



18 December 2014

Government resolution on the strategy concerning state premises

1. Background

The current Government Premises Strategy was issued in 2005. Its goal was to emphasise the importance of uniformly operating central government and draw up the state's group level policy definitions concerning premises-related objectives and procedures and taking the changes in the operating environment into account.

The goals and principles stated above are still topical. At the same time, many factors affecting premises – such as working methods and tools, working environment development needs and central government itself – have changed, making renewal of the strategy topical.

2. New State Premises Strategy

Goal of the Premises Strategy

The Premises Strategy entering into force under this Government resolution is intended as a tool for developing the use of state working environments and premises and their appropriate standardisation. The aim has been to take four points of view into account in the Premises Strategy: that of the employee, the employer and the overall interests of central government, as well as social responsibility.

1. *The goal of the State Premises Strategy is to ensure that the premises support profitable activity. Developing the premises promotes better work performance and improves cost-effectiveness. Premises design ensures the health and safety of the premises as well as the overall interests and social responsibility of central government.*

New working environments

Wireless telephones, laptops and tablets are widely used as tools in the central government. Full-scale use of electronic equipment enables both remote work and multi-space offices or environments as premises design, with space for teamwork as well as meetings, in addition to quiet places where people



can retreat for work requiring concentration. In a multi-space, the workstation is selected based on the current work task, enabling more efficient use of the premises.

It is important to invest in premises-based design and enable participation by the personnel in it. Well-implemented acoustics, adjustable and ergonomically designed workstations, together with the requirements of accessibility, must be appropriately taken into account in particular. The operating environment is constantly changing, both in the private sector and in the central government. The working environment must support this change; the premises must also be flexibly adaptable, so that their purpose of use can be changed as necessary.

The state functions are related to producing central and necessary social, economic development and citizen services. Even though only one-third of the premises in state use are offices, most of the personnel work in the latter, either full- or part-time. Other working environments include premises defined by their use, such as laboratories, museum exhibition spaces, depots and storages of the Defence Forces, or police cars, for example.

New technology or new kinds of premises alone do not increase the flexibility or productivity of work. The organisations and their methods must also change. In order to work, new premises design and ways of working require new rules with regard to responsibilities, working hours and information security, among other things.

2. *Working environments are renewed to support new ways of working Multi-space environments with space for both teamwork and work requiring concentration are the rule in office spaces. Working methods are developed further by utilising technology and services. Remote work and other multi-locational work are modern ways of working, supported both by the employer's practices and the tools used.*
3. *The premises are flexibly adaptable and they respond to the changes in work. The premises have good indoor air and successful acoustic solutions. The premises are comfortable and aesthetically pleasing, and the requirements of accessibility have been taken into account.*
Special premises defined by their use are developed to support the core tasks of the authorities better than before, taking the activity's cost-effectiveness and other goals into account. Expertise and purchasing competence related to special premises are maintained in the central government.
4. *The working environments and premises must support the activities cost-effectively. Ministries, agencies and institutions recognise the changes caused by the new working methods and technology, and anticipate the challenges of change they pose to working environments. Management of the premises must be included in the general and performance management of agencies and administrative branches, as well as the design, implementation and monitoring of activities and finances.*

Improving space utilisation

The average space utilisation of state office premises is approximately 30 m² per person. By moving away from offices divided into individual rooms into multi-space offices, space utilisation can usually be improved by renovation to a level of 18 m² per year per employee. Exceptions may include certain state-owned buildings with cultural and historical significance, where the changes would clearly be financially unprofitable for structural reasons, or endanger the preservation of cultural and historical values; they may also include other individual cases in which the repairs required would not be cost-effective. More efficient solutions can be implemented in new buildings that can be designed to meet future needs from the very start.

The space utilisation calculation methods and the basic information differ from each other to an extent, but in general it can be stated that the direction in office premises in the private sector as well as internationally is towards a much more efficient utilisation of space than in the current state premises. A more uniform definition of square metres counted in as office space in state-used premises has been taken into account in considering the space utilisation goals that are now coming into force. Separate customer service premises, for example, are not counted as office space.

Space utilisation can also be influenced by improving the utilisation rate of the premises. The utilisation rate refers to the time during which the premises are used in a working day. Due to factors such as holidays, meetings and remote work, it may be practical to have fewer workstations than the total number of personnel, depending on the tasks of the agency. In addition to offices, the utilisation rate should be studied in all kinds of premises: basements, archives, training facilities, laboratories, session halls, customer service facilities, etc. Particularly in premises used for the kinds of activities that make measuring space utilisation based on square metres per person irrelevant, improving the utilisation rate is a way to increase the efficiency of space utilisation.

5. *Space utilisation and the utilisation rate are monitored and improved with the goal of cost and energy savings. The space utilisation goal for office space to be acquired or renovated is 18 m² per year per employee and 15 m² per year per employee for new construction, unless financial or other significant reasons prevent this.*

In order to improve the space utilisation of premises in other than office use, ministries, agencies and institutions will draw up their own field-specific space utilisation goals (e.g. courtrooms, prisons, barracks, etc.). In addition, common space utilisation goals are drawn up for the state concerning typical facilities used by several agencies (such as laboratories, educational facilities, storages).

6. *Up-to-date information on future needs and premises used is available. Ministries, agencies and institutions use the HTH information service and maintain the information up to date. The definition of office space in the HTH information service's purpose-of-use zones is utilised as the calculation basis for office space utilisation.*

Overall interests of central government and the length of lease agreements

When ensuring the overall interests of central government, the review of premises design cannot be limited to the point of view of a single actor. In the solution proposals concerning premises, the consequences of the options must be estimated transparently from the points of view of the central government and the complete central government finances. Under conditions of continuous change, the efficient, flexible utilisation of existing state-owned properties is central. The joint use of premises by different state actors in particular must be increased with an open mind.

Government Decree 1070/2002 determines the procedures for the acquisition, possession and management of state real estate assets. In connection with its reform, the intention is to lay down provisions for preference for the use of state premises and centralise the acquisition and management of state premises in a single acquisition unit (Senate Properties). When operating under the absorption principle, it is reasonable to arrange the acquisition and management of premises in a centralised manner, remove overlapping administration, and clarify the operating principles. The starting point is that the agencies or institutions and Senate Properties act with one accord in acquiring and renting premises. A procedure based on processing by the Cabinet Finance Committee for the settlement of disputes is planned.

In addition to the space requirements and adaptability of the premises, special attention needs to be paid on the length of lease agreements. The functions and space requirements of administrative branches vary. In normal office premises, a short fixed-term agreement up to five years or an agreement valid until further notice may be sufficient; nevertheless, lease agreements should be made for 10 years at maximum. In particular, premises that differ from others by their purpose of use and investment costs (such as a central prison, the Nuclear Safety Building (Ydinturvallisuustalo), Helsinki Music Centre (Musiikkitalo) or certain premises required by national defence), long lease agreements may still be the most appropriate option.

In state-owned premises, the goal is to make it significantly easier for agencies and institutions to abandon unnecessary premises and the related costs, and to ensure that Senate Properties will be able to offer solutions for the space requirements of different agencies more efficiently and sell unnecessary premises to the state. More detailed policy definitions on the length of lease agreements and implementing flexible agreements in state-owned premises will be issued in the Government Decree on the Acquisition, Possession and Management of State Real Estate Assets to be reformed.

7. *Premises design is directed by overall economy. Premises owned or already rented by the state are preferred. If these are not available, the aim is to find premises on the market. If the state has no suitable premises available, the goal is for Senate Properties to acquire or rent premises that meet the customer's needs and act as the only state acquisition unit on the market.*
8. *Joint use of premises used by the state shall be increased. This requires shared practices related to premises and issues such as security as well as developing the cooperation between administrative branches and agencies.*
9. *The maximum lengths of lease agreements are 10 years and 15 years for new buildings, unless the premises have significant special characteristics. The goal is that the new lease agreements for state-owned premises are drawn up as valid until further notice, with a period of notice of 12 months. It is possible to withdraw from premises in which an investment based on the tenant's needs has been made, by paying the residual value of the investment.*

Social responsibility

The social responsibility related to premises includes the impact of actions both socially and for the citizens, the community and the work community, sustainable development and the high quality of built environment, as well as financially, concerning e.g. market equilibrium and the prevention of the grey economy.

Accessibility is a key selection criterion for premises. As a rule, state premises must be located in places that allow the use of public transport and pedestrian and bicycle traffic in commuting and other business; due to cost issues, the premises should not be located in the most expensive areas of city centres. The state also has functions where special characteristics of the activities, such as security issues, affect the choice of location.

The premises must be healthy and safe. Questions and responsibilities related to the safety of the premises must be defined in connection with renting the premises, especially if a modernisation project or extensive repairs are related to implementing the premises. Different kinds of safety requirements may increase the costs of construction projects significantly, which is why the safety solutions must be appropriate and adjusted to the correct level. The state must aim to standardise the safety requirements

set for service providers and related procedures by uniform safety agreement templates. Consistent safety requirements also promote sensible joint use of the premises.

The national and common EU goal is to improve energy efficiency. The central administration has been given the role of a pioneer in the Energy Efficiency Directive. In Finland, measures related to implementing the directive include, among other things, consumer electricity projects and maintenance energy repairs, as well as energy efficiency plans of ministries and agencies central to the Premises Strategy, together with the improvement of space utilisation.

- 10. Premises in state use must be selected along good public transport connections. State functions are transferred to areas outside the nationally most expensive city centre zones as terminating lease agreements in the normal way becomes possible. The agencies are mainly located outside the most expensive areas (such as the Helsinki city centre). With regard to the state, as a rule only the state administration, Parliament and Government premises in addition to certain existing buildings with cultural significance should be located in the most expensive areas.*
- 11. For its use, the state rents healthy and safe premises that have been produced and are maintained in a socially responsible manner. State premises design takes the requirements of premises and information security into account.*
- 12. The existing premises and buildings rented must be energy efficient (energy class D at minimum). New premises should only be constructed with great consideration, and the buildings completed after 2017 must be almost completely zero energy buildings.*

With regard to policy definitions:

On 5 December 2014, the Cabinet Finance Committee required Senate Properties to prepare solutions for improving the usability and quality of the HTH information service, and it also required that the cost liability for the basic information on the premises be transferred to Senate Properties in 2015. The administrative branches will deliver all of their premises information to the HTH information service.

Premises costs include potential for savings of an estimated EUR 100 million, provided that the efficiency of space utilisation can be improved. The Cabinet Finance Committee stated that the administrative branches, supported by Senate Properties, will draw up an implementation estimate for the more detailed execution of the Premises Strategy on their part, including schedules and impact on savings during 2015.