

BEST PRACTICE



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Co-designing low carbon public services

Ii, Finland – 10 000 inhabitants

Wind technology – Green jobs – CO₂ reduction



Credits: Ii Municipality

Ii is the fastest Finnish community in terms of CO₂ reduction. In October 2017 Ii's Innovative Low-Carbon Public Services project won the European Commission's RegioStars Awards (Energy Union: climate change category).

Project in a Nutshell

The total investment for the project was €297 526, with the European Regional Development Fund contributing €208 267 through the Operational Programme “Sustainable growth and jobs 2014-2020 - Structural Funds Programme of Finland” for the 2014-2020 programming period. Citizens ideas and input on public services were collected at the very beginning of the project with the help of a service design team. A municipality map was sent to every citizen so that they could mark their favourite place in the area on it. In-depth interviews were conducted with individuals, sometimes even in their own homes. Sessions were held with young and elderly people to get their perspectives on how the municipality could be improved.

A strong emphasis was placed on finding energy-efficient and eco-friendly solutions to the problems facing the citizens. Following an electronic survey, to which almost 500 people responded, the decision was made to build the first cycle path proposed by the citizens in order to reduce traffic. All the public buildings of Ii are now heated with renewable energy, and electric cars are used by municipal employees for their business trips. A local EU Ecolabel was created by Ii to encourage businesses in the region to save energy. For a company to be awarded the label, they must promise to be more energy-efficient or accomplish an eco-friendly activity.

Impact & Next steps

Since 2007, Ii has more than halved its carbon emissions. A total of around €600 000 is being saved each year. In addition, all schools and daycare centres are now participating in the Euronet 50/50 energy-saving programme. Twenty-six companies in the region have already received Ecolabels. Water, electricity and heating use is now being monitored through a new digital system, which is much more efficient than the manual system previously used. Currently 15 buildings are connected digitally with plans to connect all the main buildings of the municipality (100 buildings).

The municipality of Ii is committed to reduce 80% of its carbon emissions by the year 2020, over 30 years faster than the EU climate target.



Replicability: Challenges & Success Factors

Besides an effective use of European funds, the integrated strategy adopted by Ii - foreseeing actions on different fronts towards the CO₂ reduction goal, proved to be successful. Also, the municipality prepares its yearly energy efficiency action plan that is linked with the next year's budget.

Citizens of all ages were involved in the project, not only in order to discuss things to be improved but also in elaborating a shared strategy together with their policy makers. This created a strong feeling of ownership, making Ii's inhabitants proud of their city and avoided public resistance to the project. The municipality of Ii has a population of about 10 000 inhabitants, which is similar to about 80 % of all municipalities in Finland. About 250 municipalities in Finland could try to adopt similar strategies in their own areas.

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www.ii.fi/en

kunta@ii.fi

