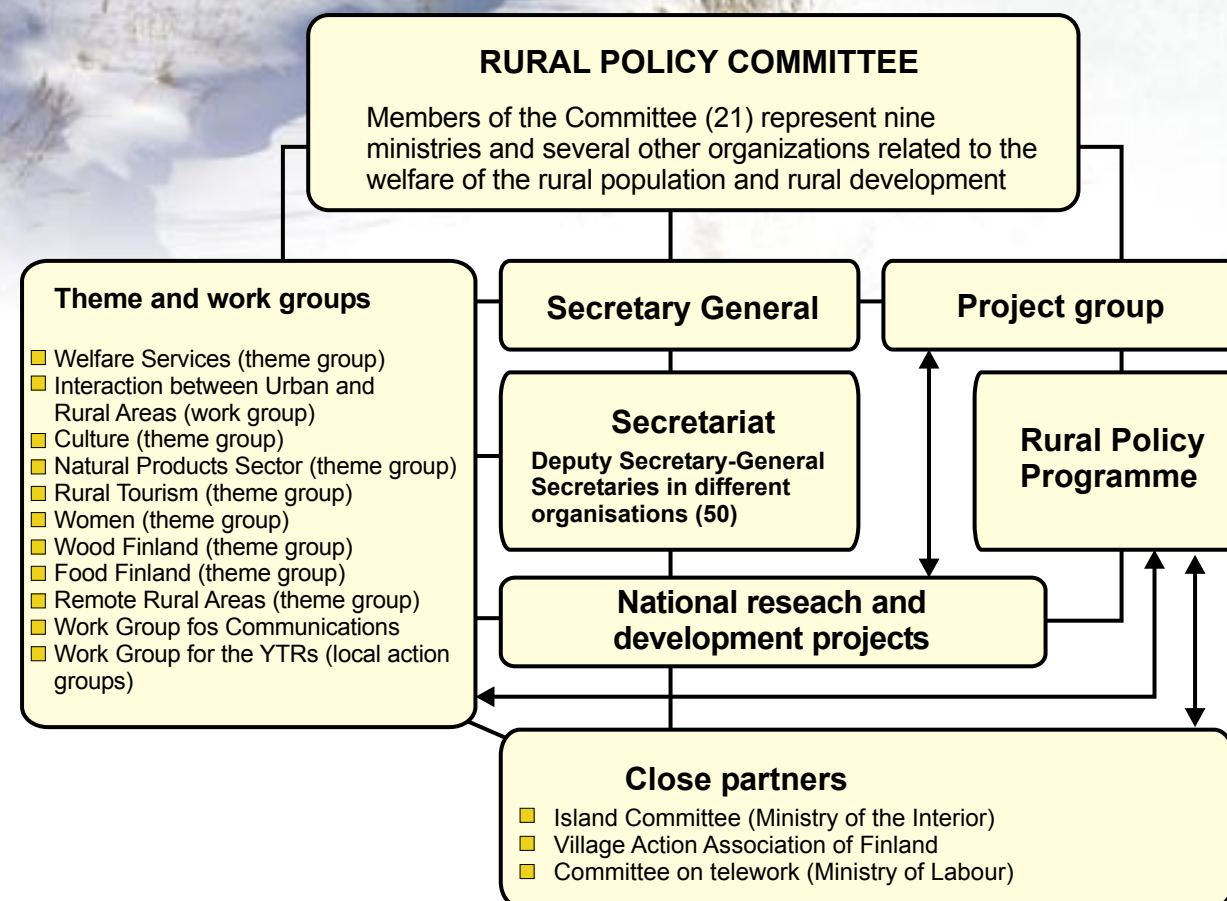


Figure 3. Rural Policy Committee (situation on 31 July 2004)

Rural policy thinking in Finland

Because rural policy is a new policy sector, the approaches to it vary in different countries and supranational organisations. The agriculture oriented rural development of the EU represents rural policy thinking where the countryside is seen as a space dominated by agriculture which can be developed through support to farming. The structural fund policy of the EU is dominated by the regional perspective, where the countryside is easily considered as the underdog, a weak actor and a recipient of the impacts of the global operating environment on regional economies which cannot take action to shape these. The term rural area occurs more and more frequently in the EU, but the criteria, political foundations and money flows are intertwined with agriculture.

In a policy where the countryside is seen as one dimension in structuring the society, the countryside itself becomes a policy issue, not only through agriculture or as part of the regional economy. The politicization of the rural issues as an independent sector confuses the familiar power relations of both agriculture and regional policy. The Finnish rural policy has been constructed from this perspective for decades.

Researchers have incorporated farming traditions and naturalistic relationship to the countryside to rural thinking. The countryside may be considered an obstacle to the construction of a modern national economy and in the traditions relating to the remote areas the countryside is structurally associated with less favoured natural environment. Because of the conditions in Finland the rural thinking necessarily involves traditions relating to the remote areas.

The weakness of the Finnish rural policy system has for years been the lack of political leadership. The Rural Policy Committee consists of civil servants and experts. Political leadership has mainly been channelled through the EU programmes to the rural development instruments. The EU programmes are also characterised by the large share of work done by civil servants, and each programme is only a component in the rural policy as a whole. Under the new Regional Development Act the rural policy is now steered by a ministerial group, which directed the preparation of the fourth Rural Policy Programme and the Special Programme based on it. The procedure is similar to the cross-sectoral policy programmes introduced by the Government of Prime Minister Vanhanen, which are implemented in four social themes. For the past two years the Members of Parliament have attended a voluntary discussion forum, the Rural Network of the Finnish Parliament, which involves 78 MPs.

The need for cross-sectoral preparation and decision-making grows in the rural areas day by day, which means that there is a continuous need to develop functioning solutions. The experiences from the Rural Policy Committee are very positive: from the inadequacy at the beginning step by step towards more powerful and influential actions.



EU-programmes

EU-PROGRAMMES AS RURAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS

The EU measures directed at the rural areas follow the programming periods (Structural Fund periods). The first EU programme period of Finland 1995-1999 proved quite successful, after some initial difficulties and delays. At that time the countryside was developed under seven distinct programmes. Programmebased development work was something quite new for both administration and regional actors. The fragmentation of the programme areas complicated the application, but now this has been abolished. Instead, the implementation so that each Structural Fund has a responsible ministry of its own has become an established practice in Finland. The allocation of EU funds through sectoral ministries obscures their programme nature and complicates their utilisation to the development of regions in a flexible way.

In the programming period 2000-2006 the special rural policy instruments are the Objective Programmes 1 (promoting the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind) and 2 (supporting the economic and social conversion of areas facing structural difficulties) part-financed by the EU, the Regional Rural Development Programme and LEADER + Community initiative. In addition to these, the whole country is covered by the Horizontal Rural Development Programme part-financed by the EU, which consists mostly of agri-environmental support and compensatory allowances for less-favoured areas, i.e. it is not directed to other rural industries.

Finland has two distinct Objective 1 Programmes, one for Northern and one for Eastern Finland. The public funding for these totals 1,978 million euros, of which the Structural Funds contribute about a half. Of the total public funding about 477 euros will be directed at rural development during the current programming period. At the programme level financing has been targeted especially to the development of the operating environment of enterprises and reinforcing the innovation structures, with focus on both the traditional production sectors and new growing sectors based on special skills. However, the key areas vary according to the region.

The Objective 2 area comprises areas undergoing structural transition, both urban and rural ones. In addition to the structural change these areas share high employment and diminishing population. The programme aims to diversify the economic activities in areas which are mainly dependent on one declining industry. During the current programming period there are two Objective 2 areas, one for Southern and one for Western Finland. In Western Finland measures are targeted at improving the competitiveness of farms by raising the level of know-how, while in Southern Finland the focus is on projects which diversify the economic structure and skills in the countryside and increase the interaction between centres and the rural areas. Measures are also targeted at improving the attractiveness and functioning of the countryside as a residential and work environment.

The Regional Rural Development Programme is implemented in Southern and Western Finland in areas which are not covered by the Objective 1 Programmes. The rural development tools applied in the Regional Rural Development Programme and Objective 1 Programmes are largely the same. The Regional Rural Development Programme includes the investment, setting-up and development aids intended for the diversification

of economic activities which are part-financed by the EU as well as the funding of rural development projects.

The Regional Rural Development Programme aims to put an end to the decrease in the rural population and distortion of the population structure, as well as to improve the opportunities for entrepreneurship and economic conditions of farms. Efforts are made to maintain villages as active working, residential and business environments. In the Regional Rural Development Programme the focus is on comprehensive development of especially the remote rural areas and rural heartland areas. The total public funding for the whole programming period is 388 million euros, of which the EU contributes about 116 million euros and the national share is about 272 million euros. Private funding has been estimated to account for about 40 per cent of the total funding of 650 million euros.

Of the Structural Fund programmes directed at the rural areas the Objective 1 and 2 Programmes and the Regional Rural Development Programme concern specifically defined regions. In addition to these there are multiannual horizontal programmes implemented from the Structural Funds, directed at a specific phenomenon, group of people or industry. Of these, the Objective 3 Programme, Structural Programme for the Fisheries Industry and Horizontal Rural Development Programme have impacts on the rural areas.

In the Structural Fund policy of the EU the Objective Programmes are complemented by the Community initiatives. One particular feature in these is the cooperation across the national and regional borders. LEADER+ Community initiative highlights the role of local action groups in developing their own home district. Financing is directed specifically at local development projects. The local action groups are responsible for both the planning and implementation of the actions. The development projects funded under LEADER+ concern the utilisation of new know-how and technologies, improving the quality of life of rural residents, further processing of local products, utilisation of the local natural and cultural resources, slowing down the migration from the countryside to the population centres and interaction between the rural and urban areas. Measures to be funded may include setting up and development of enterprises, organisation of training, development of villages, smallscale product development, joint marketing of products or entrepreneurial or other activities on farms. The total budget of the Finnish LEADER+ Programme is about 168 million euros, of which the EU contributes about 55.4 million euros.

The LEADER+ Programme has assumed a clear role of its own in rural development and the inputs of the programme have been considered to benefit the areas concerned in various ways. The projects are based on the local needs and reinforce the preconditions for developing the regions. They have involved new people and introduced new ideas to the development work. As a whole the results of the programme policies have been so good that programme and project work continue to be needed in the Finnish countryside, independent of the EU funds available for this in the future.



Outlines

OUTLINES OF RURAL POLICY

- Reinforcing work done by public and private actors which utilises the urban-rural interaction.
- Free-time residents and residents of secondary homes moving to the countryside are increasingly and in a more diversified way taken into account in the rural development work.
- Construction of means which bring along justice to the citizens and equality to the regions. Balanced regional development work cannot be achieved through centres alone, but funds are targeted directly at developing regions outside the centres. Economic competitiveness of the countryside is promoted on the basis of its own strengths.
- Attention is drawn to competitive countryside which functions and thrives in conditions where the climate is demanding, population sparse and distances long. The countryside sets its own objectives and is capable of participating as an equal partner to their implementation thanks to the diversified and developing system available for rural development work.
- The forms of citizens' influence are reinforced in municipalities because more actors are needed and local representative democracy is not always efficient enough.
- Forms of work which bring together resources, improve know-how and are founded on cooperation are reinforced (village action, municipal cooperation, district services for business, work of LAGs and centres of expertise).
- Work of the LAGs is developed as one permanent rural policy instrument.
- Positive attitudes towards immigrants are promoted in the countryside. Cultural diversity and enriching the communities is reinforced through training of attitudes at schools, village associations, LAGs and parishes.
- Obstacles to rural residence are removed and living in the countryside is increased by ensuring that rural areas maintain their competitiveness as healthy and safe environments which are in harmony with the nature, as well as living environments with reasonable social costs.
- Building of new holiday homes is ensured through flexible derogations while waiting for the plans to be completed. Control and steering of building is developed to allow the conversion of holiday homes to round-the-year use.
- Cultural events and arts are not left to depend only on market forces or random local financing sources but the whole nation assumes a long-term responsibility for them under the rural and cultural policy.
- Reform of education, training and advisory services and their diversified supply and availability is ensured.
- The regional mission of adult education is reinforced by increasing sections which support the capabilities for rural development in the diversified supply of education and training.
- Extensive networking between all actors is supported to create innovations and develop them further.
- Development of the private service sector is promoted in the rural industrial structure. The welfare sector, tourism, culture and teleworking, among others, offer opportunities for this. The competitiveness of the strong manufacturing industry in the countryside is ensured in the increasingly global context.

- Operating conditions of small rural enterprises are reinforced through diversified local services for entrepreneurs and confidence in entrepreneurs' own initiative.
- Fast and reasonably priced communication links which cover the whole country and extend to every village are constructed by 2007.
- Agriculture and the food chain are steered towards high value added products, production of farms is diversified and pluriactivity of farms is promoted.
- Structure of rural entrepreneurship is taken into account in industrial policy. Public systems and services for enterprises are constructed so that the structural solutions are founded on the needs of microenterprises.
- Ability of the manufacturing industry to maintain jobs in Finland is preserved as a choice in the globalisation policy to support welfare, employment and regional structure in Finland. This calls for dynamic reorganisation of the manufacturing industry, by means of support through the industrial policy.
- Private service sectors are developed in the rural areas in accordance with the natural and new potential. In the support for enterprises and public promotion efforts the service sectors are placed in an equal position with the manufacturing industry.
- All sectors of economic activities have an equal position as sources of livelihood.
- In the forest cluster attention is directed at the utilisation of the good quality, abundance and high value added of wood in support of the work and livelihood of the people.
- Fishery is diversified and developed into an industry that is based on the regional special characteristics and know-how. To promote regionally balanced development of professional fishing the Fishery Units of the Employment and Economic Development Centres direct special attention at the utilisation of the structure, special skills and innovation in professional fishing.
- The financing system of municipalities is developed so that it ensures the organisation of basic services and encourages the municipalities to efficient production of services.
- In the national, regional and local decision-making the decisions concerning the rural areas are assessed from the perspective of weakening or strengthening of the economics of proximity.
- At least the present amount of funding is reserved from financing the operations concerning the rural areas.



Proposals

PROPOSALS OF THE RURAL POLICY PROGRAMME

The programme Viable Countryside contains altogether 133 proposals. In this summary they are listed briefly, classified under five headings. The proposals from the strategic sections I and III of the programme have been compiled under the heading "System and practices of rural policy". The other four groups follow the division of section II into four main themes: reinforcing the operative structures of the rural areas, reorganisation of industries and work, maintenance and construction of basic services and raising the level of know-how

System and practices of rural policy

- Division of regions into urban areas, urban-adjacent rural areas/interaction areas, rural heartland areas and sparsely populated rural areas is increasingly applied in the urban-rural interaction policy.
- The above division of regions is taken into account more and applied in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of regional and EU programmes.
- Political leadership of rural policy is organised on a permanent basis.
- An "ombudsperson" is appointed to draw up proposals concerning the best and complementary practices for regional, rural and agricultural policy.
- Work of the Rural Policy Committee is incorporated into the Finnish regional development scheme and the development of rural policy is continued.
- Practices and financing of crosssectoral policy programmes, including rural policy, are developed on the basis of the experiences gained.
- Regional Rural Policy Programme is continued by a similar national programme with total funding of 35 million euros.
- Negative impacts of the possible delay of the next EU programming period are prevented through training and careful preparation for the EU programmes to be implemented during the next period.
- Rural policy strategies and measures are prepared for broadly-based joint working groups in the regions.
- Material on the regional development and rural policy positions is prepared for the new members of the municipal councils who start their work in the beginning of 2005.
- Sub-regional units are more active in rural development.
- The Rural Policy Committee sets up a theme group on living in the countryside.
- Legislation on land use is developed so that it creates better possibilities for long-term residence in holiday homes or converting these into permanent use.
- The Theme Group on Culture of the Rural Policy Committee draws up a cultural programme for rural areas.
- Incentive and flexibility of financing systems for programme and project activities is increased so that the delays in the payments to the projects and risks involved in own financing do not constitute obstacles to the actions.
- Public advisory and financing services for enterprises emphasise the need to increase service entrepreneurship and dissemination of new forms of services and organising the activities, such as combination of services.
- Sufficient state of the whole road network is ensured by increasing the funds for basic road maintenance.
- Financing for national public transport is increased and the development and expansion of combined transports, public transportation based on orders and service transportation are continued.

- Combination of transports reimbursed by the society is made a permanent practice and the system is extended to the whole country.
- Near transports are promoted and piloted and the experiences gained are disseminated in the production of services and transportation of goods.
- Expenses of transport to work are considered deductions for work expenses in State taxation (except for the amount to be paid by the taxpayer). The problems due to long distances are alleviated through relief relating to taxation of fuels in sparsely populated regions.
- A work group is appointed to study possible tasks for the rural population other than those relating to primary production from the perspective of the viability of the countryside, farmers' income level and new jobs.
- Conditions for farming are maintained in the whole country. Financing is also directed at the diversification of rural enterprises and reinforcing the rural communities.
- Regional model calculations are made on the impacts of the agricultural policy alternatives on regional economies.
- Balanced development of the different parts of the country is taken into account in agricultural policy planning and in the allocation of regional development funds attention is directed at regional differences and needs. This concerns the differentiation of the support levels as well.
- The Rural Policy Committee is appointed for the new term 16 May 2005–16 May 2008.
- Regional development is coordinated by a Ministerial Working Group on Administration and Regional Development. The entity of urban and rural policy receives strong emphasis in the monitoring group on regional policy measures.

Reinforcing the operative structures of the rural areas

- Survey of the development of the resource centres is carried out. The Theme Group on Women and women's organisations launch the resource centre activity by degrees in 10 regions.
- The Theme Group on Women of the Rural Policy Committee sets up similar theme groups in all regions.
- Local enterprises and associations offer apprenticeship and training possibilities for the young, and training and job opportunities for students are available in the countryside surrounding the place of study.
- Schools and colleges encourage the students to entrepreneurship already during their studies.
- Good experiences are disseminated in municipal and subregional groups involving the young.
- The development programmes for the new programming period 2007-2013 contain clear objectives and tools for projects implemented by the young.
- The Rural Policy Committee activates and supports the creation of regional networks of the young.
- The Rural Policy Committee sets up a national network of the young which operates based on the bottom-up principle and consists mainly of members of the regional networks.
- State assistance to village action is raised to the same level as that of other similar organisations supported by the State by increasing the assistance annually by 200,000 euros.
- Number of associations carrying out village actions is increased from the present 2,300 to 2,700 by the end of 2008. Village plans and regional village programmes are incorporated into the regional and municipal planning and regional programmes.
- Village action looks for and creates practices through which the village residents participate in the planning of infrastructure and practical development work.

- Villages act as intermediaries in supporting the living of the elderly in their own homes by organising and developing care services which complement the municipal, professional work for the elderly.
- In the programming period 2007–2013 the ministries include the financing of the LAG work in their development and Structural Fund programmes and its public financing under the programmes is raised to 50 million euros per year.
- Basic administrative funding is allocated to the rural development associations.
- A pilot project of the POMO+ action groups (Rural Programme Based on Local Initiative) prepares all groups to the new programming period and tests the practical procedures in 2005–2006. The funding of the pilot groups is continued by 2.5 million euros in 2007.
- Management of entities of tasks and taking account of the opportunities offered by different kinds of municipalities are stressed in cooperation between municipalities.
- Index adjustment of the State support is realised in full, financing of State contributions to investments in social services and health care is ensured and this is maintained at least in basic education and library services, and the possibilities to adjust the equalisation level of the State subsidy system are examined. Strong reduction in the population is included in the system as a distinct factor.
- New forms of work suited for the utilisation of interaction which are based on two equal partners are created for the public administration.
- Financing similar to the LAG methodology will be included in the next Objective 2 Programme, directed at local development associations operating in urban areas.
- The theme of urban-rural interaction is incorporated into the citizens' influence policy programme in a comprehensive way.
- Urban regional forums and neighbourhood associations are converted into development associations operating according to the principle of tripartition.

Reorganisation of industries and work

- Financing from the National Technology Agency of Finland TEKES is directed at multi-level networking of production chains and creation and financing of innovations based on skills and technologies.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Ministry of Trade and Industry study means through which the financing of investments and development measures of enterprises operating in different sectors can be managed in a flexible way despite the administrative borders.
- Sufficient resources are ensured for the Employment and Economic Development Centres to employ people working on rural development on a permanent basis and to organise efficient vocational guidance.
- Regional differences in the production potential, role of agriculture in the regional economy and employment and possibilities of farmers to find alternative income sources are taken into account in developing the support systems.
- Like in many other EU countries, efforts are made to influence the operating conditions of agriculture and other rural industries through the national tax policy.
- A national target and action programme on landscape management is prepared.
- The national forest sector programme is revised, starting from the rural and regional policy objectives.
- Regional forest programmes are incorporated into the regional programme and industrial policy planning of the Employment and Economic Development Centres. Regional Forest Councils are developed into an expert body for regional development measures in the forest and wood sector.
- Interest of young people living in rural areas in forest work is promoted in cooperation between organisations.

- The industrial policy programme for the wood product industry and programme for promoting wood building to be completed towards the end of 2004 are implemented in full.
- A national image and sales promotion strategy for SMEs in the food sector for 2006–2008 is drawn up.
- Preserving the operating conditions of small enterprises and harmonised procedures in different parts of the country are taken into account in the preparation of the Food Act and decrees.
- Application of the financial instrument of the common agricultural policy of the EU which supports cooperation between producers is started.
- Outlines for developing the food sector, including small enterprises, are included in regional programmes.
- Rural tourism is a key area in the future as well. Work is done in seamless cooperation between the regional and national measures.
- Theme Group on Rural Tourism manages the organisation of the development of activities, planning of routes, compilation and marketing on the national level
- The "Wild North" (Villi Pohjola) partnership model is applied in the product development, sale and marketing of wildlife and nature tourism products in the whole country.
- "Service with a Heart" (Palvelua Sydämellä) customer service training is incorporated into the national quality management systems.
- Definition of the value of special natural products for the national economy is developed.
- A training programme is designed for entrepreneurs in the natural products sector to support their market access.
- Theme Group on Natural Products prepares an action programme for the national development of certification of organic products.
- Specific production practice criteria are designed for natural products.
- Content and demonstration of skills are designed for the training of fishing guides.
- Fishing tourism is developed in line with the regional fishing tourism development programmes as part of rural tourism.
- Possibilities for hunting are secured through training, advisory and development work.
- Aid for reindeer husbandry based on the number of animals for full-time reindeer herders.
- Processing and tourism linked to reindeer husbandry are developed through programmes and projects.
- Views representing the population and economic activities receive sufficient emphasis in the planning of large predator populations.
- Use, collection and processing of renewable energy sources in rural areas are promoted.
- Refund of electricity tax is granted for electricity produced by means of reed canary grass.
- Posts of wood energy advisors in Forestry Centres are made permanent.
- Operating conditions for heat entrepreneurship are developed and the number of companies and cooperatives in the field is increased.
- Conditions for the use of peat are ensured in the context of emissions trading through revisions to the tax and support policy.
- Regionalisation of government functions is continued.
- Municipal and State administration adopt teleworking as one alternative form of work.
- A network of experts for entrepreneurial activity in the form of cooperatives which covers the whole country is trained.
- The start money system is extended to those who become entrepreneurs after salaried employment, domestic work or studies, in addition to the unemployed, and the duration is extended to 12 months.
- The activation model for preliminary entrepreneurship is implemented as labour policy training in connection with the administration experiment in Kainuu.
- Preparation of the Land Use Contracts is continued with the aim of introducing the scheme in 2007.

Maintenance and construction of basic services

- Village associations and other similar organisations inform about the possibilities to use communication links in small-scale entrepreneurship and domestic routines and find out who is to join the network.
- A guide is drawn up on the process of acquiring communication links.
- The national strategy on broadband connections is revised based on results and experiences from regional broadband strategies and regional and local construction projects.
- State subsidies for private roads are raised to 16 million euros a year and gradually to the earlier level.
- Operating conditions of associations for the maintenance of private roads are improved by organising training for road managers.
- Possibilities to amend section 130 of the Value Added Tax Act so that the tax included in the purchases relating to the management of private roads would be refunded to the management associations are examined.
- Municipalities plan the organisation of the transport of passengers in a comprehensive way.
- Different forms of transport are made equal in terms of their competitiveness. The weight limit for transport of goods in taxis (100 kg) is made more flexible.
- The education administration creates a support scheme for small schools.
- Domestic help credit is developed so that tax deduction can also be made by persons who purchase the services for their close relatives.
- Scope of use of the service vouchers is expanded.
- Shortage of labour in social and health services is removed by organising welfare services as regional entities.
- Connection between vocational training and working life in social and health sectors is reinforced through a campaign.
- Value added taxation of the service sectors is revised.
- Investment and setting-up aids for service entrepreneurship in the welfare sector are improved.
- Multi-care services suited for village entities are developed.
- Sufficient supply of high-quality household water and appropriate sewerage and treatment of wastewater is ensured for 5,000 households per year through support measures for water services.
- More local waste collection points are established.
- Support system for village shops in sparsely populated regions is developed into a support system for multifunctional services and the available funds are raised to 40 million euros.

Raising the level of know-how

- The multidisciplinary master's degree programme in rural studies is started in autumn 2005.
- The five-year rural studies programme of the Academy of Finland is launched in spring 2006.
- A proposal on school of researchers is prepared for the next application for schools of researchers in 2005 and efforts are made to get the activity started in 2006.
- Teaching in rural affairs is integrated into an education system during 2005.
- Financing of national rural research and development projects is raised to 6 million euros in cooperation between different administrative sectors.
- As many village schools as possible are developed into service centres.

- Financing system for secondary education is revised so that cooperation between high schools (lukio) and vocational training increases.
- Quality of teaching is ensured, among other things, by establishing sub-regional posts.
- Rural development is incorporated in the regional development function of universities and rural development tasks are assigned to universities.
- Schools and colleges reinforce the business incubator activities by means of aid from the education administration, taking account of the rural development needs.
- Demonstrations of skills are developed and rural residents are adopted as a special target group in the implementation of degrees.
- In adult education special attention is directed at the rural aspects and impacts of the content of the teaching and measures increasing the demand for these.
- Employment and Economic Development Centres, National Technology Agency Tekes, Finnvera and Finpro intensify their cooperation.
- Sub-regional services for enterprises are established to develop local and regional enterprises in rural sub-regional units.
- Education administration supports regional cooperation of primary and secondary schools and high schools, construction of joint supply of subjects and introduction of alternative ways of organising the teaching by utilising information and communication technologies.
- Broadband connections are extended to all schools.
- Legislation concerning the copyrights and responsibility for maintenance of multimedia teaching materials produced for WWW pages is eased and simplified.
- Education administration promotes entrepreneurship by developing diversified teaching methods and increasing the contacts between education establishments and local business life. Special attention is directed at possibilities for self-employment in sparsely populated regions.
- Rural libraries are developed into cultural, information and action centres through a development programme.
- Theme Group on Culture creates a regional network of participatory cultural activity.
- A business incubator network for the cultural sector is created, focused on the commercialisation of the know-how.
- Environmental administration organises and intensifies the local tasks in the protection and management of cultural environments. Establishment of regional offices of the National Board of Antiquities is started.
- Cultural environment programmes, village plans and landscape management plans are prepared and implemented in cooperation between the administrative sectors and residents.
- Villages assume the responsibility for landscape management measures in the countryside. These and the maintenance of cultural environments are incorporated in the Land Use Contract procedure.
- A strategy for bilingual regions is prepared to improve the possibilities for citizens' influence.
- Means to increase the flexibility in the administration of development projects carried out by the Swedish-speaking Finns are searched for to improve the efficiency of project work.
- A joint development project for the rural areas and archipelago of the Swedish-speaking Finns is created under the EU's "Coastal Management" scheme.
- A bilingual rural professorship directed at the development of the coastal regions and archipelago is established at the Åbo Akademi University.



Funds

FUNDS NEEDED

The Rural Policy Programme is highly extensive in terms of its content and the responsibility for its implementation. In view of the available funds it mainly strives to influence the reallocation of the existing funds within the decided frameworks. Only few proposals involve a clear increase in the funding, because the issues concerned are considered highly important, such as preventing the erosion of the operative structures, necessary changes or new working practices. The programme focuses on changing the operative structures, which calls for some State funding, but the funds will be returned as the activity increases. The following table presents the proposals which either increase the expenditure or reduce the revenue and through this have impacts on the State economy

There are two kinds of proposals in terms of the financial positions. Some of the proposals concern public funds intended for rural policy development which also aim at increasing private funding, while some are basic issues relating to improving the conditions in the rural areas which have for years been present in the policy making and are naturally included in the rural programme, but the possible additional funds depend on the state of the national economy and on the political decision-makers. The funds needed for the first type are much smaller than those involved in the second type, while the strategic and indirect impact of the former is greater.

In the proposals the continuation of rural development work, overcoming the likely delays and developing the mechanisms imply funding for the Rural Development Programme for Southern and Western Finland (=funding for a national rural programme), proposals to solve problems due to delays, raising the State grant for village action, financing of LAG work, employing staff at the Employment and Economic Development Centres on a permanent basis, launching activities based on agreements, introduction of support for multifunctional services and increasing national project funding to create projects concerning networking and centres of expertise. The Rural Policy Programme proposes that new funding of 2.2 million euros be allocated for 2005, with total funding of 46 million euros by the end of 2008 (the largest contribution is to the Rural Development Programme for Southern and Western Finland).

It is impossible to present the exact economic impacts of the proposals of the second type, but these are clearly greater than the impacts of the first type of proposals on the State economy. Many of the proposals and the greatest economic impacts relate to roads and transport.

Decision	Impact on State economy in 2005–2008, increased expenditure or reduced revenue
Continuation of the Regional Rural Development Programme by Rural Programme for Southern and Western Finland (ELMA)	35 million euros per year in 2006 and 2007
Delays of next EU programming period, reduction of negative impacts	One million euros reserved for training
Increased funds for basic road maintenance, incl. raising the subsidies for private roads	In accordance with the proposal of the ministerial working group for routes 45 million euros, incl. raising the subsidies for private roads from 11.1 million euros to 16 million euros, later on gradually to 30 million euros
Increased funding for State public transportation	Even a slight increase together with combination of transports improves the situation
Expenses of transport to work considered deductions for work expenses in State taxation (except for the amount to be paid by the taxpayer)	Some
Reductions relating to fuel tax for residents of sparsely populated regions	Some
Raising State grant for village action by 200,000 euros per year	Impact on State economy insignificant, increase of 600,000 euros from the level of 2004 in 2005–2007
Financing of LAG work (EU, State, municipalities) in 2007 - 2013 altogether 50 million euros per year	Proposal implies a slightly higher financing level than at present, but this is not new funding, because the proposal can be included in the framework of the regional section of EU's rural programme.
Preparing for funding the transitional period of LAGs under Rural Programme Based on Local Initiative POMO+	2.5 million euros for 2007

Decision	Impact on State economy in 2005–2008, increased expenditure or reduced revenue
Reform of the State contribution and financing system of municipalities	Some
Employing persons working on rural development on a permanent basis, organisation of vocational guidance in Employment and Economic Development Centres	No need to increase funding but the source changes from technical assistance under EU programmes into budget funding, which in many ways must be considered a better solution
Developing of operating conditions for agriculture through national tax policy	Some
Supporting use of peat through tax policy	The matter is being examined, some impacts
Launching contract-based activities	Preparation until the end of 2006; activity can be started by means of existing funds, but new funding is needed for the new tasks, which will lead to savings in State funds later on. Estimate for 2007 is 5 million euros (activity not yet in its full extent)
Refund of the value added tax to road maintenance associations	State revenue reduced by 17 million euros
Expansion of domestic help credit	Insignificant
Revision of value added tax in service sectors	Some
Support for village shops into support for multifunctional services	A 2 million increase to the present 2 million euros, i.e. 4 million euros per year, which means an increase of altogether 6 million euros in 2005–2008
Increased funds for national projects	From 3.3 million to 6.0 million euros so that agreements on extensive joint projects are made with several administrative sectors. No raise in frameworks, no additional funding.





Implemente...

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RURAL POLICY PROGRAMME

Certain strategic key areas have influenced the proposals of the Rural Policy Programmes considerably. These include the equality between the means of developing communities and support for enterprises, efforts to bring together the resources and interaction between urban and rural areas. The content and structure of the rural policy programme are in line with the strategies. However, it should be considered whether a certain strategy supports rural development or is concerned with the interests of a single organisation, industry or interest group, where the countryside again is only the setting, or even loser. For the sectors concerned such strategies will be needed in the future as well, but they have no place in the core of the rural policy.

Main strategies

The aim of emphasising the differences between the rural regions in developing the rural policy strategies and use of the tripartite division of the rural areas is to find appropriate development measures for each type. This is not an easy task, because most of the measures are needed in all types of regions, while many rural areas do not easily identify themselves as, for example, sparsely populated and remote and highlight the measures directed at this particular type, even if they would clearly represent this type of area.

The position and role of municipalities is tested in a number of ways. The practical implementation of tasks is shifting to the sub-regional level, or the level of villages. These changes influence the organisation of tasks in municipalities, but they do not reduce the significance of municipalities, if these, together with the other actors, recognise their current role in the development work.

A rural policy system has been developed in Finland. The work of the Rural Policy Committee has grown stronger, and there are highly efficient working methodologies on the level of villages and sub-regions. Instead, on the level of regions the preparation and practical implementation of the rural policy should be increased.

All industries and economic activities are equal. The focus on the diversification of the economic foundation in the rural policy strategy means *increased attention to the growing sectors*. This is why rural policy stresses, for example, the new forms of welfare services, jobs created in the cultural sector, development of tourism and conscious efforts to increase teleworking. More important than the present extent of an activity are its future prospects.

Countryside with a few characteristic industries has been replaced by *rural areas with numerous and rapidly increasing number of economic activities and types of residence*. It is obvious that from the perspective of the viability of the countryside more can be achieved through the new residents than by means of any industrial policies, however strong.

It is also very important that *the society views the enterprises on an equal footing* independent of their links to agriculture, unemployment of the customer or growth-orientation of the enterprise. When the administrative sectors have applied the criteria referred to above, certain types of entrepreneurship have been excluded: a person who strives to get started in a new service sector to diversify the activity of a farm may be eligible for public sup-

port for the new enterprise, while a neighbour without a farm who tries to enter the same field cannot get the support, even if the farm in no way guarantees the success of the new activity.

In the rural policy *forests constitute a production factor and source of livelihood for the rural residents*. This means that the wood products sector and utilisation of wood energy are important development fields in terms of the viability of the countryside. Forests have great potential for the rural policy, which has not yet been utilised in full. High-quality wood should be processed more and further locally and regionally.

The programme and project work continue during the EU programming period 2007–2013. *Because of the great regional differences in Finland, the funds available for regional development must stay at the current level. Any reduction in the EU funding must be compensated for by increasing the national funding.* At present Finland is a relatively rich country in the enlarged EU, but at the same time it is even more peripheral and far away from the European centres than before. This is why the success of Finland calls for serious attention to balanced regional development.

Government decides, Ministerial Working Group steers and Rural Policy Committee assists

The Rural Policy Programme is in many ways a combination of very different kinds of issues. This is why the implementation of the programme is also a process which consists of several parts:

- the Government approves the Special Rural Policy Programme
- the progress of the Special Programme and the Rural Policy Programme is from time to time dealt with at the Ministerial Working Group on Administration and Regional Development, Ministerial Group on Rural Development and Rural Network of the Finnish Parliament
- the Rural Policy Committee determines a responsible organisation, theme group or person for each proposal
- the Rural Policy Committee gives its opinion on the programme implementation by a implementation report drawn up twice a year
- the theme groups and cooperation networks of the Rural Policy Committee are responsible for the progress of the proposals in their own field
- the Prime Minister's Office and Rural Policy Committee monitor the impacts of the programme by means of selected indicators
- the functioning of the rural policy system, incl. the Rural Policy Programme, is evaluated once during the term of each Government
- the implementation of the proposals is promoted through negotiations
- project funding is directed to research and network projects through which the Rural Policy Programme is implemented
- the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Communication Work Group of the Rural Policy Committee organise information and training sessions and seminars on the Special Programme and Rural Policy Programme
- the Secretariat of the Rural Policy Committee produces a series of articles on the programmes
- the Rural Policy Programmes is offered to be used as a textbook
- the summary of the Rural Policy Programme is available in Finnish, Swedish, English, French, German and Russian.

The Government decision concerning the Special Programme gives the rural policy the necessary political support. The practical actions to implement the programme are the responsibility of the Rural Policy Committee. The work of the theme and work groups and financing of the national projects constitute important elements in the implementation of the Rural Policy Programme. This will continue to be the case in the future. On the one hand the theme groups must engage in cooperation and reinforce the regional activity on their themes and, on the other, they need to be more active in negotiations and in producing information on the problems in their own field, both directly and through the Rural Policy Committee. In the national project the key question is the improvement of the possibilities to finance extensive network projects. Still a few years ago no such projects were created. Now the necessary groundwork, including the construction of the theme groups, has been done and the basic conditions exist, but the funds are insufficient.

Common priorities of regional and central government

The Rural Policy Programme focuses on the regional impacts of decisions made in the central government, while the regional programme puts forward the most important outlines and measures for the development of regions. The Rural Policy Programme functions as backup fire for the development work in the regions. The best results are achieved when the strategies and practices of the Rural Policy Programme and regional programmes coincide, while the regional differences obviously lead to variation. Important common priorities and sets of measures include:

- common understanding of the relationship between the Policy Programme and regional programme
- the countryside must be strongly visible in the regional programmes
- regions need a body which carries the responsibility for rural policy and especially prepares the matters
- division of areas into four types and rural areas into three types
- common understanding of the role of village and development associations
- dense network of centres and concentrations of expertise
- genuine national and regional urban and rural policy
- cooperation between national and regional theme groups and similar groupings
- countryside as operating environment for work and living
- expanding sectors - common understanding of the opportunities

These tasks are important in all regions, even if their relative weight may vary. However, their progress calls for stronger local development work, in addition to the regional perspective. This should be taken into account in both national and regional development work and in the allocation of funds.

The progress made in these tasks reinforces the rural policy of the regions and leads to better results. In the rural policy the local, regional, national and international perspectives go hand in hand. None of these levels is capable of replacing each other, which means that all the levels must be fully functional. Strong common priorities and development work consciously targeted at the same direction lead to better results.



Preparat...

ANNEX

Preparation process of the Rural Policy Programme

Regional negotiations

The updating of the Rural Policy Programme was included in the programme of the Government headed by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen. In accordance with this commission, the Rural Policy Committee started the preparation of the fourth Rural Policy Programme in spring 2003. In the spirit of the new Regional Development Act, rural policy seminars and negotiations were held in all regions to make the regional programme work and preparation process of the Rural Policy Programme increasingly aware of each other, promote the dialogue between the two and agree on the necessary networking measures. Both parties benefited from the negotiation round and interaction was promoted independent of the stage of the regional programme or Rural Policy Programme process when the negotiations were carried out.

The tour of regions was started on 16 May 2003 in Varsinais-Suomi and it ended on 8 September 2003 in Kymenlaakso. Altogether 16 seminars and meetings were held. The reports drawn up together with the regions were distributed widely. The reports were analysed and compiled into a report entitled Harmonisation of Rural Policy and Regional Programme Work (Rural Policy Committee 10/2003, in Finnish). The perspectives put forward in the negotiation report were expanded by analysing the regional programmes from the rural policy perspective. Themes offered by the regions to the Rural Policy Programme were also dealt with and matters which call for further development and processing were raised.

Before the completion of the Rural Policy Programme in May 2004 regional seminars were held in Kemi, Pieksanmaa and Tampere, where the regions had the opportunity to examine the draft programme and comment on it. These comments were taken into account in finalising the programme.

Strategy Group

In September 2003 the Rural Policy Committee appointed a Strategy Group to prepare the strategic elements of the Rural Policy Programme. The group consisted of the professors for rural affairs Hannu Katajamäki, Kari Ilmonen and Kari Vesala, Professor Heikki Eskelinen and Docent Eero Uusitalo. The group was headed by Professor Hilikka Vihinen. It convened six times and drew up a basic proposal for the strategy section of the programme.

Coordination Group

In autumn 2003 a Coordination Group was appointed to prepare the programme. The group was headed by Secretary-General, Rural Counsellor Eero Uusitalo. Most of the work was done in spring 2004, and the group convened altogether six times. The Rural Policy Committee invited the following persons as members of the Coordination Group:

Union Secretary Lauri Ainasto, Wood and Allied Workers' Union
 Manager of small municipality issues Markku Fagerlund, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
 Development Director Hannu Heikkilä, Association of Rural Advisory Centres
 Director-General Matti Heikkilä, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health STAKES
 Special Adviser Jari Heiniluoma, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
 Senior Adviser Rainer Lahti, Ministry of the Environment
 Regional Development Director Kaisa-Leena Lintilä, Ministry of the Interior
 Head of Section Ilpo Mattila, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners
 Counsellor for Education Seppo Niinivaara, Ministry of Education
 Senior Officer, Agriculture Jarmo Salonen, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
 Professor Pirjo Siiskonen, Institute for Rural Research and Training of the University of Helsinki
 Research Director Ritva Toivonen, Pellervo Economic Research Institute
 Director Matti Tuiremo, Savo-Karelia Road District
 Special Researcher Tatu Tuominen, Ministry of Traffic and Communications
 Senior Architect Aulis Tynkkynen, Ministry of the Environment
 Director Eila Valtanen, Kainuu Forestry Centre
 Professor Hilikka Vihinen, Agrifood Research Finland
 Ministerial Adviser Riitta Viren, Ministry of Transport and Communications
 Senior Adviser Jussi Yli-Lahti, Ministry of Trade and Industry

The secretaries of the varied preparation process of the Rural Policy Programme were Planning Officer Marjatta Koskinen (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry), Planning Manager Jukka Mäkitalo (Ministry of Trade and Industry), Senior Officer Risto Matti Niemi (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry), Ministerial Adviser Jarmo Palm (Ministry of Labour) and Planning Officer Laura Perheentupa (Ministry of the Interior).

The tasks of the coordination group were:

- To compile and summarise the material produced by the Strategy Group, theme groups and similar groupings.
- To analyse and take account of the regional programmes and regional development strategies of ministries.
- Utilise the summary on the tour of regions and the outcome of the negotiations carried out with over partners.
- Draw up the texts on themes which were not obtained elsewhere.

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Ministerial Working Group

A political steering group was set up to steer the preparation of the programme, because the political outlines of the programme constitute one of the special programmes to be approved by the Finnish Government. The political steering group was a so-called channel group, whose members were Minister of Transport and Communications Leena Luhtanen, Minister of Regional and Municipal Affairs Hannes Manninen (Ministry of the Interior), Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Juha Korkeaoja, Minister of the Environment Jan Erik Enestam and Minister of the Interior Kari Rajamäki. When the group dealt with the Rural Policy Programme, Special Programme or agricultural report, it was chaired by Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Juha Korkeaoja. The ministerial group convened to deal with the rural programmes six times during the preparation process.

Proposals of the theme groups

In 2003 the theme groups of the Rural Policy Committee, New Time for the Countryside association, Island Committee, Finnish Village Action Association and the Committee on Telemwork were requested to prepare texts on the situation in their own field and concrete proposals for future efforts. These were first dealt with at the meeting of the Coordination Group on 25 February 2004, and the theme groups revised the texts on the basis of the feedback. In this connection the theme groups also evaluated the implementation of their own proposals based on the situation on 30 April 2004.

Negotiations with ministries, interest groups and expert organisations

The invitations to negotiations were sent to the different administrative sectors, political parties, interest groups and expert organisations in December 2003. These were the Department for Development of Regions and Public Administration and Department for Municipal Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, Department of Agriculture, Department of Rural Areas and Natural Resources, Department of Food and Health, Department of Fisheries and Game and Department of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of the Environment, National Board of Education, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health STAKES, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, National Ecclesiastical Board, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners and central union of Swedish-speaking agricultural producers in Finland SLC, Federation of Finnish Enterprises, Finnish National Fund for Research and Development (Sitra), Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees, Association of Rural Advisory Centres and Svenska Lantbrukssällskapens Förbund, Rural Women's Advisory Organisation, Forestry Development Centre Tapio, Finnish 4H Association and Finlands Svenska 4H, National Coalition Party, Swedish People's Party, Centre Party, and Green League of Finland.

The summary of the Countryside for the People - Rural Policy Based on Will programme (publication of the Rural Policy Committee 9/2000), Government Resolution on Rural Policy, report on the implementation of the third Rural Policy Programme (situation on 30 October 2003) and brochure on the Rural Policy Committee were attached to the invitation. Certain other publications were handed out in the negotiations concerning e.g. the harmonisation of rural policy and regional programme work (No 10/2003) and discussion on Land Use Contracts in Finland (No 7/2003), depending on the negotiation partners. The agenda of the negotiations was decided in advance in cooperation with each partner. Proposals from the Countryside for the People programme for which the negotiation partners were responsible were selected on the agenda. The current status of these measures was presented in the implementation report, which was updated on the basis of the discussions.

The recipient of the invitation, in most cases the Permanent Secretary, Director-General, Director of a Department, party secretary or a similar person appointed suitable persons to be invited to the negotiations based on the agenda. Members and secretaries of the Rural Policy Committee were also invited. The negotiation schedules were notified at the meetings of the Secretariat, which also decided the members of the Secretariat who participated in the negotiations. The negotiations focused on issues which each negotiation partner considered important for rural development where further work needs to be done. The forms of work or projects under way to take account of or remove regional differences were also discussed. The special expertise of the negotiation partners in different fields was taken advantage of in preparing the Rural Policy Programme. Some of the partners drew up proposals and their grounds for the programme.

Certain issues from the reports on the negotiations which were approved by the partners were raised to the Rural Policy Programme. The negotiations functioned as sources of information in both directions and the feedback was very positive. Further measures were

agreed on with some of the negotiation partners. Both versions of the Rural Policy Programme will be launched for consultation and a new round of negotiations will be organised on the proposals and the statements obtained with the relevant partners.

EIA, GIA and RIA

Environmental and gender impact assessments were carried out on the Rural Policy Programme. These are presented in Annex 2. The theme groups and other parties preparing the proposals assessed in connection with each measure whether they may have such impacts. Instead, no regional impact assessment was made, because this is constructed into the whole process especially when considering the proposals relative to the different types of regions.

In the planning stage the experts in EIA at the Ministry of the Environment and the parties preparing the Rural Policy Programme met for a brief discussion. The members of this group operated as contact persons and coordinated the progress of the EIA and GIA of the Rural Policy Programme. The contact persons towards the theme groups, Strategy Group and Coordination Group were Senior Officer Sanna-Liisa Taivalmaa from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (EIA) and Project Manager Annamari Asikainen from the Ministry of the Interior (GIA). In the Coordination Group the contact persons were Senior Adviser Rainer Lahti and Senior Architect Aulis Tynkkynen from the Ministry of the Environment (EIA) and Planning Officer Laura Perheentupa from the Ministry of the Interior (GIA).



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