

16/12/2021

Government Resolution on the Government Premises Strategy

The current Government Premises Strategy was adopted in 2014. The goal of the strategy was to emphasise the importance of a uniformly operating central government and to form the government's 'group-level' policy on objectives and procedures related to premises that takes into account changes in the operating environment. The premises strategy, together with the central government real estate strategy and the leasing system, form the basis for the government's group-level control of the use of premises and buildings.

Great changes in the operating environment have made the renewal of the premises strategy topical. Digitalisation has brought many opportunities for organising central government services, administration and other tasks in a new way. When customers, information and employees meet online, the work can be done in a different way, often without being tied to a time or place.

The Ministry of Finance issued guidelines for the promotion of multi-location working in central government on 24 May 2021. The guidelines deal with the wider use of a multi-location approach according to work tasks, the goal-oriented management required by multi-location working, as well as the responsibilities of the employer and the employee in multi-location working. In accordance with the guidelines, workplace-based and multi-location working will in future be equivalent working methods in central government. According to the definitions of the guidelines, **workplace-based work** is physically tied to a space on the basis of work equipment, customers or, for example, non-digitised material. **Multi-location work** can be carried out through information networks in different places, for example in a government co-working environment in another locality or at home. **Remote work** refers to work done away from the employer's premises and is therefore one way of working in multiple locations. In the changing working life, a combination of workplace-based and multi-location working, **so-called hybrid working**, is often commonplace. In accordance with the guidelines, the choice of working approach is based on the agencies' various tasks and their requirements, as well as the wishes of the staff and the possibilities to flexibly reconcile work and private life.

The increase in the supply and use of multi-channel and digital services as well as the resulting reduction in the use of in-person services combined with the increase in multi-location working also contribute to the need to reform the central government's **service and premises network** in the 2020s. A project has been set up for the reform, which will bring together the in-person services of the public administration at joint customer service points. The project carries out the objectives of the public administration strategy to strengthen the smooth cooperation between the central government and municipalities and implements the guidelines of the Government Premises Strategy. Among the central government service providers, the reform primarily involves the Regional State Administrative Agencies, the Digital and Population Data Services Agency, Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, the Finnish Immigration Service, the National Land Survey of Finland, legal aid and public guardianship services, the police licence administration, the Criminal Sanctions Agency's Community Sanctions Offices, Employment and Economic Development Offices, the National Enforcement Authority and the Tax Administration. In addition, the reform concerns the

Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), for which the possibilities to centralise in-person services at the joint customer service points of public administration will be examined.

Multi-location work is done both in premises provided by the employer and on a remote basis in a private or public space chosen by the employee. In accordance with the guidelines for the promotion of multi-location working, every government employee has a workspace designated by the employer. The workspaces can be, for example, shared working environments of the central government, specific-use premises built for a specific activity or local joint customer service points that provide customer services for the entire public sector. When necessary, short-term office spaces, co-working premises or different venues may be used.

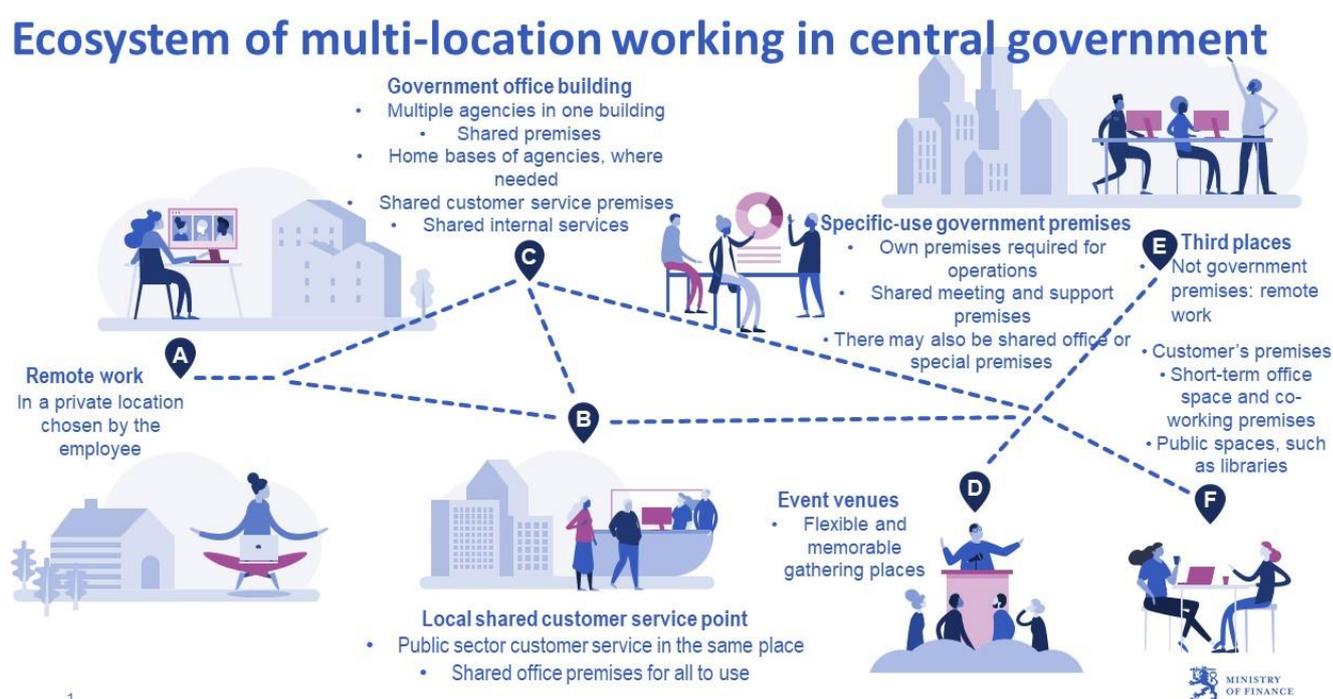


Figure 1 Ecosystem of multi-location working in central government

On 14 September 2021, the Ministry of Finance set up a working group to prepare the government resolution on the guidelines for regional presence and multi-location working. The Parliament adopted an Act on the basis of the availability of government services and location of units and functions in July 2021. The working group is also preparing other necessary measures in different administrative sectors to strengthen opportunities for flexible and multi-location working, studying and housing. In the preparation of the resolution, the impact of multi-location development on, for example, regional development, the achievement of climate objectives and ongoing government projects will be assessed.

Objective, implementation and monitoring of the premises strategy

The premises strategy, which comes into force with this government resolution, guides the development and appropriate harmonisation of the use of central government work environments and premises. The guidelines will be applied to new premises projects and solutions launched. The objectives of the strategy are to be achieved by 2030.

- 1. The aim of the Government Premises Strategy is to ensure that the premises support effective operations. The development of premises promotes the smoothness of work and services and improves cost-effectiveness. Where possible, the objective is also to reduce the cost of premises. Spatial solutions ensure the health and accessibility of the premises, data protection, information and premises security, as well as social, ecological and economic sustainability.**

Agencies and institutions will update their premises strategy implementation plans together with the Senate Group's public utilities by the end of 2022. The implementation plans aim to set measures in such a way that the objectives of the premises strategy will be achieved by 2030, taking into account the funding constraints, and they can be implemented in stages. Premises are always designed for the operations of state agencies and institutions, understanding the requirements, prerequisites and development of operations. The ministries are responsible for monitoring the implementation in their administrative sectors, and the implementation as a whole is monitored in the advisory board to be appointed. The premises strategy is also implemented as part of the project to reshape the network of central government services and premises.

Changing work environments support the change in work

Work environments consist of physical spaces, digital tools and social interaction between people. Digitalisation and the remote working it enables have been changing the service needs of citizens and the ways of working in the central government for a long time. During the COVID-19 pandemic which began in 2020, remote working has expanded significantly and it has been possible to make use of digitalisation in service provision much more than before. As government work changes, it is also necessary to review premises and their use.

In order to take advantage of new opportunities, investment will be made in the adaptability of premises and the flexibility of the use of premises. Increasing the sharing of premises within public administration is an important element of flexibility, both in terms of costs and the use of premises. Shared use of premises between several agencies also makes it possible to provide comfortable and functional premises for smaller units of agencies.

- 2. The working environments in both offices and specific-use premises will be reformed to support evolving ways of working and cooperation. The premises are as adjustable as possible to respond to changes in work. In case of new space needs, the possibilities of partially or fully solving the need by sharing existing premises is examined first. The aim is for 25 % of central government personnel to work in shared premises of agencies and institutions. The implementation takes into account the special characteristics and prerequisites of the tasks and administrative sectors.**

Central government has approximately 5.3 million m² of premises, of which approximately 1.1 million m², that is, roughly one-fifth, are office premises. In the 2010s, the amount of office premises decreased in line with the objectives of the premises strategy, while the amount of specific-use premises remained unchanged. Specific-use premises are premises allocated to a specific activity, such as prisons, police stations, museums, courthouses, military facilities and various laboratories. Approximately one-half of the office premises used by central government are connected to specific-use or customer service premises. About one-third of central government personnel work mainly in offices, but about 61,000 of the approximately 76,000 employees

working in central government have an office workstation at their disposal. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 15,000 people worked at undesignated workstations. Fewer than 1,500 people worked in shared premises.

Target:

- The majority of office premises is located in a **government office building** or campus, or at the **shared customer service points of public administration**.
- Government office buildings have a **shared work environment**, which is an activity-based environment. The premises are shared between all government agencies and institutions. The premises may have areas reserved for a single agency based on operational needs (data protection, special equipment, etc.).
 - Working in a shared work environment is supported by harmonised and centralised premises and in-house services, as well as mutually agreed responsibilities for coordination and resources for issues related to the development of the administrative, physical, digital and social work environment of the premises.
 - There are nationwide uniform models and requirements for the usability and user experience of premises in shared work environments, and the pricing of shared premises is based on the use of premises rather than floor area.
- Shared work environments will also be built at the shared customer service points of public administration, where the premises will be widely shared with, for example, municipalities and Kela.
- **Office premises that are intended for a specific use or are connected to specific-use premises** aim to increase the sharing of premises, for example with actors in the same administrative sector or with partners or stakeholders. The premises are mainly activity-based environments. In addition to their own area, agencies have shared working areas with other agencies, as well as, for example, shared meeting rooms, cafeterias and support premises. The sharing of other premises, such as storage or equipment rooms, will also be increased. Increased sharing may be restricted by, for example, operational independence requirements.
- The target state supports the ecosystem of multi-location working. As a rule, the **office premises used by central government** have the possibility of a shared workstation area for other short-term users from central government, partners or stakeholders. Security and appropriateness aspects must be taken into account.
 3. **Office premises are activity-based environments with spaces for face-to-face and virtual interaction and collaboration, as well as for individual work and handling of confidential matters. Premises, tools and working methods are developed to support online and hybrid working. The average space efficiency target for office premises is 10 m² of useful floor area per person-year, which will be realised at the end of the strategy period. The space efficiency target will be applied in new premises projects launched, taking into account the special characteristics of the administrative sector and the relationship between remote and on-location work.**

At the beginning of 2021, approximately one-half of the central government's office premises were activity-based environments. The average space efficiency of office premises was 18.6 m²/person-year. Based on a survey of government agencies and institutions at the beginning of 2021, the typical number of remote

working days is estimated to increase from one day a week to about two or three days a week, that is, by a factor of two or three.

As remote working increases, the work done at offices often focuses on activities that support cooperation, coordination and community spirit. Office work also includes online meetings, the need to handle confidential material or to have confidential discussions. Suitable working spaces and private areas are needed for this purpose. The principle of an activity-based environment also applies to office premises that are intended for a specific use or are connected to specific-use premises.

Depending on the nature of the tasks, the construction of a well-functioning activity-based environment requires a unit of at least 30 to 50 people. The experiences of the adjustability of premises and personal distances during the COVID-19 pandemic will also be taken into account. When examining the number of people, shared use with partnerships, such as wellbeing services counties and municipalities, will be taken into account. The nature of a building or activity may in some cases restrict the cost-effective adaptation of office space. The objectives of the circular economy also promote the extension of the service life of existing premises.

Target:

- In central government, the employer assigns work space to all employees. The design and dimensioning of office premises take into account the amount of remote and in-office work and the sharing of premises.
- There are separate areas for different kinds of working. Premises that support cooperation and interaction are emphasised among office premises, but they also take into account the needs of hybrid and individual working. The relative proportions of the different types of premises support the operations as well as possible.
- The need for designated individual offices and workstations is assessed taking into account the special characteristics of the tasks and administrative sectors. In this regard, and generally in the design of premises, attention is paid to the conditions of tasks requiring confidentiality, secrecy or concentration.
- There is an easy-to-use system for finding available workstations, the use of which is also possible on a mobile basis.
- ICT services and uniform equipment enable flexible working at different workstations.
- Space efficiency and occupancy rates are monitored and improved with the aim of saving costs and energy. Occupancy rates are monitored with, for example, sensor solutions. In addition to the space efficiency target (m²/person-year), the cost of premises (EUR/person-year) and occupancy rates (hours/day or week) are monitored.

4. Customer service premises support multi-channel service provision. The shared customer service points have premises for face-to-face and confidential service, as well as use of e-services and remote services.

The implementation plan of the central government service and premises network project was approved at the beginning of June 2021 on the basis of the guidelines of the political management group for public governance renewal. Services are provided to citizens on a multi-channel basis, the main service channel being comprehensive and easy-to-use electronic services. The project will contribute to the citizens' use of electronic services by ensuring that digital support is provided at the shared customer service points.

According to the plan and the policies of the public governance strategy, the central government authorities will move to the shared customer service points during the 2020s and replace their own service provider-specific service points with shared customer service points. Customers will receive the services they need, regardless of location, on an equal footing throughout the country. At the shared customer service points, the service will be provided with the authority's own resources or by service advisors or through a remote service. Access to service in both national languages and the realisation of linguistic rights will be secured. With regard to customer service and office premises, extensive cooperation with municipalities and wellbeing services counties will be sought. In addition, cooperation will be carried out with Kela, especially with regard to customer service premises.

The planning of service points is guided by service needs and criteria for the accessibility of services. The number of service points is not determined at national level, but is specified at regional level based on local and regional needs. The future development of electronic services and the development of citizens' digital skills will also affect the number of points. In sparsely populated areas, it is also planned to explore, together with municipalities and wellbeing services counties, lighter service solutions (such as remote service points, mobile service vehicles and pop-up points, etc.) that would support the network of shared customer service points. The implementation will take into account the regional accessibility of the services.

Target:

- Customer service premises and related back offices and other office premises are shared. The premises are also widely shared with municipalities and Kela.
- Shared customer service points are implemented according to a uniform customer service concept. The concept takes into account transactions with the service advisor (service counter), self-service points for e-services, remote service rooms and rooms for meetings with specialists. Secure and confidential transactions are ensured. The back offices are implemented as activity-based environments.
- The planning of the customer service point network is guided by service needs and criteria for the accessibility of services, which are a maximum of one hour of travel to services and a sufficient population base for the service volume. In addition, when planning the placement of customer service points, attention must be paid to their accessibility by public transport and to customers' natural routes.

5. When designing specific-use premises, the operations and premises are developed simultaneously, and premises projects promote the impact of the operations. Knowledge-based demand- and need-driven solutions are used in the dimensioning of premises. The benefits of shared use and synergies are identified. The key indicators to be monitored are the occupancy rate of the premises (e.g. hours per week/year) and cost-effectiveness (EUR/m² per year).

At the beginning of 2021, approximately 80% of government premises were intended for a specific use. Of the administrative sectors, more than half of the premises used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Defence are specific-use premises. Specific-use premises are also in the majority in the administrative sector of the Ministry of the Interior. Such premises include, for example, training and teaching facilities, accommodation, vehicle and equipment storage, research facilities and museum premises.

In the 2020s, there will be significant investment needs for specific-use premises. The nature of the operations and, for example, the storage of equipment and vehicles have become more demanding. The identification of development, planning and dimensioning needs related to premises requires the development of activities in multi-professional cooperation. The knowledge-based need mapping process proceeds in stages from data collection to analysis, co-creation and conceptualisation. Parallel development of operations and premises promotes the consideration of effectiveness and operational benefits in premises projects.

Target:

- The design of specific-use premises has shifted from the experience-based design of premises to the demand- and need-driven description of space needs based on researched information. Cost-effectiveness, impact and operational benefits are the basis for both operational and premise-related choices. Premises are flexible to adjust.
- Premises are examined on different levels: the national office network, the branch as part of the national or regional office network, and analysis per premises group.
- The suitability of the spatial solutions has been ensured by means of work environment management and project-specific economic and qualitative impact assessments. The anticipation of space needs utilises new methods, such as the identification of change factors in the operating environment, service design, economic impact calculations, as well as simulation and visual observation models of operating processes and premises. An ex-post evaluation of the selected projects is carried out.
- Spatial solutions use concepts specific to the agency or administrative sector. In their operations, operators have set targets and indicators for the use of space, such as occupancy rate, financial and qualitative benefits, cost level, customer and personnel experience as well as synergy benefits, for recurring activities and premises.

6. Premises must support and enable secure working and handling of confidential matters. Key means include the selection of a workstation according to tasks, zoning of premises, the definition of security areas and access control. Shared work environments apply a shared premises security concept, which enables the proper handling and storage of confidential information.

Premises are subject to site-specific security and security during use. Data protection and information security are mainly a matter of the right type of actions and work by people, which the premises must support and enable. Key regulations and recommendations include the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, the EU General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act, the Act on Information Management in Public Administration, the Government Decree on Security Classification of Documents in Central Government, the Information Management Board's Recommendations on the implementation of management responsibilities in information management, and the National Security Audit Criteria 2020 (KATAKRI). In addition, there are separate legal regulations and agreements in areas such as criminal matters, national security and international cooperation.

The regulations have not identified obstacles to the processing of personal data and confidential information in shared work environments when the protection of data is properly implemented. In shared work environments, overall safety solutions must follow common lines. Although solutions are agreed locally, they must be nationally consistent and interoperable in order for shared use to be possible and generate benefits.

Practical examples of common practices include the procedure for granting access rights and visitor practices, as well as practices related to the processing and storage of confidential information and personnel security. In support of the design of spatial solutions, the Senate Group will prepare a premises security concept, which can also be applied in shared premises.

Different functions of central government, especially the authorities, often deal with confidential or secret matters and have confidential discussions and telephone calls. Most of these are handled with similar requirements in terms of operating methods, tools and premises, but the number or nature of the matters handled may also require operator-specific solutions, for example to assess the independence of operations.

Target:

- The physical, social and digital work environment as a whole supports the implementation of data protection and information security. Paper documents have been virtually phased out.
- In shared work environments, the security solution is conceptualised and the responsibility for implementing related services is centralised to one operator. The role of the Senate Group has been confirmed in the approval of service providers and in security clearance practices (interpretation of the competent authority, Section 15 of the Act on Security Investigations). The experience of working in different premises is good and smooth on a practical level and the working day starts off in the same way regardless of the location.

7. Premises used by the central government are emission-free and their construction and repair have low emissions. The premises used by central government are sustainable, healthy and safe, and they are produced and maintained in a socially responsible manner. Zero tolerance for indoor air quality problems applies to these spaces.

The central government uses premises and buildings taking into account the impact of social responsibility and premises from the perspective of social issues, citizens and society, as well as from the perspective of the work community. The use of premises is also examined from the perspectives of sustainable development, building protection and a high-quality built environment, as well as from the economic perspectives of, for example, cost-effectiveness, market balance and combating the shadow economy.

Finland is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and has set the goal of being a carbon-neutral welfare society by 2035. Much of the central government's current climate load is caused by carbon emissions during the construction, renovation and use of premises. The management of the properties is the responsibility of the Senate Group, which is shifting to the use of entirely renewable and emission-free energy in government buildings, and undertakes to gradually develop construction towards carbon neutrality. In addition, the aim is to significantly improve energy efficiency and for the government to act as a pioneer in accordance with upcoming EU and Finnish policies.

Emissions from government premises have been significantly reduced from around 400,000 tonnes of CO₂e in 2012 to around 80,000 tonnes of CO₂e by 2020. A significant factor contributing to the reduction in emissions was the switch to the purchase of 100% renewable electricity in 2017. The level of these emissions calculated according to the GHG Protocol is aimed to reach zero emissions in government premises by 2030, and the current emission level is aimed to be halved by 2023. However, when we take into account emissions caused by construction and maintenance, leased premises and services related to premises, the amount of

emissions is roughly 2.5 times greater (approximately 200,000 tonnes of CO₂e). These emissions, too, are set to reach zero by 2035.

A key part of reducing emissions is reducing the number of premises and developing operations towards zero emissions where possible. Digitalisation, increased remote working, reduced work-related travel, responsible procurement and more efficient use of space by utilising overbooking and shared spaces as a whole have a significant impact on the reduction of emissions from government premises.

Healthy premises are a basic prerequisite for wellbeing. A holistic approach and prevention of problems, immediate response to emerging problems and clarity of operating models and responsibilities are central to combatting indoor air problems.

Finland's first common National Public Procurement Strategy was published in September 2020. Among other goals, it outlines the goals of economic, social and ecological sustainability. Economic sustainability consists of cost-effectiveness, profitability, combatting the shadow economy and promoting tax accountability. Socially sustainable procurement pays attention to promoting the employment of people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental labour rights. Public procurement supports Finland's carbon neutrality target for 2035, the implementation of a circular economy and the conservation of biodiversity. The corporate governance of the Senate Group takes into account the implementation of the National Public Procurement Strategy.

Target:

- Central government is shifting to using emission-free and fossil-free energy on its premises whenever possible. The use of emission-free energy and low-carbon principles are also lease conditions for premises leased by the central government from outside operators.
- Within localities, central government offices are centralised along good (public) transport connections to office campuses and shared office premises. The benefits of centralising specific-use premises are also assessed in the implementation plans of the premises strategy.
- Central government premises are accessible and their use, management and development maintain the government's cultural heritage and natural diversity. Procurement is in line with the objectives of the National Public Procurement Strategy.
- Support measures for the health and safety of government premises are constantly being invested in. The use, management and maintenance of the premises follow a zero-tolerance model requiring indoor condition information management, preventive measures and rapid corrective action. The health of personnel is protected under all circumstances.
- Of all government employees whose workplaces are located in state-owned buildings, 95% work in buildings that are subject to indoor air condition inspection.

Other guidelines

For example, the following indicators are used to monitor the implementation of the strategy:

- office space efficiency in square metres per person-year (target on average 10 m²/person-year);
- number of personnel working in shared premises (target 25% of government personnel);
- occupancy rates for office and specific-use premises;
- space costs in EUR/person-year;

- cost of premises as percentage of the organisation's total costs;
- personnel and customer satisfaction (VM Baro joint);
- number of deployed concepts and implemented development reports of specific-use premises by administrative sector;
- number of personnel working in buildings subject to indoor air condition inspection and number and development of indoor air items;
- share of buildings significant in terms of cultural history in the occupied premises;
- useful floor area of occupied premises (m²);
- percentage of emission-free energy used (Senate Group produces).