

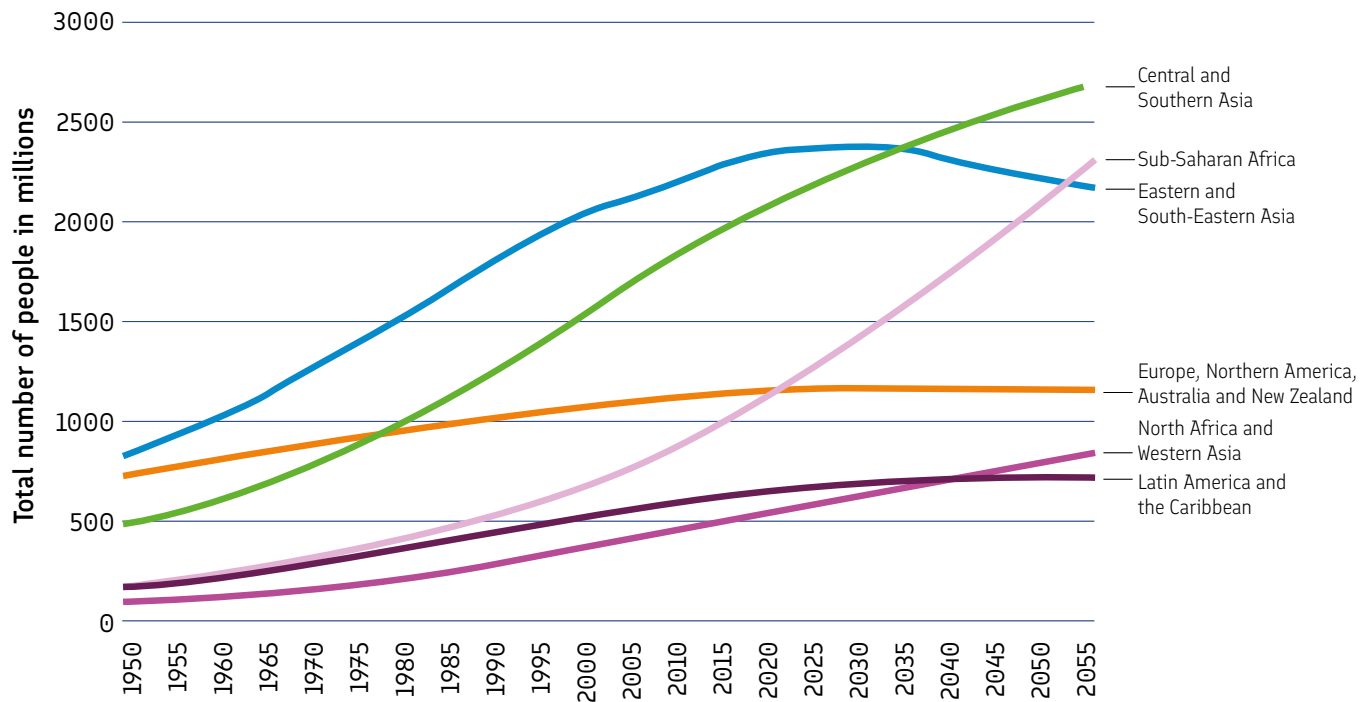
POPULATION GROWTH IN EMERGING MARKETS AS PART OF COMPANY STRATEGY

Emerging and developing markets, especially in Africa, are expected to account for the most of the global population growth in the coming decades. Changes in demographics worldwide can bring about both significant opportunities and challenges for companies in the future. Global demographic trends are an important element for Finnish companies to consider when thinking about their international growth strategies and innovation needs.

CHANGING WORLD

- The world population is projected to grow by over two billion people from over eight billion in the mid-2020s before peaking at over ten billion people in the mid-2080s, according to the United Nations (UN).
- Over 80% of people currently live in the developing world and the top 10 most populous countries in the world include eight developing markets.
- Most of the future population growth is expected to concentrate in developing markets, while population in many developed markets, such as Germany and Japan, or in countries such as China are expected to stagnate or decline in the coming decades.
- Asia hosts over half of the world population now and likely also in the decades to come. India, China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh continue to be ranked among the 10 most populous countries in the world.
- Population of Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to nearly double in size and reach two billion people by the mid-2050s with Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo among the 10 most populous countries in the world.
- Growth of working age population can, under right circumstances, boost economic growth and sustainable development in many developing markets.
- Most countries currently ranked among the top 10 most populous countries in the world have improved their income-based country classification over the past three decades.

POPULATION IN SELECTED WORLD REGIONS IN 1950-2055



GLOBAL TOP 10 MOST POPULOUS COUNTRIES AND SELECTED INDICATORS

COUNTRY	TOP 10 MOST POPULOUS COUNTRIES			POPULATION IN MILLIONS			INCOME-BASED COUNTRY CLASSIFICATION	
	1995	2024	2054	1995	2024	2054	1995	2023
India	2	1	1	951	1 444	1 691	Low income	LMIC
China	1	2	2	1 215	1 421	1 221	Low income	UMIC
Pakistan	7	5	3	133	249	387	Low income	LMIC
United States	3	3	4	267	344	384	High income	High income
Nigeria	10	6	5	109	230	374	Low income	LMIC
Indonesia	4	4	6	198	282	322	LMIC	UMIC
Ethiopia	...	10	7	57	130	234	Low income	Low income
Democratic Republic of Congo	...	...	8	44	108	235	Low income	Low income
Bangladesh	9	8	9	121	173	218	Low income	LMIC
Brazil	5	7	10	160	212	216	UMIC	UMIC
Russia	6	9	...	148	145	135	LMIC	High income
Japan	8	...	...	126	124	103	High income	High income
WORLD	...	...	...	5 717	8 127	9 796	...	...

Note: United Nations population estimates for 1995 and medium scenario projections for 2024 and 2054 / Country classifications by the World Bank based on income level / LMIC = Lower-middle income country, UMIC = Upper-middle income country

Data: United Nations (2024b) and [World Bank Historical Country Classifications by Income Level](#) data (2025) / Table by the author

POSSIBLE BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

- Many future consumers may live in developing markets and their preferences may differ from the consumers in the developed world, for example, due to cultural, historical, regulatory or environmental reasons.
- Increasing number of people in developing markets can boost demand for better infrastructure and services, creating potential business-to-business or business-to-government market opportunities.
- Population growth may create greenfield for new, radical innovations in some developing markets. These markets can also have the first adopters of the most innovative technologies and solutions.
- Increasing number of young people in developing markets can become potential future employees, business partners or global competitors.
- Stagnating or declining populations in more developed markets can alter or diminish the current market opportunities in the future.
- Diverging demographic trends across countries may create different types of sustainability challenges calling for a variety of innovative solutions.

GROWTH IN THE CHANGING WORLD

- What may be the most promising international growth opportunities and target markets for your company from medium to long term?
- How can the potential medium to long-term challenges for the business of your company be mitigated?
- Are the solutions provided by your company likely to be compatible with and competitive in markets likely to grow in the future?
- Do you need to renew your existing or create completely new products, services, processes or businesses models to be competitive and sustainable in future growth markets?
- Are your products or services suitable for different cultural, historical, regulatory or environmental contexts?
- How can you ensure and enhance responsible business conducive to sustainable development in the changing world?

FUNDING FOR RENEWAL AND INNOVATION

Business Finland offers funding for research and development (R&D) – and various business development needs.

With our R&D funding, companies seeking significant international growth can renew or develop completely new products, services, production methods or business models. Companies can also test their new solutions with customers.



FIND OUT MORE
– Business Finland Funding

DEVELOPING MARKETS PLATFORM

Developing Markets Platform helps Finnish companies and their partners to develop innovative and competitive business for sustainable opportunities in emerging and developing markets – covering more than 100 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Southeast Europe.

Developing Markets Platform is a joint endeavor of Business Finland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. We combine research, development and innovation with international growth opportunities in developing markets – in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.



FIND OUT MORE
– Developing Markets Platform

PERSPECTIVES FOR INNOVATION AND GROWTH

Perspectives for Innovation and Growth series by Business Finland invites companies to think about their international growth, renewal and innovation endeavors in the light of long(er) term changes taking place worldwide. The series includes concise snapshots of selected global issues with a long(er) term perspective, discussing also the possible future implications they may have on businesses.

Perspectives for Innovation and Growth seeks to foster strategic reflection among companies on potential future markets and customer needs – as well as on implications that long(er) term global trends may have on company renewal and innovation.



FIND OUT MORE
Developing
Markets Platform

REFERENCES AND SOURCES FOR FINDING OUT MORE

- Bloom D. E. (2000) | Population 2020: Demographics can be a potent driver of the pace and process of economic development | International Monetary Fund | Finance & Development Magazine, March 2020 | [Changing Demographics and Economic Growth](#)
- Business Finland | Become a customer webpage | [Become A Customer](#)
- Business Finland | Business Finland website | [Business Finland](#)
- Business Finland | Developing Markets Platform webpage | [Developing Markets Platform](#)
- Business Finland | Funding website | [Business Finland Funding](#)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development | OECD list of developing countries webpage | [OECD List of Developing Countries](#)
- Sinha S. and M. Getachew (2024) | As Africa's population crosses 1.5 billion, the demographic window is opening; getting the dividend requires more time and stronger effort | UN Economic Commission for Africa | Blog 12 July 2024 | [As Africa's Population Crosses 1.5 Billion, The Demographic Window Is Opening](#)
- United Nations (2024a) | UN projects world population to peak within this century | UN press release 11 Jul 2024 | [UN Press Release](#)
- United Nations (2024b) | World population prospects 2024: Summary of results | UN DESA/POP/2024/TR/NO. 9. New York: United Nations | [World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results](#)
- United Nations | Global Issues – Population webpage | [Population](#) | Accessed on 6 May 2025
- United Nations | Sustainable Development Goals website | [Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- United Nations | UN population division data portal | [World Population Prospects 2024](#)
- United Nations | UNdata data portal | [UNdata](#) | Accessed on 2 May 2025
- World Bank | World Bank data on historical country classification by income data | World Bank country and lending groups webpage | [World Bank Country and Lending Groups](#) | Accessed on 6 May 2025
- Yleisradio (2021) | Edessä hämmöttävä väestöräjähdys on sitkeä väärinkäsitys – maailman väkiluku voi pian alkaa kutistua, mutta riittääkö se pelastamaan planeetan ympäristökriiseiltä? | YLE news article of 18 July 2021 | [Edessä hämmöttävä väestöräjähdys on sitkeä väärinkäsitys](#)

AUTHOR

BUSINESSFINLAND.FI

Kiira Kärkkäinen

Head of Developing Markets Platform
kiira.karkkainen@businessfinland.fi