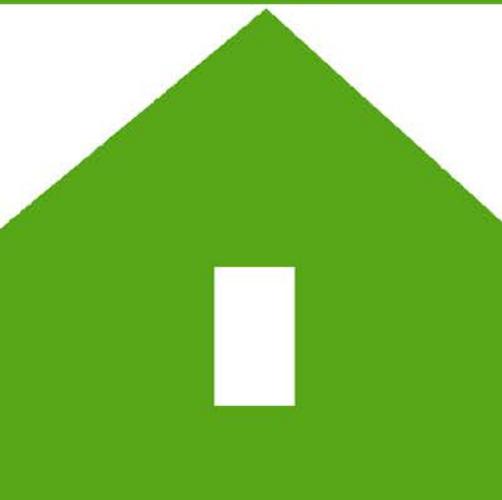


# Improving access to services

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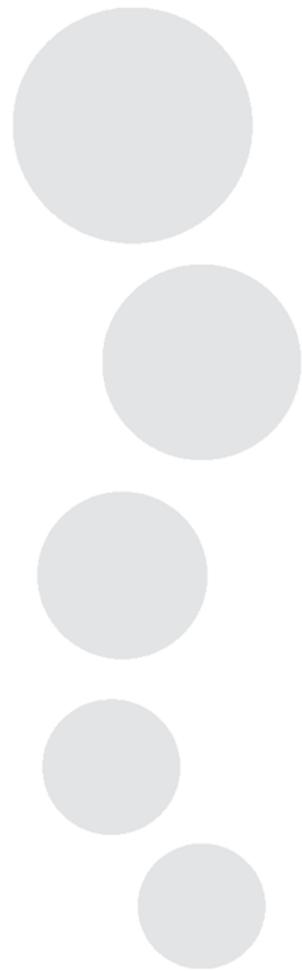


10th OECD Rural Development Conference,  
19 - 21 May 2015

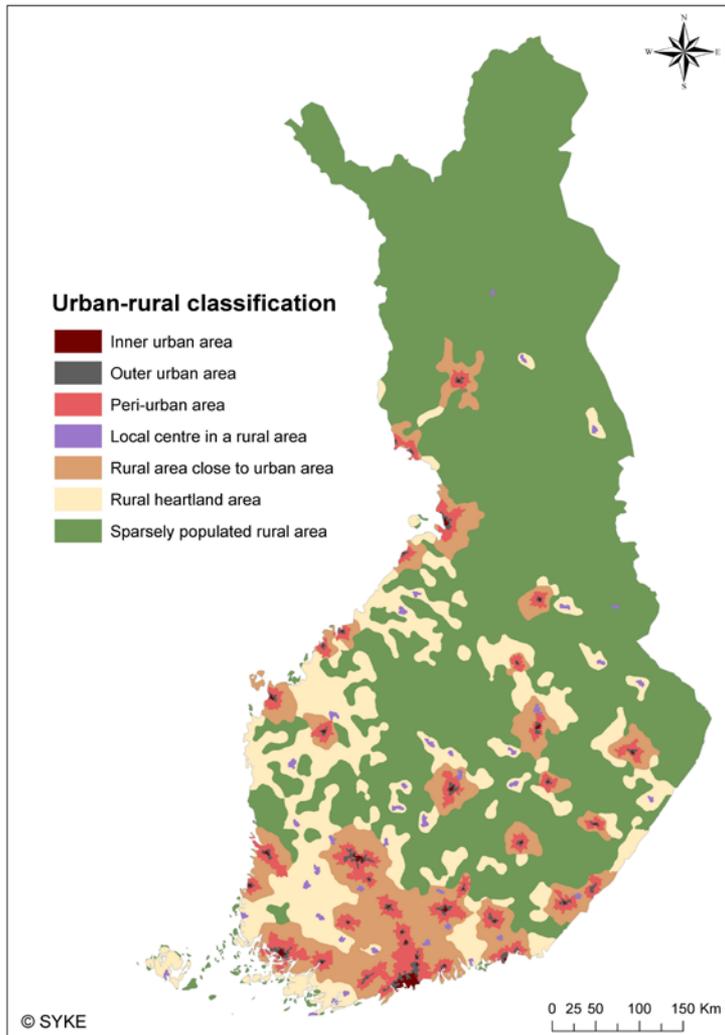


# Content of the presentation

1. Rural context and present situation in Finland
2. Improving access to service – examples from Finland
3. Conclusions



# Rural Finland and its challenges

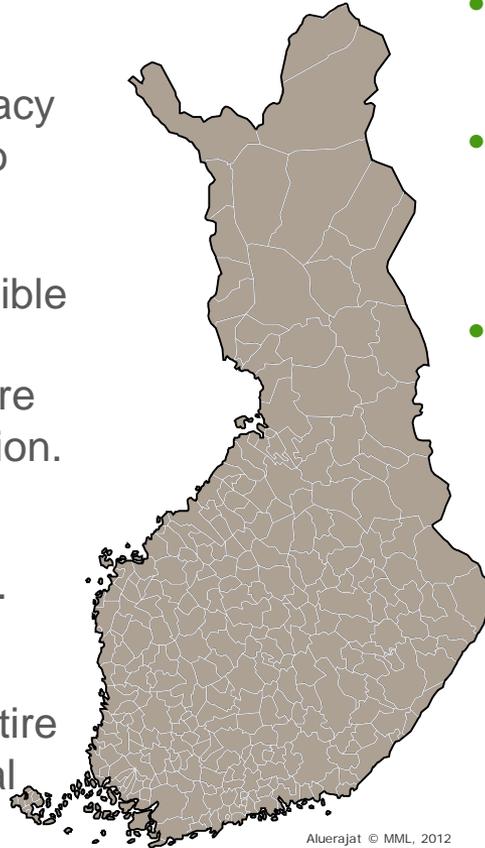


- Average population density in Finland: 17 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>
- Approximately 31% of the inhabitants live in rural areas, which cover around 95% of the country
- Ageing population, culminating in rural areas
- Migration to cities
- Challenges: how to keep rural areas populated, how to provide services to ageing population, how to keep the local municipalities and communities vital.



# Municipalities in Finland

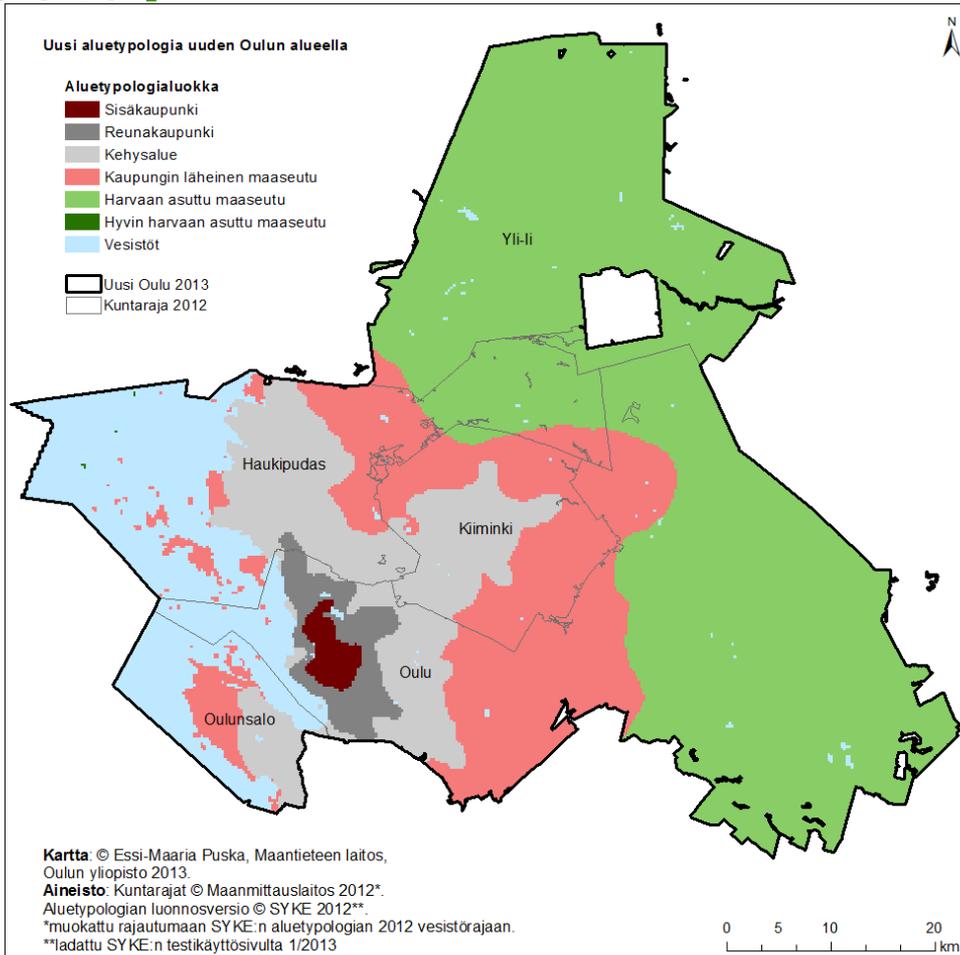
- Local authorities have strong self-government, based on local democracy and decision making, and the right to levy taxes.
- Local authorities are broadly responsible for the provision of basic services to citizens. Social welfare and health care is the largest local government function.
- As process of local government restructuring is under way in Finland.
- The aim is to maintain the Nordic welfare model and to develop the entire country, while respecting unique local characteristics.



Aluerajat © MML, 2012  
Karttakuva © Kuntaliitto/JAH

- In 2015, 317 municipalities, (2007, 431)
- Finnish local and joint authorities employ over 439,000 persons ( 20 % of Finland's workforce).
- The ongoing strict economical situation has caused pressure to cut down the service and to reduce the working force in municipalities.

# Large municipalities with different area types – challenges for rural regions (for example City of Oulu)



The questions raised during the large, ongoing local government restructuring

- How to ensure that the areas are developed equally?
- How to ensure that the people in rural areas are equally heard in democracy issues?
- How to ensure that the people in rural areas also receive local services?

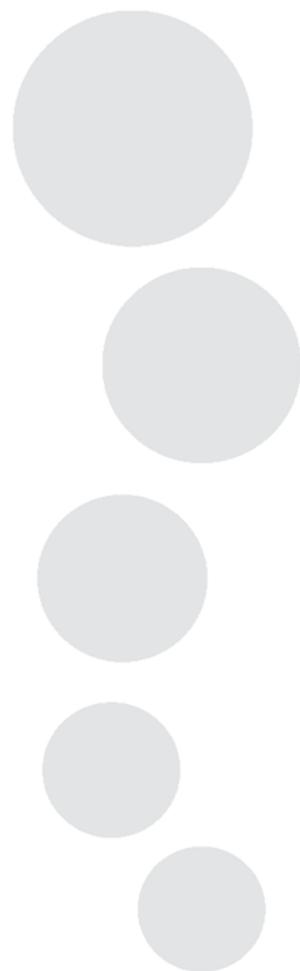
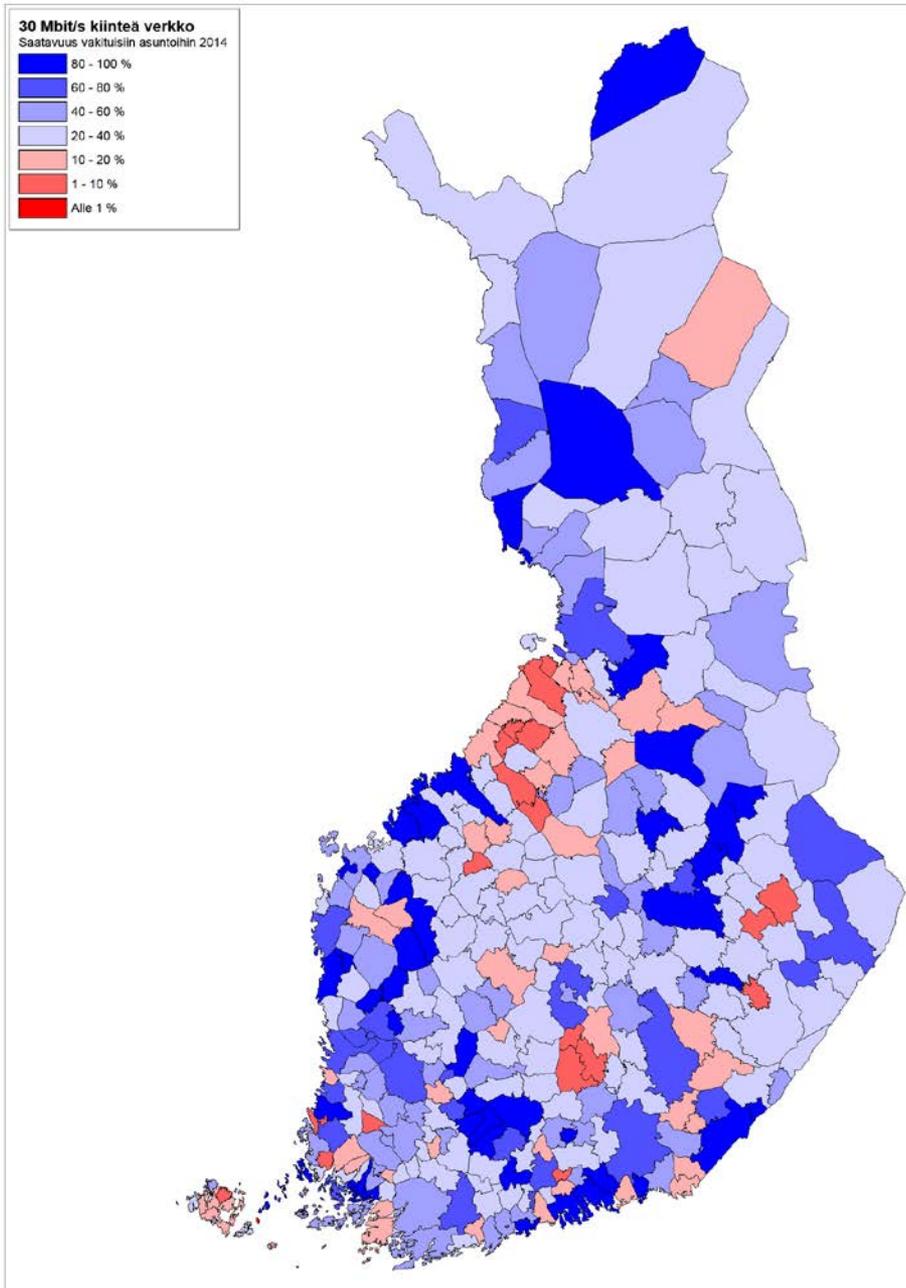
# New ways of producing service in rural regions

- Local authorities can provide services to residents in different ways, for example jointly with other local authorities, communities and enterprises.
- **Combinations of services** - crossing administrative borders, improving public and private collaboration
- **Mobile service** - for example mobile health-care service
- **Internet based services** - efficient use of ICT in the production and development of e-services
- **Citizen Services ‘One Stop Shop’**  
– a streamlined way of offering both public and other services at one service point.



# Availability and accessibility

Both availability and accessibility of service is essential.



# Partnerships between public, private and the third sector (associations etc.)

- **Rural Policy Committee** is planning a national project which aim is to promote the partnerships in service and welfare on local and regional levels.
  - We need collaboration on national level to overcome the challenges of service delivery in rural areas.
- Especially in sparsely populated rural areas we need tailored solutions.

**Different places need different solutions –**

**Place based policy approach is needed**