

FINLAND'S ARCHITECTURAL POLICY PROGRAMME 2022–2035

A R O V I

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

A HIGH-QUALITY LIVING ENVIRONMENT CREATES THE FRAMEWORK FOR A GOOD LIFE.



Maritime Centre Vellamo, Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Architects, 2008. Photo: Carl Irjala, Town of Kotka.

“Seventy-three per cent of our national wealth is tied to the built environment.”

Architecture is an integral part of our daily lives. A good daily life is based on a functional and pleasant living environment. Three quarters of our national wealth lies in the built environment.

A high-quality built environment improves the quality of life – in terms of safety, security, healthiness, functionality and beauty alike. The built environment also plays a key role in solving future challenges, such as the climate crisis. This creates the framework for an economically viable Finland.

A well-functioning living environment is created through good planning and cooperation. The Architectural Policy Programme (Apoli) aims to cast an eye on a more pleasant and sustainable built environment of higher quality. Architecture touches each and every one of us.

“Architecture is used by 100% of Finns every day.”

Finland’s Architectural Policy Programme for 2022–2035 includes the following themes:

- I – Climate change and biodiversity
- II – Equality and social inclusion
- III – Economy and internationality
- IV – Meaning and identity
- V – Education and research

I – THE ARCHITECTURAL POLICY PROGRAMME OPENS UP A VISION OF A MORE SUSTAINABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

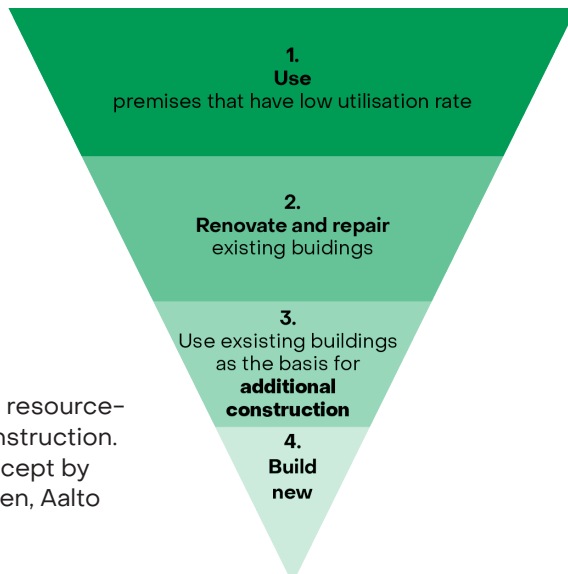
The global climate crisis and degradation of natural resources challenge us to examine the ways in which we design, construct, maintain and repair our building stock. New legislation provides a strong framework for climate-aware town planning and construction in support of biodiversity. At the end of the day, however, practical planning and construction decide what our future living environment will look like. Materials, spaces and areas will play an increasingly important role in climate action.

Little Finlandia, a movable venue functioning as a temporary facility during the renovation of Finlandia Hall, puts the principles of the circular economy into practice. Design by Aalto University/Jaakko Torvinen. Photo: Harri Hakaste.



The Architectural Policy Programme:

- **Promotes the ecological sustainability of building design** by strengthening cooperation in the design process, establishing a prize for sustainable construction and supporting the use of traditional construction methods and natural materials;
- **Supports climate- and biodiversity-aware land use** by promoting environmental impact assessment in practical town planning processes and strengthening the role of green area design in support of diversity;
- **Extends the low-carbon approach and circular economy to cover the planning of local environments** by providing a model for low-carbon circular economy city blocks and a concept for coordinated low-carbon repairs of residential areas;
- **Promotes the flexible and diverse use of premises, buildings and areas** by improving the conditions for increasing the utilisation rates of premises, buildings and areas based on legislation and town planning, and by creating a framework for the adaptability, versatility, and ease of repairing and demolishing new buildings.



Hierarchy of resource-efficient construction. Original concept by Matti Kuittinen, Aalto University.



Environmental management will increasingly focus on the whole life cycle of a building.





II – THE ARCHITECTURAL POLICY PROGRAMME PROMOTES HUMAN WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND LIFE OF DIGNITY

In the near future, our population will get older, some areas will grow and others will decline. Our society will keep diversifying and technological advancements, for example, will bring new opportunities to work. The built environment has a significant impact on people's physical, mental and emotional health. We need a well-designed environment that empowers as many people as possible and supports wellbeing and different needs.

The village hall Puuhi in Soini is the result of cooperation between the local community and the architect. OOPEAA/Anssi Lassila. 2019.
Photo: Henri Hentunen.



The Architectural Policy Programme:

- **Promotes people's inclusion and reduces inequality** by employing the means of co-design, creating a framework for assessing environmental experiences, collecting information on common spaces in residential areas and highlighting the Design for All principle as the starting point for design;
- **Promotes local and neighbourhood-level development** by establishing the prerequisites for a regional architect scheme, advancing the drafting of regional Architectural Policy Programmes and creating operating models for the development of depopulating areas;
- **Strengthens the quality and diversity of housing and housing construction** by creating a set of criteria for assessing the quality of homes and developing design methods that improve the residents' possibilities to influence the design;
- **Increases awareness of the impact of the built environment on wellbeing and health** by improving people's understanding of how the built environment impacts on health and compiling information on wellbeing and health.

“Our Architectural Policy Programme highlights the importance of a functional and beautiful living environment for people's wellbeing. As a result of the health and social services reform, the focus of municipal operations will shift more strongly towards promoting residents' wellbeing.”

Leena Arvela-Hellén,
Uusikaupunki City Architect



The City of Uusikaupunki published its Architectural Policy Programme entitled *The plan for happiness* in 2020. In the Demokatu ('Demo Street') project, the centrally located Rauhanpuisto park was restored from oblivion to a new renaissance when it was transformed into an outdoor living space for rest and relaxation for residents. Its many hammocks, beautiful lights and public events also delighted tourists. A wide range of residents and stakeholders were engaged in its planning.



A residential event organised by the City of Lahti on the vision for the city centre at Palvelutori Service Centre in November 2021. Photo: Susanna Harvio, WSP Finland Ltd.



III – THE ARCHITECTURAL POLICY PROGRAMME FORMS THE FOUNDATION FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Planning and building our common environment have taken a great deal of resources. The built environment is capital with technical, artistic and cultural value that should also be preserved and used in the future. Investments in architectural sustainability and high-quality procurement processes create long-term attractions and strengthen the vitality of regions throughout Finland. Research and development, innovations and systematic export promotion increase the international competitiveness, value and operating opportunities of architectural expertise and business.

Railo – the spectator stands and multifunctional building of the Rovaniemi Central Sports Arena. APRT Architects, 2015. Photo: Aaro Artto.

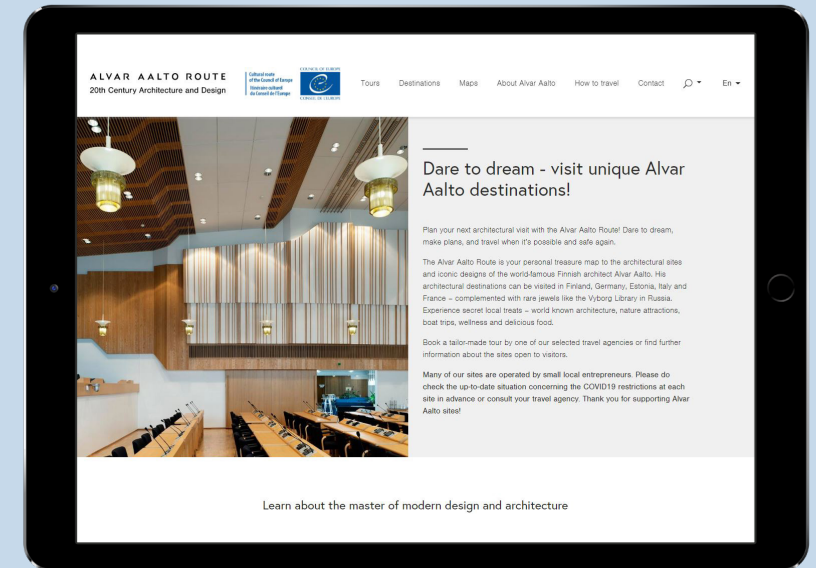


The Architectural Policy Programme:

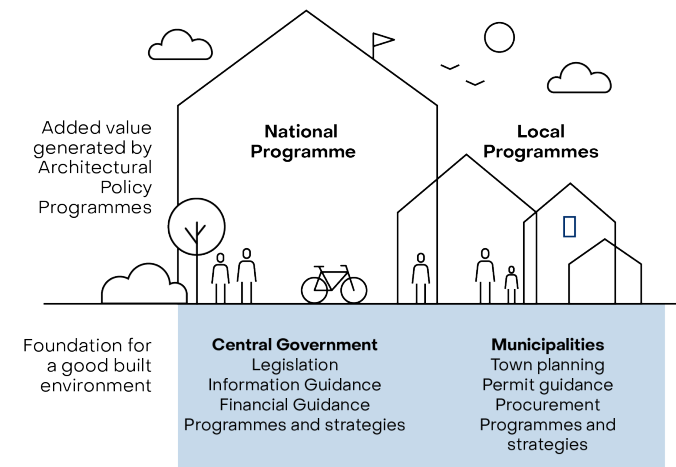
- **Promotes the role of architecture in solving social and cross-disciplinary problems** by developing new operating models for providing and exporting services, cooperation between parties involved in the sector and their opportunities to operate both domestically and internationally;
- **Strengthens procurement and design expertise** by developing quality criteria and new solutions and promoting the use of public architectural competitions as a means of procurement;
- **Contributes to wide use of opportunities afforded by digitalisation in architecture and urban planning** by developing technological expertise both in the architectural business and in the municipal sector, and by allocating product development funding to the application of new technologies in the sector;
- **Supports regional development and attractiveness by means of architecture** by recognising the local built environment as a strategic element of development and by systematically strengthening tourism to architectural sites as part of developing regional cultural heritage sites.



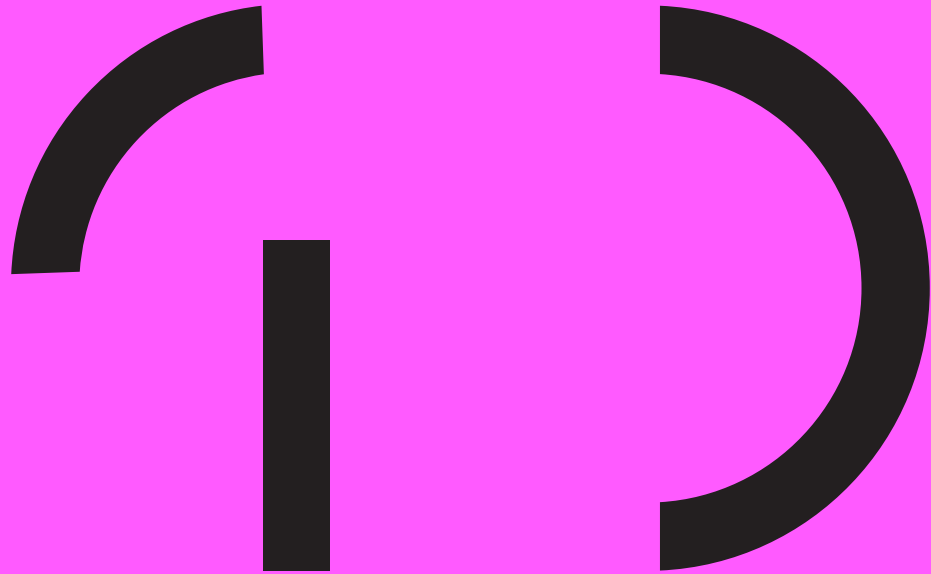
Regular architectural competitions are one of the tools of long-term architectural policy. Kuokkala's Kalon in Jyväskylä, the winning entry to the 2018 Housing Reform Competition. Photo: Collaboratorio.



Selected as one of the Council of Europe's cultural routes in 2021, *the Alvar Aalto Route – 20th Century Architecture and Design* covers more than 60 architectural sites. visit.alvaraalto.fi



Architectural Policy Programmes complement the guidelines on the built environment issued by the central government and municipalities.



IV – THE ARCHITECTURAL POLICY PROGRAMME PROMOTES A GOOD BUILDING CULTURE

The built environment touches everyone. A discussion about architecture that gives voice to many parties, including both citizens and professionals, forms the foundation for a culturally sustainable built environment. Exhibitions and communications also strengthen our understanding of the built environment while providing new forms of learning and participation. Architecture should not be viewed merely as engineering solutions or a tool for achieving social or economic goals. Architecture is about art, functionality, comfort and quality of life.

Paimio Sanatorium. Architects Aino and Alvar Aalto, 1933. From the *Paimio Series* by photographer Tuomas Uusheimo.



The Architectural Policy Programme:

- **Stimulates discussion on the living environment** by introducing perspectives on the built environment that interest the general public and by offering new opportunities to participate in the debate;
- **Strengthens the identity of locations and places** by highlighting the significance of cultural heritage sites and local special characteristics, by creating a template for a book of the history of a house, block or village, and by supporting expertise relevant to traditional construction and public art processes;
- **Fosters the cultural values of the built environment** by developing real estate asset management, proactive conservation of buildings and financial incentives, and by creating an evaluation framework to take account of cultural and social values;
- **Strengthens the culture of architectural exhibitions and events** by supporting the activities of exhibition organisers, such as the future Museum of Architecture and Design, and their contacts with international curators, critics and media representatives.

The proposal of the Architectural Policy Programme for the concept of 'architectural sustainability'



“Apoli Lahti has been in place for more than 10 years now. We have established a cityscape advisory board and a post of cityscape architect. The new programme will include the objective of establishing a landscape architect’s post. We will also continue to present APOLI awards and organise Apoli Forums moving forward.”

Päivi Airas

City Planning Architect

The display windows and street-level details on Rautatienkatu street in Lahti received the local APOLI award for promoting high-quality environment in 2015. *The Golden Goose nesting area* is a public art installation (Miss Kompro & Ihana Havo, 2018) as part of the Art Axis in central Lahti. Photo: Lassi Häkkinen.



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V – THE ARCHITECTURAL POLICY PROGRAMME ENCOURAGES COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING AND RESEARCH

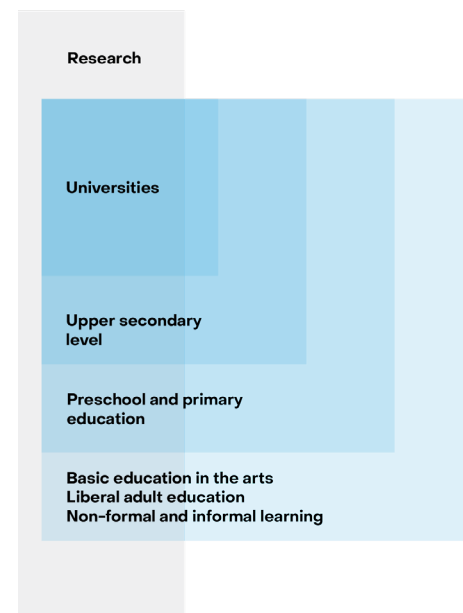
Development of a high-quality and sustainable built environment requires solid expertise and research evidence. By developing educational provision, taking account of future labour needs and engaging in multidisciplinary research, we can ensure that architectural competence and information about the built environment will meet the needs of the future. Extensive debates on the built environment are facilitated through architectural and design education provided at different levels to spark interest in architecture and boost its appreciation.

Basic arts education in architecture at the City of Jyväskylä School of Visual Arts. Photo: Ilpo Vuorela.



The Architectural Policy Programme:

- **Takes a stand on the development of educational provision** by emphasising the principles of creativity, knowledge, responsibility and sustainable design and construction, by highlighting the importance of cooperation between higher education institutions and at the international level, and by encouraging further development of construction and crafts and design qualifications;
- **Supports responsiveness to future competence needs** by developing the forecasting of the types of competencies and the number of professionals required in the sector, identifying professionals' competencies, labour needs and future challenges and strengthening further and continuing training opportunities in the sector;
- **Encourages research on the built environment** to invest in multidisciplinary and inter-organisational cooperation, architectural researcher training, scientific publishing and communications and to combine theory and practice in experimental development efforts;
- **Strengthens architectural and design education** by emphasising its significance when the cultural education plans are being created for early childhood education and care and primary education and by supporting the development of pedagogical materials, methods, tools and competence.



Research creates new information on the built environment. Research evidence provides a basis for architectural and environmental education and training. Non-formal and informal learning about the built environment can be promoted by making diverse use of various means of communications, for example.



Carried out by the University of Oulu School of Architecture in cooperation with the Log House Industry Association, the My Town project brainstormed solid wood construction in Tuusula. Proposal by architectural student Tuure Kinnunen.

Finland's Architectural Policy Programme – putting words into action

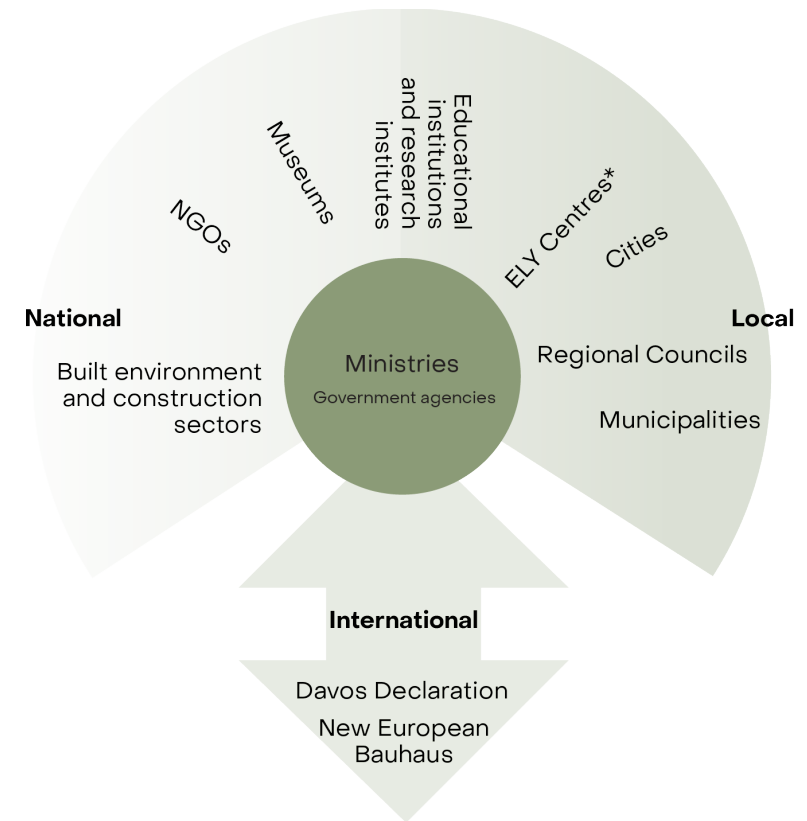
Finland's first Architectural Policy Programme was published in 1998, when it raised the importance of architecture and the built environment for debate in a new way. The programme served as a model for Architectural Policy Programmes in many European countries.

The new Architectural Policy Programme provides a framework for development of the quality of the built environment through to 2035. The programme is a part of the Government Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin. The programme was drafted by a working group appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of the Environment, while the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment was also closely involved in the work. Its goal is to improve the living environment of all Finns.

The programme is implemented at three levels – local, national and international. Local parties include cities, other municipalities and regions, which may also prepare their own local programmes. More than 20 of these local Architectural Policy Programmes have already been produced in Finland.

The national Architectural Policy Programme

is linked to international initiatives for the built environment, such as the Davos Declaration and the New European Bauhaus. Finland is also engaged in close cooperation with other Nordic and European countries in the field of architectural policy.



Architectural policy is carried out through cooperation at international, national and local levels.

**READ THE PROGRAMME ONLINE
TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE:
FINLAND'S ARCHITECTURAL POLICY
PROGRAMME 2022–2035**



FURTHER INFORMATION APOLI.FI

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