

Finland moves towards a bioeconomy with its natural resource strategy

In Finland, leaders in various fields have taken up the challenge presented by the increasing use of natural resources. Jointly, they have set out to find an answer to the question of how to use natural resources to enhance both national competitiveness and global responsibility. One result of this cooperation is the Natural Resource Strategy for Finland, a unique effort on a global scale. The strategy work was coordinated by Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund, in collaboration with a wide range of national actors.

"The Natural Resource Strategy is unlike any other investigation into this subject in that it studies the use of natural resources from a much wider perspective, across sector boundaries," says Eeva Hellström, Executive Director of the Natural Resource Strategy for Finland.

"The strategy concentrates mainly on the intelligent use of natural resources, by which we mean creating viable business operations and increasing wellbeing through sustainable and responsible actions."

The strategy proposes a new path that Finland could follow. It specifies eighteen points as steps towards the goal, including the creation of local biorefinery operations as a regional network, increasing product-specific resource efficiency, and developing natural resources accounting.

"The strategy serves as a joint declaration of intent by a wide range of representatives, unique in its kind. The Government of Finland has also adopted the main goals of the strategy in its recent mid-term policy review."

New business could be created through, for example, the bioeconomy and creating efficient material cycles. Immaterial assets connected to natural resources, such as quietness and cleanliness, may also become economically important issues in Finland. Overall, creating an efficient bioeconomy may be a significant factor in improving national competitiveness, in Finland as well as in other countries.

"Natural resource policies will also be placed on the international policy agenda," says Eeva Hellström. "The first concrete sign of this is the launch of the UN Resource Panel, in which Finland and the EU played an active role. Finland has created its trailblazing natural resource strategy in good time. Taking initiative and engaging in international dialogue are an essential part of the strategy."

Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund, is an independent public fund which, under the supervision of the Finnish Parliament, promotes the welfare of Finnish society.

The Natural Resource Strategy for Finland:

www.sitra.fi/naturalresources

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