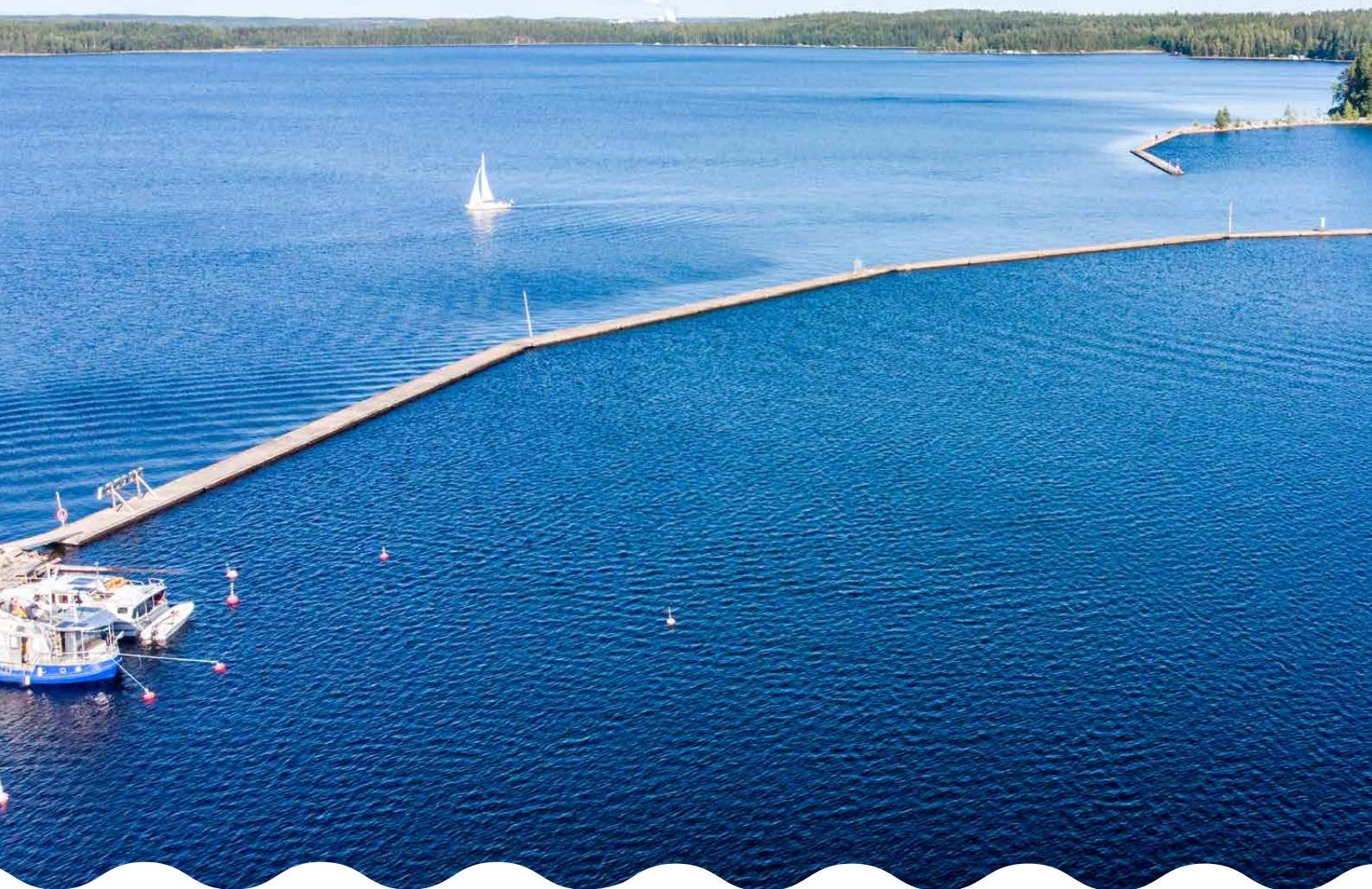


REGIONAL ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

GOSAIMAA – LAPPEENRANTA & IMATRA REGION



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Regional roadmap for responsible tourism

This joint regional roadmap for responsible tourism is developed by goSaimaa together with the cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra and the Regional Council of South Karelia. The aim of the roadmap is to identify the biggest sustainability challenges in tourism in Lappeenranta and Imatra, and to set a common long-term goal to respond to them. This map focuses on sustainable tourism in the cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra. This is the first time that a roadmap on sustainable tourism is being produced and can be developed to reflect the wider sustainability sub-area.

The roadmap has been developed as part of the goSaimaa's Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) regional pathway and is integrated as part of goSaimaa's development plan and the Glasgow Declaration Climate Action Plan. goSaimaa was responsible for compiling the roadmap and coordinating its participation. Key actor interviews were used: representatives of the cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra were key persons on behalf of the cities, and a transport expert from the Regional Council of South Karelia was consulted. The work was carried out in cooperation with the public sector and development organizations in the region, and the stakeholders' expert input to the baseline is considerable.

STEP 1.

Defining the initial situation of the region.
Setting the goal.

How to solve step 1.

Making sure all aspects are taken into consideration, expanding the roadmap themes if necessary.

- Public transportation as a key role factor.
- Cycling as a supporter of sustainable tourism.
- Sustainable event coordination as whole.

STEP 2.

Finding the best solutions for the development and starting to implement those for the main aim.

- Concrete examples of development work.
- Cooperation in regional level.

How to solve step 2.

Encouraging and training of tourism companies to become sustainable.

- Taking part to Visit Finland's Sustainable Travel Finland -path.
- CO2-calculations.
- Certification.

2030

Sustainable tourism destination.
Together we can make it happen.



**2nd
STEP**



**1st
STEP**



2023

Reducing of carbon footprint
of tourism in the region.



Target to reduce carbon footprint

The common regional goal is that the cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra will be carbon neutral in 2030. In addition, South Karelia is also a Hinku province. To become a Hinku region, the Hinku criteria must be met. The key objective of the Hinku program is for South Karelia to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 2007 levels by 2030. This target will be achieved by promoting sustainable mobility in both cities.

South Karelia's sustainable tourism cooperation target is to halve the carbon footprint of tourism by 2030, in line with the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Change.

The baseline is 0.09 kg CO₂ e/km, 4-10/2022 measurement/goSaimaa. The target is to halve the carbon footprint of tourism by 2030.

The City of Lappeenranta is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The carbon neutrality target will be monitored by one of the strategy's main indicators, CO₂ emission reductions. The target will be implemented through a climate program and the NetZero Cities action plan to be developed during 2023. The Glasgow Commitment Action Program will be coordinated with other climate programs.

Regional carbon footprint & promotion of low-carbon tourism mobility

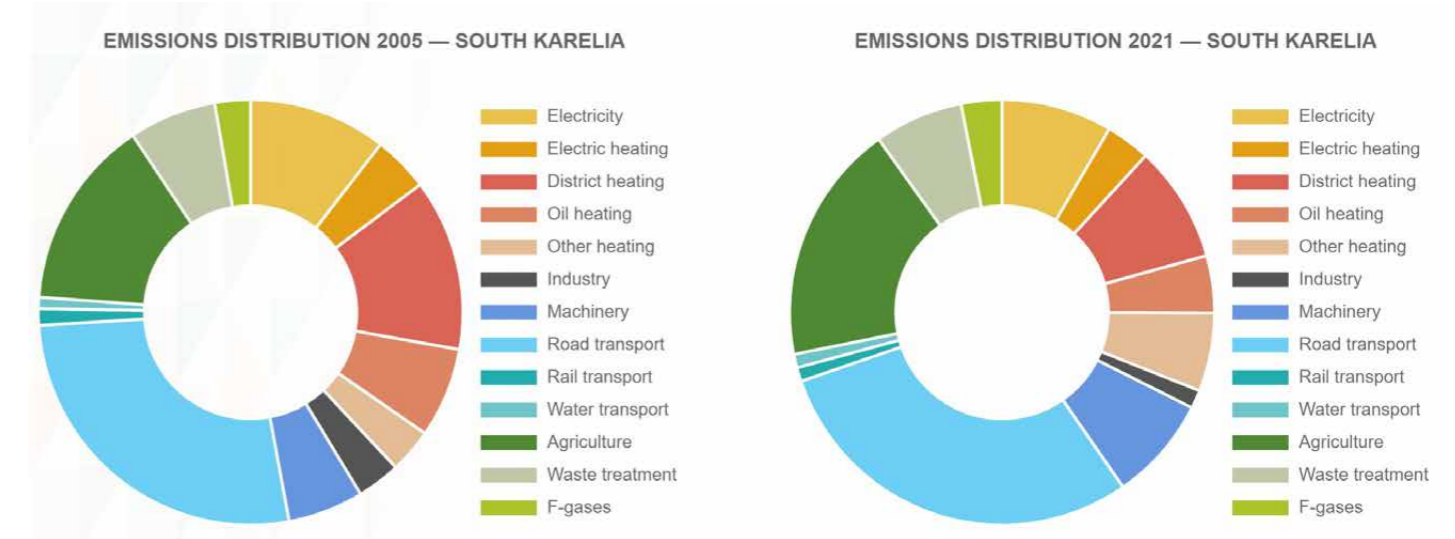


Photo 1. Distribution of emissions in South Karelia Photo and additional information link: [SYKE carbon-neutral Finland](#).

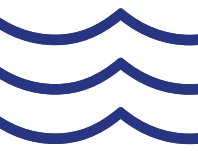
A major challenge - and opportunity - for the tourism sector is the development of low-carbon travel modes and services. Transport accounts for about a quarter of all emissions in South Karelia (Photo 1), but transport accounts for about half of the total emissions from tourism. Emissions from transport come from road, rail, and water transport, but most emissions come from road transport.

As transport emissions account for about half of total tourism emissions, it is very important to reduce these emissions by encouraging tourists to travel by public transport, especially by using the rail network. Essential information can be obtained by comparing the extent to which tourists use public transport or hire cars. This information will allow us to measure the carbon footprint of the tourist. The carbon footprint can also be calculated from the services provided by cities for urban

mobility and local transport. The city of Lappeenranta is therefore aiming for carbon neutral public transport by 2030. A common ticketing system between the cities of Imatra and Lappeenranta is a key measure to enable easy public transport for tourists.

Lappeenranta has a Greenreality network, where companies, communities and residents work together to create a sustainable tomorrow, and the network already has a good number of companies in the area. Greenreality is about ecological thinking, information, responsible choices and, above all, action for a sustainable tomorrow. Together with businesses, communities, and residents, we are building the future with green thinking.

Read more:
[Greenreality](#)

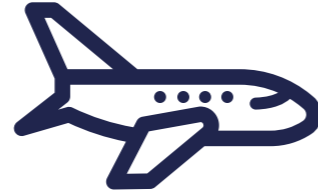


Sustainable destination and sustainability in South Karelia

The City of Lappeenranta will implement joint public transport between the cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra from 2023 and one ticket product will contribute significantly to the development of sustainable mobility. The level of emissions from road transport will be measured annually. A mobility survey will be carried out in Lappeenranta every 4 years with the aim of increasing the modal share of walking, cycling and public transport to 55% by 2030. In the area, travelers are encouraged to use public transport to get around the destination. This is made possible by the wide range of ticketing outlets: Aalef, Ridango, mobile ticketing, Onni ticketing service. The Digi Transit guide to local transport is easily downloadable on mobile. Default options to promote sustainable mobility, guiding you to choose sustainable transport as a priority. Intra-regional flexible travel options, e.g., on-call taxi and the Mobility with Mobility brochure will also be made available to travelers. Comprehensive development of ticketing products suitable for tourists and financial benefits for the public in future ticket prices, e.g., local bus ticket and theatre ticket at a joint price, through service formats.

Signposts and brochures on how tourists can get to destinations without their own car will become more common. The Lappeenranta buses brochure and the Travel with Jouko brochure are examples. goSaimaa, Visit Lappeenranta and Imatra city brochures and map material for tourists are varied and constantly being developed.

One of the regional objectives is accessibility, and this is where joint public transport between the cities is a keyword. Throughout the region, the aim is to make it possible to travel to and within the region by rail. A provincial commuter rail service has been explored, with the aim of reducing the carbon footprint of the travel chain. Once people have arrived by air, it would be ideal to be able to use rail transport. The development of a regional commuter rail service is under way, with new sta-



tions being developed in Lappeenranta and Imatra region, including a station in the Rauha area, which would again serve businesses in the region. Other projects under development include a rail station in Taavetti and a direct link from Simpele railway station in Rautjärvi to Hiitolanjoki. Expansion of the electric car and charging network for those who do not come by rail is under development. Connected parking for those coming from a little further afield is planned at the stands. And these parking facilities will consider electric charging.

In Lappeenranta, a study is being carried out on the locations and number of charging points for electric cars. In the smaller municipalities in our region, research has also been carried out into the extent to which tourism entrepreneurs are willing to invest in their business with sustainable values and specifically enable, for example, electric car charging as part of their business.

In Lappeenranta, in terms of air transport, a comparison can be made between the travel chain Central Europe-LPP and Central Europe-HEL to see how much the emissions of travelers coming to our region are. Comparing those who arrive by car from Helsinki with those who come by air directly to Lappeenranta, what are the emission shares between the two routes. The sustainability targets can be achieved by renting a city bike, electric car sharing, carpooling and by preferring VR's zero-emission transport when arriving in Lappeenranta or Imatra and between the cities.

The biggest step for the whole region is the development of local transport.

Nature sites and carbon throats

The City of Lappeenranta promotes easy access to nature sites, the accessibility of sites, the creation of new routes, and informs and markets nature sites together with goSaimaa and the City of Imatra. The city will implement the Winter harbor concept and create multi-use trails to promote mobility on Saimaa also in winter. The concept aims to highlight local actors and develop new activities. Events that encourage sustainable mobility, such as the Saimaa Friendship Cycling, will encourage visitors to explore natural sites. A weekly program of guaranteed activity departures will start from the Sandcastle, taking you on nature walks in the summer and introducing Saimaa UNESCO Global Geopark sites. In the future, digitally purchased tourist services and sustainably produced excursions and programs will be easily accessible. Services will be produced sustainably for the enjoyment of residents and tourists alike.

Imatra will develop the Vuoksi river region as a sustainable tourist destination. An extensive network of nature trails and multi-purpose transport has been created in the area, providing access not only for walkers but also for cyclists, for example. In Imatra, a town stream has been built on the Vuoksi river to safeguard the rare trout population of the Vuoksi. Fishing piers have been built on the main river, as well as mobile boating platforms made of larch, which can be used for various events. Diving tourism on the Vuoksi will be promoted by cleaning up sites on the bottom of the Vuoksi and improving their tourist visibility. Underwater cleaning of the Vuoksi has already been organized by divers and will be encouraged in the future to ensure the sustainability of the national heritage. A suspension bridge over the old Vuoksi riverbed is planned to link the extensive network of nature trails in Vuoksi.

Lappeenranta has worked to improve the water quality of Lake Saimaa and has included this in its strategy. In Imatra, sustainable use of the Vuoksi area and the Imatrakoski national landscape has been taken forward. In

the area, progress is being made with the development of guidelines for sustainable use, which will be prepared for tourists, residents, and entrepreneurs.

Work has begun to clean up the water in the dammed Gulf of Mello on the Vuoksi. The Mellonlahti area is being developed as a green oasis, connecting with the Imatrakoski National Landscape. At the same time, the city is developing recreational opportunities in the area and promoting fishing tourism. In Imatra, the wooden school is already a green project that will hopefully encourage the continued production of new sustainable buildings in our area.

The service buildings of the City of Lappeenranta (swimming pool, library, museum, City Theatre, Lappeenranta Hall, Harbor Stage, Summer Theatre, Fortress buildings) will be carbon neutral by 2025.

Overall, the combination of nature and urbanity in the Lappeenranta and Imatra region is something unique. Finland's largest lake, Lake Saimaa, on whose shores Lappeenranta and Imatra are located, is a tourist attraction. In the future, the region will develop not only Saimaa nature tourism, but also green areas, for example around Vuoksi, and create destinations where, in cooperation with entrepreneurs, the green transition is realized, and the destinations are accessible and sustainable. Both Imatra and Lappeenranta want to develop the implementation of green oases. Not only the Saimaa, but also the Vuoksi, the largest river in Finland in terms of water flow - the sustainability of both is important.





Photo: The City of Imatra

Sustainable services and events

In Imatra, responsibility has been made familiar to companies through, for example, various projects. The project work has resulted in a focus on sustainability and has involved a small group of entrepreneurs who are now implementing sustainable actions. As one practical example, at a winter event in Imatra in February 2023, the company organized a light show with LED lights instead of fireworks. These small but significant actions have taken the company in a greener direction. The challenge is to get entrepreneurs involved in green actions. The aim is to show entrepreneurs how to make this green transition in practice. In Imatra, it is felt that entrepreneurs can be more widely involved on the green path, if they are given sufficient knowledge and practical tips on how to do things sustainably. Imatra has piloted an eco-friendly event for two years, where a business can continue to organize the event by piloting a sustainability target set by the city. Imatra is making tourism in the Vuoksi region sustainable through common rules and reforms.

Sustainable Vuoksi - criteria and rules for a sustainable Vuoksi - how to act when coming to Vuoksi as a tourist, entrepreneur or local. Vuoksi is an increasingly important destination for tourism and a wide range of leisure activities. The City of Imatra is developing sustainable use and accessibility so that more and more tourists can easily visit Vuoksi. Guidelines for sustainable event organization are in place in the Vuoksi area.

The City of Lappeenranta has sustainable event guidelines and encourages carbon-neutral events when renting event areas and in event partnerships. People are encouraged to arrive at events on foot, by bike or by public transport. Event organizers have access to city equipment and sustainable event spaces. A discount on event space hire is available if you follow the sustainable event guidelines. The combined ticketing products, event, and transit, already mentioned above, are constantly evolving. Bike parks at event sites will link the whole.

Cycling supports sustainable tourism

The wonderful cycling routes in our region support sustainable tourism, and access to the routes is sign-posted and encouraged other than by car. Along the routes, tourists can explore the area by bike and public transport is encouraged and guided along the routes. Routes and maps will be available alongside the Saimaa Cycle Tour, and new cycling packages and events will be created. Discussions have been held with VR to add bicycle parking to long-distance trains and this was done in the summer of 2022. The Saimaa Cycle Tour brings hundreds of cycling enthusiasts to the area in the summer, including international ones, and it is hoped that an extra train carriage will be added to the long-distance trains during the event to carry bikes only. Negotiations are underway with VR. Cycling enthusiasts do not want to hire a rental bike to replace their own hobby bike in the area. The rolling stock of the commuter trains planned for the region is better suited to transporting bicycles than the existing long-distance trains. Passenger rail transport is seen as having potential in the region; for example, when travelling between Lappeenranta and Imatra, you can take your bike with you on the commuter train and return from work with your bike if you wish, which lowers the threshold for using public transport and bicycles significantly.



Photo: The City of Lappeenranta

goSaimaa as a developer of sustainable tourism in the region

goSaimaa, the Lappeenranta and Imatra region, cooperate across industry boundaries all the time - effectiveness and resource efficiency are continuously developed. goSaimaa organizes training to make it easier for entrepreneurs to develop and become accessible. goSaimaa's partner companies are encouraged to take actions in the STF pathway and as a regional tourism developer goSaimaa has resources available to implement the sustainability pathway in companies. Tourism businesses can also calculate their carbon footprint. Visit Finland's carbon footprint calculator for tourism businesses is available online, and goSaimaa can guide businesses in implementing the carbon footprint calculator.

CO2 calculator

In this general roadmap, we are making the whole picture more familiar so that we can move from words to deeds - all entrepreneurs are encouraged to join Visit Finland's STF path.

The challenges to success at regional level are that goSaimaa, for example, has limited responsibility as an organization, it works to encourage businesses but is unable to take responsibility on behalf of tourism businesses. However, sufficient training and expertise is valid and will continue to be provided. As a region, we will identify partners and work to ensure that funding for sustainable tourism can be found and is ongoing. We encourage every entrepreneur in the region to have a low threshold contact with e.g., goSaimaa to help entrepreneurs towards a more sustainable tourism destination. The cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra are involved in this.

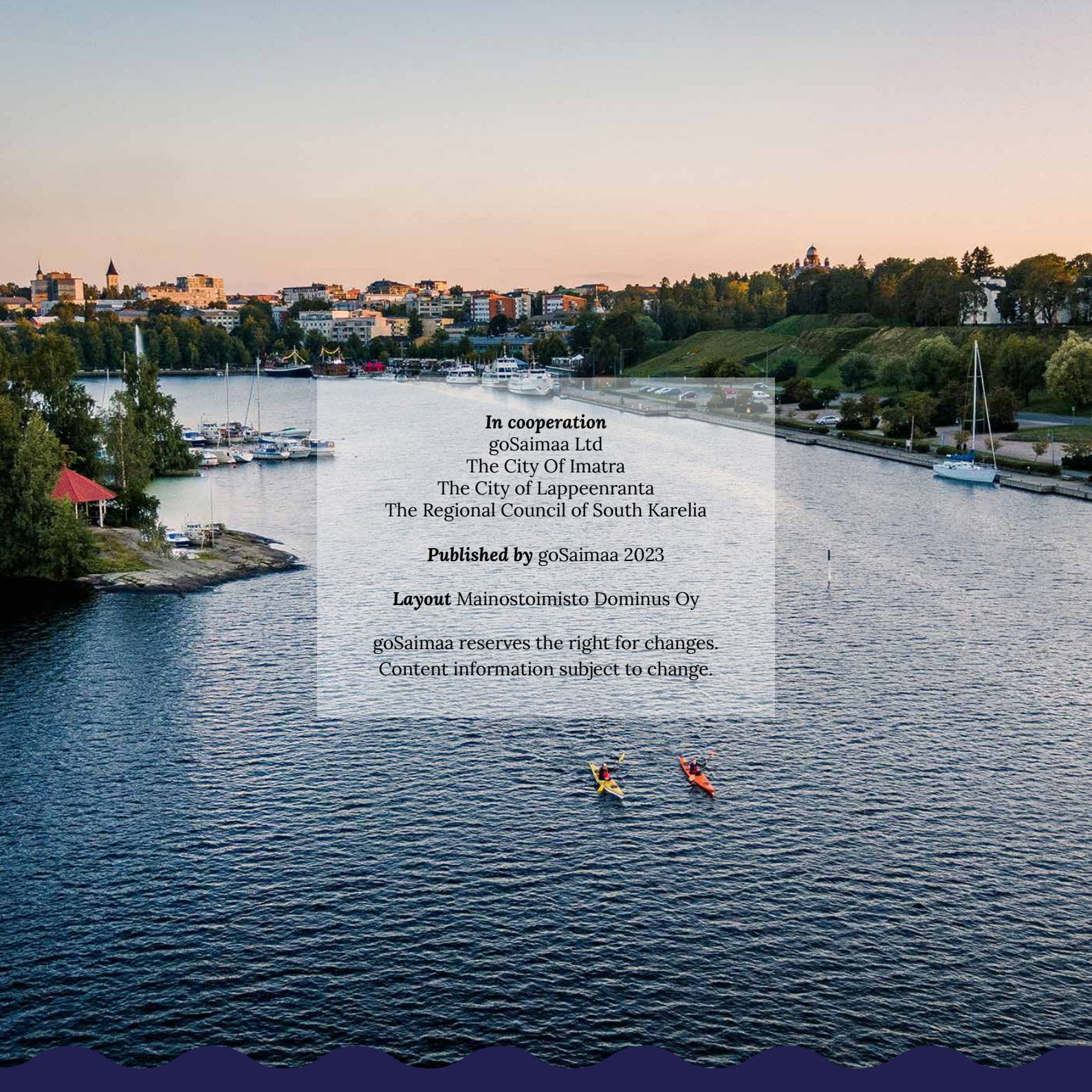
Only together can we succeed. Sustainability is about taking actions.



Promise

Our common promise is to add the Lappeenranta and Imatra region as part of the pioneers in Finland's sustainable tourism areas. We will set sustainable tourism as an important factor for joint marketing and branding work in our region and encourage businesses to succeed with their own sustainability.

Read more: [goSaimaa sustainability](#)



In cooperation
goSaimaa Ltd
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The City of Lappeenranta
The Regional Council of South Karelia

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