

ZEROCO₂ Final newsletter for Finland

How did we do?

Goals of ZEROCO₂ in South Ostrobothnia, Finland

In Finland, we had 6 goals that we set out to accomplish through the ZEROCO₂ project. The main goal, common to all ZEROCO₂ partners, was to define the term Near Zero CO₂ Emission Building (NZCO₂EB) due to energy use and to show its benefit. All project actions and regional goals worked around this main goal. The five regional goals were 1) to impact and improve the Regional Strategy of South Ostrobothnia, 2) to support regional co-operation to improve the implementation of the Regional strategy, 3) to promote new projects which are targeted at developing innovative energy solutions in buildings, 4) to create a guide for best practice with the goal of including it as a tool for the Regional Strategy and 5) to work in close cooperation with the Regional Strategy monitoring teams of the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia.



Stakeholder event in Seinäjoki

Reaching the goals

The main goal of defining NZCO₂EB was reached in a part as all our studies, reports, events and activities focused on the topic of what is a ZEROCO₂ building, how to achieve this type of building and why. The stakeholders involved in the project have gained an understanding of the term, and the term was included in the updated version of the Regional Strategy of South Ostrobothnia. However, the term has not been widely accepted as for example the term Near Zero Energy buildings.

In fact, the concept of NZCO₂EB is more important than the term itself. And ZEROCO₂ project has done its share in impacting society with ways to facilitate the creation of such buildings.

In relation to the 5 regional goals, the project has achieved all 5 of the goals. 1) The regional strategy was

impacted. NZCO₂EB concept was included in the updated version and the project also helped in identifying energy related indicators, to better evaluate the impact of the strategy on the energy and building sector. 2) The work done in the project has relied on cooperation with local and regional stakeholders and bringing them together discuss the project topics and the relation to the regional strategy. 3) This goal has been achieved in the form of a submitted proposal of a H2020 project (submitted 15.1.2020), in which a multi-apartment residential building from our Region will take important steps towards becoming an NZCO₂EB. 4) A common guide for all partners was created and the content was presented to the local stakeholders. It was not directly included as a tool for the Regional Strategy, but the content helped in impacting the Regional Strategy. 5) The Regional Strategy Monitoring Teams were combined into an external expert team. We participated actively in this TEAM.

Our keys to success

The main key to success was active cooperation and communication both locally as well as between partners. Locally we worked with our local stakeholder group and participated in the Regional Strategy Monitoring Team that was called together by the regional authority The Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia. Through these groups we were able to successfully impact the Regional Strategy and fulfil all the rest of our goals.

When asked for it we also provided written feed-back on draft versions of the updated Regional Strategy.

To further impact Regional Policy, we handed a short and do-able policy recommendation document to the Regional Mayor. The policy recommendations were derived from the findings of the project.

Luck was also on our side as during the project lifetime a section of the Regional Strategy underwent an update, which we were able to impact.

In conclusion

On a whole, we were able to reach the goals we set for ourselves in the ZEROCO₂ project. However, though the project was drawn to an end, the topic of reducing CO₂ emissions caused by building energy use remains. And we hope to see the realisation of NZCO₂EB in our region in the future.

Content

How did we do.....	1
Action plan	2
Policy recommendations	2
What we are especially proud of	2
Thank you	3
Contact.....	3

Thank you!

Thank you for joining us on the ZEROCO₂ journey towards buildings using renewable energy as the source of energy.

Tools of impact and other points of success

Action plans

Action plans were created at the end of the first part of the project as a tool to be used to monitor the results of the project. The activity plan for South Ostrobothnia Finland had 7 actions.

Action one

Description: Helping the Regional Council define Energy related indicators for the Regional Strategy and to helping with the first follow up of these indicators.

Status: This activity was completed. The chosen energy indicators were 1) electricity consumption in South Ostrobothnia, 2) the use of wood fuels in heat and power utilities in South Ostrobothnia, 3) Green house gas emissions in South Ostrobothnia and 4) the production of renewable energy in South Ostrobothnia. The first follow-up was completed in fall 2019.

Action two

Description: Participate in the expert group to create the Regional implementation plan 2019-2020. As invited by the Regional Council.

Status: This activity was completed. The Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia held one hearing event on this topic and it was attended.

Action three

Description: Participating in the external expert team for mid-term evaluation of the Regional Strategy/Regional programme 2018-2021.

Status: This task was not completed. The mid-term evaluation did not take place during the project timeframe.

Action four

Description: Impacting the new regional government in issues related to renewable energy, CO2 emissions and climate change.

Status: This action was not completed. A large change in local and regional government structure was planned to take place at the beginning of 2019. However, this did not happen, and the National government resigned a few months before elections.

Action five

Description: Sharing inspiration from the identified Good practice "Sustainable Municipalities".

Status: This action was completed. The Good Practice was identified during the first phase of the project and uploaded onto the Interreg Europe Good Practice Platform. Sustainable municipalities were presented at the Interregional Cooperation for Energy Transit event in Florence in June 2018. It was the topic of a Peer review in the German speaking community in the East of Belgium in May 2019 and it has also been presented as an example for municipalities in other municipalities in our region.

Action six

Description: Providing energy related information for the single-family home builders platform being developed by Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences.

Status: This action was completed. We provided information for the platform in relation to deciding on the type of energy system to choose for your home. The test version is currently running. In the first stage it will be used as a teaching aid and in the second stage it will be opened for consumers.

Action seven

Description: Collection indicators for the Regional Energy and Climate Strategy of South Ostrobothnia.

Status: This action was completed. In cooperation with the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia a report on the indicators was compiled.

Policy Recommendations

Phase one of the project we handed a short document of policy recommendations to the Regional Mayor of South Ostrobothnia. The recommendations were as follows.

1. The term "near ZERO CO2 building due to energy use" should be taken into use to accompany the term "near zero energy building".
2. The energy indicators written into the Regional Programme of South Ostrobothnia and the Energy and Climate Strategy of South Ostrobothnia should be followed and evaluated continuously.
3. By supporting the concept of near ZERO CO2 buildings the Region of South Ostrobothnia can take important steps towards a carbon free region.



Handing the policy recommendations to the Regional Mayor Antti Saartenoja and to MEP Anneli Jäätteenmäki.

At least the second and third points of the recommendations have been put into action in our region.

What we are especially proud of

If asked which points in the project we are especially proud of, I'd have to highlight at least the active cooperation of our local stakeholder group, the positive reception of our identified good practice "Sustainable municipalities" and the impact we were able to have on our regional policy instrument would be the first.

Other points worth mentioning are the interest that Mr. Jyrki Kauppinen from the ministry of Environment has shown by attending two of our events and the possibility to have Mrs. Anneli Jäätteenmäki (MEP until 2019) attend our project meeting in Finland.

Thank you

As co-operation was essential for the success of the project, we thank the whole ZERO CO2 team and all the organisations and people that participated in our events and activities. The project has reached its end. But the road to reaching ZERO CO2 emission buildings still stretches out before us with more challenges and possibilities for success.



ZERO CO2 partner countries.

Contact information of Project partners

Partner	Country	Contact
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