BEST PRACTICES FROM NORTH KARELIA TOWARDS THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY
Introduction

Purpose of the report
This report contains 21 best practice project examples from North Karelia, each represented under the relevant flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The purpose of this report is to promote the knowledge gained by these projects and also to prepare for the next programme period 2014+. Selected projects are funded by several EU funding instruments. Although some of the projects are implemented at the regional level, they do contain possibilities for further development in an international context. Most of the projects have been executed in the 2007-2013 programme period, but a few are still continuing their work.

North Karelia as a region in Europe
The Region of North Karelia is part of Eastern Finland and shares a 302 km common border with the Federation of Russia. The region itself is the easternmost point of the continental European Union – only Cyprus is further east than North Karelia. North Karelia consist of 14 municipalities and has a population of 165,962 inhabitants (1.1.2011). The population density is 7.7/km². The total surface area of the region is 21,584 km², 3,821 km² of which is water. The special status of the northern sparsely populated areas is recognised in the European Union Accession Treaty of Finland.

The Region of North Karelia has a long tradition of triple-helix cooperation and there is a great deal of unleashed potential in this field. Areas of high-level expertise include energy and forestry, the environment, geology, material technology, optics and photonics. This knowledge potential can be utilised in pan-European development actions.

EU programmes in North Karelia
The implementation and utilisation of EU funding programmes already started in 1994 in North Karelia with international EU programme projects. Work with the main structural fund programmes started in 1995, when Finland joined the European Union.

In the EU programme period of 2007-2013 the region of North Karelia belongs to the programme areas of the ERDF Operational Programme of Eastern Finland, the ESF Operational Programme of mainland Finland, the ENPI Karelia CBC programme, the Northern Periphery 2007–2013 programme, the Baltic Sea Region 2007–2013 programme, the ESPON Programme and the Interreg IVC programme. The Region is also utilising the funding possibilities of several other international EU funding programmes.

Thanks to the aid of European Union funding programmes, the Region of North Karelia has been able to overcome some of the challenges set by its northern and peripheral location, sparse population and cold climate.

Credits
This report has been produced by the EUFUND 2010 project, which aims to improve the use of EU funding in North Karelia. The project was funded from the ERDF Operational Programme for Eastern Finland, Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective. Further informa-
tion about the project is available at www.eufund.fi. The organisation implementing the EUFUND 2010 project is the Regional Council of North Karelia, a regional authority whose areas of responsibility include economic development, regional planning, safeguarding of regional interests and the creation of a knowledge infrastructure. Further information is available at www.pohjois-karjala.fi/English

EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

"Europe 2020 is a strategy that sets out a vision of Europe’s social market economy for the 21st century. Europe 2020 puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:

• Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
• Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
• Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

The Commission has proposed the following EU headline targets by the year 2020:

• 5 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed.
• 3 % of the EU’s GDP should be invested in R&D.
• The “20/20/20” climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right).
• The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree.
• 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty.

These targets are interrelated and critical to our overall success. To ensure that each Member State tailors the Europe 2020 strategy to its particular situation, the Commission has proposed that EU goals are translated into national targets and trajectories. The targets are representative of the three priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth but they are not exhaustive: a wide range of actions at national, EU and international levels will be necessary to underpin them.

The Commission has put forward seven flagship initiatives to catalyse progress under each priority theme:

• “Innovation Union”
• “Youth on the move”
• “A digital agenda for Europe”
• “Resource efficient Europe”
• “An industrial policy for the globalisation era”
• “An agenda for new skills and jobs”
• “European platform against poverty

Europe 2020 strategy: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
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1 Flagship Initiative: Innovation Union

"Innovation Union" to improve framework conditions and access to finance for research and innovation so as to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs.
**Project name:**
The Centre of Expertise Programme, North Karelia

**Project website(s):**
http://www.oske.net/osaamiskeskukset/pohjois-karjala/
http://www.carelian.fi/fi/hankkeet/osaamiskeskusohjelma/

**Funding instrument:** Ministry of Employment and the Economy

**Duration:** 2007 to 2013

**Total funding:** about 5,600,000 €

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**Summary of content:**
The Centre of Expertise Programme (OSKE) is a fixed term special government programme aimed at focussing regional resources and activities on development areas of key national importance. The programme promotes utilisation of the highest international standard of knowledge and expertise that exists in different regions. The operations model of the programme was reformed from 2007 to 2013 as a cluster-based model, with the overriding objective of increasing regional specialisation and strengthening cooperation between centres of expertise. The National Programme involves 13 national Clusters of Expertise and 21 regional Centres of Expertise. Pivotal cooperation parties include companies, universities, institutes of higher education, research institutes, technology centres and various funding instruments (cities, municipalities, regional councils, Employment and Economic Development Offices, especially their technology divisions and county administration boards).

The objective of Centre of Expertise Programme is to create new innovations, products, services, enterprises and jobs based on top expertise. The programme supports specialisation of regions to form internationally competitive centres of expertise. In addition, the programme aims to improve the capacity of regional innovation environments to draw international companies, investments and top experts to Finland. In pursuit of these objectives, the Centre of Expertise Programme networks innovation players regionally, nationally and internationally, and promotes the utilisation of competence. The programme offers diverse types of networks and services for companies, universities, universities of applied sciences and research institutions. At the core of the programme are project planning, company activation, strengthening partnerships and boosting competence. In the current programme period spanning from 2007 to 2013, special attention is paid to the growth of enterprises, networking, cooperation between regions and internationalisation.

The North Karelia Centre of Expertise is managed by Joensuu Science Park Ltd. The Science Park bridges the gaps between competence-intensive growth companies, research and educational organisations, and other interest groups. The goal is to promote commercialisation and utilisation of research and new information in the business operations of companies. The Expert Services of Joensuu Science Park Ltd. bring their own expertise as well as that of a wide national and international partnership network for the benefit of companies and other partners. The Centre of Expertise Programme is active in building a sustainable future for the region as well as supporting the growth and internationalisation of companies in the competence areas North Karelia represents.
Best practise gained:
The North Karelia Centre of Expertise has focused on utilising the expertise in the following internationally high-standard fields and developing business activity:

Forest Industry Future
This competence area consists of two strong fields of expertise covering production, procurement, logging and transport of forest biomass, and development of demanding wood construction solutions and business models. The primary objective is to develop the wood bio-mass procurement chain from stump to mill: from forest management, purchasing, harvesting, transport and logistics to raw material reception, storage and pre-treatment. The competence area also actively promotes demanding wood construction locally and nation-wide. Its activities contribute to enhancing the business environment and technological development of the wood construction value network and to developing competencies in the field.

Energy Technology
The primary objective is to promote the wide and cost-efficient use of renewable energy, as well as the export of Finnish energy technology and services. Core competences include biomass resources, production of wood biomass, harvesting and logistics of energy wood, and production of solid biofuels. The competence areas that Energy Technology cluster shares with the Living Business and Forest Industry Future cluster include energy and material-efficient building, energy systems and energy efficiency in housing, and the life cycle analyses of biofuel and wood products. Solar energy and energy-efficient lighting are examples of nanotechnology applications in the energy sector.

Nano Technology
The objective is to support the further development of Joensuu region’s world-class competence cluster in photonics, materials and precision technologies. Operations are aimed at wide-scale utilisation of photonics and materials technologies within fields such as display and lighting technology, and in different kinds of imaging systems. The cluster also develops technology expertise related to the manufacture and production methods of photonics, and search for new solutions in the fields of medicine and new energy technologies. Operations promote the business preconditions and internationalisation of technology and service companies operating in the field.

Living Business
The objective is to influence the creation of user-oriented living solutions and to strengthen related research, development, and innovation activities. Operations are geared toward developing internationally competitive living-related products, services, and business models in collaboration with companies and other stakeholders in the sector. The activities support solution development for environmentally responsible and energy-efficient use of land, planning, zoning, construction, and living. The Centre of Expertise operates at the interface of several competence clusters and fields of knowledge. At the same time, it offers a user-oriented development platform for living – one that focuses on, for example, stone, locking, and wood product applications. The operations are in line with European and national-level programmes.

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Summary of content:
In North Karelia, the level of employment among higher education graduates has decreased due to the global economic downturn. However, companies and organisations are taking on challenges posed by both the present situation and the future by actively developing innovations and new operating methods as well as their competitive ability.

The purpose of the Innovation Assistant project is to promote the permanent employment of graduates with a higher education degree in companies and organisations in the region and to improve the competitiveness and innovation capacity of local small and medium-sized enterprises. The target group includes companies in the region of North Karelia and graduates with a higher education degree seeking employment. During the project, the job seekers will be offered both intensive training and a practical training period in a company.

The project also has a parallel project administered by the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, North Karelia for implementing labour market measures. Other co-operation partners include regional companies. The project is supported by ESF, and funded by the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, North Karelia, and Josek Ltd (municipal financing). The project is administrated by the North Karelia University of Applied Sciences.

Best practice gained:
1. Job seekers will be offered an intensive training period in the companies followed by on-the-job training (including subsidies for both practical training and salary)
2. Use of target-group tailored media (job seekers with a higher education degree)
3. Personal and reciprocal communication plays an important role when engaging employers to take part in the project. To commit employers in the project, special attention has been paid to the method of approaching them. The employers are always approached personally through arranging an initial meeting, and the competence needs of the employer are heard. If the employer finds that the project might benefit his or her company, the best course of action is negotiated together. The client is encouraged to benefit from the opportunities provided by the project in the way best suited for them but also to innovate new methods of cooperation if needed. Frequent discussions with employers have promoted their commitment to the project and helped to achieve excellent results.

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Project name: Project cluster of materials and precision technology and diffractive optics
Funding instrument: European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund
Duration: 2007–2013
Total funding: approximately €10 million in the current structural fund programming period

Summary of content:
As a result of long-term development work, North Karelia has succeeded in generating a cluster of high-quality expertise in the fields of materials and precision technology and diffractive optics. The strong educational foundation in natural sciences (chemistry, physics, IT) at the University of Eastern Finland combined with the technological fields of study in the North Karelia University of Applied Sciences have enabled the formation of a broad-based cluster based on high-quality expertise. The field has also generated new business activity, such as spin-off companies and entirely new types of business activity partly based on the plastics and metals industry and associated with tasks such as the utilisation of composite materials. The fields of materials and precision technology and diffractive optics constitute strategically important interface sectors for other fields in technology industry. The foundation for the areas of expertise lies in top of the line hi-tech infrastructure and knowledge-intensive research and development activity that supports it.

The development work has been funded by mutually complementary investment and development projects (ERDF and ESF) that have been implemented within a cooperation network of local businesses and institutes of higher education. EU funds have been directed to strengthening both the physical capacity and the knowledge base. The multidisciplinary network of experts that has emerged in the area operates in a synergetic manner, even though the structural fund activities have directed the funds based on areas and centres of excellence. Investments in the strengthening of expertise have enabled more profound international cooperation for example within the 7th Framework Programme and other specific programmes of the EU.

Best practice gained:
Four hubs of high technology research, development and innovation activity have emerged in North Karelia as a result of the activities of the EU structural funds during the programming periods 2000–2006 and 2007–2013.

The Ultra Precision Unit (North Karelia University of Applied Sciences) specialises in precision machining. The range of equipment at the unit is unique in Finland. Comparative learning and product development environments are rare even on the European scale. The development work is largely based on cooperation with businesses in the plastics and metals industries.

The Research Laboratory for Diffractive Optics and Photonics (University of Eastern Finland) is a globally unique research infrastructure and laboratory in the field of diffractive optics and photonics. The laboratory, the operations of which are based on scientific research carried out at the university, provides services to assist in product development work carried out by companies as well as opportunities for the testing of new ideas.
The Special Material Research Centre “SMARC Innovations” has operated as a research unit of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Eastern Finland. The activities of SMARCi project are founded on the long term expertise of the physical and materials chemistry laboratories. A core strategy of the SMARCi has been to engage in high-level materials research and to promote technology transfer. The aim of the project has been to increase competitiveness of the region by providing a versatile interface between scientific research and the industry. The collaboration by project has been taken place on several levels including provision of analysis services and contract research, generation of new project openings with national and international industrial and academic partners, participation in networks in the field of materials research, organisation of training courses for the industry and implementation of a strategic research.

The InFotonics Centre Joensuu (University of Eastern Finland) has been an optics research and business service centre that combines expertise in photonics and information technology. The core expertise of the InFotonics Centre concentrates on wave-optical engineering and spectral color research, an area in which the centre has become a global leader. The InFotonics Centre provides an interface between industry and the University of Eastern Finland in the commercialisation of high technology optical research. The InFotonics Center has established an active cooperation network with the most highly-esteemed laboratories and institutes in the field.

After the project period, the activities of SMARC innovations and InFotonics Center Joensuu will be continued as part of the operations of SIB-labs, a research environment that brings together the expertise of the University of Eastern Finland in the fields of biomaterials, materials, photonics and spectral color research. A third party to the unit is BioMater Center located at the Kuopio Campus. SIB-labs are a scientific research and infrastructure unit operating in the Faculty of Science and Forestry.

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**Project name:**
*Wenet Centre – provides a boost to export and internationalisation of sustainable energy solutions through cross-regional cooperation.*

**Project website(s):**
- http://www.wenet.fi/eng/
- http://www.wenetvideos.com

**Funding instrument:** European Regional Development Fund (Eastern Finland)

**Duration:** 1 May 2009 to 30 April 2011

**Total funding:** 464,000 €

**Summary of content:**
North Karelian wood energy expertise and products have been exported world-wide through the Wenet network from 2004 onward. Three years into its work the Wenet network broadened to other regions in Eastern Finland. The key objectives of the Wenet Centre project, which was launched in 2009, were to improve operational conditions and international expertise of companies and players in Eastern Finland’s sustainable energy market, increase business and give birth to new businesses and thus increase income from exports in Eastern Finland. The Wenet export network was established on the basis of strengths exhibited by the businesses and players in Eastern Finland. The network’s sustainable energy expertise and technology carries through the entire production chain from tree stump to kettle and in district heating all the way to the customer interface. Networking enables participating companies to offer customers complete service in the form of key turns. Network and export cooperation will improve the competitiveness of businesses and players and increase their recognition in the international market. The project focuses on developing the products and expertise of businesses and players in the field, on international joint marketing, on organisation of professional visits in Eastern Finland and on supporting preparation and realisation of export ventures that support internationalisation.

**Best practice gained:**
Project participants have built an active network including companies and organisations providing sustainable energy solution that are based primarily in Eastern Finland’s regions, but also in Central and Western Finland. In order to maintain networking a committee was formed of cross-regional implementers and key players. The committee has established joint procedures for managing networking activities and for planning, realising and monitoring operations. The members of the committee have been actively in contact with companies and players in their own regions.

A procedure has been established for assessing the project; results are monitored cumulatively and compared to the project’s quantitative and qualitative objectives. Some of these objectives were defined in the project application while others were determined by the steering group. The wishes and experiences of companies and organisations participating in the project have been heard and taken into account in the project’s operational plan and in planning the continuation of networking activities.
Export events and internationalisation training have been the key services this project has focused on providing for businesses. A cohesive Wenet image and an exhibition concept including exhibit tables, posters as well as the ties and scarves for exhibit workers in the Wenet colours was designed for export events. The majority of these events were carried out in cooperation with Finbio ry at the “Bioenergy Finland” stand. The Wenet Centre actively took part in designing and realising the stand’s appearance.

The project also continued to develop a previously established concept for hosting professional visits. The project has created the readiness to organise versatile programme entities, which can be tailored according to the wishes of guests and the time constraints set by visits. Participants have been able to host events with just a couple days advance warning. Guests have been able to familiarise themselves with new sites in advance: each site has an info card, which can be downloaded from the Wenet homepage and includes a description of the site. The project has included active cooperation with other projects. Different forms of cooperation have included joint briefings, seminars and workshops as well as joint production of marketing materials (Wenet Review, DVD). The project worked in close cooperation with the Energy technology cluster Centre of Expertise Programme in communicating with companies and preparation and expansion of ventures. The national energy technology cluster network was utilised in realising this project. The project on the other hand supports the realisation of the energy technology cluster’s internationalisation focus areas.

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2 Flagship Initiative: Youth on the Move

"Youth on the move" to enhance the performance of education systems and to facilitate the entry of young people to the labour market.
**Summary of content:**
The purpose of the project is to increase the innovative entrepreneurship of university students and to integrate the methods developed in the project into a regular element of university studies in the future. There are two universities in the region. Students from both universities have been able to participate in the Innovation Month® course. Several self-employed persons participate in the project, because the project also improves and develops business of the existing enterprises. The project helps to increase the target group’s innovation abilities and readiness to work as an entrepreneur in a network-based environment. The methods developed during Innovation Month®, improve their abilities to create new, successful business operations based on higher education. The project particularly increases student co-operation opportunities and commercialisation opportunities of innovative business ideas.

**Best practice gained:**
The project has developed a method, Innovation Month®, which will be used in courses organised for different businesses or groups. Each course is modified based on the participants’ needs and wishes. The objective of the courses is to promote innovative entrepreneurship by producing concrete business, product and service concepts with the help of a group of diverse members and experts. During the course, the group works through the different phases of product development and divisions of a business plan. The group works with innovative methods using different practical assignments. Regional organisations providing enterprise assistance are involved in the process ensuring that that the network of a new entrepreneur supports continuous development. The integration of the project to university students’ entrepreneurial studies has been very successful. Multinational and multitalented groups have provided an opportunity for international networks with diverse knowledge. The language of instruction for Innovation Month® studies is English.

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**Project name:** Nuokka – Environmental and Cultural Project for Youth in Karelia  
**Project website(s):** [http://www.nuokka.fi/paasivu_eng.htm](http://www.nuokka.fi/paasivu_eng.htm)  
**Funding programme:** Euregio Karelia Neighbourhood Programme  
**Duration:** 1 November 2005 to 31 October 2007  
**Total funding:** €210 048

**Summary of content:**  
The purpose of the project was to increase the environmental knowledge of young people in North Karelia and the Republic of Karelia through mutual nature and cultural camps, meetings and events and to promote young people’s cultural cooperation across national borders. The project developed youth work by giving youth workers in North Karelia and the Republic of Karelia the opportunity to exchange information and experiences as well as transfer and develop working models and methods. The project also aimed to increase cross-border cooperation and networking between youth councils and other organisations and associations working with young people. The simultaneous Youth House Karelia Tacis project enabled more intense cooperation.

**Best practice gained:**  
During the project, various different kinds of events, seminars, camps and festivals were organised for young people from both sides of the border. For example, camps focusing on topics such as the environment and crafts and culture were held in Finland and in Russia. The participating youth were young people who were involved in open youth work; also students from schools and young people from various organisations took part to organised activities. Environmental issues were approached in the camps through practice, games and play.

The project was successful in a sense that the four environmental seminars organised by the project were attended by the representatives of almost all partners. Also the development of non-governmental organisation activities was successful, as all operators were able to locate a Russian partner. Altogether ten separate partnerships between various youth operators were realised in Finland. The success can also be measured by the fact that in addition to cross-border activities and partnerships becoming more common, there was also an increase in regional youth work. The cross-border activities between Finnish and Russian youth not only promoted interest in the Russian language, culture and environment but also reduced prejudices and therefore further increased the opportunities for cross-border cooperation.

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Project website(s):
http://www2.mll.fi/piirit/pohjois-karjala/projektit/kaupunkionkotimme.html
http://www2.mll.fi/piirit/pohjois-karjala/ourcity/ourcity_fi/projekti_fi/projekti_fi.html
Funding programme: Interreg and Tacis
Total funding: 52 617 € (Interreg) ja 174 499 € (Tacis)

Summary of content:
The project was based on a need that emerged in connection with the friendship school activities between the Joensuun lyseo upper secondary school and Sortavala School I to develop the school environment, specifically school yards, in a direction that would promote well-being and a more active lifestyle among students. The Our City is Our Home joint project aimed to get the students to participate in the planning and implementation of the construction work in the school yard. In addition, the goal of the project was to increase young people’s awareness of their environment and find new ideas for student-driven planning of the school environment as well as active participation in society in a broader sense and youth cooperation across national boundaries.

To promote the aim of increasing environmental awareness, the schools established action teams that coordinated environmental activities in their schools. Environmental education and inclusion training was also arranged for the students. Young persons from both countries took part in the trainings arranged in the form of camps. In the trainings, the participants reviewed plans that they would later implement in their own schools. Environmental seminars were arranged for teachers that provided advice on how to incorporate environmental issues into their teaching. In Finland, the students had the opportunity to influence the planning of their school yard with the aim of improving the school environment and school satisfaction. In Russia, the students also participated in the refurbishment of the school yard and the immediate environment of the school; in addition to the school yard, a nearby park and shoreline were restored and a stone park and an open-air theatre were built.

Best practice gained:
The project on developing the school environment was based on initiative from the students; the project also provided the young people with a genuine opportunity to impact their respective school environments. Action teams were selected from Sortavala School I and Joensuun lyseo upper secondary school that chose their own methods to influence environmental issues in their schools. The action teams had a central role in the planning and practical implementation of the school yard projects of both schools. The action teams gathered ideas and wishes concerning the school environment from other students and accounted for these in their action plans and forwarded the ideas to personnel in the schools and other cooperation partners. When carrying out their work, the members of the action teams learned to use different participation channels and gained experience in negotiation as a work method.
Environmental education supported the young people’s conception of themselves as a part of both the natural environment and society. The emergence of positive emotional bond and respect for the student’s own living environment as well as life in general on our planet were also central in the project. Environmental education was also used to promote young people’s awareness of environmental problems and their backgrounds and to support the learning of operating models that are environmentally responsible and sustainable. The camps organised in the project provided good opportunities for the Finnish and Russian students to get together, share experiences and learn about the culture of the other country.

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3 Flagship Initiative: A Digital Agenda for Europe

“A digital agenda for Europe” to speed up the roll-out of high-speed internet and reap the benefits of a digital single market for households and firms.
Project name:
Broadband for All in Eastern and Northern Finland 2015

Project website(s):

Funding programme: National funding (regional development resources, municipal funds, operating costs of regional councils, etc.), income financing

Duration: 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2012 (possible option until 31.12.2015)

Total funding: approximately 300 000 €

Summary of content:
Well-functioning telecommunications have shifted from a luxury to a necessity, as both work and free time require high quality communications. In Finland, the standard broadband (1 MB) is already available to everyone (universal service obligation starting 1 July 2010). However, due to the impossibility of ensuring the necessary high-speed communications for citizens and businesses regardless of the place of residence or location on market terms, in December 2008 the government made a decision on a new national broadband strategy Broadband for All 2015.

The goal of the strategy is that by the end of 2015 all permanent residences (more than 99% of population) and permanent places of business as well as offices of public administration organisations will be within two kilometres of an optical fibre or cable network enabling a functional connection with a speed of 100Mbit/s. The assumption was that telecommunication businesses will construct fast communications to densely populated areas on market terms, thus covering 95% of the population. Improving connections in the most remote sparsely populated areas is supported from public funds. Two thirds of the cost of building a communications network to reach the final 5 per cent of the population will be covered from public funds. The cost is divided between the state, the European Union and municipalities. When granting public aid to the project, the following aspects have been accounted for: government aid, EU legislation on the provision of subsidies and the principles of public procurement (the mandatory tendering process). The aid is targeted to (rural) areas that have not managed to generate sufficient competition and supply on market terms and where high-speed connections are built only in locations where there is sufficient demand for them. The telecommunications company constructing the network/networks must cover at least a third of the costs. The consumer is required to pay connecting fees and a maximum of two kilometres worth of construction costs for connecting to the backbone.

The project is used to ensure competitive and equal circumstances for living, working and entrepreneurship also in sparsely populated areas and to secure regional equality and the vitality of rural areas. The aim of the project is to help municipalities in evaluating, planning, financing and preparing the tendering processes for high-speed broadband investments and to provide them with expert assistance and support.

In Finland, each regional council is responsible for the regional implementation of the national broadband strategy. In cooperation with municipalities, the regional councils have prepared a programme for broadband construction for the years 2010 to 2015 that contains a year-to-year plan for construction of the publically-funded network. The programmes contain 800 individual projects to be implemented between 2010 and 2015. The Regional Council of North Karelia administers a joint project between eastern and northern Finland that coordinates and prepares
broadband projects for six regions: Lapland, Kainuu, North Karelia, Central Ostrobothnia, Oulu Region and North Savo. The plan is to construct a total of 19 000 kilometres of backbone in the areas of the municipalities participating in the Broadband for All in Eastern and Northern Finland project. The cost estimate for the network to be built is approximately €250 million. In North Karelia, 4200 kilometres of backbone will be constructed in the area of 14 municipalities with the end result of putting 11 000 homes within two kilometres of the network. The estimated cost of the network is €53 million.

**Best practices:**
The Broadband for All in Eastern and Northern Finland 2015 project is a so-called administrative and expert project that aims at cost-efficient implementation of the regions’ broadband construction programmes and initiates investments projects for a high-speed broadband network. On the regional level, the main responsibility for achieving the goals lies with regional councils. The regional councils are responsible for preparatory duties associated with “tendering,” or seeking government aid. As a result of the project, the availability of highly developed telecommunications in rural and sparsely populated areas in the participating municipalities has improved significantly in areas where a cooperation partner to implement the construction has been found through the tendering process. So far, decisions have been made on 13 areas/investments in six municipalities. One project area is nearly finished, and the other 12 projects will be started during summers 2011 and 2012. Total investment costs for these are €9.3 million. The number of households/private companies/public service estates in the area covered by the investments is 3 800 and the amount of new cable required is 776 kilometres.

The Regional Council of North Karelia has been active in defining the model of implementation. The model of implementation has been formed in cooperation between the different regional councils and the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and parts of it have been adopted on the national level. A well-functioning operating model has been for a specialist from the regional council to operate as a contact person and an expert in drafting the network plans for municipalities within his or her area and in preparing the tendering process for the network. Uniform tendering documents and methods, prepared in cooperation between the regions and the Ministry, are employed in all parts of Finland. As a follow-up to the project, the Regional Council of North Karelia is currently launching a new promotional and marketing project to provide information and encourage people living in rural areas to become users of the new high-speed broadband. **The aim is to create demand and distribute knowledge on the use of high-speed broadband.**

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Project name:
North Karelia Regional Network

Project website:

Funding programme: Regional Structural Funds

Total funding: 2 850 000 €

Duration: 1 May 2001 to 31 December 2006

Summary of content:
Finland is characterised by a large degree of independency at municipal level. Municipalities are the major providers of public services for citizens but rarely co-operate or work together. The aim of the North Karelia Regional Network was to achieve efficiencies based on shared services enabled by the creation of a region-wide service platform for online municipal services covering areas such as education, health care, social services, administrative services and information deliveries. The project also formed part of a nation-wide process for harmonising connections, information systems and technologies between different levels of administration in the public sector through the use of ICTs with the overarching aim of interoperability. In North Karelia, the project created a joint network infrastructure for the region to promote co-operation between 16 municipalities and three joint municipal boards. The network constitutes of more than 150 servers that link 12 000 workstations and 17 000 users in the partner organisations.

Best practice gained:
The project created partnerships and developed a new way of thinking within the municipalities. Until the project began, municipalities in North Karelia did not have much cooperation in IT matters. Therefore, a key task in the beginning was to engage each municipality in the project and convince them of the benefits of participation. The network, entitled “Regional Network,” was launched in 2001, and it has serviced a need within the municipalities. Through cooperation, the municipalities have achieved a cost-effective model of producing the ICT services they need. Due to the integration of different operations and service processes, the municipalities are also able to serve citizens of the region more effectively. The project has developed or purchased services and information systems for the network, including a web service environment and joint internet traffic. The project has also served as a catalyst for joint development of several other e-services by municipal authorities in the region. One of the most significant developments has been the procurement of a patient management system for all 14 municipalities and the hospital district of North Karelia, which enables electronic processing and sharing of all patient information in all health care centres and hospitals. In the long run, the aim is to link this patient information system to the system of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, one of the functions of which is to process patient information for the National Health Insurance services.

For the purposes of maintaining the network and developing new projects, the project set up the publicly-owned company Pohjois-Karjalan Tietotekniikkakeskus Oy (PTTK Oy) 2007. Owned by municipalities and joint municipal boards, PTTK Oy is a non-profit seeking development company that creates, implements and maintains ICT solutions for joint use of the municipalities of the
region. The task of the company is to secure the availability, quality level and cost efficiency of ICT services required by the municipalities in the region and also to function as a developer and reformer of the municipalities' operating processes as well as their representative and procurement unit in the ICT market.

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Flagship Initiative: Resource Efficient Europe

“Resource efficient Europe” to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, support the shift towards a low carbon economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernise our transport sector and promote energy efficiency.
Project name:  
**Northern ToSIA – Assessing Sustainability of Forest-based Activities in Rural Areas of the Northern Periphery**  

Project website(s): www.northerntosia.org  

**Funding instrument:** Northern Periphery 2007 to 2013  

**Duration:** 1 June 2008 to 31 August 2011  

**Total funding (budget):** 1,312,955 €

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**Summary of content:**

The Forest-based activities sector plays a crucial role in sustainable development of natural and community resources of the Northern Periphery region. Recently, there has been a strong increase in demand for various goods and services that forest resources offer. Forest resource management and regional development are thus facing great challenges with finding a sustainable balance between competing demands. Northern ToSIA focuses on comparative sustainability impact assessments of alternative forest resource use and forest value chains in Nordic regions (North Karelia/Finland, Malå sami village/Sweden, Cairngorms National Park/Scotland, Indre Helgeland/Norway). Besides forest resource use options, the project’s case studies cover aspects of bioenergy production, reindeer husbandry, the forest industry and tourism. Sustainable development is assessed with changes in the indicator values of environmental, economic and social sustainability. The long-term objective of Northern ToSIA is to foster the sustainable use of forest resources in the Northern Periphery.

**Best practice gained:**

ToSIA, the Tool for Sustainability Impact Assessment has been used in close stakeholder interaction and further developed to facilitate application for a wide range of cases. This also includes – as a novelty – the application of the reindeer husbandry value chain as the first non-wood-based forest value chain that is interacting with forestry. Northern ToSIA case studies have demonstrated how science-based knowledge can be used to implement regional policies in support of sustainable development.

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Project name: PELLETime – Solutions for competitive pellet production in medium size enterprises
Project website(s): http://www.pelletime.fi/project/
Funding instrument: Northern Periphery 2007 to 2013
Duration: 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2010
Total funding: 1,766,494 €

Summary of content:
PELLETime has developed an accessible package of tools for designing sustainable pellet supply chains, and thereby promoting the role of local entrepreneurs in utilising local renewable energy resources and supported the energy self-sufficiency of northern peripheral regions. The small scale production of pellets faces the challenges of technological limitations, as well as lack of knowledge. The project addressed those challenges by offering a holistic approach for SMEs reaching from identification and estimation of available resources, raw material procurement, the design of the entire pellet production process to the final product. PELLETime encouraged sustainable expansion of the raw material resource, and strived to improve widespread awareness and information dissemination to facilitate market development. The result was a significant improvement in the efficient use of natural resources, mitigation of climate change and headway in renewable energy policy objectives.

Best practice gained:
1. PELLETime significantly increased the knowledge available on the new and alternative raw materials of pellets and their technological and economic potential. Broadening of the raw material base is considered widely among the pellet producers. Detailed study reports on the best practices are available in the project’s final tool package at pelletime.fi.
2. PELLETime resulted in a number of spin-offs that are new products and enterprises in wood energy. A new forest energy enterprise, a heating plant, pelletising activity, as well as service enterprise were born. The spin-off generation is a best practice that resulted from direct involvement with associate partners (enterprises) and implementing partners.
3. PELLETime produced a tool package with integrated services on 1) training, 2) business planning of pellet production, and 3) design of supply-chain structures and logistics of both raw-materials and pellets. This service model, provided by partners involved in the project, can secure the future viability of the project outcome and is considered a good practice.

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5 Flagship Initiative:
An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era

"An industrial policy for the globalisation era" to improve the business environment, notably for SMEs, and to support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally.
Project name: **Karelian Business Booster growth programme**

**Project website(s):**
http://www.carelian.fi/en/expert+services/strategy-based+business+development+services/

**Funding programme:** European Regional Development Fund (Eastern Finland)

**Duration:** 1 December 2007 to 31 December 2010

**Total funding:** 1 445 000 €

**Summary of content:**
The aim of the Karelian Business Booster (KBB) programme was to function as a development partner for SMEs in the productive sector in North Karelia and their networks thus ensuring strategy-driven, comprehensive and long-term development of the companies. The growth programme aimed at incorporating systematic business planning practices as part of the daily functions of businesses in that way enabling them to adapt to the structural change in the sector in good time. The target groups of the KBB programme were industrial SMEs in the productive sector (in the fields of metals, plastics, forestry, stone processing, rubber, foods), SMEs producing different expert services for industrial SMEs (planning, consulting and IT services, for example) and companies in supplier networks led by larger companies. The most central measures were associated with the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the strategy-driven development programmes of the businesses.

The project was administered by the Joensuu Science Park Ltd, with the Central Karelia Development Company KETI Ltd, and the Pielinen Karelia Development Centre PIKES Ltd, as cooperation partners. **Regional cooperation was also carried out with a project for promoting production development activities in companies (TUKEA 2007–2010), educational services of the Karelian Business Booster growth programme (KOUPA) and the Joensuu Regional Development Centre JOSEK Ltd.** The programme is based on growth programmes for the metals, plastics and forestry sectors implemented in the previous programme period.

**Best practices:**
The Karelian Business Booster programme developed an operating model for cooperation with businesses and their interest groups. The operating model is based on confidential, regular and systematic contacts with the companies. The aim was to achieve a regularly implemented standard-format strategy process for the companies and to introduce an annual planning process as a regularly recurring feature and management tool. Based on the strategy, a development programme was drafted for the companies that aims to prioritise, schedule, budget and define a concrete method of implementation for development measures chosen for the programme. Several development needs were identified in the company-specific development and operational programmes. The measures to meet the needs were then prioritised, and a preliminary schedule was drawn up for their implementation, accounting for any interdependencies. Company-specific project plans were drawn up for the development projects to be implemented and possible funding applications were prepared. Results from the implemented development projects are monitored, and agreements have been made with the companies on how to continue cooperation.
In the KBB programme, cooperation between different funding instruments created a foundation for assessing, supporting and guiding the operations of growth-oriented companies in a manner individually customised for each company. A regional cooperation network enabled the production of investment and development measures and training services for the target companies in sufficient range and volume. Sub-regional development agencies were able to put to use their knowledge concerning companies in their area and business life in general. Central elements for successful implementation of the project were coordination between the different financiers in the project planning and decision-making stage, functional cooperation network between sub-regional development agencies and Joensuu Science Park and commitment from the companies.

After the completion of the project, the operating model developed in the programme will be utilised in the development of growth companies in a nationwide co-operative network of Finnish science parks and technology centres. The *Good Practices and Operating Models of Technology Centres in Eastern Finland* project launched in 2011 aims at disseminating the operating model to all technology centres in Eastern Finland. The project is administered by Joensuu Science Park Ltd and funded by the European Social Fund.

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Project name:
Structural Change in Central Karelia project cluster
Creating New Business in Central Karelia, Puhos 2013 and Akseli projects

Project website(s): www.keti.fi

Funding instrument: European Regional Development Fund (Arppen jäljillä and Puhos 2013), European Social Fund (Akseli)

Duration: Creating New Business in Central Karelia 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2010, Puhos 2013 and Akseli 1 August 2010 to 31 March 2013

Total funding: 705 000 € (ERDF) and 491 000 € (ESF)

Summary of content:
The sudden global structural change had a vast impact on industry in Central Karelia at the end of 2008. Unemployment rate in the region rose quickly from 12.4 per cent to peak at 17.6 per cent, leading the government to name Central Karelia as a region of sudden structural change. In order to locate jobs to replace the old ones and to support both new and already functioning enterprises, the area was granted funding for the Creating New Business in Central Karelia project. Based on the project, plans were also formed for the Puhos 2013 – New Business from the Environmental Sector project and its support project Akseli.

The target groups for the measures in the Creating New Business in Central Karelia project were companies planning to establish themselves in the sub-region that would hire workforce laid off from the companies in the area as well as companies already operating in the sub-region with plans to hire new workforce. The project was used to activate companies to apply for additional funding made available through the sudden structural change to strengthen their investment and development activities in order to ensure their future. As a result of goal-oriented investments and functional cooperation between the project and the sub-regional development agency KETI Ltd, the number of new businesses and jobs in the sub-region of Central Karelia increased significantly. Reports produced during the project also served as a basis for a concept for further development of the Puhos industrial estate.

Also the Puhos 2013 project that emerged based on the Creating New Business in Central Karelia project aims to create new business activity and new jobs in a situation of sudden structural change. The aim of the project is to develop the Puhos industrial estate into a modern, attractive industrial hub generating new business, jobs and tax revenues that benefit not only the immediate operating environment, but all municipalities in Central Karelia. The project aims to secure the development and future of companies operating in the Puhos estate and to start up new energy production facilities, recycle parks and construction industry plants for Puhos as well as other business activity associated with the afore-mentioned activities. Central elements in the activities are locating contacts, entrepreneurs and investors, preparing background reports for new business ideas and advising potential entrepreneurs. Special attention is paid to environmental and climate requirements in the planning of both the area and the operations of the companies. The project cooperates with the sub-region’s and the region’s economic development personnel to coordinate the available tools, measures and funding for the Puhos area and its business network. The availability of workforce for the companies is ensured in cooperation with the local Employment and Economic Development Office and the Akseli project. In addition, the project coordinates cooperation between companies and promotes development
measures within companies. The project will obtain maximum benefit from the expertise and contacts of the support group generated in the Creating New Business in Central Karelia project.

The Akseli project that supports the Puhos 2013 project is aimed to ensure the availability of competent workforce for businesses in Central Karelia and to promote the employment of Central Karelia residents. In addition to the target companies of the Puhos 2013 project, the measures are also directed to the travel and care industries as well as other sectors throughout the sub-region. The project explores the companies’ workforce needs and draws up education and training plans with the aim of responding to these needs. The aim is to direct persons that are unemployed or temporarily laid off to employer-directed training, independently-sought training financed through unemployment benefits or labour market training to increase their professional skills. The specific target group of the project is persons under 50 years of age who are unemployed or temporarily laid off and whose professional skills require development or updating or who have no professional training. The project engages in close cooperation with the Employment and Economic Development Office, other projects and other parties involved in economic development. The project aims at engendering a positive climate of working together and moving forward in the area. The project is used to develop cooperation between companies and other organisations in an atmosphere of social responsibility.

Best practices:
1. In the Creating New Business in Central Karelia project, the means used to encourage companies to generate new business included compiling a publication focusing on almost twenty companies that carried out significant investments and development projects during the economic downturn. The companies presented in the publication served as a model for other companies in the area, and the booklet has received praise for its effectiveness.
2. The PUHOS support group activities launched by the project include five persons who have acted in demanding international positions and who are committed to working in different projects of KETI Ltd to benefit the sub-region.
3. The project utilised the well-functioning Carelmet network developed for local businesses in the metal industry to locate and establish contacts to subcontractor companies.

The Puhos 2013 and Akseli projects are still being implemented, so no significant good practices have yet emerged from them.

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Project name: 
Development Programme for Technology Industry in North Karelia 2015 – Reforming Technology Industry

Project website(s):

Funding programme: European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund

Duration: Reform of the Productive Sector in North Karelia programme 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2013, Competence for the Reforming Business Activities 1 May 2011 to 31 December 2013

Total funding: 1 565 000 € (ERDF) and 1 329 000 € (ESF)

Summary of content:
The Development Programme for Technology Industry in North Karelia 2011–2015 is a strategy document that completes the North Karelia Regional Development Programme. It was drawn up in cooperation between the North Karelia Regional Council, representatives of businesses in the region, other actors in economic life and representatives of research, education and development organisations. The Development Programme for Technology Industry in North Karelia presents focal areas and central proposed measures for the technology industry. The development programme aims to outline how the different sectors and companies in the technology industry can be reformed to meet the competitive challenges of the 2010s. From the viewpoint of the different operators in the technology industry in North Karelia, it is particularly crucial to seek solutions for how to shift from product and manufacturing-technology oriented thinking towards new service- and value-chain thinking.

In the development programme, the technology industry is defined as the plastics and metals business and services associated with these sectors. The plastics and metals sectors account for more than half of the industry in North Karelia, and their production has traditionally been export-driven and largely based on the use of subcontractors. The vision of the development programme is that by 2015 technology industry in North Karelia will have been regenerated and it will have improved its competitiveness through innovation, product and method development, productivity and high-quality expertise. In addition to subcontracting, the success of the industry should be based increasingly on the companies’ own products, services and solutions delivered and internationalisation.

Best practices:
The development of value networks, product and method development, expertise and leadership and innovation activities have been chosen as the main themes of the Development Programme for Technology Industry in North Karelia. Through development of these main themes, it is possible to implement the change in product and service business and the development of solutions in a manner that is cost efficient and optimises resource utilisation. Global thinking is a crucial aspect and will be accounted for in all development activities. The selected themes form a framework for development thinking in both plastics and metals businesses. The operating model also requires clarification, reassessment and development of service production from knowledge-intensive service companies and development organisations. It is important to incorporate the model into educational contents, provision of continuing education and operational programmes of economic development programmes and to provide training for operators in
the region. Competitiveness consists of managing the different sectors of the whole. Solutions based on the energy and the environment sectors, the extractive resources industry, security, the pharmaceuticals and diagnostics industry as well as the experience and the care industry are the client and growth areas of product, service and overall solutions.

The Development Programme for Technology Industry in North Karelia 2015 is implemented through the Reform of the Productive Sector in North Karelia programme (ERDF) and the Competence for the Reforming Business Activities project (ESF) launched to support the programme. Other programmes will also be used to support the implementation where necessary. The Reform of the Productive Sector in North Karelia programme aims to develop businesses in the region in a comprehensive way in order to provide them with means to adapt to the structural change that has taken place in the industry. Businesses are assisted and supported for example in the preparation of project plans and funding applications, in the long-term and strategic development of the company, assessment of product ideas, product and method development and the establishing of contacts and networks. The Competence for the Reforming Business Activities project aims to strengthen expertise from a strategic starting point by defining a strategy for the companies’ product business and expertise. During the programme, companies in the productive sector will be encouraged to put forward product development ideas, assess their market potential, further develop their products, reassess their pricing and improve sales. The significance of design and environmental efficiency during the life cycle of the product are highlighted.

The Regional Council of North Karelia is responsible for updating the Development Programme for Technology Industry in North Karelia 2015, the realisation of the goals and indicators of the programme and the general monitoring of its activities.

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Project name:  
**North Karelian Economic Developmental Russia Programme**

**Project website:**  [http://josek.fi/?ID=1460](http://josek.fi/?ID=1460)

**Duration:** 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2010

**Funding instrument:** European Regional Development Fund

**Total funding:** 937,350 €

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**Summary of content:**

At the start of 2008, the Joensuu Regional Development Company JOSEK Oy, the Central Karelia Development Company KETI Oy, the Pielinen Karelia Development Centre PIKES Oy and the North Karelia Chamber of Commerce launched the North Karelian Trade Programme for Russia. The project's main objectives were to promote trade with Russia, to get new companies involved in trade with Russia and to improve cooperation between players. The project strived to establish a new long-standing regional business service model and to develop the logistics standing of the Niirala international border crossing. The project's main procedures included providing assistance to small and medium sized enterprises on matters related to trade with Russia (export and import related matters, sector-specific market studies, creating contacts, cooperation and exhibition trips, events focusing on current trends in Russian trade) as well as improving cooperation with authorities on both sides of the border and maintaining active communications. The project was carried out in cooperation with the region's different business consultants and business support organisations, regional development authorities and companies from the region.

**Best practices:**

The project worked to improve cooperation between different organisations in providing assistance services for trade with Russia, so that by the end of the project businesses were promptly directed to the local organisation that would provide the best advice for their requirements. Cooperation ensured that overlapping procedures was prevented and that resources could be combined according to the requirements of the region's companies. After the project was complete organisations continued to provide assistance based on the needs and requirements of companies as one of their normal functions. The project worked in close cooperation with other simultaneously running business projects, ensuring that activities could be linked to one another and the full potential of each project with regard to development of companies could be realised. Russian border and customs officials and companies in North Karelia now have more cooperation and closer ties than before the project.

During the project a regional strategy for trade with Russia was developed. This also evoked much interest in other parts of Finland and in Russia. The objective of the North Karelian strategy for trade with Russia is to promote and increase business opportunities with Russia and cooperation between North Karelia and Russia. The strategy clarifies the roles of players and the distribution of responsibility as well as cuts down on overlapping procedures and frees up resources so they can be directed at promoting chosen focus areas. After the project was completed the North Karelia Chamber of Commerce’s internationalisation committee took over responsibility for up-dating the Russia strategy. The Chamber of Commerce will also continue to organise the Russia Forum, which was established within the project and handles all current issues related to trade with Russia.
Companies within the region became more aware of the possibilities in Russian trade and Russian clients became more aware of the possibilities in North Karelia thanks to active briefing. The interest shown by participating organisations in Russia's potential also grew. Development of local companies' Russia activities has continued and will continue now the project is complete also in other new joint development projects.

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Flagship Initiative:
An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs

"An agenda for new skills and jobs" to modernise labour markets and empower people by developing their skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increase labour participation and better match labour supply and demand, including through labour mobility.
Project name: Regional Higher Education Network in North Karelia
Project website(s): http://www.pohjois-karjalanmaakuntakorkeakoulu.fi/english.html
Funding programme: Ministry of Education and Culture, Regional Council of North Karelia
Duration: April 2006 - December 2010
Total funding: 501 278 €

Summary of content:
North Karelia is a region where the majority of development work and services are focused on developing and promoting the growth of the most important centres, such as Joensuu. Ageing population structure, unemployment and economic issues also create challenges for the region. The Regional Higher Education Network in North Karelia is a co-operation network aimed to respond to the needs of higher education and development in the sparsely populated areas of North Karelia. The starting point of the Regional Higher Education Network is the structural development of the institutions of higher education in the area. The aim of the network is to support co-operation between the higher education institutions and to centralise them into larger, more efficient units. Another starting point is the decree on regional development governing higher education.

There are three main objectives in the project. First, the project offered equal opportunities for higher education in the region. Second, it provided support and help for adult students in the planning of their studies. This was done by creating a network for the provision of consultation and counselling services. Third, from the viewpoint of the economy, higher education in sparsely populated areas would provide an opportunity for skilled labour force to remain in their home region. Therefore, it would support the development of industry and commerce in the regions. In addition, small and medium-sized enterprises would benefit from the proximity of the expertise and services provided by higher education.

The project was implemented in co-operation with the North Karelia University of Applied Sciences, the University of Eastern Finland, the HUMAK University of Applied Sciences (Joensuu campus) and North Karelia Summer University. Also municipalities, towns, cities, regional development agencies as well as entrepreneurs and entrepreneur organisations were involved in the project.

Best practice gained:
Most of the activities were realised in co-operation with different actors in the region. Regional comprehensive groups were created for the target areas, training was implemented with regional actors and funding for the activities of regional contact persons was secured. An important factor was creating a Regional Education, Development and Innovation Plan to establish current needs in terms of education, skills and development in a format that can be easily updated. Concrete measures implemented included the launch of educational programmes and specific measures to meet local needs in the region. A contact person network was created for the regions, and the counselling services were implemented in co-operation with the Employment and Economic Development Offices.
Practical information was collected from students through interviews and online surveys; the results indicated an increase of interest in education. The project also succeeded in eliciting a variety of needs regarding education and skills. Moreover, it created a close co-operation network between higher education institutions and regional actors. The project validated the importance of having a contact person in the regions as well as the significance of close co-operation with regional actors in order to establish the needs regarding education and expertise. After the completion of the actual project, the Regional Higher Education Network in North Karelia continues its work and has a stable position in the field of education and the development of sparsely populated areas in the region. The network is part of Working Life and International Relations at North Karelia University of Applied Sciences.

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From 1 September 2011
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**Project name:** HYRRÄ – Growth Programme for Well-Being Enterprises in North Karelia

**Project website(s):** [http://www.josek.fi/fi/?ID=1405](http://www.josek.fi/fi/?ID=1405)

**Funding programme:** European Regional Development Fund

**Duration:** 1 January 2008 to 31 May 2011

**Total funding:** 714 000 €

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**Summary of content:**

The well-being sector is a new and emerging sector that is expanding rapidly. In addition to the public sector, private sector actors are also needed to ensure the provision of the necessary services. Previously in North Karelia, the well-being sector has been developed largely from the viewpoint of public sector social and health services, and little attention has been paid to factors such as marketing and the quality of the services. Entrepreneurial activity in the well-being sector should, however, be observed more comprehensively from the viewpoints of economic life and entrepreneurship, accounting for all aspects of business. As the competition intensifies, SMEs must pay increasing attention to their business competence and improving their competitive ability.

In North Karelia, the rapid ageing of population places challenges to providers of well-being services in terms of high demand and the availability of competent workforce.

The goal of the growth programme is to facilitate the strategy based and long-term development of knowledge management in local well-being companies, which are expanding and have capacity for growth. Efforts were made to increase the competitive ability of the companies through a comprehensive analysis of their business and development plans and the provision of practical business tools, personal guidance and consulting. Companies were also supported in the specific challenges facing them, cooperation across the various sectors of the field was promoted, and the companies were offered the support of a wide expert group as well as an opportunity for networking. An additional goal is to intensify cooperation between municipalities, SMEs and third sector. The aim is also to create a multi-provider model and to increase the use of service vouchers in Joensuu region.

In the Growth Programme HYRRÄ, the well-being industry covers the following areas: social and health care services, the management of everyday life (home help service), free-time services, well-being at work, well-being tourism, and the production of related equipment.

**Best practices:**

With the help of the growth programme, private providers of well-being services have been encouraged to observe their business activities from all vantage points, commit to long-term strategy-driven development in accordance with a development programme drawn up for them and also to invest funds in development work. In the course of the programme, the business competence of entrepreneurs has increased, the entrepreneurs have adopted new business models and the competitive ability of the businesses has improved. Moreover, networking opportunities have been created for the businesses, and functional enterprise networks have been generated. New businesses have also emerged in the field during the programme, although not necessarily as a result of it. Significance of the cooperation between the public and private sector has continued to increase, and little by little the parties have also begun to develop well-being services
in collaboration with each other. Cooperation with municipalities has been carried out for example concerning the use of the service voucher. The impact of the company-specific development measures implemented in the growth programme will continue for several years after the completion of the programme.

Knowledge of the operating environment was an essential requirement for the implementation of the growth programme, and the significance of networks is crucial. When a large group of companies in a certain sector starts to explore its business activities using the relevant indicators and the necessary resources, this will yield a vast amount of current information on the sector in the area where the companies operate. For example, national-level comparisons using statistics on the sector do not offer a similar insight into entrepreneurship in the sector.

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Summary of content:
The objectives of the regional foresight project have been to work in cooperation with various players to develop processing of anticipatory information as well as to gather and further improve regional labour and schooling possibilities for business and labour assistance work as well as training and development planning. Additionally, the project has worked on anticipatory information that will help with strategic planning.

Best practice gained:
During this project, cooperation between various players has developed in the recognition of the need for labour and expertise and further development of anticipatory information produced with the following measures:

1. The project has initiated the use of **business sector specific expert juries**, which review the results of company visits by the Employment and Economic Development Office in a joint process between entrepreneurs, educational institutions, employment and economic development administration, the Chamber of Commerce and experts from the regional council. The traditional process for the study of labour and education demands has been developed so that when expert juries are arranged by utilising North Karelia’s Chamber of Commerce and further developed through Helsinki’s chamber of foresight by combining TKTT surveys (studies on demand for labour and schooling) with the chamber of foresight. Educational institutions and employment and economic development administration staff have been briefed on the results of TKTT surveys and chamber of foresight meetings.

2. On the basis of anticipatory information from various sources the North Karelia Foresight project has drafted within its labour policy determined adult schooling requirements **policy pages** for labour and expertise demands. The policy pages include a review of key factors that cause change in the labour market: the age structure of the labour force, the development of different fields and the future outlook. The policy was drawn up by utilising the expertise of a network of players and cooperation partners.

3. The North Karelia Foresight project has through its own work already promoted the introduction of a permanent professional barometer in North Karelia.

In order to maintain the good practices promoted by the project operations must be resourced and network cooperation must work well. Anticipatory information is divided between networks, and it is important to establish forums where different players can exchange information. Such forums include the chamber of foresight which is utilised in determining labour and expertise demands. Successful network cooperation makes it possible to allocate educational resources to best meet the requirements set by the labour market while still being prepared for the changes anticipated in the region’s labour market and economy. Cooperation partners, local schooling institutions, Employment and Economic Development Offices as well as their customers (e.g. professional barometers) have been briefed on the results of anticipatory studies on labour and schooling demands.
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7 Flagship Initiative: European Platform against Poverty

"European platform against poverty" to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society". (European Commission 2010.)
Project name:
VAVA II – Developing Social Equality and Inclusion among the Severely Disabled

Project website(s): http://wanda.uef.fi/tkk/projektit/vava2/index.php

Funding instrument: European Social Fund and Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Eastern Finland

Duration: 1 March 2008 to 30 June 2011

Total funding: 1 364 275 €

Summary of content:
The project for developing the educational opportunities of the severely disabled was a cross-regional project that was implemented in North and South Savo and North Karelia. The aim of the project was promoting the social equality of severely disabled persons by developing functions that prevent exclusion, promoting social inclusion and developing equal opportunities for education and employment. The functions of the project promoted and supported upper secondary education, lifelong learning and employment among the severely disabled, improved communication environments and supported professional development for persons working with the severely disabled.

Best practice gained:
The development measures of the VAVA II project targeted the development of educational and employment opportunities and social inclusion of the severely disabled through means such as improving opportunities for communication, promoting lifelong learning and enhancing opportunities for study.

There has been a lack of sufficient learning materials and uniform evaluation methods for the most severely disabled students in upper secondary education. To promote this cause, the project arranged training for teaching personnel, who then developed and produced an extensive resource of educational materials. The evaluation and learning materials produced in the project are intended as tools for the learning, training and assessment of skills needed for independent living to be used both by the student and the employees teaching and offering guidance to him or her. They can be used in educational institutions as well as housing, work and occupational units. The materials can be used to support the planning of the future of mentally disabled young people at crucial junctures in their studies. The materials also contain models and guidelines for the planning and implementation of upper secondary level preparatory and rehabilitative training and guidance and the gathering of materials.

The starting point in the development of the teaching forms for the Preparatory II training was to support the learning of skills needed in daily life. Training guides and plans associated with life skills, independent living and work life were developed as tools for cooperation between teachers and instructors at the educational institutes and the home and practical training placements of the student. With the help of these tools, information about the learner’s knowledge level and skills development is communicated from one party to another, which makes it easier to build on existing skills in the training. According to a report by the Research Unit on Disability at the University of Eastern Finland, the materials developed as tools in the cooperation help the student...
to gain an understanding of their own skills and also to determine their goals in a realistic manner. Commitment to studies increases, and, with the clarification of objectives, the instruction provided becomes clearer and more systematic.

The VAVA II project developed upper secondary level training for the severely disabled by modeling the organisation of Preparatory II training as a distance learning module. The distance learning model enables participation in training for students who are not able to take part in training arranged in educational institutions due to geographical or other reasons. The objective of the distance learning option is that the studying would take place in the environment where the student is most likely to function when the preparatory training is over. Based on distance learning experiences gained from the VAVA II project, a materials resource was produced to support the work of those planning and implementing Preparatory II training as a distance learning module.

One of the goals of the VAVA project functions was to promote the employment of mentally disabled people in the open job market through means such as the provision of information and increasing the visibility of work done by mentally disabled people. The measures to promote employment also addressed the development of organisations, their operating methods and the competence of personnel. In North Karelia, the project modelled cooperation between the educational institution and the occupational centre. The model has been tested in practice, and improvements in the work done to benefit the common clients can already be seen.

Another aim of the project activities was to increase the opportunities of severely disabled people for lifelong learning. A resource of learning materials was developed to promote this end. The study module material (ELIAS), unassociated with a particular educational institution, can be used, for example, in the housing and occupational units after the preparatory training has been completed. The material can also be used by learners who have not had the opportunity to participate in the Preparatory II training.

The aim of the project was also to improve communication opportunities by developing and constructing integrated communication environments into the daily environments of severely disabled people. A further aspect in this was increasing the skills level of persons working with them. To improve the possibilities of communication, the project also implemented updating training for personnel, which also involved a report prepared by the Research Unit on Disability at the University of Eastern Finland. The report assessed the significance of developing the communication environment of the severely disabled to disabled people themselves and the people close to them.

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Project name: **Focus on Competence**

Project website(s): [http://www.honkalamppisaatio.fi/profiloidu_osaaajaksi__hankkeen_loppuraportti](http://www.honkalamppisaatio.fi/profiloidu_osaaajaksi__hankkeen_loppuraportti)

**Funding instrument:** European Social Fund

**Duration:** 1 November 2008 to 31 December 2010

**Total funding:** 496 450 €

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**Summary of content:**

The objective of the Promote Your Competence project was to create a regional service model for the active management of long-term unemployment in the City of Joensuu. The project used profiling interviews to determine the service needs of one thousand unemployed persons on a level of both the individual and society and developed services and operating models to help persons with a long history of unemployment to find jobs in the open job market. The launch of the project was propelled by the high unemployment rate in the City of Joensuu and the knowledge that the demand for workforce was not directed to those whose position in the job market was the weakest. Due to the large number of persons with a long history of unemployment, their service needs were not well known prior to the project.

**Best practice gained:**

The Joensuu Employment and Economic Development Office sent an invitation to a profiling interview to all persons aged 25 to 55 with more than 500 days of unemployment. In the profiling interview, the client's service needs are assessed based on the client's own account of his or her life course, work history and work path. This way, the client's active role in the service need assessment is highlighted. Apart from the name of the person, the personnel implementing the interview were not given any other background information about the client. During the 45-minute interview, an recommendation for further measures was prepared individually for each interviewee and was then sent to the Employment and Economic Development Office. An advantage of the profiling interview is that the clients are more willing to talk openly about their life situation and factors affecting their unemployment to a person not working directly within the employment and economic administration.

About 30 per cent (309 persons) of the interviewees remained direct clients of the project, and 70 per cent (691) were directed to existing services. The persons chosen to remain clients of the project were close to obtaining a job and had no pressing reasons preventing employment or education. An important factor was the client's own willingness to change the direction of his or her life, to commit to jointly set goals and motivation to achieve these goals. Personal advisers or educational planners developed training or career plans in cooperation with the clients of the project. The project's job broker charted and looked for jobs for the clients mainly from the open job market. Out of the clients of the project, 168 persons participated in the trainings and 160 persons were employed. Some individuals both received training and gained employment after the training. Successful profiling requires good knowledge of the profiling method and the service system, a functional cooperation network with the employment and economic administration in particular and an attitude geared towards developing and stabilising the service among persons working with the target group.
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Project name:
Age Counselling Service Ruori –
launch and piloting of a service model for senior citizens

Project website(s): http://www.jns.fi/Resource.phx/sivut/sivut-ruori/ruori-hanke/ruori.htx

Funding programme: European Regional Development Fund (Eastern Finland)


Total funding: 275 655 €

Summary of content:
As the population ages, the demand for services for senior citizens as well as the need for treatment and care increase. Promoting the well-being of elderly people brings the need to develop new forms of operating and change the service structure. The objective is to preserve functional ability and opportunity for independent living among the ageing population. The Ruori Counselling Service for Seniors is a project administered by the city of Joensuu with the aim of promoting the health of ageing persons. The project developed a client-driven network-like model for counselling services that promotes health and well-being among seniors and is implemented in cooperation with seniors and a variety of different operators. The focal point was in the development of services for standard and preventive support and early intervention. The counselling service created operating models and tool that are used to empower Joensuu residents over the age of 65 to active participation and assuming responsibility for their own health and well-being.

Best practice gained:
The main goal of the project was to introduce a partnership structure involving different operators to senior health promotion. The goal was realised using self-treatment and service points that emerged through the cooperation of different operators. The self-treatment and service points provide a new kind of model for senior services. The service model offers an opportunity for the provision of health advice as well as guidance and information regarding issues such as financial benefits and housing to both groups and individuals. The service model also entails the opportunity for peer support and the formation of new social contacts between seniors. In the practical implementation of the model, the key actor is the public health nurse. The project was implemented according to the objectives set for it, and a network-like model for a counseling service for seniors was created in Joensuu. As the project is completed, the model will remain a permanent function of the elderly services. The operating model has also been adopted in other regions.

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