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## Press Release from AFRY

# AFRY to conduct Finland's first Environmental Impact Assessment for a small modular reactor for district heating

Kuopion Energia, a Finnish municipally owned energy utility, is exploring small modular reactors (SMR) as a future solution for low-carbon district heating in Kuopio. AFRY has been chosen to carry out both the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and a constructability study, with results expected in spring 2027.

Kuopion Energia's existing combined heat and power plant in Haapaniemi is expected to reach the end of its operational lifetime around 2035. An investment decision on a replacement for future district heating provision will be required around 2030. SMRs are among the alternatives under consideration for future heat production.

AFRY previously conducted a study to identify potential locations for an SMR-based district heating plant in Kuopio. The project has now progressed to the next stage, with AFRY entrusted with delivering a constructability study and environmental impact assessment.

"Small modular reactors are seen in Kuopio as a promising solution for energy production due to its very low carbon emissions and the stability of fuel pricing," says Esa Lindholm, CEO of Kuopion Energia.

AFRY will perform a comprehensive EIA to help identify and mitigate potential impacts of the project on the community and the environment, including air, water, soil, fauna and flora. In addition, the scope includes assessments related to nuclear and radiation safety. The process enables participation from local residents and stakeholders through public hearings and consultations.

"As part of the EIA, AFRY will conduct extensive nature surveys, along with specific modelling required for nuclear projects. The EIA is also a prerequisite for submitting the Decision-in-Principle application to the Finnish Government," says Iikka Suntio, Project Manager at AFRY.

"Thorough assessment helps reduce uncertainty and prevent surprises during project execution," adds Petri Turtiainen, Development Manager at Kuopion Energia Oy.

The constructability study, conducted prior to the environmental impact assessment, will evaluate the suitability of the proposed sites for SMR location. This includes geological and geotechnical investigations of soil and bedrock conditions. To verify the quality of the bedrock, AFRY will carry out deep percussion drilling at the selected sites, extending below the intended construction depth of the plant.

For more information, please contact:

Maria Palo, Head of Nuclear Business Unit Finland, AFRY

[maria.palo@afry.com](mailto:maria.palo@afry.com)

Mia Brunila, Head of Communications, Global Division Energy, AFRY

[mia.brunila@afry.com](mailto:mia.brunila@afry.com)

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