

The impact of ferries on the sustainability of tourism

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Ilmari Viljanen
ilmari.viljanen@elinvoimakeskus.fi



Archipelago traffic in Finland

The **Economic Development Centre** is the Finnish government authority responsible for organizing both road ferry services and commuter ferry services in Finland.

Road ferries are an integral part of the public road network and are legally considered sections of the road system.

The State's responsibility for **commuter ferry services** is based on the Archipelago Act, which requires the government to ensure the transport services needed by permanent residents of the archipelago.

These services provide essential year-round connections for people, goods, and public services in island communities

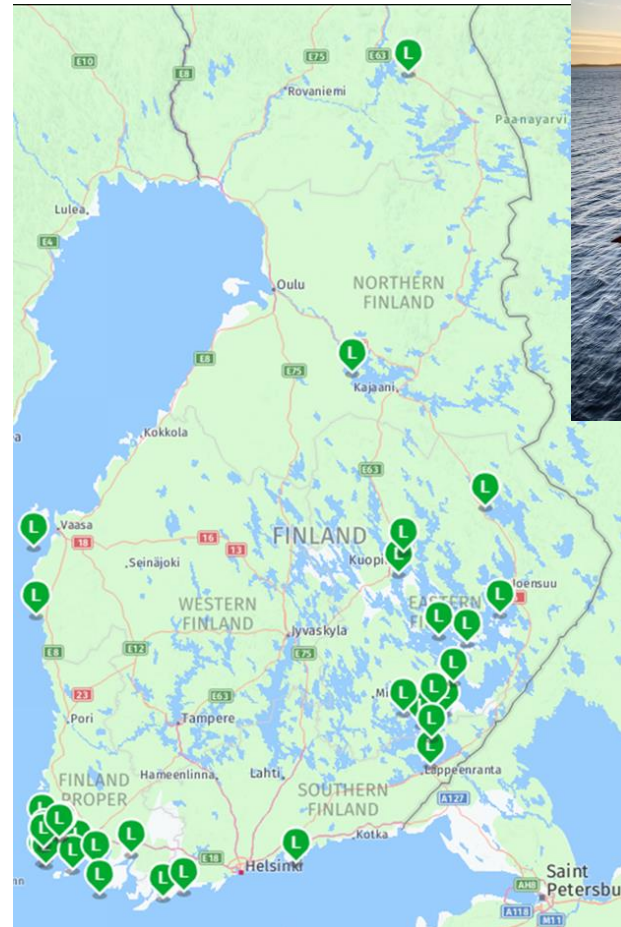
Road Ferries

- 39 ferry crossings
 - Scheduled traffic at 19 ferry sites
 - 20 sites operate without a schedule
- 3,5 mil vehicles / year
- Busiest is Pargas-Nagu, 543 000 cars / year
- Longest route 9,5 km, Korpo-Houtskär
- Shortest 169m, Kivimo in Houtskär
- One official ice road in Räisälä, 17tn



Road Ferries

- Road ferry services are procured through competitive public tenders
- 37 contracts are delivered as full-service contracts (with vessels owned by the operator)
- 2 as operating service contracts (with vessels owned by the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency)



Road Ferries - Green transition

- Longer contracts, 20 years (earlier only 5-10 years)
- Ambitious emission reduction requirements
- Recent Procurement, road ferries in lake-districts: Emissions will be reduced by 98%, equivalent to approximately 2,200 tonnes per year
- Converting to electric winch operations, Higher energy efficiency. Propulsion system and a diesel generator as backup systems



Retrofitting existing vessels

Circular economy:

In building new electric ferries, ferryoperator is actively reusing existing vessel hulls.

By avoiding the heavy carbon emissions associated with manufacturing brand-new industrial steel, the circular design saves an equivalent of 2.5 years' worth of diesel ferry emissions.



Commuter Ferries



- 19 routes
- Longest route - Utö, one-way travel time 4,5h
- 140 islands served by commuter ferries
- Approximately 750 permanent residents
- Vessel size vary from 12 pax to 200 pax
- Hovercrafts during severe winters



Commuter Ferries - Green transition

- Longer contracts 5 years - > 15 years
- Enables setting more stringent emission and fleet requirements than the current ones
- New fully electric, emission-free vessel (58pac) to Porvoo-route
- Emissions -97%
- Costs -24%



Replacing ferry traffic with bridges

- The Hailuoto Bridge opened to traffic in June 2026, linking the island of Hailuoto to the mainland
- Project evaluation carried out for 9 ferry sites
 - Three of them here in Houtskär
 - Kivimo
 - Mossala
 - Saverkeit



The Role of Ferries in Tourism

Ferries as Tourism Enablers

Accessibility:

- Archipelago communities
- Remote islands
- National parks and other tourism destinations

Scenic travel, enjoy archipelago landscapes

Island hopping

Vehicle transport: cars, bikes, and campers, allowing for flexible road trips across regions and islands



Without ferry connections, many tourism destinations would remain inaccessible.

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An ecological alternative:

In archipelago destinations and on short sea voyages, ferries offer a low-emission alternative, especially if you travel without a car.

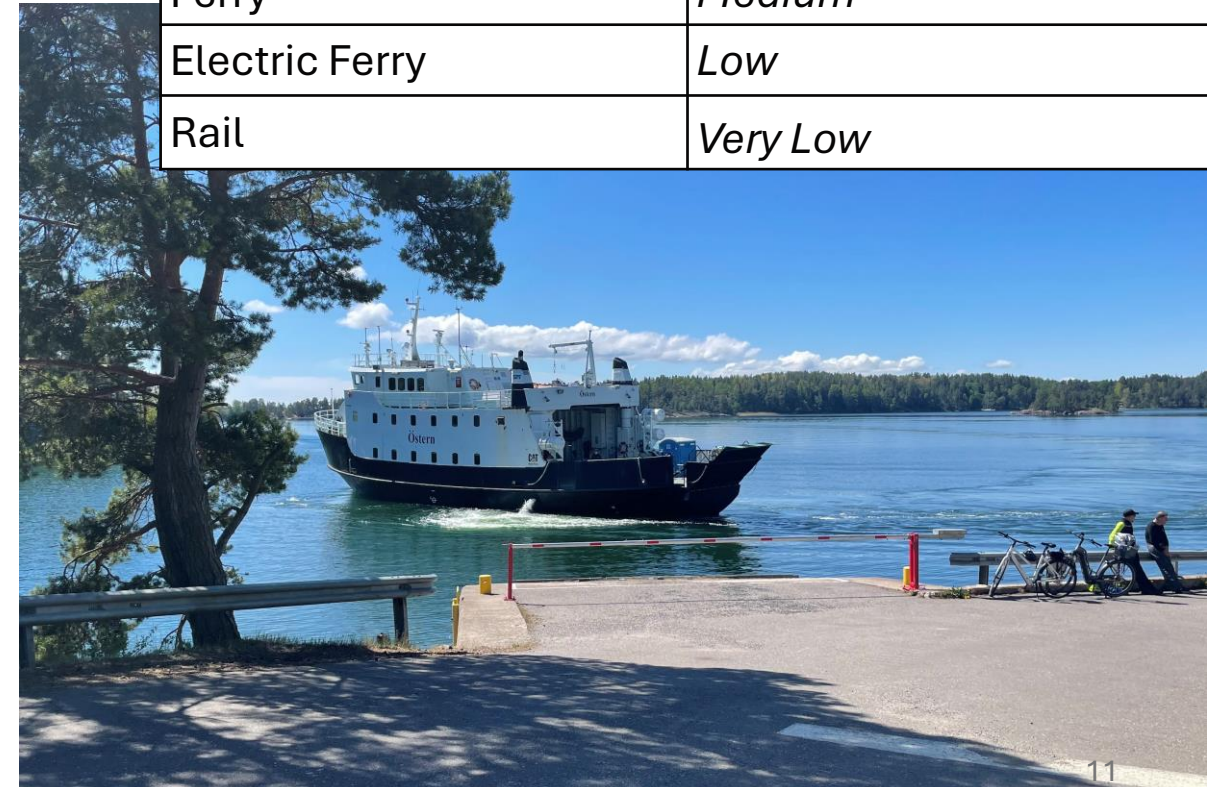
Accessibility and local economies:

Ferries enable sustainable tourism to spread to remote islands and coastal communities. Dispersing tourist flows and supporting local communities.

Green Technology Upgrades:

Electric- and hybrid-electric setups replace fossil fuels to cut greenhouse gases.

Mode	Emissions per Passenger
Airplane	<i>High</i>
Private Car	<i>Medium to High</i>
Ferry	<i>Medium</i>
Electric Ferry	<i>Low</i>
Rail	<i>Very Low</i>



Future development

- The modernization of ferry services enables a transition to faster vessels through fleet renewal.
- The introduction of new vessels makes it possible to simultaneously improve service levels, re-evaluate existing routes and increase operating speeds.
- Charging infrastructure solutions for remote islands
- Zero-emission ferry operations year-round, including in severe ice conditions

