

## What is a Regional Management Committee?

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Each region has a Regional Management Committee that coordinates regional development actions in its area. These committees, which have no parallel anywhere else, are groups composed of key actors in the region. They bring together a wide range of stakeholders that play a central role in developing the region: one third of the members represent regional government (the municipal sector), one third central government authorities that fund the programmes, and the remaining third key lobbying groups. The competence of the Regional Management Committee is complemented by experts.

The Regional Management Committee is appointed by the Regional Council. Its term of office coincides with that of the local council.

Jussi Huttunen, retired regional mayor of North Savo, believes that the Regional Management Committees have a significant role in implementing EU-supported regional and structural policy. Each region has a great deal of freedom to modify and develop the committee's significance, impact and working methods. It is up to each committee to select its working methods and specify its role. The aim of the Regional Management Committee for North Savo, for example, is to shape development policies, point the direction for development work, and serve as an active forum for discussion and decision-making.

### **Regional Management Committees shape policies on regional development and EU funding**

The task of the Regional Management Committee is to implement the development objectives specified in the regional strategic programme and to coordinate different development programmes and funding instruments. The committee's most important task is coordinating Structural Funds policy and national regional development funding. The Regional Management Committee approves the regional strategic programme implementation plan, which defines development policies and the annual allocation of EU and central government funding to the funding authorities.

The committee also discusses the region's key development issues, major projects and the most important new departures. The committee's tasks are defined in greater detail in the rules of procedure of each Regional Management Committee.

The meetings of the Regional Management Committees in Eastern Finland not only make decisions on projects but also hear presentations on implemented projects and topical themes. Project presentations give the committee members an insider's view on the project world and provide them with the most accurate information possible about the projects and their contents. The presentations also spread information about the projects' impacts and their potential continuation after project funding comes to an end.

Regional mayor Jussi Huttunen finds that through the Regional Management Committee, its members can influence long-term development work, ensuring that it is based on each region's strategic development programme and smart specialisation policies. Even significant differences between the activities and composition of the Regional Management Committees in different regions should be allowed, as Finland's success is based on the regions' unique strengths, notes Huttunen.

Pirjo Rämänen, chairperson of the Regional Management Committee for North Karelia, explains that the committee has been extremely active in the current period. Thanks to its members who represent many fields and have expertise in different areas, discussions at the meetings are lively, and different opinions on the topics to be discussed are aired.

In a region like South Savo, using Structural Funds sensibly to create and generate future success stories is particularly vital, says Teemu Hirvonen, chairperson of the Regional Management Committee for South Savo. He finds participation in the Committee a great opportunity for influencing his region's development and shaping its future. He is also a member of the Regional Council, and often finds this association useful in the council's decision-making process.

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