

Waste policies

Finland's waste policies are based on the following key principles in accordance with the EU waste strategy (1996):

Prevention: The production and harmful impacts of wastes should be reduced and wherever possible prevented at source.

The Polluter Pays: The producers of wastes take responsibility for the costs of waste management.

Producer Responsibility: Manufacturers and importers of certain product types must bear the responsibility for the management of their products when they become wastes, instead of waste producers.

The Precautionary Principle: Potential problems related to wastes and waste management should be anticipated and avoided.

The Proximity Principle: Wastes should be disposed of near to their source.

The Self-sufficiency Principle: The EU and member states should remain self-sufficient with regard to the disposal of wastes.

Finland's waste legislation defines waste management activities in the following order of precedence:

- preventing wastes and reducing their harmful impacts
- recovering wastes - including primarily their material content and secondarily their energy content
- the safe treatment of wastes and the rehabilitation of any related damage

Finland's National Waste Plan to the year 2016

The Finnish Government approved in April 2008 the new national waste plan to the year 2016. The plan describes how waste management in Finland should look like in 2016 and how the goal will be achieved. The plan also contains a separate action plan for preventing the generation of waste.

The 13 regional environment centres have each drafted their own regional waste plan.

Biowaste strategy

Finland has drafted a national strategy to reduce the amounts of biodegradable waste going to landfill (2004). The strategy also aims to reduce emissions of methane - a greenhouse gas.

The biowaste strategy particularly aims to reduce the amounts of biodegradable municipal waste ending up in landfill sites over the period 2006-2016. In 2006 the amounts of biodegradable wastes being disposed of in landfills should correspond to less than 75% of the 1994 level, while by 2016 the quantity should only amount to less than 35% of the figure for the benchmark year. This means that only a maximum of 25% of all the biodegradable waste expected to be generated in 2016 can go to landfill.

Measures taken to help reach this target will include more recycling, the wider use of biological waste treatment methods such as composting, and the increased use of wastes in energy production.