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Heinola Successfully Hosted an International NATUREFIN Project Meeting



The international NATUREFIN project meeting hosted by the City of Heinola in June was a success. One important factor was Finland's summer nature, which treated the international guests to pleasantly mild conditions compared to the nearly 40-degree temperatures experienced in their home countries. The city also received praise for the meeting arrangements and the accommodation close to nature at the conference venue located by the Kymijoki River, with all necessary services available within walking distance. The City of Heinola's 250th anniversary celebrations further enhanced the atmosphere, making the event particularly memorable.

Within the NATUREFIN project, the main focus is on supporting biodiversity and preventing negative impacts on nature in regional and municipal development using sustainable financing instruments. During workshop sessions, Heinola's contribution focused on exploring how the Vierumäki area and new energy solutions could be developed while minimizing impacts on nature. The discussions also touched upon the management and

utilization of the Salpausselkä UNESCO Global Geopark, part of which is located in Vierumäki. This is a topic that Heinola shares with another project partner operating near the Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark in Portugal.



Among the highlights of the three-day program was the Vierumäki Forest Seminar which featured presentations from the City of Heinola's Forestry and Development Unit, the Finnish Sports Institute, and the Salpausselkä UNESCO Global Geopark. Participants also visited Versowood's recently completed headquarters and the historic House of Provincial Chief Superintendent Aschan. Both buildings represent sustainable timber construction of their respective eras, although Aschan House is now approximately 250 years old. If Versowood's headquarters remain standing for as long, they could still be showcased during Heinola's 500th anniversary celebrations in 2276.

In addition, a brochure highlighting the sustainability aspects of the June project meeting has been published and is available on the project website.

The NATUREFIN project is being implemented between 2025 and 2029, with the EU Interreg Europe Programme serving as its main funding source. The partnership includes regions and cities from six countries, and the City of Heinola is the only partner representing Northern Europe.

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