



Picture: Sami Kivistö

Elina Heikkilä
Doctoral Researcher
UEF Law School
University of Eastern Finland

Antti Belinskij
Professor of Environmental Law
UEF Law School
University of Eastern Finland

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Industrial-scale harvesting of reed – water law solutions

This policy recommendation presents legal solutions to enable industrial-scale harvesting of reed in water areas.

Well-planned harvesting can improve the biodiversity of coastal areas, help in nutrient removal, and provide sustainably produced raw material for the production economy. We recommend minor amendments to the Water Act (VL 587/2011) to increase clarity.

Industrial-scale harvesting of reed is possible under current legislation, but usage rights issues and environmental impacts must be carefully resolved, for which we have developed solutions in this policy recommendation. Minor changes to the Water Act could clarify the legal requirements for cutting and harvesting projects and facilitate their implementation.

Interreg



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The needs and impacts of reed harvesting

Harvesting reed is necessary for the restoration of coastal areas and the increase of biodiversity. Industrial-scale harvesting can serve economic and environmental protection needs, but its environmental impacts depend on the implementation method.



Possible applications

There is currently strong demand for common reed as a raw material for various products, such as fertilizer, construction material, biofuel, and high-value products like biochar and bioplastics.



Legal challenges

The challenges are related to the fragmentation of water area ownership, the arrangement of rights of use, exceeding the permit threshold, the unsuitability of the notification procedure for large-scale projects, the difficulties in establishing rights of use and environmental impact assessment.

Recommendations:

- > **Incorporating large-scale harvesting into nuisance removal measures:** This change would allow industrial-scale harvesting to be implemented as a nuisance removal measure, which would facilitate the acquisition of usage rights.
- > **Clarifying the Water Act in terms of the need for rights of use:** A clarification indicating that certain types of projects, such as large-scale harvest projects, do not require a right of use to the project area would facilitate project implementation.
- > **Including moving and harvesting projects in the criteria for granting minor rights of use:** This would allow for granting limited rights of use for cutting and harvesting projects, which would facilitate the permit process and the arrangement of rights of use.