Environmental Report and Challenges – Finnish Aeronautical Association (SIL)
The Finnish Aeronautical Association (Suomen Ilmailuliitto, SIL) represents a broad range of air sports and recreational aviation activities in Finland, including powered flight, gliding, ballooning, parachuting and model flying. Environmental issues are increasingly central to the long-term viability of these activities, both through regulation and through local community expectations.

Key environmental challenges

1. **Environmental permits and regulatory pressure**
   Airfields used by recreational aviation are facing steadily increasing requirements in environmental permitting. Each renewal of an environmental permit typically brings:

   - stricter **groundwater protection and monitoring** obligations, requiring new infrastructure (monitoring wells, better drainage, spill protection) and increasing operating costs;
   - tighter rules for **fuel storage and refuelling**, including secondary containment, improved handling procedures and more frequent inspections.

These developments are positive from an environmental protection point of view, but they are financially demanding for small, volunteer-driven aeroclubs and airfields.

2. **Aircraft noise and community relations**
   Aircraft noise remains the most visible environmental issue for many airfields located near residential areas. It leads to:

   - operating restrictions (shorter daily operating hours, more weekend limitations);
   - pressure to reduce noise levels of existing aircraft fleets through modifications or replacement with quieter types;
   - requirements for complex and expensive **noise measurements and modelling** in connection with environmental permits.

Managing noise in a fair and transparent way is key to maintaining local support for air sports activities.

3. **Climate impact and fossil fuel dependence**
   Like in most countries, recreational aviation in Finland still depends largely on fossil fuels. Reducing **CO_2 emissions** and the overall climate footprint of air sports is a strategic challenge. At the same time, the economic capacity of clubs and individual pilots to invest in new technologies is limited.

Initiatives and responses

Despite these challenges, several steps have been taken over the past years:

1. **Support for environmental permitting and best practices**
   SIL has strengthened cooperation with member clubs on environmental permit issues by:

- sharing **best practices** and example documents within a national network of airfields;
- providing advice on typical permit conditions related to groundwater protection, fuel storage and noise management;
- encouraging early dialogue between clubs, municipalities and environmental authorities to prevent conflicts and find pragmatic solutions.

2. **Improving noise management**
   Clubs and the Association have focused on:

- **spreading flight operations** more evenly in space and time, directing training and repetitive patterns away from densely populated areas where possible;
- highlighting and encouraging **quieter aircraft types**, including electrically powered aircraft where feasible;
- promoting **noise-aware flight procedures** in training (reduced-power climbs where safe, optimized circuits, avoiding low-level overflights over sensitive areas).

3. **Climate awareness and compensation**
   While the technical options for rapid decarbonisation of recreational aviation are still limited, the community has begun to:

- raise awareness of **fuel efficiency and emission reduction** in flight training and club communication;
- promote **voluntary carbon offsetting** or other forms of compensation for flying activities at club level;
- follow closely the development of electric and hybrid aircraft and sustainable aviation fuels, and inform members about emerging opportunities.

Outlook

Environmental requirements for air sports in Finland will continue to tighten in the coming years, especially regarding noise, groundwater protection and climate impacts. The Finnish Aeronautical Association sees cooperation as essential: between clubs, with authorities and with local communities.

Our aim is to maintain safe, accessible and enjoyable air sports while progressively reducing the environmental footprint of our activities and ensuring that small, volunteer-based operators can realistically meet the new standards.

Report on reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 2025

The Finnish Aviation Association has an environmental website, which is a source of environmental information on recreational aviation for clubs and members.

During the season, we also sent environmental messages directly to members and clubs.

The Finnish Aeronautical Association actions

- The association's membership cards, certificates, sport licenses and qualifications for drone, hang- and paraglider and skydiver athletes, as well as all contracts, were delivered to members electronically.
- During the 2025 season, the committees of various aviation disciplines held 48 meetings, almost all of which were electronic. Mostly with Teams.
- The association's employees worked remotely four days a week.
- The organizers of the Finnish championships signed an agreement with the association to reduce environmental emissions.
- Large forest fires are rare in Finland. Clubs actively fly forest fire surveillance flights during the dry season in the summer. The activities are currently organized by the Finnish Air Rescue Association
- The audience of the main air show of the Finnish Aviation Association was advised to arrive by public transport. Train services were increased for those coming to the Air Show.