



# Industry Briefing Papers 2016

## EUROPE: FINLAND

### 1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to spa, wellness, wellness travel or well-being?

The truth is, that Finns have one private sauna per two citizens; that many Finns use sauna daily; that they all have a summer cottage on the lakeside; that they pick berries and mushrooms from the forest at summertime; that they all ski at wintertime; they grow up eating healthy food at school, partly supported by the government; and when they get older, they get at least one week spa vacation every year, paid by the government. No doubts, that it is "well" to live in Finland. What can Finland provide for wellness tourists, is another topic. Winter sports and ski resorts are in good shape, but as said, country's natural resources could provide more. Finland is aware of its values as a wellness destination, but urgently needs to find a modern way to promote and track all the activities.

Anyway, one trend shows a tendency of increase: it is forest bathing. During the last summer Koli area has recognized increasing amount of tourists from Asian countries, who come to stay there. They do nothing. There is nothing to do. But there is a nature. Silence. Space. Just to be. And enjoy.

Another similar service that could be enlisted as a wellness travel is "guest farming" - local farmers invite guests to come to stay at their homes and help the family in daily agriculture routine, as a vacation and enjoyment.

The current initiative at KasvuOpen, a program for startups to support creation of digital solutions for health and wellness sector in Finland. With these solutions local businesses will be able to use the benefits of digitalization to promote themselves globally.

One of such digital products is Wellmonde - integral platform for the whole wellness community, available globally. It provides personal profile, where user can store and collect information on his treatments worldwide, helps specialists to track the details of the procedures, and creates the marketplace for wellness brands. With digitalization and gamification, Wellmonde collects valuable data and statistics that might present some great insights for the industry.

## **2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think is the most important development in your country for each of the following wellness sectors:**

The influence of digitalization remains strong throughout all the wellness sectors. Being a digital product, Wellmonde tries to stay inclusive and manages to fulfill the needs of each domain:

### **Spas:**

Through personal profile Wellmonde connects spas, spa customers, specialists and spa brands between themselves.

### **Beauty:**

Wellmonde connects beauty brands with their customers and customers can find their favorite brands while traveling as well they can follow their treatment programs easily.

### **Fitness:**

Also fitness brands are connected with their global customer base, with Wellmonde, helping users to find the same courses, they are attending at home, during their travel. Adding new activities, such as nordic walking, forest bathing, sauna, or lake swimming can also counted to their personal wellness activity list.

### **Nutrition:**

Following the eco-trends, Wellmonde provides help in finding healthy food globally, follow spa cuisine globally and especially find organic, local food at your destination.

### **Wellness Tourism:**

Available globally, Wellmonde is a major benefit to the wellness tourism sector. While people travel, they can follow their choices for their wellbeing and industry gets a valuable data, in real time.

### **Wellness Communities or Real Estate:**

Wellmonde creates a global wellness community and meeting point of customers, businesses and brands in digital cloud, which is a modern solution to networking.

## **3. Our theme this year is “Back to the Future.” What do you feel is your country’s most significant contribution to what is now a global wellness economy?**

Without any doubt, Finland has a well-known heritage of Sauna traditions, but also, in a future perspective, it has a natural source for forest bathing, natural sources for healthy food and wellness tourism. Arctic Wellness idea is based on nature, wilderness and silence together with unique tranquility, hospitality and true friendship. There are 190.000 lakes size more than 1 acre in Finland and 1,3 million saunas per household plus additional 1 million saunas at summer cottages. The forests take 71,6 % of the Finland area making 4 hectares for every Finnish person while European average is 1,3 hectares per citizen. Finnish unique everyman`s right

allows to pick berries or mushrooms or just walk in any forest, private or state owned. In Finland the idea of getting back to the future means getting back to the roots. Snow, lakes, arctic food, aurora borealis, silence and peace have been and will be.

#### **4. What do you feel is the biggest challenge in your country when it comes to growing the wellness economy?**

State has created a strong network of social wellness services for elderly people and for rehabilitation to anyone. That bears the best idea to help people live longer and healthier but it is a challenge for the private companies to compete with the state on opening new spas and wider the range of wellness services.

Another challenge is reliable statistics and data, which is provided only by state funded KELA, but does not represent the whole Finnish wellness industry. Private enterprises, 3rd sector and individual operators are not connected and no wellness cluster exist, either regional nor state level. We do not know the value added of the Finnish wellbeing and wellness industry.

The biggest challenge for wellness is to remain in close and personal connection with customer, while being global as a business or a destination. Nonetheless, with help of digital technologies these challenges can be successfully met and managed.

#### **5. While no answers are right or wrong, we would like to know what you feel is the difference - if any - between the terms/concepts of “wellness” and “well-being” in your country.**

Even though the idea of wellness is familiar to everyone in Finland, the exact word “wellness” is quite a stranger. Somehow, it is more common to use a word “wellbeing”. In Finland selfness and LOHAS are the key factors already now in leisure and working life. As described above, a general lifestyle in Finland is healthy and generally, wellbeing is granted naturally (by nature and by legislation) for people who live in Finland. Based on that wider understanding of wellbeing, most research papers, where Finnish wellness has been analyzed, have used a term wellbeing, as more precise to describe a situation today, and probably in a future perspective, as well.

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