

Finland: Jyväskylä Region

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

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1. A Brief Description of Regional Characteristics (in terms of population, the specialisation in economic sectors etc)

The Jyväskylä region - comprising of nine municipalities - has approximately 163,000 inhabitants. Jyväskylä is one of the Finland's five centres of growth. The population has been growing by 1500 persons/year on the average over the past 10 years and half of the population are living in the city of Jyväskylä. The Region has nearly 70,000 jobs, 70% of them in the city of Jyväskylä, with an annual increase of about 1500 jobs during the past decade. The unemployment rate in the region is rather high, about 13%.

The number of firms in the region of Jyväskylä is nearly 7,000 and most of them are small or medium sized. The industrial structure of the region is dominated by the service sector (75 % of jobs) which is characterized by a strong manufacturing and business service sector. The share of jobs in the primary production is 2 % and in the industrial sector 18 %.

Jyväskylä Region is an industrial centre with approximately 11,000 industrial jobs. Special expertise can be found in the fields of paper manufacturing and paper machinery as well as energy production, environmental, information and wellness technology. The world's leading manufacturer of paper machines, Metso Paper, is one of the biggest companies in the region. It has considerable influence also through a comprehensive network of SME's operating in the metal industry. In the field of information technology the most important companies are the giants of new technology Nokia, TeliaSonera and TietoEnator.

The activities of the Jyväskylä Centre of Expertise form part of a national programme aimed at developing businesses that can compete successfully on an international scale. There is also an ongoing pilot project for developing a network-town administration model comprising several municipalities. In the Jyväskylä Region the economic development is conducted on a collaborative basis. Jyväskylä Regional Development Company Jykes Ltd acts as a co-ordinator and provider of services predominantly to the regions SMEs. At Jyväskylä Science Park (JSP) an entrepreneurial activity based on new know-how and technology is developed by encouraging innovation, setting up new businesses and by providing the operating prerequisites for businesses. JSP's business incubator has given initial help to more than 200 companies.

Research and development activities are well-represented in the region. Besides the research carried out by the university, the VTT Technical Centre of Finland has laboratories in Jyväskylä. They specialize in process technology relating to the forest and energy industries. Also, the Jyväskylä Science Park hosts an R&D-oriented Excellence Center Program focused on the ICT, paper, energy and environmental technologies.

Jyväskylä is also a major education centre in Finland. The nickname 'Athens of Finland' has its roots in the long tradition of education and culture. The region provides a diversity of educational offerings for people of all ages. The multi-disciplinary University of Jyväskylä and the Jyväskylä Polytechnic are among Finland's leading research and higher educational institutions.

2. Characteristics of the HEIs in the Region (the number of HEIs; a basic profile of each institution to be involved in the project in terms of student numbers, balance between teaching and research functions, territorial focus etc)

1. The University of Jyväskylä (state-run university) is home to Finland's first Faculty of Information Technology and only Faculty of Sport Science, a strong Faculty of Natural Sciences and a highly extensive range of study programmes in Humanities, Economics and Social Sciences. There are five Centres of Excellence in Research (selected by the Academy of Finland) operating within the University. The University has nearly 16,000 students and the number of staff is 2500. The total funding is 142 M€. The University of Jyväskylä is known for its active role in developing innovations in education and research, especially in collaboration with business and commerce, and other actors of the region.
2. Jyväskylä Polytechnic (run by a non-profit company) comprises the Schools of Engineering, ICT, Business, Culture, Social and Health Care, Tourism and Rural Industries and a College of Vocational Teacher Education and has 7500 students. The number of staff is 650, including a teaching staff of 300. The yearly turnover is 65 M€, of which 75% is spent on degree education and 25% on regional and working life development. The Polytechnic focuses a lot of efforts on the development of the Central Finland Region, including both the region of Jyväskylä and surrounding small rural regions.
3. Air force C3 Systems School is a smaller HE unit (with approximately 790 students and a staff of 350) which has not a direct regional aim.
4. The Korpilahti Unit of Humanities Polytechnic (HUMAK) offers the degree programme in Cultural Management and Production. There are some 220 students and the number of personnel is 32.

The regional development strategy of the Ministry of Education stresses the mutually complementary knowledge of the universities and polytechnics, which will be developed with emphasis on the strengths of the regions. According to this strategy, the cooperation and division of work between the University of Jyväskylä and Jyväskylä Polytechnic will be clarified on the basis of their joint regional strategies.

3. A Brief History of HEIs' Engagement in the Regional Development;

Jyväskylä region was a sunset area of big chimney industries in the 1970s and 1980s. A positive change was just starting to emerge in the late eighties, when a deep economic recession hit Finland. Resources were allocated to new fields of engineering like ICT, bioenergy and environmental technology. Jyväskylä Regional Development Company was established in 1996 to coordinate these efforts. It is generally thought that the positive change was due to well-executed planning, high expertise and successful cooperation between local authorities, industry and research and educational units. There is no doubt that that the growth in ICT in the 1990s hinged heavily on the HEI units.

Examples: The Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences of the University of Jyväskylä started to provide IT education in research- and industry-oriented programs (the Faculty of Information Technology was established later) and the School of Business and Economics in business-oriented programs. These were geared to contribute to the regional strategies with targeted Master's degrees. Regional EU-funding was also available. Jyväskylä Institute of Technology, subsequently the Engineering School of Jyväskylä Polytechnic, more than doubled its ICT and electronic engineer education. Both institutions supported the entrepreneurial activities of their students and staff in order to step up the creation of new companies and commercialization of research findings. One of the Finland's largest incubators for technology enterprises started its operations in 1992 as an integral part of the Jyväskylä Science Park being in close contact with HEIs.

The newest areas of expertise in the region of Jyväskylä are wellness and nanotechnology. The comprehensive sport and health science sector is promoted by HEIs. One important starting point for the wellness industrial activities was the launch of wellness engineering education in the Jyväskylä Polytechnic. The objective of the Development Programme for Wellness Technology is to promote business activity, applied research and product development as well as training and research in this technology sector. One important unit of the University of Jyväskylä is the Agora Center, a multidisciplinary networked research community concerned with human development. Nanotechnology has been selected as the latest strategic development sector and it forms part of the Jyväskylä Region's Centre of Expertise programme. The development of nano know-how is conducted by the University of Jyväskylä.

The University and Polytechnic personnel have carried out hundreds of R&D projects - in cooperation with the regional authorities, municipalities, business and industry organizations, companies and public organizations - which have promoted regional development.

4. The Scope and Level of Involvement of Regional Stakeholders in the Project

This is a joint project by the University of Jyväskylä and Jyväskylä Polytechnic. All relevant stakeholders will participate in the steering group together with Jyväskylä University and Jyväskylä Polytechnic. They have been stressed that this project provides an opportunity of learning and developing the regional co-operation. The following organizations are represented in the steering group and they are also responsible for the financing of the project together with the Ministry of Education: University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä Polytechnic, City of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä Science Park, Jyväskylä Regional Development Company (Jykes), Employment and Economic Development Centre of Central Finland and Regional Council of Central Finland. In addition to the organizations mentioned above the Central Finland Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Finnish Enterprises (regional unit of Central Finland) participate in the steering group as representatives of entrepreneurs.

Besides the HEIs of the region the working group consists of members representing the State Provincial Office of Western Finland and Regional Council of Central Finland.

5. Resources for Further Information on the Region (i.e. web-site, published report etc.)

www.jyu.fi (University of Jyväskylä)

www.jypoly.fi (Jyväskylä Polytechnic)

www.jyvaskyla.fi (City of Jyväskylä)

www.jykes.fi (Jyväskylä Regional Development Company, Jykes Ltd.)

www.jsp.fi (Jyväskylä Science Park)

www.keskisuomi.fi (Regional Council of Central Finland)

www.laaninhallitus.fi/lansi (State Provincial Office of Western Finland)

www.te-keskus.fi (Employment and Economic Development Centre of Central Finland)

www.cenralfinlandchamber.fi (Central Finland Chamber of Commerce)