

A recent study at Columbia University ranked Finland number one in the world for environmental sustainability. With the passage of its updated Environmental Protection Act on March 1, 2000, Finland has adopted an integrated approach to preventing environmental damage. Utilizing the best available technologies

Promoting "ecoefficiency"

Finland's environmental sector

(BAT) to preserve the environment is now a key element of corporate programs in Finland, and presents opportunities for suppliers of competitively priced, niche solutions.

Finland's revised environmental legislation, which has been harmonized with the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive of the Council of the European Union, applies to all activities that are potentially harmful to the environment. The objective of the legislation is to improve the environment by using the best available technologies (BAT) — without having to tighten Finland's already stringent demands on environmental protection.

Using an integrated approach to reducing emissions, rather than focusing on water and air separately, allows better control over the overall environmental impact of industrial operations.

Trends

In the 1990s, industrial investment in the environment represented 5%-10% of total investments in Finland. By 1998, the value of the total environmental market in Finland was estimated to be \$2.5 billion. Today, Finnish companies produce environmental technology products worth approximately \$2.7-\$4.6 billion each year.

Further investment in emission controls can be expected as the compliance date for the new environmental legislation approaches in 2007.

For more details, visit the Finnish Environmental Administration Web site

at: www.vyh.fi/eng/environ/legis/index.htm

Environmental health program

In 1997, a collaborative project between 60 research institutes and enterprises, known as the Environmental Cluster Research Programme (ECRP), was formed in Finland to promote human and environmental welfare through

"ecoefficiency", cooperation and entrepreneurship.

The program, now in its second phase, is examining the best ways to build infrastructure in a sustainable society.

Opportunities

Although Finnish municipalities and government institutions tend to favour domestic suppliers, Finnish industry welcomes environmental technology from reliable, world-class firms. Indeed, many of the industrial systems manufactured in Finland are constructed from imported high-technology components.

To compete with the well-established component suppliers from the EU, the U.S. and Japan, Canadian firms are advised to offer niche, best available technologies that are unique and competitively priced. Opportunities exist in such sectors as instrumentation, soil and water remediation, solid waste and waste water treatment, and air emissions controls.

Partnerships between Finnish and Canadian firms may be mutually advantageous, given that Canada and Finland are both world leaders in environmental technologies.

Major competition

The environmental industry in Finland employs some 24,000 people and is one of the world's most technologically advanced. It comprises approximately 400 companies, mostly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs),

as well as a few larger corporations with environmental divisions. Most (300) of these companies operate in infrastructure-related areas such as water supply, waste water treatment, solid waste treatment and bioenergy, with the remainder involved primarily in the fast-growing field of monitoring and measurement.

Market access issues

Foreign suppliers are advised to work with local agents and distributors because the domestic market for environmental technology equipment in Finland is not large enough to warrant full-scale sales operations.

Finland adheres strictly to EU directives and regulations and therefore, in principle, accepts products that have been admitted to other EU countries.

Useful Web sites

- Environmental Cluster Research Program: www.vyh.fi/eng/research/cluster/clus2pha.htm
- National Technology Agency: www.tekes.fi
- Finnish Environmental Administration: www.vyh.fi/eng/
- The Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers: www.tt.fi/english/
- Environmental Technology Research Centre ETRC Ltd.: www.ytkk.suomi.net/
- Technical Research Centre of Finland: www.vtt.fi/indexe.htm
- Nordic Environment Finance Corporation: www.nefco.fi/

For more information, contact Seppo Viheraari, Business Development Officer, Canadian Embassy, Helsinki, tel.: (011-358-9) 228-530, fax: (011-358-9) 601-060, e-mail: seppo.viheraari@dfait-maeci.gc.ca
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(For the unabridged version, see www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport and click on "The European Advantage")

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Winter 2002

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