

# The Environmental Implementation Review



## Finland

### Environmental Implementation Review 2025

Finland has many lakes and rivers which need protecting from pollution. Around 78% of its land area is covered by forest. Despite Finland's low population density, there are high environmental pressures from the use of natural resources and pollution, the responsibility for which lies with both the state and regions, including municipalities. However, overall, environmental policy implementation in Finland is high.

Finland has made progress in the green transition; however more action is needed on specifying the funding framework for the climate and energy transition, strengthening carbon sinks in the land use sector, and protecting biodiversity.

## Highlights



Air quality in Finland is generally good with some exceptions (e.g. arsenic). The emissions of several air pollutants have decreased significantly in Finland since 2005, while GDP growth has continued.

# Main Challenges



## Nature and biodiversity

The conservation status of many grassland habitats and many of their associated species continues to be unfavourable. Agricultural intensification and resulting eutrophication continue to increase. Forestry is the most-reported pressure on Natura 2000 sites.



## Pollution

On water quality, decisive measures are needed to address diffuse pollution from agriculture, mainly by phosphates, mercury and to PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers). In Finland, periodic reviews do not fully conform with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). In 2024, the Commission started an infringement case against Finland for incorrect transposition of the WFD.



## Circular economy

Waste management must be improved. Economic instruments must be used to curb landfilling of waste streams other than municipal waste, and to direct recyclables away from waste incineration towards the higher steps of the waste hierarchy. Finland needs to introduce new policies to promote waste prevention and make product reuse and waste recycling more economically attractive.

# Governance and investment



The investment gap to meet Finland's environmental objectives is an estimated €6.2 billion per year, representing around 2.32% of the national GDP, which is higher than the EU-average (0.77%).

Finland needs to ensure the full and correct legislation related to environmental information (ongoing infringement case on the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive since 2019). Finland also needs to improve the data available to assess the level of public participation in decision-making process. Finland should make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise environmental datasets in the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive.

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