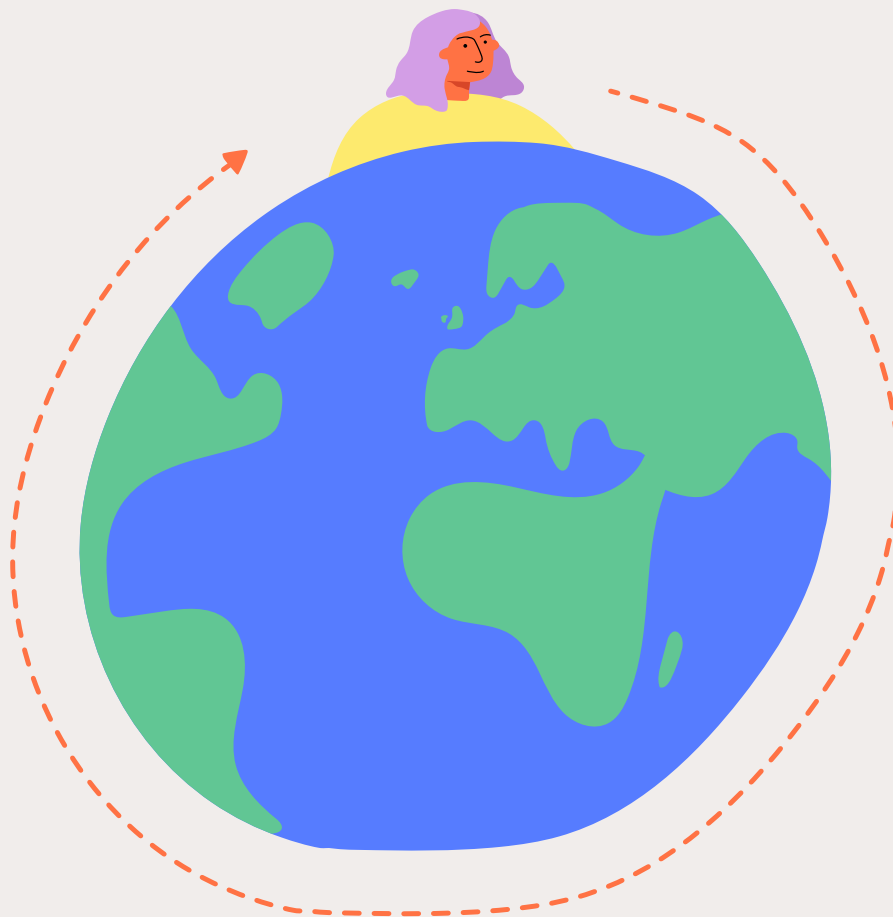Strategy for Finns Worldwide

# The Human–Centred Strategy Process

Savannah Vize, Hannah Roche, Amir Tahvonen, Shuaijun Zhang
Design for Government 2021

# Preface

This report details *The Human-Centred Strategy Process*, our proposal and outcome of Design for Government, a 12-week advanced studio course from Aalto University's Creative Sustainability master programme. The course aims at addressing the complex challenges within Finnish government and the public sector. Using "empathetic approaches to identify stakeholder needs, systems approaches to analyze the wider context of policies, and behavioural insight," (Design for Government 2015) students are able to locate and design relevant solutions. Each year, government stakeholders propose a selection of briefs, which provide the basis for "in-depth and practical development by interdisciplinary student teams" (ibid.). This year, there were three briefs: the *Pilot project for Personal Budgeting and Mobility Services* from the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Kela, the City of Espoo, and the ORSI research consortium; *Reducing the carbon footprint of public procurement using the Kela maternity package example* from Kela and the Ministry of Affairs and Employment; and lastly the *Strategy for Expatriate Finns*, from the Ministry of the Interior.

Our group worked within the *Strategy for Expatriate Finns* brief, collaborating closely with civil servants, policy writers, researchers and service designers primarily from the Ministry of the Interior and Suomi-Seura. The brief asked how we might "increase the participation, cooperation and communication of expatriate Finns with Finland." Emphasis was placed on gaining active involvement from those overseas, reinforcing their liaison with Finland, whilst also bearing in mind Finland's Sustainable Development Goals. Stakeholders also presented an interest in identifying the most underrepresented groups, and mapping the strategies and policies of other countries engaging and supporting their diasporas. To quote a stakeholder from one of our early discussions: "we are looking for ideas and concepts that relate to how we could better integrate expats into the strategy...With that in mind we are also interested in mapping what services are provided, and need to be provided, tomorrow and for the faraway future".

We discovered that some of the main areas for growth within the *Strategy for Expatriate Finns* were placing an increased focus on inclusivity and accessibility, strengthening engagement, incorporating foresight and adaptability, and by embedding empathy. These opportunities led to the *Human-Centred Strategy Process* which reimagines how policy writers work on the strategy for expatriates, or as we prefer to call them: Finns worldwide.

# Contents

**A!**

**Aalto University**

# Meet the team

**Amir Tahvonen**

Creative Sustainability
amir.tahvonen@aalto.fi / amir.tahvonen@gmail.com
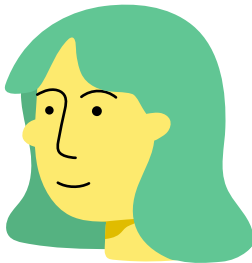
**Hannah Roche**

Collaborative and Industrial Design
h.roche1@student.gsa.ac.uk / hrscotty@gmail.com
hannahroche.myportfolio.com

**Savannah Vize**

Creative Sustainability
savannahvizedesign@gmail.com
@savannahvizedesign

**Shuaijun Zhang**

Collaborative and Industrial Design
shuaijun.zhang@aalto.fi / shuaijun.zhang.fi@gmail.com
kansang.github.io

# Introduction

We live in an increasingly globalised world where people, information and ideas continuously travel and merge with one another. This massive shift has created more fluid identities, with expatriates, dual-citizens, immigrants, asylum seekers, and third culture children having to come to terms with complex issues surrounding culture, politics, religion, history, and belonging. In particular, losing one's sense of place can cause people to grapple with loneliness, uncertainty, trauma and disconnect.

According to Suomi-Seura, the "second biggest Finnish town is abroad," with 2 million people claiming Finnish roots and 300,000 citizens and families, of which 254,000 are entitled to vote. Typically there are more people emigrating (~10,000) than immigrating (~8,500), with the most popular destinations being Sweden, the United Kingdom, Spain, the USA, and Germany. Many emigrants are students or young professionals, with over 50% between the ages of 20 and 44. There is a need in the government to mobilise Finns worldwide to increase their participation with Finland, especially with regards to politics or repatriation to counter brain-drain and support the Finnish economy. Despite the introduction of postal voting, only 12.6% of Finns worldwide voted in the parliamentary elections in 2019 (Suomi-Seura 2020). These facts and figures demonstrate why it is time to rethink how this group is treated, and how their experiences can be improved.

To ensure change, our team was especially interested in the long-term needs of this target group, and how to best provide solutions for them. We made sure to fully immerse ourselves in the lived experiences of Finns worldwide through interviews, workshops and desktop research. Understanding and engaging in the contextual complexity of this group meant it was necessary to focus on a specific area, such as service provision or policymaking. Therefore, our proposal and process has focused primarily on the integration of a human-centred approach at the system design level.

Two other proposals were also developed in response to this brief, focusing on practical solutions for government employees. One group created a 'one-stop-shop' for returning Finns to access all relevant information on a single platform, whilst the other developed tools for engagement, with a focus on young expatriates. All three groups worked in close collaboration throughout the process, sharing the responsibility for running interviews, workshops and surveys. We felt it was important to be transparent and open with each other so that every group was on the same page and got the same level of support and information.

**Throughout this report we use a number of governmental terms which we have defined below:**

- Finns worldwide: the term we have used to describe the Finnish diaspora to reflect diverse profiles and avoid 'expatriate' as an exclusive term
- Participation: An umbrella term to describe social, cultural, political, educational and economical interactions with Finland
- Strategy vs. policy: The strategy is the overarching governmental document, in which individual policies and goals are set

Round Table

Understanding the brief

Desktop research

eam

Affinity mapping

Interviews

System mapping

Survey

Research *1.*

# Phase 1: Research

The first 6 weeks of our process were dedicated towards gathering and compiling research to better understand and map the context of the Finnish diaspora, the current strategy and stakeholders, and the approaches of other countries/governments.

## Round table

After reading and discussing the initial pack of documents provided by the strategy team, and conducting preliminary desktop research, we had the opportunity to clarify grey areas and questions through a round table discussion with stakeholders. Here, the discussion guide included topics regarding the emotional needs of Finns living overseas, expat movement during the pandemic, clarifying the scope of participation, and understanding stakeholder expectations.

From the discussion, we understood that current information networks lack coordination, that there is currently no system for staying in touch with expatriate Finns when leaving and returning, and that young people lack the channels and opportunities to engage, despite their enthusiasm to do so. Most stakeholders also agreed that maintaining ties to Finland through language and/or culture is vital. The event helped clarify our initial research direction, thus we began to recruit expatriates, service designers and experts to interview.

## Desktop research

Though we prioritised hearing personal stories and experiences from stakeholders and expatriates alike, we conducted desktop research into the general expatriation experience. This included Finnish expatriate voting habits, researching services provided in Finland and globally; and other countries' policies and strategies. The materials we screened were governmental reports, news articles and scholarly documents. We also immersed ourselves in online expat communities popular amongst expatriates such as Facebook and Reddit groups. This activity gave valuable insight into the preferred informal methods of communication and participation in Finnish society and culture.

With this foundational knowledge, we were able to conduct more in depth interviews and surveys that provided us with more specific information as time went on. As our interests changed throughout the course, we continued to conduct some desktop research when necessary, such as discovering the complexities of policy writing.

# Survey

Following the combined effort of the 3 teams in the round table, the 'supergroup' collectively conducted a survey to gain more information from Finnish expats.

We designed the survey to help us understand the experiences, needs and general attitudes of the Finnish diaspora, and circulated it via informal channels such as Facebook expatriate groups and Reddit. Within 4 days, we received 844 responses. This response speed demonstrated how people proactively want their opinions and stories to be heard. Most survey respondents were also young people (59.7% 18 to 29 years old), highlighting a gap between the way Finnish government communicates with young expats and the way young expats are involved in Finnish society.

The overall dataset collected offers many different and also shared experiences of being a Finn living abroad. These findings went on to inform our detailed data analysis, affirming other areas of our research such as our interviews. Many respondents were also keen to be involved in the ongoing project, and the survey thus generated a pool of engaged stakeholders to interact with going forward.

➔ **See the survey data in a bit more detail**

## Relationship to Finland

843 responses



- Finnish citizen 91.2%
- Dual citizenship 14.9%
- Parents / grandparents Finnish citizens 18%
- Partner / child is Finnish citizen 6.6%
- Triple citizenship 0.2%
- Other 0.8%
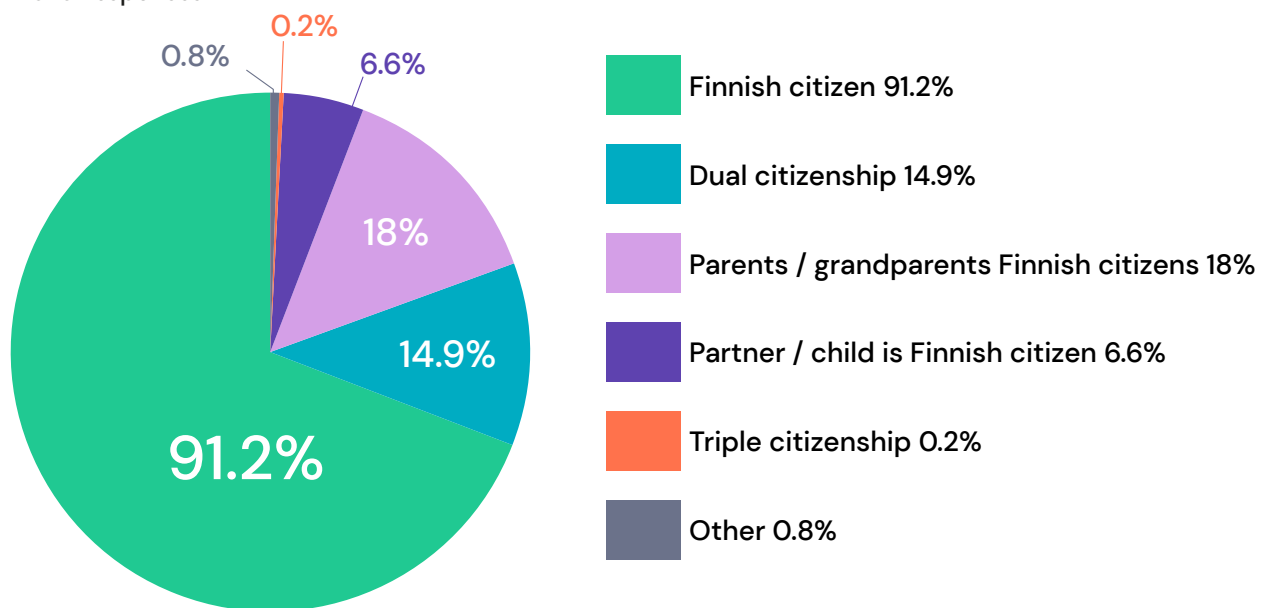
Source: Supergroup 3 online survey

"A lot of things have changed since I left Finland, and it feels like being a foreigner in your own country at times. I don't get a distinct feeling that the Finnish government particularly acknowledges Finns living abroad, other than sending a voting card sometimes"
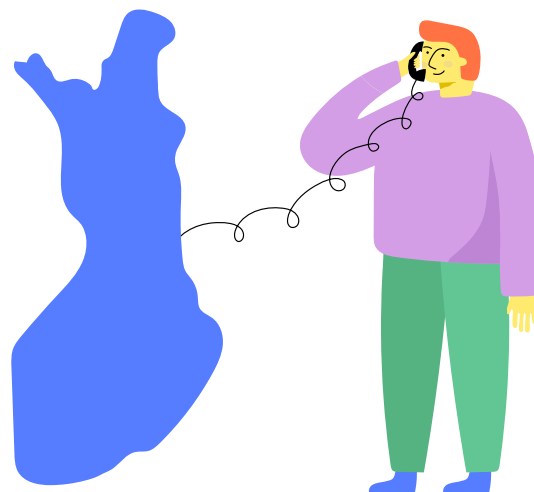
– Finnish citizen, 40–49, 16+ years abroad

## How supported do you, or did you feel by the Finnish government as an overseas resident?

843 responses

Number of answers
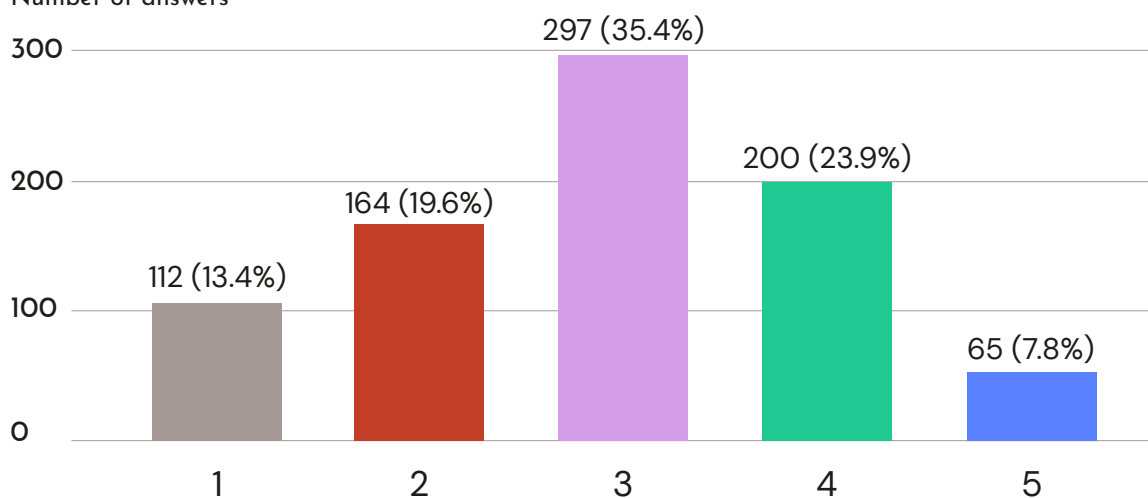


Source: Supergroup 3 online survey

## Interviews

Whilst the survey collected responses, we purposefully contacted expats from different nationalities and backgrounds. By broadening our choice of interviewees, we gained varied qualitative data which later became the basis for an affinity diagram. For example, interviews with Finnish expats bettered our understanding of Finns abroad, and gave insight into the experience of transitioning back into Finnish society. Interviews with expatriates of other nationalities verified a universal experience of expatriation and also gave us interesting examples to guide and inspire our process.

A meeting with a senior specialist from the Ministry of the Interior was held after the roundtable discussion as they were absent. Being the head of the strategy writing team they were a great source of knowledge, and were able to detail the ways in which this process might be streamlined. Some potential needs from this conversation were practical long term implementation, tangible monitoring, flexibility and more grassroots level engagement.

In addition to some Finnish service providers, we reached out to two experts with involvement in expatriate support organisations in different countries. These helped benchmark ideas and provide detailed insights, particularly around the emotional needs of expatriates in relation to the practicalities of moving and living abroad.

Noting the importance of the Facebook groups, and their following's contributions to our survey response, we also interviewed two moderators of a large Finnish global–expatriate Facebook group. These interviews verified our findings of the survey and detailed the ways in which expatriates interact with these informal online platforms as a means of casual research, social and cultural recommendations and nostalgia.

Whilst the majority of our interviews were held over Zoom, we also held some asynchronous interviews via email and Facebook for those with busier schedules. These interviews, along with workshops and survey results, ended up informing our personas: an integral part of our proposal.

"Acknowledging all the emotional connections they have to the topic, and making that a part of the process and the conversation – not just going for the practical stuff"

– Service designer
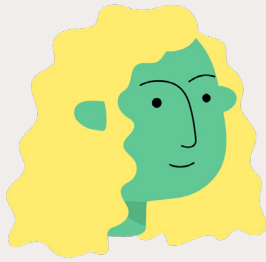
## International expats

2 people, one Asian American and the other European dual citizen.
Aged 17–20.
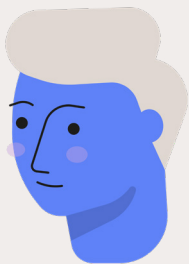
## Finnish expats

3 people, one living in Japan, one who had lived in the UK, and one who had live in the US.
Aged 20–50.

## International service providers

Service designer from an European expat project, CEO of a service providing mental health support for expats and Facebook expat group admins.

## Finnish service providers

Service provider and researcher, government workers from our stakeholder ministries.

**Participation in language / culture**

Preserving Finnish language

Shared Finnish traditions

Finnish school and education

Means of connecting with others

**Return to Finland**

Not inviting or incentivised

Undervalued international experience

Arduous process

Concern for partners and family

**Emotional wellbeing and support**

Need to humanise the diaspora

Link between emotional and practical needs

Mental health concerns

Overwhelming channels

## Mapping our data

Our initial research phase resulted in a plethora of information, stories and insights into the complex brief we were tackling. To make sense of all our data, we began categorising it using an affinity diagram. Grouping our data, we organically identified 5 themes from our various findings, of which 3 seemed key: **participation in language and culture, emotional wellbeing and support, and return to Finland**.

With these themes in mind and the learnings from our interviews, desktop research and survey responses, we started to map the system in which we were working. An important process, this helped us form a clear idea of how the system works, which key actors are at play, and what processes, tangible elements, intangible elements and connections sit between them.

Throughout our research phase we reworked, simplified and modified this system map multiple times, each time adding in new information, identified connections or relevant stakeholders to better understand the context as a whole. The final simplified iteration demonstrated areas we began to focus on, most essential stakeholders, artefacts and services.
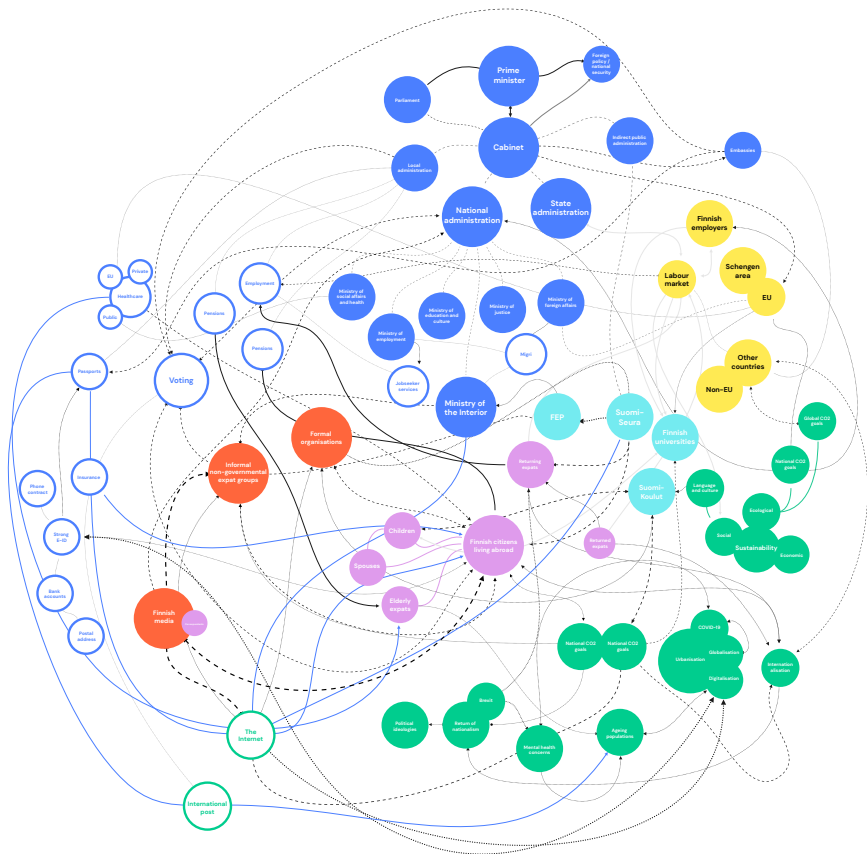
**Mapping 1**
A tangle showing
the complexity and
intercennected nature of
the phenoma
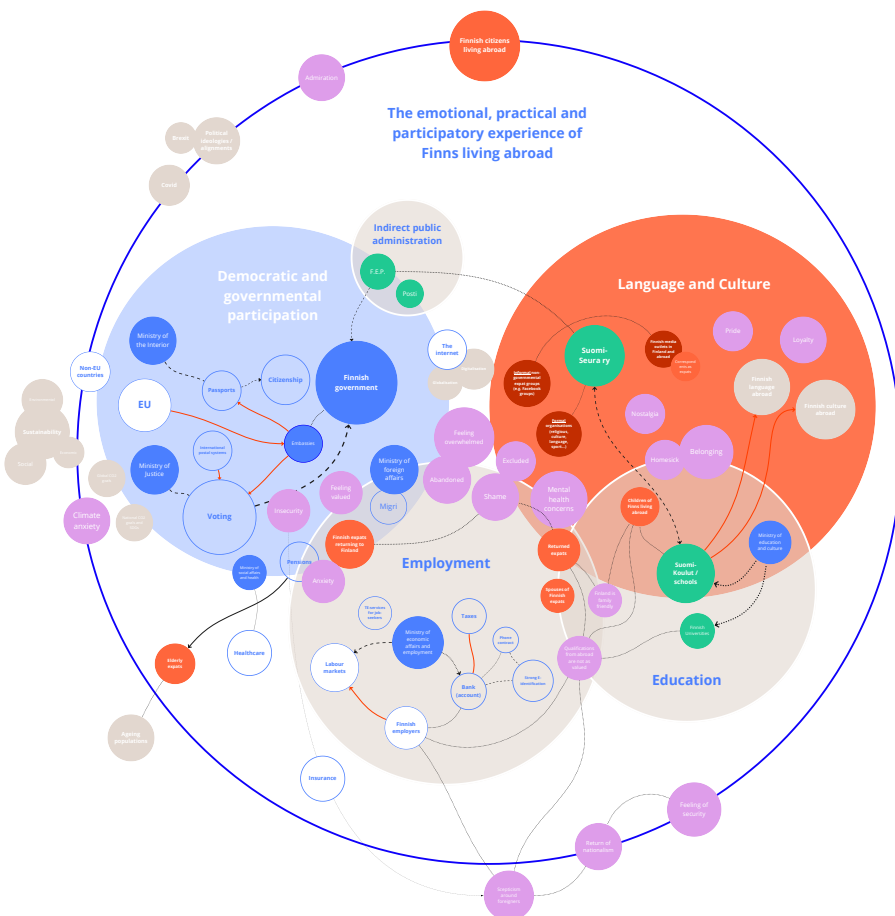


**Mapping 2**
Arranged and classified to
start focusing on a more
specific topic

# Final system mapping

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Who is included in the policy writing process?

Ministry of the Interior

Suomi-Seura

F.E.P

Formal organisations

Informal organisations

Policy

Individual Finns are consulted due to service design methods in the government

Which services does the policy impact?

Services used by Finns living abroad

Suomi-Koulut (Schools)

Passports

Voting

Jobseeker services

Postal services

Identification

Insurance

Taxes

Bank services

Pensions

Media (e.g. YLE)

Healthcare

The policy / strategy is experience by Finns through interfaces which include different services and their touchpoints

The diverse Finnish diaspora

Finnish citizens living abroad

Finnish expatriates returning to Finland

Returned expatriates

Elderly expatriates

Children

Spouses

People working abroad

Students

## Legend

🔵 Governmental bodies and ministries   ⚪ Formal organisations   ⚪ Fiscal artefacts and services

🔴 Expatriates and related individuals   ⚪ Informal organisations

➔ **See the system maps in detail**

**Before Arrival**　　　**Settling in**　　　**Settled**

Excitement
Nostalgia for
home

Culture shock
Reverse culture shock

Missing home
Negatives of home
country become clear

Assimilated
Settled back in

O Months　　　3　　　6　　　20　　　24+

Moving away　　　Returning home
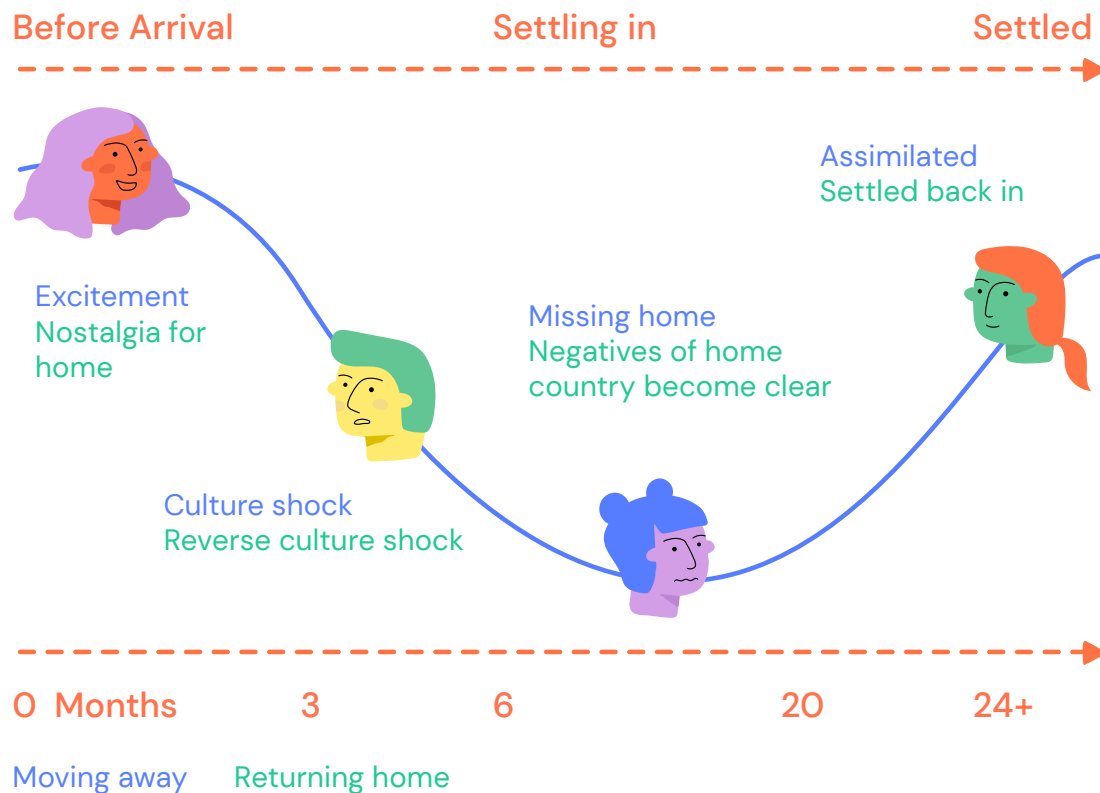
**Moving emotions |** We found that feelings related to moving are not linear, but rather can flow in an arc

## Key insights

The key insights from our research were mostly related to either emotions or communication. For instance we realised that Finns worldwide wanted to be in closer contact with their government, especially to locate important resources. However, a lack of effective communication and barriers (eg. language) have made this form of engagement tricky and caused confusion or misinformation in the past. We recognise that in our globalised world, people are bound to move around more fluidly than before. Bearing this in mind, we felt that the Finnish definition of who or when someone is considered an expatriate to be rather narrow. For instance, people who return to Finland are no longer considered expatriates, despite the fact that they might need time to adjust, or may suffer from reverse culture shock. We discovered that it is also challenging for Finns worldwide to reintegrate into the workforce upon returning. Employers seem to have certain biases and preconceptions around expatriates, and often hold Finnish qualifications in higher regard.

Lastly, the current Strategy for Expatriate Finns is typically put into effect for four years. We thought it could be valuable to consider long term goals and policies instead, which might mean incorporating foresight and adaptability.

Interactive session with survey respondents

Additional contact with expats

Design drivers

ning more about the FEP

Further analysis and problem finding
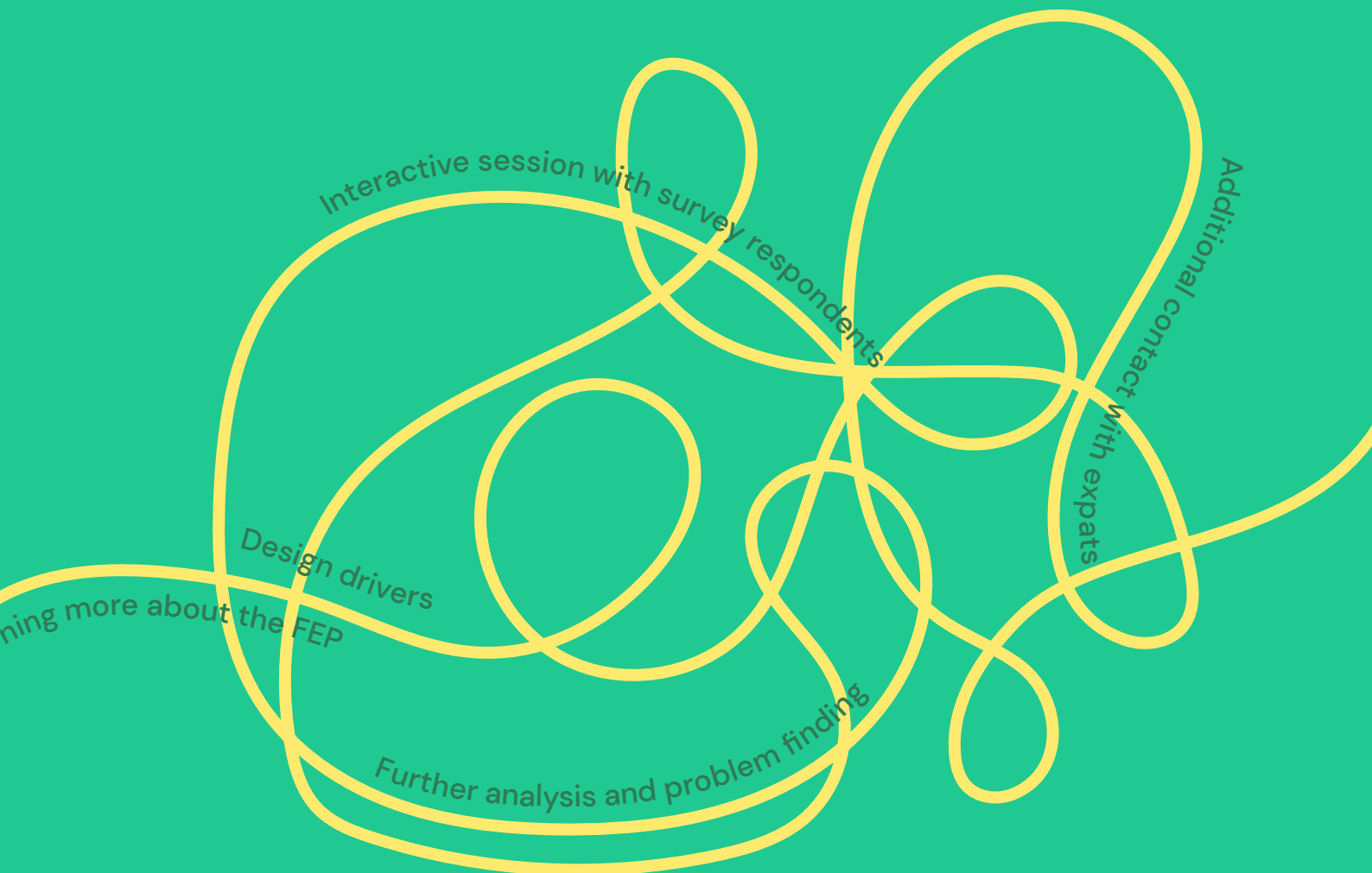
Design

2.

# Phase 2: Design
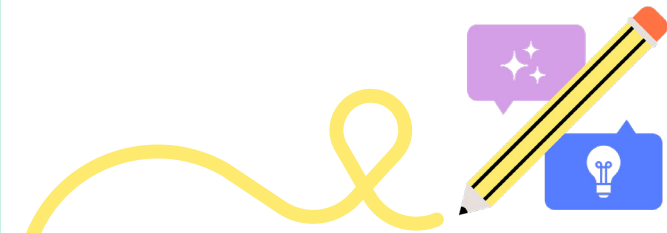
## Finding a place to intervene

Following the initial research stage, we began to bridge the gap between insights and practice, using our findings to frame opportunities and how these might be addressed.

Before looking for specific solutions and design intervention areas, it was necessary to frame our wider context and principles. By reevaluating the identified problem areas, we mapped the desired ethos and goals of our potential design solutions. Our principles emphasised a user–focused approach to support and engage expatriate Finns above any value they could return to the government.

| Problem areas | Ethos and Principles | Why? | Goals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participation is complex | Flexible, equitable and non–committal participation | More democratic and increases participation | "Invisible string" relationship |
| International experience is not valued | Encourage, value and celebrate diversity | Encourage return talent | Support diverse needs across all stages of the expatriate experience |
| | Recognise all stages of the expatriate experience | Better overall experience throughout | |
| Expats are only contacted for bureaucratic reasons | Government should not expect anything in return | Duty to support citizens | |
| 4–year strategies focus on short term and topical goals | Long term consideration and adaptability | Opportunity for long–term funding | Include long–term consideration |
| Formal channels are unpopular, and informal ones are underused | Readily available and ongoing support | Increases trust and may boost participation | Ensure expats stay involved with Finland when abroad |
| Support focuses on practical, rather than emotional needs | Empathy, clear communication and emotional support | | Consider the emotional aspects of support |

| | User-focused design manifesto | Government design manifesto |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Be simple, flexible, noncommittal and maintain a "door's always open" and "invisible string" support approach | Provide expatriate Finns with an ongoing line of support from Finland, offering a continued but not overbearing relationship |
| **2** | Consider expatriate needs from both practical and emotional perspectives | Support Finns living abroad in their emotional and practical needs |
| **3** | Consider and be aware of expats at all stages of their expatriation experience, with long-term consideration | Support Finns throughout their expatriate experience with long-term solutions |
| **4** | Be inclusive and celebrate, value and recognise diversity (gender, age, relationship and status with Finland, language skills etc) | Recognise, respond to and celebrate diverse needs and experiences within the expatriate population |
| **5** | Fulfil government duty of care and responsibility to Finns abroad unconditionally | Prioritise support for the needs of expatriate Finns to maintain a positive connection to Finland |
| **6** | Support expat communities, and aid them in upholding their Finnish culture however the expat sees fit (culture, language, politics…) | Openly communicate with expat communities to nurture, strengthen and reinforce cultural participation through existing channels |

However, we recognised that our use of designerly practises and methods would be somewhat difficult to communicate to the strategy team. Thus we created a double-sided design manifesto, with one side true to our human-centred principles, and the other using language borrowed from the governmental vocabulary.

Using a variation of Donella Meadows' *Leverage points: places to intervene in a system* (145–165), and Policy Lab's *Government as a System framework* (Policy Lab 2020), we located our design drivers within the government system. Working with the leverage points diagram revealed that we were looking to impact the system on a deep level. Though there was potential to work in the lower levels of the system through stocks, flows and feedback loops, the majority of our intervention areas sat at the deeper goal and mindset levels. In other words, our research had suggested a shift was needed to incorporate more empathetic and supportive processes into the very structure and aim of the strategy, rather than just at a service provision level.

**Lower leverage points: easier to target but low impact**

- Constants, parameters, numbers
- Buffer sizes
- Material stocks and flows
- Relative delays
- Negative feedback loops
- Positive feedback loops

**Deep leverage points: hard to target but high impact**

- Information flows
- Rules of the system
- Structure of the system
- Goal of the system
- Mindset paradigm
- The power to see paradigms as such

Prioritise support for the needs of expatriate Finns to maintain a positive connection to Finland

Recognise, respond to and celebrate diverse needs and experiences within the expatriate population

Provide expatriate Finns with an ongoing line of support from Finland, offering a continued but not overbearing relationship

Openly communicate with expat communities to nurture, strengthen and reinforce cultural participation through existing channel

Support Finns living abroad in their emotional and practical needs

Support Finns throughout their expatriate experience with long-term solutions

**Leverage points**
Adapted from Meadows (1977) *Leverage points: Places to intervene in a system*

Policy Lab's Government as a System framework then helped us identify which styles of action were currently being used by the Ministry, and which missing actions aligned with our design drivers. The taxonomy of government action styles also helped us find examples of other countries' approaches to better locate our area and methods of interest.

→ **Government as a System diagram**

→ **World map of diasporic engagement examples**

Phase 2: Design

# Ideation

With clear leverage points and a solid understanding of the levels and actions we were working with, our focus area had significantly narrowed. To aid this refinement further, we held internal discussions to map the overlap and commonalities in our design drivers.

This process highlighted the interwoven nature of our manifesto's six points, with relationships, communication and similarities between each of them. Though it was therefore difficult to isolate one manifesto point from its counterparts, these mapping exercises highlighted key opportunities, enabling us to further distill our intervention space.



**Support Finns living abroad in their emotional and practical needs**

**Provide expatriate Finns with an ongoing line of support from Finland, offering a continued but not overbearing relationship**

**Recognise, respond to and celebrate diverse needs and experiences within the expatriate population**

**Support Finns throughout their expatriate experience with long-term solutions**

**Openly communicate with expat communities to nurture, strengthen and reinforce cultural participation through existing channels**

**Prioritise support for the needs of expatriate Finns to maintain a positive connection to Finland**

**Policy Writing that dictates what a citizen-government relationship is**

**Policies that determine who is an expatriate**

**The relationship between government, NGOs and indirect public administration**

**Government communications and language**

**Online resources**

Commonalities between design drivers

These emerging "opportunities" captured our design manifesto as much more tangible and applicable intervention areas:

**Increased focus on inclusivity and accessibility**

**Strengthening of engagement**

**Incorporating foresight and adaptability**

**Embedding empathy**

*Pre-Strategy January*   *Pre-strategy June*

| Strategy for Finns Worldwide<br>**Main action points** | Previous contact | New policy programme is green lit | Project set-up | Discussions with stakeholders | Working Group meeting 1 | Working Group meeting 2 | Working Group meeting 3 | Draft strategy written |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Previous analysis | | Aims, goals and actors are set out | Information is gathered from stakeholders | | | Structure is drafted | |

| Interaction with<br>**Other Ministries** | Working group shares aims and goals | Knowledge sharing | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

| Interaction with<br>**Indirect public administrations** | Suomi-Seura share aims and goals | Suomi-Seura knowledge sharing | | Migration institute research | FEP share conclusions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

| Interaction with<br>**Finns Worldwide** | Workshops |
| --- | --- |

# Discussions with the strategy team and strategy writing process mapping

Working with deep leverage points, these opportunities emphasised the need for a stronger understanding of the strategy process itself. The next clear step was to speak with members of the ministry's strategy writing team to fully appreciate the actors, voices and actions at play in the entirety of strategy's development and lifespan. This was achieved through a mapping–interview style discussion in which one of the policy writers dictated the process and we followed up with prompts, questions and a live sketching of the system through a shared Miro board. Following the main discussion, we reviewed the diagram and emailed a copy to the ministry stakeholders for comment and clarification on any incomplete areas.

| | | January (Year 1) | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Draft circulated for approval

Strategy finalised and published

2022 Strategy Published

Analysis of successes / shortcomings

Change in government (unlikely to effect)

Read and comment on draft strategy

Approval given

Analyse successes and shortcomings

FEP meet mid-strategy
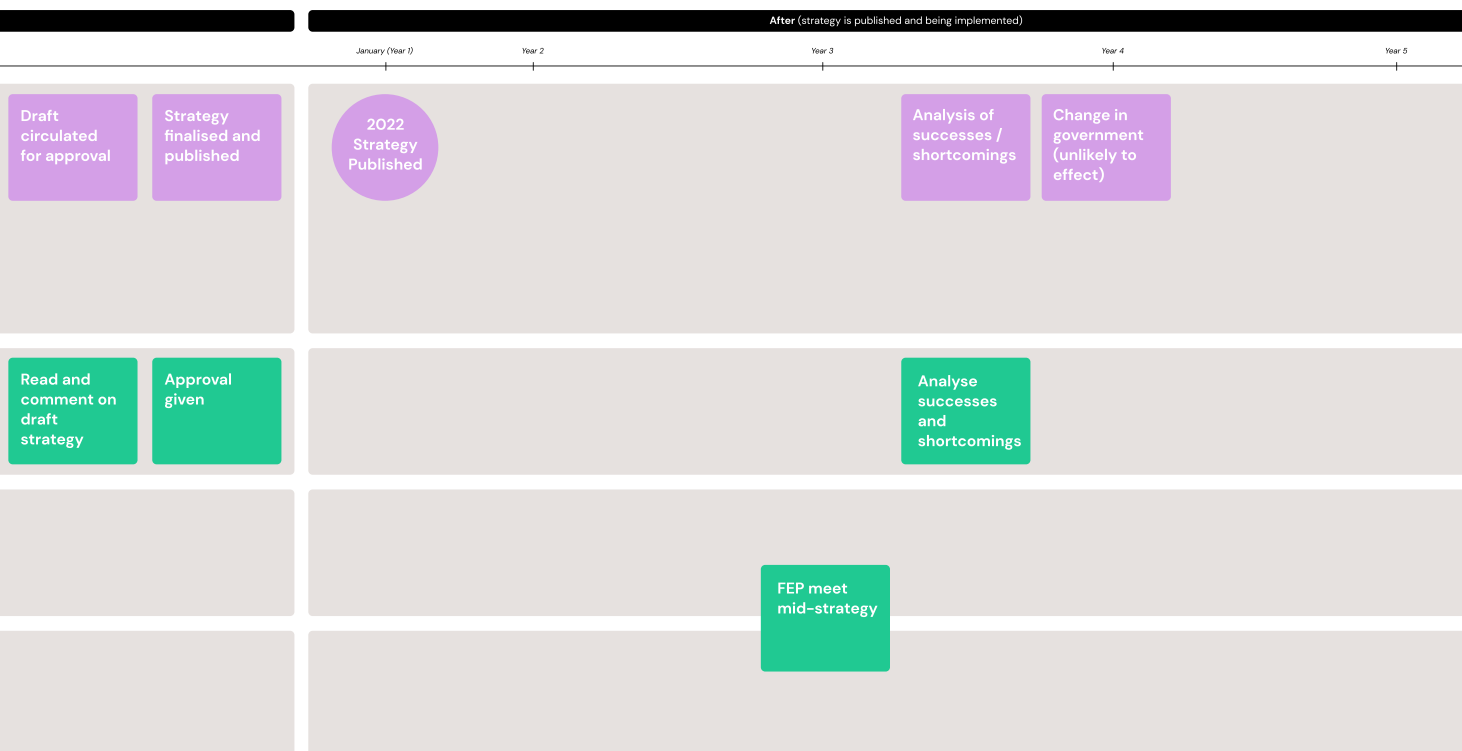
**Mapping of the current strategy writing process**

Whilst the main aim of this activity was to understand the existing processes, our discussions and active visualisation indicated areas and actions which would benefit from revision. It was apparent that the current strategy process was insular and lacked both engagement and communication opportunities with the wider Finnish diaspora. Similarly, it worked very much within the 4-year lifespan of a single strategy, reaffirming our concerns about short-term goals and highlighting a lack of active reflection throughout the writing and implementation of the strategy. With our 4 opportunities in mind, we were able to locate points along the process where communication, accessibility, engagement and empathy were missing and could be embedded.

Phase 2: Design

"There should be clearer communication that people moving abroad could let the Foreign ministry know as well that they are moving abroad, and op-in for these information updates because otherwise you're completely left out unless you're actively searching information on social media groups and online."

– Finnish citizen based in the UK

## Workshop with Finns Worldwide

Though our intervention space clearly sat on the policymaker's side of the table, it was important to put our user-centered approach into practice and continue consultation and collaboration with Finns worldwide themselves. We therefore organised and held a workshop with 5 survey respondents to gather their experiences and thoughts on our emerging direction. It was held on Zoom over a 2 hour period, using Miro as an online interactive platform for documenting thoughts and ideas.

Our agenda was simple: after a short introduction and warm-up task we conducted a 1:1 activity and concluded with a guided group discussion. During the 1:1 activity, we guided participants through a pre-prepared expatriate journey template, documenting their key events, experiences and associated emotions.

The purpose of this activity was to validate our identified opportunities with the emotion-laden experiences of real Finnish expatriates. We found that while emotions related to the practical steps of moving, living and socialising, some found it more difficult to describe them: "I'm a Finn, I don't have any emotions". E.g. visits to Finland and connecting with other Finns worldwide prompted feelings of belonging. Moving abroad was exciting to most, where big life changes related to employment or bureaucracy caused stress and anxiety. Interestingly, any positive feelings were usually related to non-official situations and events.

The subsequent guided group discussion focused on the government, and how to increase inclusivity, emotional awareness and long term thinking when interacting with Finns

## In adopted country (long term)



**Home comforts of Finland may wear off**

**Maintaining relationships with friends & family in Finland**

**Citizenship of children**

**Returning to Finland for holidays** (1/2 times a year)

**Struggling with reverse culture shock**

**Joining local networks (e.g. Facebook)**

**Keeping in touch with family & friends at home**

**Finding ways to engage in Finnish Culture abroad**

Not that much

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ● Excited | ● Nostalgia | ● Shame |
| ● Pride | ● Insecurity | ● Depressed |
| ● Belonging | ● Lonely / homesick | ● Stress / anxiety |

worldwide. The discussion was lively and varied, frequently revolving around the need for better communication tools, styles and relationships. As well as validating our identified opportunity for increased communication, it was useful to hear how expatriates want to be contacted and involved – such as opt–in communications and open invitations for participation or feedback. There was a general lack of awareness of the current strategy and the Ministry's policy making process, with participants noting an obliviousness to policies that affected them.

Our closing activity asked participants: If you were creating a toolbox for the Ministry of the Interior, which tools would you include? Responses varied from very practical service provision concepts, such as internationally available digital platforms, to more holistic shifts such as efficient communication, check–

in opportunities, low–threshold participation and the use of in–depth scenarios when building policies. A youth expatriate workshop run by 3C and Suomi–Seura also helped confirm some of our insights, and solidified our personas.

## Focus on the strategy process

Compiling learnings from stakeholders on both sides of the table, we settled on the strategy process itself as an important space for intervention. Working at this high level would enable us to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the current system, design tools in response, and plan their implementation. Over the next few weeks we maintained a continual back–and–forth with our government stakeholders to check parameters and resource/budgeting limitations, and confirm the applicability of our proposals.
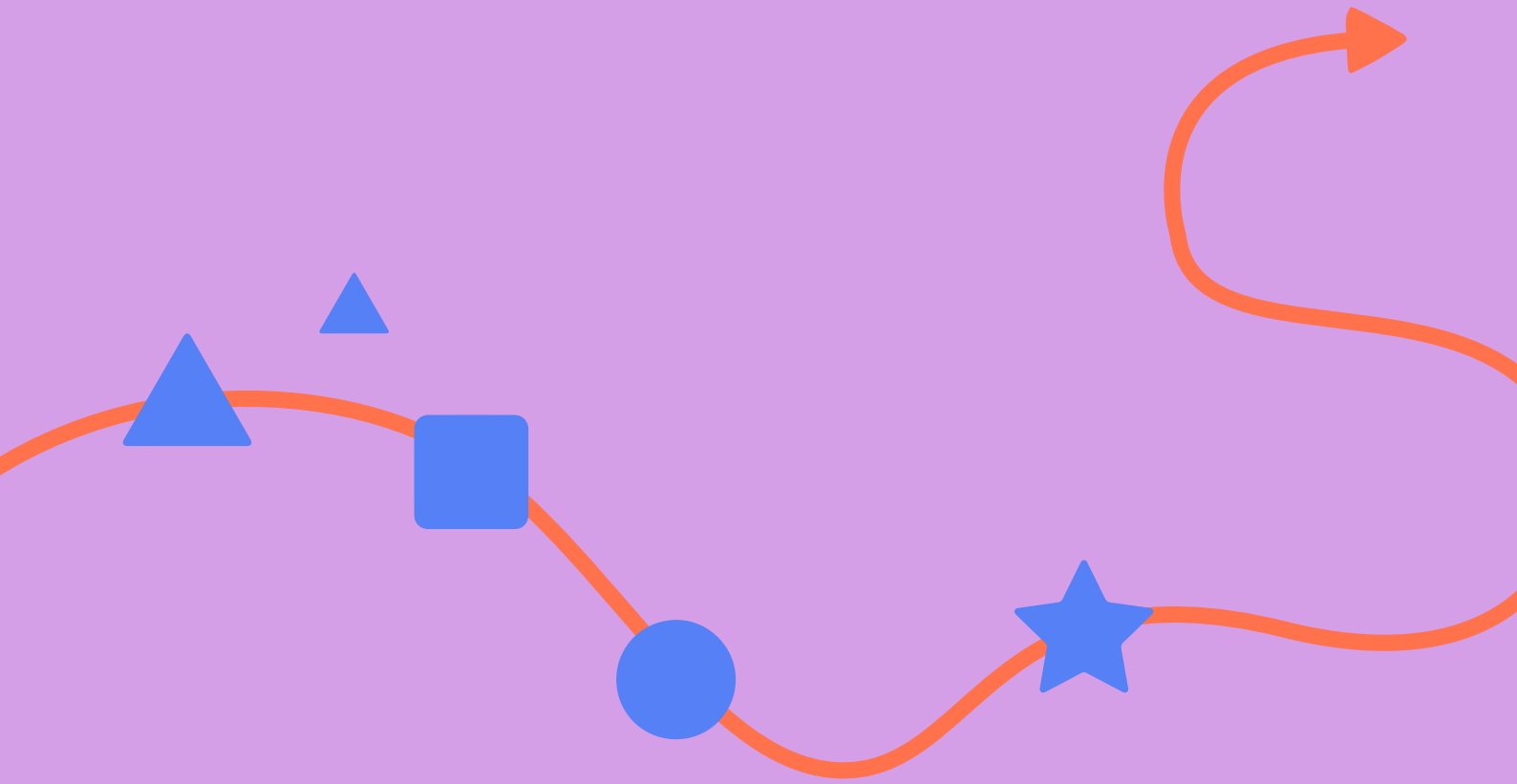
Proposal

3.

# Proposal

Working at the strategy process level, we propose a holistic change to the strategy-writing process to incorporate human centred design approaches and tools. With our knowledge of the existing strategy writing process, its shortcomings and the needs of policymakers and Finns worldwide, we have translated our 4 opportunities into 4 key tools.

The intention is for these tools to be slowly implemented and eventually embedded into a new *Human-Centred Strategy Writing Process*.

# Proposal

| | **Before** (prep for policy writing to begin) | | **During** (new strategy and policies are being written) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Pre-Strategy January* | | | | | | *Pre-strategy June* | |

| Strategy for Finns Worldwide **Main action points** | Previous contact | New policy programme is green lit | Project set-up | Discussions with stakeholders | Working Group meeting 1 | Working Group meeting 2 | Working Group meeting 3 | Draft strategy written |
| | Previous analysis | ▲ | Aims, goals and actors are set out | Information is gathered from stakeholders | | | Structure is drafted | ▲ |

| Interaction with **Other Ministries** | | | Working group shares aims and goals | Knowledge sharing | | | | |

| Interaction with **Indirect public administrations** | ▲ | | Suomi-Seura share aims and goals | Suomi-Seura knowledge sharing | | Migration institute research | FEP share conclusions | |

| Interaction with **Finns Worldwide** | ★ ■ | | ● ★ | | Workshops | | | |

◼ First, to increase focus on <u>inclusivity and accessibility</u>, we propose a co-creation of language, reevaluating existing tone of voice and vocabulary

▲ To embed empathy, we propose the development and integration of a <u>catalogue of personas</u>, informing policy writers on the plethora of needs with an accurate representation of diversity

**After** (strategy is published and being implemented)

January (Year 1) | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5

Draft circulated for approval

Strategy finalised and published

2022 Strategy Published

Analysis of successes / shortcomings

Change in government (unlikely to effect)

Read and comment on draft strategy

Approval given

Analyse successes and shortcomings

FEP meet mid-strategy

**Mapping of the Human–Centered Strategy Writing process**

To strengthen <u>engagement and accessibility</u>, we propose an increased awareness and resourcing of external <u>communication</u> between the Ministry and its diaspora

And finally, to <u>incorporate further engagement and adaptability</u>, we propose ongoing workshops with Finns worldwide, with low barriers to entry, to gather opinions and feedback throughout the process

# Tools and their practicalities

## Personas

**What:** We propose integrating a library of personas into the strategy–writing process. As a constantly evolving set of archetypal expatriates, the library should exist digitally as a pdf/powerpoint and as physical character cards. It would be accompanied by a user guide on how to read, understand and incorporate the personas.

We have identified 4 key personas through our own research, interviews and surveys, as the foundation for this library. These personas are introduced on the following page.

**How:** These 4 personas would act as the starting point for the library, but we highly recommend that these are consistently built on and revised. The library is then consulted at any necessary or appropriate point in the strategy–writing process - such as cross–referencing new policy ideas or frameworks against them, or identifying whose voice needs to be heard regarding certain issues. This embedded practice will ensure new policies and language consider as many positions and circumstances as possible.

**Why:** In line with our desire to embed empathy into the strategy process, personas will engage with the needs of expatriates when workshops or feedback sessions are not practical. This will help to streamline a more conscientious process which considers the needs of the Finnish diaspora wholly.

## The proud second generation Finn

Someone who has never lived in Finland but is very enthusiastic about Finnish language and culture. He is participating through the finnish expatriate parliament, and holds a dual citizenship. However, he struggles to find events that would be just for him. *"I feel strongly that I am a non–official cultural ambassador of Finnishness."*

## The withdrawn Finn

A person who has lived abroad for a long while, but does not really get contacted by the government. She's integrated in her current home country and does not plan to return to Finland, but does feel nostalgia for her birth country, especially the traditions. *"I don't get a distinct feeling that the Finnish government particularly acknowledges Finn's living abroad, other than sending a voting card sometimes"*

## The third culture kid

Lived abroad during their childhood, the third culture kid has since partially reintegrated to Finland. They experience reverse culture shock, and find it difficult sometimes to fit in. *"My identification with Finland has definitely become stronger the longer I've been away".*

## The nomadic family Finn

This Finn has lived in multiple countries and has a higher likelihood of returning, as she thinks Finland a safe place especially for kids. She is struggling to find up to date official information, and wishes she wouldn't need to know what to search for. She reports that her *"partner is also concerned about his possibility to be employed in Finland".*

Passport card 1:
Suomi : Finland : Suomi
Age: 20–29
Languages: English, Finnish
Citizenship: Dual citizen
Absence: Has never lived in Finland
Engagement with Finland
Likelihood of returning / staying in Finland

Passport card 2:
Suomi : Finland : Suomi
Age: 50–59
Languages: Finnish, English
Citizenship: Recent dual citizenship
Absence: 20 years
Engagement with Finland
Likelihood of returning / staying in Finland

Passport card 3:
Suomi : Finland : Suomi
Age: 20–29
Languages: Finnish, English
Citizenship: Finnish citizenship, born abroad
Absence: 16 years from birth
Engagement with Finland
Likelihood of returning / staying in Finland

Passport card 4:
Suomi : Finland : Suomi
Age: 30–39
Languages: Finnish, Swedish, English
Citizenship: Finnish citizen
Absence: 10 years on and off
Engagement with Finland
Likelihood of returning / staying in Finland

Tools and their  practicalities

## Communication

**What:** We propose an increased awareness and resourcing of external communication with Finns worldwide. This would be achieved through more equitable recruitment processes (for workshops and feedback opportunities) and continual open sharing of information.

**How and who:** We recommend that documents and participation opportunities are publicised using social media and accessible channels such as an opt-in digital newsletter. Making use of both official social media accounts (such as Suomi-Seura and the Ministry's own channels), and promoting/redirecting via informal groups (such as expatriate Facebook groups) will increase the awareness of shared information. Feedback opportunities themselves can be minimal via contact forms on the Ministry / Suomi-Seura's websites, or more extensive using website feedback forms or third-party hosts such as SurveyMonkey or SurveySparrow.

Please see the Language tool for reference on using accessible and user-friendly language within all external communications.

**Why:** This ongoing process will increase awareness of the strategy and make it easier for the strategy team to collect responses, participation and feedback from the diaspora.

## Language

**What:** We propose that the language of the strategy and policies is collaboratively revised and co-created on an ongoing basis with Finns Worldwide. This is primarily directed at outward facing communication, but would also affect governmental language where possible and appropriate, as we recognise that the Ministry will have to adhere to certain terminology and formats.

**How:** This would exist as a "Tone of Voice" guideline document, as a .pdf or powerpoint document detailing the overall sentiment and specific co-created terminology, revised regularly through collaborative workshops. Workshops would be held through Jitsi with interactive elements using Mural, or 'lite' feedback options such as a contact form or minimal survey.

**Why:** Current language feels inaccessible and not representative of the diverse diaspora it concerns. Co-creating language will therefore benefit the overall strategy by making it more emotionally engaged and accessible. Furthermore, it will increase efficiency in team onboarding and in writing external communications.

Tools and their practicalities

## Workshops

**What:** We propose collaborative workshops with Finns worldwide are held throughout the strategy writing process and the lifespan of each strategy.
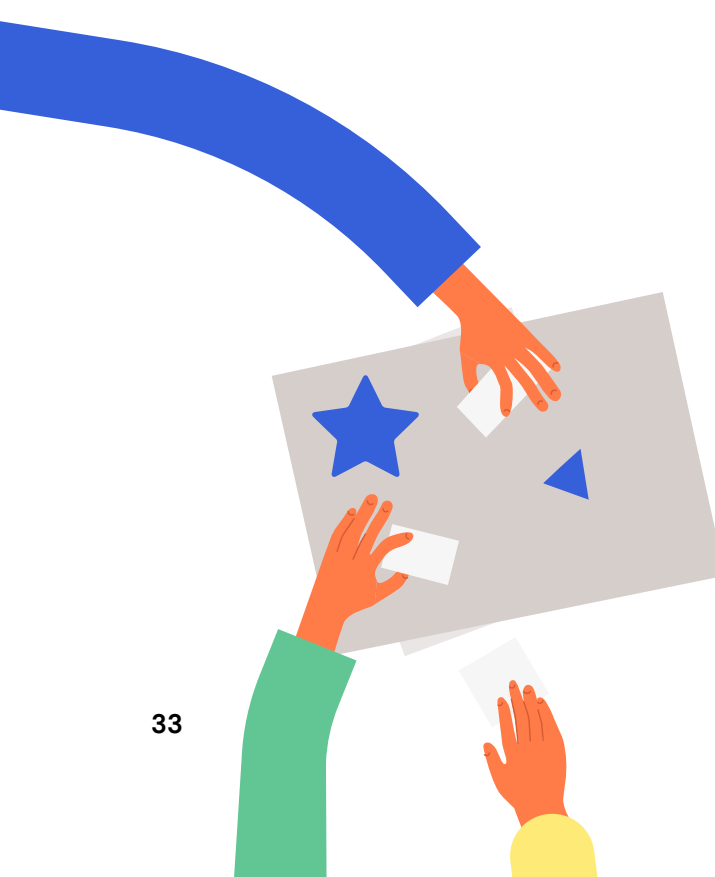
**How and who:** We suggest that workshops continue in a remote, online format using the Jitsi video-calling software, whilst using collaborative tools such as Mural to collect ideas and document discussions. We recommend that the Ministry of the Interior hold these sessions, or set the agendas, goals and criteria to then outsource to other relevant bodies such as Suomi–Seura and the Migration Institute.

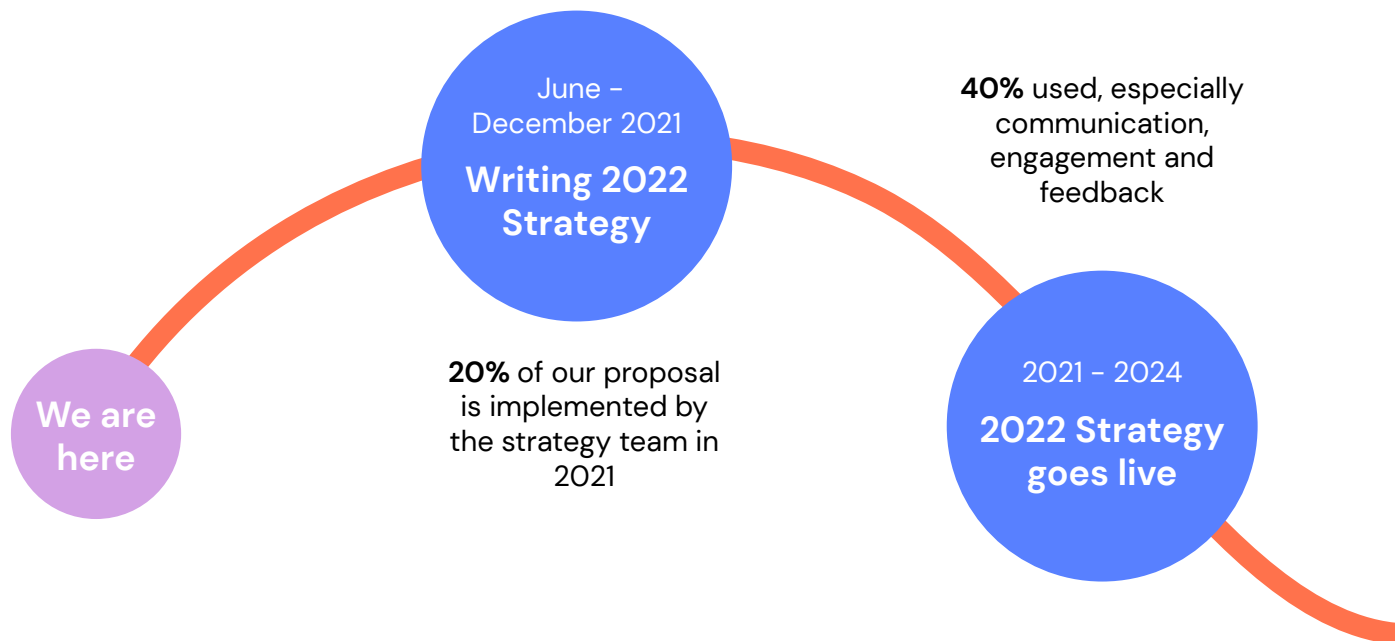Please see the communications tool for information on how workshop participants should be recruited.

**Why:** Continual workshops will check in with stories and needs and ensure the strategy accurately reflects and responds to them. By increasing the frequency of workshops and creating isolated, non-committal opportunities for participation there will be a lower barrier for entry to increase the diversity of voices in these forums. Workshops designed around specific policy areas or the strategy as a whole will mean final outcomes better reflect evolving requirements.

"Everything that changes, that's relevant for people living abroad, should be communicated fast and efficiently to those people the policy involves. (...) It's all now up to us to try and search for this information but that requires that you're aware of these policy changes, and I'm not."

– Finnish citizen based in the UK

Tools and their practicalities

# Implementation of tools

June –
December 2021
**Writing 2022
Strategy**

**40%** used, especially
communication,
engagement and
feedback

**We are
here**

**20%** of our proposal
is implemented by
the strategy team in
2021

2021 – 2024
**2022 Strategy
goes live**

*We have suggested a staggered approach to implement
our tools, with the roadmap for our human-centered
strategy process spanning over more than six years. We
focused on long term solutions that can grow over time,
and wanted policy writers and civil servants to become
comfortable using these new tools.*

In our roadmap, we imagined about half of our ideas would be
implemented by the time the 2027 strategy begins, mainly involving
communication and feedback. During this process, the strategy
team would slowly increase use of our tools, until 2032, when 110%
of our proposal would go into effect. By 110% we mean that we
would encourage government employees to continuously add to
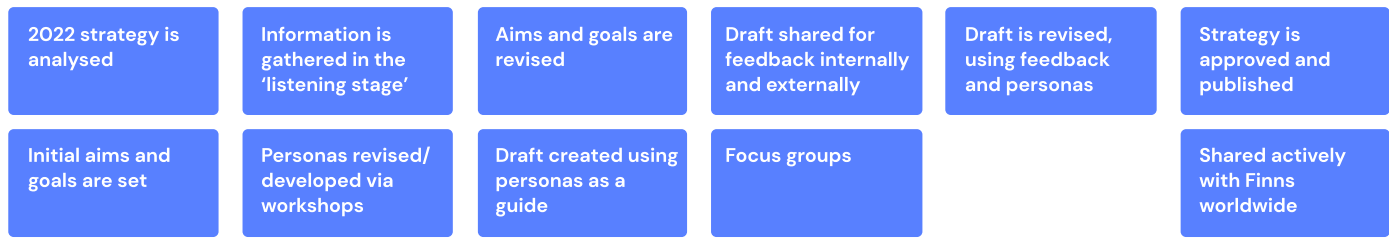and alter our tools to reflect evolving situations and needs.

**Tools and methods are updated to reflect evolving needs**

**Process is repeated for next strategy**

**110%** used in 2032

2025

**2022 Report written**

2026

**Writing 2027 Strategy**

**70%** of our proposal is used

**50%** goes into effect

"We are interested in ideas and concepts that could help us to follow up the strategy once it is published."
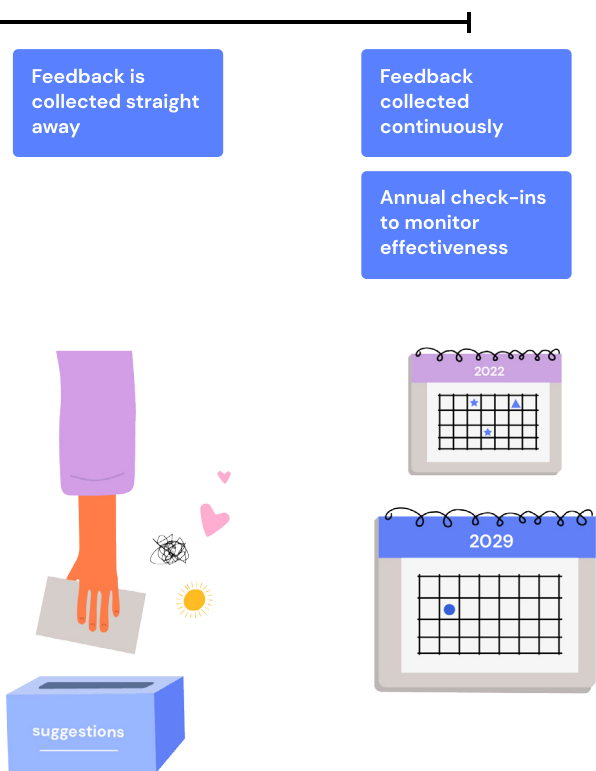
– Ministry stakeholder

Implementation of tools

| 2022 strategy is analysed | Information is gathered in the 'listening stage' | Aims and goals are revised | Draft shared for feedback internally and externally | Draft is revised, using feedback and personas | Strategy is approved and published |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initial aims and goals are set | Personas revised/ developed via workshops | Draft created using personas as a guide | Focus groups | | Shared actively with Finns worldwide |



## Story of the implementation

The storyline above shows when and how our proposal and tools would be used by the strategy writing team in 2027. The first few stages remain relatively similar: they analyse the previous strategy, establish key stakeholders and broad aims, and begin their 'listening stage' to fill in any gaps in their knowledge. However, here we suggest the introduction of our personas and workshops. The strategy writing team would compile a list of Finns to hear from, and outsource this to Suomi–Seura or the Migration Institute to conduct the necessary interviews, workshops or research. These findings would then feed into the team's ever growing persona library, kept both as a physical set of character cards and as a pdf.

With this new information, the strategy aims would then be revised. The team could then begin drafting the strategy whilst continuously using personas to ensure that a diverse set of needs and stories are consulted. For those in the team who are not familiar with personas, a guide with questions and instructions would assist. Physical character cards in the office should make it harder for strategy writers to forget any voices. It could also encourage discussions and conversations amongst the team, leading to better writing.

Once the draft is written, we recommend it is shared with Finns worldwide. As a part of our goal to strengthen

2027 – 2031

Feedback is collected straight away

Feedback collected continuously

Annual check-ins to monitor effectiveness

engagement, the main aims of the 2027 strategy should be shared on the Ministry and Suomi–Seura's websites to keep Finns up-to-date, accessibly in Finnish, Swedish and English. To gain deeper insights on the diaspora's response to the draft, the team could invite expats to input via small virtual focus groups. In our experience, Finns worldwide are very willing to engage and share their stories, so we believe this would be an incredibly insightful and worthwhile activity to help improve the strategy.

When the final strategy is published, we propose that it is clearly communicated to Finns worldwide with the help of Suomi–Seura, via social media and their

website. Expats would be able to read the full strategy, but should also be provided with a condensed, user-friendly version that is comprehensive and easy to share. This ensures miscommunication is avoided and that the Ministry is the primary source of information for Finns worldwide.

In the 4 years that the strategy is active, feedback should be collected from expats via a one-way feedback portal. This ensures Finns worldwide have a reliable, constant way to contact the government. We suggest that this portal is implemented in the Suomi–Seura website rehaul, and monitored by both Suomi–Seura and the Ministry. This provides an excellent way to continuously collect data and opinions from Finns worldwide at all points during the strategy's lifespan. This information should then be consulted ahead of workshops, reports, or integrated into the listening and research phase of the next strategy.

Annual check ins are also recommended to monitor its effectiveness via events like the Finnish Expatriate Parliament or workshops proposed by the ministry.

Reflection

*4.*

# Reflection

## Our design and research process

Throughout the Design for Government course we really came to appreciate the organisation and expertise of the teaching staff. Dividing the 12 week course into clear phases via the double-diamond model, we were able to progress through the discovery, definition, developing and delivery stages with ease. Having such a short turnaround pushed us to go through the motions to reach our conclusions: otherwise the research and design phases could have been extended indefinitely.

In particular, activities and classes involving problem finding, systems thinking, leverage points, and framing interventions proved particularly useful. Receiving feedback from teaching staff, peers and stakeholders helped us move forward at critical moments, as did internal discussions within our team. Working closely with the other groups from our brief benefitted us all, and meant we were able to present the Ministry of the Interior with three cohesive and interlinking proposals.

## The proposal

Looking back, nobody in our group could have predicted that we would be creating a *Human-Centered Strategy Process* for policy writers when we started our Design for Government journey. Initially, we all seemed a lot more interested in creating tangible solutions involving services. For instance, we had ideas for information packs and birthday cards to be sent to Finns worldwide during key life events to show governmental support and to remind them of their home country. However, as is so often the case with intensive projects, the knowledge we acquired over time meant that a service solution no longer felt like the most effective thing we could provide the ministry with. We wanted something long-term that would equip the writers with a flexible and overarching toolkit and process, intervening at a systems level.

## Feedback received from peers and stakeholders

Overall our group was extremely pleased with our final proposal and its growth over time. Our final presentation confirmed this, with audience members and governmental stakeholders giving overwhelmingly positive feedback. People appreciated our attention to detail, with one person remarking that they "love how instead of the word 'expatriates' [we are] using *Finns worldwide* – a much more attractive name that expands the definition of expatriates," and another saying that our personas "illustrate well the diversity of expats."

Some constructive comments came from a peer–to–peer feedback session amongst Design for Government students. Although we received praise for our visuals and storytelling, several people were wanting to know more on how our personas originated, and whether or not they were definitive. Others would have liked to see the personas continue on as a central part of the presentation's narrative. Reflecting on this, we could have been clearer about our intentions for the personas, as we intend for them to be a dynamic and ever changing tool for the strategy writing team.
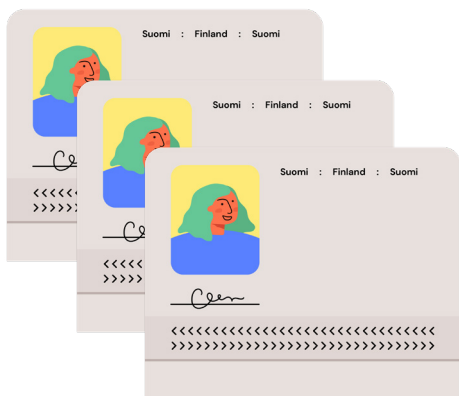
## Design for government as a practice

Throughout this course we also learned a great deal on the role of design in government. We think that the Ministry of the Interior employing service designers is progress, but there is still a long way to go before their potential is fully understood and appreciated by the government. Hearing from a designer within one of the ministries, they remarked that they are "orphans" who are often excluded from key decision making and the information that is crucial to their job.

Reflecting on this, we believe that shifting mindsets from a binary and traditional understanding of design would greatly benefit not only civil servants, but everyone that falls under their jurisdiction. By employing certain design tools or design thinking, unexplored methods and processes might be uncovered, helping break through the silos of government to form a more united and collaborative way of working.

# Bibliography

Arvola, Outi. "Siivet vievät, juuret Suomessa" Suomi–Seura, University of Turku. 2019.

Aðalsteinsdóttir, Arna Hrund. "Einkenni þeirra hópa sem flytja frá Íslandi í Efnahagsþrengingum" Þórólfur Matthíasson, Faculty of Economics. October, 2012, https://skemman.is/bitstream/1946/13110/1/ArnaLokaritgerd.pdf

Carlin, John. "No wonder Iceland has the happiest people on earth" The Guardian. May, 2008, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/may/18/iceland

Carswell, Simon. "30 ways to support returning Irish emigrants recommended to Government" Irish Times. March, 2018, https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/30-ways-to-support-returning-irish-emigrants-recommended-to-government-1.3418328

Delpero, Claudia. "Spain launches €24 million plan for return of Spaniards abroad" Europe Street. March, 2019, https://europestreet.news/spain-launches-e24-million-plan-for-return-of-spaniards-abroad/

Design for Government. "About Design for Government." 6 Oct. 2015, http://dfg-course.aalto.fi/2015/about-design-for-government/

Fennia. Revista Fennia. https://revistafennia.com/fi/meista

Finlandia Foundation National. Finlandia Foundation. https://finlandiafoundation.org/

Finlandia Foundation National. "Suomi / Finland 100, 65 years strong!" 2018.

Helin, Satu. "Missä ovat Virossa ja Kanadassa asuvat ulkosuomalaiset, entä kuuleeko Fuengirola? – Suomi-imperiumi alkoi rakentua Euroopasta". YLE. June, 2017, https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9641498

Heleniak, Timothy. Harnessing the diaspora for development in Europe and Central Asia. World Bank, 2011.

Heleniak, Timothy & Sigurjonsdottir, Hjördis Rut. "Once Homogenous, Tiny Iceland Opens Its Doors to Immigrants" Migrationpolicy.org. April, 2018, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/once-homogenous-tiny-iceland-opens-its-doors-immigrants

Helplink Mental Health. "Helplink's Irish Abroad Counselling Service". https://helplink.ie/iaocs/irish-abroad-counselling-service/

Hindustan Times. "Kerala announces rehabilitation project for expats who returned home" July, 2020, https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/kerala-announces-rehabilitation-project-for-expats-who-returned-home/story-h4uOblmGiflzEfzrapKO4K.html

Johnston, Neil. "Overseas Voters". House of Commons, UK Parliament. May, 2021, https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05923/

InterNations. "Expat City Ranking 2020" 2020.

InterNations. "Expat Insider 2018". 2018. https://cms-internationsgmbh.netdna-ssl.com/cdn/file/2018-09/Expat-Insider-2018_The-InterNations-Survey.pdf

Karjalainen, Jonna. "Espanjansuomalaiset avasivat päiväkirjansa tunti tunnilta: Videot ja kuvat paljastavat, miltä näyttää karavaanareiden, sapattivapaan viettäjien ja perheiden arki". YLE. December, 2018, https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10548627

Kea New Zealand. https://www.keanewzealand.com/

Kenny, Ciara. "Free counselling offered to help returning Irish emigrants" Irish Times. January, 2019. https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/free-counselling-offered-to-help-returning-irish-emigrants-1.3768065

Mayberry, Kate. "The problem with being a long-term expat" BBC. October, 2016. https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20161024-the-problem-with-being-a-long-term-expat

McIntyre, Chris, and Alan Gamlen. "States of belonging: How conceptions of national membership guide state diaspora engagement." Geoforum 103, 2019, pp. 36–46.

Meadows, Donella. "Leverage Points—Places to Intervene in a System." Thinking in Systems: A Primer, edited by Diana Wright, Sustainability Institute, 2008, pp. 145–165.

Migration Institute of Finland. "Survey on the changing nature of being an expatriate Finn". Hovi, Tuomas. Tervonen, Miika. 2020, https://siirtolaisuusinstituutti.fi/en/news/survey-on-the-changing-nature-of-being-an-expatriate-finn/

Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale. "Registry of Italians Resident Abroad (A.I.R.E.)" https://www.esteri.it/mae/en/servizi/italiani-all-estero/aire_0.html

Nemchick, Emily. "Habitual Expats: Why Do So Many Expats Repeatedly Relocate?" Internations.org. https://www.internations.org/guide/global/habitual-expats-why-do-so-many-expats-repeatedly-relocate-16187

Policy Lab. "Introducing a 'Government as a System' toolkit." 6 March 2020, https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/2020/03/06/introducing-a-government-as-a-system-toolkit/

Peltoniemi, Johanna. "On the borderlines of voting" University of Tampere. 2018.

Pellettieri, Lucia. "Offsetting the Brain Drain of Inhospitable Eras, Argentina Helps Expat Scientists Return" Global Press Journal. July, 2015. https://globalpressjournal.com/americas/argentina/offsetting-the-brain-drain-of-inhospitable-eras-argentina-helps-expat-scientists-return/

Public Governance Strategy. "Strategy for Public Governance Renewal" Ministry of Finance, Finland. 2019.

Rabat Process. "Collection Of Diaspora Engagement Practices". International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2020. https://www.rabat-process.org/en/activities/publications/publication-collection-diaspora-engagement-practices

Reuters. "Greece to offer 50% tax break for returning professionals and 'digital migrants'". November, 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-economy-taxation-idUSKBN27R2M9

Ruotsinsuomalaisten Keskusliitto. RSKL. https://www.rskl.se/

Schulze, Stine. "Inspiration for service design" MindLab. November, 2017, https://danskdesigncenter.dk/en/inspiration-service-design

Sisäministeriö. "Hallituksen ulkosuomalaispoliittinen ohjelma vuosiksi 2017–2021". July 2018.

Sisäministeriö. "Ulkosuomalaisstrategialla kehitetään ulkomailla asuvien suomalaisten vaikutusmahdollisuuksia" February 2021, https://intermin.fi/-/ulkosuomalaisstrategialla-kehitetaan-ulkomailla-asuvien-suomalaisten-vaikutusmahdollisuuksia

Sisäministeriö. "Expatriate Finns are united by their Finnish identity" 2021, https://intermin.fi/en/areas-of-expertise/migration/nationality/expatriate-finns

Song, Changzoo. "Engaging the diaspora in an era of transnationalism" University of Auckland, New Zealand and IZA, Germany. 2014, https://wol.iza.org/uploads/articles/64/pdfs/engaging-the-diaspora-in-an-era-of-transnationalism.pdf

Strandberg, Tina. "Kuultavat tahot ajankohtaiset teemat". Suomi-Seura. 2020.

Suomen Merimieskirkko. Merimieskirkko. https://merimieskirkko.fi/

Suomi Koulut. SuomiKoulut. https://suomikoulut.fi/

Suomi-Seura. "Aloiteyhteenvedot" 2020, https://suomi-seura.fi/usp-aloiteyhteenvedot/

Suomi-Seura. "Figures" 2020, pp. 1–6.

Suomi-Seura. "Information about us" https://suomi-seura.fi/information-about-us/

Suomi-Seura. "Seniori Paluumuuttajan Opas" 2018. https://suomi-seura.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Senioripaluumuuttajan-opas-2018.pdf

Suomi-Seura. "Suomen Silta" https://suomi-seura.fi/suomen-silta-lehti/

Torguet, Rosa. "Un país para volver. Plan de Retorno a España." 2020, https://rosatorguet.com/portfolio/planretornoespana

Un país paravolver, plan de retorno España. https://unpaisparavolver.es/

Volvemos. https://volvemos.org/

Wikipedia. "Constituencies for French residents overseas". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constituencies_for_French_residents_overseas

联合移民YOYO. "华侨身份的超国民待遇". Zhuanlan. March, 2020, https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/114057602
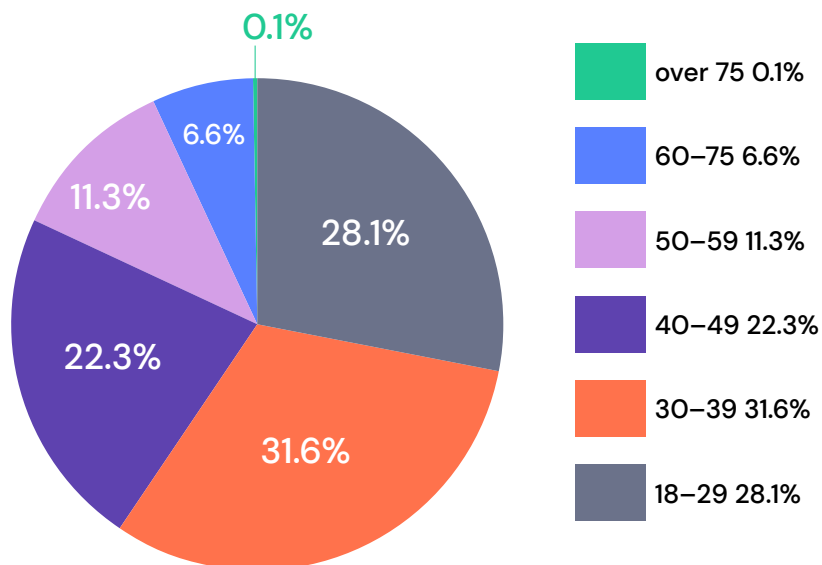
# Appendices

5.

# Appendices

- **Survey key facts**

- **System maps in detail**

- **World map of diasporic examples**

- **Government as a System diagram**

- **Detailed staggered implementation of the Human–Centred strategy process over the next 6 years**

# Survey key facts

Formatted in Google Forms
Conducted in March 2021

**844** responses | **4** days

Circulated in Facebook, Reddit and among Design for Government student contacts.

Opened 12:20 on March 11
Closed 19:00 on March 15

SHARED IN FACEBOOK GROUPS
- Finnish people living abroad – Suomalaiset ulkomailla
- Suomalaiset Irlannissa
- Suomalaiset Japanissa
- Finns in Scotland
- Suomalaiset UK:ssa
- LontoonSuomalaiset
- Finnish People Living in Spain
- Suomalaiset Berliinissä

SHARED IN OTHER CHANNELS
- 22 private Instagram accounts
- r/Suomi in Reddit
- Aalto student Telegram chat groups: Department of design 2021 and student organisation NuDe

## Respondent ages

844 responses



- over 75 0.1%
- 60–75 6.6%
- 50–59 11.3%
- 40–49 22.3%
- 30–39 31.6%
- 18–29 28.1%

## Respondent genders

841 responses



1.4%  1.3%

79.9%

17.4%

- Female 79.9%
- Male 17.4%
- Non-binary 1.3%
- Prefer not to disclose 1.4%

## Relationship to Finland

843 responses



0.8%  0.2%  6.6%

18%

14.9%

91.2%

- Finnish citizen 91.2%
- Dual citizenship 14.9%
- Parents / grandparents Finnish citizens 18%
- Partner / child is Finnish citizen 6.6%
- Triple citizenship 0.2%
- Other 0.8%
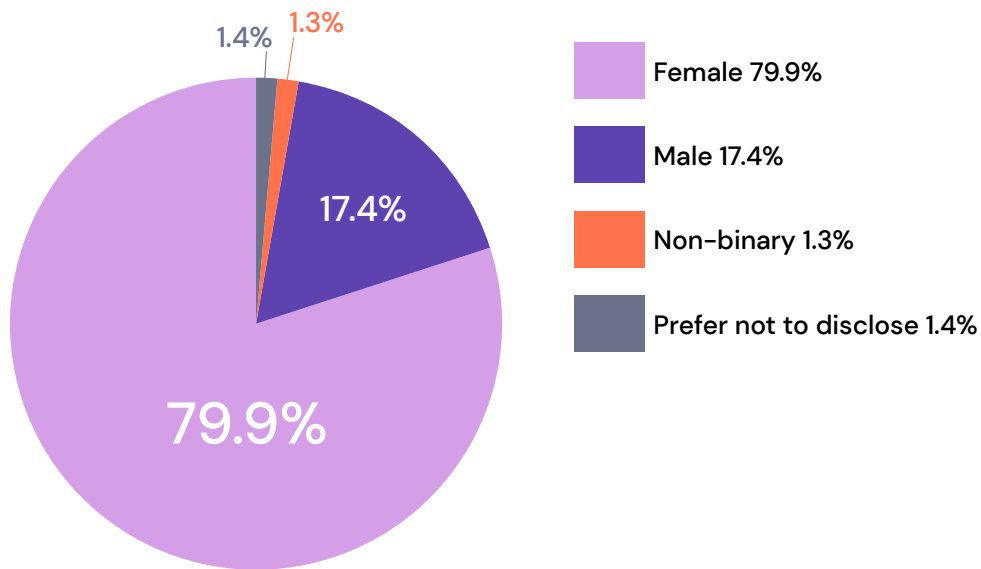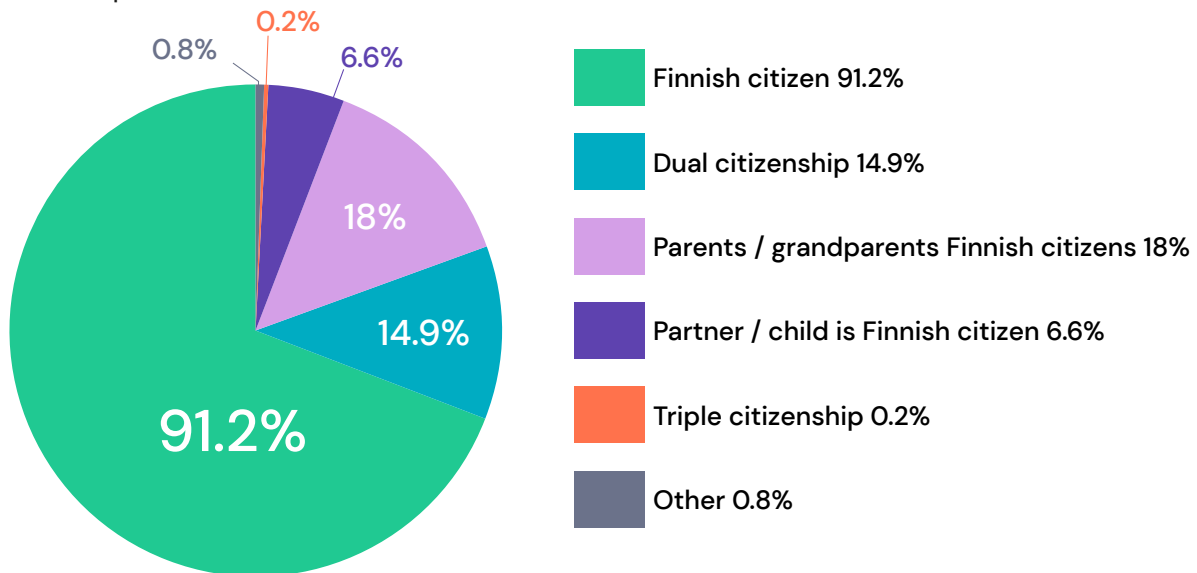
Other responses included e.g. single-citizenships in the UK before dual citizenship was made possible, growing up in Finland, having one Finnish parent and grandparent.

## Recidency situation

843 responses



- Currently living away from Finland 84.5%
- Currently abroad but planning to return soon 5.5%
- In Finland but used to live abroad 10.7%
- Born abroad but have Finnish roots 1.5%
- Permanently abroad 0.2%
- Other 1.5%
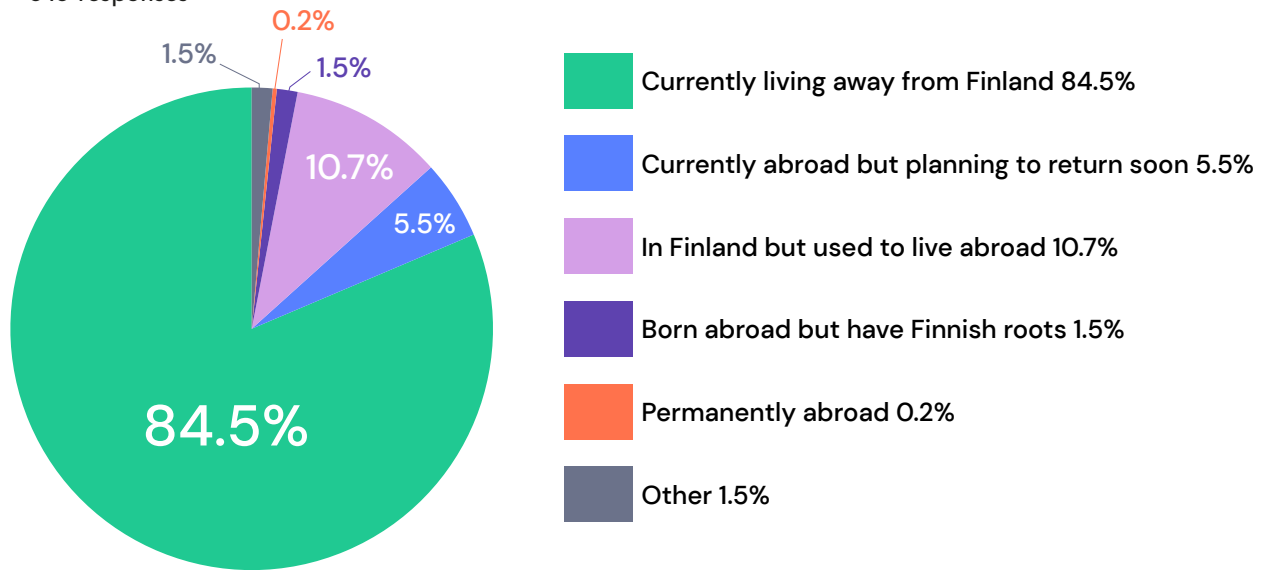
Other responses included shorter term returns due to the Covid-pandemic, sharing one's time between two countries and being abroad to study or work.

## Time lived away from Finland

844 responses



- 0–1 years 3.9%
- 1–5 years 31.2%
- 5–10 years 21.3%
- 10–15 years 14.1%
- 15+ years 28.4%
- 20+ years 1.1%

**Which country do you currently live in,
or have previously lived as an international resident?**
841 responses, with multiple countries mentioned in some answers

Respondents reported to have lived in over 70 different countries
around the globe. Europe was most reported as a continents, next
Asia where Japan was mentioned most often. US was also reported by
many. Of all countries, the UK was mentioned as a current or previous
place of redicency most often (361 mentions out of 1190).

# 70+
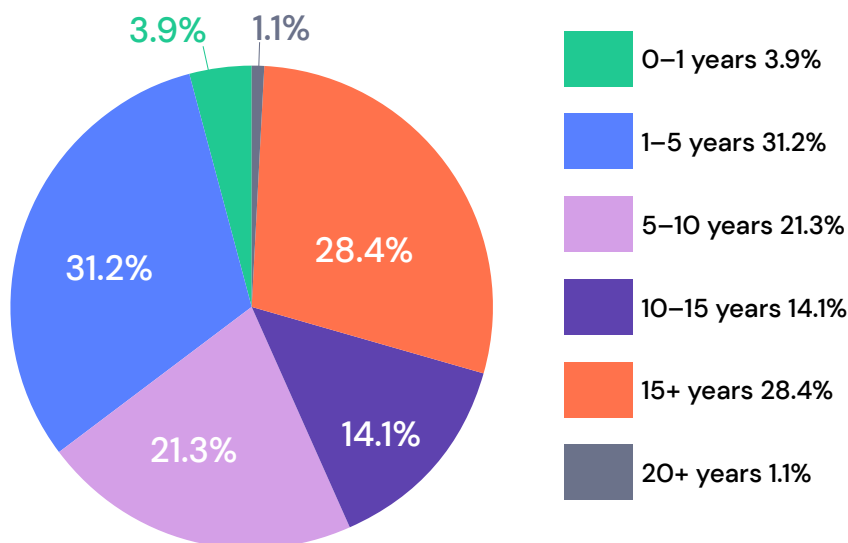countries

## Africa
TOP THREE
COUNTRIES  LIVED IN
1. Kuwait
2. South Africa
3. Egypt

ALSO REPORTED
Botswana, Costa Rica, Madagascar,
Mozambique, Nicaragua, Rwanda,
Uganda, Zanzibar

## Europe
TOP TEN
COUNTRIES  LIVED IN
1. UK
2. Germany
3. Ireland
4. Denmark
5. Sweden
6. Netherlands
7. Spain
8. Switzerland
9. Belgium
10. Austria

## Middle East
TOP THREE
COUNTRIES LIVED IN
1. United Arab Emirates
2. Jordan
3. Israel

## Asia
TOP THREE
COUNTRIES LIVED IN
1. Japan
2. China
3. Singapore

## North America
COUNTRIES LIVED IN
1. United Sates
2. Canada
3. Mexico

## South America
COUNTRIES LIVED IN
Brasil & Peru

## Oceania
COUNTRIES LIVED IN
Australia & New Zealand

## What is your language fluency in the following languages?

Number of answers



Legend:
- 1 – No knowledge
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 – Fluent
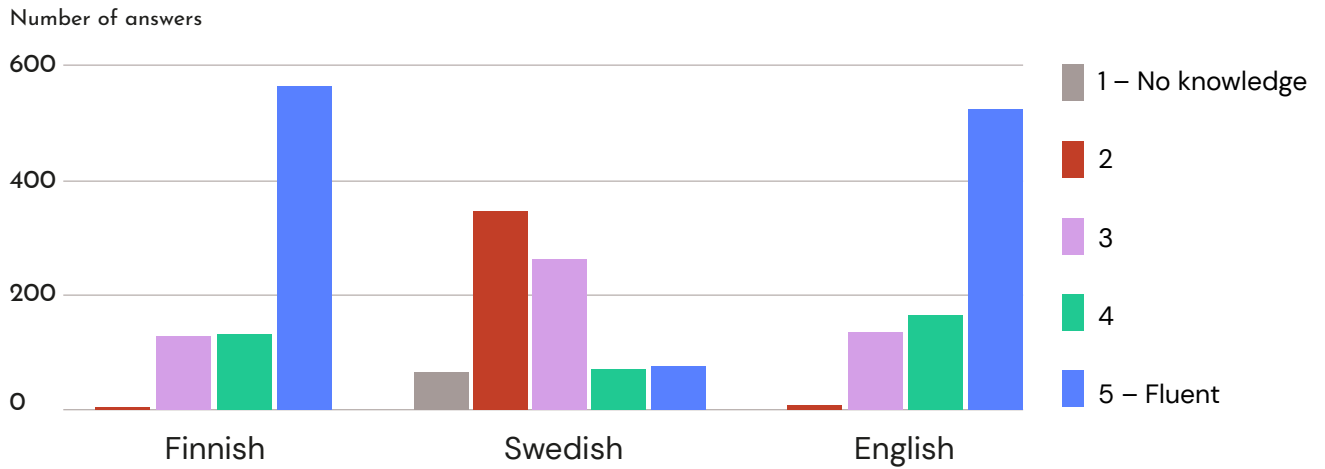
Notably, out of Finnish, Swedish and English, English was the strongest language of the respodents.

---

## How strongly do you identify with Finnish culture?

843 responses

Number of answers



- 1: 0 (0%)
- 2: 23 (2.7%)
- 3: 74 (8.8%)
- 4: 183 (21.7%)
- 5: 536 (66.8%)
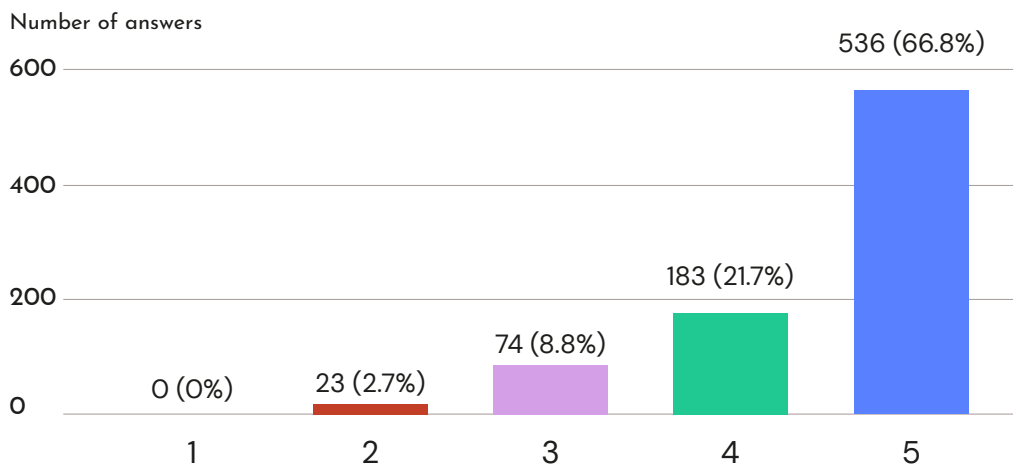
Additionally, 398 respondents reported that staying of living abroad had made their feeling of Finnish identity stronger. 136 reported no change, while 34 said their identification had reduced.

## Which of the following organisations have you heard of?

795 responses

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament    209 (28.5%)

Suomi Koulut schools    600 (81.9%)

Suomi-Seura    638 (87%)

Number of answers

## In what ways do you currently participate in Finland, politically, culturally or socially from abroad?

795 responses
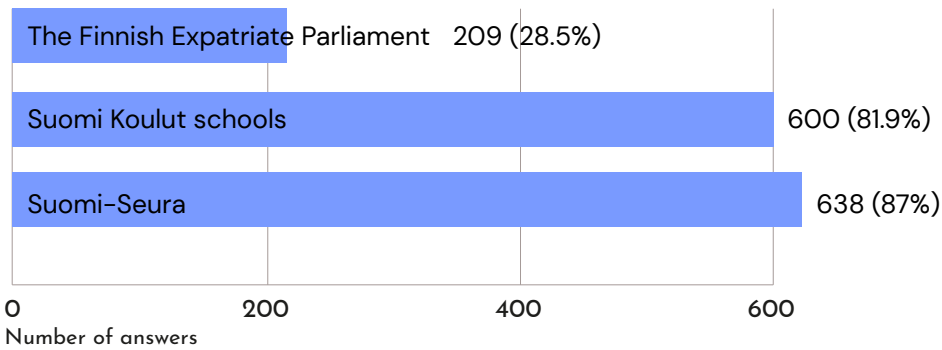
Voting    608 (76.5%)

Active in Suomi-Seura ry   21 (2.6%)

Active in informal groups and societies    512 (64.4%)
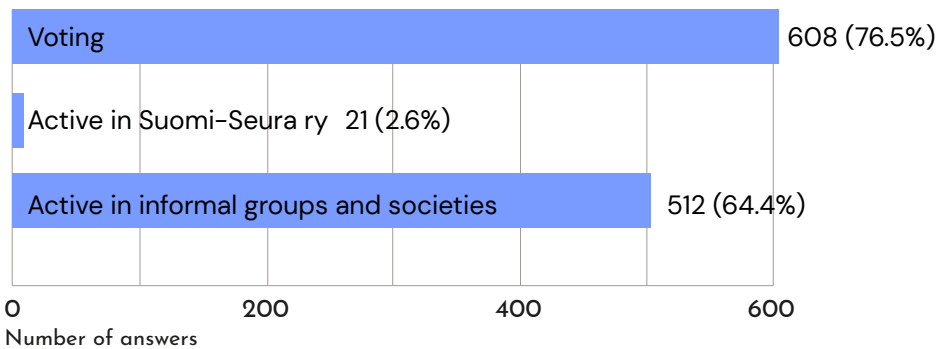
Number of answers

## Which resources do you typically consult when encountering problems regarding your experience abroad?

830 responses
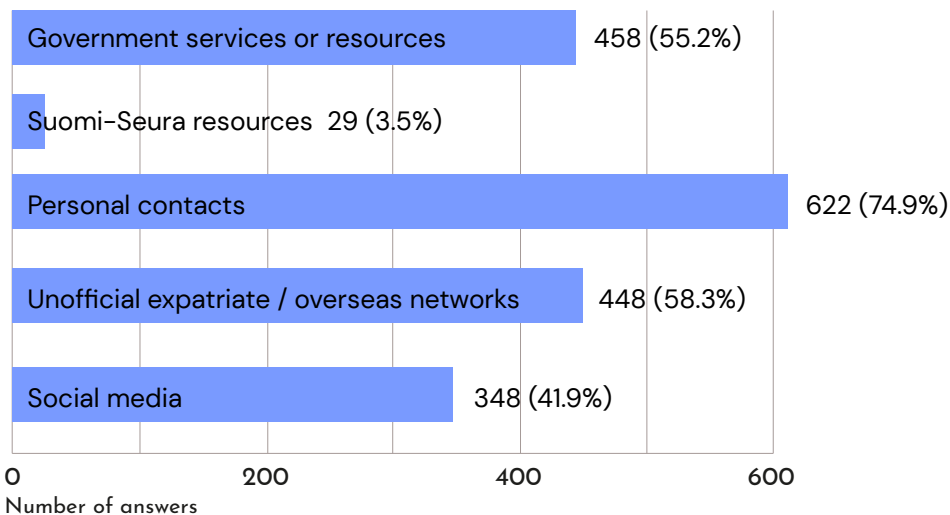
Government services or resources    458 (55.2%)

Suomi-Seura resources   29 (3.5%)

Personal contacts    622 (74.9%)

Unofficial expatriate / overseas networks    448 (58.3%)

Social media    348 (41.9%)

Number of answers

How supported do you, or did you feel by the Finnish government as an overseas resident?

843 responses

Number of answers
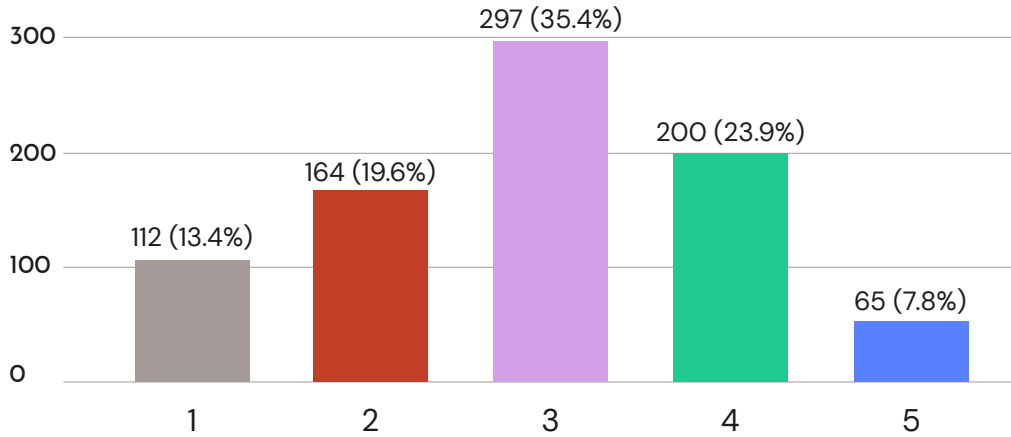


"The reason to choose number 5 on the question about the support from Finnish government is because I'm a student. I feel very lucky to be part of a financial system such as Kela."

– Survey respondent

"I'd wish the Finnish government would be more active in reaching out to Finnish ex-pats. -- I wish there was e.g. a newsletter or something similar."

– Survey respondent

**Do you feel that other Finns living abroad could benefit from hearing about your experiences?**

*830 responses*

Yes 61.6%

No 38.4%

38.4%

61.6%
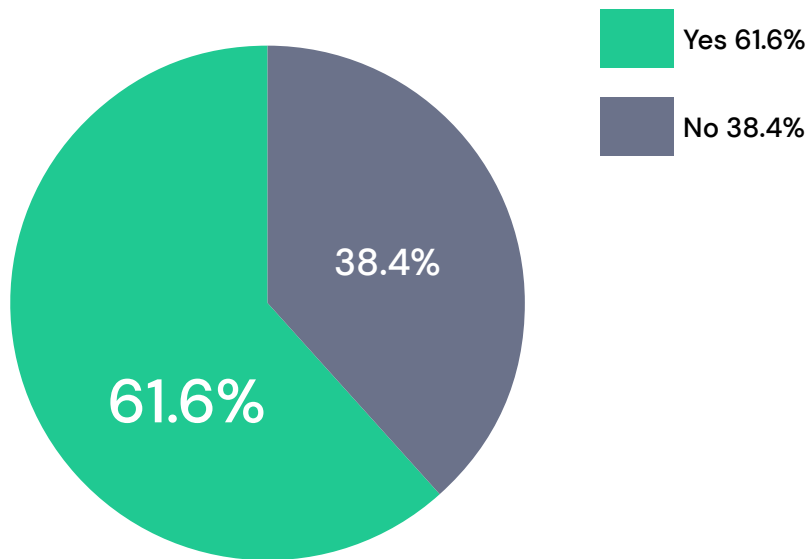
"It's a strange position to be in because you are at once the "representative" of Finland for people who know you – I am the only Finnish person many of my friends know. At the same time, I myself am not that up to date with everything going on in Finland nor do I really have close friends my age there that I could ask info from."

– Survey respondent

## Legend

**Governmental bodies and ministries** (blue filled circle)

**Expatriates and related individuals** (purple filled circle)

**External stakeholders** (teal filled circle)

**Non-governmental expatriate organisations** (orange filled circle)

**Other entities and elements** (green filled circle)

**Indirect stakeholders** (yellow filled circle)

**Fiscal artefacts and services** (blue outlined circle)

**Other artefacts and services** (green outlined circle)

- - - **Information flow**
......... **Influence**
——— **Financial flow**
——— **Material / resource flow**
——— **Labour / skill flow**

Diagram node labels:
Prime minister, Foreign policy / national security, Parliament, Cabinet, Indirect public administration, Embassies, Local administration, National administration, State administration, Finnish employers, EU, Private, Healthcare, Public, Employment, Pensions, Ministry of social affairs and health, Ministry of education and culture, Ministry of justice, Ministry of foreign affairs, Ministry of employment, Migri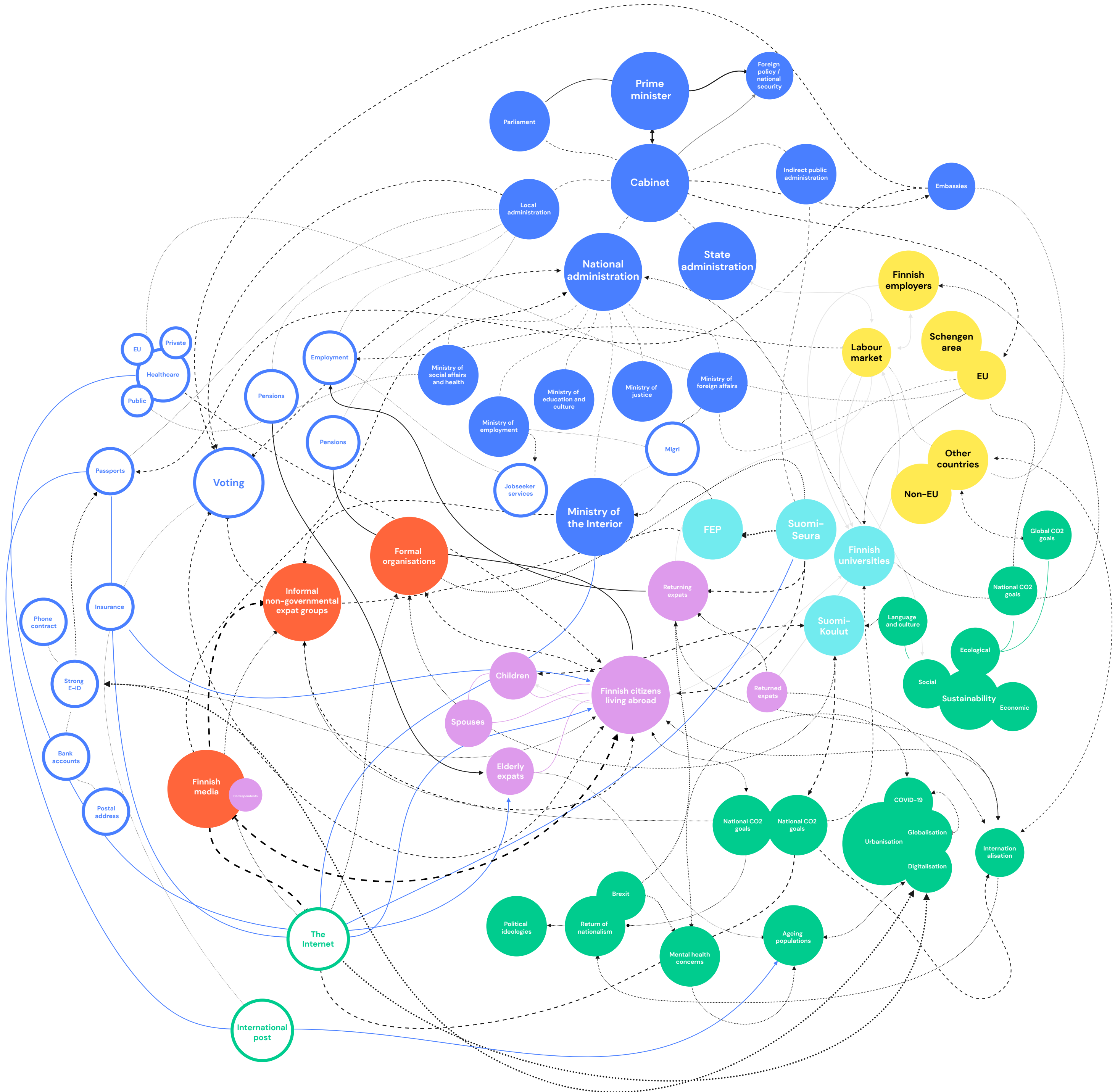, Labour market, Schengen area, EU, Other countries, Non-EU, Global CO2 goals, National CO2 goals, Passports, Voting, Pensions, Jobseeker services, Ministry of the Interior, FEP, Suomi-Seura, Finnish universities, Language and culture, National CO2 goals, Phone contract, Insurance, Formal organisations, Informal non-governmental expat groups, Returning expats, Suomi-Koulut, Ecological, Social, Economic, Sustainability, Strong E-ID, Children, Finnish citizens living abroad, Returned expats, Spouses, Bank accounts, Elderly expats, Finnish media, Correspondents, Postal address, COVID-19, Globalisation, Urbanisation, Digitalisation, Internationalisation, National CO2 goals, National CO2 goals, The Internet, Brexit, Return of nationalism, Political ideologies, Mental health concerns, Ageing populations, International post

The emotional, practical and participatory experience of Finns living abroad

**Finnish citizens living abroad**

Admiration

Brexit · Political ideologies / alignments · Covid

**Indirect public administration**

F.E.P. · Posti

**Democratic and governmental participation**

Ministry of the Interior · Passports · Citizenship · Finnish government

Non-EU countries · EU · Embassies

International postal systems

Ministry of Justice · Voting · Insecurity · Feeling valued · Migri · Ministry of foreign affairs

The internet · Digitalisation · Globalisation

**Language and Culture**

Suomi-Seura ry · Finnish media outlets in Finland and abroad · Correspondents as expats

Informal non-governmental expat groups (e.g. Facebook groups)

Formal organisations (religious, culture, language, sport...)

Pride · Loyalty · Nostalgia · Finnish language abroad · Finnish culture abroad

Homesick · Belonging

Feeling overwhelmed · Excluded · Abandoned · Shame · Mental health concerns

Children of Finns living abroad

Ministry of education and culture

Environmental · Sustainability · Social · Economic

Global E112 goals · National E112 goals and SDGs

Climate anxiety · Ministry of social affairs and health · Pensions · Anxiety

**Employment**

Returned expats · Spouses of Finnish expats · Finland is family friendly

**Suomi-Koulut / schools** · Finnish Universities

Finnish expats returning to Finland

TE-services for job-seekers · Taxes · Phone contract

Ministry of economic affairs and employment · Bank (account) · Strong E-identification

Qualifications from abroad are not as valued

**Education**

Elderly expats · Healthcare · Labour markets · Finnish employers

Insurance

Ageing populations

Return of nationalism · Feeling of security

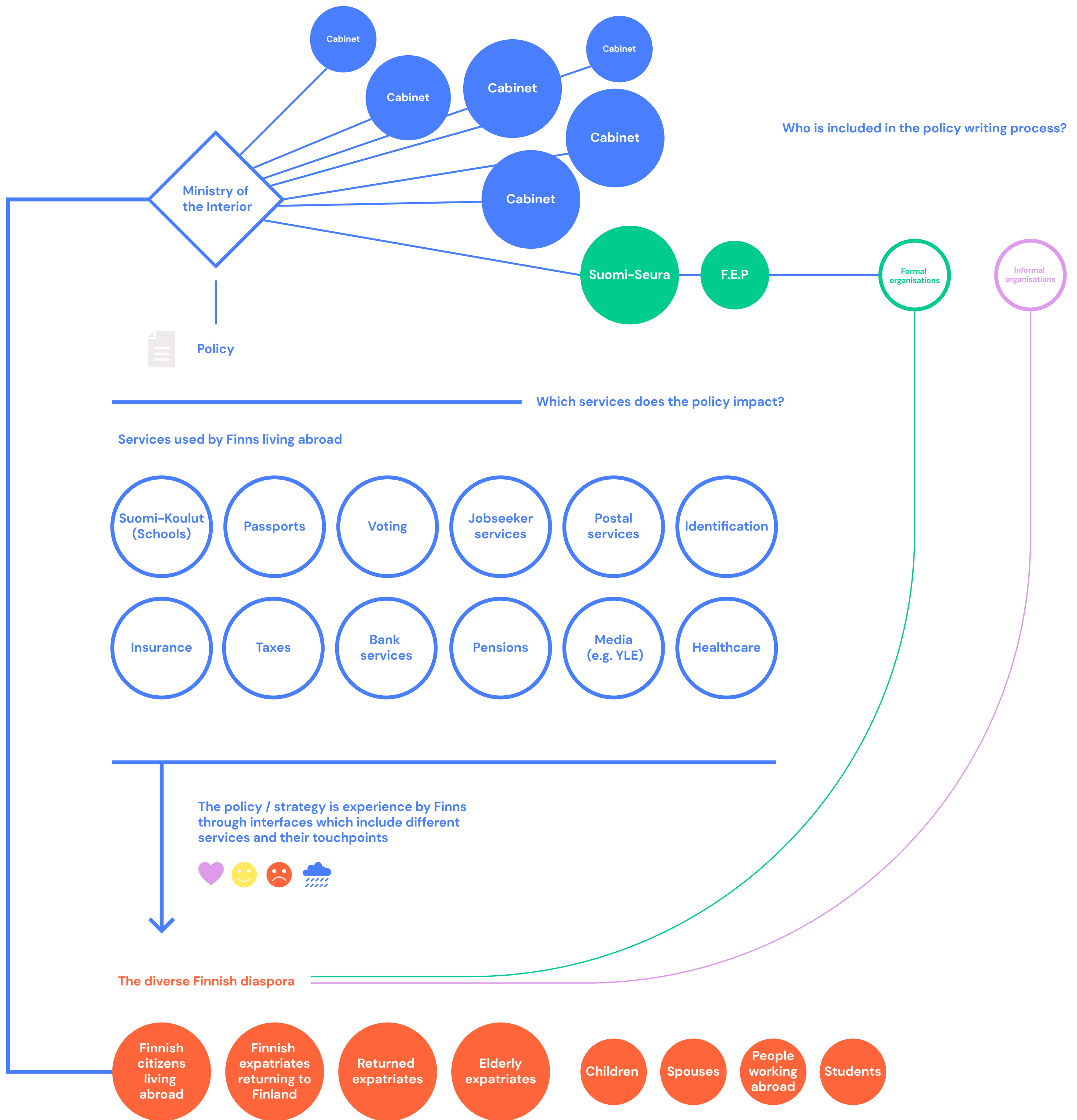Scepticism around foreigners

## Legend

- 🔵 Governmental bodies and ministries
- 🟠 Expatriates and related individuals
- ⚪ External stakeholders
- 🔴 Non-governmental expatriate organisations
- 🟤 Contextual entities and elements
- 🟢 Indirect public administration
- ⚪ Fiscal artefacts and services
- 🟣 Sentiments, emotions and feelings

- - - - Information flow
- ⋯⋯⋯ Influence
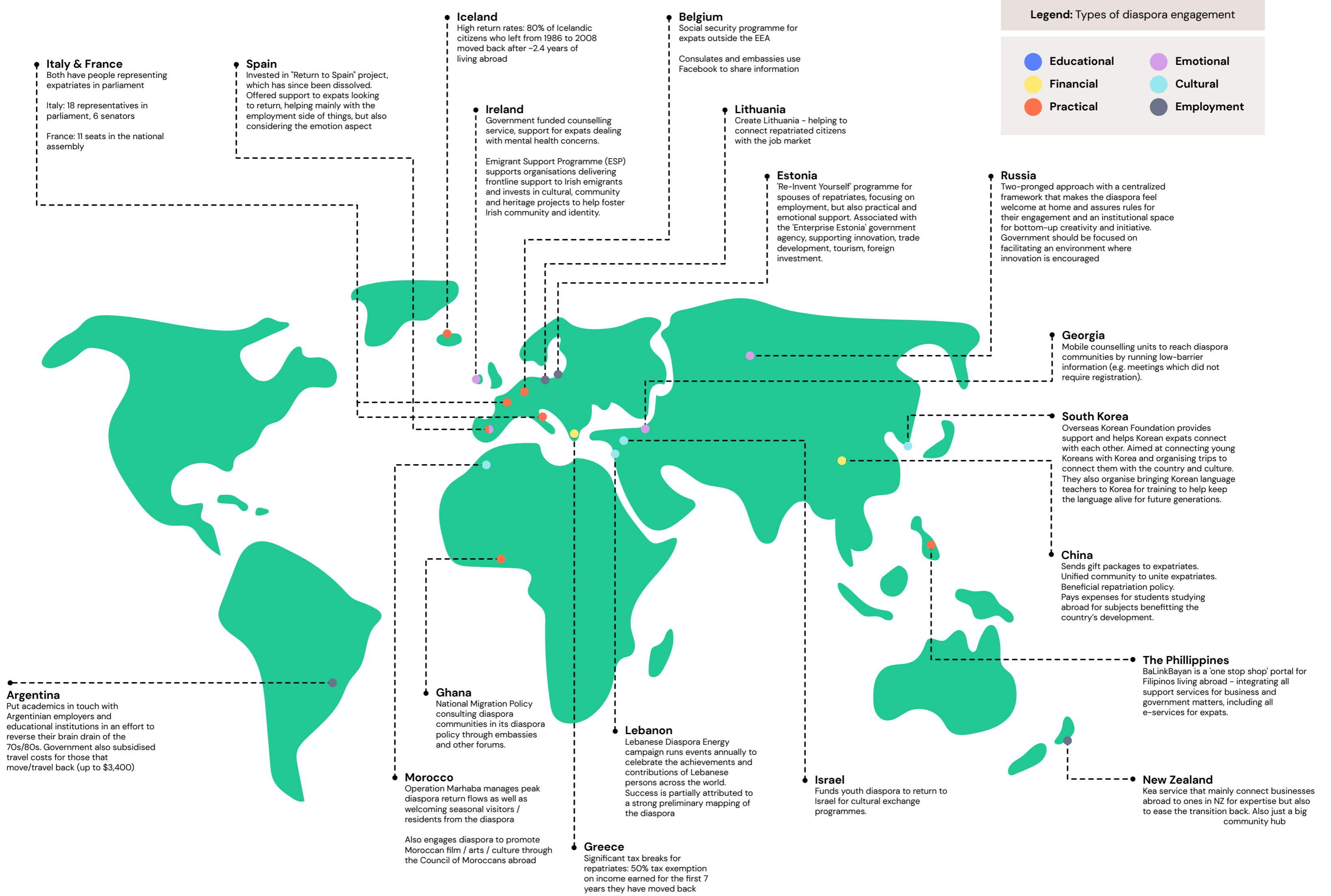- ——— Financial flow
- ——— Material / resource flow

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

Cabinet

**Who is included in the policy writing process?**

**Ministry of the Interior**

Suomi–Seura

F.E.P

Formal organisations

Informal organisations

Policy

Individual Finns are consulted due to service design methods in the government

**Which services does the policy impact?**

**Services used by Finns living abroad**

Suomi–Koulut (Schools)

Passports

Voting

Jobseeker services

Postal services

Identification

Insurance

Taxes

Bank services

Pensions

Media (e.g. YLE)

Healthcare

**The policy / strategy is experience by Finns through interfaces which include different services and their touchpoints**

**The diverse Finnish diaspora**

Finnish citizens living abroad

Finnish expatriates returning to Finland

Returned expatriates

Elderly expatriates

Children

Spouses

People working abroad

Students

**Legend**

● Governmental bodies and ministries

○ Formal organisations

○ Fiscal artefacts and services

● Expatriates and related individuals

○ Informal organisations

# World map of diasporic examples

**Legend:** Types of diaspora engagement

- 🔵 Educational
- 🟡 Financial
- 🔴 Practical
- 🟣 Emotional
- 🔵 Cultural
- ⚫ Employment

**Iceland**
High return rates: 80% of Icelandic citizens who left from 1986 to 2008 moved back after ~2.4 years of living abroad

**Belgium**
Social security programme for expats outside the EEA

Consulates and embassies use Facebook to share information

**Italy & France**
Both have people representing expatriates in parliament

Italy: 18 representatives in parliament, 6 senators

France: 11 seats in the national assembly

**Spain**
Invested in "Return to Spain" project, which has since been dissolved. Offered support to expats looking to return, helping mainly with the employment side of things, but also considering the emotion aspect

**Ireland**
Government funded counselling service, support for expats dealing with mental health concerns.

Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) supports organisations delivering frontline support to Irish emigrants and invests in cultural, community and heritage projects to help foster Irish community and identity.

**Lithuania**
Create Lithuania – helping to connect repatriated citizens with the job market

**Estonia**
'Re-Invent Yourself' programme for spouses of repatriates, focusing on employment, but also practical and emotional support. Associated with the 'Enterprise Estonia' government agency, supporting innovation, trade development, tourism, foreign investment.

**Russia**
Two-pronged approach with a centralized framework that makes the diaspora feel welcome at home and assures rules for their engagement and an institutional space for bottom-up creativity and initiative. Government should be focused on facilitating an environment where innovation is encouraged

**Georgia**
Mobile counselling units to reach diaspora communities by running low-barrier information (e.g. meetings which did not require registration).

**South Korea**
Overseas Korean Foundation provides support and helps Korean expats connect with each other. Aimed at connecting young Koreans with Korea and organising trips to connect them with the country and culture. They also organise bringing Korean language teachers to Korea for training to help keep the language alive for future generations.

**China**
Sends gift packages to expatriates.
Unified community to unite expatriates.
Beneficial repatriation policy.
Pays expenses for students studying abroad for subjects benefitting the country's development.

**The Phillippines**
BaLinkBayan is a 'one stop shop' portal for Filipinos living abroad – integrating all support services for business and government matters, including all e-services for expats.

**Argentina**
Put academics in touch with Argentinian employers and educational institutions in an effort to reverse their brain drain of the 70s/80s. Government also subsidised travel costs for those that move/travel back (up to $3,400)

**Ghana**
National Migration Policy consulting diaspora communities in its diaspora policy through embassies and other forums.

**Morocco**
Operation Marhaba manages peak diaspora return flows as well as welcoming seasonal visitors / residents from the diaspora

Also engages diaspora to promote Moroccan film / arts / culture through the Council of Moroccans abroad

**Lebanon**
Lebanese Diaspora Energy campaign also runs events annually to celebrate the achievements and contributions of Lebanese persons across the world. Success is partially attributed to a strong preliminary mapping of the diaspora

**Israel**
Funds youth diaspora to return to Israel for cultural exchange programmes.

**New Zealand**
Kea service that mainly connect businesses abroad to ones in NZ for expertise but also to ease the transition back. Also just a big community hub

**Greece**
Significant tax breaks for repatriates: 50% tax exemption on income earned for the first 7 years they have moved back

---

# Strategy action points

## Government as a system



Adapted from PolicyLab (2020) *Government as a system toolkit*

🔵 Actions the current strategy uses

▭ Potential areas to consider

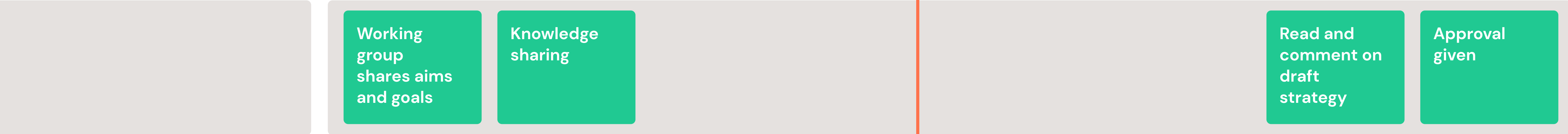| | Before (prep for policy writing to begin) | During (new strategy and policies are being written) | During (new strategy and policies are being written) | After (strategy is published and being impleme... |
|---|---|---|---|---|

January 2021 — June 2021 — January 2022 — 202...

**Strategy for Finns Worldwide**
**Main action points**

- Previous contact
- New policy programme is green lit
- Previous analysis
- Project set-up
- Discussions with stakeholders
- Working Group meeting 1
- Working Group meeting 2
- Working Group meeting 3
- Draft strategy written
- Draft circulated for approval
- Strategy finalised and published
- Aims, goals and actors are set out
- Information is gathered from stakeholders
- Structure is drafted
- 2022 Strategy Published

**Interaction with Other Ministries**

- Working group shares aims and goals
- Knowledge sharing
- Read and comment on draft strategy
- Approval given

**Interaction with Indirect public administrations**

- Suomi-Seura share aims and goals
- Suomi-Seura knowledge sharing
- Migration institute research
- FEP share conclusions

**Interaction with Finns Worldwide**

- Workshops

We are here

(nted)

2024　2025　2026

Analysis of successes / shortcomings

Change in government (unlikely to effect)

2027 Strategy Published

Analyse successes and shortcomings

FEP meet mid-strategy

---

**Before** (prep for policy writing to begin)　　**During** (new strategy and policies are being written)　　**During** (new strategy and policies are being written)

January 2026　　June 2026　　January 2027

**Strategy for Finns Worldwide**

**Main action points**

| Previous contact | New policy programme is green lit |
| Previous analysis | |

Project set-up | Discussions with stakeholders | Working Group meeting 1 | Working Group meeting 2 | Working Group meeting 3 | Draft strategy written | Draft circulated for approval | Strategy finalised and published | 2027 Strategy Published

Aims, goals and actors are set out | Information is gathered from stakeholders | Structure is drafted

**Interaction with Other Ministries**

Working group shares aims and goals | Knowledge sharing | Read and comment on draft strategy | Approval given

**Interaction with Indirect public administrations**

Suomi-Seura share aims and goals | Suomi-Seura knowledge sharing | Migration institute research | FEP share conclusions

**Interaction with Finns Worldwide**

Workshops