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Impact Study of the Helsinki Biennial 2021

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Preface

In Helsinki, art, culture and events play an important role in building the city's vitality and appeal, in addition to supporting the wellbeing of the city residents. Especially now, as we recover from the many changes brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, art events play a key part in strengthening our collective sense of cohesion, trust and society.

The first-ever Helsinki Biennial international art exhibition took place in Helsinki in the summer of 2021. It aimed to boost Helsinki's reputation as a host of world-class art and culture. The event featured works from 41 artists and artist teams from Finland and around the world. The Biennial took place on the island of Vallisaari in the Helsinki archipelago, which added to the special nature of the event and strengthened Helsinki's image as a maritime city.

This research report examines the impact of the Helsinki Biennial from a sociocultural, environmental and economic perspective. It shows that the Helsinki Biennial was an unparalleled event in many ways. Some 148,000 people visited Vallisaari during the event, and several Biennial public art works were also made available in neighbourhoods on the mainland. Organising the event on the island was considered a success, since the location gave visitors the opportunity to experience art in nature and see Helsinki in a new light. The report finds that the Helsinki Biennial reinforced the image of Finland's capital as a city of first-rate art and culture. The event was also seen to have successfully contributed to Helsinki's maritime strategy objectives.

The Helsinki Biennial is scheduled to take place again in 2023 and 2025. This impact report from the first Biennial provides baseline data for organising future Biennials and serves as an effective assessment model for the analysis of other cultural events. Development ideas outlined in the report will also benefit the planning of future events.

Helsinki, February 2022
Katja Vilkama
Research Director
Urban Research and Statistics

Summary

Impact study of the 2021 Helsinki Biennial

Background and purposes of the study

The first ever Helsinki Biennial, a contemporary art event, took place 12/6–26/9/2021 in Vallisaari island and it attracted 148,000 visitors during the summer. The Biennial also offered artistic experiences to the audience in different parts of Helsinki.

Since the Biennial was one of the projects in the Helsinki city strategy 2017–2021, it was also the subject of a comprehensive impact study. The purpose of the study was to collect comprehensive starting level data of the first Biennial and to produce information about the impact of the Biennial.

Methods

The impact of the Helsinki Biennial was evaluated in relation to the three main goals of the Biennial:

- To make Helsinki more widely recognised as a city of high-quality visual arts and culture
- To bring attention to maritime Helsinki and its maritime services
- To organise an ecologically sustainable and responsible event

The sociocultural and image-related impact as well as the environmental and economic impact of the Helsinki Biennial were included in the impact study plan. The impact of the event on buildings (the so-called impact on the cultural environment), construction, traffic and mobility were excluded from the study.

The most important research materials were a public survey conducted in Vallisaari (1,539 people responded), a survey to the residents of Helsinki (1,185 people responded) and the visitor count data of the event. Artists and collaboration partners of the event as well as experts in the Helsinki visual arts scene were interviewed as a part of the study. Moreover, a business survey was conducted among maritime entrepreneurs with close ties to the Biennial. The material on the environmental impact of the Biennial's environmental programme was collected as a part of the implementation of the EcoCompass system. Other statistical materials on travel were also used as background materials for the study. The research material was collected mainly during the year 2021.

Main results

Based on the evaluation, it can be concluded that the event met its objectives and the expectations regarding impact. The event offered artistic experiences to different types of visitors and strengthened the reputation of Helsinki as a city of visual arts and culture. At the same time, the event supported the objectives of the maritime strategy of Helsinki. Moreover, the Helsinki Biennial pledged itself to comply with the criteria in its environmental programme and to organise sustainable and responsible events in the future as well.

Most of those who responded to the visitor survey rated the event as good or excellent, and said that they had memorable artistic experiences during their visit. Some aspects of the event experience that received criticism from visitors were the queues to the ferry, accessibility issues, the quality/price ratio of the restaurant services and the concentration of the restaurants mainly to one place.

Significance and results of the findings

The impact study of the Helsinki Biennial supported the City of Helsinki's objective of knowledge-based management of the city. The impact study created starting level data for the Biennial and an assessment model for analysing future events. Parts of the study can be used as a model for the assessment and follow-up of various cultural services or events.

Keywords: cultural event, contemporary art event, impact study, Biennial

1 Helsinki Biennial 2021

In its City Strategy 2017, the City of Helsinki committed to developing recreational opportunities for residents, for example, by opening more nearby islands for public use. The aim was to make better use of the city's maritime potential: to improve the services and accessibility of the archipelago. The strategy also stated: "*An international public arts biennale will be created in Helsinki.*" Helsinki Biennial was one part of the city's plan to make Helsinki a more diverse and international city for culture, tourism and events.¹

The uniqueness of the upcoming contemporary art event was also emphasised by Mayor Jan Vapaavuori on several occasions. When inaugurating the MFA Degree Show of Uniarts Helsinki's Academy of Fine Arts in 2018, he emphasised the importance of fine arts for the city: "*Helsinki is a great city of art. We have a significant number of museums, galleries and art spaces, all of which are important factors in the appeal of Helsinki. [...] In addition, we are preparing the Biennial, which will bring together contemporary art and the maritime characteristics of Helsinki in an unprecedented way. These are all evidence that art is of interest both in Helsinki and around the world.*"²

Preparations for the event began in earnest with the project organisation set up at HAM Helsinki Art Museum in the spring of 2018. HAM was responsible for the production and curation of the Biennial, but the aim was to make it a joint project for the whole city. The project involved a wide range of people from different city divisions, and the aim was to make the event open and free of charge for visitors.

Summer 2020 was planned to be the first year of the event. However, in spring 2020, almost at the same time as the artists of the event were announced, the coronavirus pandemic started. The situation turned critical very quickly and the City of Helsinki had no other option but to postpone the Biennial to 2021.

However, the work on Helsinki Biennial continued in all aspects possible in the changed world situation. A new goal was set for the event to take place in summer 2021. When international tourism halted, the Biennial also focused its marketing more specifically on residents of the Helsinki region and domestic travellers.

After all the turns of events, Helsinki Biennial was held for the first time on Vallisaari from 12 June to 26 September 2021. The event showcased 41 artists or groups of artists from Finland and around the world. During Helsinki Biennial, 148,000 people visited Vallisaari.

In addition, the Biennial offered artistic experiences to the public in different parts of Helsinki. On the mainland, the works were located at Senate Square, HAM Helsinki Art Museum, Vuosaari, Central Library Oodi and Töölönlahti Bay. In addition, an entity called *Helsinki Biennial Inspired* comprising events and exhibitions was created to accompany the Biennial. This entity featured a series of Biennial-inspired cultural and art events organised by Helsinki's cultural centres, youth services, senior centres as well as companies and art organisations, among others.

The head curators of Helsinki Biennial 2021, Pirkko Siitari and Taru Tappola, entitled the Biennial "*The Same Sea*". The Same Sea is a metaphor for interconnectedness – the impacts of any activity on Earth cannot be detached from its surroundings. The sea was also integrally linked to the main venue of the Biennial – Vallisaari.

1 The Most Functional City in the World: Helsinki City Strategy 2017–2021. (https://www.hel.fi/static/helsinki/kaupunkistrategia/helsinki_city_strategy_leaflet.pdf)

2 Jan Vapaavuori: Kuvan kevät – speech at the inauguration of the MFA Degree Show of Uniarts Helsinki's Academy of Fine Arts on 4 May 2018. <https://vapaavuori.net/fi/2018/05/04/kuvan-kevat-puhe-taideyliopiston-kuvataideakatemi-an-maisterinayttelyn-avajaisissa/>

The main partners of the inaugural Biennial were the land owner Metsähallitus and the Jane and Aatos Erkkö Foundation. The Biennial was also supported by the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation and the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland. The main corporate partner of the event was Clear Channel. The other partners included Artek, Facebook Open Arts, Helen Ltd, Korkeasaari Zoo and Helsinki Festival. Helsinki Marketing, for one, worked in close cooperation with the marketing of the Biennial organisation. The Finnish Heritage Agency and Metsähallitus were the experts in terms of using the historic buildings on the island.

2 Impact study of the event

As an organisation, the City of Helsinki strives to promote knowledge-based management. The aim is to collect reliable research data to support the development of any service or operating method. This impact study of Helsinki Biennial is an example of this knowledge-based management principle. As the event was an important strategic effort for the City of Helsinki and HAM Helsinki Art Museum, it was decided to carry out an extensive impact study from the very start of the event. The objective of the study was to collect comprehensive baseline data from the first Biennial and also to produce information on the impacts of the event using different research methods.

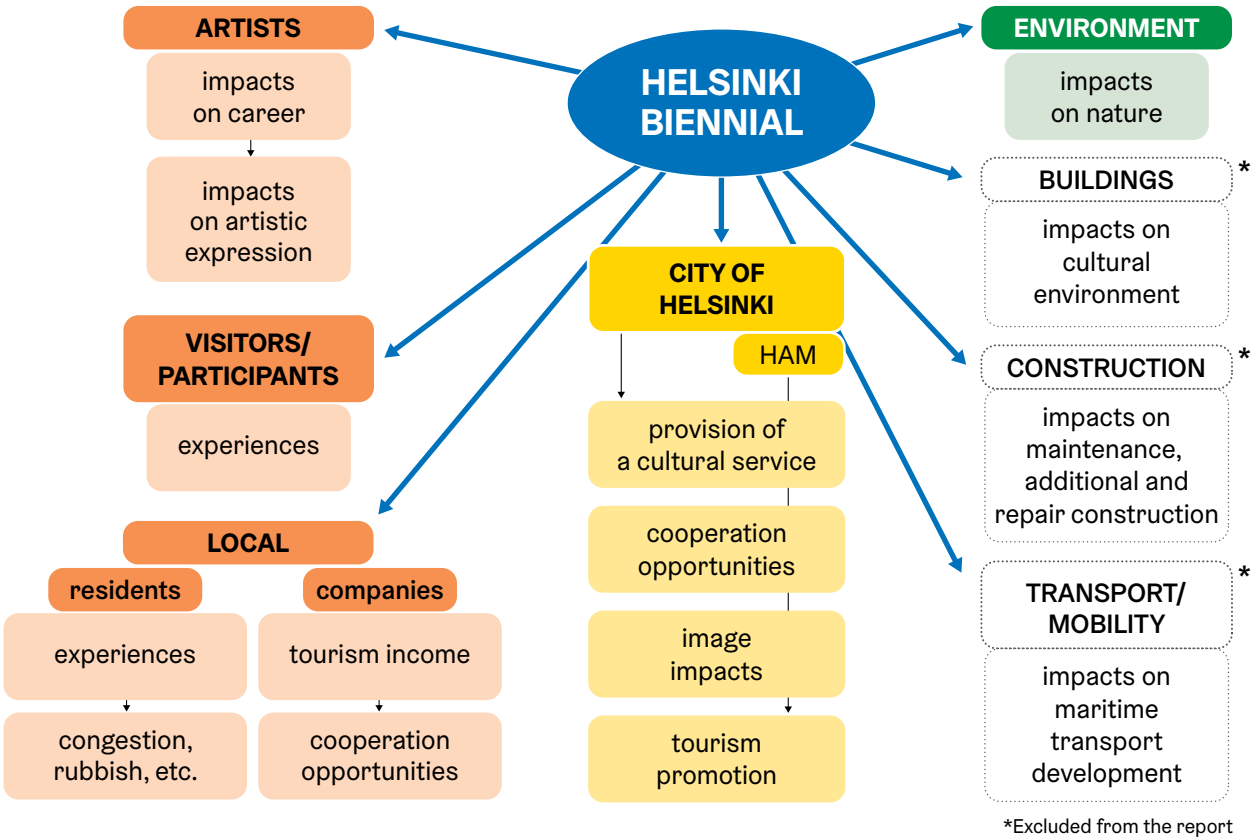
An extensive working group, which operated in 2019–2021, was set up to prepare the study. At first, the research work was coordinated by the Economic Development Department of Helsinki City Executive Office and then by the Urban Research and Statistics unit of the Strategy Department. The working group served under the steering group of Helsinki Biennial, chaired by Tommi Laitio, Executive Director for Culture and Leisure. The research working group included:

2019	Henri Kähönen, Economic Planner, City Executive Office, Economic Development Department (Chair until 07/10/2019)
2019–2021	Heidi Taskinen, Special Advisor, City Executive Office, Strategy Department (Chair as of 07/10/2019)
2019–2021	Pekka Mustonen, Senior Researcher, City Executive Office, Strategy Department
2020–2021	Sara Kuusi, Special Planner, Culture and Leisure Division
2018–2020	Hanna-Mari Peltomäki, Project Manager, Helsinki Biennial/Culture and Leisure Division
2020–2021	Jonna Hurskainen, Project Manager, Helsinki Biennial/Culture and Leisure Division
2019–2021	Minttu Perttula, Project Manager, City Executive Office, Economic Development Department
2019–2020	Meri Louekari, Architect, Urban Environment Division
2019–2020	Mikko Jääskeläinen, Senior Advisor, Urban Environment Division
2019–2020	Markku Granholm, Traffic Engineer, Urban Environment Division
2019–2020	Tapio Rossi, Water Traffic Manager, Culture and Leisure Division
2019–2021	Carina Wennström, Senior Advisor, Metsähallitus/Parks & Wildlife Finland

An art event situated on an island has a wide range of impacts on its different interest groups and surroundings (Figure 1). Thus, there would have been numerous approaches to the impact study of Helsinki Biennial, and the event offers many options and perspectives for follow-up studies. The study excluded the impacts of the event on buildings (incl. impacts on the cultural environment), construction as well as transport and mobility. These were analysed by HAM Helsinki Art Museum with the help of other data as part of its development work. HAM is also responsible for the separate production-related reporting on the Biennial.

However, many different aspects were included in Helsinki Biennial’s impact research plan, such as sociocultural, image-related, environmental and economic. The results of the study are discussed in the following chapters on the basis of the aforementioned starting points and the collected data.

Figure 1. Impacts of Helsinki Biennial 2021 on people, operators and the island



The most important data sets were the visitor survey conducted on Vallisaari (KANTAR TNS, 1,539 respondents), the Helsinki resident survey (TAK Research, 1,185 respondents) and the visitor counter data of the event (Metsähallitus, Suomen Saaristokuljetus, JT-line and Hypercell Industries). In addition, the City of Helsinki’s Culture and Leisure Division’s Partnership Unit collected research data by interviewing artists, arts experts and event partners. The City Executive Office’s Urban Research and Statistics Unit conducted a business survey on maritime entrepreneurs closely linked to the Biennial. Background information of the research entity included border interview survey and domestic tourism survey materials provided by TAK Research. The calculation of the economic impacts of the event was carried out by the Urban Research TA Ltd. The environmental impact data were collected as part of the implementation of the Eco-Compass system. HAM Helsinki Art Museum was responsible for more detailed analysis of personnel feedback and communications and marketing materials (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Helsinki Biennial 2021 impact study data

Accumulated data	Data to be collected: interviews	Data to be collected: surveys	Data to be collected: EcoCompass
Marketing communication data *	Artist interviews and/or surveys	Customer feedback	The environment and sustainability
Visitor numbers	Expert and partner interviews and/or surveys	Resident views on the event	
Event financial data	Personnel feedback *	Travellers (awareness and non-visitors)	
Transport data	Entrepreneur feedback		
Turnover data from entrepreneurs			

*HAM Helsinki Art Museum is responsible for analysing the data

In addition, it should be noted that Helsinki Biennial did not curate the *Inspired by Helsinki Biennial* programme or participate in its production. Assessment material for the impact study has not been collected as regards this programme entity, but HAM has at its disposal production-related data that will be utilised in planning the next Biennial.

Some of the event impacts may only be felt in the longer term (e.g. the impact of the Biennial on the career paths of the participating artists). Possible further studies in the coming years will be able to provide information on such impacts.

At the heart of the impact assessment is the success of the event in achieving the objectives set for it. Three main objectives were set for the Biennial:

1. Increasing awareness of Helsinki being a high-level city of visual arts and culture
2. Highlighting maritime Helsinki and its maritime services
3. Organising an ecologically sustainable and responsible event

Other objectives set for the event included:

4. Providing unforgettable art experiences for visitors
5. Promoting Finnish artists and art on an international level
6. Strengthening the operational preconditions for visual artists
7. Establishing and strengthening partnerships of HAM Helsinki Art Museum
8. Utilising digitality in the operations of HAM Helsinki Art Museum
9. Cooperation between HAM Helsinki Art Museum and other city organisation in art education and audience development

This report focuses on assessing the achievement of the first six objectives. HAM Helsinki Art Museum is responsible for monitoring the achievement of the last three objectives.

The research report is divided into six main chapters. The sociocultural and image effects of Helsinki Biennial are presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reviews the environmental impacts of the event from the perspective of the environmental programme of the event. The following Chapter 5 describes the impacts of the Biennial on tourist appeal and the maritime characteristics of Helsinki. Chapter 6 summarises the conclusions of the study. Although the research report does not discuss event production more extensively, development ideas that have emerged from the research data have been summarised at the end of each thematic subchapter. These can be utilised by Helsinki Biennial in further development of the event.

3 Sociocultural and image impacts of the Biennial

Sara Kuusi, Special Planner, Culture and Leisure Division, City of Helsinki

This chapter focuses on assessing the sociocultural impacts of Helsinki Biennial, which in this context refer to the non-economic impacts of the event. The sociocultural perspective takes into account the impacts of the event more widely on its area and residents (including the artists and visitors). In addition to the sociocultural impacts, this chapter discusses the impacts of the event on the image of the City of Helsinki as a visual arts city.

Events are known to enrich the social and cultural life of the area, they increase social interaction and improve well-being and comfort. The sociocultural impacts of an art event can therefore be directed at the individual level (artist, visitor, experiencer), at the community level or at the level of society. These impacts may also occur at several levels at the same time, they may overlap and be mutually reinforcing. In terms of sociocultural impacts, the time perspective must also be taken into account, as some of the impacts are immediate, while others may occur in the longer term.

In connection with Helsinki Biennial, the sociocultural impacts of the art event are approached from the perspective of the participating artists, partners, visual art experts and the public. The impact assessment is based on qualitative surveys and interviews carried out in the summer and autumn of 2021. The work has also made use of HAM Helsinki Art Museum's reports on Audience development and media monitoring (see Appendix 1).

As stated earlier, in the inaugural year of 2021, the collection of baseline data was an important research objective of the impact study. For this reason, when discussing sociocultural impacts, in addition to the impacts of the event, the realisation of the artistic and cultural objectives set in advance for the Biennial is also discussed, and the event production is briefly touched upon.

This section focuses in particular on the following objectives set for the event and the related impacts (all objectives, see Chapter 2):

- Providing unforgettable art experiences for visitors
- Increasing awareness about Helsinki being a high-level city of visual arts and culture
- Promoting Finnish artists and art on an international level
- Strengthening the operational preconditions for visual artists

3.1 Experiences of artists about the production

The official event entity of the Biennial involved 41 artists or groups of artists from Finland and around the world. The artists' views on the event were mapped with the help of surveys and interviews. 15 Finnish and foreign artists took part in these. They were asked to assess the impacts of the event on their work, future career prospects and opportunities for internationalisation. They also evaluated the achievement of the event objectives.

In the same connection, the artists gave feedback on the production-related process of Helsinki Biennial and Vallisaari as an exhibition venue. Although HAM is responsible for the more detailed production-related reporting of the event, some views on

the experiences of the artists are presented below. Their experiences of the event affect how they talk about the Biennial and Helsinki within their own networks after the event. These activities will have an impact on the national and international artist co-operation of the Biennial.

According to the artists' feedback, cooperation with the HAM Biennial team went very well. Prior preparations, such as the construction phase, curation and agreement processes, received the most praise. The curation process was seen as conversational, and the dialogue was meaningful according to them. The artists were also satisfied with the compensation paid to them and felt that their work was truly appreciated. According to the artists' feedback, the practical arrangements went smoothly in an inspiring and positive spirit.

"Collaborating with Helsinki Biennial was one of the most productive and efficient experiences we have ever had. The Helsinki Biennial team was extremely cooperative and open to ideas, they were professional and rigorous. It was a joy to work with the curators and all the production teams. Having worked with nearly 50 organisations internationally in a dozen countries, this was one of the high points of our artistic career." (artist 1)

However, the implementation of temporary public spatial art was challenging in many ways, and some of the artists felt that there was room for improvement as regards condition monitoring, servicing and maintaining of the works. According to an artist who participated in the interview: *"An outdoor exhibition isn't finished until it's dismantled."* (artist 2) A more professional approach and attitude to the maintenance and servicing of the works was desired.

Figure 3. Jaakko Niemelä: Quay 6, 2021.



3.2 Impact of the event on the work and visibility gained by the artists

Based on Helsinki Biennial artist interviews and survey data, the artists were satisfied with the visibility they gained. According to the media statistics compiled on the event, there were more than 200 international media hits and nearly 500 Finnish ones.

In this connection, it must be stated that international visibility and networking were severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Joint meetings and international artist and media visits had to be restricted. According to the interviewed artists, the event still had a significant impact on their artistic work and visibility. However, media visibility was not in the end a primary objective according to the artists. For them, the most important thing was to receive positive feedback from the public and the messages and experiences conveyed by the works to the public.

While the internationality objectives set pre-coronavirus were not achieved, the localness theme was positively highlighted. The unique nature of the island made a huge impression on visitors and the artists alike, for whom nature was a source of inspiration. International artists also emphasised that, even though they did not know Helsinki beforehand, the invitation to Helsinki Biennial was that more meaningful and interesting. As one of the interviewed international artists put it: “*Helsinki is positively unknown.*” (artist 3)

3.3 Social significance of making art

The artists felt that the environmental theme of Helsinki Biennial was very topical and relevant. All the artists who responded to the survey felt that it would be important to take the environment and ecological sustainability into account in the production of art events.

However, the artists found it problematic that artistic productions are essentially unecological (artists and cargoes are flown around the world, the construction of works is a burden on the environment), but at the same time participation in art events was considered of paramount importance. In the opinion of the artists, it is also important for them to gather to discuss ecological matters within the art scene. According to them, the social significance of an art event is a plus, although organising an event in itself is always unecological.

The environmental impacts of Helsinki Biennial is presented in more detail in Chapter 4 of this report, but it can be stated in this connection that some of the works of the 2021 Biennial were returned to the artists and the remaining materials were recycled or reused. Three works remained to be part of the public art collection of HAM Helsinki Art Museum, which can be seen as part of the cultural impact of the event. After the Biennial, Alicja Kwade’s works *Big Be-Hide and Pars pro Toto* (Figure 5) will be permanently placed in Kalasatama in Helsinki. Laura Könönen’s work *No heaven up in the sky* (Figure 4) will be placed in the Hyväntoivonpuisto Park in Jätkäsaari. In addition, some of the works will be displayed again at HAM Helsinki Art Museum after the Biennial.



Figure 4. Laura Könönen: *No heaven up in the sky*, 2021.

3.4 Impacts of the event on the visual art scene of Helsinki

Impact study data were also collected from the visual art expert field by interviewing some key operators in the field (e.g. Helsinki-based contemporary art experts and representatives of residency organisations and galleries). They were asked about the impacts of the event on the internationalisation and networking of the artists and about the impacts of the Biennial on the visual art scene.

According to the experts interviewed, Helsinki Biennial was a success and responded to expectations. People in the visual art field had been hoping for a larger international event to take place in Helsinki for a long time, and there was a clear demand for such an event. It is estimated that the event will strengthen the position of visual arts both nationally and internationally. According to the experts, the positive effects of the Biennial will be reflected more widely and in the longer term on the Finnish visual art scene as a whole. The experts felt that the satisfaction of the artists is also an important factor in terms of the international impact, as a positive message spreads through them in the international art community.

In the opinion of the experts interviewed, Helsinki Biennial was carried out in a professional and high-quality manner. On the other hand, communications related to the event received criticism and internal communications towards the professional field of visual arts were perceived as insufficient. Visual art operators would also have liked

to see closer cooperation in terms of the professional programme of the Biennial. The experts felt that the event failed to reach its full potential this time. However, the Biennial was seen by the visual art operators as a significant opening for the internationalisation of Finnish visual arts and they hope that art professionals will be more closely involved in strengthening this common goal at future Biennial events.

The visual art experts considered the event being free of charge to be of primary importance in reaching the public. In their view, the Biennial offered a low-threshold opportunity for many to enjoy art and gain new experiences. The experts estimated that the Biennial increased public interest in the visual arts, and this may lead to an increase in visitor numbers to visual art exhibitions in the longer term.

The role of the City of Helsinki in enabling the event was praised. In the opinion of the experts, the city did a significant service to the development of the whole visual arts scene. The experts felt that Helsinki's image as an interesting international art city was strengthened as a result of the event.

3.5 Audience development impacts of the event

The objective of Helsinki Biennial was to invest in accessibility and to be an art event open to everyone. The fact that the event was free of charge supported this objective, but the Biennial also brought art to the mainland and was also accessible to those who might have found it challenging to visit the island. Audience development was a big part of the Biennial, the impacts of which are discussed in more detail in this chapter. In this context, audience development refers to activities related to an art organisation that aim to increase the accessibility of art and culture.

The assessment of audience development as a whole is based on interviews with experts in audience development, art educators, participating artists and representatives of the city organisation. The assessment materials also included a separate report compiled by HAM's Audiences and Communities Team on the implemented audience development entity (see Appendix 1).

Based on the interviews and participant feedback, the audience development of Helsinki Biennial was very successful. The Biennial brought along new tools, ideas and competence for the systematic implementation of audience development at HAM Helsinki Art Museum. According to feedback, cooperation between the City of Helsinki's divisions was productive in terms of audience development. Cooperation was carried out with various service entities of the Education Division, the Social Services and Health Care Division and the Culture and Leisure Division. The event cooperation established a dialogue between the city's various units and services.

Vallisaari set new kinds of challenges for audience development. The interiors of old buildings and numerous video works made it difficult to plan audience development. Based on the assessments, what was lost in terms of accessibility was gained in experiences. The island's nature and unique environment provided a framework in which the dialogue between art and nature was interesting in terms of audience development.

The one-year postponement of the Biennial allowed for deeper planning of audience development and cooperation. On the other hand, many already planned entities had to be cancelled due to the pandemic and the coronavirus situation imposed restrictions on communal programme contents.

According to assessments, audience development strengthened the equality and well-being of participants from infancy to old age. Every child's right and opportunity to participate in cultural visits and to enjoy art – regardless of their family background – was supported by close cooperation with schools.

According to the art museum's audience development staff, cooperation with schools is often most effective when aimed at wider groups (e.g. a whole age group). The City of Helsinki invited all fifth-graders, over 5,000 pupils, to visit the Biennial. Regional summer camps and a mini-biennial event at playgrounds also contributed to the equal availability of the event and the accessibility of the Biennial.

In terms of the audience development entity, the *Saarella (On the island)* concept and the communal part of *Crochet Coral Reef* by Margaret and Christine Wertheim can be highlighted as examples (see page 19). According to the experts engaged in audience development cooperation, the success of these entities was due to close cooperation between the city divisions, co-creation and various opportunities for participation.

When discussing the sociocultural impacts of the event, the diversity of the event entity should also be emphasised. It included communal events related to the works on display on Vallisaari, events organised by the artists themselves and partners as well as the *Inspired by Helsinki Biennial* programme entity. This included a programme inspired by the themes of the Biennial and produced by various partners, which took place all over Helsinki during the summer and early autumn. Helsinki Biennial did not curate the *Inspired by Helsinki Biennial* programme or participate in its production. These events were organised by the City of Helsinki's cultural centres, among other things, and the number of visitors to the events was in the tens of thousands. No assessment material was collected from the whole event for the impact study, so it is not discussed in more detail in this report.



Figure 5: Alicja Kwade: *Pars pro Toto*, 2018.

Examples of audience development cooperation

Saarella (On the island) concept

The Saarella (On the island) concept included art workshops, which were implemented at senior centres and among the elderly. The concept was flexible and it was possible to modify the implementation methods according to the site of implementation. A cultural instructor of a service centre describes the significance of audience development as follows:

“At the [...] senior centre, I carried out a workshop of three sessions in the assessment and rehabilitation ward and, after the actual working period, we held an ‘exhibition opening’, where we also watched a short film about the Biennial. Every session started by listening to the sounds of the sea and a short orientation on the subject, and we also listened to sea-themed music. In addition to the ready-made materials, we also used plastic rubbish found at the centre, adding an environmental theme to the concept. At all the other group homes, I held painting workshops of one session, with a total of approximately 40 participants. I prepared a small collage for the workshop participants to commemorate their work. Also, a poem was created through ‘poem co-creation’ with the residents. All in all, the Biennial and maritime Helsinki formed a theme that lasted all summer. It included sea-themed singalongs, maritime book clubs, a sea-themed sensory room for making poetry with the residents so now we have a poetry exhibition, fish/octopus crocheting in addition to the corals, the Merellinen Helsinki photographic exhibition by Laajasalon valokuvaajat, etc. In other words, both the Biennial and the Saarella (On the island) materials inspired activities in many ways and over a long period of time.” (service centre cultural instructor)

Margaret and Christine Wertheim’s Crochet Coral Reef

The role of audience development in the realisation of Margaret and Christine Wertheim’s biennial artwork was significant, as every component of the work has been communally crocheted according to the instructions of the artists. Approximately 3,000 people from Helsinki and other parts of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area participated in the crocheting. Pieces crocheted in various workshops were incorporated into the work by the Wertheims displayed on Vallisaari.

The ‘Satellite Reefs’ included in the work have been communally crocheted in more than 40 countries and cities around the world by some 10,000 people. According to the artists, what was done in Helsinki was so far the widest in terms of the number of participants and also exceptional due to the collaboration with the city services.

From the point of view of city cooperation and the involvement of the public, the communal work made it possible for a wide range of people to participate in the Biennial. The interest shown by people and the amount of spontaneous positive feedback reinforced the impression that the communal work in question was both a work of interest to Helsinki residents and a project in which people wanted to participate, and from which the participants got very personal feelings of participation, success and inclusion for themselves.

"There have been many wonderful crocheting moments, sharing, laughter, concentration and the joy of working together. There are already corals of all sorts, and many people who have never crocheted before are totally enthusiastic about this. What a great project!" (senior centre feedback)



Figure 6. Workshop at the Roihuvuori Senior Centre.



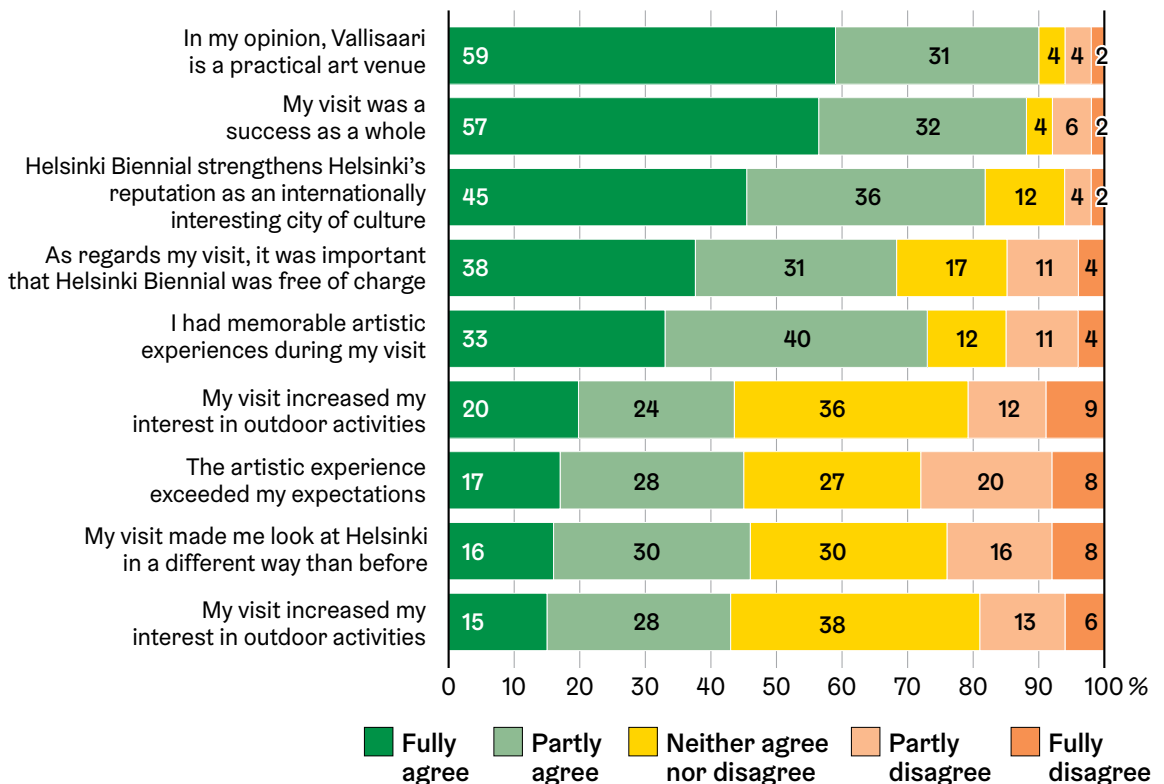
Figure 7. Margaret & Christine Wertheim: Crochet Coral Reef/Helsinki Satellite Reef, 2021.

3.6 Audience experiences of the cultural impacts of the event

During Helsinki Biennial, 148,000 people visited Vallisaari. Respondents to the visitor survey were sought throughout the event. In June, there were six respondent recruitment days, eleven in July and August and six in September. This was not a genuine random sample, as the subjects were given the opportunity to complete the survey either via a link or a QR code. Based on the feedback of the people who recruited the respondents, the reception was almost invariably positive. This was also reflected in the accumulation of data. In the end, more than 1,500 visitors responded to the survey. The original goal was to get around 1,000 respondents. It can be reasonably assumed that the respondents are at least reasonably representative of the visitors, although in such research frames it is quite naturally not possible to fully know the possible deviations of the data.

A clear majority of the respondents to both the visitor survey (n=1,539) and the Helsinki resident survey (n=1,185) gave a good overall rating for the event and the visit to Vallisaari was considered successful (Diagram 1). Approximately 90% of the respondents to the visitor survey felt that the visit as a whole had been successful. As many as 57% fully agree with this statement. More than two out of three respondents had memorable artistic experiences during the visit, which can be considered a rather high percentage. Nearly half of the respondents felt that the art experience exceeded their expectations. 68% of the respondents also considered that, from a visitor's point of view, the fact that the event was free of charge was important (Diagram 2).

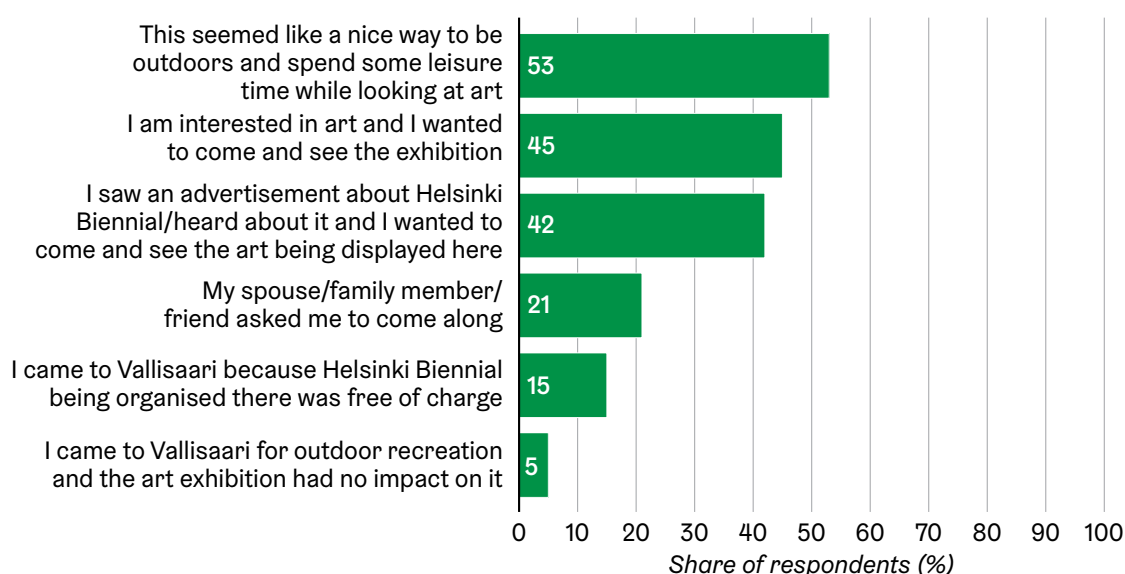
Diagram 1. Visitors' experiences of visiting Helsinki Biennial



Data source: Visitor survey, KANTAR TNS (n=1,455–1,470).

Almost all respondents (90%) considered Vallisaari to be a suitable place for displaying art (Diagram 1). Helsinki Biennial clearly influenced the respondents' decision to go to Vallisaari. Only a very small proportion of the respondents felt that the event had no impact on the realisation of their visit. The most common reason for the visit was the anticipated combination of outdoor recreation and art, which according to the visitors was excellently realised at the site. The visit increased the interest of many in outdoor activities, but also in art. A significant proportion of the respondents to the visitor survey, four out of five, were also of the opinion that the Biennial would strengthen Helsinki's reputation as a cultural city of international interest (Diagram 1).

■ Diagram 2. Motives for visiting Helsinki Biennial



Data source: Visitor survey, KANTAR TNS (n=1,539). Respondents had to choose 1–3 options. The diagram shows how many respondents chose the different options in relation to all respondents.

Visitor experiences were positive in both surveys, both in terms of the arrangements and experience. The richness of experiences is highlighted in the free-form feedback. The unique milieu of Vallisaari and the combination of nature and art received a lot of praise.

“The interaction of the works with the environment was truly remarkable – such effect cannot be achieved in exhibition halls.” (visitor feedback)

“I wanted my child to have an art experience while spending the day outdoors.” (visitor feedback)

“I was already enchanted by Vallisaari from before, so combining art and nature is a great thing.” (visitor feedback)

“[...] If the exhibition had been in a traditional museum (indoors) I probably would not have come to the event.” (visitor feedback)



Figure 8. Visitors coming ashore on Vallisaari.

As regards the event experience, the visitors criticised, for example, queues for the ferries and to the works and servicing done to the works, during which they were closed. In addition, negative feedback was given about the price-quality ratio of restaurant services and their concentration on a single location in Torpedo Bay. Free-form feedback also included some criticisms about the accessibility of the event. Longer opening hours, more lunch options along the route, fewer indoor and video works and a free-of-charge paper map were requested for the next Biennial.

“I didn’t go to any of the indoor locations because of the queues. Hopefully, in the future, all works will be displayed outdoors allowing easy access without queues, as would be appropriate for the choice of venue.” (visitor feedback)

“It’s too bad you couldn’t buy snacks or coffee along the route. The sales stalls were closed. If we could have purchased some refreshments, we would have stayed longer.” (visitor feedback)

“The event was not at all accessible with a pushchair, which is why we missed many of the works. I would like more attention to be paid to accessibility in the future.” (visitor feedback)

Development ideas related to the sociocultural and image impacts of Helsinki Biennial

Strengthening the operational preconditions for visual artists

- The objective of strengthening the operating conditions of visual artists will probably require longer-term cooperation in the visual art scene. Finnish artists got a great opportunity to develop in their careers by participating in the Biennial, but they will still need support in marketing, communications and networking after the event.
- Strengthening the international status of Finnish visual arts requires closer cooperation both nationally and internationally (e.g. biennial events, Frame, galleries, other museums, Finnish cultural institutes, etc.). Cooperation between organisations in the field should be strengthened, for example, in the organisation of VIP events and expert visits in connection with the Biennial.

Developing eventness

- Exhibition maintenance clearly needs better coordination and resourcing throughout the event, and servicing of the works must be ensured. Based on feedback from the artists and also visitors, servicing the works was time consuming and the works had to be kept closed then.
- The side events should be more focused and emphasise quality over quantity. The off programme was diverse, but at the same time disorganised and difficult for the public to perceive. It included events such as the Inspired by Biennial events, communal events related to the exhibition works, events organised by the artists themselves and partners as well as events organised in the context of audience development. According to assessments, the entity would have benefited from curation and clearer internal and external communications.
- The development of the Inspired by Biennial theme and a clearer integration of the contents on display on the mainland into the main event of the Biennial should be taken as a target for development.
- Closer cooperation with Helsinki Events Foundation should be considered, as the foundation embodies expertise in event production, which could help in the planning of the Biennial's eventness.

Improving audience experience

- More attention should be paid to ensuring different service paths for the benefit of a comprehensive customer experience. A positive visitor experience consists of many factors, in addition to the island's services and ferry service. It is also related to communications, for example.
- The visitor feedback reiterates the wish to improve accessibility – in order for the art experience to be even more successful, it is worth considering, among other things, longer opening hours for the event, more visitor-friendly communications about the works (clearer and more varied presentation of the works on the island and a free map for visitors), placement of services along the walking route as well as better lighting and signage for indoor spaces that are difficult to access.
- The harmony of the Biennial works with their location should be emphasised and the number of outdoor works should be increased in the future. Based on the feedback, it is probably worth choosing fewer video works and thus avoiding long queues to the indoor spaces.
- The cultural heritage background of Vallisaari should be presented more, because according to the feedback, visitors are interested not only in nature, but also in the unique history of the island.

4 Environmental impacts of the Biennial

Kiira Kivisaari, Helsinki Art Museum HAM/Helsinki Biennial, City of Helsinki

This chapter discusses the environmental impacts of Helsinki Biennial based on the results of the environmental programme of the event. The chapter also briefly describes the introduction of the environmental programme in the first year of the event.

It is not possible to avoid environmental impacts, as all activities have an impact on the environment. It is important to consider, anticipate and minimise possible negative impacts in the environmental impact assessment. This has also been the starting point for the environmental work of Helsinki Biennial.

The nature of Vallisaari set precise requirements for Helsinki Biennial, according to which the event was realised. In this context, environmental impacts refer to those that have changed the natural environment of Helsinki Biennial on Vallisaari in a negative or positive way. Responsibility, on the other hand, refers to the ability and willingness to react to negative impacts.

As explained in the introduction to the report, the impacts of the event on the cultural environment, i.e. on the island's buildings, maritime construction and maritime transport, have not been assessed more broadly in this context. It should be mentioned, however, that each idea for the works of art and their respective site was assessed in cooperation with Metsähallitus and the Finnish Heritage Agency from the perspective of the cultural environment, preservation of historic buildings and the natural environment. Possible wear caused by the Biennial to the archaeological sites and the built cultural environment of the island as well as to the restricted areas that are valuable from the point of view of nature conservation has been mapped by Metsähallitus with photogrammetric documentation. This work was still ongoing at the time the Biennial impact report was completed.

In addition, extensive cooperation took place in the construction of the event, both internally in the City of Helsinki organisation and with external partners. This work involved, among other things, maritime entrepreneurs, the City of Helsinki's Urban Environment Division, Economic Development Department and the maritime services of the Culture and Leisure Division. Locating the event on Vallisaari can also be seen as part of the development of water transport in Helsinki and the planned construction of municipal and civil engineering on the island. A new archipelago connection from Hakaniemi via Kruunuvuorenranta, Vasikkasaari and Lonna was established together with a ring route between Suomenlinna and Vallisaari.

Only a few operators, with direct links to Helsinki Biennial, ran business operations during the summer. The views of these maritime entrepreneurs were established by means of interviews and a separate survey. Only a few answered the survey. In addition to these, a separate discussion event was organised, where the entrepreneurs presented their views on the event in confidence. These views were mostly linked to production and logistics, for example, so HAM Helsinki Art Museum processes these as part of its production-related reporting. These views will influence the planning of the following biennials.



Figure 9. Transport to Vallisaari.

4.1 Helsinki Biennial environmental programme

It was decided to create a dedicated environmental programme for Helsinki Biennial, as environmental sustainability was selected as one of the strategic objectives of the event. The objective stems from the Helsinki Maritime Strategy, which states that: “... the principles of sustainable tourism, carbon neutrality and Baltic Sea protection are taken into account in the maritime development programme.”³ As it was decided to hold the Biennial was on Vallisaari, the event organisation made a commitment to promoting the aforementioned strategic objectives. According to Minttu Perttula, Project Manager for the Helsinki Maritime Strategy, Helsinki Biennial 2021 was one of the most significant measures of that strategy.

The general plan for Vallisaari and Kuninkaansaari, published back in 2015, envisaged Vallisaari as an excursion destination for sustainable tourism.⁴ However, most of Vallisaari is a closed conservation area, which is off limits to people enjoying outdoor recreation. This decision aims to safeguard the island’s unique environment. The island’s large construction projects, such as the cafés and other services, have therefore focused only in a strictly limited area (approximately 15% of the island’s surface area).

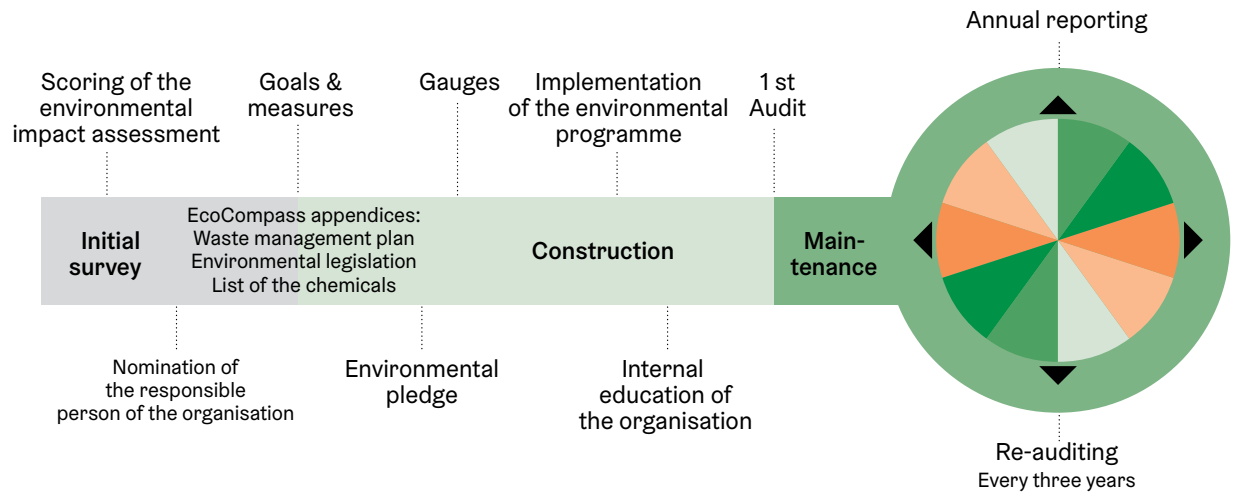
The creation of the environmental programme for Helsinki Biennial started with the EcoCompass environmental system (Figure 10). EcoCompass is a system developed and managed by the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation’s Kinos Ltd, which is based on international environmental management standards. The system contains 10 environmental criteria, to which the party committed to the system commits. The

³ Helsinki Maritime Strategy 2030. (<https://www.hel.fi/static/kanslia/elo/helsinki-maritime-strategy-2030.pdf>)

⁴ Vallisaaren ja Kuninkaansaaren yleissuunnitelma. (<https://julkaisut.metsa.fi/assets/pdf/lp/Muut/vallisaari-yleissuunnitelma.pdf>)

EcoCompass certificate is issued to an operator for a period of three years at a time. An auditor monitors how the objectives have been met.⁵

Figure 10. EcoCompass process



Source: ekokompassi.fi

EcoCompass was chosen as the environmental system for Helsinki Biennial, because the system has been used by other operators of the City of Helsinki. With regard to the Biennial, Metsähallitus, the ferry operator at the time, a representative of the Vallisaari entrepreneurs and the city's Environmental Protection personnel and experts in the Maritime Strategy were involved in the EcoCompass work from the outset. This was done to ensure that the environmental programme and the impact assessment take into account all the different parties involved in the organisation of the event.

The implementation of the EcoCompass phases at Helsinki Biennial is described in more detail in Appendix 2. All the phases are briefly described below. The key phases are the 1) initial survey, 2) environmental impact assessment (EIA), and 3) audit.

The *initial survey of the Biennial* was carried out back in the summer and autumn of 2019. A total of 10 people from the above organisations participated in the making of the initial survey. The initial survey was led by Helsinki Biennial environmental co-ordinator and two environmental planners from the city's Environmental Protection.

After the initial survey, Helsinki Biennial carried out an *environmental impact assessment* (EIA), involving 12 people from different organisations. The participants were Metsähallitus, a representative of the Vallisaari entrepreneurs, employees of Helsinki Biennial, representatives of the city's Environmental Protection and experts on the city's Maritime Strategy.

The objective of the assessment was to score (scale 1–5) the issues raised by the initial survey based on their environmental impacts and to take into account the possibilities of Helsinki Biennial and its partners to influence these environmental factors. The lowest score of “1” meant that the impact of the issue under assessment on the environment or the possibility of the Biennial to influence the matter in question was small. Correspondingly, a score of “5” meant that the impact of the issue under assessment on the environment or the possibility for the Biennial to influence the matter was great. After scoring, the areas with the highest scores were selected as the starting points for the environmental programme.

⁵ EcoCompass. (<https://ekokompassi.fi/>)

Based on the ideas that emerged in the EIA, the environmental coordinator of the Biennial, together with the environmental planners of the City of Helsinki, prepared an environmental programme for the event consisting of eight objectives and one or more measures aimed at achieving the objectives (Appendix 3).

In addition to the environmental programme, an environmental pledge was made for Helsinki Biennial, which binds the Biennial to long-term environmental work:

“In accordance with the Helsinki City Strategy, Helsinki Biennial emphasises sustainability in its activities, and holding the event aims to honour this value as far as possible. Helsinki Biennial wants to stimulate discussion and be a pioneer in highlighting the sustainability aspect of art events, and is therefore committed to transparent environmental actions now and in the future.”

Helsinki Biennial was audited on 20 July 2021 on Vallisaari and the process was attended by the environmental coordinator and project manager in addition to the auditor. The event passed the audit successfully. The only comment concerned the absence of safety data sheets related to the chemicals being used (petrol, hand sanitiser). This was corrected immediately. The Biennial received praise, in particular, for its extensive cooperation with the partners and its desire to be a pioneer in sustainability matters in the field of art.

After the successful audit, Helsinki Biennial was awarded the EcoCompass certificate for the next three years, after which the audit will be carried out again. In the meantime, the Biennial must be able to demonstrate promotion of environmental work. The promotion of the environmental matters can be demonstrated by, among other things, updating the objectives and measures of the environmental programme.

Figure 11. One of the ponds on Vallisaari.



4.2 Indicators and results of the environmental programme

Indicators were set for all the objectives of Helsinki Biennial environmental programme in order to assess the success of Helsinki Biennial. Data were collected on the customer service material flow, Biennial logistics, energy consumption, waste and erosion. In the inaugural Biennial, the objective was to collect this baseline data, as no points of comparison or information were available on the consumption of such a large and long-lasting artistic event. The above-mentioned areas were selected in order to obtain the broadest possible understanding of the environmental impacts of the event already in connection with the first Biennial.

The Helsinki Biennial environmental programme included a total of eight objectives and 42 measures to achieve these objectives. The objectives and measures of the environmental programme are described in more detail in Appendix 3. More than half of the measures were implemented during the Biennial (32). Some of the measures were not implemented at all (5), some were only partially implemented and a small number of the objectives were abandoned even before the Biennial had started. However, one or more measures were implemented for each of the environmental objectives of the Biennial. Only one objective succeeded in all measures; several objectives succeeded in full or in part.

The carrying capacity of the island had already been assessed in the general plan for Vallisaari and Kuninkaansaari in 2015, on the basis of which the target of 300,000 visitors to Helsinki Biennial was also set. After this first Biennial, where the number of visitors fell short by half at 148,000 visitors, it is good to reassess the carrying capacity of the island. Wear was caused to certain areas of the island by this number of visitors. Erosion was caused especially to the large grass areas in front of the Alexander Battery and in the vicinity of the picnic site. In addition to the large number of visitors, the grass areas were eroded by the long heat wave in July and the subsequent rainy period. However, the more sensitive areas were not eroded, suggesting that the visitors kept well to the main walking routes.

All transport and trips to the event during 2019–2021 were mapped as part of the environmental impact assessment. The trips and transports accounted for the majority of the emissions of Helsinki Biennial.

The second largest source of emissions was material purchases during the Biennial. While the aim was to purchase a large portion of the materials as used, work phones, computers and customer service work clothes, among other things, were purchased as new.



Figure 12. Alicja Kwade: *Big Be-Hide*, 2019.

Waste volumes generated by the personnel, visitors and entrepreneurs operating on the island also formed part of the emissions. The volumes below do not include the waste volumes resulting from the dismantling of the event. Among the waste fractions, mixed waste was the largest fraction with 37 tonnes. The second largest was biowaste with 7.9 tonnes, and the smallest fraction was cardboard waste with 2.5 tonnes. During the event, 235 MWh of energy was consumed on Vallisaari. This amount corresponds to the annual electricity consumption of approximately 16 Finns.⁶ All the energy consumed on Vallisaari came from renewable energy sources.

In addition to waste emissions, an estimate of the carbon footprint of the event was calculated. A large portion of the carbon footprint consisted of the flights of the artists and the Biennial organisation. Several complementary indicators were utilised in these calculations. The emissions were calculated using the LIPASTO database⁷ and the My Climate website⁸. The total carbon footprint of the event corresponds to the annual emissions of 100 Finns. If the carbon footprint is set in proportion to the number of visitors, the emissions per visitor are 7 kg, which is approximately 0.07% of the

6 Motiva: Energy Use in Finland, Electricity Supply and Demand. (https://www.motiva.fi/en/solutions/energy_use_in_finland/electricity_supply_and_demand), accessed 5 November 2021

7 LIPASTO unit emissions database. (<http://lipasto.vtt.fi/yksikkopaastot/indexe.htm>), accessed 21 October 2021

8 Foundation myclimate. (https://co2.myclimate.org/en/offset_further_emissions), accessed 21 October 2021

average annual carbon footprint of a Finn.⁹ It should be noted that the average carbon footprint of Finns is among the largest in Europe.¹⁰

Helsinki Biennial received the data on energy consumption and the public waste bins of Vallisaari from Metsähallitus. The Biennial was part of the City of Helsinki's pilot project to develop a carbon footprint calculator for events. In addition to the pilot project, the carbon footprint of the event was calculated with the 'Hiilifiksu järjestö' calculator of the University of Helsinki.¹¹ The carbon footprint results of the event were obtained by utilising the best parts of both calculators.

One of the objectives of Helsinki Biennial environmental programme was to make the environment a visible part of both internal and external communications. The environmental coordinator participated in several discussion sessions concerning the environmental measures of the Biennial and environmental sustainability matters in the field of art and culture. In addition, the Biennial team also participated in public discussion on the matter. The event website also included a "Sustainability" subpage, which informed the public about the environmental work and values of the event. Communications on sustainability also comprised participation in the City of Helsinki's "Think Sustainably" website as one of the listed events.¹²

Helsinki Biennial created good cooperation practices together with the Helsinki Region Environmental Services HSY and the City of Helsinki's Park Pals activities. During the summer, HSY's water tap bar on Vallisaari allowed visitors to refill their water bottles easily on the island. As for Park Pals, they visited Vallisaari every weekend in July to tidy up the island. This was the first time that Park Pals were participating operators at an event site.

The results of the visitor survey were also noteworthy, asking questions related to Helsinki Biennial and the environment of Vallisaari. Of the visitors to Vallisaari, only 5% were concerned about the environmental impacts of Helsinki Biennial on Vallisaari. 14% of the respondents were somewhat concerned and 25% were not at all concerned about the environmental impacts of the event. Thus, a large portion of the respondents were unable to take a precise stand on the matter.

4.3 Calculation errors and shortcomings in the environmental impacts of the environmental programme

It should be noted that the environmental impact assessment of the production of the works of Helsinki Biennial did not measure everything. In terms of the works, the monitoring took into account the transport of the works to and from the island, the trips of the artists and their teams to Vallisaari, overnight stays in Helsinki and the waste volumes of the works. Thus, the acquisition of the materials used in the works and the impacts of material production were excluded from the calculation.

In addition, it should be noted that it is possible that there are errors in the calculation. The employees reported their own trips and stays and those of their guests. This may have resulted in duplicate entries, and some trips may have been completely forgotten. Similarly, there may be measurement errors in the trip distances. In addition,

9 Sitra. Carbon footprint of the average Finn. (<https://www.sitra.fi/en/articles/carbon-footprint-average-finn/>), accessed 5 November 2021

10 Helsingin Sanomat (Niko Kettunen): "Tutkimus kartoitti tarkasti Euroopan eri alueiden hiilijalanjäljet." (<https://www.hs.fi/tiede/art-2000005295459.html>), accessed 5 November 2021

11 University of Helsinki: Hiilifiksu järjestö, calculator. (<https://blogs.helsinki.fi/hiilifiksu/laskuri/>), accessed 11 October 2021

12 Helsinki Marketing: Think Sustainably website. "Helsinki Biennial is leading the way in sustainability." (<https://www.my-helsinki.fi/think-sustainably/helsinki-biennial-is-leading-the-way-in-sustainability>), accessed 11 October 2021

for the purpose of calculating the carbon footprint, the visitors' trip has been defined as a trip by ferry to and from Vallisaari, i.e. the calculation does not take into account by what means the visitor arrived at the departure pier of their choice.

The effects of the coronavirus pandemic were also reflected on the environmental actions of Helsinki Biennial. Due to the coronavirus, the supplies of the customer service staff included a lot of disposable products, such as face masks, disinfectant wipes and rubber gloves, as well as larger items, such as hand sanitiser stands and waste bins for the visitors' face masks. During the summer, the staff consumed 8,000 face masks. The coronavirus increased the amount of rubbish found on the ground on Vallisaari, including the aforementioned face masks, for example.

Development ideas related to the environmental impacts of Helsinki Biennial

Developing the environmental programme

- The environmental programme of the next event should be drawn up in accordance with the sustainable development goals of the City of Helsinki. In this way, Helsinki Biennial would comply with and promote the achievement of the City of Helsinki's sustainable development goals.
- In the future, artists should already be involved in the implementation of the environmental programme at the planning stage of the event. In this way, artists could already take the environmental aspect into account in the material choices for their works, for example.
- The City of Helsinki's Environmental Protection could be engaged in even closer cooperation, even though cooperation with them in the first Biennial was already of significant help and very smooth.
- In the future, it will be important to maintain a dialogue with the other museums and, in particular, with art institutions in terms of environmental matters. Care should be taken to ensure that these dialogues are maintained and intensified as environmental work develops more widely in the field of art and culture.
- Instead of an environmental coordinator, a sustainability manager could be hired for the event. The job description of the sustainability manager would include all sustainability matters: social, environmental, cultural and economic sustainability. Thus, for example, availability and accessibility information and measures would be the clear responsibility of one person.
- The sustainability coordinator should prepare a sustainability programme for Helsinki Biennial, including goals and measures to promote sustainability work. One area of the sustainability programme can be, for example, an environmental programme.
- In order to reduce emissions, the event could hire a logistics planner.
- An environmental/climate budget should be prepared for the event, itemising the permissible limits of environmental impacts.

5 Impacts of the Biennial on Helsinki's tourist appeal and maritime characteristics

Pekka Mustonen, Senior Researcher, Urban Research and Statistics Unit of the City Executive Office, City of Helsinki

This chapter discusses the impacts of Helsinki Biennial on the city's tourist appeal and the maritime characteristics of Helsinki. The overall economic impacts of the event are therefore approached from a number of different points of view. On the one hand, the role of Helsinki Biennial as a tourist appeal factor and the Vallisaari location as a venue will be discussed. On the other hand, views of the Biennial visitors and Helsinki residents on the maritime characteristics and the archipelago will be discussed. In addition, the chapter describes how well-known the event was among locals and visitors, and whether the two target groups perceived the event as an interesting and sensible use of tax money.

When examining the economic and tourism impact factors, it should be borne in mind that Helsinki Biennial was an art event whose main objective was not to generate sales revenue for its organiser HAM (the event was free of charge) or to obtain other business profits. It was, however, hoped that the event would support the local economy and boost the service activities of maritime entrepreneurs. This aspect was perhaps most influenced by the coronavirus. Nevertheless, an assessment of the economic impacts of the event is presented below. This so-called baseline definition is important for the further development of the event.

As stated in the introduction to the report, the impacts of the event on maritime construction (impacts on maintenance, additional and repair construction) as well as on transport and mobility have been excluded from this analysis (Figure 1). These large entities should be considered in more detail as part of separate follow-up studies.

5.1 Tourist appeal and visitor profiles of the event

As mentioned earlier in the report, 148,000 people visited Vallisaari during Helsinki Biennial. No visitor counting was carried out at the mainland event sites (incl. the Senate Square, HAM Helsinki Art Museum, Vuosaari, Central Library Oodi and Töölönlahti). Participants in the Biennial audience development cooperation and in the *Inspired by Biennial* partnership projects were also not included in the total number of visitors. Helsinki Biennial audience development entity was significant. Dozens of events were organised and around 800 people attended events requiring prior registration. There were at least as many participants in the other events and workshops. The artists themselves also organised events attended by more than 6,000 people according to estimates.

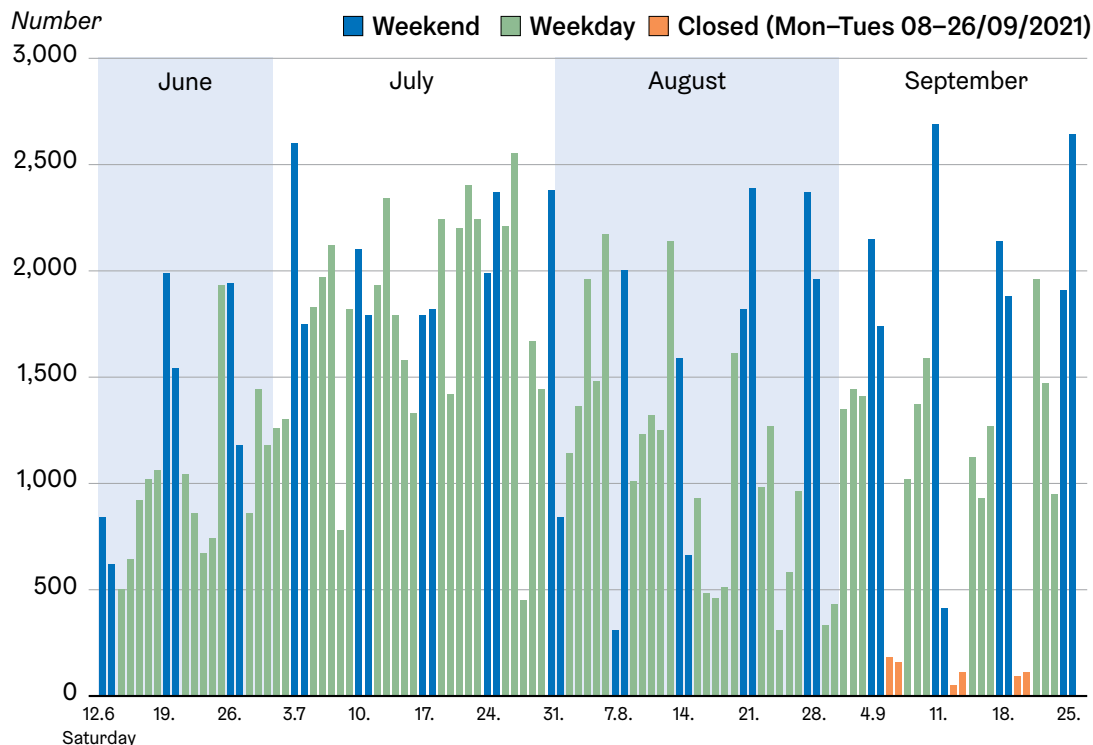
For the sake of clarity, these numbers of the separate side events and workshops are not included in the economic calculations. At these events, visitor profiles were not studied in detail. Presumably, a very large number of participants were from Helsinki or the neighbouring areas, so it would have been difficult if not impossible to estimate the additional consumption caused by the events. On the other hand, many of the side event participants also presumably visited the main event on Vallisaari.

If all these things related to Helsinki Biennial entity are taken into account, the total number of visitors – or rather the “number of experiencers” – is naturally higher than the number of visitors to Vallisaari. Naturally, the works that were on display on the mainland and, for example, on the premises of the Port of Helsinki, were seen by a multiple number of people. In addition, there were certainly a lot of people who adjusted their route to see these works. Estimating such numbers is, however, very difficult and therefore this report does not discuss this dimension any further. In terms of the economic impacts, the calculations presented below are therefore somewhat subdued, as they only take into account the additional consumption generated by the main event on Vallisaari.

On a weekly level, the average number of visitors to Vallisaari was 10,000. The visitor numbers peaked in July, when almost 15,000 people per week visited. After mid-August, the visitor numbers fell slightly, as there were clearly fewer visitors to Vallisaari on weekdays than in the preceding weeks. At the same time, the number of visitors at weekends increased and remained at a high level until the end of the event. In September, Helsinki Biennial was closed on Mondays and Tuesdays (Diagram 3).

The weekly visitor numbers of the event were collected by Metsähallitus from the ferry operators. The daily visitor estimates have been calculated using the weekly-level data by making use of the data collected by the Hypercell visitor counters installed on Vallisaari.

Diagram 3. Estimated number of Helsinki Biennial visitors on Vallisaari during the event



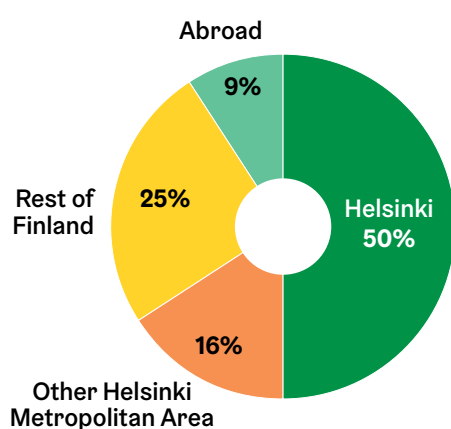
Data source: Metsähallitus. Daily data has been calculated based on weekly data using data collected by Bluetooth sensors managed by Hypercell. With the help of this information, the distribution of visitors to different days of the week has been calculated, and the exact data collected by Metsähallitus are used to estimate the number of daily visitors.

Two out of the three people who visited the Biennial were women. Nearly half of the visitors were between the ages of 25 and 44. The visitor profile was clearly inclined to highly educated people. Half of the survey respondents had at least a master’s degree.

The majority of the Biennial visitor survey respondents came from nearby areas, which was, of course, expected due to the Covid-19 pandemic that prevailed in the summer of 2021. Around one-third of the 148,000 visitors, or 50,000, came from places other than the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, including more than 10,000 foreigners (Diagram 4). Approximately half of the visitors were Helsinki residents; about one-quarter of the visitors came from Finland but outside the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

Contrary to the original plans, the first Helsinki Biennial was, in practice, an event aimed at Finns rather than an international event. Around one-third of those who came from other parts of Finland came to see Helsinki Biennial, so clearly the event attracted some people to Helsinki. Only a few foreign visitors, about one in ten, came to Helsinki because of the Biennial.

■ Diagram 4. Visitors by municipality of residence



Data source: Visitor survey, KANTAR TNS (n=1,442).

5.2 Audience development impacts of the event

Helsinki Biennial was not only an international contemporary art event, but also an economic activity that had a direct and indirect impact on the economy of Helsinki, the Helsinki region and the country as a whole. Impacts were generated as a result of organising the Biennial and consumption by the event visitors. Therefore, when assessing the overall economic impacts, both these dimensions must be taken into account and it must be understood that the money spent on organising the event, including tax money, is not just an expense – the money goes into the economic cycle and some of it eventually returns to its source.

In connection with Helsinki Biennial, assessing this mechanism utilised the so-called input-output model (Appendix 4) used to assess the overall economic impacts of investments, economic activities or consumption.¹³ The method does not take a stand on alternative costs, i.e. what could have been the alternative uses of the money. The calculations have been carried out by Seppo Laakso of the Urban Research TA Ltd. The results of the calculations are summarised in Table 1.

The total output is generated by the direct impacts of the economic activities and their multiplier effects. Even when a single event is located in a single geographical

¹³ Official Statistics of Finland (OSF): Input-output [e-publication], ISSN=1799-201X. 2018. Helsinki: Statistics Finland. (https://www.stat.fi/til/pt/2018/pt_2018_2021-04-29_tie_001_en.html), accessed 21 December 2021

area (e.g. a municipality) and all the arrangements are made from there, some of the impacts fall upon areas outside the event area in the form of multiplier effects.

The Helsinki Biennial visitor survey asked the visitors to estimate their spending on their trip and, on the other hand, in the Biennial area on Vallisaari. The latter was asked of all respondents and the former only of those from outside Helsinki. This was due to the fact that any consumption by Helsinki residents outside Vallisaari could not be considered directly linked to the Biennial. On the other hand, only a portion, the above-mentioned one-third approximately, of the out-of-town visitors came to Helsinki because of the Biennial.

Most of the respondents visiting from outside Helsinki spent money on restaurant and café services. Approximately half spent money on mobility, one-third spent money on shopping and one in four spent it on accommodation. Out-of-town visitors spent an average approximately EUR 50 per person during their visit to Helsinki. A little over EUR 10 per person was spent in the Biennial area on Vallisaari.

The additional consumption by the event visitors in Helsinki was estimated at EUR 2.4 million. The additional consumption refers to purchases on Vallisaari and the increase in consumption in Helsinki in connection with the visit.

On the basis of the available data, it is not possible to know how much consumption the event caused compared to a situation where the event would not have taken place. In principle, it may be possible that the amount of money resulting from consumption and remaining in circulation in the local economy was now smaller than it would have been if the event had not taken place. The amount of consumption, presumably below its potential, was probably influenced by the island's challenging logistics and infrastructure. Consumption possibilities on Vallisaari were limited and the restaurant services were mainly available in one place so, due to queues and running out of products, for example, the supply possibly did not meet the potential demand. For this reason, the event may have indirectly increased consumption elsewhere. This may have happened in cases where, due to queues for example, consumption on the island was not possible, so it was postponed to take place elsewhere in the city centre.

Figure 13. Easy Café on Vallisaari.



The employment impact of the additional consumption by the visitors was around 40 person-years, more than half of which focused on Helsinki. The employment impact was based on the direct and indirect employment increases in companies caused by the additional consumption. The impact of the increase in consumption on the sum of wages and salaries was approximately EUR 0.7 million. The impact on tax revenue was approximately EUR 0.3 million, one-third of which came to the municipal sector and most of it to Helsinki. Most of the tax revenue went to the state, with the value added tax being the largest contribution.

The expenses of the event organisation responsible for organising the event in 2020–2021 were approximately EUR 6.2 million, EUR 1.4 million of which was spent on administrative and general expenses of the event, consisting mainly of personnel expenses. Approximately EUR 4.8 million was spent on outsourced services. They consisted of marketing and communications, content and programme services, Vallisaari arrangements, customer service and sales.

The employment impact of organising the event was in total approximately 105 person-years, of which two-thirds, about 70 person-years, were focused on Helsinki. Around one-third of the employment impact was based on direct employment and two-thirds on the impact generated by the outsourced services. The sum of wages and salaries for organising the event was approximately EUR 2.4 million, much of which was passed on to consumption, resulting in economic multiplier effects. Also, in the case of the sum of wages and salaries, two-thirds was focused on Helsinki. The tax revenue generated by organising the event was approximately EUR 1 million, approximately EUR 0.4 million of which was passed on to the municipal sector mostly as municipal tax and approximately EUR 0.2 million of which was passed on to Helsinki. The majority of the tax revenue – around EUR 0.6 million – went to the state in the form of value added tax and income tax.

The Biennial also had direct and indirect economic impacts resulting from the organisation of the event and the additional consumption by the event participants. These factors increased the economic output by about EUR 8.5 million in 2020–2021. However, as mentioned earlier, the additional consumption amount of the visitors is uncertain. The event increased employment by approximately 140 person-years and the sum of wages and salaries by EUR 3.2 million. Tax revenue amounted to approximately EUR 1.4 million, one-third of which was accrued by the municipal sector. The numbers show that a large part of the city's funding for organising the event is returned to the local economy and a small part also to the city's economy as tax revenue.

Assessing the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic is difficult. There would probably have been more international visitors if travel had been free of restrictions and there would not have been any other restrictions either. Then again, the coronavirus situation and a relatively long period without any events – in addition to the sunny summer – may have increased domestic interest on Vallisaari. Paradoxically, it is possible that the coronavirus pandemic eventually increased the interest of Finns and especially that of locals in Helsinki Biennial.

Table 4. Summary of the economic impacts of Helsinki Biennial 2021

Key figures	In total	Organisation of the Biennial	Additional consumption by the visitors
Output, EUR 1,000	8,535	6,158	2,378
Added value, EUR 1,000	5,882	4,618	1,264
Sum of wages and salaries, EUR 1,000	3,172	2,446	727
Operating surplus, EUR 1,000	228	152	76
Employment, person-years	142	105	37
Total tax revenue, EUR 1,000	1,390	1,031	359

5.3 Event impacts on the maritime characteristics of Helsinki

Nearly all of the respondents to the Helsinki resident survey (n=1,185) had visited one of the destinations in Helsinki's archipelago, most likely Suomenlinna. Around 40% of the respondents had visited Vallisaari at some point, and just under one-third of them during Helsinki Biennial. So, approximately every tenth person participating in the resident survey had visited Helsinki Biennial. Even though the data are not sufficiently representative of the population in such small categories, this amount would correspond to approximately 60,000 Helsinki residents. This is in line with the visitor survey estimate, according to which about half of all visitors would have been Helsinki residents.

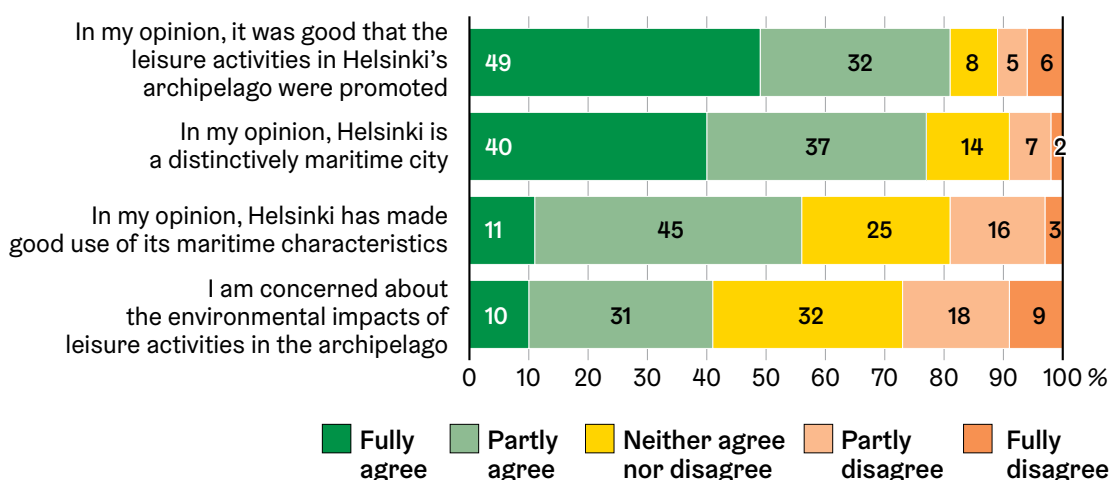
The resident survey asked about their attitude towards the maritime characteristics and, on the other hand, impressions of the Biennial. These questions were asked of all respondents, including those who had not visited Helsinki Biennial. The overwhelming majority (81%) of the resident survey respondents considered the promotion of leisure activities in Helsinki's archipelago to be a good thing. Almost as many (77%) regarded Helsinki as a distinctively maritime city (Diagram 5).

On the other hand, when asked whether Helsinki has made good use of its maritime characteristics or when asked about the environmental impacts of the archipelago's recreational use, the share of wavering people was higher. However, more than half of the respondents felt that the maritime characteristics has been well utilised. Approximately one in five disagreed with this statement.

There are a number of reasons behind the uncertainty reflected on these responses, the most important of which is probably the fact that the themes enquired about are multidimensional and many people do not know enough about them. It is likely that for most people the maritime characteristics are understood as the archipelago destinations or as the vicinity of the sea, and people do not know how the maritime characteristics were utilised in other respects or how they could be utilised.

Slightly over 40% of the respondents were concerned about the environmental impacts of the archipelago's recreational use. Here, too, the views are divided, which is partly understandable, as this is a difficult matter to comprehend (Diagram 5).

Diagram 5. Views of Helsinki residents on maritime characteristics

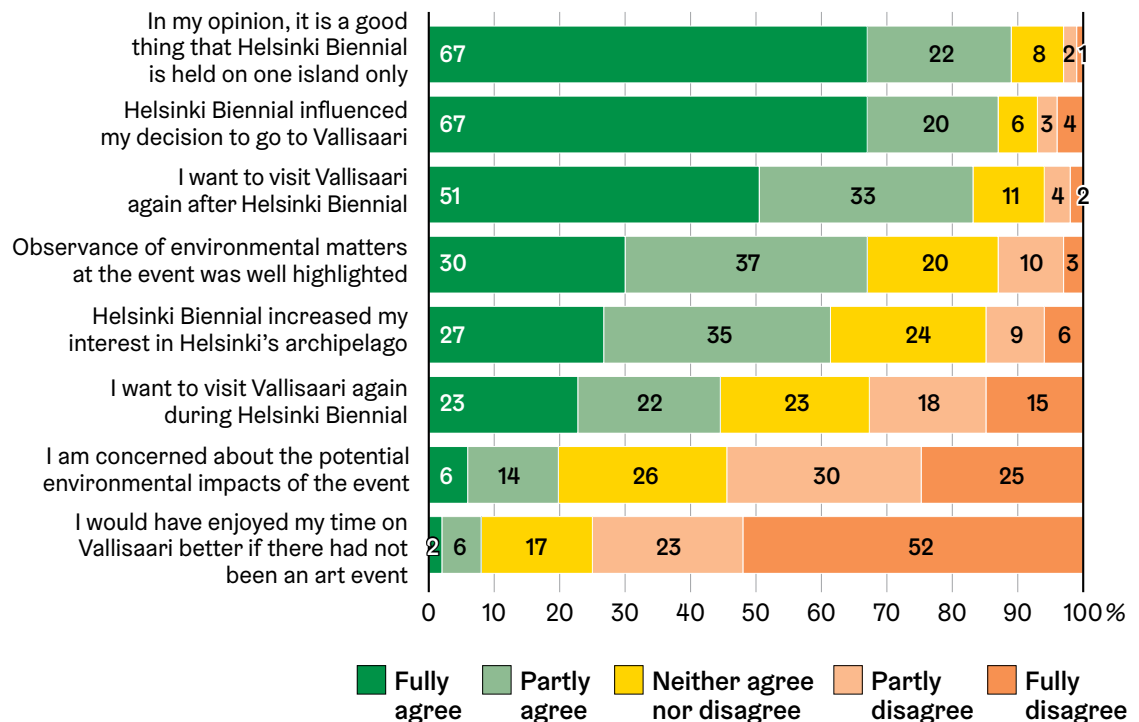


Data source: Visitor survey, TAK (n=1,053–1,056).

These same themes were also asked in the visitor survey. So, in this case, all the respondents were visitors to the event. Interestingly, as highlighted in Chapter 3, fewer respondents were concerned about the environmental impacts in the visitor survey than in the resident survey. This may be due to the fact that, in these kinds of surveys, people tend to respond as is expected of them. As environmental matters and sustainable development are much debated, this may have been reflected on these survey responses. Then again, if the respondent is already in the archipelago (i.e. all the respondents to the visitor survey had visited Helsinki Biennial), the decision to visit has already been made, the responses clearly pertain to the experience to be evaluated rather than taking a general and broader view.

So, in the spirit of the Helsinki Maritime Strategy, the event can be considered quite successful. Well over half of the respondents felt that the visit had increased their interest in Helsinki's archipelago and, on the other hand, nearly half said that the visit had made them look at Helsinki in a new way (Diagram 6).

Diagram 6. Views of visitors on Vallisaari as a venue



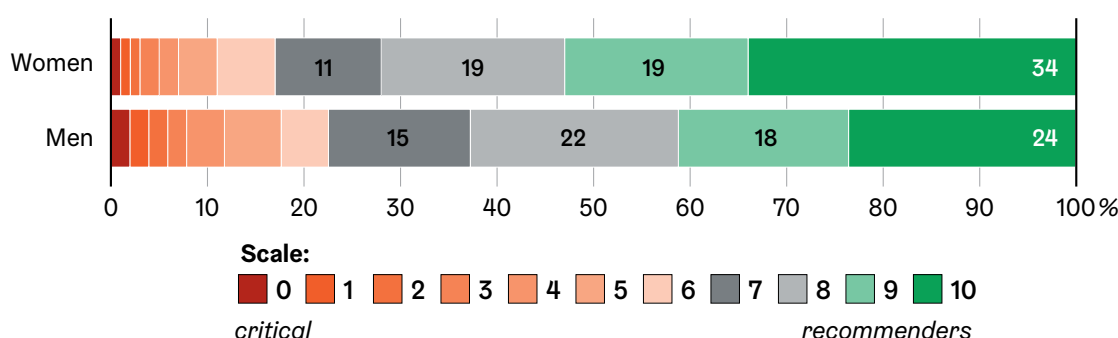
Data source: Visitor survey, KANTAR TNS (n=1,456–1,471).

5.4 Vallisaari as a venue

Nearly all of the respondents to the visitor survey considered holding Helsinki Biennial on one island to be a good thing. The vast majority of the respondents also want to visit Vallisaari again – quite a few also during the event.

More than 80% of the respondents (n=1,539) to the visitor survey carried out on Vallisaari chose option 7 or higher on a scale of 0 to 10 when asked about their willingness to recommend (“How likely are you to recommend Helsinki Biennial to your friends or acquaintances?”). Almost half of them chose option 9 or 10, which are interpreted as actual willingness to recommend in the frequently used NPS (Net Promoter Score) recommendation indicator (Diagram 7).

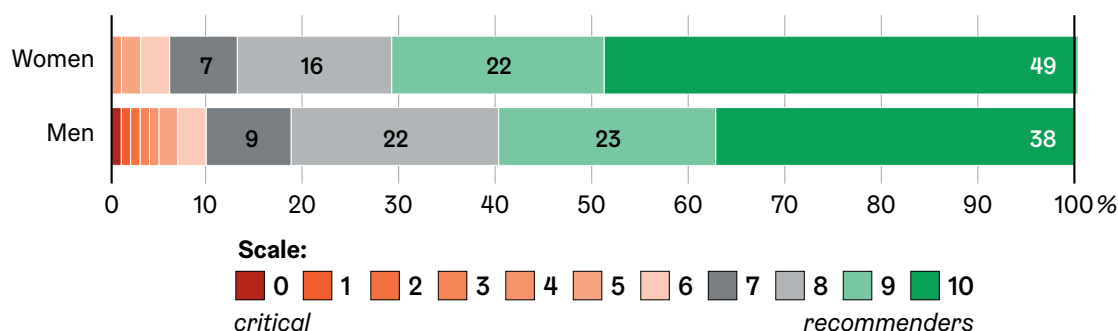
Diagram 7. Willingness of visitors to recommend Helsinki Biennial



Data source: Visitor survey, KANTAR TNS (n=1,523–1,529).

The survey also asked about the willingness to recommend Vallisaari as an excursion destination (Diagram 8). The answers to this question were even more positive. Nine out of ten chose option 7 or higher and two out of three chose option 9 or 10.

Diagram 8. Willingness of visitors to recommend Vallisaari as an excursion destination



Data source: Visitor survey, KANTAR TNS (n=1,523–1,529).

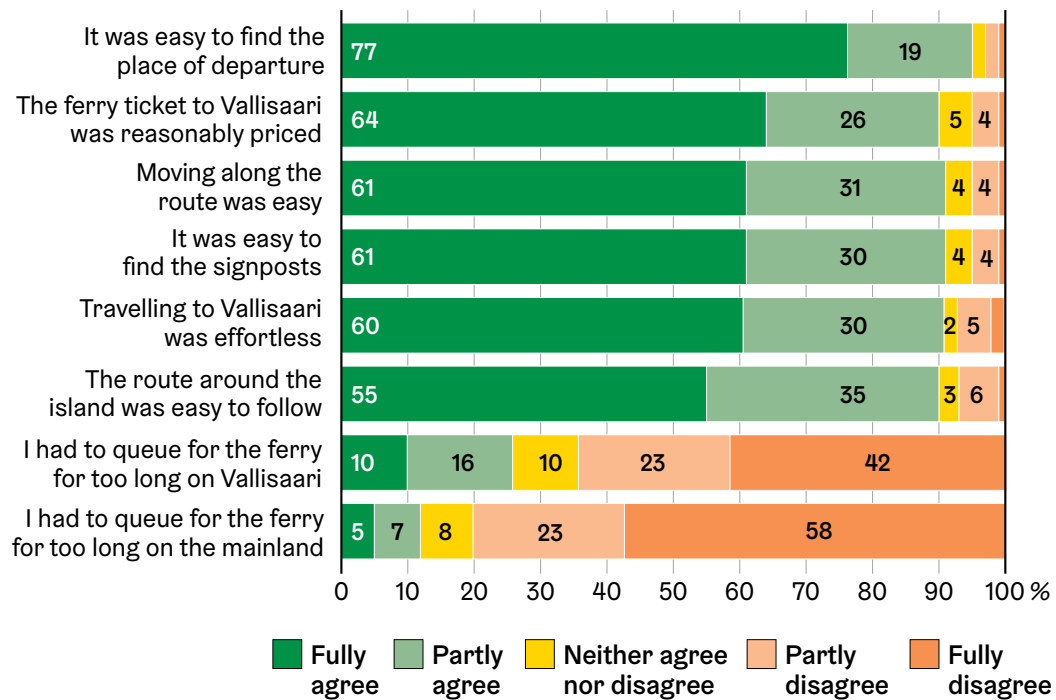
The NPS figures are not presented here because of the numerous issues with the indicator, but the colours of the options in the diagram have been chosen so that the critical ones are displayed in red, as they are in the NPS calculations, and green is used for those willing to recommend. As you can see from the diagrams, the red shares, i.e. the so-called critical shares, are very small. In addition, it should be noted here that, when looking at something on such a broad scale (0–10; 11 options), according to the NPS indicator the neutral options 7 and 8 (shown in grey) are clearly on the positive side of

the scale. Option 5, which is in the middle of the scale, is classified to the critical side in the NPS calculations, as is option 6, although it is on the positive side on the scale.

In both questions, men were slightly more critical than women. This analysis included those respondents who had marked one of these as their sex/gender. Among women, the willingness to recommend was higher and, correspondingly, there were fewer neutral and critical responses. The willingness to recommend also very clearly increased with age. The younger respondents were much more critical than the older ones.

From the point of view of accessibility and mobility, almost all areas received significantly positive responses among the visitor survey respondents (Diagram 9). The only thing related to mobility and accessibility where the results of the visitor survey showed some criticism was queuing, as already stated in Chapter 3. Around one-fifth of the respondents felt that they had to queue for the ferry on Vallisaari for too long, but on the other hand the majority did not see a problem with this. In addition to queuing for the ferry, the free-form responses to the visitor survey also gave negative feedback about queuing to see the works.

■ Diagram 9. Visitor ratings on accessibility and mobility

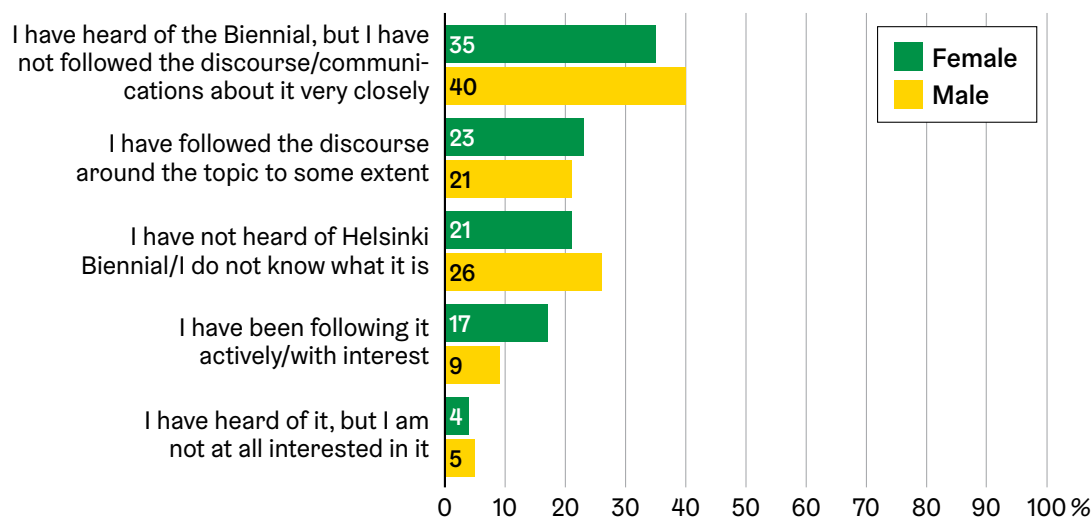


Data source: Visitor survey, KANTAR TNS (n=1,452–1,519).

5.5 Awareness about the event and its appeal

Only less than one-quarter of the respondents to the Helsinki resident survey had not heard of Helsinki Biennial (Diagram 10). Therefore, it can be said that the event was quite well known among the Helsinki residents. More than one-third of the respondents had followed discourse on the topic to some extent. There were differences in awareness and also in following this discourse among the respondent groups: awareness increased with age based on the data and women had followed the discourse on the Biennial more actively than men.

Diagram 10. Awareness about Helsinki Biennial among Helsinki residents



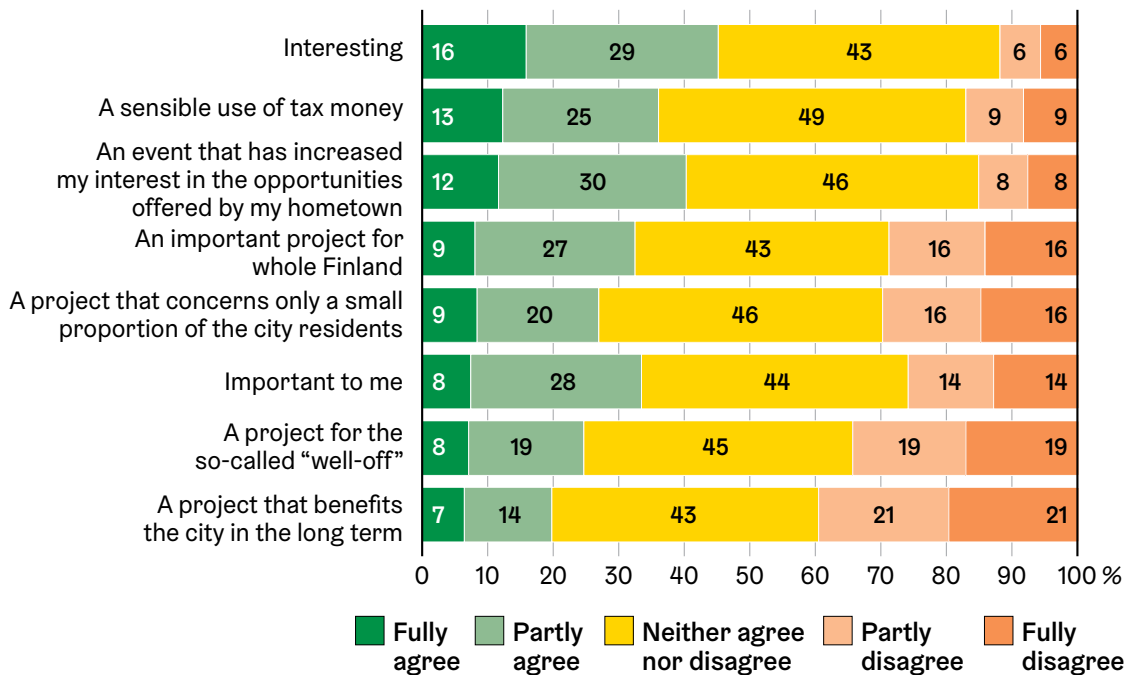
Data source: Resident survey, TAK (n=1,035). Including those who have marked their sex/gender either as female or male.

The resident survey also asked for general views about the Biennial from all respondents, whether they had participated in the event or not. Only about one in ten respondents found Helsinki Biennial not interesting at all, but there were almost as many uncertain respondents as there were those who found the event interesting. Here, of course, the aforementioned fact must be taken into account; the resident survey was not primarily aimed at Helsinki Biennial visitors and the vast majority had never visited Vallisaari, let alone during the event.

Nonetheless, only a relatively small proportion of the resident survey respondents felt that Helsinki Biennial would not benefit the city in the long term or that it was not sensible use of tax money. Although the share of uncertain respondents is almost half, it can be stated that the results are clearly inclined in a positive direction. In these kinds of surveys, it is typical that negative views are expressed clearly and, as stated, there were relatively few of them. Naturally, the respondents who were aware of the Biennial were more positive in their responses than those who had not heard of or been interested in the project.

Women thought that Helsinki Biennial was more interesting, closer to them and a more sensible use of tax money than men (Diagram 11). Women also felt more strongly than men that the project had increased their interest in the potential of their hometown. In general, men were more sceptical about Helsinki Biennial than women. Compared to women, it was more common among men to see Helsinki Biennial as a “project for the well-off” or, on the other hand, as a project that only concerned a small proportion of the city’s population. These results, highlighting the differences between women and men, are very typical and fully in line with surveys and studies on culture. This phenomenon was also seen in the results of the visitor survey presented here.

Diagram 11. Views of Helsinki residents on Helsinki Biennial



Data source: Resident survey, TAK (n=1,044–1,047).

In addition, HAM Helsinki Art Museum was well identified among the visitors as the organiser of the event. Almost half of the respondents to the visitor survey were able to name HAM Helsinki Art Museum or the City of Helsinki as the organiser of the Biennial (Figure 13). Naturally, the art museum was mentioned in several different ways in the answers, for example "art museum" or "Helsinki Art Museum" without the prefix HAM. Also, partners such as Metsähallitus were mentioned several times among the aforementioned responses.

Figure 13. Who (what organisation) do you think is the organiser of Helsinki Biennial? Source: Helsinki Biennial visitor survey/KANTAR TNS (open-ended question, n=717)



5.6 Feedback from the partners on event impacts and the Biennial cooperation

The partners of Helsinki Biennial said that they will monitor the first event's assessment, results and collected feedback with interest. They would also be interested in hearing about the most important lessons learnt and ideas for development. The assessment of the event was seen as part of the cooperation and the partners emphasised that it is also of paramount importance for the planning and funding of the future Biennial events. From the point of view of the foundations that provided funding, cooperation with the city is also important in the future and the aim is to develop the cooperation on the basis of the impact assessment.

The partners were satisfied with the event's communication impact, i.e. media visibility. The communications and marketing of the event were perceived as being of high quality, and the event was prominent in a variety of media and in the cityscape. International media coverage of Helsinki Biennial was good; articles were published in, for example, Dagens Nyheter, El País, the Financial Times, Forbes, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Monocle, The Telegraph and numerous design and art media. In addition, the Biennial was listed among the World's 100 Greatest Places 2021 of the Time magazine. Feedback from the Biennial's partners was by and large positive. Cooperation with HAM's Biennial team was seen as good and business-like.

HAM Helsinki Art Museum held feedback discussions with the partners responsible for the implementation of the event (Metsähallitus, the island's entrepreneurs and the companies responsible for the ferry service) on the operational production of the Biennial. As previously stated in this report, HAM is responsible for the production-related reporting of the event, so the feedback of the partners involved in the practical arrangements will be taken into account in the further development of the production and will not be discussed in more detail as part of this impact study.

Development ideas related to the tourism impacts of Helsinki Biennial and supporting the maritime characteristics of Helsinki

Developing the tourism characteristics and appeal of the event

- By placing more restaurant and café services along the Vallisaari walking route, visitors could be better served in the future.
- Extending Helsinki Biennial to other Helsinki islands should be carefully considered, as almost all of the respondents to the visitor survey felt that holding Helsinki Biennial on one island was a good thing.
- If the aim of the event is to attract more visitors and increase the tourist appeal of the event, the island's carrying capacity must be reassessed. See more in Chapter 4 "Environmental impacts of the Biennial".
- If the impacts of the event are to be examined more extensively in the future, visitor counting statistics must also be compiled for the side events. The visitor profiles of the side events could also be analysed in more depth as part of follow-up studies.
- In the case of Helsinki Biennial, two extensive survey data entities (the visitor survey and resident survey) were collected, and the more detailed utilisation of these should be considered. This report only scratches at the surface of the results. The data will allow for much more detailed reflection, which would be of use in monitoring future Biennials and other events.

6 Conclusions

The contemporary art event Helsinki Biennial was held for the first time from 12 June to 26 September 2021 on Vallisaari, with 148,000 visitors during the summer. In addition, the Biennial offered artistic experiences to the public in different parts of Helsinki.

As the Biennial was one of the projects included in the Helsinki City Strategy 2017–2021, it was decided to carry out an extensive impact study. The objective of the study was to collect comprehensive baseline data from the first Biennial and also to produce information on the impacts of the Biennial.

The impact assessment focused on the three main objectives set for the Biennial:

- Increasing awareness of Helsinki being a high-level city of visual arts and culture
- Highlighting maritime Helsinki and its maritime services
- Organising an ecologically sustainable and responsible event

The impacts of the event were approached from the perspective of sociocultural and image impacts and environmental and economic impacts. The study was carried out using qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The key data of the study were the visitor survey carried out on Vallisaari, the Helsinki resident survey and the visitor counting data of the event. As part of the study, artists and partners of the event as well as experts in the field of visual arts in Helsinki were interviewed. In addition, a business survey was conducted with maritime entrepreneurs closely linked to the Biennial. The environmental impact data linked to the environmental programme of the Biennial were collected as part of the implementation of the EcoCompass system. Other tourism statistics were also used as background material for the study as a whole.

On the basis of the assessment carried out, it can be concluded that the event met the objectives set for it and the impact expectations. The event offered artistic experiences for different types of audiences and strengthened Helsinki's reputation as a city of visual arts and culture. At the same time, the event promoted the objectives of the Helsinki Maritime Strategy. In addition, Helsinki Biennial made a commitment to follow the criteria of its environmental programme and to operate in a sustainable and responsible manner in organising the event, now and in the future.

Event visitors' consumption and experience

The visitor profile of the event was very similar to that of cultural events in general: two out of three visitors to the Biennial were women. Approximately half of the visitors were Helsinki residents; about one-quarter of the visitors came from Finland but outside the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. About one in ten were foreigners. Nearly half of the visitors were between the ages of 25 and 44. The visitor profile was clearly inclined to highly educated people. Half of the visitor survey respondents had at least a master's degree.

Most Biennial visitors came from the neighbouring areas, which was to be expected amid the Covid-19 pandemic in summer 2021. Around one-third of those who came from other parts of Finland came to see Helsinki Biennial, so clearly the event attracted some people to Helsinki. Of the 148,000 visitors to Vallisaari, around one-third, i.e. 50,000 visitors, came from Finland but outside the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and more than 10,000 visitors came from abroad.

Most of the respondents visiting from outside Helsinki spent money on restaurant and café services. Approximately half spent money on mobility, one-third spent money on shopping and one in four spent it on accommodation. Out-of-town visitors spent an average approximately EUR 50 per person during their visit to Helsinki. On average, approximately EUR 10 per visitors was spent in the Biennial area on Vallisaari. Therefore, the direct economic impact of the additional consumption by Helsinki Biennial visitors can be estimated at approximately EUR 2.4 million. These data are indicative.

The majority of the visitor survey respondents gave a good or excellent overall rating to the event, and the majority of them felt that they had memorable artistic experiences during their visit. As regards the event experience, the public criticised, for example, queues for the ferries and to the works, and servicing of the works during which the works were closed. In addition, negative feedback was given about the price-quality ratio of restaurant services and their concentration on a single location in Torpedo Bay. Also, accessibility was criticised, and it was hoped that better accessibility would be ensured when building the next event and selecting places for works. Longer opening hours, more lunch options along the route, fewer indoor and video works and a free-of-charge paper map were requested for the next Biennial.

Positive impact on the work of the artists and the art city image of Helsinki

According to the interviewed artists, Helsinki Biennial was significant in terms of their work and visibility despite the coronavirus. Based on the feedback, it can be stated that the artists were pleased with the practical arrangements of the event and felt that the cooperation with the HAM Biennial team went well. The satisfaction of the artists has various effects; the positive message will spread in the art community and, as a result, strengthen both international and national cooperation as well as Helsinki's reputation as a city of visual arts.

According to the interviewed experts in the visual arts field of Helsinki, Helsinki Biennial was a success and the event raises the status of Finnish visual arts both nationally and internationally. They felt that Helsinki's image as an interesting international art city was strengthened as a result of the event. Naturally, the experts and artists also gave criticism, mostly related to production and the practical implementation of the event. The experts were also understanding of these problems, as the event was being organised for the first time.

Audience development strengthened the accessibility of the Biennial and supported the equality of participants

One big part of the Biennial was audience development, which was very successful based on feedback. The Biennial also brought art to the mainland to be enjoyed in different ways by those who might have found it challenging to visit the island.

The cooperation between the City of Helsinki's divisions within the framework of audience development was also considered successful. According to assessments, audience development strengthened the equality and well-being of participants from infancy to old age. It can therefore be said that the activities implemented by the city in different areas directly supported the accessibility of the Biennial and the realisation of equality. At the same time, the Biennial brought along new tools, ideas and competence for the systematic implementation of audience development at HAM Helsinki Art Museum.

Support for the Helsinki Maritime Strategy

In the spirit of the Helsinki Maritime Strategy, the event can be considered quite successful. Well over half of the visitor survey respondents felt that the visit increased their interest in Helsinki's archipelago and nearly half said that the visit made them look at Helsinki in a new way. The overwhelming majority of the resident survey respondents considered the promotion of leisure activities in Helsinki's archipelago to be a good thing. Almost as many of the respondents to the above-mentioned resident survey considered Helsinki to be a distinctively maritime city.

Only a relatively small proportion of the resident survey respondents felt that Helsinki Biennial would not benefit the city in the long term or that it was not sensible use of tax money. Women thought that Helsinki Biennial was more interesting, closer to them and a more sensible use of tax money than men. Women also felt more strongly than men that the project had increased their interest in the potential of their hometown.

Although this overall impact assessment did not look at the impacts of the Biennial in more detail as regards maritime buildings, construction and transport or mobility, it can be stated that the event had an impact on the development of maritime transport and infrastructure. Locating the event on Vallisaari was part of the development of water transport in Helsinki and the planned construction of municipal and civil engineering on the island. A new archipelago connection from Hakaniemi via Kruunuvuorenranta, Vasikkasaari and Lonna was established together with a ring route between Suomenlinna and Vallisaari.

In the opinion of the visitors, Vallisaari was a good venue for the Biennial. A clear majority of the visitors considered their visit to Vallisaari successful. The overwhelming majority of the respondents also wanted to visit Vallisaari again.

Helsinki Biennial clearly influenced the respondents' decision to go to Vallisaari. The most common reason for the visit was the anticipated combination of outdoor recreation and art, which according to the visitors was excellently realised at the site. The visit increased the interest of many in outdoor activities, but also in art. The unique milieu of Vallisaari and the combination of nature and art received a lot of praise, and organising the event on one island was considered a good thing.

Sustainable environmental programme for the event

It was decided to create a dedicated environmental programme for Helsinki Biennial, which was implemented with the EcoCompass system. The event was audited in the summer of 2021 and was awarded the EcoCompass certificate for the next three years. The Biennial received praise, in particular, for its extensive cooperation with the partners and its desire to be a pioneer in sustainability matters in the field of art.

However, on the basis of the environmental programme data, it can be concluded that the event caused wear on to the island's large grass fields. No wear was observed in the more sensitive areas. Nevertheless, now after the first Biennial, it is good to reassess the island's carrying capacity before the next event is organised.

The environmental activities of the event aroused interest in the art field both in Finland and internationally. Helsinki Biennial has the opportunity to be a pioneer in the future and to develop new tools for taking into account the environmental impacts of art events.

According to the event organisers, the goal of Helsinki Biennial is to achieve carbon neutrality in the near future. According to the Biennial's environmental coordinator, this will require resources, new tools and a willingness to do things in a new way. According to the environmental coordinator, environmental issues could be approached from a broader perspective – of sustainability – in the future as part of the further development of the Biennial.

Utilisation of the impact study within the division and topics for follow-up studies

The impact study of Helsinki Biennial supported the objective of the City of Helsinki to implement knowledge-based management. This impact study created the baseline data for the Biennial and an assessment model for the analysis of future events.

In addition, competence was transferred from the Urban Research and Statistics Unit of the Helsinki City Executive Office to the City of Helsinki Culture and Leisure Division, to the cultural services. The same research method and data production model can be utilised, where applicable, more extensively in the development of the services of the Culture and Leisure Division in the future. Parts of Helsinki Biennial research entity can be used as a model for the assessment and monitoring of various cultural services or events.

The study was extensive, making use of a large data set. In the future, the scope of the impact study should therefore be reassessed as part of the following Biennials. Due to the size of the data, its analysis may not be possible in the future with the same resources that were available for research in 2019–2021.

Despite the fact that the Biennial data that have now been reviewed and analysed were very extensive, a lot of interesting areas of research and materials were excluded from this study. In the future, the Biennial studies could be elaborated on by analysing, for example, the impacts of Helsinki Biennial on maritime construction, transport or mobility. Similarly, the valuable cultural heritage buildings of Vallisaari would deserve their own study. In addition, the event could be approached from the point of view of studying the impacts of its communications. Analyses of physical exercise and well-being among the visitors of the following events could also offer new perspectives to the impacts of a cultural event. In addition, an international comparison with other biennials and their impacts would provide essential additional information for the development of the event, although it will be challenging to find comparable data. Research methods and analysis models vary by country and by event, so this should be taken into account in any future international biennial comparisons.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Method

The impact study of the Helsinki Biennale 2021 was prepared by a working group that operated in 2019–2021. At first, the research work was coordinated by the Economic Development Department of Helsinki City Executive Office and then by the Urban Research and Statistics unit of the Strategy Department. The working group served under the steering group of Helsinki Biennial, chaired by Tommi Laitio, Executive Director for Culture and Leisure.

Helsinki Biennial's impact research plan included the event's sociocultural and image impacts as well as environmental and economic impacts. The study excluded the impacts of the event on buildings (the so-called impacts on the cultural environment), construction as well as transport and mobility. The data were collected mainly in 2021.

Data, methods and implementers of the study

Research material	Data size	Research method/	Study implementer/ data collector
Visitor survey on Vallisaari	N=1,539	Electronic survey via either link or QR code	KANTAR TNS
Visitor survey	N=209	Electronic survey	TAK Research
Helsinki resident survey	N=1,185	Internet panel	TAK Research
Visitor counting data		Passenger counting on ferries and visitor sensor counting on the island	Metsähallitus, Suomen Saaristo-kuljetus, JT-line and Hypercell Industries
Artist interviews and survey	15	Interview and electronic survey	City of Helsinki's Culture and Leisure Division's Partnership Unit
Interviews of Helsinki Biennial partners and experts in the visual arts field of Helsinki	6	Interview	City of Helsinki's Culture and Leisure Division's Partnership Unit
HAM Helsinki Art Museum's Audiences and Communities Team Audience development report		Written report	HAM Helsinki Art Museum
Helsinki Biennial's communication and marketing media data and other production-related reports		Electronic media monitoring data and other such written reports	HAM Helsinki Art Museum/Helsinki Biennial and Helsinki Marketing

Data, methods and implementers of the study

Research material	Data size	Research method/	Study implementer/ data collector
Business survey on maritime entrepreneurs closely linked to Helsinki Biennial	A few responses out of 10	Electronic survey	Helsinki City Executive Office's Urban Research and Statistics Unit
Border interview survey		Border interview	TAK Research
Domestic tourism survey		Continuous internet panel survey until further notice	TAK Research
Helsinki Biennial environmental programme data		EcoCompass system	HAM Helsinki Art Museum/Helsinki Biennial
Calculations of the economic impacts		Input-output model	The Urban Research TA

Appendix 2: Implementation of the EcoCompass system at Helsinki Biennial 2021

The environmental programme of Helsinki Biennial 2021 was created with the EcoCompass environmental management system. EcoCompass is a system developed and managed by the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation's Kinos Ltd, which is based on international environmental management standards. The system contains 10 environmental criteria, to which the party committed to the system commits.

Once an event has been audited, the EcoCompass certificate is issued to the operator for a period of three years at a time. After that, the audit will be carried out again. In the meantime, the operator must be able to demonstrate the promotion of environmental work. The promotion of the environmental matters can be demonstrated by, among other things, updating the objectives and measures of the environmental programme.

In order to follow through with EcoCompass, the operator must demonstrate that it meets the ten criteria set by EcoCompass. The key system phases are:

1. Initial survey:

- Establishing the starting point of the operator; what actions have already been taken and what have not.

2. Environmental impact assessment (EIA):

- Identifying the operator's most significant environmental impacts that the operator can influence.
- An environmental programme and an environmental pledge will be drawn up on the basis of the EIA. This will be followed by concrete implementation of the environmental programme in everyday work.

3. Auditing:

- The environmental work of the operator is audited by an external auditor.

The initial survey at Helsinki Biennial was carried out during the summer and autumn of 2019. In the initial survey, the environmental actions of the Biennial were mapped using the EcoCompass system's set of questions. The set of questions included questions about the basic information of the organisation, the basic information and description of the event and the reasons why the Biennial organisation had chosen EcoCompass as its environmental system. However, most of the questions focused on the environmental aspects, including questions about waste, energy consumption, water consumption, procurement, material efficiency and chemicals, logistics, noise, partners and communications. The set of questions was reviewed with Metsähallitus, the ferry operator at the time and a representative of the island's entrepreneurs. In this way, Helsinki Biennial sought to gain a better overview of its own activities in relation to the Vallisaari environment. A total of ten people from the above organisations participated in the making of the initial survey. The initial survey was led by Helsinki Biennial environmental coordinator together with two environmental planners from the City of Helsinki Environmental Protection.

After the initial survey, Helsinki Biennial carried out an environmental impact assessment, i.e. an EIA. Twelve people from different organisations participated in this phase. The participants were Metsähallitus, a representative of the Vallisaari entrepreneurs, employees of Helsinki Biennial, representatives of the City of Helsinki Environmental Protection and persons responsible for the city's Maritime Strategy. The EIA was carried out in the form of a workshop. The workshop day started with a review

of the initial survey results, after which the workshop moved on to the environmental impact assessment. The objective of the assessment was to score the issues raised by the initial survey based on their environmental impact and to take into account the possibilities of Helsinki Biennial and of the partners to influence these environmental factors. The idea behind the process was to highlight the environmental aspects that are important to take into account and which Helsinki Biennial can influence in its operations. The scoring scale was from 1 to 5. The lowest score of “1” meant that the impact of the issue under assessment on the environment or the possibility of the Biennial to influence the matter in question was small. Correspondingly, a score of “5” meant that the impact of the issue under assessment on the environment or the possibility for the Biennial to influence the matter was great. After scoring, the areas with the highest scores were selected as the starting points for the environmental programme.

Then, the group was divided into smaller working groups to think up goals and actions for the environmental programme. The ideas were collected to a shared online platform. Finally, the ideas were discussed by all participants. Based on the ideas, the environmental coordinator of the Biennial prepared an environmental programme together with the environmental planners of the City of Helsinki’s Environmental Protection, consisting of eight objectives and one or more measures.

In addition to the environmental programme, an environmental pledge was made for Helsinki Biennial, which binds the Biennial to long-term environmental work. The environmental programme and pledge were approved by the management team of HAM Helsinki Art Museum. Two more fluently readable versions of the environmental programme and pledge were prepared together with Helsinki Biennial communications to support the tool base provided by EcoCompass. This was done to ensure that the environmental programme would be easily understood by all readers.

Prior to the audit, the tasks of the environmental coordinator also included drawing up a list of laws, a list of chemicals as well as a waste management and dismantling plan. The latter was prepared in cooperation with the producer and technical manager of Helsinki Biennial.

Helsinki Biennial was audited on 20 July 2021. The auditor was selected from the list of authorised auditors available on the website of EcoCompass (<https://ekokompassi.fi/oma-ekokompassi/auditointi/>, accessed 4 October 2021). The audit was carried out at the venue on Vallisaari. In addition to the auditor, the environmental coordinator and the project manager of Helsinki Biennial participated in the audit. The auditor also interviewed employees on the island. The total duration of the audit was about five hours, during which the auditor interviewed the persons participating in the audit and reviewed all the criteria required for the EcoCompass certificate. The auditor also toured the event area. Helsinki Biennial passed the audit. The only matter requiring correction was the absence of safety data sheets for the chemicals being used (petrol, hand sanitiser). This was corrected immediately. The Biennial received praise, in particular, for its extensive cooperation with the partners and its desire to be a pioneer in sustainability matters in the field of art.

As a development proposal, the auditor recommended debriefing of the results of the first Biennial’s environmental programme and, on this basis, creating a new programme. This way, the data collected would not be used just for a report, but would also lead to development and actions. Helsinki Biennial was certified as an EcoCompass event on 20 July 2021.

Appendix 3: Helsinki Biennial environmental programme

The environmental programme of Helsinki Biennial, produced by HAM Helsinki Art Museum, outlines the environmental objectives and measures of the event. The environmental programme is guided by the environmental policy of Helsinki Biennial: In accordance with the Helsinki City Strategy, Helsinki Biennial emphasises sustainability in its activities, and holding the event aims to honour this value as far as possible. Helsinki Biennial wants to stimulate discussion and be a pioneer in highlighting the sustainability aspect of art events, and is therefore committed to transparent environmental actions now and in the future.

Helsinki Biennial environmental programme consists of nine environmental objectives. Measures have been set for each of these objectives, which will be pursued already in the 2021 Biennial. Some of the objectives have been set keeping in mind also the future Biennials.

1. Keeping Vallisaari tidy and free of rubbish

- a. Clearly marked waste sorting and smoking points
- b. Employees' service points have rubbish bags and tongs for collecting possible pieces of rubbish
- c. Employees are instructed to collect pieces of rubbish found in the area
- d. Waste sorting point at the guest marina
- e. Uniformity of waste bins to facilitate sorting
- f. Establishing those responsible for waste management at the marinas and on the island.
- g. Organising waste management at the departure and arrival marinas

2. Energy-efficient production of the event

- a. Optimising lighting, additional lighting only for the works of art
- b. Monitor energy consumption of the Biennial in relation to previous years; energy consumption is monitored separately for services and works of art
- c. Business cooperation with Helen on enabling the use of renewable energy sources on Vallisaari

3. Sustainable procurement

- a. Drawing up a checklist for sustainable procurement
- b. Listing of all procurements exceeding EUR 10,000; the list is used to calculate the percentage of procurements where the environmental aspect is taken into account
- c. Using an expert from the city's Environmental Protection in the preparation of environmental criteria for larger procurements
- d. Food and service suppliers are required to operate in accordance with the principles for sustainable nature tourism
- e. Training the Biennial team on sustainable procurement
- f. Guiding artists to sustainable procurement from 2022 onwards

4. Reusing materials (structures, goods and works of art) produced by the Biennial after the event

- a. Mapping goods and materials not to be kept after the event, naming reuse destinations for them
- b. Using reusable tableware whenever possible
- c. Borrowing or leasing equipment and structures
- d. Procuring as much as possible of the materials to be used from Finland

5. Increasing material efficiency in the future Biennials by influencing the material choices of artists

- a. Creating new curation policies for the future Biennials

6. Collecting data on emissions from logistics and mobility

- a. Compensating for indispensable emissions for the Biennial
- b. Planning logistics to be as efficient as possible
- c. Listing all trips taken because of the Biennial
- d. Calculating carbon footprint* of the Biennial

7. Taking the environment visibly into account in both external and internal communications

- a. All communications take place mainly electronically before the event
- b. Engaging partners in the environmental communications of the Biennial
- c. Planning how to communicate environmental matters to the public
- d. Integrating environmental matters into the communication plan
- e. Integrating environmental matters into the internal communication plan
- f. Preparing instructions for boat-owners on environmental matters
- g. Highlighting works of art with environmental themes
- h. Slowly integrating the environmental measures of the Biennial to the operations of the entire HAM Helsinki Art Museum

8. Encouraging and engaging partners to take environmental matters into account in their operations

- a. Engaging artists, production teams and other partners to the environmental objectives of the Biennial
- b. Educating the partners of Metsähallitus on the principles of sustainable nature tourism

9. Ensuring the ecological sustainability of Vallisaari and minimising localised erosion

- a. Highlighting the uniqueness of the island in order to motivate people in a positive way to act in favour of the environment
- b. Ensuring in planning the event that large crowds are directed only to areas that can withstand such stress
- c. Ensuring sufficient guidance and fencing before the event so that people stay on the assigned routes
- d. Agreeing on surveillance and monitoring of the area with the customer service
- e. Monitoring people's routes and photographing places during the event; increasing fencing and guidance as necessary if an unexpected vantage point puts the nature under too much stress
- f. Choosing a tyre type that wears roads as little as possible
- g. Assessing each location and idea for a work of art from the perspective of nature conservation together with a group of experts, including, among others, a conservation biologist of Metsähallitus and curators from the Cultural Environment Services of the Finnish Heritage Agency
- h. Dismantling is to take place in October during daylight hours, as artificial light in the dark could disturb bats

* Emissions resulting from the production of works have been excluded from the calculation of the carbon footprint of the Biennial, and some of the calculated values are estimates or averages of emissions. The calculators used are the WWF climate calculator and the calculator created by Hiilifiksu järjestö.

Appendix 4: Input-output calculation

The input-output model can be used to estimate the overall economic impacts of investments, economic activities or consumption. The method does not take a stand on alternative costs, i.e. what could have been the alternative uses of the money.

The total output is generated by the direct impacts of the economic activities and their multiplier effects. Direct impacts arise, for example, from the costs of organising an event, which consist of the personnel costs of the organisation itself and of the purchase of goods and services from other operators. The multiplier effects arise from the supply chains of companies, such as subcontracting and production chains of goods. The multiplier effects arise from consumption by the event visitors and from passing the sum of wages and salaries of employees employed by different parties to consumption.

Added value is obtained by deducting intermediate consumption from the total output. Added value is usually 30–50% of the total output. Added value can be divided into sections according to use, the most significant of which are:

- compensation of employees, from which, for example, income taxes are paid and which generates multiplier effects via consumption
- operating surplus (profit) of companies, from which, for example, corporation taxes are paid.

Direct and multiplier effects increase employment at different stages of the chain. In cultural services, the total impact is, for example, approximately 13 person-years per a total output of EUR 1 million.