

The importance of international cooperation in forest bioeconomy at the regional level

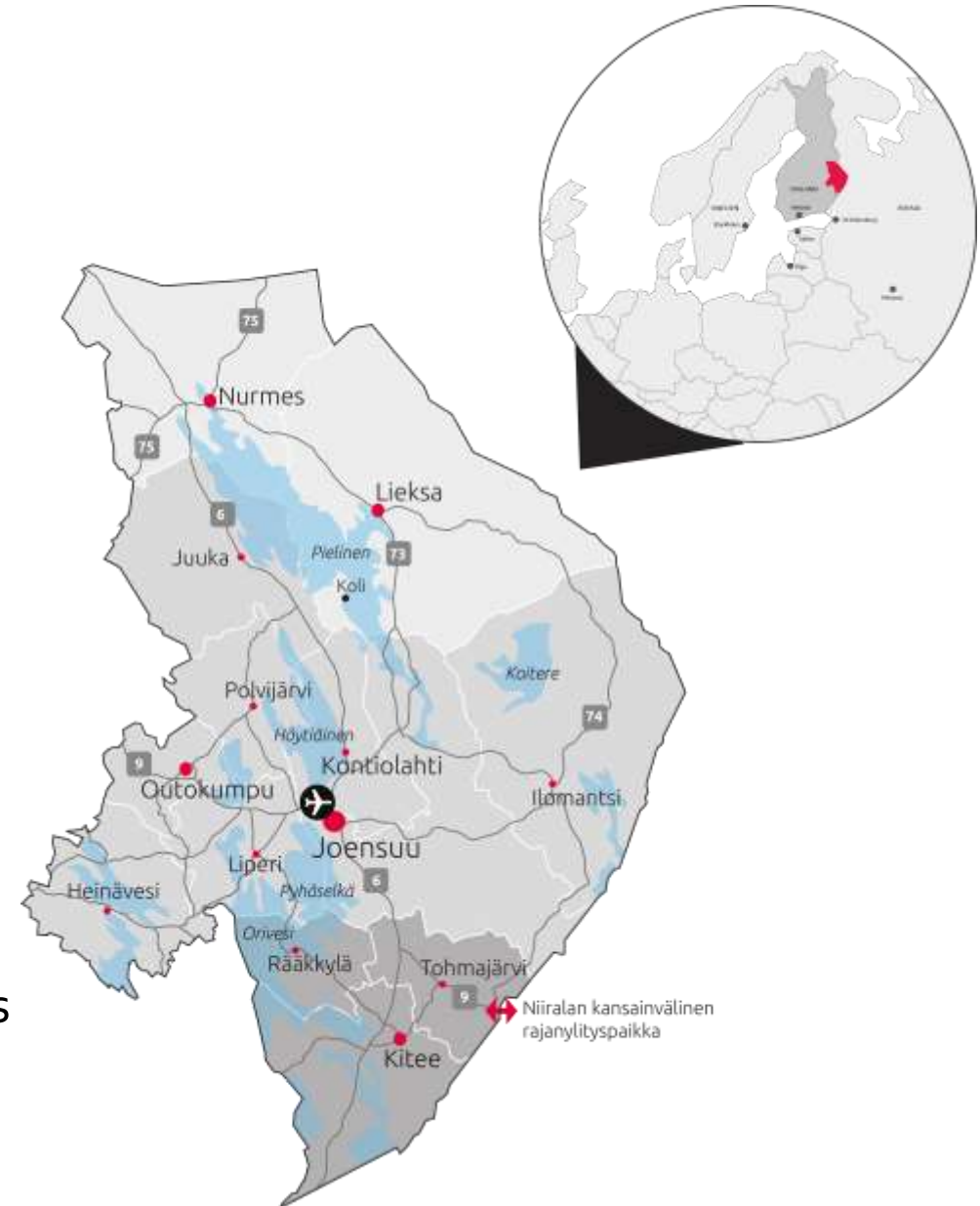
Forest and climate expert Sari Koivula



Regional Council of
NORTH KARELIA

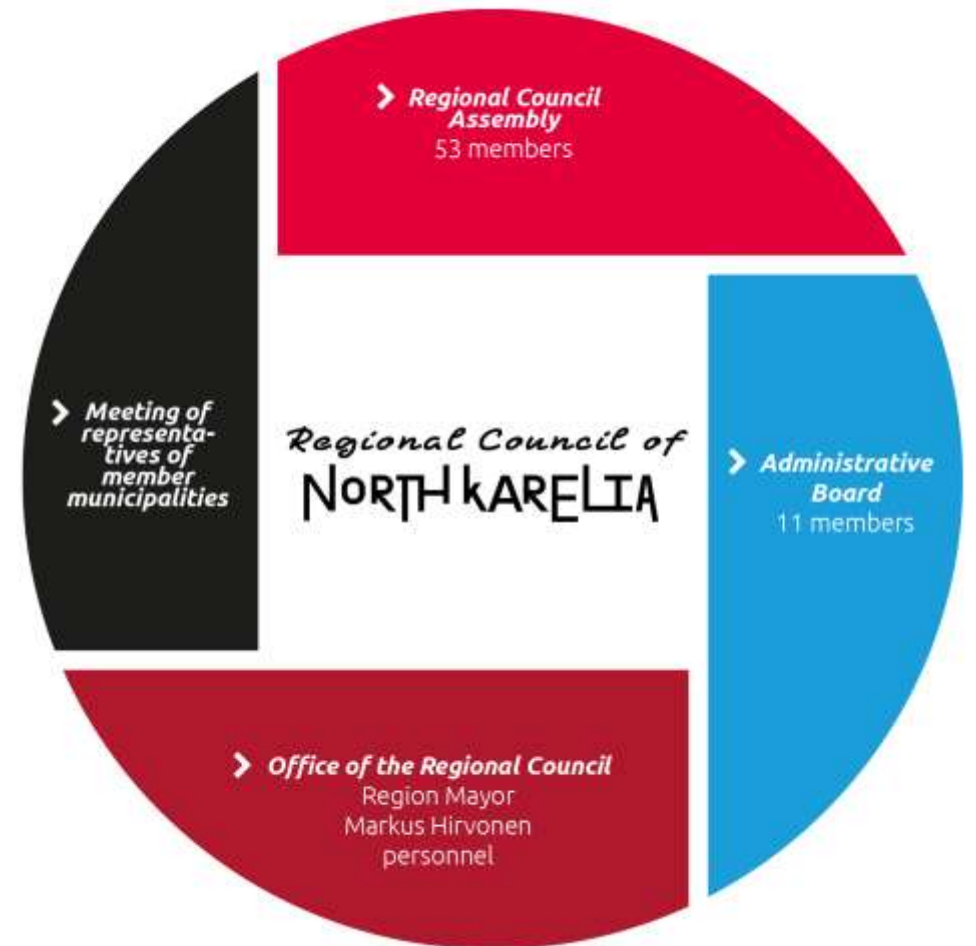
North Karelia in a nutshell

- Population 162 104 (2024)
- 13 municipalities, of which 5 towns
- Regional centre Joensuu
- Region is aiming for carbon neutrality in 2030
 - This means 80 % reduction of GHG emissions by 2030 from 2007 level
 - Support to carbon storages and sequestration
 - Forests and forest industry are important players in fighting against climate change
- 89 % of land area covered by forests



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- Development of the region
 - Welfare, wellbeing and living
 - Connections
 - Bioeconomy
 - Climate and energy
 - Research into practice
- Land use planning
- Promotion of the region's interests
- EU funding



Forestry in North- Karelia

- We cut about 6,9 million m³ / year (NFI 2023) to e.g.
 - produce buildings
 - replace plastic
 - produce pulp for soft paper
 - create adding value goods (e.g. for health & food industry)
- We have
 - 90 % forests of our land cover (NFI 2022)
 - our forests grow 9,87 million m³ / year (average growth 6,1 m³/hectare/year) acting as carbon sinks (National Forest Inventory 2018-2022)
 - 600 companies, 6000 jobs, 2 bn. € turnover
- Forests are the source of income and work, well-being and recreation, forest owner has a full right to decide about the management, of course in the limits of the forest law
 - “Timber and everything else”
 - Berries, mushrooms and other non-wood goods
 - Fishing, hunting, hiking and other immaterial services
 - Eco-tourism
 - Maintaining ecosystem services



Unique expertise at the region

European Forest Institute – EFI HQ

Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)

Finnish Forest Centre

University of Eastern Finland – UEF

Karelia University of Applied Sciences

Riveria Vocational Education & Training

Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)

Business development: Business Joensuu,
regional business development
organisations



Co-operation in forestry regional and national level – building national expertise & visibility

- **Regional Forest Council, member**
 - Enhancement of regional forestry and forest bioeconomy: Regional forest programme, representatives from public and private sector
- **Expert Groups for Regional Strategy work: group of specialists from the region working to implement the Regional Strategic Programme: forest bioeconomy group and Climate and Energy 2030 group**
- **Co-operation in projects: funding and monitoring, also partner (suitable cases)**
 - Importance of the network of our research and education organisations
- **Participation to Forest Innovation group work (matching business and research in practise, Joensuu region)**
- **Cooperation with the relevant ministries in Finland: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland and Ministry of the Environment**

Importance of international cooperation for the region: what

- European network of EU's forested areas (ERIAFF) – influencing to EU policy making
- Vanquard initiative- platform for businesses, clusters and knowledge institutes to meet and join forces in finding new innovative solutions
- North-East Forest Group, North-East Office at Brussels
 - Group of forest experts from the seven north and east regions in Finland: Lapland, Oulu region, Kainuu, North Karelia, North Savo, South Savo and Central Ostrobothnia
 - Co-operation to develop forest bioeconomy and influence on national and EU decision making
- Northern Sparsely Populated Areas Network (NSPA): the regions of northern Finland, Norway and Sweden, to raise awareness of the NSPA in the EU institutions, to influence EU policy and to provide a platform for best practice
- Regional Innovation Valley (RIV) status from EU on circular economy: to promote cooperation in research and business
- Pilot area on EU projects: 2030CATALYST (SDG goals in the region), RRC (circular economy)– knowledge and information sharing

Importance of international cooperation for the region: why – solutions for common challenges



- Climate change:
 - Role of wood as carbon sinks and storages: how to reply to it?
 - Are we allowed to utilize timber also in the future? With what conditions? How to significantly increase the adding value?
 - Replacing fossil goods in a sustainable way
- Business: how to create new kind of income from wood, circular economy, non-wood goods and products and services?
- Regional development: availability of competent employee, sufficient income, availability of resources and materials (sustainability), welfare, how to get investments and finance to the area?



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Thank you for your attention!



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