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Finland Halts Work at Two Google Data Centre Sites

Decision Taken After 300+ Hectares of Forest Cleared Without Environmental Review

By **Manasee Kurlekar** | October 7, 2026



Google's largest single investment in Europe has run into a very Finnish problem: the paperwork came after the chainsaws.

A Finnish supervisory authority on Tuesday ordered environmentally significant preparatory work at two planned Google data center sites in northern Finland to be halted until legally required environmental impact assessments are completed. The trigger was the scale of what had already been done. Tuiki Finland, the company representing Google, cleared 330 hectares of forest in Muhos, in North Ostrobothnia, without an environmental impact assessment, and forest at the Kajaani site has been felled as well. [newsmtvuutiset](#)

What the order says

The Finnish Licensing and Supervision Authority (LVV) said Tuiki Finland Oy must suspend such work at the sites in Muhos and Kajaani immediately and no later than Oct. 23. The order covers tree removal, topsoil stripping, road and storage-area construction, and changes to drainage. Google must also submit an official explanation by 14 October 2026.

The legal threshold is not ambiguous. Finnish law requires an environmental impact assessment for continuous clear-cuts of more than 200 hectares where tree cover is permanently removed.

Google knew, and cut anyway

That's the part that will sting. According to Helsingin Sanomat, Tuiki Finland asked the LVV in an April 30 letter for a case-by-case decision on whether an assessment was needed — effectively seeking an exemption. Tuiki was told in May that one was required. The clearing had started in March, and timber from the area has been sold.

Google had earlier said it acted on the basis of Finnish forestry legislation. Finnish authorities have stressed, however, that environmental impact assessment requirements are governed by separate legislation. [news](#)

Google now says it will comply. Sondre Ronander, Google's head of communications for Finland and Norway, told Yle the company is examining the authorities' observations carefully and will follow their instructions.

The government isn't letting the subcontracting structure muddy who's accountable. Climate and Environment Minister Sari Multala said all companies operating in Finland must comply with Finnish law, and that responsibility runs through the subcontracting chain, with the international company ultimately bearing it.

The backlash

The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation asked the LVV to take coercive administrative action, with chair Hanna Halmeenpää saying satellite images suggest four nature sites meant to be protected under the zoning plan have already been flattened. The association said it could not recall a comparable case in its 86-year history. The Muhos municipality has distanced itself from the clearing.

What's at stake

Both projects are part of Google's €13 billion (\$14.64 billion) investment plan for Finland, formally announced on Sept. 9, which includes new data centres in Muhos, Kajaani and Vaala plus an expansion of its existing facility in Hamina. Environmental impact assessments for both halted projects are still underway and are expected to be completed later this year.

The WBW take

Cheap green power, cold air and empty land have made the Nordics the AI industry's favourite backyard. The Finnish Data Center Association expects live capacity in the country to jump from 285MW in 2025 to 1.5GW in 2030. But the Muhos episode shows the land isn't as frictionless as the pitch decks suggest. Hyperscalers racing to lock in compute capacity are discovering that the bottleneck isn't only power and chips — it's permits, and the patience of the communities hosting them.

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