

**innocities**

# Speeding up innovation ecosystems

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25 April 2023



Ministry of Economic Affairs  
and Employment of Finland



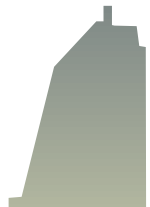
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# Green and Digital Transition - Key Drivers of Innovation

Grand challenges – innovations play an important role in solving them  
OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES TO CITIES AND COMPANIES



SUSTAINABILITY of  
natural resources



AVAILABILITY  
of workforce



RENEWING  
competences



Urbanisation



CIRCULAR  
economy



CARBON-  
NEUTRAL  
society



Aging  
POPULATION



QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY  
of public services



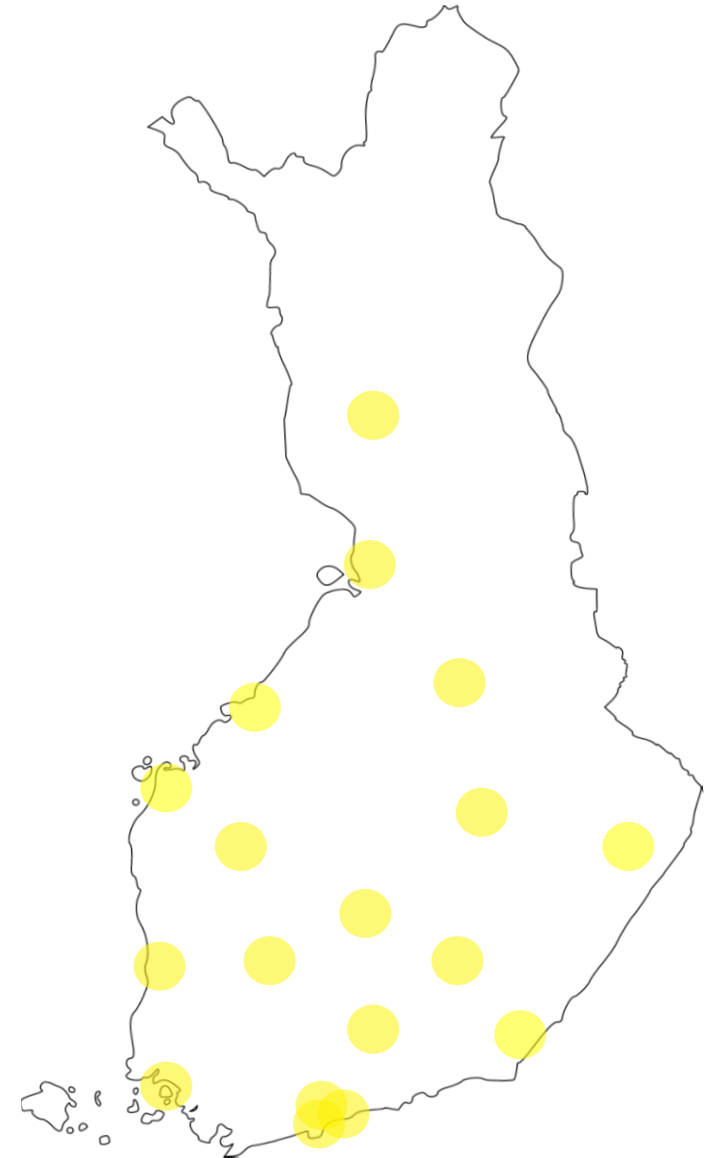
# 16 City agreements (2021-2027)



- Altogether 2,8 million people (50% of the population of Finland)
- Around 85% of RDI spending

# Cities' Ecosystem Agreements - Main characteristics

- Altogether 16 city regions, all university-driven
- Agreements designed and written in co-creative process between each city and the Government
- Clear priority setting with spearhead competencies
- Ambitious and strategic approach, global level competencies and knowledge
- Long-term partnership between cities and national Government (2021-2027)
- Combines innovation policy to urban development policy







# Mission

Innovative and pioneering cities aiming at innovation-led and sustaining growth by linking their own strengths to the opportunities of digitalization and carbon neutrality

# Different roles for cities

- ✓ Neutral platforms for strengthening collaboration between companies, universities and research
- ✓ Large scale infrastructure investments for RDI-collaboration
- ✓ Innovation hubs capable to allure international and national RDI-investments and talents to Finland
- ✓ Pioneers as building digital, low carbon and resource effective urban area – offering at the same time new business opportunities
- ✓ Reference markets for export companies (investment and innovative public procurement)
- ✓ Leading roles for thematic networks (ie. Clusters)



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# Future innovation environments and testbeds



Supported by  
the European Union



# Concept of Innovative cities and Communities initiative



Partnership between state and university cities

16 long-term agreements 2021-2027

Co-funded by ERDF, State and Cities

Focus in strategic spearheads in each agreement

Sparring and exchange of ideas with National Steering Committee led by the MEAE



Smooth RDI collaboration at local level

Shared vision and ambitious goals set by local stakeholders: Companies, universities, research institutes, city and other public institutes.

Catalyzing and pooling resources

Local leading groups led by the city



National and international networks

6 selected themes led by champion cities

Innovation and competence networks: applied research for companies



# Smart Technology Hub

Partner Campus



# EnergySampo CCU

Wasa Innovation Center

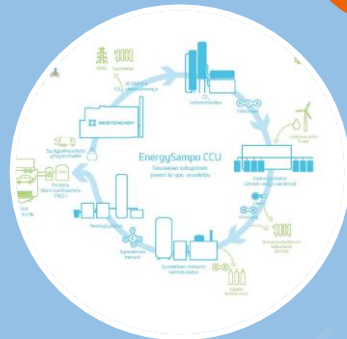
# H-Flex-E

# Aurora Botnia

Service Center Know-how

Digital Economy

Energy Storage



# Ravilaakso



# 40%

of coal can be replaced with renewable biofuels

The export rate is over

# 80%

# Co-Creation Vaasa

Innolab



# Vebic

Logistics

Digitalization

EnergySpin

VASEK



# GigaVaasa

Hybrids



# Vaasan Sähkö

The largest Nordic Energy technology hub employs

# 13 000

Team Finland

Robotics & 3d Printing

Merinova



# Sundom Smart Grid

# Thematic activities within the Ecosystem agreements 2021-2027

## Green transition

- Technology metals and circular economy
- Circular economy of urban water system
- Smart and sustainable urban solutions
- Circular economy of industrial waste water treatment
- Sustainable and smart energy systems
- New business in the forest bioeconomy and circular economy
- Green electrification
- Sustainable circular economy and clean solutions in urban areas
- Buildings, energy and infrastructure
- Battery chemicals
- Circular economy and intelligent solutions for industry
- Carbon-neutral circular economy

## Digital transition and new technologies

- Automation and robotics
- New learning environments and digital solutions of skills development
- Digitalisation in the changing urban environment
- Sustainable regeneration of the food ecosystem
- Photonics business
- Renewing industry
- Measurement technology
- Intelligent regeneration of industry
- High-performance computing, artificial intelligence and data centres
- Sustainable industry X

## Wellbeing

- Health and wellbeing technology
- Life sciences
- Digital wellbeing and health solutions
- Sports business
- Physical activity, health promotion and wellbeing
- Arctic tourism
- Wellbeing services of future and management of distances
- Digital health solutions

# Some policy lessons and challenges

- Ecosystemic thinking has brought new ingredients and new value in comparison to the previous approaches
- Ecosystems are one form of urban development policy based on partnership, agreements and deal-making, making the approach more common
- The partnerships takes place in various dimensions, 1) at the local level, 2) between national level and cities and 3) teaming up many cities

- EU funding not sufficiently agile for the purpose of the policy concept of the ecosystems
- Technical delivery of the funds at the national level has taken long time and created some frustration. However, national bridge funding has helped quite a lot.
- Concept of Innovative Cities and Communities encloses several sub-components: 1) synergy in steering but 2) creates some difficulties of readability



Thank you