



InnoHiili

Innovative Low-Carbon Public Services

The project defines, formulates and pilots six new low-carbon services and consumer-driven concepts in the municipality. Citizens, companies, associations and the public sector are co-designing and co-producing services such as public transport and town development. Through consultation methods, citizens share ideas on how to make climate friendly choices appealing to users. Through the project, the region promotes its role as a forerunner in low-carbon solutions nationally and internationally.

www.greenpolis.fi/en/projektit/innohiili-innovative-low-carbon-public-services



Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



Kuva: Antti J. Leinonen

Co-design approach for cleaner air

The Finnish municipality of Ii turned to its citizens to improve public services and reduce its CO2 emissions. The co-design approach has made public services more citizen-focused and enhanced cooperation and efficiency between municipality departments.

From 2007 to 2015, the municipality of Ii has reduced its CO2 emissions more quickly than any other Finnish municipality, according to the Finnish Environment Institute, SYKE. It achieved these savings by redesigning public services, using less energy and switching to renewable energy.

“This project inspires us to continue to work towards sustainability while co-designing services. It helps us share our practices with a wider international audience and strengthens our belief that we are doing the right thing,” says Project Manager Kristiina Nurmenniemi. Her main

task has been to listen to all stakeholders and coordinate varying interests. “Different views complement each other. Our transition model consists of three parts: vision, people and comparisons.”

Valuable partnerships

To support Ii’s development work, Oulu Regional Council allocated funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). A public business development agency and a design association joint resources in a co-project. A third partner joined the project team following a compet-

itive tendering. “We wanted to outsource service design and went through a thorough process to find the right service provider. As a result, we gained a partnership based on open communication with Palvelumuotoilu Palo Ltd. Together we took on the challenge to link business needs with methods more commonly used in the creative industries. The municipality’s mission of sustainable development has stayed on the background but in the project we have been able to put people first”, says Managing Director Leena Vuotovesi.

Collaboration with the ERDF Managing Authority has been effortless. Regional Development Adviser Heikki Laukkanen “It is valuable that the citizens are involved in the process. The project combines a topical subject with motivated and talented people. The project leader convinced us at the proposal stage with a well planned, good quality project plan.”

A global solution

The municipality of Ii secured international attention when The Innovative Low-Carbon Public Services project received the 2017 RegioStars Award for ‘Energy Union: climate action’. “We are solving a global problem in a way which can be adopted in any small town in any corner of Europe”, envisions Vuotovesi.

Innovative Low-Carbon Public Services

Project code: A71392

Ii Micropolis Ltd and
Designers’ Association of
Northern Finland

1.12.2015–30.4.2018

Total budget: 277 526 €

ERDF funding: 208 267 €

Objectives

The objective of the project is to define, formulate and pilot six new low-carbon services and consumer-driven concepts in the Municipality of Ii. The methods used to get citizens involved are drawn from the creative industries. The concepts concern low-carbon bottlenecks such as logistics, real estate, residential areas and digital service provision. The project will work towards finding low-carbon logistical solutions and utilizing digital tools to enhance effective use of properties. The project will also support Ii in becoming a pioneer and a trendsetter in achieving a carbon-neutral society.

Results

The project has built on the municipality of Ii’s CO2 emissions through energy savings, cleaner transport and a switch to renewable energy. Through consultation methods such as workshops and competitions, citizens have shared ideas on how to make climate-friendly choices desirable and easy. Their insights have improved public transport and cycling infrastructure, helped re-zone the town centre, introduced smart technology into public services and led to a scheme to recognize businesses that save resources. The co-design approach has not only made public services more citizen-focused and better value, but it has enhanced cooperation and efficiency between municipal departments.

Oulu Regional Council allocates funding for regional development from the ERDF

Oulu Regional Council is a Managing Authority for the Sustainable growth and jobs 2014–2020 – Finland’s Structural Funds Programme in Northern Ostrobothnia.

European Regional Development Fund’s (ERDF) main objectives are to improve the competitiveness of SMEs and produce and use the latest information and knowledge.

‘Sustainable growth and jobs 2014–2020 – Finland’s structural funds programme’ has two priority axes and seven specific objectives for ERDF. Each project must deliver at least one of these specific objectives.

ERDF priority axes and specific objectives:

1. Competitiveness of SMEs
 - Generating new business
 - Improving transport and logistic connections that are important to SMEs (Eastern and Northern Finland)
 - Promoting growth and internationalisation of enterprises
 - Promoting energy efficiency in SMEs
2. Producing and using the latest information and knowledge
 - Development of the centres of research, expertise and innovation on the basis of regional strengths
 - Strengthening innovation in enterprises
 - Developing solutions based on renewable energy and energy-efficient solutions

More information on Structural Funds in Finland from the dedicated website www.rakennerahastot.fi

RegioStars Awards

RegioStars Awards identify good practices in regional development and highlight original and innovative projects. The five award categories in the 2017 were the following:

1. Smart Specialisation for SME innovation
2. Energy Union: climate change
3. Women empowerment and active participation
4. Education and Training
5. CityStars: cities in digital transition

Comments on award, Leena Vuotovesi

We gained international visibility, for example an interview for Euronews, which would have not been possible without RegioStars. Winning the award has strengthened our position in international organisations and provided a valuable reference for our accomplishments. We have also been able to utilize this in investment marketing.

Socially we have gained a lot, too. Winning the award has brought people together and given a sense of community to us. It feels great to succeed together.

One of the criterion for the 2017 RegioStars Award was innovativeness and that is definitely something we have been able to achieve through collaboration with the Designers’ Association of Northern Finland. The project has enabled us to try new methods and we firmly believe that collaboration and creative approach bring great results. Being bold and taking some risks is worthwhile. The new way of working has been revitalizing as it has shaken the structure.



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POHJOIS-POHJANMAA
Council of Oulu Region

