



LIFE17 IPC/FI/000002 LIFE-IP CANEMURE-FINLAND

Project has been carried out with the financial contribution of the LIFE Programme of the European Union. This presentation reflects only the CANEMURE project's view, and the EASME/ Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Towards Carbon Neutral Municipalities

An innovative approach to climate change mitigation at local level

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Some comments on ERCTS methodology

- In Finland, climate commitments are made through national Hinku-network that enlargens at a fastening speed. Only a few municipalities/larges cities included in international larger network.
- Difficulties in defining: high-quality commitment, Technological viability, Monitoring mechanism, Governance and Social acceptability. Additionality criteria need very thorough undestanding

Voluntary climate commitments of Finland – The Hinku network

33%

of the population

23%

of municipalities

4

Hinku
Regions

- ▶ Target: GHG emissions -80 % by 2030 from 2007
- ▶ Scope: reduction in electricity, heating, transportation, agriculture and waste management (excl. industry under the EU ETS), 60% of total in 2017
- ▶ Commitment with a decision by municipal council
- ▶ One contact point, working group to be appointed
- ▶ 72 municipalities, over 1 887 500 inhabitants
- ▶ Also larger cities and regions have joined
- ▶ Coordinated by the Finnish Environment Institute



Has joining Hinku influenced emission reductions?

- The impact of Hinku on municipality's GHG emission in 2005-2017 estimated.
- Panel regression model, where a large set of exogenous variables was included, e.g. the monthly mean temperatures and precipitation, fuel prices, urbanity and land surface area, gross domestic product in the municipality, and mean socio-demographic characteristics of the population in each municipality.
- The results show that there is a **highly statistically significant and negative relationship between municipality's GHG emissions and being a Hinku-municipality.**
- However, possible self-selection bias need to be studied, there might be a possibility that the GHG emissions of Hinku-municipalities could have been lower even without them becoming members of Hinku.

The perceived role of the Hinku network

- Motivation, inspiration; peer support
- Almost half feel that expert support has been important
- Organisational support, justification of action in the municipality
- Positive PR image and communication support
- 10% felt that the network has had no impact

Joining the network through council decisions - Real Commitment to climate work?

- Willingness to act has improved in some municipalities
- Slow impact in concrete actions in many:
 - bureaucracy, organisational changes, changes in personnel, resources, difficulties in implementation at the strategic level
- No understanding of the ambition of the targets in the first place

Forerunners?

Half of the municipalities don't see themselves as forerunners:

- no real action yet
 - no dissemination about the Hinku-work
 - no special activities,
 - forerunner maybe later
 - forerunner only at some sectors
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- Municipalities make commitments with assumption that state-level policies will automatically reduce emissions.