



LAPPEENRANTA

THE CLIMATE CAPITAL OF FINLAND



EUROPEAN GREEN LEAF 2021 FINAL REPORT

**CITY OF LAPPEENRANTA**

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# Opening Words

The transformation of the City of Lappeenranta from an industrial city to a city of clean environment and energy has been amazing. Global challenges such as environmental pollution, climate change, and the loss of biodiversity have long affected the activities of the city and its citizens. The industry has become an environmental pioneer, and research and residents' active recycling have brought solutions to the global challenges. The location of the City of Lappeenranta on the shores of Europe's fourth largest lake supports the goals of a green city. We have been able to turn weaknesses into strengths through collaboration, actions and research. The Greenreality brand and the Greenreality website offer more information already from before the Award Year about the actions of Lappeenranta and other actors in the region. Lappeenranta's winning year 2021 is an award for those joint efforts. This document describes how the European Green Leaf Award 2021 was implemented in Lappeenranta and what experiences were gained from it.





Photograph: Generation Finland

# Lappeenranta Celebrated the Green Leaf Award in 2021

**Kimmo Jarva, Mayor of City of Lappeenranta**

When we won the Green Leaf award for 2021 in the competition organized by the European Commission just over a year ago, Lappeenranta entered a new phase in its history. The City of Lappeenranta was chosen as one of the greenest cities in Europe. The City of Lappeenranta received the award for its ambitious climate work, cooperation with companies and educational institutions to solve global sustainability challenges, environmental education in schools and the restoration of water bodies. The city is also committed to taking actions against climate change and promoting a circular economy.

Lappeenranta's winning year has been a series of events, communication and new actions. We have organized more than 70 events in cooperation with various actors, built 7 new or renovated natural sites, and made numerous individual measures.

It seems to me that we are only at the beginning of a new path. The cooperation gained during the year is worth maintaining and resolving climate and circular economy goals and strengthening biodiversity with greater determination. The development of an energy and environmental network and helping companies to assess responsibility and carbon footprint bring vitality. "Sustainable Success Stories" is the goal of the Lappeenranta 2037 strategy. The themes of the Green Leaf year, solving sustainability challenges together with educational institutions, residents and companies, have recently been at the heart of Lappeenranta City Council's strategy. I thank everyone who took part in the year. This has been a great experience for us and a great journey together. You have made this a real year of events. We are proud of our city. We are only at the beginning of this work and a lot of good things will follow for us in the future.

# Challenging but the Best Year Ever!

**Ilkka Räsänen, Environmental Director of  
City of Lappeenranta**

The European Green Leaf award was announced on October 8th, 2020 in a virtual event from Lisbon. After the victory, preparations for the year began in a great hurry. Although the preliminary program was prepared in advance, launching the Lappeenranta Green Leaf year was a big effort. Finding roles and sharing tasks in the city organization and with stakeholders was challenging in a short time. During the early part of the year, the actions were marked by Covid-19 restrictions, planning of measures and repeatedly happening webinars. Towards the end of the year, the team's activities fell into place and the cooperation with various city organizations worked well. Many wonderful events, measures and activities took place. Despite the challenges, the result of the European Green Leaf Award Year was great. More than 70 events and a dozen different measures were far more than expected. I am happy to notice that during 2021, the City of Lappeenranta has had an impact and made changes on a local and European level. I specially thank the project team Kati Korhonen, Heli Mälkiä and Vanessa Techera for their outstanding work. This year will stay in the history of Lappeenranta for a very long time.





Photograph: Teemu Leinonen, LUT University

# Science and Local Activities go Hand in Hand

## Juha-Matti Saksa, Rector of LUT University

The Green Leaf Award given to the city of Lappeenranta is an outstanding achievement. I feel it was a collective accomplishment.

During my years in Lappeenranta, I have recognized enormous changes in the city. Cycling possibilities have improved, new nature trails along Lake Saimaa have popped up, and buses to our green campus run on biogas.

Lappeenranta is an excellent environment for us to implement our strategy. Clean energy, water and air are life-giving resources for which we at LUT University seek new solutions with our expertise in technology and business. We help society and businesses in their sustainable renewal.

When our hometown is sustainable – and awarded and known for it – it makes it easier for the university to attract top professionals and new students and contribute to a better future.

We spur each other on to improve and innovate sustainable solutions. Overall, our common goal is to make the world a better place to live – globally and locally.

We are proud to be one of the world's top 10 universities for climate action and pleased to call the Green Leaf city Lappeenranta our home.

# Green Leaf Strengthening Entrepreneurship

**Ari Piispanen, CEO of Elstor Oy, Afstor Oy and Soletair Oy**

I was delighted to see that our city received significant recognition from the European Union when our city won the European Green Leaf Award.

Recognition has not come in vain, and for decades, our city has done significant climate work on many different fronts. This work will also help local businesses to strongly move forward and create an even more significant amount of jobs in the future. The solutions developed here in Lappeenranta have an impact on the entire global climate when the developed technologies are widely used.

For several years, the goal of our companies has been to develop solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in various positions. We have developed solutions, for example, for heat production, carbon offset with solar cookers and carbon capture from indoor air.







# Why Did Lappeenranta Win?

The City of Lappeenranta is a responsible and sustainable pioneer. The city is committed to Greenreality actions, and builds the future together with citizens, communities, and businesses. The city's Greenreality brand is a mindset and actions towards a sustainable future. The factors that made Lappeenranta a European Green Leaf Award winner are a result of the city's long-term work.

In Lappeenranta, the environment is a major part of children's education, starting from a young age. Each year, sustainable development is taught to 3500 young students in LUT Junior University. In LUT Junior University, the early childhood education, basic education and upper secondary education are based on three focus areas: clean energy, circular energy and sustainable business and entrepreneurship. This way, the children in Lappeenranta learn to seek solutions to global environmental issues.

City of Lappeenranta builds a green future with courage and action. There are over 2000 jobs in the environmental and energy sectors in the city. The city's environmental goals are made into an innovative reality. Companies play a considerable role in building a more environmentally friendly future. Greenreality Partnership is the city's climate initiative for companies of all fields. The initiative's purpose is to benefit businesses and reduce emissions. The City of Lappeenranta cooperates with companies and offers them assistance in factors such as energy use, water consumption, waste generation, material choices, and transport and delivery services.

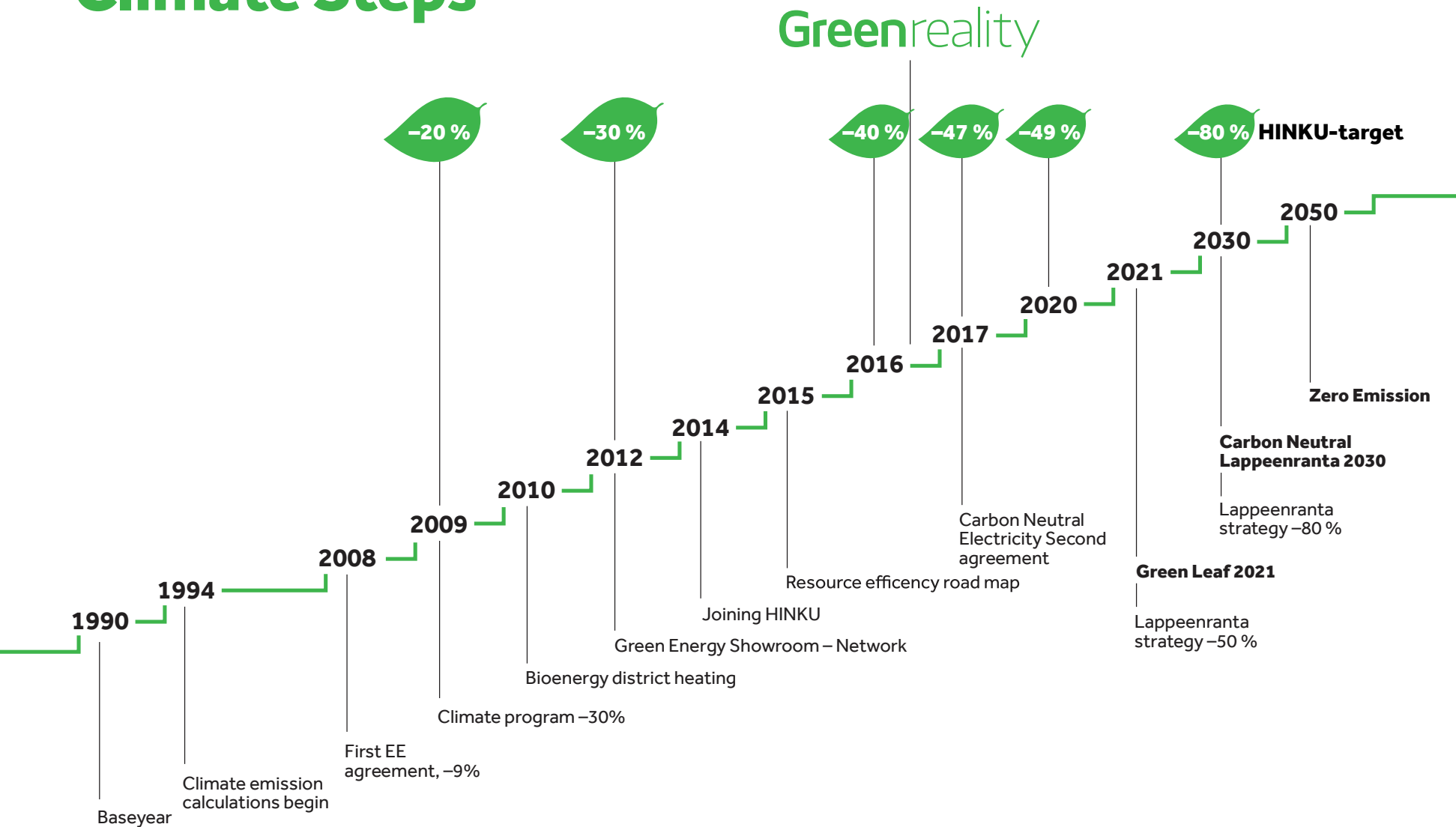
Lappeenranta is surrounded by water, and the city is on the shoreline of Lake Saimaa – Finland’s largest lake. Over the last decade, the city has significantly protected and improved its waterways. Over 100 wetlands have been constructed to take care of the lake. Constructed wetlands reduce the load and collect nutrients, impurities, and solid material from run-off water before it reaches the lake. The wetlands also increase biodiversity and provide a habitat for birds and insects. Besides, they enhance the area’s scenery.

Lappeenranta is also a pioneer in recycling, and recycling has been made easy and efficient for the region’s residents. In the city, the final disposal of waste that burdens the environment is minimized. The Kukkuoinmäki waste processing center in Lappeenranta annually processes 65 000 tonnes of waste. Biowaste has been sorted in Lappeenranta since 2002. All the region’s dry household waste is used in energy production.

Cycling is widely promoted in Lappeenranta and it is easy to bicycle in the whole region. The bicycle route network has been developed and unified constantly to form a clear and comprehensive route through the whole city. In total, there are 275 kilometers of bicycle paths. Of those, 23 kilometers are main routes and 75 kilometers regional routes. The city has produced a brochure map of all the main routes in three languages. In 2015, Lappeenranta also received national recognition for the development of cycling, when the city was awarded as the Cycling City of the Year. There have also been many bicycle events in the city.



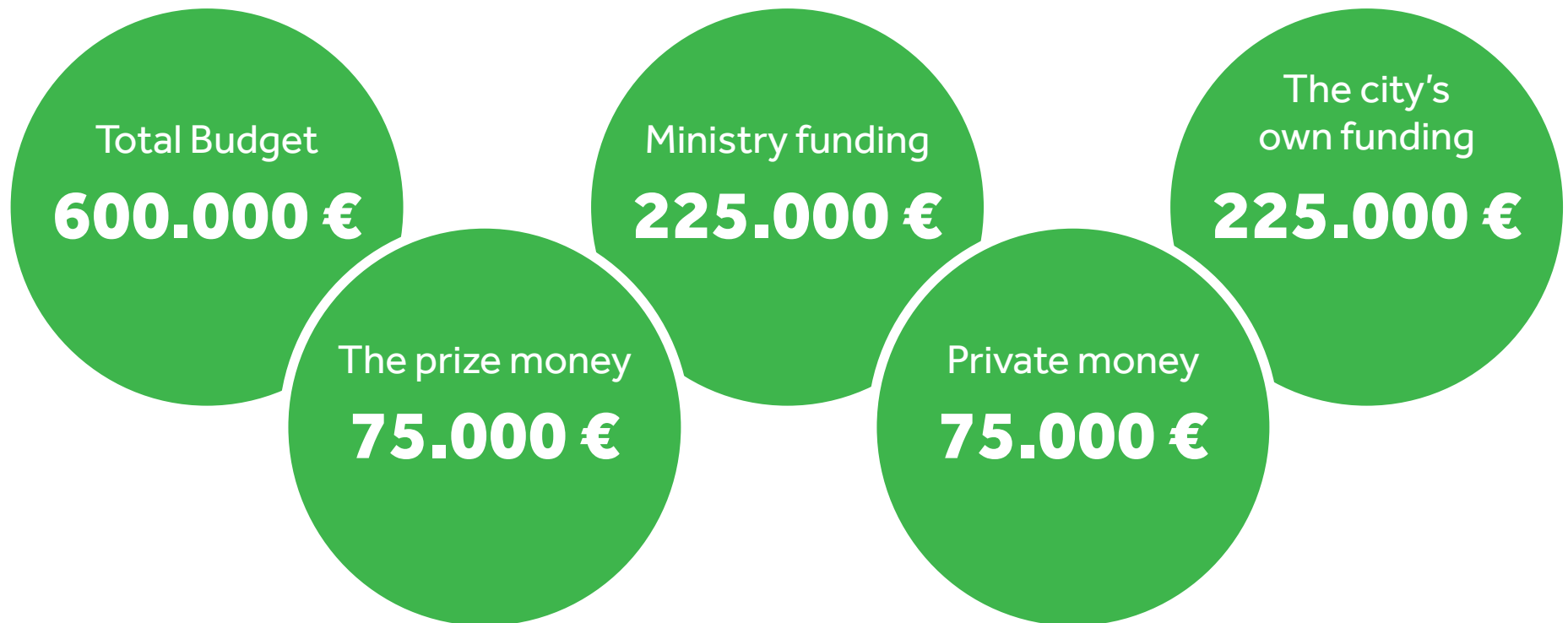
# Lappeenranta Climate Steps





# Goals for the Green Leaf Award Year 2021

The beginning of the year was filled with planning. The project plan was approved by the City Board on January 11th together with the main themes of the Green Leaf Award Year: nature, water, climate change and green electrification. The city also decided on the budget for the winning year. The total budget was 600 000 euros, which consisted of 75 000 euros of prize money, 225 000 euros of funding from the Ministry of Environment, 75 000 euros of private money and 225 000 euros of the city's own funding.



# Organizing the Year

Preparations for the European Green Leaf Award Year program began as early as the application phase, about a year before the application was submitted. Measures and a program were prepared for the year with stakeholders in Lappeenranta. A preliminary plan for the year's measures was made in June 2020 for budget planning by the Ministry of the Environment and the City of Lappeenranta. The win was announced on October 8th, 2020, and after that the practical preparations for the year were started.

Environmental Director Ilkka Räsänen was responsible for the implementation of the year. He led the Green Leaf project team, which was formed by Project Manager Kati Korhonen, Communications Manager Heli Mälkiä and Communications Assistant Vanessa Techera. The Green Leaf project team started working in December 2020.

The measures for the Award Year were linked to the goal of the entire City Organization during the preparation phase of the 2021 budget and its implementation. A joint Green Leaf steering group was established to ensure follow-up and monitor the implementation of planned measures and activities. The steering group met a total of 12 times, and it included stakeholders and members of the City Organization. Planning for 2021 was carried out in early 2021, ensuring the implementation of previously prepared measures. From March to the end of the year, the previously planned program was implemented. To reach the number of events and measures, the year clearly exceeded targets, even though the Covid-19 pandemic limited operations.





# Financing

## Participatory Budgeting

The city wanted to involve residents in making the city a better environment to live in. Lappeenranta designated 20 000 euros from the Green Leaf budget for that. Through participatory budgeting, the city looked for proposals and ideas that would reduce the residents' harmful effects on the environment, climate and nature, increase biodiversity or enhance the municipality's residents' opportunities to enjoy local nature or Lake Saimaa in a sustainable way.

An online survey was open for two weeks (February 18th–March 3rd, 2021), and it generated 140 ideas. The ideas were diverse, but themes of developing mobility and increasing urban green spaces, construction and recycling, were widely repeated. All the ideas submitted by residents were pre-screened, and a cost estimate was calculated for their implementation. From the citizens' ideas, a panel of city officials and various experts selected 11 ideas to a voting phase. The voting period for the 11 ideas was two weeks (March 22nd–April 4th, 2021), and voting was possible online or on paper at the City Hall. In total, 1350 votes were cast. Four proposals that received the most votes were selected to be implemented using the EUR 20,000 appropriation.

### The four proposals with the most votes were:

- Mountain biking route, 5000 euros, 408 votes
- Development of beaches by reducing littering, 5000 euros, 266 votes
- Surveillance cameras for bicycle parking areas, 5000 euros, 160 votes
- Development of playgrounds, 5000 euros, 146 votes

The City of Lappeenranta monitored the implementation of the measures throughout the year. Residents were also involved via two online events that were organized during the participatory budgeting project.





# Green Leaf

## Partnerships with Events and Actions

A partnership application call for event and action partnerships was open between January and March 2021. In the partnership model, City of Lappeenranta offered expert assistance, visibility as well as financial support for event producers. The city received numerous applications, and by the end of March, the city had formed 18 partnerships. All of the Green Leaf partnerships were financed with the funding from the Ministry of the Environment.

You can read more from these partnerships in this report

- > Carbon negative festival, UUS Festivaali
- > Biodive Workshops for all 4th graders in Lappeenranta
- > Cycling in local villages during one weekend
- > Saimaa Challenge sports event
- > Möllö Pöötinen climate agent. Different actions for local families
- > Cartoon workshops for 4th to 7th graders with eco-actions theme
- > Charging stations (3) for electric bikes in the city center electric city bikes (4)
- > Local day care units got vegetable gardening boxes, where children will grow flowers, lettuce and other plants
- > Local day care units got backpacks with excursion equipment, so that it would be easier for children to explore nature on excursions
- > Carbon neutral museums in Lappeenranta and calculation of carbon footprint in museums
- > Calculation of carbon footprint and handprint in the City Library
- > Smart & Sustainable Saimaa webinar. Sustainability forum for companies, focusing on sustainable travel and cycling tourism
- > Greenreality Promises made by students
- > Sustainability week in LUT University
- > Community garden in the Rakuunamäki area near the city center
- > Sustainability promises made by local sports club "LUM" (Lappeenrannan Urheilu-Miehet). Promises were published at sports games and in social media videos



# Opening and Closing Ceremonies

The City of Lappeenranta's European Green Leaf Award Year included multiple official events in the beginning and ending of the award year. The official events were held especially for city personnel, international professionals and guests, companies, and citizens to celebrate the achievements of Lappeenranta as a winning city of the European Green Leaf Award.

## **New Year's Celebrations and Green Leaf Opening Ceremony**

In Lappeenranta, the New Year's Eve 2020 was celebrated in a virtual format. The celebrations kicked off the city's theme year as the winner of the European Green Leaf Award 2021. The virtual New Year's Eve celebrations started at 6:45 p.m. on December 31st, and they could be watched via the city's website at [www.lappeenranta.fi](http://www.lappeenranta.fi). The webcast contained amazing video footage shot in Lappeenranta and various content created for the upcoming Green Leaf Award Year.

City of Lappeenranta received many greetings and congratulations from Finland and around the world, including Sauli Niinistö, the President of the Republic of Finland, Krista Mikkonen, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and Joanna Drake, the European Commission's Deputy Director-General for Mobility and Environment. The webcast was saved on YouTube and it has been viewed over 6370 times (May 17th, 2021).

In the webcast, the Chair of the City Board, Risto Kakkola, unveiled a new green wall created in the Lappeenranta City Hall and the European Green Leaf Award plaque. Mayor Kimmo Jarva gave the traditional New Year's speech on behalf of the city. The traditional New Year's Eve firework was replaced by a Green Leaf themed light art show.

### **January Start Event for the City Personnel**

City of Lappeenranta organized an annual start event for the personnel virtually on January 21st. In the event, Environmental Director Ilkka Räsänen gave a speech about the Green Leaf year. The aim was to involve the whole personnel to be part of the events and actions. This stream had 592 views (May 6th, 2021).

### **January Start Event for Local Companies**

On January 28th, a start event for local companies was organized by the Lappeenranta Business Services. In the webinar European Green Leaf Project Manager Kati Korhonen presented the goals of the European Green Leaf Year and how local companies could benefit from this title. In total, 161 people registered in the event.

### **Closing Event in December**

City of Lappeenranta celebrated the European Green Leaf Award Year's achievements together with local citizens and international participants on December 10th. The day included activities near nature all around the city and virtual program that was live streamed to the city's YouTube channel. The theme of the closing event day was future. Overall, the closing event's program demonstrated that the ambitious climate work in Lappeenranta continues although the city's 2021 European Green Leaf Award year ended.

The day started with opening ceremonies. A renovated children's playground, a new health path in a forest, and a new outdoor hut were introduced to residents of all ages. In the city center, a Christmas star was lit to the bell tower of the church to represent sustainable Christmas preparations and the European Green Leaf Award year.





Experts and citizens were gathered in an international live stream “Turning a New Leaf – A Look into the Future”. Kimmo Jarva, Mayor of Lappeenranta, gave a welcome speech and spoke about the future prospects of the city. Ilkka Räsänen, Environmental Director of Lappeenranta, hosted the live stream event which started with greetings from international decision-makers. Virginijus Sinkevicius, Commissioner for the Environment, congratulated Lappeenranta from the European Commission, and spoke about the environment, oceans, and fisheries. Ville Skinnari, Minister for Development and Foreign Trade of Finland, presented greetings and congratulations from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Green Leaf bags made from recycled fabric were gifted to the participants.

The program of the live stream also included keynote speeches. Mari Pantsar, Director of Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, gave a speech about hope and the importance of actions towards a better future. Anne Toppinen, Director and Professor of Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science, spoke about the built environment sector’s future of decarbonization. Riina Salmimies, Dean of the Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology, discussed life on this planet and beyond in space. Sanna Koskenranta, Chairman of the City Council presented greetings from Lappeenranta, the Climate Capital of Finland. The live stream also included greetings from Gabrovo – the Bulgarian city that also won the 2021 European Green Leaf Award. Tanya Hristova, Mayor of Gabrovo, sent congratulations and presented a video about life in Gabrovo in the future. At the end of the international virtual live stream, a compilation video about the highlights of Lappeenranta’s Green Leaf Award Year was shown.

The closing event also included a live stream lecture and discussion “Life in Finland’s Climate Capital Lappeenranta in 2050”. The event was held in Finnish, and it was hosted by Essi Silvonen, Futurist from Finland Futures Research Center. The closing event day ended in the screening of an environmental documentary “Walk the Tideline” (2021).





# Events and Actions through the Main Themes of the Year

In Lappeenranta, the four main themes for the European Green Leaf Award Year were water, nature, climate change and green electrification. Each theme included events, activities or other content related to the theme.

## Water Theme

Lappeenranta is located on the shore of Lake Saimaa – the largest lake in Finland and the fourth largest lake in Europe. The city actively participates in water protection, because water is an important part of citizens' life quality in Lappeenranta. The Saimaa archipelago is also home of the endangered Saimaa ringed seal, one of the rarest seals in the world. During the European Green Leaf Award Year, Lappeenranta strengthened water protection cooperation and networks.

### **Baltic Sea and the Quality of Life Conference**

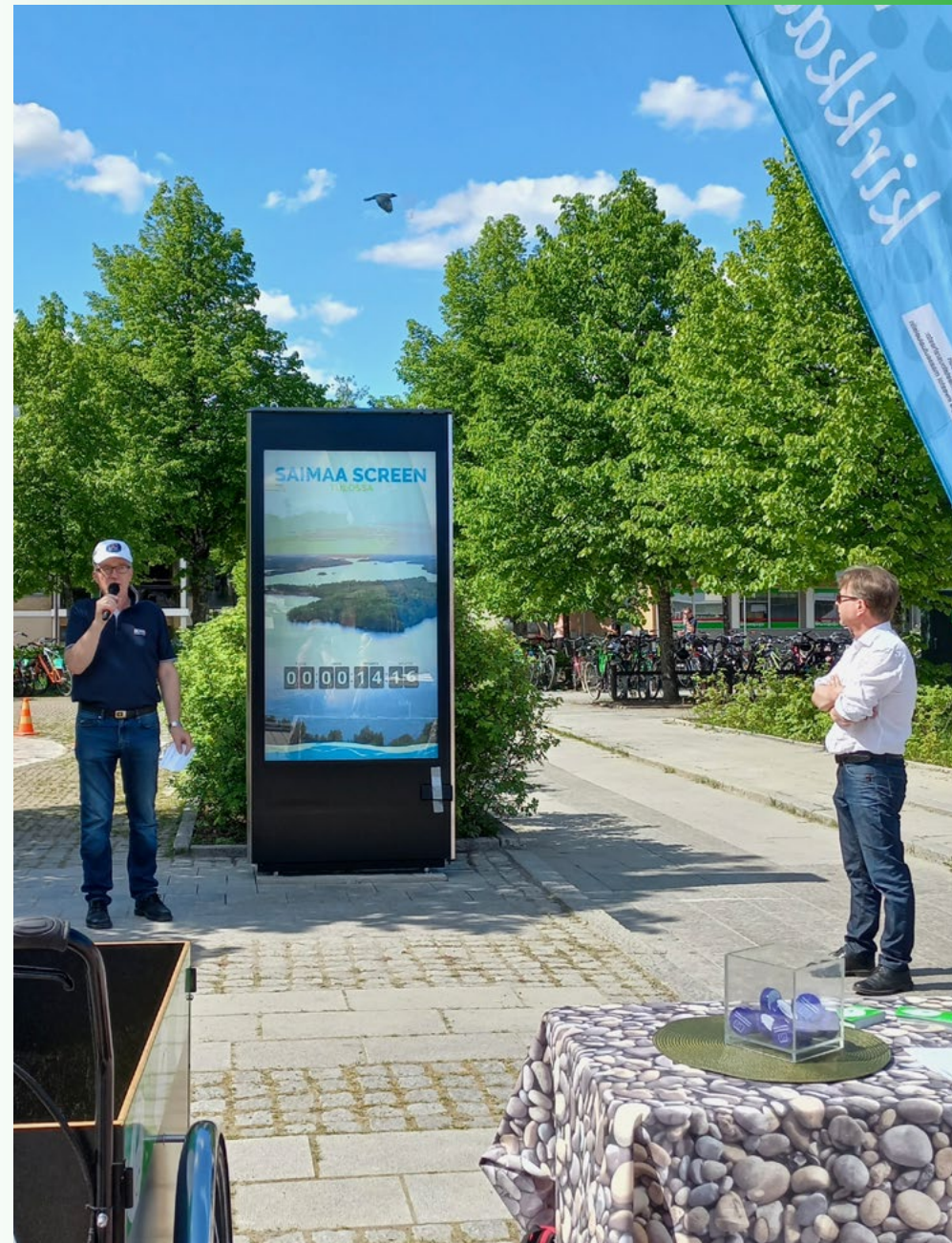
An international virtual conference was organized on April 15th and 16th. It was part of a project about the construction of a centralized water supply and sewerage system of the Petrovsky district in Vyborg, taking into account the construction of engineering networks of the state institution Park Monrepos. One of the key objectives of the project was the reduction of harmful emissions into the waters of the Gulf of Finland.

### **Smart & Sustainable Saimaa Responsibility Forum**

The Smart & Sustainable Saimaa Responsibility Forum during June 3rd and 4th, was part of the goSaimaa project Smart & Sustainable Saimaa, which addressed the theme of responsibility from several different perspectives. The event was a hybrid event with numerous top speakers and trainers in the field of sustainability in the travel market. The event was widely advertised in advance and gathered audience all over Finland. The recording of the event was available for a week and gained a relatively good number of views. In addition to responsibility, the themes of the event included trends in cycling tourism and tourism in the Saimaa region. In the panel discussions, the themes of the day were reviewed, and new development priorities emerged. All in all, the responsibility forum was a successful first experiment, which should be further refined and tailored to different themes.

### **Opening of the Saimaa Screen**

A screen with live data from Lake Saimaa was officially opened on June 5th. This was named officially as Saimaa Screen, and it is located in a very central place in Lappeenranta harbor. It is planned that the screen will stay there permanently. An Instagram live stream was also recorded of the opening ceremony. The construction was financed by UPM-Kymmene Oyj, a Finnish forest industry company.





The Saimaa screen provides changing and up-to-date information on, among other things, water and its special features, Lake Saimaa and its unique organisms, water quality, temperature, surface height and current topics according to the seasons. It also informs what blue-green algae is, and how the Saimaa ringed seal is doing.

### **Finnish Lakeland Forum**

The annual Lakeland Forum is an event where experts cooperate to promote the cleanliness of lakelands. The second Finnish Lakeland Forum was organized in Lappeenranta on September 23rd. The event gathered approximately 100 participants both live in Kehruuhuone Restaurant, and virtually via live streaming. The participants were committed to protecting the waters of the lake area and promoting its vitality. The forum brought together experts to discuss actions taken in favor of the valuable lake area, its status and future.

The event started with City of Lappeenranta's Mayor Kimmo Jarva's opening speech, which was followed by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Krista Mikkonen's opening words. City of Lappeenranta's Cultural Director Anu Talka and Saimaa Ilmiö's Project Manager Sari Kaasinen discussed the cultural aspects and the meaning of clean lakelands for human well-being in a presentation "Saimaa – The Art of Living". City of Kuopio's Mayor Jarmo Pirhonen shared his thoughts about the lakelands' importance and vitality for the economy. The themes and topics of the event also included sustainable traveling, the possibility of receiving Unesco to the Saimaa region, the future of water purification and the situation of migratory fish.

### **Big Jump – Family Event**

An outdoor family event was held on July 11th in the Myllysaari Beach area in Lappeenranta. The Big Jump event was open to all, and it emphasized the importance of clean waters and water protection work. A wide range of activity checkpoints, sports and hobby experiments and various performances were offered around the event area. The event also had an art workshop using natural materials and an adventure track based on local wildlife and nature, both for children and families.







# Nature Theme

In Lappeenranta, nature is always near. Promoting nature conservation, protecting the natural environment and preserving biodiversity are important environmental actions for the City of Lappeenranta. The many nature trails, forest areas, and swimming beaches in the city also promote citizens' well-being by offering beautiful scenery and peacefulness. Lappeenranta's Green Leaf Award Year's actions for nature focused especially on nature trails, gardening and sharing knowledge while building a sense of community.

## **The Nature of Lappeenranta Webinar**

The Nature of Lappeenranta webinar was held on February 25th. It focused on the biodiversity survey of the City of Lappeenranta which was completed later in the spring. The 2-hour webinar contained speeches of stakeholders and questions about biodiversity made by school pupils. Altogether around 60 participants took part in the event.

## **Forest Policy and Virtual Forest Tour Webinar**

A forest themed webinar was organized on April 19th. It focused on Lappeenranta's forests and their carbon sequestration: the process of increasing the carbon content of the forest by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The webinar included an introduction of local carbon sink forests: forests that store more carbon dioxide than they release into the atmosphere. In addition, the webinar offered information about carbon neutrality goals and climate friendly forestry.

## Wild Vegetables Webinar

The Wild Vegetables webinar on May 24th presented easy-to-identify wild vegetables and provided tips for handling, using and preserving them. In addition, the participants were warned about the use of toxic wild plants. In the demonstration, dishes and herbal drinks were made from natural herbs and wild vegetables. The participants of the webinar were very interested in the topic and gained necessary knowledge for the safe use of wild vegetables.

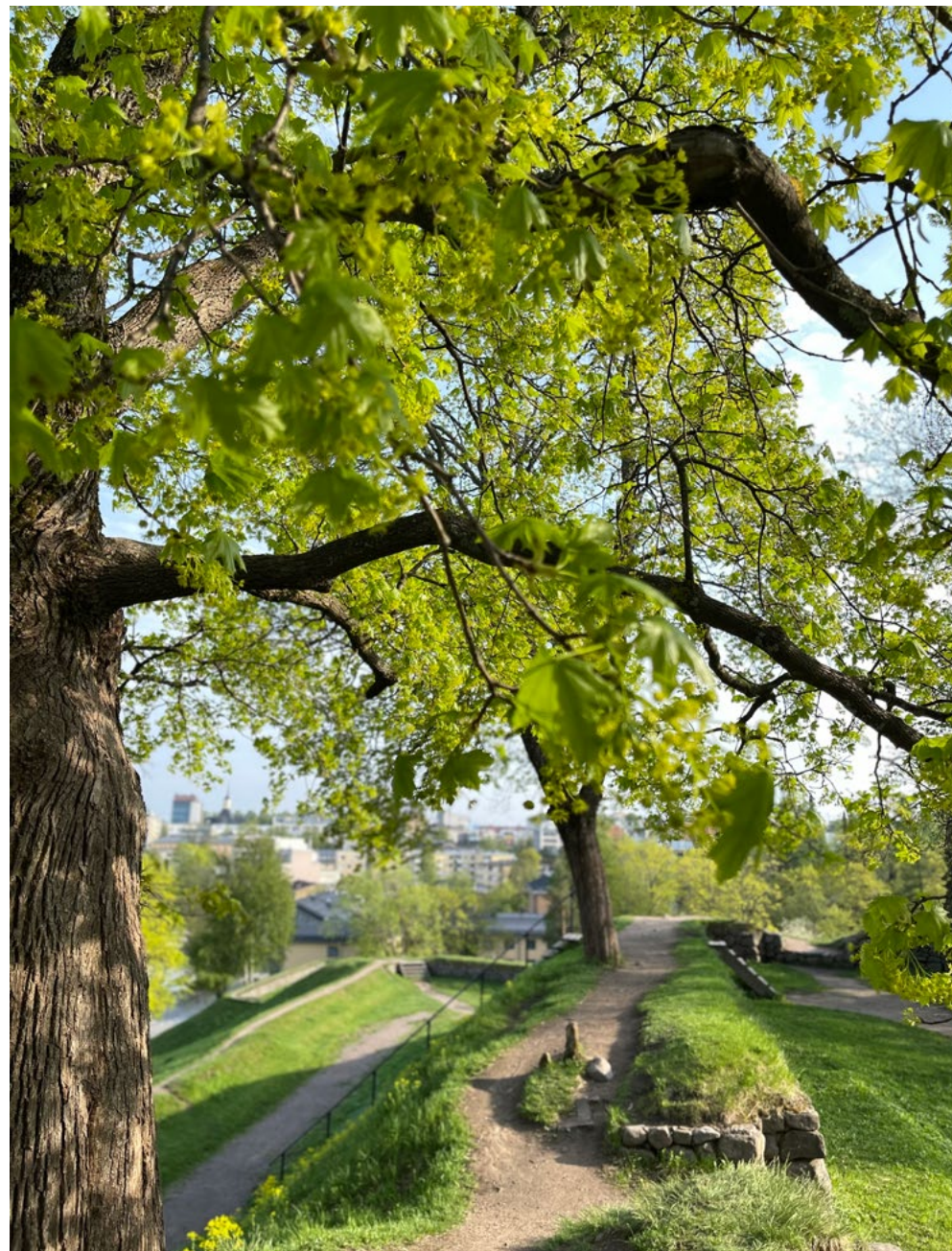
## Village Cycling Weekend

The Village Cycling was a free-form cycling weekend that encouraged people to ride bikes to Lappeenranta's villages. The event was held on May 13th and 14th to encourage citizens to explore the less-known corners of their hometown by bike. Many villages and local services were added to the example routes. A lot of cyclists participated in the event, and over 90 people shared images with the Finnish hashtag #kyläpyöräily2021 on social media.

The event was organized by a local cycling association Lappeenrannan Pyöräilijät ry. The first similar event was organized already in the mid-1990's.

## Nature Excursions

The nature in Lappeenranta is diverse, so the city organized a series of eight guided nature excursions for citizens to visit the different nature types and familiarize with biodiversity. The excursions were organized between June 28th and August 16th in different locations every Monday at 6 p.m. Each destination represented diverse natural environments within the city region. The excursion locations included Pappilanniemi grove, Lauritsala country house park, Fortress meadows, Tyysterniemi cliffs, Uus-Lavola spruce forest, Huhtiniemi shore trail, City arboretum and Joutseno swamp. All excursions were free of charge and open to all. Altogether 118 participants were favored by good weather conditions each time – a rather uncommon situation in





the midst of the Finnish summer! A strong message was sent to Green Lappeenranta as feedback from the participants: "We want more of these!"

### **Planting Vegetables in Child Care Centers**

The City of Lappeenranta wanted to bring more nature to early childhood education by providing gardening possibilities. Each child care center in Lappeenranta got two garden boxes to their yard with vegetable, flower and herb seeds and gardening tools. This way, children were able to be in contact with soil and plants, and nature could be experienced with all their senses. Children got to strengthen their immune system and experience what healthy food tastes like. Additionally, they got to experience how much work goes into growing food. The children have been very proud of their gardening boxes, and also their parents and early childhood educators have given good feedback. The use of the gardening boxes will continue in the future.

### **Community Garden Plantis**

In the spring of 2021, a community garden, later named Community Garden Plantis, was established in a rarely used park area. As its name suggests, Plantis is a community project designed to bring together people and ideas from different backgrounds and find use for the central park area. The goal was to share knowledge about cultivation to each other and create new kinds of networks. At the same time, the aim was to develop urban gardening in Lappeenranta and share this know-how to a wider audience.

The activities were run by a network of approximately 15 volunteers. Most of them didn't know each other before the summer of 2021. The volunteers represented a wide range of people of different ages and backgrounds, including different nationalities. Operating in the background was Uus Kulttuuri, a registered non-profit association that produces and develops ecological and sustainable cultural activities in Lappeenranta and enables the function of Plantis.

The growing season of 2021 for Plantis went well, although there wasn't much to do due to the overwhelming heat waves of the summer. The association also managed to create a foundation from which they can further develop the garden and also gradually share this information. For 2022 in particular, their aim is to develop versatile, high-quality and interesting event operations.

The garden has received a lot of good feedback from passers-by and other visitors. The volunteers have garnered praise especially for the fact that they have succeeded in creating a nice place to visit in an area that used to be practically a wasteland. The volunteers who took part in establishing this community garden, have also been very grateful because they have created a community of people interested in gardening. According to the participants, they all have certainly learned as much about cultivation as each other.

### **Nature Excursion Backpacks for Child Care Centers**

The City of Lappeenranta ordered 1–2 backpacks to each of its child care centers to be used during nature excursions. The backpacks contain supplies for forest excursions. By this, the city wants to encourage groups to go to nature every week. With the backpacks' materials, children can learn more about nature and explore it for example with magnifying glasses. Also supplies such as a compass, flashlight, first aid kit, and rope are included in the backpack. With the backpacks, children can experience nature with all their senses. Nature surroundings make exercise pleasant, increase children's creativity, and give children the opportunity to develop their essential motoric skills and learning conditions. Nature also has a calming and relaxing effect on children. Children will be in touch with the ground and it will strengthen their immune system.





### **Saimaa Ringed Seal Comics with Green Leaf Themes**

Each month, a sequence of an environmental comic strip was produced with the collaboration of Metku, a children's cultural center of South Karelia region. Each month's comic strip had a different environmental theme. The cartoon project's goal was to familiarize children in a fun way with taking care of nature and encouraging them to make environmentally responsible choices in their everyday life. The comic illustrations featured two adventurous Saimaa ringed seals. The main characters faced different day-to-day situations, where they cheerfully advised each other to make environmentally friendly decisions. The comic was published monthly on the social media channels of Green-reality Lappeenranta and the children's cultural center Metku.

### **Biodive Workshops for all Fourth Graders**

Outdoor workshops dealing with biodiversity and its ecological meaning were organized for 4th class primary school pupils and their teachers in Lappeenranta. Over 700 pupils participated in nature games, as well as in the search and identification of water bugs in the schoolyards and nearby nature. The workshops were highly favored as stimulating nature occasions. Finally, learning and teaching materials based on the workshops were created and saved in the open environmental education database at [mappa.fi](http://mappa.fi)-website.

### **Saimaa Challenge**

The Saimaa Challenge on July 3rd was an adventure race that was held for the first time. In the event, teams of two navigated from checkpoint to checkpoint by bike, kayak and foot. The route took participants to the waterfronts of Lake Saimaa. Few control points included tasks where participants had to use their physical abilities and knowledge like gathering facts about Green Leaf and City of Lappeenranta from the checkpoints. In total 88 teams participated in the event.



## Nature Trails

City of Lappeenranta implemented several actions funded by the city and the Ministry of Environment.

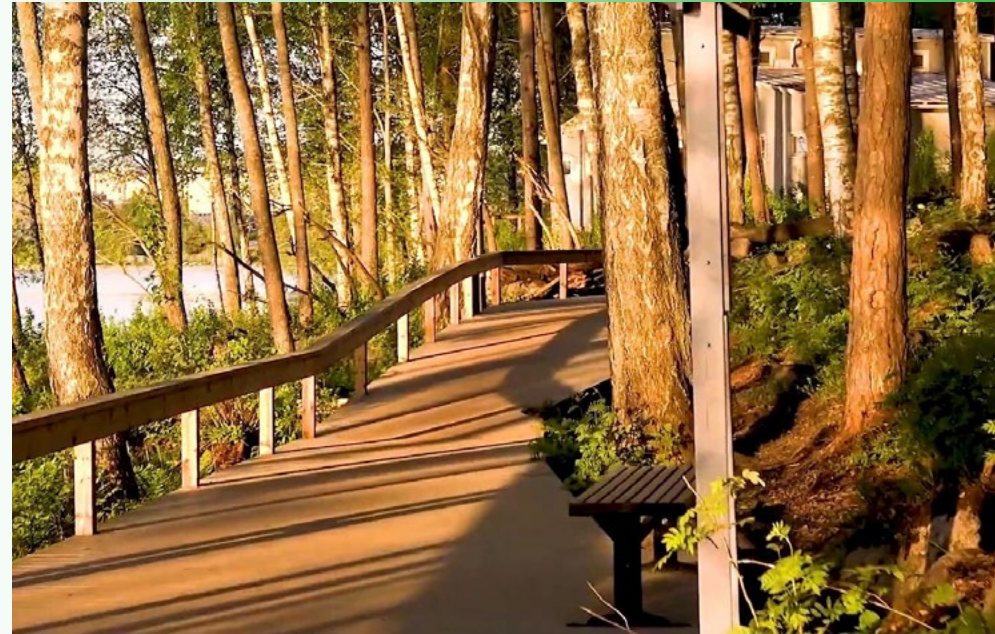
- > Building several new nature trails
- > Developing a nature trail in Pappilanniemi
- > Developing recycling at schools, daycare and libraries
- > New recycling system to fortress and harbor
- > Installing green or recycled art to the city – a competition for artists
- > Presenting lake data on a digital screen at harbor

## Smart Trash Cans Around the City

The City of Lappeenranta constantly develops waste disposal. In October, the city installed ten new trash bins near the city center. The smart trash bins work with solar energy, and they compress trash into small pieces. In addition, they help the planning of the emptying process by informing when they are starting to fill up.

## Saimaa Ringed Seal Sculpture

The Saimaa Ringed Seal (*Pusa hispida saimensis*) is one of the rarest seals in the world. Around 430 seals remain in Lake Saimaa, Finland. City of Lappeenranta is fully committed to the protection of the seal. In December 2021, the City of Lappeenranta ordered a sculptor of a seal from a self-taught artist August Eskelinen, who makes sculptures from logs. For the material, the city offered a log of linden. The city revealed the sculpture on January 25th, 2022 at the city harbor. The sculpture also has a Green Leaf text curved to the other end of the sculpture.









# Climate Change Theme

The city of Lappeenranta works ambitiously to combat climate change by building a green future with courage and action. The city's actions are based on resource wisdom and carbon neutrality. During the European Green Leaf Award Year, the City of Lappeenranta organized events related to climate change especially for citizens, students and businesses.

## **Textile Circular Economy Webinar**

On February 10th, a webinar was organized to provide a snapshot of the current situation and development opportunities of the circular economy of Finnish textiles. The purpose of the webinar was also to consider how the development of the sector could be promoted in South Karelia. The speakers of the event were Project Manager Pirjo Heikkilä from VTT Research Institution, CEO Outi Luukko from Rester Oy, Researcher Helena Dahlbo from Finnish Environment Institute, Expert Satumaija Mäki from Suomen tekstiili ja muoti ry, and Director Eija Palsinajärvi-Äikäs from Saimaan Virta ry. The webinar was chaired by Environmental Director Ilkka Räsänen.

The Textile Circular Economy webinar gained over 200 participants. The presenters of the webinar were high-level experts on textile recycling and circular economy in Finland. The participants were from all over Finland, mostly from Southeastern Finland. The received feedback of the webinar was excellent. The event was organized by the City of Lappeenranta and Circwaste project.

## **Greener Future, Possibilities for Local Companies Webinar**

On March 19th and May 12th, a one-hour webinar was organized for local companies in order to highlight the possibilities of how local companies could benefit from the city's European Green Leaf Award winning title. Lappeenranta has an active Greenreality network for companies working in the energy and environmental sector. The city also offers assistance for any company interested in climate issues. The speakers of the event were Environmental Director Ilkka Räsänen and Director of Stakeholder Relations Johanna Väyrynen. A Mentimeter questionnaire was held during the webinar, with two questions: What would help companies to participate? What defines Lappeenranta the best as a Climate capital of Finland?

## **Climate Coffees**

City of Lappeenranta organized Climate Coffee events almost every other month. Each event had a different environmental theme. The first climate coffee was held virtually on March 25th. When it was possible to organize live events again, the Climate Coffees were held in local cafes.

In the first Climate Coffee, the City of Lappeenranta's new climate program and Green Leaf winner's year events were presented. Environmental Director Ilkka Räsänen presented the City of Lappeenranta's new climate program, and we also heard about the City of Lahti's measures towards a carbon-neutral municipality in 2025. Project manager Kati Korhonen spoke about Green Leaf 2021 events and activities.

The second Climate Coffee event was on May 26th. It was held in a local coffee shop, which is also a Greenreality partner. The topic of the event was clean water and the water protection in Lappeenranta. The third Climate Coffee was organized on June 17th, and its topic was bicycling. It included discussion of bicycle trails, equipment, and bicycle tourism.

The topic of the fourth Climate Coffee was the future of Finnish nature. The Climate Coffee took place on October 14th, and TV meteorologist and writer Kerttu Kotakorpi participated as a guest speaker. Kotakorpi presented her views of Finnish nature in the future: in the 2100's. Other topics of the event were Finnish forests and lakelands. The last Climate Coffee was organized at the Lappeenranta University of Technology on November 4th. It included discussion about solving climate change with science.

## **EU Green Week**

City of Lappeenranta participated in the Opening Event of the EU Green Week. The Opening Event was dedicated to Citizen Science for Zero Pollution, and it took place virtually from Lahti on May 31st. Environmental Protection Manager, Sara Piutunen, participated in the parallel session called "Air Quality Measured by European Citizens/Cities". Piutunen talked about reducing street dust by cooperation with municipality and residents in Lappeenranta. Youth from City of Lahti (Mika Myllyntaus and Miika Hartman) and City of Lappeenranta (Venla Lehkoinen and Anni Wahlman) participated in the closing session. They sat in front of a virtual campfire and discussed the topics of the event.

In May, Lappeenranta launched an international cleaning challenge together with the City of Lahti. The campaign was called #ZeroPollutionHour, and it encouraged citizens to pick up trash from nature for at least an hour in May. The purpose of the challenge was to increase peoples' interest in the cleanliness of their environment. All citizens, students, politicians, authorities, families, schools, jobs, associations, businesses, cities and communities – around the world, were challenged to spend at least one hour collecting garbage. The challenge campaign was an official partner event of the EU Green Week. Most of the participants of the challenge were from Finland, Spain, Belgium, Hungary, Check Republic and Estonia. Altogether 503 garbage bags and 103 face masks were reported to have been collected from the nature.

As a local event of the EU Green Week, City of Lappeenranta launched a “Matt the Plastic” campaign. It challenged residents, businesses, educational institutions, workplaces, neighborhood associations, sports clubs and other communities to collect garbage in a local cleaning campaign during the weekend from May 7th to 9th. It had over 1300 participants. A series of social media posts (7 in total) were aimed at families with children. The posts reached a total of 10 067 users and had 197 engagements.

### **Air Protection Days**

On August 17th and 18th, Environmental Protection Manager Sara Piutunen gave a presentation of the Green Leaf Award Year to the Air Protection Days participants. The event was held as an online event and there were about 150 participants.

### **UpCycle – Circular Economy & Design Event**

Lappeenranta organized an international event about the importance of the design process in developing and marketing circular economy products on the 5th of October. The purpose of the event was to increase the capabilities of companies, professionals and other stakeholders in combining design and marketing with circular economy products. The program included keynote speeches, plenary and parallel sessions and a panel discussion.

At the same time, the event offers great examples of existing circular economy products, which demonstrate the significance of product design in their usability and attractiveness. The event was organized at the Lappeenranta City Hall and streamed virtually.

### **Calculation of Carbon Footprint in the Libraries**

In Autumn 2021 Lappeenranta City Library carried out a study of its carbon footprint and handprint. The entire operation of the library was included in the calculation, such as material purchases, borrowing activities, material transports and library properties. Library services

Photograph: Generaxion Finland





aim to develop their operations towards carbon neutrality and to pinpoint the most significant emission producing functions. In addition, the library wished to examine the positive environmental effects of its services – its carbon handprint – and to gain insight into Lappeenranta City Library's ecological impacts in comparison with those of other libraries around Finland.

The findings were compared with a report produced by Helsinki City Library. The calculations and the comparative analysis were executed by the expert associate of the study, LCA Consulting, who also produced the report on the results. The examination covers all premises of Lappeenranta City Library – the main library, nine branch libraries and a library car. The calculations aim to identify the most significant emission producing functions, and the results of the report enable the establishment of emission targets for library services. These findings also enable the library to evaluate the effectiveness of its emission-reducing efforts in the following years, for example when determining the potential impacts of major overhauls of library buildings or of other renovations. The study was a part of a broader Green Leaf project which strives to promote eco-friendliness within various sectors of the City of Lappeenranta. An event in which the findings were presented to the public was held on November 22nd, 2021. The report of the project will be published on the city's website.

### **Calculation of Carbon Footprint in the Museums**

The Museums of Lappeenranta calculated their carbon footprint. The calculation shows that by far the largest carbon footprint consists of the heating costs of the various properties used by museums. The final calculation was performed by LCA Consulting Oy and has been calculated in accordance with the standards of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) protocol. In 2020, the carbon footprint of Lappeenranta museums was 275 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (275 t CO<sub>2</sub> eq.). Regardless of the standards used in the calculation, it should be noted that the results are not absolute values and uncertainties should be

taken into account when interpreting the results. The calculation has also not been verified by a third party. In the future, the clearest and most significant measures to reduce the carbon footprint would be to convert oil-fired rental premises to district heating or to abandon such premises. In addition, reducing the number of properties in use would reduce the carbon footprint. Another significant measure would be to replace district heating with green district heating, says Museum Director Päivi Partanen.

### **Greenreality Promises by Youth**

The Greenreality pledges website for school classes was designed and built during the spring and summer of 2021. The site was built under the Greenreality website, and an English version of the site was also made. The Greenreality pledges activities were marketed to schools in Lappeenranta. The activities were also announced through a media release and social media posts. Postcard brochures were made so that school classes could send them to schools elsewhere in Finland and Europe to challenge the schools to participate. The Greenreality pledges activities started in the schools of Lappeenranta at the end of 2021 and the expansion of the activities will continue in 2022.

Photograph: Ada Pääskysaari.





# Green Electrification Theme

In Lappeenranta, green electrification is an important step towards a carbon-neutral future. The city uses electricity that is generated with renewable sources such as wind and solar power, to replace electricity generated from fossil fuels. During the European Green Leaf Award Year, the City of Lappeenranta shared innovative and international solutions about green electrification.

## **Future Energy Solutions Conference**

On September 13th and 14th, the City of Lappeenranta hosted the Future Energy Solutions Conference, a high-level event related to green electrification and hydrogen economy. The event demonstrated how to transform air and water into fuels, chemicals, materials and even food. Future Energy Solutions was a hybrid event online and at the Lappeenranta City Hall for around 300 registered participants.

The main objective of the Future Energy Solutions Conference was to share knowledge and promote joint business opportunities and political initiatives. The event focused on answering questions such as: "What are the new and innovative products and storages needed?" and: "How can the European Union and national governments support the transition to smart energy?"

In the conference, companies revealed the most innovative solutions for saving the planet and creating growth in global business. Altogether 33 speakers gave presentations during the event. Keynote

speakers included Catharina Sikow-Magny, Director of DG Energy, Timo Harakka, Finland's Minister of Transport and Communications and Mika Anttonen, the founder and principal shareholder of the energy company St1.

The side event, "Decreasing Carbon Footprint from Housing & Social Infra Buildings, Mobility and Waste Management" was held on September 15th.

### **How Green Cities Lead the Way to European Recovery? Workshop**

City of Lappeenranta (Finland), together with the Cities of Lahti (Finland), Grenoble (France) and Växjö (Sweden), organized the "How green cities lead the way to European recovery?" webinar on October 13th as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities 2021.

The four Green Cities, all Green Capital or Green Leaf winners, organized the webinar in the framework of the 19th edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities to highlight the Green Transition theme. The aim of the event was to show how forerunner green cities enhance the speed of their green transition by utilizing the European Recovery Funding opportunities and European-wide networking possibilities.

Green Capital and Green Leaf cities are recognized for their commitment to ambitious goals and environmental standards. All the Green Cities have set common objectives for the recovery: decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, productivity growth and increasing the employment rate. In the workshop, participants found out the best practices of the recovery and sustainability work of the cities of Lahti and Lappeenranta, Grenoble and Växjö. Each presentation had a different angle to boost the recovery. The webinar was moderated by ICLEI Regional Director for Europe Wolfgang Teubner. This virtual event gathered 125 registered participants, but not all made it to the live event.





## Charging Stations for Electric Bicycles

New charging stations for electric bicycles were installed in Lappeenranta in June. In total three bicycle charging stations were installed in the city center near event areas. One charging station has a charging plug for four bicycles.

The charging stations are free to use, and they are meant for local citizens as well as tourists. The charging stations promote green electrification – one of the main themes for Lappeenranta's Green Leaf Award Year. In addition, they facilitate bicycle tourism, as there are many bicycle routes in Lappeenranta and in the whole province of South Karelia.

## Solar Power Smartphone Charger

Two students from LUT University and LAB University of Applied Sciences had an idea of building a phone charger that would not need to be connected to an external power source. Then it could also be easily moved from place to place. The City of Lappeenranta helped by providing material, and the students built the solar power operated smartphone charging station in LUT University's Jamie Hyneman Center.







# Cultural Events and Actions

The European Green Leaf Award Year was part of sports, music and leisure activities in Lappeenranta. The City of Lappeenranta's participation in these diverse projects allowed reaching new target groups and providing interesting and relevant program for citizens together with partners and local actors.

## **Youth Athletic Games and Videos**

Finland's largest children's and youth athletics competition for 9–17-year-olds was organized in Lappeenranta from July 23rd to 25th. The Finnish Athletics Federation completed the concept according to which the event was carried out. The event was successful, and the Games received lots of positive feedback. The event also had a good financial impact for the local organizing club. The Green Leaf was featured during the three days of the event in the form of other collaborative information videos. In addition, Lappeenranta gained wide visibility for the Green Leaf Award in social media.

## **Picnic Concert at the Fortress**

A relaxed concert was organized in the Lappeenranta Fortress together with Lappeenranta Energy company on August 22nd. The Picnic Concert was organized to celebrate the City of Lappeenranta's Green Leaf Award Year and Lappeenranta Energy's 120th year. In the concert there performed three local music groups. The public could also have a sustainable picnic in the park area. Mascot Möllö Pöötinen from Mannerheim League for Child Welfare's (MLL) South-East District also visited and danced with kids at the Picnic Concert.

## Greenreality Carnival

Lappeenranta's number one Green event for citizens, companies and schools was organized in the City Hall Square for the fourth time. The event was part of the City's open doors' day, which invites citizens to get to know the city administration and actions. In 2021 was organized on 25th August.

The day was filled with diverse program. Numerous businesses and environmental, cultural and leisure actors from South Karelia took part in the carnival. At the event, it was possible to get acquainted with, for example, the Emission-Free Climate Tour, the South Karelia Children's Cultural Center Metku and the Science Program of Lappeenranta Upper secondary schools.

## Lights of Harbor Event Turns Sustainable

The traditional Lights of Harbor event, which ends the summer season, was celebrated on Saturday August 28th at Lappeenranta Harbor area. There were different performances, various workshops and other outdoor activities from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m.

The event offered a wide range of music, dance and circus performances for children, young people and adults, fun workshops, demonstration points and a happy carnival atmosphere in the spirit of a sustainable future throughout the harbor area.

City of Lappeenranta had a stand with a wheel of fortune. By turning this wheel of fortune, it was possible for citizens to make their own small climate promises. Every promise was also rewarded with a small Green Leaf prize, such as a tree seed pencil or bicycle seat cover. Green Leaf partner MLL South-East District had an information stall at the event and organized an art workshop using natural materials. The MLL mascot Möllö Pöötinen was also present.





## Carbon Negative Festival – UUS Festivaali

Uus Festivaali was a festival event which united music, other arts and sciences into a single event. The key goal was to raise awareness of the threatening environmental situation – climate change and extinction of species – and to develop ways to organize festival events in an ecologically sustainable way. At the festival, funds were also raised for the purchase of carbon sinks.

Direct feedback from the audience regarding the festival was generally positive. The open-minded concept and artistic quality of the festival programme was especially praised. Hope for the return of the festival was also often expressed.

Information about the ecological crisis and ways of tackling the problem were also introduced in between the festival program. Student organization Pelletti from LUT University produced the scientific content displayed at the festival.

The event producers were able to generate some new know-how so that similar events could be organized in a sustainable way. For the event of 2021, the special area of focus was recycling, and the organizers gained new skills and knowledge in this particular regard.

### Sustainability Week

In Lappeenranta, Sustainability Week was organized by LUT University and LAB University of Applied Sciences during November 1st and 5th. Each day had a different sustainability theme, and different kinds of occasions and events related to these themes were organized. During the week there were lectures held by specialists, workshops on sustainability challenges in the clothing industry and dealing with environmental anxiety, a flea market, insect hotel building campaigns, waste sorting guidance and a climate-friendly pop-up café.

Some of the week's program was open to all citizens, while some were mainly for students and staff on campus. The events drew attention to the sustainability work on the campus and in the city, and encouraged consumers to think about their own choices and opportunities. Campus restaurants campaigns were also organized during the week. Participants' knowledge of various sustainability issues certainly increased. In addition, the students involved in the arrangements learned a lot about event organizing and are now committed to promoting the sustainability work of LUT and LAB. The program was praised as excellent, so parts of it will certainly be repeated in the coming years. The event is to be made annual.

### **Christmas Calendar in YouTube**

South Karelian Children's Culture Center Metku and the Green Leaf Award Year of the City of Lappeenranta brought ecological values to the winter in the spirit of the new Christmas Calendar. The main character Mielikki Mutta goes through her surroundings observing the seasons and wondering about the world.

The Christmas Calendar is a fictional tale that combines ecological scientific facts and Christmas fiction. The calendar's episodes are in Finnish language, and they can be watched from YouTube anytime.







# Indicators

## Societal Indicators

The events organized during the European Green Leaf Award Year were local, national, and international. The city of Lappeenranta organized either independently or cooperated with several partners 67 events during the year. The events included presentations, webinars, outdoor events, lectures, and cultural events.

## The Biggest Events

The biggest events, both in terms of the arrangements and the number of participants, were Virtual Opening Ceremony, Zero Pollution Hour, Finnish Lakeland Forum, Future Energy Solutions Conference, Closing Event, Green Leaf Picnic Concert, Greenreality Carnival, Harbour Lights and UpCycle Circular Economy & Design.

In all those **67** events, there were about **54 000** participants

About **7700** other participants in the events, such as performers, participants in the arrangements, facilitators, and support staff, took part

There were at least **2500** international participants in the events

Lappeenranta also participated in 30 other outside events and gave the European Green Leaf Award Year presentations for thousands of listeners.

### **Economic Indicators**

Lappeenranta's financial statements for 2021 were a success in history. The best financial statement ever produced a surplus of 25 million euros. The circumstances have been exceptional, and the figures do not tell the whole truth about the state of the municipal economy. The employment rate improved from the weak situation in 2020. In 2021, the average unemployment rate in Lappeenranta was 11,4 %, compared to 13,7 % in 2020.

During 2021, there was an increase in the green procurement in the City of Lappeenranta by 20 %. The green procurement was used in two investment cases. A wooden school was opened in the Joutseno neighborhood for 800 pupils and 110 adults.

The tourism was heavily affected by the covid situation, but the number of Finnish tourists increased from 2020. Some Green tourism indicators:

18 000 visitors in the Saimaarium Nature Center  
2077 visitors in the new archipelago cycling route with a ferry (151 km).  
14 companies participated in the Sustainable Travel Finland Training  
2 tourism companies as Greenreality partnership companies.

### **Environmental Indicators**

The main monitored environmental indicators are greenhouse gas emissions, material recycling rate, air quality, water quality and the number of nature protection areas.

The greenhouse gas emissions decreased 1 % from 2019 to 2020. The average emissions are 3,9 t CO<sub>2</sub> ekv/a/inhabitant. Material recycling rate increased 1 % during 2021 and was 55 % in 2021. Water qual-



ity at Lake Pien-Saimaa improved as the visibility increased. Increase in the visibility means that the nutrient level in the Pien-Saimaa decreased.

Air quality in Lappeenranta was mainly good during 2021. Most of the problems occurred during spring because of the street dust. Although the air quality was good, the concentration of the fine particles increased. Some improvements were made to the traffic noise prevention.

The City of Lappeenranta decided to establish three new nature protection areas during 2021. Other stakeholders decided to protect 120 hectares of forests in Lappeenranta during 2021.





# Media and Visibility

Greenreality Lappeenranta focused on implementing the Green Leaf Award Year and communicating about the related action throughout the year. The city's main communications and marketing messages emphasized that Lappeenranta is a winner of the European Green Leaf Award 2021 and one of the greenest cities in Europe. In advertising, the European Green Leaf brand was always used to convey the key message.

## Communication Objectives

In Lappeenranta, the Award Year's communication objectives were to get stronger visibility nationally and internationally for the City of Lappeenranta, and to make it clear that Lappeenranta wants to act as an ambassador for green action. Because of this, another communication objective was that the Greenreality actions of the city become more widely known and can be replicated in other countries. The city's brand message was redesigned to include the European Green Leaf Award 2021 win.

The communication objectives were also related to the city's attractiveness. The objective was that the city and the Greenreality Network of environmental businesses, attract more energy and environmental investment and businesses to the region. In addition, the objective was that as one of the greenest cities in Europe Lappeenranta attracts students, tourists and new residents. Residents' participation was also one of the communication objectives so that residents want to engage in the Green City actions and spread the message.

Locally the messages to local residents, educational institutes, businesses, stakeholders and media. Nationally the messages were targeted to media, ministries, central government agencies, representative organizations, the Confederation of Finnish Industries, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, energy and environment companies and other actors. Internationally actors of the European Union, business and cooperation networks, sister and twinning cities and international media.

### Media Releases

Media releases were sent locally and nationwide in Finnish, and for international distribution in English. They were sent through distribution lists for local, national and international media, and published also on the City's website and Greenreality's website. During the Green Leaf Award Year 2021, there were 50 media releases published in Finnish mainly because of the Green Leaf Award year and 103 "Green action" media releases. In total 20 English-translated and international media releases were published.

The media releases in Finnish were targeted from local citizens to nationwide audiences. They were shared to one or more of the following regions: Lappeenranta, South Carelian province, or/and Finland. The media releases for international audiences in English were sent to one or more of the following regions: Finland, Europe, or/and 20 379 media in areas of energy and environment.

**103** "Green action" press releases

**50** press releases about the Award Year 2021

**20** press releases published in English





## Social Media

Social media was a relevant way for sharing information about the European Green Leaf Year, and the objective was to have an active presence in social media. Social media communication was based on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. The accounts of City of Lappeenranta and Greenreality Lappeenranta were used in the European Green Leaf communication. The official social media accounts of City of Lappeenranta are used for sharing information to citizens. Greenreality brand's social media accounts contain topics of administrative, environmental and business services related to the city's Greenreality brand.

The city's official social media accounts were mainly used to share European Green Leaf news and press releases and promote high-level

events, while current and specific European Green Leaf topics and actions were shared primarily on Greenreality's social media accounts. This combination was ideal, because the city's official accounts have a larger amount of followers. Secondly, it was functional to dedicate Greenreality Lappeenranta's accounts widely for European Green Leaf communication, because this way it was possible to publish often and a lot.

Twitter was the most important channel to reach an international audience. Because of this, the communication on Twitter was in English. The primary channel to promote local events was Facebook. The goal was to reach other target groups in addition to existing followers. To increase visibility, the Facebook page of Greenreality Lappeenranta was made co-organizer in events that were created with partners.

In addition, Facebook and Instagram were used in sharing nature photos to engage an active audience. This way, the goal was to share topical and local news, and inspire people to pay attention to climate friendly behavior.

On LinkedIn, companies and experts were the main target audience in communication. Therefore, environmental news and high-level events that were related to the business sector were shared and promoted on LinkedIn.

YouTube was an important channel for publishing video material, because the City of Lappeenranta produced various video projects during the Award Year.

## Video Productions

In total 45 videos (Christmas calendar not included) were made during the European Green Leaf Year and around 35 virtual events were implemented. All videos can be found in Greenreality and City of Lappeenranta YouTube channels.

## Examples of Videos

Lappeenranta –  
European Green  
Leaf Award 2021  
winner November  
2nd, 2020

Green Leaf  
opening ceremony  
video December  
31st, 2020

Greenreality  
Lappeenranta -  
Winner City of Euro-  
pean Green Leaf 2021  
May 11th, 2021



Future  
Energy Solutions  
Conference  
September 13th,  
2021

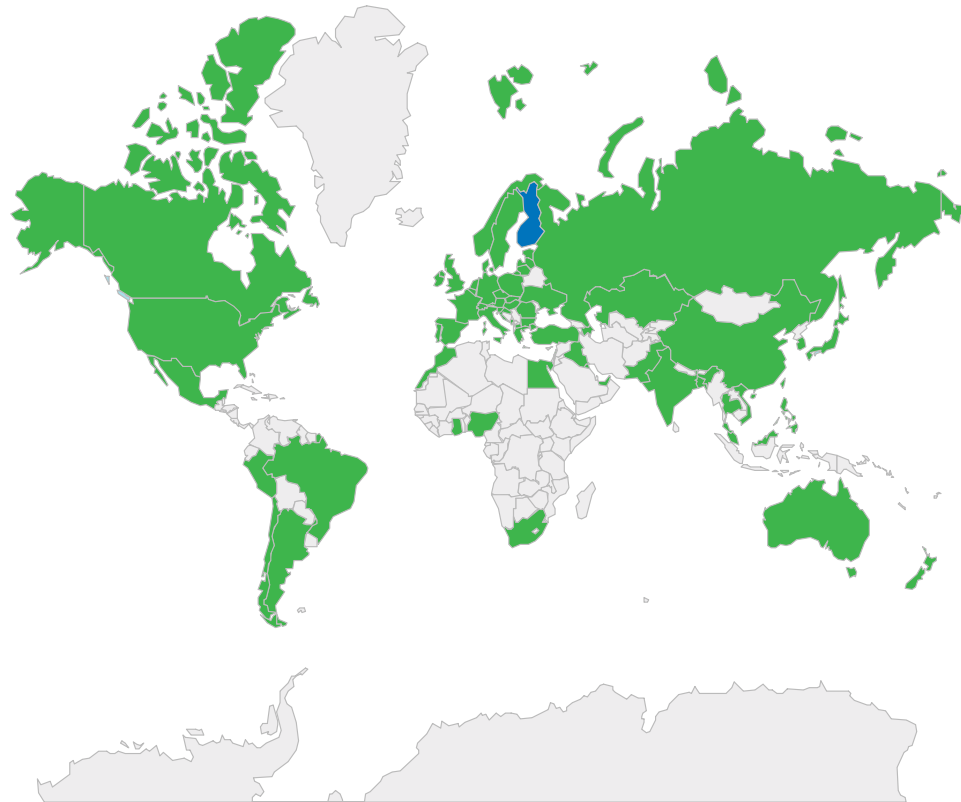
Christmas  
Calendar  
videos (24)  
December  
1st December  
24th, 2021

Turning a New  
Leaf – A Look into  
the Future (Clos-  
ing Ceremony)  
December 10th,  
2021

European Green  
Leaf Award Year  
2021 in Lappeen-  
ranta January  
14th, 2022

## Website

The European Green Leaf site of the city was created at Greenreality.fi in Finnish and English. The Green Leaf website provided more general information about what is going on with the Green Leaf year. On the front page there was an introduction section that shortly described basic information about the Green Leaf Award Year. From the introduction section and the website's top menu, there was a redirection to a complete European Green Leaf site. Events of the award year were displayed in an event calendar that was designed for the website.



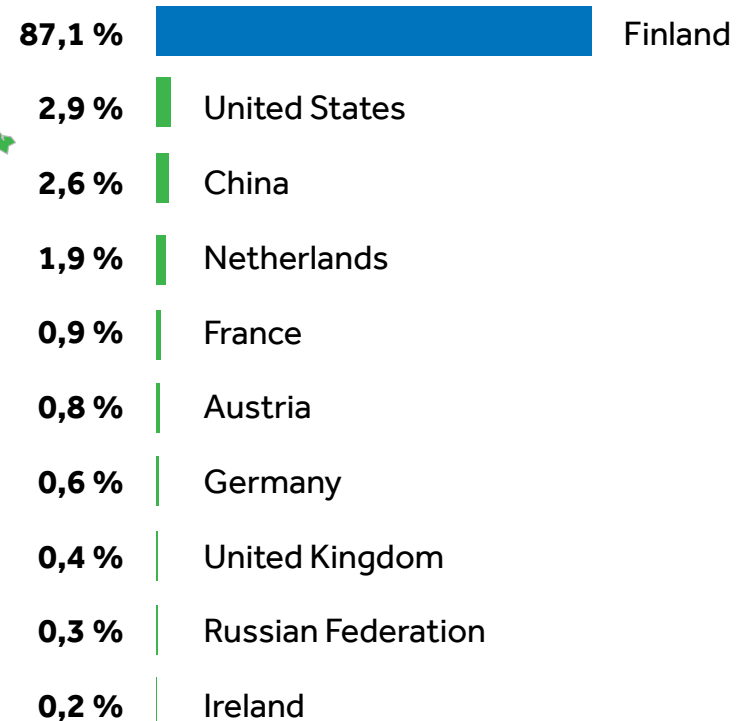
## Visibility Examples Internationally

Lappeenranta and Green Leaf was the topic or mentioned in 106 articles (digital media) in 10 countries in 2021.

There were 11 351 visitors on Greenreality websites in 2021. The visitors were from 79 different countries.

Examples of larger international visibility are Lahti Ski Games from January 22nd to 24th, 2021 and French TF1 News on November 1st, 2021.

## Visits | % in total





## Visibility Around the City

The European Green Leaf Award year was visible around the city. The City of Lappeenranta had advertising in central transport locations and outdoor installations such as bus stops, the main street, and the railway station and bus station. The Winner logo was used throughout the communications and especially in marketing materials. Lappeenranta's streetscape advertising used the Finnish-language Winner logo, other advertising and/or international advertising used the English-language logo.

**85** winner-logo ads around the city, city hall, media, street train, sandcastle, boats, bicycles (city bikes and electric box bicycle), bus stops, rubbish bins, street light posts

**20** Green Leaf partners used the Green Leaf Lappeenranta logo in their ads

## Marketing Materials and Other Visibility of the Logo

The Winner logo was used throughout communications and especially in marketing materials. Lappeenranta's streetscape advertising used the Finnish-language Winner logo, other advertising and/or international advertising used the English-language logo.

City of Lappeenranta brochure **500**

Green Leaf Lappeenranta, EU brochure **1000**



Christmas cards



Honey jars



Recycling bags



Bicycle saddle covers



Hoodies, t-shirts, college shirts



Teams Background



The city organization



Companies in the Lappeenranta area



Websites of the City of Lappeenranta and Greenreality and partner companies



Email signatures: City staff including city owned companies



Plantable pencils with tree-seeds







# Evaluation

The City of Lappeenranta has involved citizens as decision-makers in different workshops and virtual lectures about their environment's cleanliness and pleasantness. Feedback about the European Green Leaf actions and activities was sought directly from citizens and the European Green Leaf steering group via questionnaires. In spring and autumn of 2021, the city asked its residents for feedback about the environmental actions and their visibility for citizens. According to the results, it was highly important for the citizens that Lappeenranta is making progress towards the environmental goals and that the city is seen as a pioneer in sustainable development.

The steering group's answers highlighted that Lappeenranta received increased recognition as an active advancer of environmental topics. In addition, the steering group highlighted the positive and international media presence that Lappeenranta gained during the Award Year. According to the steering group's feedback, the city's upper management's commitment to the European Green Leaf year was a success.

On the other hand, some results stated that their own organization's commitment to the Award Year could still have been stronger, even though the year was present as part of discussions and event productions. Overall, the steering group was pleased with the implementation of the European Green Leaf Award Year in Lappeenranta. According to the steering group, the improvement of outdoor activities, possibilities and the cooperation with education were one of the highlights of the award year. The steering group also hoped for continuity for many Green Leaf actions and activities, such as the Future Energy Solutions Conference, the workshops of European Week of Regions and Cities, participatory budgeting and efficient communication.

# Lessons Learned

In Lappeenranta, one of the main goals for the European Green Leaf Award Year was to gain increased international attention to be able to share sustainable and innovative solutions across Europe and the world. The City of Lappeenranta achieved increased international attention such as in news articles, television news reportage, and networking. The city obtained presence and actively participated in local and European networks with politicians and professionals of climate, environment and urban development.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the city started the Award Year with virtual events. Between January and March 2021, all public events with more than six people were prohibited. During summer, it was possible to organize events with more people and in August, the City was able to organize several big outdoor events. Despite the global Covid-19 pandemic, the City of Lappeenranta was able to organize many local and international Green Leaf events in total. Because of Covid restrictions, it was challenging to keep citizens interested in webinar productions. Secondly, even though some restrictions were removed, some recommendations remained during the whole European Green Leaf Year. This might have resulted in tenderness to participate in live events when it was possible to organize them again.

On the other hand, the importance of nature became even more significant for people during the restrictions of the pandemic. This resulted in a demand or at least a very receptive attitude towards the improved and new nature areas that were reconstructed and built during the European Green Leaf Award Year.

While organizing the year, it was practical and functional to have a specific European Green Leaf project team that always had up-to-date knowledge about the occurring activities. This made information sharing and participating in cooperation possibilities and partnerships easy.

Most importantly, the European Green Leaf Award Year has taught that having the courage to participate counts the most. City of Lappeenranta actively participated in innovative brainstorming and making ideas into reality. A strong will, purpose and positive attitude lead to successful achievements.



# Thank You to All Our Partners

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