

GOVERNMENT DECISION ON FINLAND'S NATIONAL LAND USE GUIDELINES

Issued on 14 December 2017. This Government decision replaces the decision on Finland's National Land Use Guidelines taken by the Government on 30 November 2000 and revised by the Government on 13 November 2008.

1 Land use solutions impact the future

Land use and the regional structure constitute a continuously changing platform creating the foundation for the population's living conditions and the operating conditions of economic activities and livelihoods and playing a significant role as regards environmental sustainability. The components of a sustainable regional structure and sustainable land use are well-functioning communities of various sizes providing high-quality living environments; efficient and operationally reliable transport systems and energy supply; and vibrant natural and cultural environments.

The developments taking place in the world and in Finnish society call for new actions in all spheres of society. In particular climate change, urbanisation and demographic changes, renewal of economic activities and livelihoods, digitalisation and declines in biodiversity are trends with long-term implications on Finland's prospects of success. They challenge land use and its planning to adopt new kinds of approaches and solutions.

Land use planning has a direct impact on the siting of housing, businesses and leisure activities and the networks connecting these. Sustainable land use planning promotes the functioning of society, the quality of the built environment and the smoothness of people's everyday lives. Land use decisions made today have impacts extending far into the future.

1.1 Land use supports transition into low-carbon society

Climate change and the ensuing extreme weather events create risks relating to human wellbeing, the economy and the environment everywhere in the world as well as significant adverse health and environmental effects, and efforts must be made to pay attention to their prevention.

Climate change, the economy and energy security can be impacted significantly by developing a sustainable community structure and transport system. The built environment generates a significant proportion of Finland's greenhouse gas emissions. Buildings account for around 38% and transport makes up around 17% of the end use of energy. Transport generates around 40% of the effort sharing sectors' greenhouse gas emissions and, of this, around half comes from car use, an activity on which land use has a major impact.

Curbing climate change and preparing for extreme weather events caused by climate change require a transition towards a low-carbon society where greenhouse gas emissions have been minimised. A considerable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions calls for more and more actions across the sectors in the future. Land use plays an important role in this.

1.2 Biodiversity and sustainable use of cultural environments will be promoted

The accelerating loss of biodiversity is one of the main challenges both internationally and nationally. Ecosystem adaptability is limited and exceeding it may result in a sudden decline in ecosystem services provided by nature to humans, in food security and in the economy. The biggest changes in natural habitats have taken place in coastal and forest habitats as well as in cultural environments such as traditional rural biotopes. In recent years, the role played by mires and peatlands and other wetlands has also increased as regards adaptation to climate change.

Without further actions, the species composition dependent on these habitats will decline, low-tolerance or specialist species will become increasingly threatened and alien species will continue to spread.

Cultural environments change particularly as a result of changes relating to the economy, business life and demographic developments. Under- or non-utilisation of the built environment poses the biggest challenges for the preservation of the values of cultural environments. High-quality development of the built environment can promote the diversity and temporal layers of cultural environments. Their importance for economic activities and livelihoods based on regional identity and strengths and to residential comfort is getting stronger due to factors including internationalisation.

1.3 Land use creates opportunities for renewal of economic activities

With global competition intensifying and progress made in digitalisation, the economic fabric and enterprise structure are undergoing rapid renewal. This development is characterised by the impacts of climate change and changes in global and local division of labour. Digital service production and the industrial internet are fundamentally altering production and consumption alike. Finland has strong competencies in many sectors, creating capacities for the development of knowledge-intensive export products and services generating high value added, digital expertise and the creative economy. In addition to service production based on digitalisation, rising Finnish sectors include the bioeconomy and natural resources economy as well as circular economy. Rapid global population growth, exhaustible natural resources and biodiversity loss necessitate the development of a bioeconomy based on renewable natural resources and a circular economy based on the recycling of natural resources.

The utilisation of the strengths and resources of the various parts of the country in the development and renewal of economic activities and livelihoods can be supported by networking between viable centres and their surrounding areas.

Increasing service intensity of the economic fabric and specialisation in the labour market boost the regional concentration of functions, which is further strengthened by reductions in the activities or closedowns of large production facilities in industrial municipalities. Several industries benefit from agglomeration into larger urban regions where they are located close to other enterprises and the market. On the other hand, digitalisation, food production, the bioeconomy, tourism and refining of natural resources provide new opportunities for the development of enterprise activities throughout the country. Anticipation of structural change, including land use that supports this, maintains the vibrancy of regions and reduces the adverse effects of changes.

1.4 Urbanisation offers opportunities and creates challenges

In Finland, community construction is focusing more and more clearly on the largest urban regions where working areas and retail, leisure and service catchment areas are expanding. Medium-sized centres will retain their position in this development, but the population of many smaller centres and rural areas will decline. Population ageing will have a considerable effect on land use in the decades ahead. Services will also become more concentrated and digitalised, and this will change people's mobility needs as well as means of mobility. Increasingly widespread use of various smart devices and positioning services will enable a change where people and goods become less and less location-dependent.

Differences in regional development will be caused increasingly by non-material factors. Urban regions and predominantly rural regions offer different environments and pull factors for businesses and housing. Residential multi-locality is becoming more common, and more and less densely built-up areas are more strongly connected with each other.

2 Starting points of the national land use guidelines

2.1 Legal basis for the guidelines

Finland's national land use guidelines are part of the system of land use planning alongside regional, master and local detailed plans specified in the Land Use and Building Act (132/1999). The primary purpose of the guidelines is to ensure that nationally significant matters are taken into account in county and municipal statutory land use planning and the activities of central government authorities. The purpose of the guidelines is also to promote the implementation of international agreements and commitments in Finland and to safeguard the appropriate actualisation of national land use solutions.

Under section 22 of the Land Use and Building Act, national land use guidelines may concern matters relating to land use and land use planning which have:

- international or more extensive than regional bearing on local structure, land use, or the transport or power network;
- a significant impact on national cultural or natural heritage; or
- a nationally significant impact on ecological sustainability, the economy of the local structure, or avoidance of environmental hazards.

Under section 22, subsection 3 of the Land Use and Building Act, when national land use guidelines are issued, the general guidelines laid down in section 1 of the Act and the guidelines for land use planning laid down in section 5 of the Act must, in addition, be taken into account. According to the rationale of the Act, national land use guidelines must support and promote the attainment of the land use planning guidelines provided in section 5 of the Act.

In accordance with the general guideline of the Act, national land use guidelines contribute to the creation of preconditions for a favourable living environment and promote ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable development. The goal of the promotion of sustainable development is safeguarding opportunities for a good life for the current and future generations. This also means taking the environment, humans and the economy equally into account in planning and decision-making concerning land use.

The national land use guidelines concretise the land use planning guidelines laid down in section 5 of the Land Use and Building Act in nationally significant contexts. The national land use guidelines do not extend the scope of the content requirements for the various plans or create any new basic legal requirements for statutory land use planning.

The Land Use and Building Act is part of the guidance system applying to the environment. The national land use guidelines do not put in place any guidance overlapping with other legislation or repeat any restrictions arising from other legislation. Therefore the national land use guidelines cover such matters that need to be taken into account in land use planning as part of activities that are broad-based and harmonise various land use needs in advance.

2.2 Role of the guidelines in the implementation of international agreements

Although decision-making concerning land use takes place nationally, it is also affected by international obligations and agreements in addition to national guideline-setting. The national land use guidelines contribute to safeguarding the implementation of international obligations and agreements in land use.

The following documents contain the key international decisions relating to the national land use guidelines:

- UN Sustainable Development Goals – the 2030 Agenda
- Paris Agreement on climate change (Finnish Treaty Series 75/2016)
- UN Habitat III – the New Urban Agenda
- Convention on Biological Diversity (Finnish Treaty Series 78/1994)
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Finnish Treaty Series 19/1987)
- Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Finnish Treaty Series 10/1992)
- European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Finnish Treaty Series 26/1995)
- European Landscape Convention (Finnish Treaty Series 14/2006).

In 2015, UN Member States agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for the promotion of sustainable development until 2030. The 2030 Agenda obliges states to make cities and human settlements safe and sustainable. The actions required include ensuring access for all to affordable housing and sustainable transport systems and efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

The UN Paris Agreement on climate change aims to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C. In addition, the Paris Agreement aims to increase states' ability to adapt to climate change and direct actions towards low-carbon and climate-resilient development. To reach the guidelines, the rise in global greenhouse gas emissions must be reversed as soon as possible. As part of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the European Commission has presented Finland with an emissions reduction target of 39% for the non-Emission Trading Scheme sectors on 2005 levels by 2030. Nationally, emission reductions will focus particularly on transport. Solutions concerning land use and community structure of urban regions in particular play an important role in the achievement of emissions reduction targets.

The urbanisation guidelines relating to the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement were specified further in the New Urban Agenda adopted at UN Habitat III in 2016. According to the New Urban Agenda, cities and human settlements will be developed so that all their inhabitants have access to a choice of housing, green spaces and sustainable mobility. Its guidelines also include polycentrism, urban-rural interactions, healthy and crisis-resilient living environments, promoting a circular economy and renewable energy forms as well as protecting urban ecosystems, biodiversity and environmental services.

The guideline of the Convention on Biological Diversity is the conservation and sustainable use of the earth's ecosystems and the biodiversity of the animal and plant species and the genetic resources they contain. Finland and the other Contracting Parties have made a commitment to the implementation of this guideline with a view to halting the loss of biodiversity globally, nationally and regionally by 2020. The Convention also expands the scope of conservation beyond traditional nature conservation. The global Strategic Plan adopted by the Conference of the Parties in 2010 is implemented through national strategies and action plans. The National Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland also contains guidelines and measures closely related to land use, including those relating to the connectivity of the network of protected areas, green infrastructure and restoration of degraded ecosystems.

There are four international conventions on the protection of landscapes and cultural environments binding on Finland: the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural

Heritage of Europe, the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage and the European Landscape Convention. These oblige states to safeguard and take into account cultural and natural heritage, architectural heritage, archaeological heritage as well as natural and cultural landscapes, protected areas and everyday environments in land use planning and construction.

2.3 Regional government reform

Finland's regional government reform will result in the establishment of 18 counties and the National Licensing and Supervisory Authority. The reform will involve the abolition of the regional councils, centres for economic development, transport and the environment, and regional state administrative agencies. When completed, the reform will have a major impact on the organisations responsible for land use planning and its guidance. Regional land use planning duties will be transferred from regional councils to counties. The promotion of the organisation of municipal land use planning and building activities will be transferred from centres for economic development, transport and the environment to counties. The current form of supervision of statutory land use planning as part of the duties of centres for economic development, transport and the environment will end in conjunction with the regional government reform.

The regional government reform will not change the plan system under the Land Use and Building Act, which will continue to comprise regional land use plans, local master plans and local detailed plans. Nor will the regional government reform affect the mutual guidance relationships between these plans. The removal of ex post supervision by central government will emphasise the role of the national land use guidelines as tools for ex ante cooperation between authorities.

3 National land use guidelines

3.1 Well-functioning communities and sustainable mobility

Background to and need for the guidelines

To improve Finland's competitiveness and ensure residents' wellbeing, it is important that regions and communities develop as vibrant environments and their strengths and resources can be utilised efficiently and sustainably. A polycentric regional structure supports the utilisation of the strengths of the various parts of the country. Interregional networking and cooperation can strengthen the operating conditions and attractiveness of regions. The basic condition for the regional structure and communities to function well is that land use responds to the needs arising from demographic and employment development, and enables housing provision meeting the needs of the various population groups as well as the renewal and development of economic activities and livelihoods. Particularly in urban regions, an adequate supply of affordable housing is important to ensure access to labour and, consequently, for the competitiveness of businesses throughout the country.

The built environment accounts for the majority of Finland's national wealth. It is important for the economy and for resource efficiency to make maximum use of the existing structure. The functioning of communities is a basic condition for residents' smooth everyday lives, particularly as the population is ageing. Resource-efficient and low-carbon community development is vital for Finland to be able to meet the emission reduction obligations in accordance with the Paris Agreement on climate change. As well as by utilising the existing structure, emissions can be reduced by promoting the accessibility of workplaces, services and recreational areas and by improving opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport. Additionally, it is important to promote new communication, mobility and transport services. Land use solutions of large urban regions and, in particular, improving cohesion in the community structure play a

major role as regards climate change mitigation and the economic and functional efficiency of communities.

National land use guidelines

Promote a nationwide regional structure that is polycentric, networked and based on good connections, and support the vibrancy of the various regions and the utilisation of their strengths. Create capacities for the development of economic and enterprise activities and sufficient and diverse housing production required by demographic development.

Create capacities for low-carbon and resource-efficient community development based primarily on the existing structure. Strengthen the cohesion of the community structure in large urban regions.

Promote good accessibility of services, workplaces and recreational areas for the various population groups. Promote walking, cycling and public transport as well as the development of communication, mobility and transport services.

Site major new residential, workplace and service function areas so that they are easily accessible by public transport, walking or cycling.

3.2 Efficient transport system

Background to and need for the guidelines

The functioning, reliability and safety of the transport system is a basic condition for the development of the entire country. It can be developed economically by utilising existing transport connections and networks efficiently. New connections, services and technology are developed in accordance with transport needs. The transport system plays a key role in the promotion of a low-carbon society.

The current transformation taking place in transport also affects land use planning. Digitalisation and automation enable increased efficiency in the functioning of intermodal travel and transport chains, and more efficient use of the existing transport network. Land use affects mobility needs, opportunities to use mobility modes, and spatial needs and overall costs of the transport infrastructure.

The backbone of the national transport system is formed by a network that interconnects county centres, important regional centres and significant passenger and goods transport terminals, and that has a major role in transport for businesses. It is important to ensure the continuity of internationally and nationally important connections and opportunities for nodal development for the advancement of Finland's competitiveness.

National land use guidelines

Promote the functioning and economy of the national transport system by primarily developing existing transport connections and networks and ensuring conditions for intermodal and multiservice travel and transport chains and the functioning of goods and passenger transport nodes.

Safeguard the continuity and development opportunities of internationally and nationally significant transport and communication connections and the development opportunities of nationally significant ports, airports and border crossing points.

3.3 Safe and healthy living environment

Background to and need for the guidelines

One of the tasks of sustainable land use is to prevent significant adverse health and environmental effects. This is also essential to the economy. Global warming in particular is increasing the probability of serious and irreversible changes and requires land use solutions for adaptation to climate change. The need to adapt to climate change arises in particular from changes in precipitation levels, floods, average temperature, soil and groundwater conditions and the increased occurrence of extreme weather events such as storms, torrential rains and urban floods.

Adverse developments relating to the safety and healthiness of the living environment include, in particular, transport and production emissions and discharges into the soil, water and air, exposure to noise, and accidents with environmental impacts.

More than a million people in Finland are exposed to harmful external noise. Continuous noise exposure has been found to cause serious adverse effects on health. Vibration nuisance is experienced particularly in environments with rail transport. Airborne fine particulate matter is estimated to cause a total of around 2,000 premature deaths in Finland each year. Adverse effects can be reduced by siting functions sensitive to them in appropriate locations or by restricting the spread or generation of the emissions and discharges.

Location solutions and other precautionary measures in land use are usually more economical than measures taken once areas have been completed. Land use planning plays an important role in the protection of groundwater. Particular challenges are created when human settlements and other sensitive functions and functions with major-accident hazard potential are sited close to each other. According to the Seveso III Directive, Member States must ensure that the guidelines of preventing major accidents and limiting the consequences of such accidents for human health and the environment are taken into account in their land-use policies. Reducing adverse effects has a major impact on the population's health and on the economy.

It is crucial for Finland's overall safety and security to ensure society's capacity to function and to promote citizens' safety and wellbeing. In land use, it is necessary to ensure the conditions required for overall national safety and security, such as the needs of national defence, border control, rescue services and security of supply. The functions of the Defence Forces are characterised by their impacts extending beyond the areas used. To ensure the operating conditions required, it is therefore necessary to pay particular attention in land use to those restrictions on land use that arise from the activities and development of the Defence Forces and border control.

National land use guidelines

Prepare for extreme weather events and floods and the impacts of climate change. Site new construction outside flood risk areas or otherwise ensure flood risk management.

Prevent adverse environmental and health effects caused by noise, vibration and poor air quality.

Leave a large enough distance between functions causing adverse health effects or accident risks and functions sensitive to effects or otherwise manage the risks.

Site establishments causing major-accident hazards, chemicals rail yards and marshalling yards of hazardous substance transport sufficiently far from residential areas, areas of public use and areas of natural sensitivity.

Take into account society's overall safety and security needs, particularly the needs of national defence and border control, and secure their sufficient regional development conditions and operational opportunities.

3.4 Vibrant natural and cultural environments and natural resources

Background to and need for the guidelines

The sustainable management of natural and cultural environments is important for economic activities and livelihood, the wellbeing of the population, and regional identities. Land use plays a crucial role in the preservation of natural and cultural environments and archaeological values, and in the implementation of international conventions relating to these. Land use also affects the sustainable utilisation of natural resources. The sustainable use of natural and cultural environments is realised by safeguarding their spatial diversity and temporal layers. The elements constituting the Finnish cultural environment are included in national inventories conducted by authorities on nationally valuable landscape areas, nationally significant built cultural environments and nationally significant archaeological sites. It is necessary to identify these areas and take them into account in land use to safeguard their values. The Government decides on replacing inventories in accordance with these national land use guidelines with any new inventories.

A substantial proportion of natural values important for biodiversity and also of valuable contiguous natural areas are located outside protected areas. It is important for the promotion of biodiversity and related international obligations that natural values and the areas and ecological connectivities important for them are taken into account in land use planning and that they are not fragmented unnecessarily by other land use. Ecological connectivity also plays an important role in adaptation to climate change because it enables the migration of species to new habitats as global warming progresses. Urbanisation, growth in nature and cultural tourism, people's increasing leisure time and the important public health role of physical activity in natural environments increase the need for areas suitable for recreational use. It is therefore necessary to pay attention in land use to the sufficiency of recreational areas that are good in terms of their quality and accessibility and to the continuity of recreational connections.

In land use it is necessary to prepare for growth in the bioeconomy and circular economy as part of Finland's renewing economic fabric and to pay attention to the locations of natural resources and capacities for their sustainable utilisation. To promote the bioeconomy and circular economy, it is necessary to take into account not only production facilities but also the functioning of logistics and opportunities for the production of renewable natural resources. Forests play a key role in climate change mitigation. Preserving sufficiently contiguous field and forest areas is important for the bioeconomy, security of supply, landscape and biodiversity. Therefore it is necessary to take well-functioning and sufficiently contiguous areas into account in land use from the perspectives of forestry and agriculture. In land use it is important to ensure the conditions for the development of Saami culture and livelihoods and the preservation of areas important for these in order to realise the right of Saami as an indigenous people to maintain and develop their culture.

National land use guidelines

Take care of safeguarding the nationally valuable cultural environments and natural heritage values.

Promote the preservation of areas and ecological connectivities that are valuable for biodiversity.

Take care of the sufficiency of areas suitable for recreational use and the continuity of the green area network.

Create capacities for the bioeconomy and circular economy and promote the sustainable utilisation of natural resources. Ensure the preservation of contiguous farmland and forest areas that are important for agriculture and forestry and of areas that are important for Saami culture and livelihoods.

3.5 Energy supply capable of renewal

Background to and need for the guidelines

Finland's climate and energy policies are guided strongly by the climate and energy policy guidelines and actions adopted under the Paris Agreement on climate change and by the European Union. According to Finland's national policy, the share of energy from renewable sources in final consumption of energy will increase to 50% and energy self-sufficiency to more than 55% in the 2020s. In land use it is therefore necessary to prepare for major increases in the production and use of renewable energy, particularly bioenergy, and for the extensive utilisation of wind power potential. The increased use of bioenergy sets requirements for the functioning of related transport and storage.

Increases in wind power generation require that wind power construction is reconciled with surrounding land use and adverse effects are taken appropriately into account. Adverse effects caused by wind turbines can be minimised and techno-economic feasibility improved if wind turbines are sited in large units.

It is essential for connection networks and energy supply to safeguard national needs in a manner promoting a well-functioning regional structure and international competitiveness. Operationally secure energy supply is an important element in national security of supply. Reliable and minimally disrupted access to energy is vital for the operating conditions of businesses and for citizens' smooth everyday lives. Considerable investments will be made in the development of the main grid in the future. Land use planning pays a key role in securing opportunities for the implementation of power lines and gas pipelines required for securing the functioning of energy supply.

National land use guidelines

Prepare for the needs of renewable energy production and the attendant logistics solutions. Site wind turbines primarily in a centralised manner in units of several turbines.

Secure the routings for power lines and long-distance gas transmission pipelines that are important for energy supply as well as opportunities for their implementation. Primarily utilise existing power line corridors in power line routing.

4 Key impacts of the guidelines

An impact assessment in accordance with the Act on the Assessment of the Impacts of the Authorities' Plans, Programmes and Policies on the Environment (200/2005) was conducted and an environmental report was drawn up in conjunction with the reform of the guidelines. This involved a qualitative assessment of key impacts on community structure and transport, the environment, economy, human wellbeing and authorities' activities. The assessment was used in the preparation process.

Because the guidelines concern land use, many of the most important impacts of the guidelines can be seen in regional and community structure. As regards regional structure, it can be assessed that, when attained, the guidelines will create conditions for a polycentric regional structure and the balanced development and increased vibrancy of regions. Attainment of the guidelines will support the development of a more and more efficient and economical community structure. The vibrancy and development opportunities of city centres and rural built-up areas and the village network alike will increase when, in line with these guidelines, the starting points for the development of the community structure are good accessibility, utilisation of the existing structure, sufficient housing production and a safe and healthy living environment.

Attainment of the guidelines will on the whole support the land use development conditions for increasingly functional and smoother transport system and transport chains, which will have positive impacts on the economy, people and the environment. Efficient transport connections will safeguard the operating conditions of domestic as well as international trade. When attained, the guidelines will promote the accessibility of services, workplaces and recreational areas throughout the country in different kinds of areas and for the needs of different groups of people. On the other hand, both passenger and goods transport may increase in certain areas, which would have adverse environmental and health effects.

The utilisation and development of existing structures, such as community structure, transport infrastructure and transmission corridors of energy supply, will have many positive impacts. Urban sprawl and the use of land, natural resources and energy will be reduced. Conditions for the development of transport and utility services will improve, maintenance backlog will be easier to manage and conditions for service provision and development will improve.

Adverse effects on national cultural heritage will decrease. Conditions for the protection of cultural heritage will improve as regions become more vibrant. The promotion of the bioeconomy may increase forest cutting, which may result in conflicts with biodiversity preservation.

When attained and together with other measures, several guidelines relating to community structure, mobility and energy supply will support Finland's transition towards a low-carbon and resource-efficient society. The guidelines support the adaptation of the built environment to climate change.

Attainment of the guidelines will support the pleasantness and healthiness of human habitats by reducing environmental risks and ensuring the preservation of areas that are important for recreation. Reductions in environmental risks will also reduce economic risks and increase overall safety. The preservation of cultural and natural values will promote not only the pleasantness of living environments but also the attractiveness of economic activities such as tourism. The siting of wind turbines in large units will reduce their adverse effects.

The ratification of regional land use plans and joint local master plans of municipalities has been abolished. The changed roles of municipalities, counties and central government should be examined in the implementation of the guidelines despite the key planning tools remaining unchanged in the regional government reform. Reducing the number of guidelines and the more detailed demarcation of the matters covered by them could result in lighter administration and stronger self-government of counties and municipalities.

When attained, the guidelines will improve the foreseeability of land use planning, which will facilitate sustainable land use decisions. These are important, for example, for ensuring affordable housing production, business siting opportunities and transport and communication connections.

5 Legal effects of the guidelines

Provisions on the legal effects of the national land use guidelines are laid down in section 24 of the Land Use and Building Act, under which they pertain to land use planning and the activities of central government authorities.

Under section 24, subsection 1 of the Act, government authorities must take national land use guidelines into account and promote their implementation in their activities. They must also assess the impacts of their actions as regards national land use guidelines.

Under section 24, subsection 2 of the Act, national land use guidelines are to be taken into account in regional planning and other land use planning in a manner promoting their implementation.

National land use guidelines are given a concrete form primarily through statutory land use planning. In this, regional land use planning plays a key role. In county planning, national land use guidelines will be specified further into county-specific land use solutions and harmonised with county-specific and local guidelines.

The national land use guidelines do not have direct legal effects on conditions for granting individual building permits, deviation authorisations or decisions concerning the need for planning in rural or other areas. Effects on individual building projects and otherwise on land use will be conveyed through statutory land use planning within the content requirements laid down in the Act for the various plans.

Key plans as regards land use are prepared and related decisions made by various central government actors. Activities of central government actors must support and promote the attainment of the guidelines. In this regard, taking the guidelines into account will, however, be affected by any provisions concerning legal conditions of authorities' decision-making and related discretionary powers laid down in relevant special legislation.

6 Entry into force and implementation of the decision

This decision enters into force on 1 April 2018.

A plan under preparation at the time of the entry into force of this decision may, notwithstanding this decision, be approved by 30 September 2018 if the land use plan proposal was made available to the public before the entry into force of this decision.

A decision or other measure under preparation at the time of the entry into force of this decision may, notwithstanding this decision, be taken by 30 September 2018.

The Ministry of the Environment must promote and monitor the implementation of this decision in the activities of the various authorities and in land use planning in cooperation with other authorities.

The Ministry of the Environment must assess the currency of the decision as necessary. On the basis of the assessments, the Ministry of the Environment must, where necessary, see to a review of the decision and its submission for consideration by the Government. Alongside currency, the need to review the guidelines must be assessed on the basis of any problems detected in their application. Reviews of guidelines must be drafted in accordance with section 23 of the Land Use and Building Act in interaction with the various parties, and Parliament must be provided with the opportunity to consider any reviews.

Minister of Housing, Energy and the Environment Kimmo Tiilikainen

Environment Counsellor Timo Turunen