Rationale of the strategy
The Ministry of Education has a social responsibility for promoting education, culture and the well-being of the Finnish population. The Ministry’s Strategy 2015 takes a long-term view of the means by which the ministry’s vision, operational idea and values can be realized. The strategy identifies future challenges in the operational environment, the education sector, Finnish society and the international environment, and outlines relevant aims. The Strategy 2015 contains a view of future management, leadership, monitoring and development. The strategy will guide the drafting of the ministry’s action and economic plan and target outcomes.

Concept of lifelong learning
The aim of lifelong learning is to maintain a positive and active approach to learning among all population groups throughout the whole lifespan. Basic education builds a foundation for lifelong learning. The challenges are to renew knowledge and secure intellectual growth and well-being. The promotion of lifelong learning and job satisfaction will help to keep the ageing population in employment for longer. Educational, cultural and sports services promote people’s independence as well as their mental and physical well-being.

Main challenges
- The proportion of young people in the labour force is set to decline, which means that older people are becoming an increasingly important resource.
- The share of immigrants in Finland is estimated to double over the next decade.
- Demands for productivity and efficiency in knowledge-intensive work will grow. Changes in working life require an ability to adapt to and manage change and keep learning.
- Entrepreneurship is becoming more important both as an activity and as an outlook.
- Finnish society is evolving towards plurality and diversity of values.
- Forms of civic activity have diversified.
- International interdependence and the role of multilateral cooperation will grow.
- The EU is expanding and undergoing institutional changes, which will also influence the education sector.

Therefore it will be important to:
- Raise the level of education among the population as a whole and constantly develop the national knowledge reserve
- Renew knowledge and secure intellectual growth and well-being
- Maintain equal educational and cultural services in different regions
- Reconcile the aims of different policies with regard to the promotion and implementation of socially and economically sustainable development

Main targets and measures
The targets of the Ministry of Education Strategy 2015 span all education sectors. They are comprehensive in nature and include the following:
- **Securing educational and cultural equality**: information and communication technologies play a key role in promoting balanced regional development. Regional success is further sustained by cooperation between businesses, educational institutions and the cultural and creative industries. It is important to safeguard the position of the public library system and folk high schools, and to develop museums and art institutions.
- **Promoting intellectual growth and learning**: opportunities for comprehensive learning and self-development will be expanded and the education system will demonstrate greater flexibility in recognizing informal learning. Promoting lifelong learning in the workplace promotes the ageing
population’s well-being.

- **Increasing opportunities for participation**: opportunities for learning citizenship skills will be promoted in youth work, sport and hobbies. Immigrants’ integration into Finnish society will be promoted. Special attention will be given to preventing exclusion from education and supporting transitions from one level to another and from school to work.

- **Supporting the educational, cultural and economic competitiveness of Finnish society**: public research and development financing will be increased. The aim is to create a balanced and flexible research system built on cooperation between different partners. In addition, the compatibility of education and labour market needs will be improved by means of enhancing cooperation between education and training providers and business and industry.

- **Diversifying Finland’s international influence**: growing mobility highlights the significance of cultural identity. Nordic educational, research and cultural cooperation is growing in importance. Finland will continue to cooperate closely with Estonia and is developing its cooperation with Russia. The aim of bilateral cooperation is to enhance the international visibility of Finnish culture and to increase knowledge of other cultures in Finland.

- **Improving performance in the Ministry of Education**: the Ministry of Education is responsible for preparing legislation and the annual budget for its sector in keeping with decisions made by policy-makers. Crucial steering methods in the Ministry of Education are normative regulation, management by target outcome and information-based guidance. In addition, the ministry will be a competitive employer and a forerunner in staff development. Knowledge, lifelong learning and knowledge management will be emphasized.

**Relevant documents that the strategy refers to:**

- Government of Finland. 2002. *Art and Artist Policy Programme*
- Finland. 2002. *Architectural Heritage Strategy*
- Finland. 2003. *Digital Content Production: Strategic aims and action*
- Science and Technology Policy Council of Finland. 2003. *Knowledge, Innovation and Internationalisation*
- OECD. 2010. *International mobility in higher education*
- Finland. 2010. *Library Strategy*

**Stakeholders involved in the development of the strategy:**

- Ministry of Education

**Stakeholders responsible for implementation of the strategy:**

- Ministry of Education

**Further readings and web links:**

- [Education and Research Development Plan 2011–2016](#)
- [National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning](#)