

# CLIMATE CHANGE IN NORTHERN TERRITORIES

*Sharing Experiences and Exploring New Methods*

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## Looking North?

### The Arctic Dimension in Finnish Regional Policy

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# 1. Introduction: Finland and the Arctic

- Arctic issues have risen in importance on the political agenda in several countries
- Finland is not a littoral state of the Arctic Ocean, but is a member of the Arctic Council
- Northernmost region of Finland (Lapland) is part of the Arctic region

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## 2. Topics

- Arctic issues in regional development policy in/for Finnish Lapland?
- How have various framework conditions (geopolitics, European debates on territorial development, climate change) reflected on this?

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### 3. Development Policy for/in the Northernmost Areas

- Traditionally, northernmost Finland (Lapland) has been seen as an archetypical problem region: lagging socio-economic development, geographical and relational peripherality, migration, etc.
- Focus area of Finnish regional policy (comparable to eastern Finland)
  - “small” regional policy since the 1950s for compensating for the peripherality burden (tax breaks, investments of state enterprises, transport subsidies etc.)
  - however, specific resources of Lapland were identified and exploited, such as energy (waterpower), ores, tourism potential
  - inward-looking approach in policy-making (with the exception of North Calotte co-operation)
  - geopolitics constrained connections with the Arctic and USSR
  - “large” regional policy (construction of the welfare state) also important

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## Since 1990

- Geopolitical sea-change in the early 1990s
  - “normalisation” of the border, cross-border co-operation
- Finland’s membership in the EU in 1995
  - governance: regional councils
  - specific conditions of the region were recognised by the EU, particularly the sparsity of population
  - Objective 6 (1995-2000) + INTERREG
  - 2000-2006, 2007-2013: specific support continued
  - Lisbon Treaty (2009): Article 174
  - NSPA interregional co-operation process; in line with the European debate on territorial capital and place-based development

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## 4. Arctic Issues Entered the Scene

- Arctic dimension was not important in domestic regional development policy in post WW2 decades, partly due to the geopolitical setting
- Nowadays “Arcticness” (= northern location and climate) is increasingly seen as a potential and additional resource (in line with the EU’s ‘diversity as strength’ → territorial cohesion approach)

# Example 1: Lapland Regional Development Programme 2011-2014

- “The Call of the Barents”, one of the four development scenarios
- Aim to participate in and benefit from Norwegian and Russian large-scale development projects, new transport corridors → against the background of climate change
- Utilisation of specificities (climate, vast space) for tourism, innovative sectors and testing facilities

LAPPI  
Pohjoisen luova menestyjä  
LAPIN MAAKUNTAOHJELMA 2011-2014

LAPIN LIITTO



## Example 2: Development Programme for Northern and Eastern Finland (2013)

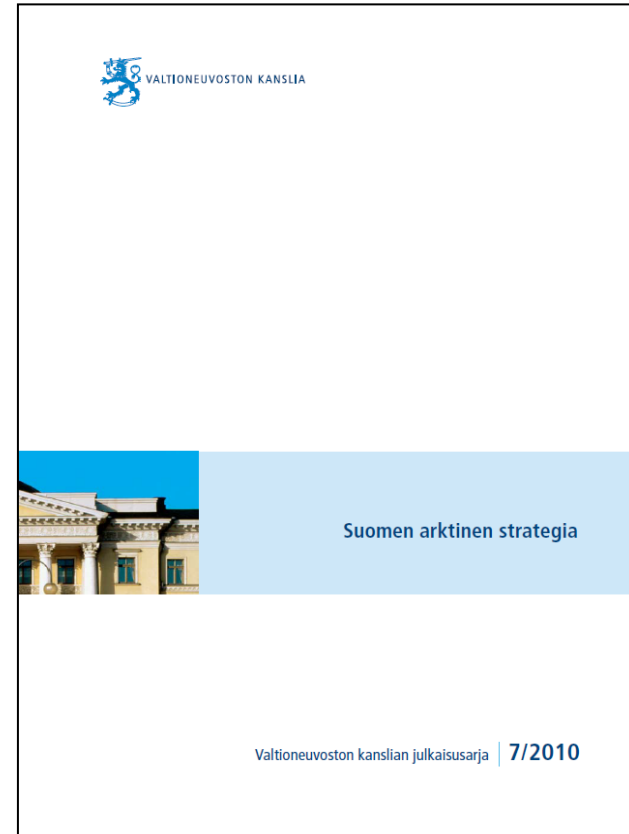
- Area in question is the NUTS2 area of eastern and northern Finland
- Produced by a working group appointed by the government: “...sees northern and eastern Finland as a region of arising opportunities that has the potential for strong growth and could even be an engine for the development of the entire country”
  - unique natural resources
  - world-class expertise and know-how
  - strategic location
- First of the 5 focal areas for development: “utilising the potentials in the Arctic and strengthening expertise and know-how in the Arctic region”
- As opposed to the Russian dimension, the Arctic dimension is not of great relevance to eastern Finland





## Example 3: The Finnish Arctic Strategy

- Being revised, the current one is from 2010
- Is Finnish Lapland (as Finland's Arctic region) assigned a specific task in the circumpolar region? What is this task?
- Information centre, logistical centre, transport corridor



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## 5. Discussion

- The place-based development model and focus have risen on the political agenda in and for northern Finland
  - Increasing focus on the specific territorial capital in the region (resources, climate, location)
  - Development of these is argued to benefit also Finland as a whole and even the EU
- From an EU perspective, eastern and northern Finland are treated as one and the same “sparsely populated area”, in practice they differ considerable in terms of geographical features and orientation, and in relation to the Arctic in particular
- Climate change is seen as a major background factor, more as a local resource than global environmental problem



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