

Authority services

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SYKE/2026/605

Public

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Notification in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) regarding a small modular reactor (SMR) plant in Kuopio, Finland

On 15 April 2026, the Finnish Environment Institute, as the Point of Contact in Finland, shared information that an environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure is underway in relation to a small modular reactor (SMR) plant in Kuopio. The Finnish Environment Institute requested that Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) indicate whether they consider themselves to be potentially affected by the planned project. If a state considered itself likely to be affected and wished to be notified, a response letter indicating the position was requested to be submitted by 23 April 2026 at the latest.

On 4 May 2026, the Finnish Environment Institute received a response letter (ref. 99-00-127-12) from the Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria. The response letter was sent in accordance with Article 3 of the Espoo Convention. The letter informed that Bulgaria considers it necessary to participate in the transboundary EIA procedure. The Finnish Environment Institute considered this response letter as a request for a notification. On 5 May 2026 and 13 May 2026, the Finnish Environment Institute addressed requests to the Ministry of Environment and Water, for notification purposes, seeking clarification on the preferred document language and a reasonable timeframe for submitting a response. No further information was provided.

As the Party of origin, Finland hereby notifies Bulgaria regarding the planned project listed in Appendix I of the Espoo Convention. The planned project is a small modular reactor (SMR) plant. In addition, the notification is sent in accordance with Article 7 of the Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU).

Information on the planned project

Developer, Kuopion Energia Oy, is planning the SMR plant in Kuopio in the North Savo region. The SMR plant is intended to produce district heat for the district heating network of the City of Kuopio.

The SMR plant is planned to consist of up to four reactor units. The planned combined heat output of the reactors at the SMR plant is up to about 150 megawatt-thermal (MWth). It is estimated that the efficiency of the SMR plant will be in the range of 95 %, which will enable the generation of approximately 143 MWth of heat for the district heating network. The SMR plant has two alternative locations, which are Sorsasalo and Hepomäki. The space requirement for the SMR plant, along with the related buildings and structures, is planned to be approximately three hectares. The location of the SMR plant can be either in an above-ground open pit or in a rock cavern that has been excavated mainly underground.

The following alternatives are included in the EIA:

- **VE0:** The zero alternative, which means that the project is not implemented. District heat production will continue in its current form.
- **VE1:** An SMR plant with a thermal output of approximately 150 megawatts (MW) will be built in Hepomäki, which consists of up to four reactors dedicated to district heat production. The district heat transmission connection from the SMR plant to the existing district heating network will be constructed as an underground installation.
- **VE2:** An SMR plant with a thermal output of 150 MW will be built in Sorsasalo, which consists of up to four reactors dedicated to district heat production. The district heat transmission connection from the plant to the existing district heating network will be built mainly along the bottom of the lake and partly as an underground installation.

Procedures for land-use planning are progressing in parallel with the EIA procedure for the local detailed plans for the alternative areas. These matters will be subjects to international consultation conducted through separate procedures. The responsible authority for the land-use plans is the City of Kuopio.

It has been preliminarily assessed that the planned project is not likely to cause significant trans-boundary impacts. Potential harmful transboundary impacts are considered to arise in the event of a severe reactor accident and the associated radioactive release.

EIA procedure in Finland

The Act on Environment Impact Assessment Procedure (252/2017, EIA Act) and the Decree (277/2017) regulate the EIA procedure in Finland. The project complies with Appendix 1, section 7 b of the EIA Act. The nuclear safety requirements applicable to nuclear facilities in Finland are based on the Nuclear Energy Act (990/1987) and the Decree (161/1988). These are supplemented by regulations issued by the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority and by requirements set out in Regulatory Guides on nuclear safety and preparedness. Land use conditions for the siting of an SMR plant are regulated by the Land Use Act (132/1999).

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment acts as the competent authority in projects concerning nuclear facilities. The first phase of the EIA procedure involves preparing an environmental impact assessment programme (EIA programme) and organising a public hearing. The public display of the EIA programme of the planned project takes place in Finland from 15 April to 15 June 2026. Within one month of the end of the public display period, the competent authority prepares its statement on the EIA programme.

The next phase of the EIA procedure involves a preparation of an EIA report and a public hearing of the EIA report, which is prepared based on the EIA programme and the statement of the competent authority. Following the public display period for the EIA report, the competent authority will prepare a reasoned conclusion based on the EIA report, as well as the statements and opinions provided during the consultation process. Both the EIA report and the reasoned conclusion are required for permit applications.

Participation in the EIA procedure

Finland is currently planning its first SMR project. Finland is committed to apply the precautionary principle and to ensure that possible transboundary environmental impacts are considered. Finland has made the consideration to notify Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden. In addition, Finland has separately notified Bulgaria by its request.

The EIA programme is available in Finnish, Swedish and English, and an international consultation summary document is available in Danish, English, Estonian, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish and Swedish. These documents provide more information on the planned project, its alternatives, the EIA procedure, the planned content of the EIA and required permits. The documents, which have been prepared by the developer, can be downloaded from the following shared folder: <https://filesender.funet.fi/?s=download&token=07d4baa8-5c02-4807-9382-aa9867961312>.

The shared folder originally expired on 19 May 2026, but the time is extended to 9 June 2026. From 15 April 2026 onwards, the documents can also be downloaded on the following webpage, which is maintained by the competent authority: <https://tem.fi/en/kuopion-energia-eia-programme>.

Referring to Article 3, Paragraph 3 of the Espoo Convention, please send the response by e-mail to the register office of the Finnish Environment Institute (kirjaamo@syke.fi) and to the e-mail address of the Point of Contact in Finland (transboundaryEIA.SEA@syke.fi) by **30 June 2026 at the latest** and:

- acknowledge the receipt of the notification,
- indicate whether your state intends to participate in the EIA procedure,
- indicate the preferred document language,
- provide comments concerning the scope for the assessment of the likely significant environmental impacts of the planned project affecting your state, and
- submit any comments you might receive from the public and authorities in your state.

Please indicate our reference number SYKE/2026/605 in your letter.

More information

Competent authority: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Senior Specialist Venla Liljeström, venla.liljestrom@gov.fi and Senior Specialist Linda Kumpula, linda.kumpula@gov.fi

Espoo Convention: Finnish Environment Institute, Senior Officer Laura Aitala-Martesuo, transboundaryEIA.SEA@syke.fi

Head of services

Jenni Juslén

Senior officer,
Point of Contact to the Espoo Convention
and the Protocol on SEA

Laura Aitala-Martesuo

This document has been electronically signed. The electronic signatures can be verified from the register office of the Finnish Environment Institute.

Appendices

Kuopion_Energia_SMR_EIA_Program.pdf 21.2 MB
Appendix_1_International_consultation_document.pdf 996.4 kB
Appendix_2_Vegetation_and_habitat_type_survey_2025.pdf 12.5 MB
Appendix_3_Benthic_animals_survey_2025.pdf 1.1 MB
Appendix_4_Aquatic_vegetation_survey_2025.pdf 5.5 MB
Appendix_5_Underwater_archaeological_inventory_2025.pdf 2.2 MB

Kuopion_Energia_SMR_MKB_Program.pdf 20.8 MB
Bilaga_1_Dokument_för_internationellt_samråd.pdf 1005.8 kB
Bilaga_2_Inventering_av_flora_och_naturtyper_2025.pdf 12.5 MB
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For information

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Ministry of the Environment
Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment