

E.S. Lahtinen Ltd: Emission-Free Mobility with Esla Kicksleds

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E.S. Lahtinen Ltd is a Finnish family-owned company founded in 1928. The company's long history began with Erkki Samuli "Samppa" Lahtinen, who represented Indian motorcycles and repaired machines. However, in 1933, the company started producing kicksleds using self-made machines. Even today, the company is best known for its Esla brand kick sleds. Under the Esla brand, E. S. Lahtinen also manufactures kickcycles, scooters, and rollators.

Over the course of 95 years, the company has developed a well-known and trusted brand. Internationalization began in 1977 with the export of kicksleds to Sweden. Nowadays, sleds are exported to snowy countries all over the world, especially North America.

Sustainability and circular economy have always been integral parts of the company's operations, even before they were commonly talked about using those terms. Esla kicksleds have been designed to last for generations. The lifespan of a sled is approximately 70 years, and spare parts are available in the online store. The kicksleds are designed and manufactured in the village of Koura in Seinäjoki, Finland. The domestic content of Esla products ranges from 80 % to 99 %.

Traditional kicksleds and other Esla products offer emission-free transportation. By kicking along with an environmentally friendly sled, users can reduce their own mobility carbon footprint. The main raw materials used in sleds are wood and steel, both of which are recyclable. The solid birch wood used in the sleds is sourced primarily from a local sawmill in the village of Koura. The company has also taken various measures to reduce environmental impact in its own production processes.





Embracing new trends while respecting traditions and leveraging circular economy

Despite its long-standing traditions, it is important for the nearly century-old company to keep up with the latest trends. For this reason, Esla has also ventured into electrifying its products. A Swedish partner company has been involved in developing prototypes of electric products, which are currently being tested by a small consumer group. As a contract manufacturing, E.S. Lahtinen also manufactures Skick electric kicksleds, which are suitable for year-round riding on all types of terrain.

New models of traditional kicksleds have also been designed to meet the needs of today's consumers. For example, the Adventure sled serves hikers and dog enthusiasts. The company's CEO, Mika Lahtinen, describes the company as a 90-year-old start-up—despite its old age, the company remains agile, constantly generating new product and service ideas, and staying at the forefront of technological development.

All development considers the environmental impact of operations and the new opportunities created by circular economy business models. The company has planned, for instance, a sled rental service in Finland,

so in the future, people may be able to experience kick sledding without owning their own sled.



Learn more: https://esla.fi/en/etusivu-english/**Annukka Koivuranta**
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Photos: E.S. Lahtinen Ltd

E.S. Lahtinen Ltd has been a pilot company in a project called "GreenGrow – Facilitating green and inclusive growth in South Ostrobothnia", which main objective is to facilitate green and inclusive growth of South Ostrobothnian SMEs by strengthening networks and RDI activities. Through the pilot initiatives, companies have received individual expert support in sustainable business planning. The project is funded by the resources of the REACT-EU instrument, as part of the actions implemented by the European Union in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.