



# COUNTRY IMAGE ANNUAL REPORT 2023



# Contents

**SUOMI  
FINLAND**

1. The importance of country image today
2. Country image results 2023: perceptions
3. Country image results 2023: metrics
4. Indicators for attracting talent
5. Sanna Marin's impact on Finland's country image
6. Current affairs: Finland's NATO process
7. Lessons from the research
8. Country image in a nutshell

Cover photo: Marc Goodwin/Archmospheres/Helsinki Partners



# 1. The importance of country image today

SUOMI  
FINLAND

According to international studies, Finland has a strong country image. Finland is well-liked and is valued as a responsible international player. This is of great importance when trying to influence political and economic decisions concerning Finland. A strong country image also serves as protection against changes in the operating environment: the more positive the image of Finland in the world, the more Finnish points of view are listened to and the better Finland fares in the changing world.



SUOMI  
FINLAND

## **2. Country image results 2023: perceptions**



## Research into country images

SUOMI  
FINLAND

There are numerous studies that deal with country brands and soft power, i.e. the cultural and ideological appeal and influence of states. The most extensive of these compare perceptions of Finland with dozens of other countries every year. Large surveys give a comprehensive overview of world opinion about Finland and how it compares to those about other countries. Repeated surveys also make it possible to track the development of Finland's image. Although changes are slow, mental images do change and it is important to monitor their direction.



## Great interest in Finland

SUOMI  
FINLAND

In 2022, Finland was subject to a historic level of international media interest. The war in Ukraine and Finland's NATO membership process brought manifold visibility compared to the long-term average. So how does the significant increase in visibility show up in image surveys? That depends on the type of study. The views of experts and people who actively follow international news change faster than those of average citizens who follow the news more loosely. It is therefore worth examining the image of Finland in light of several studies.



# Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index

SUOMI  
FINLAND

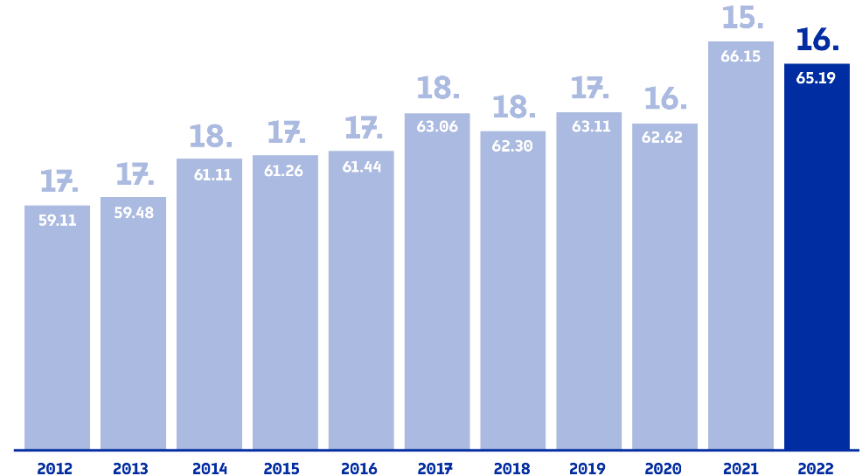
The most widely followed country image study, the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index, ranks 60 countries based on average citizens' impressions. The rankings are based on a survey conducted in 20 countries. In the 2022 study, Finland ranked 16<sup>th</sup> with a score of 65.19. That was significantly better than the European average of 62.55. Finland ranked 35<sup>th</sup> place in terms of public awareness, with 63% of the respondents saying they knew at least something about the country. In other words, Finland is not particularly well-known, but its favourability is well above average, as it ranked 15<sup>th</sup> among the 60 countries in the index.



# Changes in Finland's image, 2012–2022

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland's ranking in the annual Nation Brands Index has been gradually rising. The most notable for 2022 was the drop in the results of most countries. Although the scores of all the other countries in the top 20 decreased, Finland lost one place compared to the previous year.



Finland's ranking in the main country image survey, 2012-2022.  
Source: Nation Brands Index 2022

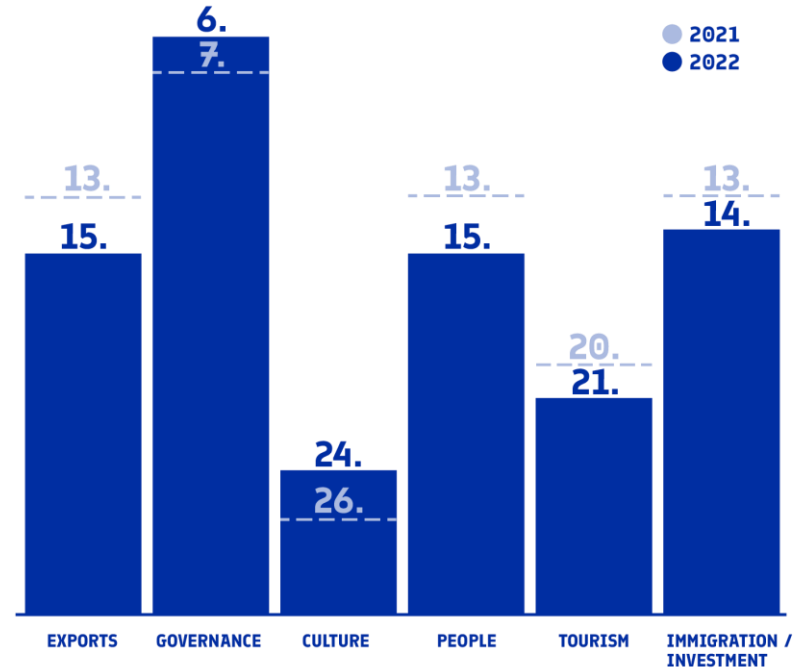




## Governance is a strong point in Finland's image

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The study is divided into six categories: Exports, Governance, Culture, People, Tourism, and Immigration/Investment. Finland's best ranking is in Governance, rising by one place since the previous year. Culture is Finland's weakest area, but the ranking did rise from 26<sup>th</sup> place to 24<sup>th</sup> place.



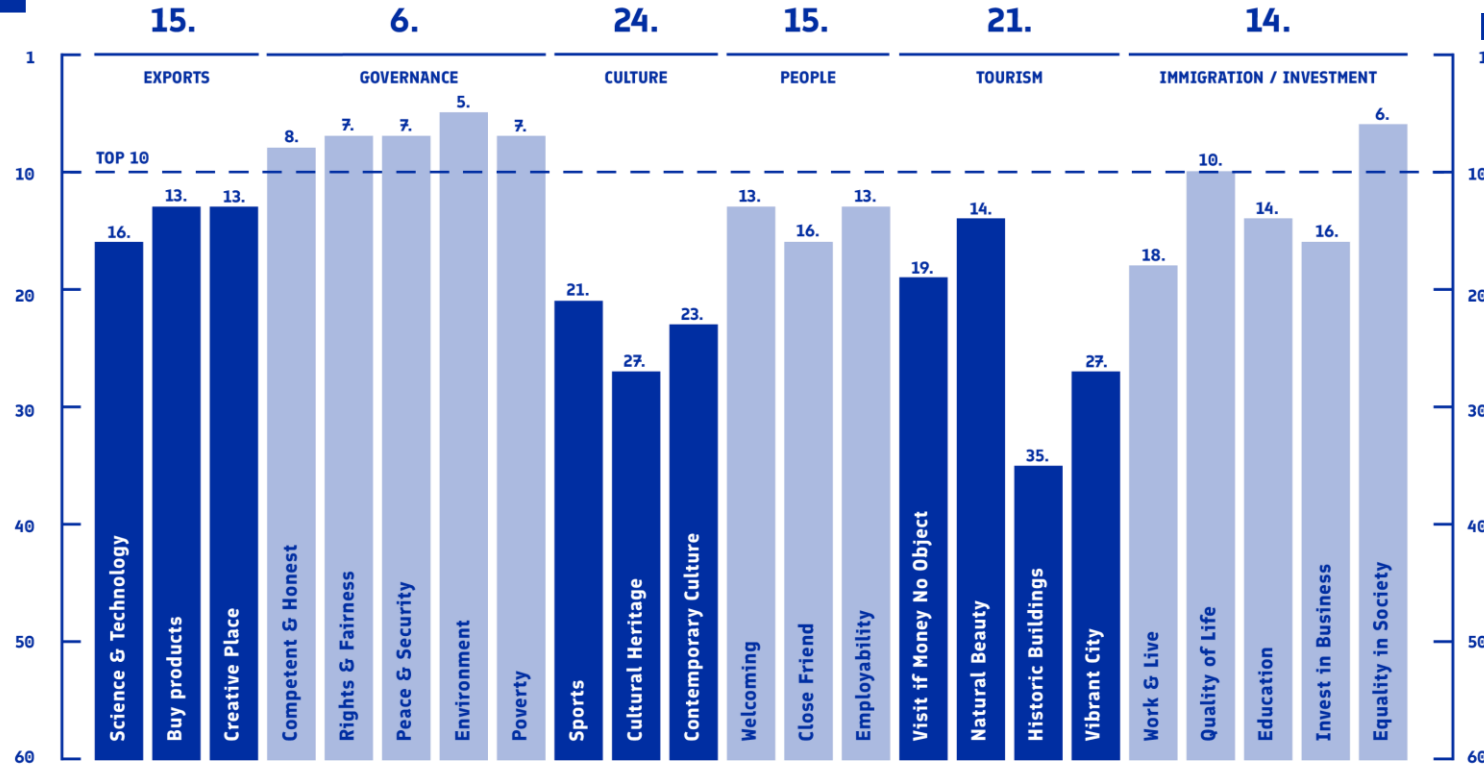
Finland ranks sixth in governance.  
Source: Nation Brands Index 2022



## Environment and equality as key strengths

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The survey's six theme categories cover 23 questions. Finland's highest rankings were on questions about environmental protection (5<sup>th</sup> place) and equality (6<sup>th</sup> place). These are very significant rankings, considering that overall familiarity with Finland remains below average. The lowest rankings were on culture-related questions: historic buildings (35<sup>th</sup>), urban culture (27<sup>th</sup>), cultural heritage (27<sup>th</sup>) and contemporary culture (23<sup>rd</sup>). There were both slight increases and decreases on individual questions compared to the previous year.



As in the previous year, Finland ranks in the top 10 on seven different metrics.

Source: Nation Brands Index 2022



## Views vary by country

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland is especially valued in Sweden, where it ranks fourth in the index. Canada, Germany and France also place Finland in the top 10. Finland gets the weakest ratings in Saudi Arabia, South Africa and India. Even in these countries, however, Finland ranks the top half of the 60 countries. Compared to the previous year, Finland's total score increased by 0.6–1.95 points in Canada, China, Italy, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and the United States. However, significant point drops were seen in Türkiye (–5.08), India (–6.97) and Russia (–8.37).



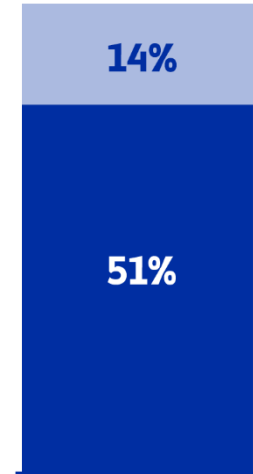
## Finland makes a positive impression

SUOMI  
FINLAND

In addition to its actual brand comparison, the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index also collects other information. The 2022 report shows that when measuring the attitude of the average citizen to the news they hear from different countries, Finland is tied for third place among the 60 countries in the study. In other words, Finland makes a very positive impression.

30%

● UNFAVORABLE  
● FAVORABLE



30% of respondents say they have heard news about Finland. 51% say they made a positive impact.  
Source: Nation Brands Index 2022



# Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The 2023 Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index ranks 121 countries based on perceptions of soft power. The survey covers the answers of 110,000 people in more than 100 countries. Finland ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> among 121 countries, up from 25<sup>th</sup> the year before. The study evaluates countries primarily in terms of recognition, reputation and influence. In recognition, Finland has risen two places compared to last year, to 41<sup>st</sup> place. In terms of influence, there has been a jump from 41<sup>st</sup> place to 35<sup>th</sup> place. Reputation is Finland's strongest area, ranking 13<sup>th</sup> place, a leap of three places.



## People, values and governance as strengths

SUOMI  
FINLAND

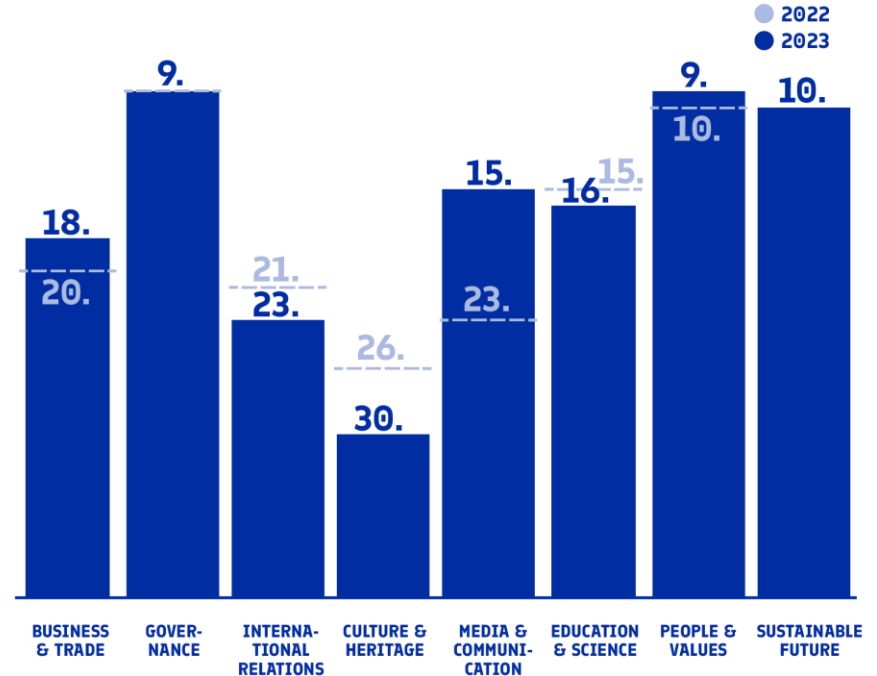
In addition to recognition, reputation and influence, the index provides information on how Finland is seen in eight categories, each of which contains several different metrics. These categories are: business and trade, governance, international relations, culture and heritage, media and communication, education and science, people and values, and sustainable future. Finland's main strengths are people and values and administration, in which Finland ranks ninth among 121 countries. As in other studies, Finland performs the weakest in culture and heritage, ranking 30<sup>th</sup>.



## Better scores across the board

Finland's ranking in relation to others has decreased in three categories, although its scores improved in two of them. The education and science score and ranking declined due to the “invests in space research” metric.

SUOMI  
FINLAND



Finland reached the top 10 in three categories.  
Source: [Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2023](#)

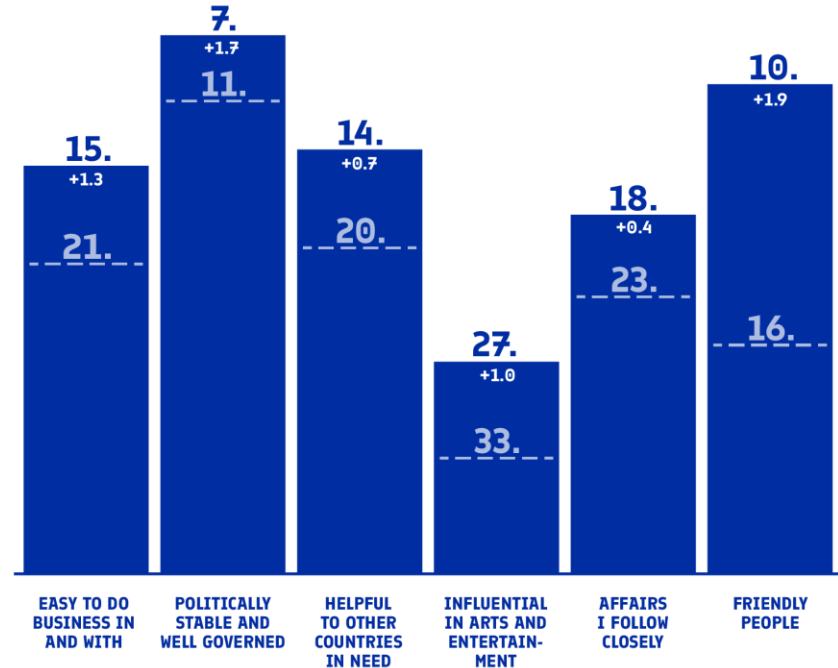




# Improvement on current-affairs metrics

SUOMI  
FINLAND

In terms of individual metrics, the biggest gains in points and ranks have been in areas related to current affairs. For example, there has been improvement on governance and development cooperation. The declines in points are small, -0.1 and -0.3 points in science and education.



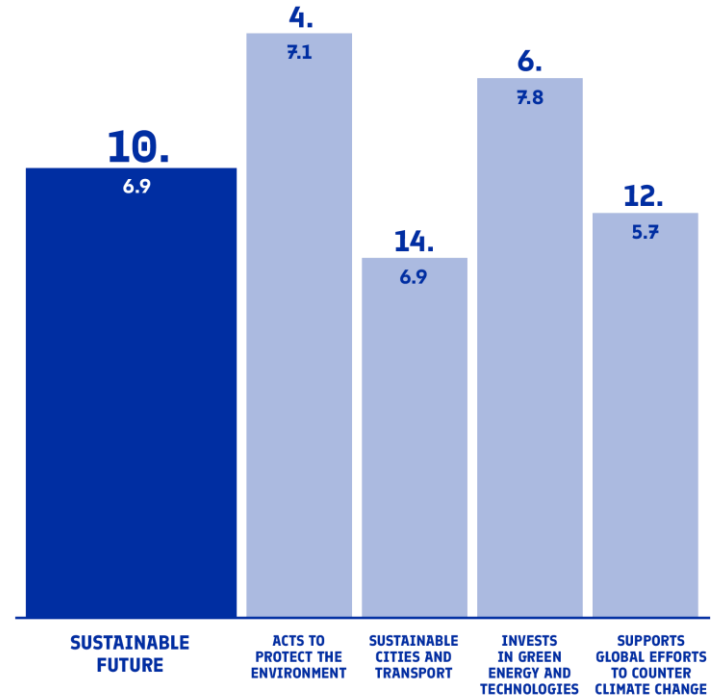
The “friendly people” metric yields the biggest gains.  
Source: [Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2023](#)



# Sustainable future: a new metric

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The 2023 Global Soft Power Index introduces a new sustainable development category that includes four distinct metrics: environmental action, sustainable cities and transport, green energy and technology, and global climate action. Finland reaches the top 10 in half of these.



Environmental actions bring the highest ranking.  
Source: [Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2023](#)



## Monocle Soft Power Survey

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The British magazine *Monocle* publishes the Soft Power Survey listing, in which 20-25 countries are singled out each year and ranked in terms of soft power. Unlike the previously presented indices, the Monocle Soft Power Survey is not based on a survey, but on the assessment of a board of experts combined with Monocle's own soft power index. The metric includes, among other things, the number of foreign missions, Olympic medals, UNESCO Heritage sites, development cooperation, Michelin stars, Nobel laureates, top universities and years until pledged carbon neutrality.



## Finland returns to the list

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland ranks 17<sup>th</sup> on *Monocle's* 2022 list. The last time Finland was included was in 2019, when it was 19<sup>th</sup>. According to the analysis, COVID-19 and Russia's war of aggression have left Finland in a stronger position. It particularly highlights the steady leadership of "soft power icon" Sanna Marin and a successful business-friendly coronavirus policy, as well as the NATO membership process, which has been promoted skilfully and resolutely. The magazine cites Finland's strengths in education, happiness and foreign aid, but notes that Finland needs to boost its cultural visibility.



SUOMI  
FINLAND

## **3. Country image results 2023: metrics**



## Rankings compare by sector

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Country image surveys measure mental images associated with Finland. Meanwhile, Finland's actual performance in different fields can be monitored through various international rankings. These rankings compare countries based on performance metrics. Reporting on these comparisons continues to build mental images of the strengths and weaknesses of various countries, which when repeated eventually forms part of the country image. Many different rankings are available, but it is particularly relevant for the country's image to monitor comparisons on Finland's three key strengths, as defined in its [country brand strategy](#).

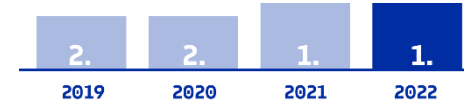


# 1. Functionality and wellbeing

Country image studies indicate the strengths of Finland's image, which are governance, functionality and quality of life. The rankings confirm this. Finland ranks first in areas such as civil and political rights, stability, social justice and equality.

**SUOMI  
FINLAND**

The Fund for Peace  
Fragile States Index



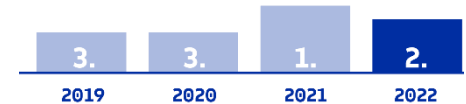
WEF Global Gender  
Gap Report



Quality of Life  
Index



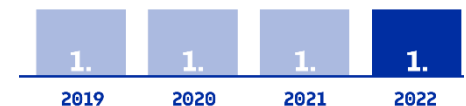
Corruption  
Perceptions Index



The Social Progress  
Index



World Happiness  
Report





# Finland is the world's happiest

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Since 2018, Finland has been ranked at the top of the World Happiness Report, which measures the life satisfaction of each country's citizens. The report is closely followed around the world, and the first-place ranking guarantees headline visibility in almost every country. Although the point differences among the top countries are insignificant, first place is important in terms of visibility and country image. Being profiled as happy is a strong message that contains many positive aspects about people and society. Repeated visibility has begun to bear fruit, as happiness now appears in open surveys related to Finland.





## 2. Nature and sustainable development

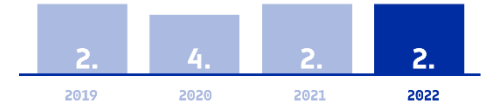
Finland's success in comparisons of nature and sustainability is paradoxical. Results regarding drinking water, air quality and technology are excellent, but Finland performs worse when measuring carbon footprint or desire to invest in curbing climate change, for example.

SUOMI  
FINLAND

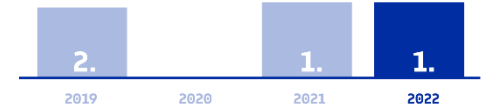
Environmental Performance Index



Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index



The Country Sustainability Ranking



Sustainable Development Report



Climate Change Performance Index



Climate Perceptions Index

**68.**  
2022



# Climate Perceptions Index 2022

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The Climate Perceptions Index, published for the first time in 2022, reports on people's perceptions of climate change. The report presents information from 110 countries or regional groups. The index surveys people's awareness of climate change, perception of related risks and commitment to climate action. The index is a good example of how Finland's ranking on measures related to sustainability and climate varies widely within a single study: Finland ranks number one in awareness but 100<sup>th</sup> in risk perceptions and 89<sup>th</sup> in commitment to action.



<b>AWARENESS</b>	<b>3.</b> I hear about climate change at least once a week	<b>1.</b> I know about climate change	<b>6.</b> Climate change is caused by human activities	<b>82.</b> Climate change is happening
<b>RISK PERCEPTIONS</b>	<b>83.</b> Climate change will harm future generations of people	<b>109.</b> Climate change will harm me personally	<b>94.</b> I am worried about climate change	<b>98.</b> Climate change is a serious threat to everyone in the country I live
<b>COMMITMENT TO ACTION</b>	<b>90.</b> The government, businesses and individual people need to act	<b>88.</b> Climate change should be a priority for the government	<b>101.</b> The issue of climate change is important to me personally	<b>44.</b> My country should reduce its pollution regardless of what other countries do

Rankings related to Finland's views on climate change vary between positions one and 109 on different measures.

Lähde: [Climate Perceptions Index 2022](#)



### 3. Education and know-how

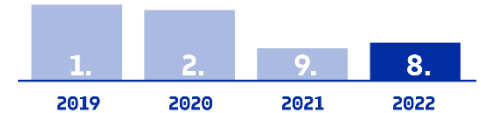
SUOMI  
FINLAND

Education became a strength in Finland's national image in the early 2000s thanks to the annual PISA study. Finland's current strengths in education and competence are particularly tied to the skills of the future: digital competence, critical thinking and creative application.

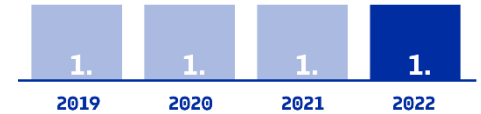
Global Innovation Index



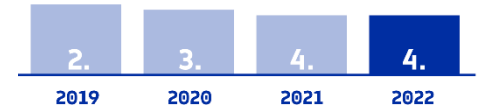
OECD Better Life Index: Education



DESI Index: Human Capital



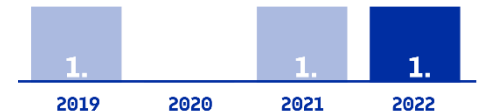
Global Knowledge Index



Global Skills Report



Media Literacy Index





## Media literacy index is a forecast

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland has ranked at the top of the Media Literacy Index since it was first published in 2017. The index ranks 41 European countries based on their ability to combat the effects of fake news and misinformation. Media freedom, education, e-participation and trust in society are used as metrics. The index does not directly indicate the ability of Finns to recognise false information, but provides a forecast of how well Finnish society is able to handle, for example, the negative effects of disinformation.



SUOMI  
FINLAND

## 4. Indicators for attracting talent



## Finland as an attractor of talent

SUOMI  
FINLAND

In recent years, there has been active debate about the availability of skilled labour, Finland's ability to attract labour from abroad, and the role of attracting skilled labour in its fiscal policy. There have been concerns about Finland's attractiveness and calls for measures to improve it. The strengths and stumbling blocks of Finland's ability to attract talent can also be examined through various metrics. Two important indexes that Finland monitors are the OECD Indicators of Talent Attractiveness and the Global Talent Competitiveness Index.



# OECD Indicators of Talent Attractiveness

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The OECD Indicators of Talent Attractiveness, first published in 2019, is a comprehensive overview of the strengths and weaknesses of OECD countries in attracting talent. Aspects of talent attraction are examined from the perspective of highly skilled workers (master's or doctorate), entrepreneurs and university students in six dimensions: quality of opportunities, income level and taxation, future prospects, family life, skills environment, inclusiveness and quality of life. Finland's rank ranges between 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Within dimensions, its positions vary from the top quarter to the bottom quarter.

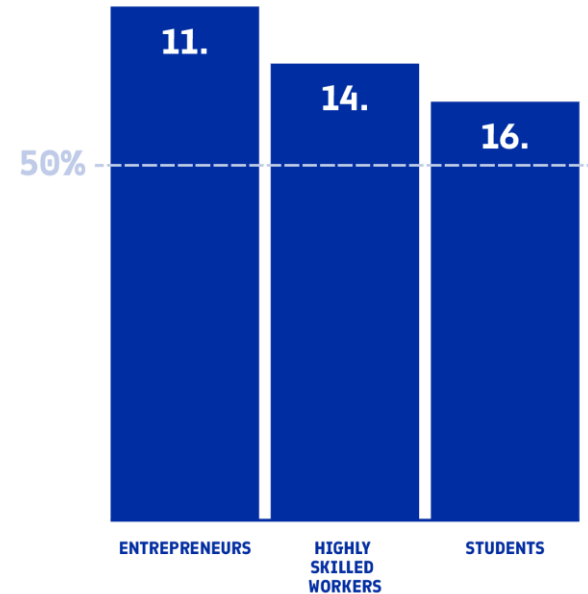




## Finland is most attractive for entrepreneurs

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland ranks best in attracting entrepreneurs, at number 11. Finland ranks 14<sup>th</sup> as an attractor of highly skilled workers and 16<sup>th</sup> in attracting students. Finland ranks in the top third as an attractor of entrepreneurs, and in the better half across all groups.



Finland is most attractive for entrepreneurs.  
Source: [OECD Indicators of Talent Attractiveness 2023](#)

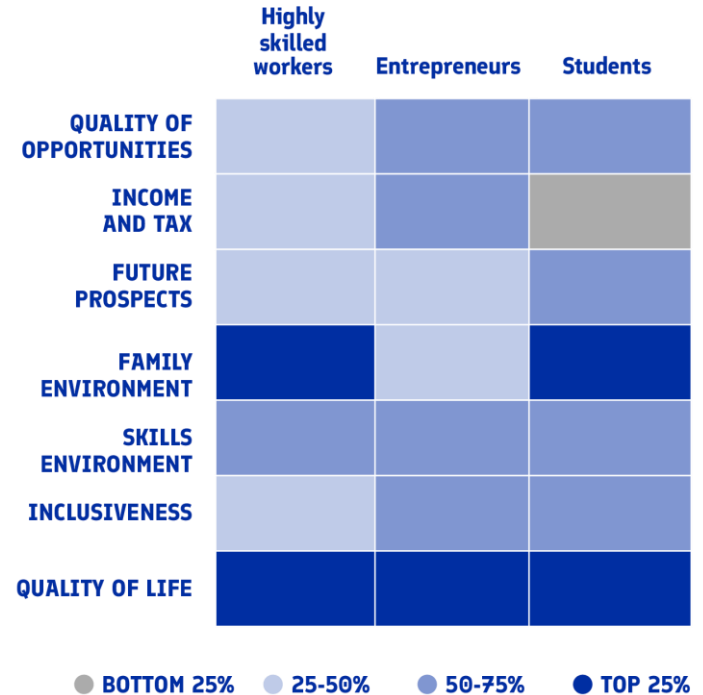


## Strongest on family life and quality of life

Finland ranks in the best quarter on five measurement points: family life of highly skilled workers and students and quality of life for highly skilled workers, students and entrepreneurs.

Finland ranks in the bottom quarter only in terms of income and taxation of students.

SUOMI  
FINLAND



Finland generally ranks in the second-highest quarter.  
Source: [OECD Indicators of Talent Attractiveness 2023](#)



## What do the dimensions comprise?

SUOMI  
FINLAND

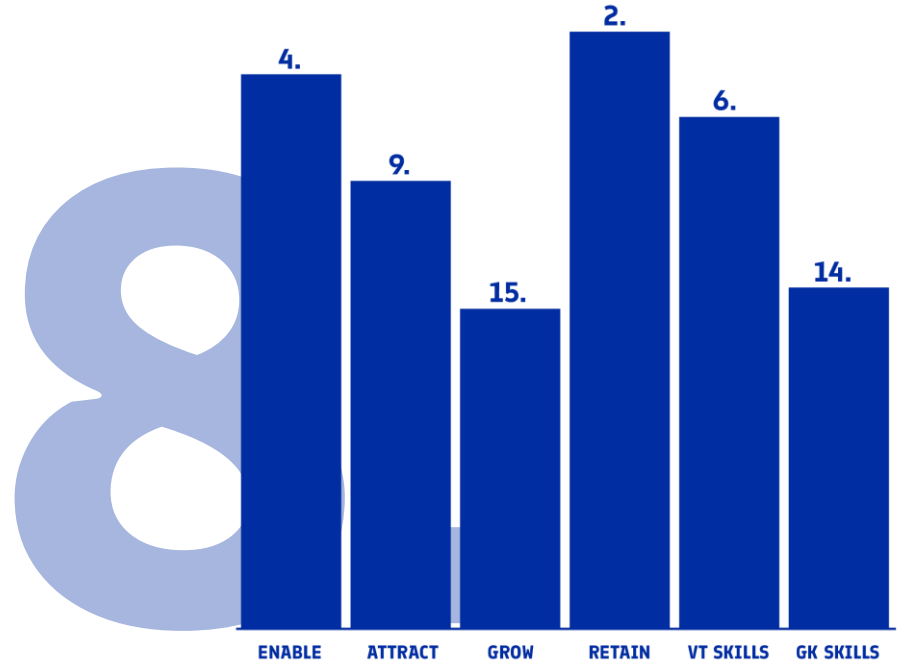
Finland's area of strength, "family environment," includes the following indicators: a spouse's right to immigrate to the country and work, ease of the citizenship process for children, PISA math test scores, public spending on family benefits and the participation tax rate of a second earner parent. Quality of life is measured with the OECD Better Life Index, where Finland's strengths are education and life satisfaction. Finland's weak link "income level and taxation of students," includes the following indicators: earnings of skilled workers, price level index, difference in university tuition fees between domestic and foreign students and their hours/week right to work.



# Global Talent Competitiveness Index

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The 2022 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) ranks 133 countries based on six indicators of talent attraction. These metrics are: enable, attract, grow and retain as well as vocational/technical skills and global knowledge skills. Finland ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in total points.



Finland ranks in the top 15 in every measure.  
Source: [The Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022](#)



# GTCI index metrics 1–4: input

SUOMI  
FINLAND

2.

## RETAIN

**Sustainability:** Pension coverage, Social protection, Brain retention, Environmental performance

**Lifestyle:** Personal rights, Personal safety, Physician density, Sanitation

4.

## ENABLE

**Regulatory Landscape:** Government effectiveness, Rule of law, Political stability, Regulatory quality, Corruption

**Market Landscape:** Extent of market dominance, Domestic credit to private sector, Cluster development, R&D expenditure, ICT infrastructure, Urbanisation

**Business Landscape:** Labour rights, Labour-employer cooperation, Professional management, Relationship of pay to productivity, Enterprise software, Cloud computing, Firms with website

9.

## ATTRACT

**External Openness:** FDI regulatory restrictiveness, Financial globalization, Migrant stock, International students, Brain gain

**Internal Openness:** Tolerance of minorities, Tolerance of immigrants, Social Mobility, Economic empowerment of women, Gender parity in high-skilled jobs, Leadership opportunities for women

15.

## GROW

**Formal Education:** Vocational enrolment, Tertiary enrolment, Tertiary education expenditure, Reading, maths, and science, University ranking

**Lifelong Learning:** Business school ranking, Prevalence of training in firms, Employee development, Formal and non-formal studies

**Access to Growth Opportunities:** Delegation of authority, Youth inclusion, Use of virtual social networks, Use of virtual professional networks

The dashboard is divided into input and output categories.  
Source: [The Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022](#)



# GTCI index metrics 5–6: output

SUOMI  
FINLAND

6.

## VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

**Mid-Level Skills:** Workforce with secondary education, Population with secondary education, Technicians and associate professionals, Labour productivity per employee  
**Employability:** Ease of finding skilled employees, Relevance of education system to the economy, Skills matching, Highly educated unemployment

15.

## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

**Higher-Level Skills:** Workforce with tertiary education, Population with tertiary education, Professionals, Researchers, Senior officials and managers, Digital skills  
**Talent Impact:** Innovation output, High-value exports, Software development, New business density, Scientific journal articles

Finland gains more points from vocational/technical skills than global knowledge skills.

Source: [The Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022](#)



## Retention: Finland's top asset

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland ranks second in terms of factors that keep talented people in the country. In particular, it earns points for welfare state services and sustainability. Finland also ranks well as a facilitator of working life, ranking third in the categories of regulatory environment and business and working life. Among other factors, Finland's points are boosted by employees' rights, professional business management and corporate rollout of technology. Somewhat surprisingly, factors related to education turn out to be Finland's weakness. For example, Finland ranks only 22<sup>nd</sup> in terms of lifelong learning.



## Talent attraction metrics vs. country image

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Talent attraction indicators reveal much about Finland and working in the country. However, as a source of information about the reality of talent attraction, they are theoretical. For example, the GTCI places Finland ahead of the UK, Germany and Canada. It's important to be aware that the talent attraction metric is not an opinion poll; a person's image of a certain country does not necessarily correspond to reality, and the decision to move is influenced by many factors besides these benchmarks. Attracting talent is an activity in which a country's image, including its strengths and weaknesses, is crucial.





SUOMI  
FINLAND

### **3. Sanna Marin's impact on Finland's country image**



## Well-known figures key to country image

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Studies suggest that Finland needs global public figures to strengthen its image. Sanna Marin, who came to international attention in 2019, has brought a positive development to the situation. The country image unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned an analysis of Marin's impact due to her exceptional visibility; in the last three years, Marin was mentioned in connection with Finland or Finnishness in foreign media about 195,000 times. During the same period, President Sauli Niinistö, who produced the second most visibility for Finland, was mentioned 156,400 times. On social media, Marin was mentioned 1.6 million times in 2022, Niinistö 381,000 times.



## Beyond politics

SUOMI  
FINLAND

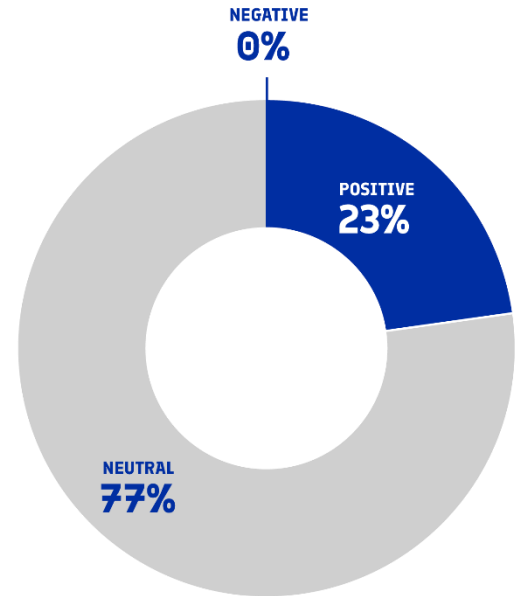
Marin's visibility is particularly significant because it extends beyond the traditional political sector. According to the Meltwater study, about one-fifth of the highest-profile Marin news dealt with non-political themes. Finland was discussed especially in personal profiles of Marin. Such profiles were published by major international media such as the BBC, *The Independent*, *Vogue* and *The Daily Mail*, whose reach is in the tens of millions. In particular, this kind of visibility has provided a significant channel for boosting Finland's recognition.



## Visibility from neutral to positive

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Most of Marin's visibility has been neutral, informative news coverage. However, according to the Meltwater analysis, almost a quarter of the visibility has been clearly positive for Finland's image. For example, Finnish society has been highlighted in the news in a positive light. Meltwater analysed about 9000 of the most widely distributed international news items, of which only two had a negative tone for Finland.



Marin has brought much positive visibility to Finland.  
Source: Meltwater visibility analysis



## Even media uproars have a positive impact

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The treatment of media scandals related to Marin was mostly neutral or clearly positive. The critical comments were mainly reporting views from the Finnish media. In particular, the so-called ‘partygate’ uproar in August 2022 seems to have had a positive effect on Finland’s image and recognition. The most common perspectives on the topic included gender equality and a modern style of being prime minister. On social media, there was also focus on the freedom of the Finnish lifestyle and the prime minister’s right to leisure time and an ordinary life.



## Finland's key strengths on display

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland was shown in a highly positive light in personal profiles of Marin, which discussed topics related to equality, education and equal opportunities through Marin's background and personality. Politics-related topics that were particularly positive for the country's image included news about the family leave reform, emphasising Finland's progressiveness and equality, extensive coverage of Finland's successful coronavirus measures, and of the composition of Marin's government from the standpoint of equality and diversity.



## **6. Current affairs: Finland's NATO process**



## **Commissioned study: The impact of the NATO process on Finland's image**

**SUOMI  
FINLAND**

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland Public Diplomacy Unit commissioned a study by Bloom Consulting surveying the views of well-educated, internationally oriented people about Finland and changes in their perceptions over the past year. The survey covered about 4,000 people in 10 countries (the US, UK, Germany, Japan, India, Brazil, Türkiye, South Korea, China and Russia, the results of which were analysed separately). The survey was carried out in July-August 2022.





# Historic recognition due to the NATO process

SUOMI  
FINLAND

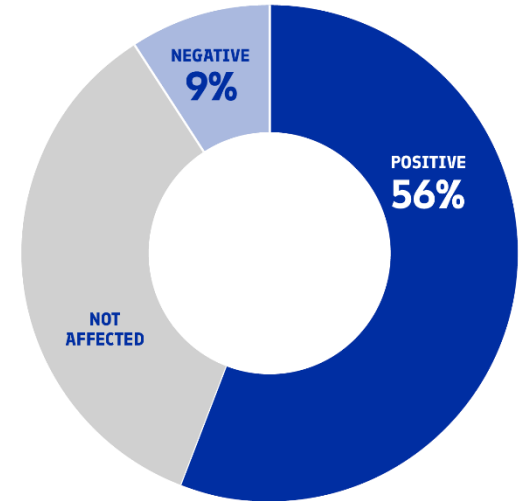
Finland's NATO process has produced exceptional global media attention for the country. According to the MFA's media monitoring, Finland was mentioned in international media headlines approximately 600,000 times in 2022 – three times as many as in the previous year. In the Bloom Consulting survey, 72% of respondent said they had heard news about Finland during the past year. About half of them say that the news was related to Finland's NATO process. Out all respondents who knew about NATO (69%), 74% say they were aware that Finland had submitted a membership application.



## Positive impact of the NATO process

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The attitude towards Finland's NATO membership application varies from country to country, but the Bloom Consulting poll shows that a positive attitude is significantly more common than a negative one. Not counting answers from Russia, 56% of respondents reported a positive change in their view of Finland, while only 9% report weakened perceptions.

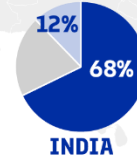
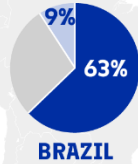
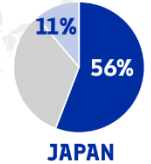
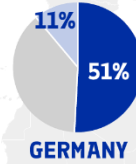
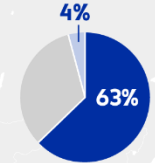
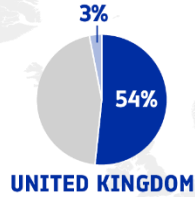
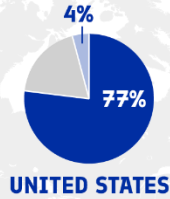


The effect on Finland's image has been positive.  
Source: Bloom Consulting 2022



# Change in perceptions by country

SUOMI  
FINLAND



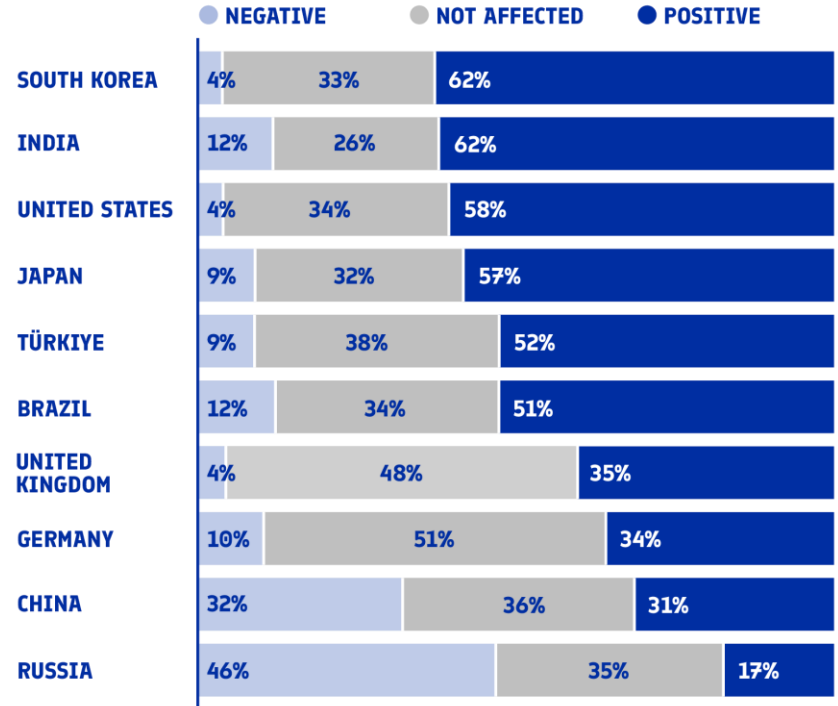
● NEGATIVE    ● NOT AFFECTED    ● POSITIVE



## Sector-specific impact

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland's NATO process was also seen as having a positive effect on the desire to move to Finland (43%), to visit the country (49%), to invest in Finland (47%) and to buy Finnish products (47%). The national distribution was similar across all these sectors.



Russians' interest in moving to Finland declined.  
Source: Bloom Consulting 2022



## 7. Lessons from the research



# Legacy of Finland's year of high visibility

SUOMI  
FINLAND

For Finland, 2022 was a year of exceptional visibility, which shaped its image around the world. This visibility was particularly linked to Russia's war of aggression, Finland's NATO process, and Prime Minister Sanna Marin, who stepped beyond the political spotlight. The most dramatic change was in Russia, where traditionally very positive views of Finland have shown signs of strain. On the other hand, for example, our western neighbour Sweden has become closer to Finland in a new way through the countries' shared NATO process. However, country images change slowly, so only time will tell which effects will remain a permanent part of the nation's image.



## **A strong country image serves as protection**

**SUOMI  
FINLAND**

Central to understanding Finland's visibility is that its treatment in the international media takes place within the framework of the country's image. For example, in NATO news, Finland is profiled through the perspectives of security of supply, comprehensive security and know-how. A strong country image also guides the positive interpretation of news related to PM Marin's leisure time, for example. A strong country image serves as protection when Finland finds itself in the middle of surprising or even negative themes, or when a journalist and reader have to make assumptions about Finland based on preconceived notions.



## Improvement in areas of weakness

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Weaknesses of Finland's country image include a relatively low degree of familiarity with the country and a perception deficiency in the culture category. The average person's familiarity with Finland grows quite slowly, but high visibility always results in positive development. Some improvement in regard to culture is noticeable in several studies. For example, Finland's standing in the culture metrics of the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index increased by two places compared to the previous year and was up five over the past four years. In the Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index, Finland jumped six places in art and entertainment.





## Familiarity essential for talent attraction

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Although Finland performs well on several measures of talent attraction, the importance of recognition when it comes to talent attraction cannot be overemphasised. Even when Finland would be a good option on paper, sufficiently strong positive images are needed to support the decision-making process. In principle, Finland must come to mind when weighing alternatives. In addition to functionality and safety, people look for a country to make an impression on them in terms of fun, liveliness and excitement – in other words, positive experiences on an emotional level. Most often, these are various cultural factors.



## Our activities shape Finland's image

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Finland's image is formed on both the macro and micro scale. In the big picture, what matters most is Finland's decisions and how it participates in international cooperation. At the grassroots level, every Finn acts as a country image ambassador. Between these, there is a network of actors whose job it is to promote Finland's visibility and country image through long-term work. Each level benefits from information associated with the country image. By understanding Finland's image, we have the opportunity to bolster its strengths, support its weaknesses and take advantage of visibility when eyes turn to Finland.



SUOMI  
FINLAND

## 8. Country image in a nutshell



## Country image in a nutshell

SUOMI  
FINLAND

A country image consists of mental images based on knowledge, experiences and beliefs about the country. A country image is based on events over decades, but everyone forms their image within their own personal frame of reference. Impressions of countries change very slowly; while reputation changes quickly and disappears, the country image remains. Perceptions of different countries arise very early in a person's life. From Finland's perspective, the country image is simply "what they think of us".



## Country image matters

SUOMI  
FINLAND

Every day, decisions that affect Finland are made around the world. These decisions may be political, economic or, for example, an individual consumer's choice between two products or holiday destinations. In addition to facts, decisions are often made based on mental images. The country image also affects whether Finland even comes to mind when weighing alternatives. Although it is sometimes said that Finns are overly interested in what others think of the country, understanding of Finland's country image is key when seeking to influence decisions that concern the nation.



## Reputation does not equal country image

SUOMI  
FINLAND

The sort of reputation that a country has at a certain moment is only part of its country image. Although years of continuous, systematic media coverage can gradually affect the country's image, momentary reputation is not the country's image – for better or for worse. Individual media scandals do not tarnish Finland's image, nor do one-off positive boosts make a lasting impression. However, the country image affects how different countries are treated in the media: a strong country image guides the choice of perspectives and the viewer's interpretations.



The Country Image Annual Report is compiled by the Public Diplomacy Unit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The unit is responsible for the operational activities of the [Finland Promotion Board](#), which guides Finland's country image work. The Finland Promotion Board's member organisations include representatives of the public, private and third sectors. Information about Finnish country image work and materials for country image work can be found in the [Finland Toolbox](#).

More information: [FinlandPromotionBoard@finland.fi](mailto:FinlandPromotionBoard@finland.fi)