

European digital nomads (EDIN)

KAINUU REGIONAL REPORT

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Executive summary

This report contains a description of a state of play in Kainuu region in general and particularly on **quality of life** and **digitalization and connectivity** in relation to the scope of the Interreg Europe EDIN – European Digital Nomads project: **how to attract DN in view of the sustainable development**, with special focus on the depopulated areas.

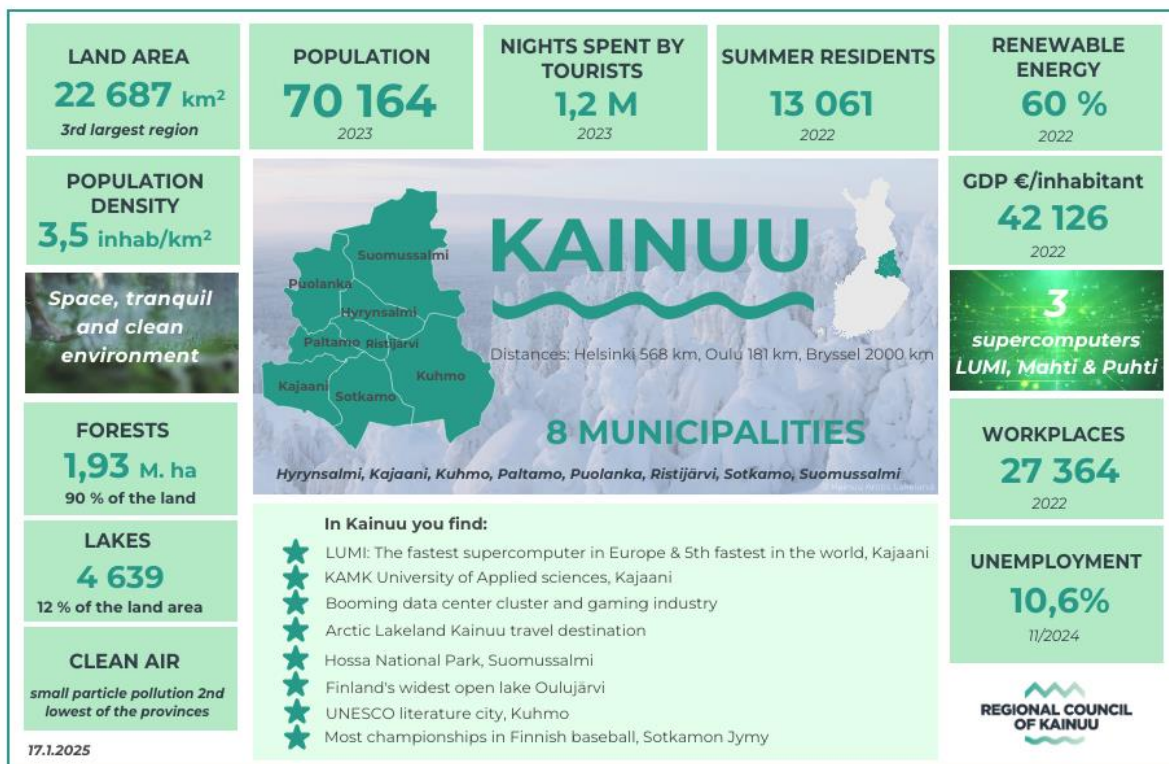
Attracting DNs to the territories brings a number of benefits such as the provision of skills and talent in areas that are losing them, they can strengthen proximity service, and they can be an opportunity to prescribe new areas to explore in terms of tourism. The project has set a goal to increase the presence of DNs in the partner territories by 30% in 2028.

Kainuu has chosen the [Strategy of the Regional State Administrative Agencies and ELY Centres](#) (ELY-AVI Strategy) as a **policy instrument** to be addressed and improved.

Some references are made to the OECD Territorial Review made of Kainuu as a part of the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) publicized on 18th February 2025.

Kainuu in a nutshell

For the Vision 2040 Kainuu has chosen the slogan: "Kainuu in 2040 is all about freedom and possibilities for a meaningful life close to the nature, attracting positive net migration as well as **multi-locational inhabitants**". The latter one refers directly to digital nomads both inside the country and across the borders. Some key statistics about Kainuu:



1. General Context (Definition and Profile of DN in the Region)

Project Overview

Digital nomads (DN) are skilled professionals of high added value sectors who can work digitally from anywhere. They usually seek places suitable to their lifestyles, with good internet connections, quality of life, affordable prices, a well-preserved natural environment, and access to local culture.

Kainuu has precisely these strengths and there is a lot of potential for attracting digital nomads to the area. Attracting DNs to the territories brings many benefits such as the provision of skills and talent in areas that are losing them, they can strengthen proximity service, and they can prescribe new areas to explore in terms of tourism.

EDIN partners cover seven different regions in Europe with different contexts and one common need: the improvement of their **policy instruments** to attract DNs in an effective way and in view of the sustainable development of the territories. Partners have various levels of experience in addressing the DN phenomenon for the benefit of the territory.

Donegal County (Ireland) has extensive experience with a fully-fledged strategy and a clear goal to attract DNs. Tuscany Region (Italy) has observed the importance of this phenomenon and now it makes part of their ERDF regional OP. North-East Region of Bulgaria, Kainuu Region (Finland), Galicia (Spain), Lazdijai Municipality (Lithuania) and Møre and Romsdal (Norway) wish to develop and adapt their policy instruments in the same direction. All partners wish to learn from each other and bring the European perspective to the policies already in place.

Interregional cooperation will lead to an **interregional report** that will identify the main aspects that need to be discussed during the project implementation and then transferred to the policy instruments. A number of exchange activities among all partners will be organized.

All these actions will imply the improvement of the identified policy instruments and will lead to increased presence of DNs in the partner territories by 30% in 2028.

In case of Kainuu, the [Strategy of the Regional State Administrative Agencies and ELY Centres](#) (ELY-AVI Strategy) was chosen as a policy instrument to be addressed and improved – see below **Strategic Priorities** set in the Strategy:

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



The above-mentioned Strategy provides the steering of the ELY Centres and the Regional State Administrative Agencies in the regional implementation of the Government Programme and in renewing their operations in close cooperation with clients and stakeholders for the period of 2024–2027. The strategy aims at creating sustainable future for the benefit of people and regions with the following strategic priorities: 1. increasing vitality, 2. implementing sustainable and clean transitions, 3. promote preparedness and overall safety and 4. safeguarding wellbeing and equality. Under each strategic priority, the strategy has stated the key objectives. **Objectives relevant to the EDIN project** are as follows:

- Renewing, growing, diversifying and internationalising business environment,
- Accessible services,
- Increase the education and skill levels of the population to meet the needs of the labour market,
- Enhancing the environment to support the well-being and the safe and smooth daily life of its residents and support their relationship with the nature,
- Develop the regional labour market to be quality, healthy, safe and adaptive to changes.

Until now, little thought has been given in Kainuu to the **Digital Nomad (DN) phenomenon** or its benefits for the region. So far, there is no idea how many DNs there are in the region, or if there are any. Kainuu is becoming increasingly international, and the goal is to attract more migration to the area, which could be partly brought by DNs. The development of settling in and other relocation services should include also the services needed by DNs in the future.

Who are Digital Nomads in Finland?

With reference to the **Digital Nomads and Finland** report, made by E2 Research in 2023 ([link](#)), digital nomads (DNs) are people who change their residence regularly and whose work is location independent and takes place in the digital sphere. An interest in digital nomadism has been on the rise during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital nomads have been studied extensively. However, only a limited number of studies have been done from the viewpoint of Finland. [The report](#) offers unique knowledge about digital nomads' work and choice of a destination country, examined especially from the perspective of Finland.

According to the study, digital nomadism is a technology-enabled, location-independent way of living that allows travelling and working remotely, anywhere on the internet-connected world. Some digital nomads travel for years, but some are nomadic for shorter periods and take working sabbaticals and "workcations" lasting from several weeks to months. Some digital nomads travel around the globe, but many choose to live and work while exploring a single area or country. The interviewees value especially freedom and flexibility.

According to the data, factors that digital nomads consider important in their employer or client are **trustworthiness**, **friendliness**, and **good communication**. They value especially flexibility in working time, and place of work when choosing a company. They also appreciate **good salary and flexible work** that provides opportunities for growth. In addition, the **international and sustainable values** of a company are important to many of them.

The study revealed that interviewees have searched for job opportunities via several digital channels. However, only a few of them have encountered businesses, employers or clients from Finland or from the Nordics. Most interviewees do not know any Finnish companies. Interviewed DNs encouraged companies to hire internationally, approaching them via LinkedIn, but also other platforms like Angelist, remote.com, Facebook, Twitter and Indeed.

When choosing a destination country digital nomads emphasize **affordability**. Digital nomads share information on destination countries in blogs and on social media channels. In 2022, the most visited countries by digital nomads were the US, Thailand and Spain.

The following strengths in Finland were identified as appealing by the interviewees: **nature** and **safety**, **functioning infrastructure**, **health care** and **education system**. Some of them complement the high English proficiency of Finns. The negative view about Finland was that digital nomads consider high living costs a weakness of the country. Most of the above-mentioned characteristics apply also to Kainuu.

How then to attract Digital Nomads to Kainuu, Finland?

According to interviewees in the above-mentioned study, Finland could attract digital nomads in several ways:

- by easing the visa application process
- by offering concrete help for digital nomads to ease entry into the country
- by clarifying taxation and offering tax incentives
- by creating hubs that provide opportunities for social interaction and networking

Kainuu is not yet widely known as a travel destination, but it has been recently promoted in Europe under the brand name **Arctic Lakeland**. The region is interested in getting new visitors and migrants, as the local population has been declining for a long time.

Digital nomads are seen as an additional target group, who can both strengthen proximity services themselves and prescribe this region to explore in terms of tourism. That is why it is important for Kainuu to raise awareness about digital nomads and the impact they can have on the region, through exchange of existing good practices with other project partners and through implementation of possible local actions and projects, creating added value for the region.

12 reasons

TO VISIT ARCTIC LAKELAND IN WINTER

 Experience Dark Skies <small>Hossa-Suomussalmi, Paljakka</small>	 Taste of Arctic Lakeland at Haapala Farm <small>Vuokatti</small>	 Northern Lights <small>All destinations</small>	 Stay in Finland's northernmost Manor House <small>Kajaani-Oulujärvi</small>
 Learn how to build an igloo <small>Hossa-Suomussalmi</small>	 Skiers winter paradise of 190 km cross-country skiing tracks & 14 slopes <small>Vuokatti</small>	 A night at Arctic Giant Birdhouse Hotel <small>Wild Taiga</small>	 A night in a glass cabin with a view of the Northern sky <small>Ukkohalla, Paljakka</small>
 Snow sure resort <small>Paljakka</small>	 Escape the crowds <small>Kuhmo</small>	 Huskies & reindeer <small>Ukkohalla, Vuokatti, Kuhmo, Suomussalmi, Paljakka</small>	 Sauna experiences <small>Ukkohalla, Vuokatti, Kuhmo, Wild Taiga, Suomussalmi, Paljakka</small>

Arctic Lakeland portal: [Arctic Lakeland Finland - where Lapland and Lakeland meet](#)

2. Framework (Existing Legislation and Regulations of DN)

Finland is a great country for DNs who value a high standard of living, a thriving start-up ecosystem, and breathtaking natural scenery. However, the country **doesn't offer a dedicated Digital Nomad Visa**. It's also not permitted to engage in remote work while in the country on a tourist visa or during visa-free visits. If you're a **citizen of the EU or EEA**, you can reside and work remotely for **up to 3 months** without any constraints. If you're a **non-EU citizen**, you are required to apply/have a residence permit to stay and work in Finland. More information is available on the [Finnish Immigration Service pages](#).

So, EU and EEA citizens, plus citizens of Liechtenstein and Switzerland, do not require a visa to travel to Finland. However, if you want to stay for **more than 3 months** you should [register with the Finnish Immigration Service](#) and have one of the following grounds: **an employee, a self-employed person, a student, or a family member of an EU citizen**. If none of these grounds are applicable to you, you may still stay in Finland and work for local companies or remotely as long as you have **sufficient financial resources**.

Read also a newly published Finland's Rating and Overview for Remote Workers: [Finland Digital Nomad Visa in November 2024 | Citizen Remote](#)

Finland Rating from Citizen Remote

Overall		3.6
Internet Infrastructure		5.0
Country Stability		5.0
Cost of Living		3.0
Ease of Obtaining Visa		2.0
Taxes		3.0

Some biggest Finnish cities such as **Helsinki, Vantaa, Tampere, Turku** and even smaller ones like **Kemi** and **Lappeenranta** have already been recognized as nomad-friendly providing high living standards, coworking spaces and many attractions with the stunning nature nearby being not the least. However, one should know some basic facts about living and working, taxes and visa regulations in Finland as a DN. Some tips may be found here: [Working as a Digital Nomad in Helsinki - Comprehensive Guide - Helsinki Blog](#)

3. Territory (Services as a Cross Sectorial Topic)

The Kainuu region is located in Northeastern Finland and shares a border with Russia, North Ostrobothnia, North Karelia and North Savo. Kainuu is a rural area with **70.164 (2023)** inhabitants and an **average density of only 3,5 people per km²**. It is also about 568 km from Helsinki. The region has a large share of employment in agriculture and mining, processing, and services. Kainuu is experiencing the same trends, population is declining, from around 86.000 in 2001 to 70.000 in 2023.

Over 90% of the land area in Kainuu is covered by forests. The key industries in Kainuu are the **forest bioeconomy**, utilisation and processing of renewable raw materials provided by forests (e.g. different fractions of wood, berries, mushrooms and by-products of production) and **food production**, including agriculture, natural product sector, fishing and fish farming. The region accounts for 41% of all bioeconomy output in Finland. **Sustainable mining** and **chemical industry** are of great importance to Kainuu's employment and well-being.

Tourism is the third largest in Finland after Lapland and the Åland Islands making it another important economic driver in Kainuu. It is based around nature-based activities such as lakes, winter and summertime outdoor activities, and wildlife and has been affected by the border closure. The **technology industry** is growing and is one of the largest employers in the region. Finally, **high-performance computing, robotics, game design** and **game design education** has also emerged as crucial area as well.

Some interesting facts about visiting, living and working in Kainuu region are gathered on the kainuu.fi portal with information presented in English, Finnish and Russian.

Education and skills development

In Kainuu region **Kajaani University of Applied Sciences (KAMK)** plays an important role in developing human capital. The development of education is supported with funding both from the National and the EU programmes. KAMK organizes long-term education and runs RDI activities in collaboration with other Universities in the region – the **University of Oulu (Kajaani University Consortium)** and the **University of Jyväskylä (Vuokatti Sports Technology Unit)**. This coupled with the strong regional innovation system differentiates Kainuu from other rural regions that lack this level of educational and research infrastructure. However, one of the challenges is that university-level education and research in Kainuu is narrow and limited.

Discussions in the region reveal a focus on the development of vocational education and training. The City of Kajaani is the provider of vocational education and training. **Kainuu**

Vocational College is part of the City of Kajaani's educational enterprise. Training is also provided in other parts of the region with permanent locations in Kuusamo and Vuokatti.

Transports

Kainuu is a relatively remote and low-density region with a few good transport options. Kajaani Airport has **regular flights to Helsinki** which take one hour and a quarter. However, the long-term viability of this route is in question because the national government has yet to commit to long-term funding strategy.

The Regional Council of Kainuu has defined the development needs of the regional transport system in co-operation with municipalities, transport authorities and other co-operation parties that have a key impact on transport in **the Kainuu Transport System Plan**. The ad hoc approach to funding is hampering long-term regional planning. Train and bus connections exist, but they require significant development, particularly in ensuring smooth travel chains.

The sparse population and long distances between key locations, such as the airport and tourist destinations, further complicate the situation. Kajaani is approximately **six and a half hours from Helsinki via car** on the E63 which is a major road link through the interior of the country. Coupled with other road connections VT5, VT6, VT22 for both passengers and the movement of goods.

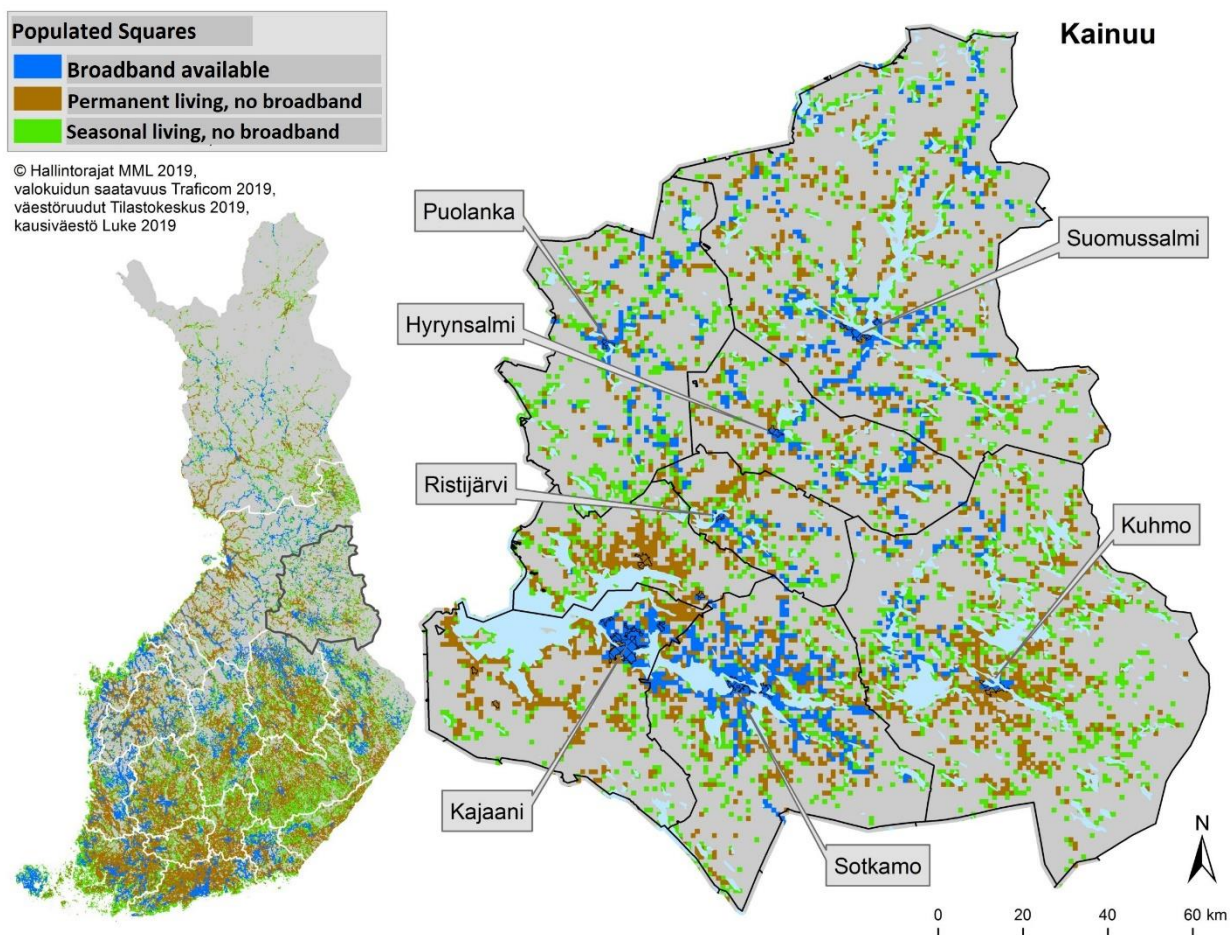
Railway networks are improving between Oulu-Kajaani-Kuopio-Helsinki, Kajaani-lisalmi-Kokkola. There are also railway connections Kontiomäki-Vuokatti-Nurmes-Joensuu and Kontiomäki-Suomussalmi. While the number of rail connections have improved, the grade crossings need work, and this impacts the speed of trains.

Transport system design is a continuous and interactive planning process based on impact assessment and cooperation between authorities and other actors. The aim of this process is to promote a functioning, safe and sustainable transport system. Read more about the development of [Transport System in Kainuu](#).

Availability of Broadband in Kainuu

Fixed fibre connections have been built in Kainuu with national funding since 2011. The availability of fibre optic network in the end of 2019 covered 32% of the households in Kainuu. Counting all the fixed connections, the availability rate (Download ≥ 100 Mbit/s) rises to 58 %. Wireless connections complement the fixed network in and around Kainuu, so the coverage of fast broadband connections is good. Read more about [Broadband Connections in Kainuu](#).

Figure: Availability of Broadband in Kainuu



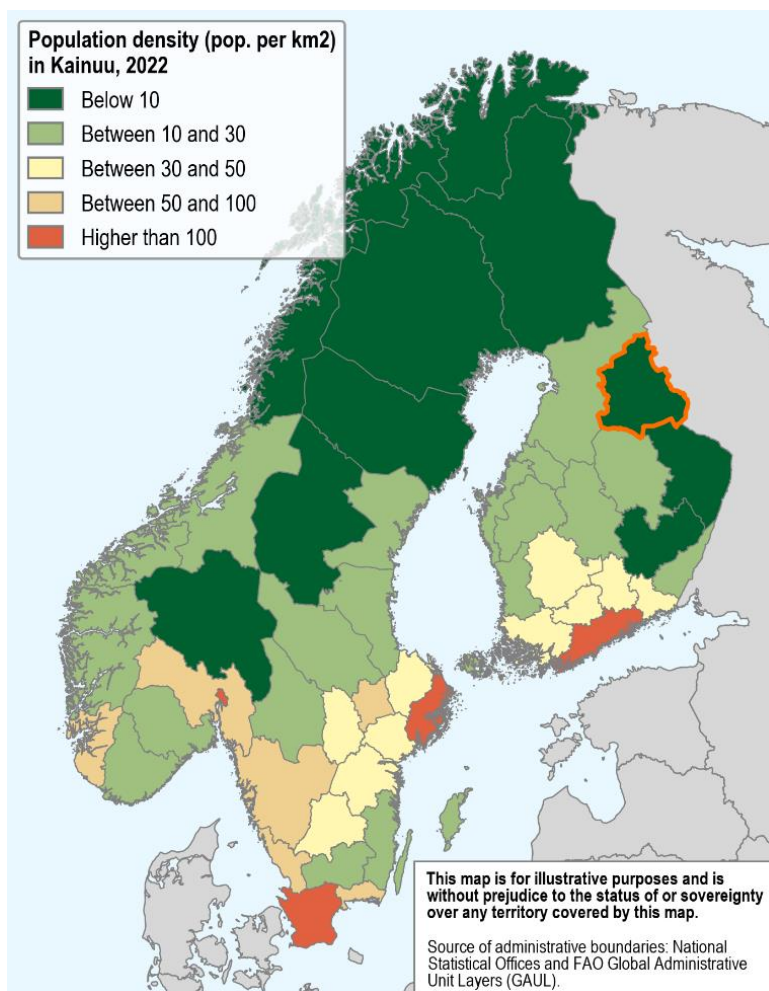
3.1 Demographics (Demographic Situation and Trends in the Region)

Population density

Around one-third of the Finnish population live in rural areas, but the population density and demographics vary according to the type of rural area. Due to its vast surface land, low population and large surface area, population density in Kainuu remains relatively low by OECD standards. When population density gets too low, it can lead to adverse impacts in rural areas. The Kainuu region is the second smallest region in Finland after Central Ostrobothnia. The region consists of eight municipalities **with a population density of only 3,5 inhabitants per km²** (see the Figure below). Over a half of the population of the region resides in City of Kajaani (36.513).

Population and companies are mostly concentrated in the south-western part of the region - the Kajaani subregion. Urbanization is a trend that is also happening in Kainuu. Within the region, peripheral areas, including Municipalities of Kuhmo, Suomussalmi, Hyrynsalmi and Puolanka, become more segregated and face significant challenges in maintaining services, getting labour due to the population decline.

Figure: Population Density in the Nordics



Note: Kainuu is highlighted. Source: OECD Regional Statistics 2022

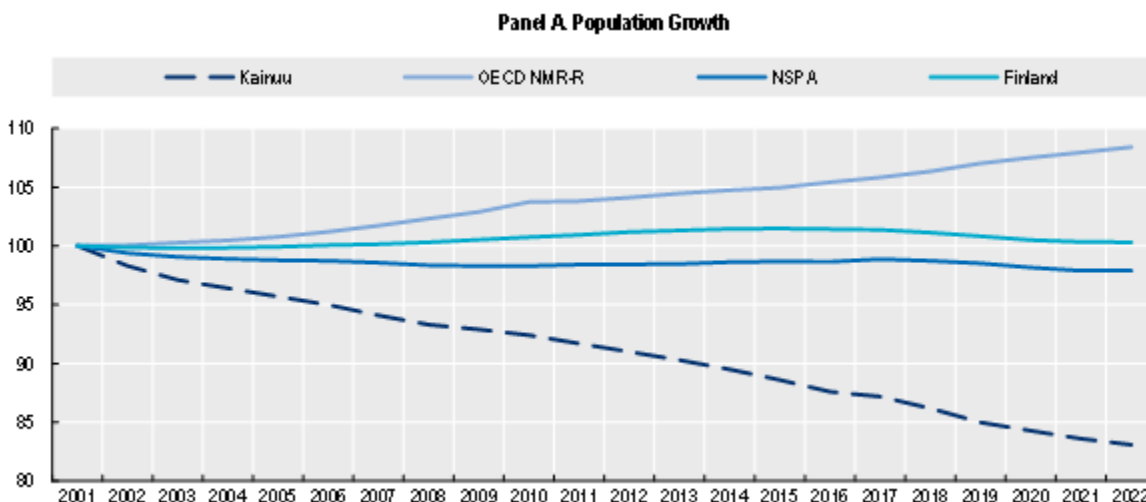
Demographic trends

Population change in Kainuu is linked to the internal migration patterns of resident populations, the settlement patterns of immigrants, different birth and death rates and the age structure of the municipal populations. According to Finland's largest pension

provider Keva's recent forecast, nearly 180.000 of the current municipal sector employees will retire in Finland over the next ten years, which is one third of the current personnel.

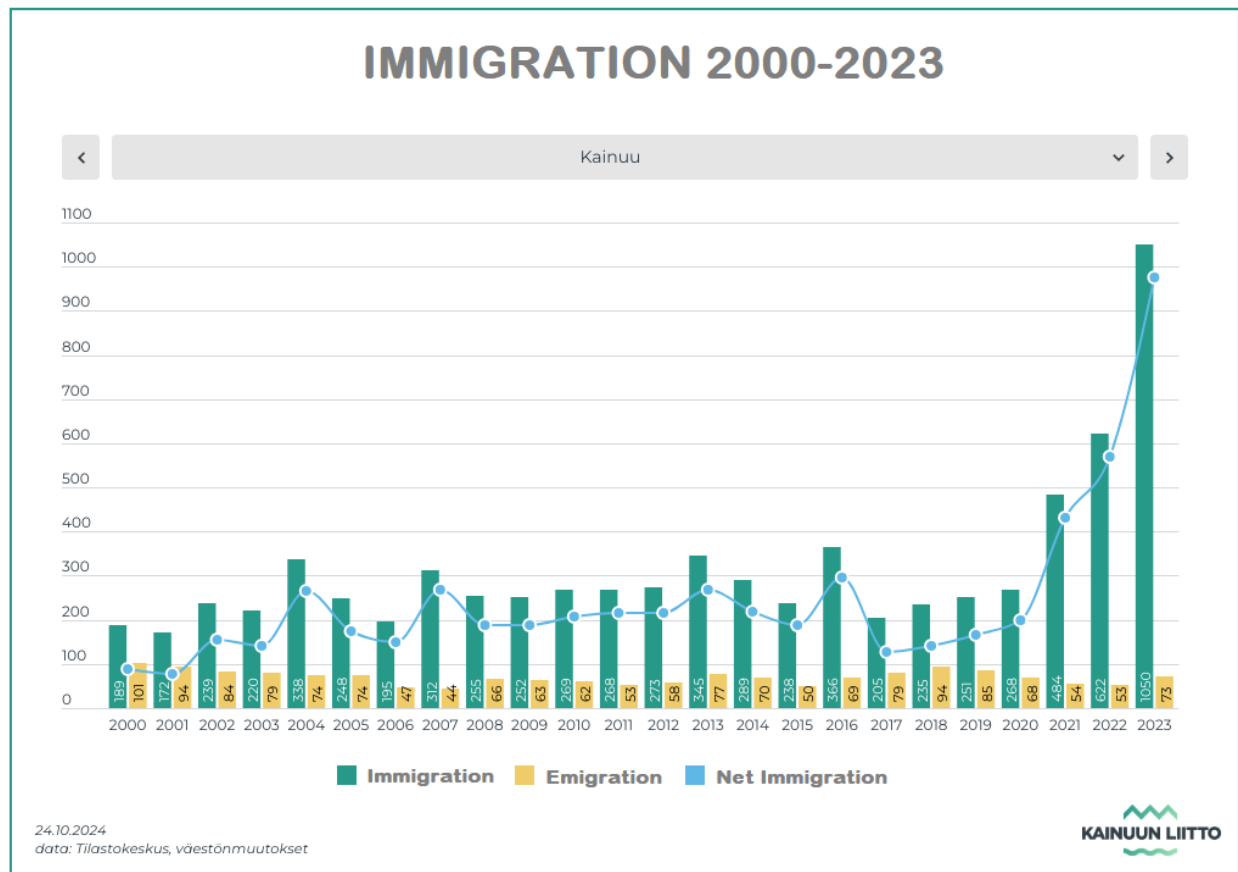
Although it is not possible to reverse the trend of reducing population in Kainuu, every effort is made to curb the decline, and this is also a goal set in the [Kainuu Programme](#).

According to Statistics Finland the number of region's working age people will fall by 2.000 persons or 6 % by 2030. The Figure below illustrates the varying population growth trajectories of Kainuu and other benchmarks from 2001 to 2022, relative to each region's population in 2001. Along with South Savo, Kainuu has experienced the most significant slowdown in population growth compared with the 2001 rate. Kainuu shows a continuous decline over the two decades, with a population decrease of 17%, while the average Northern Sparsely Populated Area (NSPA) region has experienced a decrease of only 2%. However, such a decrease was smaller than predicted.



At the moment, immigration is the most effective curb of population decline. Kainuu has even received a slight migration gain, coming from immigration. However, this will not be enough to reverse demographic trends. The trend of moving to the countryside that started with the Covid pandemic can also be seen in Kainuu and has slowed down emigration. The long-term migration loss has turned into migration gain over the past couple of years. In 2022, Kainuu had a migration gain of 19 persons and the population of Sotkamo grew. Domestic migration was negative, but net immigration was 569 persons. The growing immigration is particularly visible in Kajaani: during January–November 2023, the population of Kajaani has increased by 170 persons. In intermunicipal migration, Puolanka and Ristijärvi have received migration gain. Read more about the [Demographic changes in Kainuu](#).

Figure: Immigration in Kainuu 2000-2023 (growth of net immigration after 2020)



Gendered perspectives

In 2020 the Regional Council of Kainuu and the City of Kajaani launched a project aimed at integrating the perspective of young women more strongly into vitality policy and regional development. The experiment created a new operating model for vitality policy to be used by Kainuu's municipalities, where the wishes and needs of young women are better taken into account in decision-making.

The project was based on the observation that, especially in rural areas, women are more likely to go to bigger cities to study, while men are more likely to stay in their home region, according to the available statistics. In all municipalities in Kainuu, **young women are severely under-represented** (60–80 women per 100 men), posing various challenges to the vitality of municipalities, among other things.

The above-mentioned project carried out experiments and looked for new opportunities to create operating models for vitality policy. In the future, the results can be utilised in regional planning and municipal strategy work, nationally. See [the final report](#) (in Finnish).

3.2 Functional Areas (How Functional Areas Operate in the Region)

Regional Administrative Structure

The planned reform of regional state administration in 2026 will bring the central government's permit, guidance and supervision functions together in a new national agency. At the same time, new regional [Economic Development Centres](#) will be established. The reform aims to improve and harmonise permitting and supervision practices across regions and to streamline processes and services. Kainuu will form a new **North Finland's Economic Development Centre** together with North Ostrobothnia.

The Kainuu region (Kainuun maakunta) consists of eight municipalities that also are the members of [the Regional Council of Kainuu](#). The latter has two main functions laid down by law: **regional development** and **regional land use planning**. The Regional Council is also the key international actor in Kainuu, being responsible for the EU's Structural Fund programmes and their implementation. It has also the key role in promoting the region's interests and protects the region's culture and traditions in many ways.

The decision-making of the Regional Council of Kainuu is based on municipal democracy. The **Assembly** (maakuntavaltuusto) of Regional Council is the regional council's highest political decision-making body. The municipalities of the region elect representatives to the assembly for a four-year electoral term. The regional council's preparatory, executive and administrative body is a **Board**, which is elected by the regional assembly and represents the region's political composition. The board is assisted by the staff of the Regional Council's **Office**.

The **Kainuu Wellbeing Services County** (Kainuun hyvinvointialue) is responsible for organising **healthcare, social welfare and rescue services** in the region. The Wellbeing Services County is the largest employer in the region (about 4.000 employees). Kainuu is a pioneer in the integration of primary health care, specialised medical care and social services.

The highest decision-making power in the Wellbeing Services County is exercised by the **County Council** (aluevaltuusto), which is elected in the county elections and has 59 councillors. The County Council decides on the operations and finances.

Labour market dynamics

The current recession in Finland has affected Kainuu as well. In December 2024 the number of unemployed jobseekers rose by 11 % to 3.700 persons (compared to December 2023). It is expected that in the next few years the economy will grow again according to the forecasts, which will likely reduce the unemployment in Kainuu.

In the long term, Kainuu's unemployment rate has decreased significantly. For example, in December 2015 Kainuu's unemployment rate of 17,9 % was the 3rd worst of 16 ELY-Centre areas but in December 2024 it was 12,2 % which was the 9th best. Current economic downturn has weakened Kainuu's unemployment rate but in the next few years it will probably keep improving again.

The biggest reason for such excellent development has been the age structure of the population. The amount of people retiring has for a long time been a lot higher than the young people entering the labour market. This has opened vacancies for younger age groups. Still in December 2024, 18 % of unemployed jobseekers were at least 60 years old and 42 % at least 50 years old.

This means that the number of unemployed jobseekers will still reduce greatly during the current and next decade. However, the age structure is by no means the only reason for the improvement. The employment rate has also improved drastically, as there has been lots of open vacancies for years and many industries have developed well during the past decade, especially mining industry.

The number of region's working age people fell by 14 % between 2015 and 2023 but the number of employed people fell only by 2 % (*source: Statistics Finland*). This can be seen in Kainuu's employment rate which was 58,9 % in 2015, the worst of Finland's 19 regions. However, last year it was already 73,7 %, which was the 4th best.

The recession has also affected the demand for labour which has decreased significantly during the past years. This has eased the worst labour shortage from the last year when the recruitment problems in Finland were highest in Kainuu according to Statistics Finland survey. Towards the end of this year the number of vacant jobs will likely increase as the economy starts growing and this will again aggravate the labour shortage.

The highest demand for labour in Kainuu has for a long time been in **healthcare sector**. In addition to this the largest shortage of workers is in **metal, ICT, restaurant and forest industries**. This year **construction sector** will start recovering from its downturn according to forecasts, which will raise the need for construction workers and correspondingly the labour shortage.

In January 2025, the responsibility for organising employment services was transferred from the central government to municipalities and, at the same time, the regional state's **Employment and Economic Development Offices** (TE Offices) [were disbanded](#). Municipalities of Kainuu together with Municipalities of Kuusamo and Taivalkoski formed a new **Kainuu-Koillismaa Employment Area**.

3.3 Occupation of Spaces (How Can Abandoned Spaces Be Brought Back)

There are some examples of re-purposing old buildings into modern and lively places to be used as coliving and/or coworking facilities to accommodate potential digital nomads, who are seeking for specific and unique experiences. One interesting project to mention is the **Gamified Cohousing facility**, located in the very heart of the City of Kajaani, a former Finnish school turned into a hostel with shared workspace for students and people, who are passionate about gaming. Read more: [Gamified Cohousing Kajaani](#)

One more good example of a coliving and coworking place in Kainuu is the **Mustarinda House**, operated by a non-profit association, which fosters natural and cultural diversity by bringing together people from different backgrounds through workshops, exhibitions, residency programming, publications and happenings. It offers annually residencies for artists and researchers interested in combining contemporary art, boundary crossing research, practical experiments, education and community work.

Mustarinda works largely with volunteer input. They hope that the residency guests take part to some of shared tasks in the house like cleaning, gardening in the summer, or snow work in the wintertime. They also welcome children and pets, if agreed before the residency. The activities are centred at the Mustarinda House, located next to the Paljakka Nature Reserve in Hyrynsalmi municipality. Read more about the residency: [Mustarinda - Mustarinda](#)

In addition, **Routa Company**, a production house for contemporary dance, offers [residential accommodation](#) suitable for appr. three persons (dancers) free of charge in a two-bedroom apartment in the city centre, just few blocks away from the studio / stage.

Affordable and communal hostel rooms, located in an old functionalist apartment building designed in 1948, are also offered by the family-owned [Vieraanvara Hostel](#) in the centre of Kajaani.

[Vuokatti Sport Resort](#), located in Sotkamo, some 35 km from Kajaani, offers different types of accommodation combined with active holidays, including outdoor and indoor facilities for winter and summer sports, both for top sportspeople and non-professional individuals and groups. There are also other winter resorts in Kainuu.

The **Wild Taiga region** in and around Kuhmo and Suomussalmi offers cozy accommodation, convenient services and the complete peace and silence of the surrounding wilderness creating an ideal setting for remote working. After work, it is easy to shift to holiday mode while remaining in the same beautiful surroundings and engaging in a variety of activities or just relaxing in the bosom of nature. Read more about Wild Taiga remote work packages: [Workation in Wild Taiga - Wild Taiga](#)

3.4 Urban – Rural Link (Interaction/Connection btw Rural and Urban Areas)

The backbone of Kainuu's regional structure consists of a competitive regional centre, Kajaani, which is strengthened by close cooperation with the nearest municipalities of Sotkamo and Paltamo. There are also two strong urban service settlements of Kuhmo and Suomussalmi, which serve as workplace hubs, as well as three other municipal centres (Hyrnsalmi, Puolanka and Ristijärvi) providing public and proximity services.

This network of municipal centres is connected to a diverse and vibrant countryside and village network. Critical regional structure factors in Kainuu also include the natural environment with its protected and recreational areas, various routes, cultural environments and sites, areas of tourism and other business activities.

Traffic between Kajaani Airport and municipal centres and tourist areas is currently based on private cars and taxi journeys. Earlier connections to the airport were discontinued in 2023. The newly recommended Travel Chain Pilot for feeder traffic to and from the airport is proposed to be launched in 2025. One option is to offer such services “on-demand”.

Figure: Proposed Travel Chain Routes for Feeder Traffic to Kajaani Airport

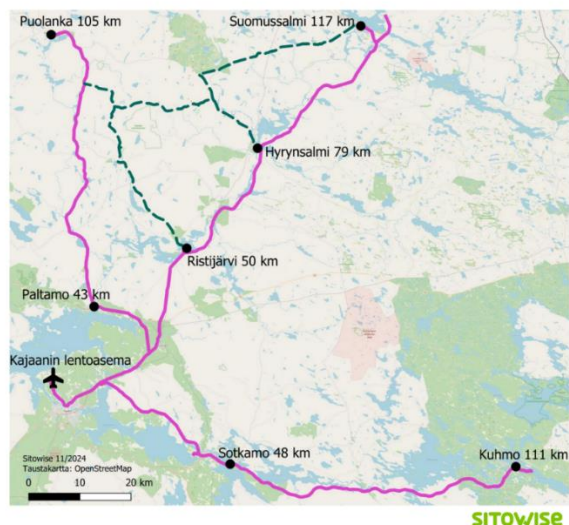
Liityntäliikenteen reitit

Matkaketjupilotin reittejä on kolmeen eri pääsuuntaan:

- **Kuhmo–Sotkamo**, joka ajetaan tarvittaessa Kuhmossa hotelli Kalevalan ja Sotkamossa Katinkullan kautta,
- **Suomussalmi–Hyrnsalmi–Ristijärvi**, joka ajetaan tarvittaessa Suomussalmella kirkonkylän kautta ja
- **Puolanka–Paltamo**.

Kaikki reitit lähtevät tai loppuvat **Kajaanin lentoasemalle**. Reitit kulkevat kuntakeskuksissa linja-autoasemien kautta. Puolangan ja Suomussalmen suuntien reitteihin on mahdollista yhdistää tarvittaessa myös Paljakan ja Ukkohallan matkailukeskukset.

Palvelu toimii kutsupohjaisena, joten vuorot ajetaan vain niiden pysähdyspaikkojen kautta, joista tilauksia on tehty. Reitit ovat siis suuntaa-antavia ja voivat vaihdella yksittäisten vuorojen välillä.



[The Current Picture of Kainuu](#) identifies the following **critical development targets**: Accessibility, Availability of skilled labour, Promotion of investments, Strengthening the green transition and infrastructure, Developing the attraction and retention power of Kainuu, Developing areas close to the eastern border in Kainuu and Utilizing NATO membership. Kainuu is a home base for the **Kainuu Brigade**, which is one of the biggest army units, training appr. 4.000 conscripts annually.

Multi-locality as a phenomenon in Kainuu

One topic, raised in the current Kainuu Regional Program 2022-2025 is **multi-locality**. In the Vision 2024 Kainuu is seen as an attractive region of **positive net migration** and **year-around tourism**. According to the Target scenario 2024 Kainuu can act as a model region for multi-location and remote work. Multi-locality means that instead of one fixed dwelling, people spend their everyday life or leisure time in several places, transiting between them. **Work-related multi-locality** includes remote work, commuting and seasonal work, whereas the leisure-related version consists of spending time at a second home or tourist rental. Read more: [Towards sustainable multi-locality](#).

In 2021 the potential for multi-location and location-independent work in Kainuu was examined. In a study commissioned by the Regional Council of Kainuu, the goal was to strengthen awareness, visibility and the attractiveness of Kainuu from the perspective of different target groups and to prepare for the spread of location-independent work in Finland. The aim was also to position **Kainuu as a pioneer region for location-independent work and multi-locational employees** while taking into account the needs of different target groups when choosing a place to live.

The main output of the study was the profiling of target groups and the search for more detailed information about them. The study covered five different groups of people:

- Kainuu-based people over the age of 50 with older parents in Kainuu,
- Young adults from Kainuu who plan to start their university studies elsewhere,
- Multi-place residents or event visitors who have a special relationship with Kainuu,
- Families with children who have grandparents in Kainuu,
- Families where one parent already has a job in Kainuu.

The potential for multi-location living was examined through a survey which gathered views on effective practices and development needs so that multi-location and location-independent work could become more common in Kainuu. **Key ideas for strengthening multi-location were related to workspaces, improving the telecommunications infrastructure, mobility and seasonal and summer housing services.**

Multi-locality in Kainuu (Monipaikkaisuus Kainuussa) study (in Finnish): [Kainuun liitto](#)

Read also: [Full article: Smart shrinkage and multi-locality – The appeal of hope, illustrated through Puolanka, a rural municipality in Finland](#)

4. Economy

4.1 State of Play of the Economic Situation in the Region

The Kainuu region is located in Northeastern Finland and shares a border with the Russian Federation, Northern Ostrobothnia, North Karelia and Pohjois-Savo. Kainuu is a rural area with **70.164 (2023)** inhabitants and an average density of **only 3,50 people per km²**. It is also about 568 km from Helsinki. The region has a large share of employment in agriculture and mining, processing, and services. Kainuu is experiencing the same trends, population is declining, from around 86.000 in 2001 to 70.000 in 2023.

Over 90% of the land area in Kainuu is covered by forests. The key industries in Kainuu are the forest bioeconomy, including the forest and wood cluster, utilization and processing of renewable raw materials provided by forests (e.g. different fractions of wood, berries, mushrooms and by-products of production) and food production, including agriculture, natural product sector, fishing and fish farming. Finland is a recognized leader in pulp and paper technology, and exports over 13 million tons of paper, board and chemical pulp annually. The region accounts for 41% of all bioeconomy output in Finland.

Sustainable mining and chemical industry are also of great importance to Kainuu's employment and well-being. The sector actively invests in RDI activities and the use of cutting-edge technology by cooperating nationally and internationally with other actors.

Tourism is the third largest in Finland after Lapland and the Åland Islands making it another important economic driver in Kainuu. It is based around nature-based activities such as lakes, winter and summertime outdoor activities, and wildlife and has been affected by the border closure. The technology industry is growing and is one of the largest employers in the region. **Finally, high-performance computing, robotics, game design and game design education has also emerged as crucial area as well.**

4.2 Post Covid Resilience and Effects of the War in Ukraine on the Economy

The pandemic has affected various sectors differently. For example, tourism and certain service industries faced significant disruptions, while the ICT, bioeconomy and mining sectors demonstrated resilience and even growth of turnover (mining in particular).

The war in Ukraine has influenced regional development, particularly in terms of geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty. Restrictions on wind power construction in border areas and changes in trade dynamics have been notable. The situation requires adaptive strategies to mitigate these challenges to maintain economic stability.

Due to the war in Ukraine, so many Ukrainians have moved to Kainuu that they are already the second most common foreign nationality (438) after Russians (773) in Kainuu in 2023. This has to some extent internationalized business environment in the region.

4.3 Perspective of the Economic Development

Strategic overview and commitment to sustainable growth in Kainuu

This section provides an overview of the assets/growth opportunities and bottlenecks/risks identified during the OECD mission to Kainuu conducted in 2023.

In sum, the growth dynamics of the region are primarily linked to its diverse natural resources and the associated processing industries (especially the mining sector and bioeconomy). Kainuu is known for its unique expertise, and especially education in the game industry is constantly being developed, for example, with regard to game technology engineering studies. Last year, technology industries became the most significant sector in Kainuu in terms of the number of employees. This sector accounts for more than half of the region's exports.

Along with **High Performance Computing (HPC)** and data centres, forest bioeconomy is the primary investment focus in Kainuu. The **KaiCell Fibers Oy/Ltd** is one example. Located in the municipality of Paltamo, it is a pulp and bioproducts mill project developed by the Regional Council of Kainuu. However, this large-scale investment remains uncertain while waiting to be funded by private investors. Demand for raw material has remained high and wood prices have continued to rise favourably. Kainuu sawmill companies have invested recently or are investing in their production facilities, and thus their readiness to deliver timber to export markets will continue to be good.

Natural resources enable the sustainable development of industries. Tourism is one of the most important sectors in Kainuu, which has a significant impact on employment and the economy of the region. For example, **Vuokatti Ski Resort** and **Olympic Training Centre** in Sotkamo is the third most popular tourism destination in Finland.

Initiatives on housing, education, learning and care are executed in collaboration with universities, research institutes and technical high schools. This acts as a pilot area for testing modern technologies and products to be offered to the elderly. Kuhmo has a history in renewable energy and timber construction, but culture is playing a critical role. Kuhmo is UNESCO's Creative City of Literature and was the 2023 Finnish-Ugric capital of culture. The municipality of Puolanka is considered by some to be "the most remote municipality in Finland's most remote province." It is also the municipality that recorded the fastest population decline (3,8 % in 2001) in Finland. At the same time, it is a part of

the southernmost reindeer herding area and a significant milk producer with the largest dairy farm in the Kainuu region, and a haven for summer homes.

Opportunities and challenges in Kainuu (SWOT Analysis)

Strengths

- **Rich natural resources and sustainable economic activities.** Kainuu's abundant forests and thriving bio-economy sectors form the cornerstone of its sustainable economic development. Leveraging these resources responsibly can drive the region's economic activities and environmental sustainability efforts.
- **Innovative ecosystems and entrepreneurial economy.** The region's commitment to innovation is evidenced by the Kajaani University Consortium and specializations in sectors such as game design. A vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem, bolstered by strong collaborations between educational institutions and businesses, fosters innovation and creates opportunities for economic growth.
- **Educational institutions as talent development hubs.** The presence of a university of applied sciences and a university consortium, hosting around 2,300 students including 500 international students, serves as a pivotal foundation for talent development and attraction. This educational base is crucial for nurturing the skills necessary for future economic challenges and opportunities.
- **Comprehensive infrastructure.** Kainuu's infrastructure, including airports, roads, rail, and Fiber optic internet, and a strong electricity core network, is vital for connecting the region to global markets and attracting foreign direct investment. Such infrastructure supports Kainuu's integration into the global economy and enhances its attractiveness to international talent and investors.
- **Visionary regional planning for future development.** The ambitious Vision 2040 underlines proactive regional planning aimed at making Kainuu an attractive destination for positive net migration and year-round tourism. Setting a clear direction for future development is essential for achieving sustainable growth and attractiveness.
- **Growing tourism sector.** Kainuu's natural beauty and opportunities for nature-based activities and winter sports make it an appealing destination for tourists. Developing the tourism sector further can significantly contribute to the region's economic diversification and resilience.
- **High export potential and international connections.** The region's significant growth in exports and focus on attracting international talent through education and business underscore Kainuu's competitive edge in international markets and its

global outlook. Enhancing these connections is crucial for fostering knowledge sharing, innovation, and economic growth.

Weaknesses

- **Demographic challenges and economic sustainability.** The aging population and declining workforce present significant threats to long-term socio-economic stability. This demographic shift necessitates a strategic response to maintain a balance between the workforce's size and its productivity.
- **Skills mismatch and talent development.** There is a need to resolve the existing skills mismatches and shortages, especially in middle-skilled occupations and sectors with high growth potential. These mismatches pose barriers to economic growth and require immediate action.
- **Adapting the education system.** It's crucial to adapt the traditional education systems to meet the demands of lifelong learning and the specific skill sets needed for future economies. This includes preparing for the green transition and ensuring that education is responsive to market needs.
- **Attracting and retaining talent.** Overcoming the challenge of attracting and retaining skilled labour is essential. This includes creating incentives for talent to stay, return after their studies, or initial employment abroad, thus ensuring a stable and skilled workforce.
- **Policy coherence and collaboration.** Ensuring coherence and effective collaboration among all actors and institutions involved in skills development is vital. Overcoming siloed approaches is key to fostering integrated policy responses and leveraging collective expertise.
- **Addressing infrastructure limitations.** The challenges of geographical isolation and infrastructural limitations must be addressed to improve accessibility and mobility, essential for economic development and talent retention.
- **Mitigating economic volatility.** Given the high dependence on natural resources and export-driven sectors, strategies to mitigate economic volatility are crucial. This involves diversifying the economy and enhancing resilience against external shocks.

Opportunities

- **Strategic vision alignment and skills development.** Prioritize aligning with Vision 2040 to capitalise on future skills development, focusing on the green transition and digital transformation. This includes strengthening the link between education, research, and industry to tailor skills development to future needs.

- **Educational and training expansion for lifelong learning.** Expand continuous education and training programs to address skill imbalances and prepare the workforce for evolving demands. This involves leveraging the region's educational institutions to enhance lifelong learning opportunities.
- **International talent and educational advancement.** Utilize the region's vibrant educational institutions and entrepreneurial ecosystem to attract international students and skilled workers. This effort will not only enhance the region's global connections and knowledge-sharing capabilities but also reinforce educational advancement to meet industry needs.
- **Economic diversification through digital and green transition.** Leverage digital transformation for economic diversification and improved public services, while capitalizing on environmental assets to lead in green energy and sustainable practices. These dual paths will foster economic growth, technological innovation, and environmental sustainability.
- **Tourism, migration, and rural revitalization for economic growth.** Leverage Kainuu's vision to promote year-round tourism and positive net migration, enhancing economic growth and cultural diversity. Parallely, develop smart rural strategies to attract residents and businesses through quality-of-life improvements, contributing to rural revitalization.
- **Comprehensive stakeholder engagement for cohesive strategy development.** Engage a broad range of stakeholders to develop a cohesive strategy for skills development and socio-economic growth, ensuring alignment with regional goals. This will include fostering cross-border cooperation to enhance trade, innovation partnerships, and shared regional development objectives.

Threats

- **Demographic challenges.** Kainuu is confronted with the threat of an ageing population. This demographic shift places pressure on social services and the labour market, which, if not addressed, could significantly impede the region's economic growth and development. Addressing the ageing population issue is essential for ensuring sustainable regional prosperity.
- **Economic diversification needs.** The region's economic health is jeopardised by its dependence on a narrow range of sectors. This vulnerability is heightened by the potential for industry-specific downturns and the broader impacts of global economic fluctuations. Enhancing economic diversification is vital for resilience against such vulnerabilities.
- **Talent retention and attraction.** Kainuu faces a significant "brain drain," with a notable proportion of the local talent leaving for educational opportunities and not

returning. This exodus of skilled individuals limits the region's growth potential and competitiveness. Developing strategies to retain local talent and attract new residents is crucial for the region's future success.

- ***Climate change and environmental sustainability.*** The impacts of climate change, including increased vulnerability of natural resources and key sectors such as tourism and agriculture, pose significant threats to Kainuu. A strategic approach to sustainability and climate adaptation is imperative to protect the region's natural assets and ensure the long-term viability of its economy.
- ***Global competition.*** In the context of intense global competition for talent and investment, Kainuu must innovate and enhance its value proposition. This is essential not only for attracting skilled workers and investment but also for standing out in a crowded and competitive international landscape.
- ***Infrastructure modernization.*** The challenge of maintaining and upgrading infrastructure to meet future demands is crucial for supporting economic growth and quality of life in Kainuu. Addressing infrastructure obsolescence will enable the region to better accommodate growth and technological advancements.
- ***Global economic uncertainties.*** The region must navigate the complexities of international trade tensions and economic downturns that can affect local industries. Developing a robust strategy to mitigate the impacts of global economic uncertainties is essential for safeguarding Kainuu's economic stability.

5. Future perspective

For the Vision 2040 Kainuu chose the slogan: "Kainuu in 2040 is all about freedom and possibilities for a meaningful life close to the nature, attracting positive net migration as well as **multi-locational inhabitants**". The last one refers directly to DNs both inside the country and across the borders. The next priorities were listed in [the Kainuu Programme](#):



5.1 Quality of Life (Affected by the Phenomenon of DN)

Easy Living

Kainuu offers you the keys to easy everyday life and there's space for everyone! Active hobbies and sports clubs for kids and adults, schools and health care services combined with nature around you are the basis of our relaxed lifestyle and quality of life – Kainuu Lifestyle. Everything is near and easy to reach, and this will save you plenty of time. The city of Kajaani has even declared to be on a totally different "**26/7**" **time zone** compared to any bigger cities – with two extra hours per day! Watch a short video at [RekryAreena](#).

Early Childhood Education

Finnish early childhood education and care comprises care, education and teaching to support children's balanced growth, development and learning. To begin the introduction

to the theme, you might want to visit the Education Finland website or watch a presentation video “Early childhood care and compulsory schooling in Finland” produced by City of Kajaani/ International info [on YouTube](#). You’ll find the links to municipal early education services of Kainuu municipalities on this website dedicated to [Living in Kainuu](#).

Kainuu Social and Health Care

Wellbeing Services County of Kainuu provides all the social welfare and health care services for the municipalities of Hyrynsalmi, Kajaani, Kuhmo, Paltamo, Ristijärvi, Sotkamo and Suomussalmi. In Puolanka, the County provides only the special health care services and environmental health care services. Kainuu is a forerunner in Finland in terms of integrating primary health care services with specialized medical care as well as social services. Wellbeing Services County is the biggest employer in the region with about 4.000 employees.

Leisure combined with remote working

There are over 12.000 summer cabins in Kainuu. Also, the tourism centres of the region provide holiday makers with holiday homes for both short term and long-term stays. Teleworking doesn’t always mean retreating to solitude but working in groups other than your own work community. For example, municipalities or village communities may provide teleworking facilities that you may reserve for a day or two, or for longer periods.

Known as a destination for especially winter sports, the Municipality of Sotkamo launched the concept **Lomalla/On holiday 365** (link to webpage in Finnish: <https://lomalla365.com/>) Watch a retro-style short marketing video featuring the Mayor of Sotkamo [here](#).

Work & Stay project, co-funded by the EU, is a joint effort of municipalities of Kuusamo, Posio and Taivalkoski, located north of Kainuun region, to promote their territory as a destination suitable for remote workers who seek the perfect work-life balance in scenery Southern Lapland. Read more about the project [here](#).

Read more about facilities for remote working available in municipalities of Kainuu [here](#).

5.2 Territorial Marketing (S3 and Social Innovation)

Kainuu has been recently marketed as **Arctic Lakeland Finland** and it will soon be even more visible with growing number of international tourists and **direct flights** from the Central European markets to Kajaani for the winter season 2025. More info about the flights to Kajaani from Europe (in Finnish): [Talvimatkailu Kainuuseen vahvassa kasvussa - Visit Finland](#)

Vuokatti (Sotkamo), known as a destination for winter sports, is the seventh tourism area in Finland to receive the [Sustainable Travel Finland \(STF\) recognition](#). Several Kainuu based STF labelled companies took sustainability measures to attract more visitors.

The STF program was recognized as a **Good Practice by the Interreg Europe** in 2024 and it offers companies and destinations a toolkit for sustainable tourism development, which makes it easier to systematically adopt sustainable measures and choices into the everyday life of the region or company. Read more about this [Good Practice](#).

Kainuu has also become an **attractive filming location**. In the new Kainuu image bank, there are also 800 photographs specifically aimed at location scouts. The purpose of Kainuu image bank is to display the possibilities of the region for both domestic and international production groups. The location pictures cover Kainuu landscapes as well as the settings offered by the villages and cities of the region photographed during all the seasons. The photographer behind this selection is **Ilkka Mukkala** from [Location House Finland](#), specialized in location scouting and pre-production services.

Read also **5 reasons to invest in Kainuu** described on the [Invest in Kainuu website](#).

Digitalization and connectivity in focus of Smart Specialization Strategy

Smart specialization is an evidence-based policy framework which uses indicators, technology foresight and other priority-setting tools to help entrepreneurs and firms strengthen existing scientific, technological and industrial specialization patterns while identifying and encouraging the emergence of new domains of economic and technological activity. Finding an appropriate smart specialization strategy is not a task that is solved once and for all because the scope and changes in external factors as well as in the level of economic and institutional development will evolve. The transfer, exploitation and commercialization of public research results is a critical component of the smart specialization strategy. Efforts to commercialize research have increased pressure on universities, public research institutions and governments to increase the reach and impact of economic outputs.

At present, Kainuu has two trajectories for specialization one economic and the other research/innovation infrastructure. The Smart specialization choices were first defined for years 2018–2021 and updated for years 2021–2027, as a part of the renewal process of the more comprehensive Kainuu Programme. The **Kainuu Smart Specialization Plan 2021–2027** officially approved on 9 December 2020 is focused on five themes:

- 1. Increasing research and promotion innovation** – development of innovation/applied research e.g. measurement technology, gaming and advances simulation techniques; big data analytics and high-performance computing; circular economy in mining and bioeconomy.

2. **Strengthening and diversifying the specialization base** – using applied research to promote industrial modernization through investment in developing new products, improving production processes; improving quality of products.
3. **Connectivity and integration**, measures for interregional collaboration.
4. **Digital transition** – strengthening the digital transition of bioeconomy, mining, metals, ICT and knowledge-based service industries.
5. **Green deal** – application and development of green deal solutions that will lead to environmentally friendly industrial change.

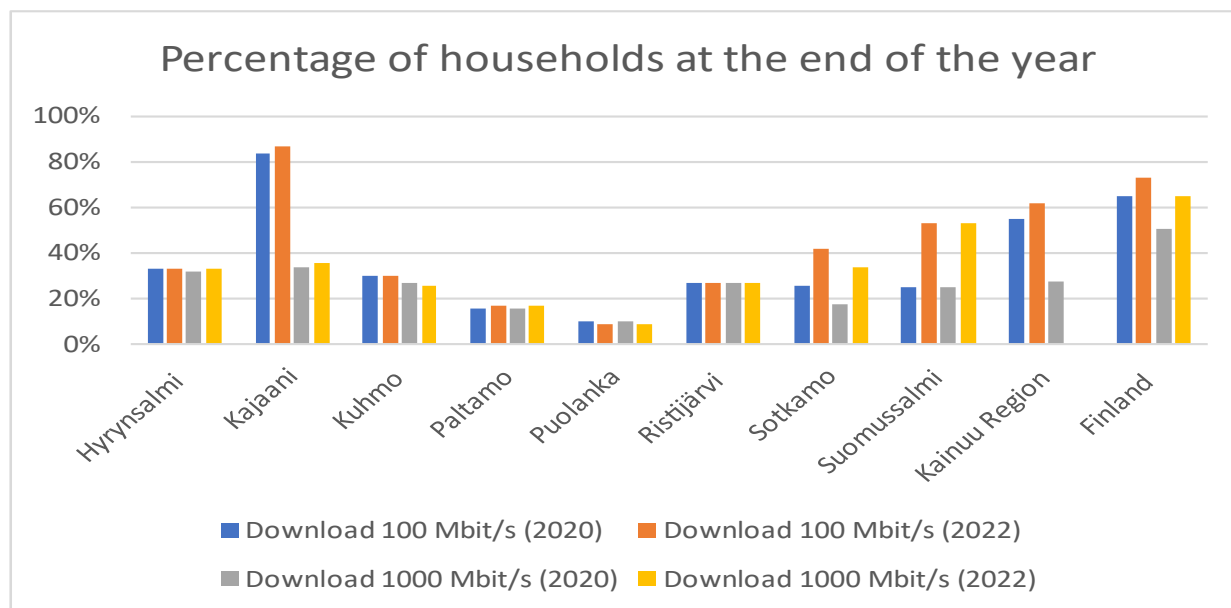
Discussions in the region reveal a need to: deepen the demand-driven, ecosystem and cluster-based development of smart specialization in the regions; increase the connection to value networks nationally and internationally; increase the internationalization capabilities of companies must be further developed. At its core, the smart specialization strategy in Kainuu is geared towards creating employment, expanding innovation activities; promoting entrepreneurship and SMEs; and moving the region closer to low-carbon energy.

Digitalization and telecommunications infrastructure

Figure below offers a comparative analysis of household broadband access across various municipalities within Finland's Kainuu region, focusing on two broadband speeds, 100 Mbit/s and 1000 Mbit/s, at the end of two consecutive years, 2020 and 2022. It visualizes variations in connectivity both over time within these municipalities and in relation to the regional and national averages. In the Kainuu region, most households consistently exhibit higher access rates to the 100 Mbit/s service compared to the 1000 Mbit/s service in both years. Specifically, in 2020, 55% of households had access to the 100 Mbit/s speed, rising to 62% in 2022, whereas access to the 1000 Mbit/s speed was considerably lower at 28% in 2020.

A detailed analysis at the municipal level reveals Kajaani as a significant driver to the regional disparity in download speeds. In this municipality, 84% of households in 2020 and 87% in 2022 had access to 100 Mbit/s speeds, yet only 34% in 2020 and 36% in 2022 could utilize the 1000 Mbit/s service. This presents a pronounced discrepancy. Other municipalities, such as Hyrynsalmi and Ristijärvi, demonstrate a more equitable distribution of broadband access between the two speeds, maintaining relatively steady rates from 32% to 33% and a uniform 27% respectively, across the two years. Nevertheless, this balance also suggests a stagnation in broadband improvement efforts within these locales.

Figure: The availability of fixed networks in Kainuu 2020-2022



Source: Traficom 2.5.2023 [Kiinteän verkon laajakaistasaatavuus | Tieto Traficom](#)

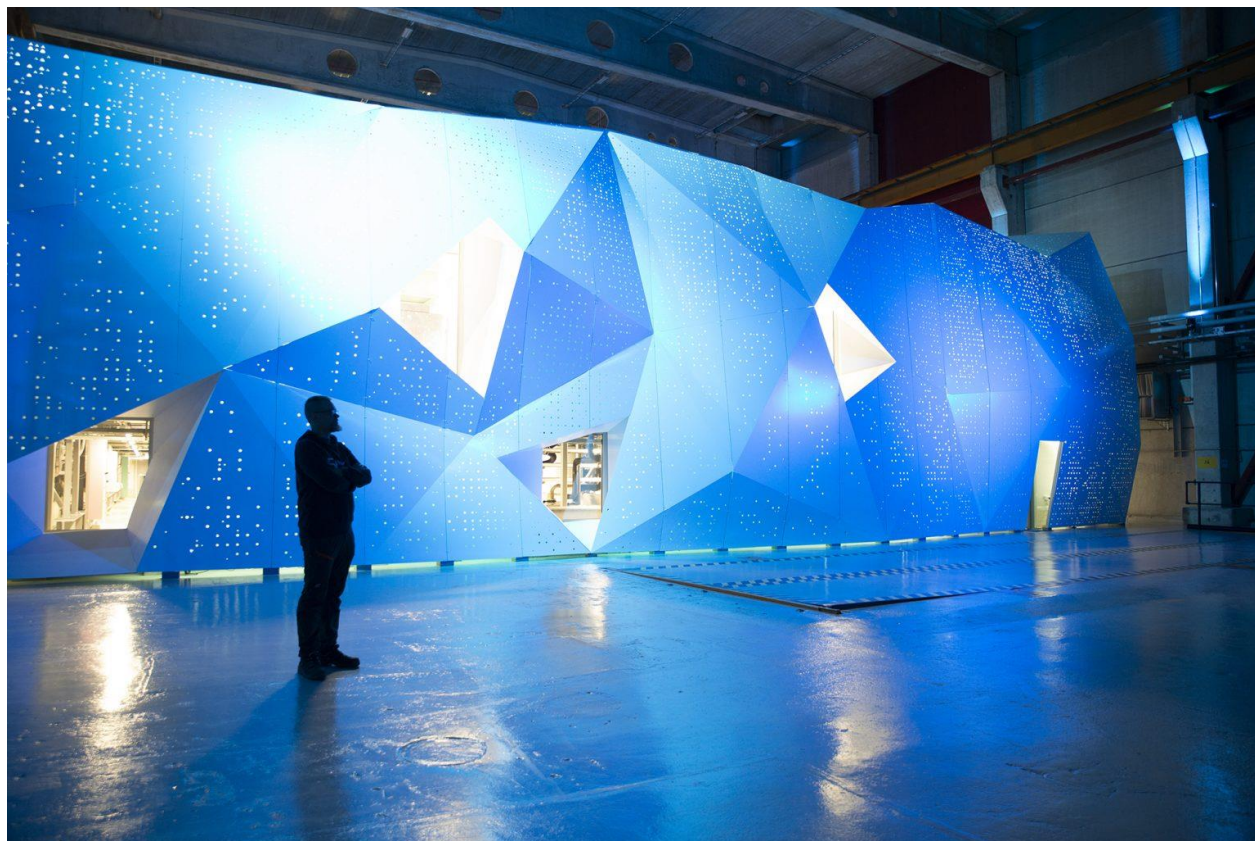
Initiatives to extend broadband access are in place, aiming to improve connectivity, particularly in rural and remote areas. Local operators like Kaisanet Oy and cooperatives play significant roles in building and maintaining optical fibre networks, supported by national policies and EU funding.

Lumi Supercomputer and Kajaani DC Ecosystem

Finland is a member of EuroHPC Joint Undertaking that is developing the **LUMI supercomputer, located in Kajaani**. Finland also is at the forefront of the European quantum computing and semiconductors: IQM Quantum Computers has invested in the building of Europe's first quantum-dedicated semiconductor production facilities in Espoo, and the quantum computer HELMI has been connected to the Lumi; it participates in the Important Project of Common European Interest (IPCEI) on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies. Read more: [Supercomputer LUMI's HPC capacity boosts research- CSC](#)

The new supercomputer called **Roihu** will triple Finland's national supercomputers' resources and enable future scientific breakthroughs. The value of the purchase is 30 million euros: [Significant investment in science: Finland renews its national supercomputer - CSC](#).

Figure: LUMI Supercomputer located in Kajaani



In addition to housing supercomputers, **Kajaani Data Centre ecosystem** is attracting new players, such as **XTX Markets** and **Google** and exploring new opportunities in data-related business in the Kainuu region. Read more: [Key industries in Kajaani | Kajaani](#)

Kajaani is also the birthplace of **Finnish game development** education and has been creating success stories for over 15 years. Backed by the city, this initiative is designed to transform students into accomplished game developers while enhancing the city's cultural richness and global appeal.

GameCity Kajaani is about positioning the city as a centre of creativity and innovation in the gaming industry by actively engaging in community building and supporting local talent. Through these efforts, Kajaani is shaping itself into a global destination for aspiring developers and creative minds alike. Read more: [GameCity Kajaani - The Birthplace of Finnish Game Development](#)

5.3 Talent Attraction (Capitalization of the Attracted Talent to the Region)

[Work in Kainuu virtual recruiting event](#) was last organized from Jan 8th to Feb 8th, 2024. It presented you a chance to explore diverse career opportunities in Kainuu region and connect with employers from different branch of industry. The live broadcast was the grand finale of the month-long event with interesting speakers, performers and presentations of Kainuu's different towns and employers – also in English!

Starting from January 2025 [RekryAreena.fi](#) is designed to facilitate job search and recruitment in the Kainuu-Koillismaa Employment area by providing diverse and up-to-date information in one place. On the website you will find diverse content, such as videos, podcasts and live broadcasts about the region's labor market, life and entrepreneurship, and other working life themes. You can also browse content by municipality.

Kainuu is a part of the **Talent Boost programme** for 2023–2027 brings together the work-based immigration measures of the Finnish Government Programme and enhances the measures introduced earlier. The programme's priorities are: - Finland's attractiveness: promoting the availability of experts and country branding; - Easy and effective residence permit processes and follow-up control; - Strengthening Finland's ability to retain foreign workforce; - Preventing and combating work-based exploitation. More information: [Talent Boost - Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment \(tem.fi\)](#)

6. Conclusions and proposals

Until now, little thought has been given in Kainuu to the **Digital Nomad (DN) phenomenon** or its benefits for the region. So far, there is no idea how many DNs there are in the region, or if there are any. Kainuu, thanks to the growing immigration, is becoming increasingly international, and the goal is to attract even more skilled labour and talent to the area, which could be partly brought by DNs. The development of settling in and relocation services should include also the services needed by DNs in the future.

Such services targeted as well to non-Finnish speakers living in Kainuu and international visitors will internationalize the business environment and improve the attractiveness of the region in general and especially for international tourists and potential investors.

6.1 Reaching New Standards and Political Messages

Unlike Italy, Portugal, Spain and some other European countries, Finland **doesn't offer a dedicated digital nomad visa**. It's also not permitted to engage in remote work while in the country on a tourist visa or during visa-free visits. According to [the study](#), made by E2 Research, mentioned above, Finland could attract digital nomads in several ways:

- by easing the visa application process
- by offering concrete help for digital nomads to ease entry into the country
- by clarifying taxation and offering tax incentives
- by creating hubs that provide opportunities for social interaction and networking

One way of attracting especially DNs to Kainuu could be **piloting campaigns** similar to the [Arctic Digital Nomad Grant](#), supported by the NORA cooperation and co-organized in Møre og Romsdal region in Norway, or [Remote Work Contest](#), recently organized by the EU co-funded Work and Stay project, which is implemented in the neighboring region of Koillismaa.

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