

Final report of the Helsinki Tourism and Events Programme

October 2025



Meeting of the Economic Development
Sub-committee of the City Board 3
November 2025

Image: Svante Gullichsen



Implementation of the Programme – summary

- The implementation of the Tourism and Events Programme was affected by four significant external factors: the COVID-19 pandemic to a slight degree, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the situation in the Middle East and the global economic situation. The war in Ukraine in particular is affecting tourism, causing phenomena such as an absence of Russian tourists and longer flight routes from markets such as Japan and China due to Russia's ban on overflights. The number of overnight stays at accommodation establishments in 2024 exceeded the record number of 2019, and growth has been on the rise over the past year across all tourist groups. This year, a decrease in the spending of Finnish visitors has affected tourism revenue, business profitability and employment opportunities.
- The events sector is also suffering from the impacts of the war, e.g. through major international world tours no longer going to Russia, often causing Finland to be skipped as a tour destination as well. Furthermore, Helsinki did not have an indoor event arena of international scale for some time, and the situation was challenging for both concert organisers and major event application calls during this period. The positive impact of both professional and public events on hotel occupancy rates, particularly during summer events and conferences, is significant.
- Almost all of the measures included in the Tourism and Events Programme have been implemented excellently. Some measures were not implemented due to the changed circumstances of the operating environment, and a few measures were not implemented as a result of prioritisation. Measures such as further development of bleisure travel and compensating for tourism emissions were left for the next programme period.
- Helsinki's achievement of becoming the most sustainable tourist destination in the world and its systematic knowledge-based management work can be seen as excellent successes. A particularly positive aspect is businesses' increased commitment to progressing the measures of the programme and increasing cooperation between businesses. This can be seen in phenomena such as growth in the number of members of the *Helsingin tekijät* ('Makers of Helsinki') network, the number of participants at events and the range of services offered in cooperation with businesses. Additionally, cooperation between the Tourism and Attraction Services unit and the Brand, Events & Marketing unit has been strengthened through the shared programme. It is also worth noting that several other operators, divisions, departments and units of the City Group have contributed to the promotion of the measures. Although the City's different operators already have a much better understanding of the needs of tourism and events than in 2022, internal communication within the City Group and increasing understanding will need to be focused on in the coming programme period as well.
- In addition to the measures set out in the Tourism and Events Programme, a lot of so-called basic work has been carried out to promote tourism and events.

Situational picture of tourism and events

Helsinki

Image: Aleksi Poutanen



State of tourism in Helsinki

- Helsinki is Finland's most popular tourist destination by many indicators and a gateway for tourism in the country. In 2024, the number of registered overnight stays by tourists in Helsinki increased by 10%, surpassing the record figures set in 2019. More than 4.55 million overnight stays, high tourism revenue, a 35% share of all international overnight stays in Finland and a third of Finland's international organisation congresses make Helsinki a major tourist destination. Additionally, Helsinki was visited by many daytime visitors and tourists who stayed with relatives and friends and in paid home accommodation.
- Sustainable values, a strong cultural life, unique events, diverse food and restaurant offerings, design, and closeness to nature and the sea are among Helsinki's top attractions as a tourist destination.
- From an international perspective, Helsinki is an exotic destination that is not too hot in the summer and does not have the same kind of mass tourism as Southern Europe. Finland joining NATO has also put Finland and Helsinki on the world map. New tourist attractions such as the Paradox Museum and the Worker's Museum were opened this year, and the Helsinki Biennial with its artworks took over Vallisaari, as well as more of the rest of Helsinki than before. There have been plenty of interesting events and exhibitions, accommodation and services have diversified and several new restaurants have been opened.
- However, the geopolitical situation and economic uncertainty have affected and continue to affect the competitiveness of tourism in Helsinki. The prolonged wars in Ukraine and the Middle East are also creating uncertainty extending to 2026. Longer flight routes from various Asian locations to Helsinki, the opening of Finland to Chinese group tourism as late as August 2023, the recovery of Japanese tourism only in 2025 due to factors such as the economic situation, the absence of St Petersburg from the routes of international cruise ships and event productions, the opening of a major event arena only in autumn 2025 and the weakened payment ability of consumers are all factors that have affected and will continue to affect the development of tourism and events in Helsinki, as well as the profitability of businesses. Increased VAT rates in 2025 have also affected the competitiveness of tourism and events.
- However, there are many positive signs in the air despite the slow economic growth. Finland and Helsinki have become better known and travel sentiment towards Finland has increased. The number of flight tickets to Helsinki purchased has increased significantly from the previous year. The world-class achievements of tourism in Helsinki in terms of sustainability and the classification of Finland as the happiest country in the world for the eighth time, as well as the resulting launching of the Happy Helsinki umbrella theme, have increased interest towards Helsinki.

Helsinki tourism in figures 2024 and 2025

- In 2024, the highest numbers of foreign visitors staying overnight in accommodation establishments were from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Japan. The largest increases in overnight stays were among visitors from the United States, Japan, China, the United Kingdom and Australia. (Statistics Finland, accommodation statistics)
- Accommodation statistics show that between November 2024 and August 2025, Helsinki reached record months in terms of overnight stays. Overnight stays by international visitors in particular have increased. The most tourists come from the United States, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Japan and Italy. Between January and August 2025, the occupancy rate of rooms was 63.1%, increasing month by month, with an average price of EUR 124.08 and a RevPAR of EUR 78.32. (Statistics Finland, Accommodation statistics, preliminary data 25 September 2025). September and October were also forecast to be the best ever.
- Domestic travel to Helsinki increased significantly in 2022 since the pandemic. Domestic visitor numbers kept increasing even more in 2023 and 2024, proving that Finns still want to travel to the capital city and find new things to experience in the city. In 2025, overnight stays by Finns in accommodation establishments have no longer increased due to factors such as fewer large-scale concerts and the economic situation. Business travellers accounted for over 44% of all registered overnight stays. A total of 187 international organisation congresses were held.
- People also stay overnight outside accommodation establishments with friends and acquaintances, and in short-term rented accommodation. In 2024, their estimated number of overnight stays was around 7.7 million. Additionally, Helsinki receives a large number of daytime visitors, estimated at 3 million, such as international cruise tourists and domestic daytime visitors.
- Flight and passenger volumes at Helsinki Airport were steady throughout the year. In 2024, the total number of flight passengers was 16.31 million (+6.5% compared to 2024). Several new flight routes have been opened. Helsinki Airport receives travellers from more than 140 destinations around the world. In 2025, flight passenger numbers have increased but are yet to reach the levels of 2019. (Finavia)
- The number of liner passengers at the Port of Helsinki continued to recover from the COVID-19 years, reaching 9.37 million in 2024. Between January and August, 6.6 million passengers used liner transport, marking a 1.4% increase from the same period the previous year. In 2024, the Port received 97 international cruise ships, and in 2025, a total of 98 visits are expected. Cruise passengers visiting Helsinki spend the most money on prepaid services and purchases/shopping. The average amount of money spent per passenger was EUR 58.5. Taking into account the volume of cruise travel, the total amount of money spent is estimated at slightly over EUR 8 million. With fairway, pilotage and port charges and indirect effects, the total amount of money generated by cruise travel is EUR 19 million. With St Petersburg being left out of cruise routes, the attractiveness of Helsinki and other Baltic Sea destinations must be increased to return to the pre-pandemic figures. (Port of Helsinki)
- Helsinki City Museum, Villa Hakasalmi, the Tram Museum in Töölö and the Burgher's House in Kruununhaka had a total of 429,327 museum visits in 2024. The new Worker's Museum, formerly known as the Worker Housing Museum, opened in August 2025. The third Helsinki Biennial was held between 8 June and 21 September 2025 in Vallisaari, in Esplanade Park and at HAM Helsinki Art Museum. The Biennial is a major investment in the visual arts by the City, and the event raised the profile of Helsinki as a city of culture and visual arts. Around 568,000 visitors attended the Helsinki Biennial.
- Four new accommodation establishments were opened in 2024. One new hotel has been opened in 2025, and a few concept changes on existing hotel properties and hotel expansions have been carried out. Virtually all new projects have some kind of environmental certification, and hotel operators are committed to sustainable tourism objectives. The projects have increased the accommodation capacity of Helsinki by several thousand rooms. The City has stopped actively attracting foreign operators and service providers to the hotel sector.

Helsinki as an event city

Situational picture of events in Helsinki

- In 2025, there have been 26 large-scale events in Helsinki (10,000–25,000 or more visitors per event).
- In 2025, Helsinki has been estimated to host 150 congresses with around 70,000 delegates.
- Events have a significant economic impact, as they boost vitality and increase interest in Helsinki as a place to visit. Turnover in the events sector has been growing steadily (no separate figure for Helsinki is available). Events also boost demand in the service sector, especially in accommodation, restaurant and transport services. Large-scale events and congresses significantly increase the occupancy rates and room-specific revenue of accommodation establishments in Helsinki.
- Helsinki is perceived as a good city for events. According to the events surveyed, Helsinki's score was 4.58 in 2024 and 4.64 in 2025 (on a scale of 1–5, assessed by event visitors). According to the 2024 and 2025 visitor surveys (N=78,000), Helsinki is a well-functioning, lively, safe, urban and open city and is perceived as a good city for events.
- The event venue situation in Helsinki has evolved, but the City must continue to actively and effectively promote this, in terms of both short and long-term solutions. Helsinki Hall being empty made it even more difficult for Helsinki and Finland as a whole to host major international events. The hall deal was finalised in spring 2025, and in August 2025, the first events to be held at Veikkaus Arena were published.
- Public transport plays an important role in the efficiency and safety of events. In 2024 and 2025, around 60% of event attendees travelled to Helsinki by public transport (min 20%, max 80% and, at stadium concerts, 50–60% of visitors from other cities). This has a positive impact on the development of the carbon footprint and sustainability of events.
- From the point of view of event development, it is very positive that in addition to event visitors, Helsinki residents also generally consider events to be a good thing. They are seen as bringing internationality, having a positive impact on the city's economy and increasing the vitality of Helsinki. While the response of residents to events is positive, the hope is that in the future, the local population will be increasingly more involved in the planning of events.

General situational picture of the events sector

- The implementation of the Tourism and Events Programme has been affected by many significant international and domestic factors, such as the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the start and continuation of Russia's war of aggression, the escalation of the situation in the Middle East, and general global unpredictability. Due to Russia's war of aggression, international world tours continue to exclude Finland from their destinations because they cannot continue their journey from Finland to the Russian market.
- According to a survey on the events sector by the University of Turku (2022–2023), the turnover of the Finnish events sector increased by 28% from 2018 to 2023. According to the researchers' estimate, the sector had a turnover of more than EUR 2.8 billion in 2023.
- The Salmi Platform development project in 2023 charted the social impacts of events. The results of the large national study showed that events have a positive impact on an individual's wellbeing, community spirit, diversity, experience, the attractiveness of the location, and visibility.
- While the events sector has experienced significant growth, there are still challenges to be addressed at the national level. Among other things, the events sector is not clearly identified in the statistics; this is particularly evident in legislation, the operations of public authorities and public services. An example of this is the Assembly Act, in which village festivals and stadium-sized events organised by associations are interpreted as similar public events.

Helsinki is a good city for events

- Helsinki's event quality and events have been studied from many different angles during the Tourism and Events Programme, and all of the surveys that asked visitors to rate Helsinki's recommendability as an event city indicate that Helsinki is a good or very good event city (more than 94% of public event visitor surveys resulted in Helsinki receiving a rating as a very good or good event city), but there is certainly still room for improvement.
- Event attendees are willing to recommend Helsinki as an event city, Helsinki is considered to be open, safe and lively, and Helsinki's event attendees have the lowest carbon footprint in Finland. Helsinki's NPS as an event city is high (79), and it is important to maintain this level in the future as well.
- According to the event surveys, there was room for improvement in the visitor experience in areas such as venue signage, taxi services, public transport and dining options, especially after events. Communication, particularly about public transport and parking facilities, was most often perceived as insufficient. Other open responses commented on the high price level, and the renovation of Mannerheimintie in particular received a lot of negative feedback.
- Event attendees who felt unsafe stated that it was due to factors such as excessive use of substances, large crowds, inappropriate or physical harassment, ineffective security and moving about at night in the city centre. Customers also gave feedback citing shortcomings in accessibility.
- Of the City's responsibility measures, visitors highlighted recycling and waste management as important. In order of importance, safe space principles, accessibility and equality were named as the next most important aspects. The importance of communication about public transport connections (HSL) was also emphasised at almost all of the events surveyed.
- The carbon footprint of event visitors arriving in Helsinki is low by national standards, at 0.041 kgCO₂e/km, when compared to the average carbon footprint of all event visitors measured in Finland, which is 0.113 kgCO₂e/km. Events in Helsinki have also been shown to have a social impact.
- Furthermore, they have an economic impact and contribute to demand for other services. In addition to the economic impact, the social impact of events is meaningful to attendees.
- It is therefore important to focus on the areas for improvement now and in the future, and to maintain well-functioning aspects at least at a good level – and preferably improve the results, of course.
- In 2024 and 2025, we examined events and event quality through media analyses, event visitor surveys and a resident survey.

Sources: Event visitor survey by Sponsor Insight, media analysis contributions by Retriver, Helsinki Partners, resident survey by Helsinki Tourism Foundation, Visitory

Helsinki

Image: Jussi Eskola



Helsinki, Finland's most important city for tourism and events 2024

4.55 million



Number of overnight stays in Helsinki (+10%)
STATISTICS FINLAND
12.3 million total overnight stays and
3 million daytime visitors

EUR 1.5 bn

Helsinki's direct tourism revenue 2024
VISITORY

EUR 2.45 bn

Total impact of tourism in Helsinki 2024
VISITORY

16.31 million



flight passengers at Helsinki Airport
(+6.5%)
FINAVIA

9.37 million

liner passengers at the port (+5%)
PORT OF HELSINKI



138,675

international cruise passengers (-
14.8%)
PORT OF HELSINKI

27,000
employees

8,127 locations

STATISTICS FINLAND



2.4 million



attendees
at partner and major
events
CITY OF HELSINKI

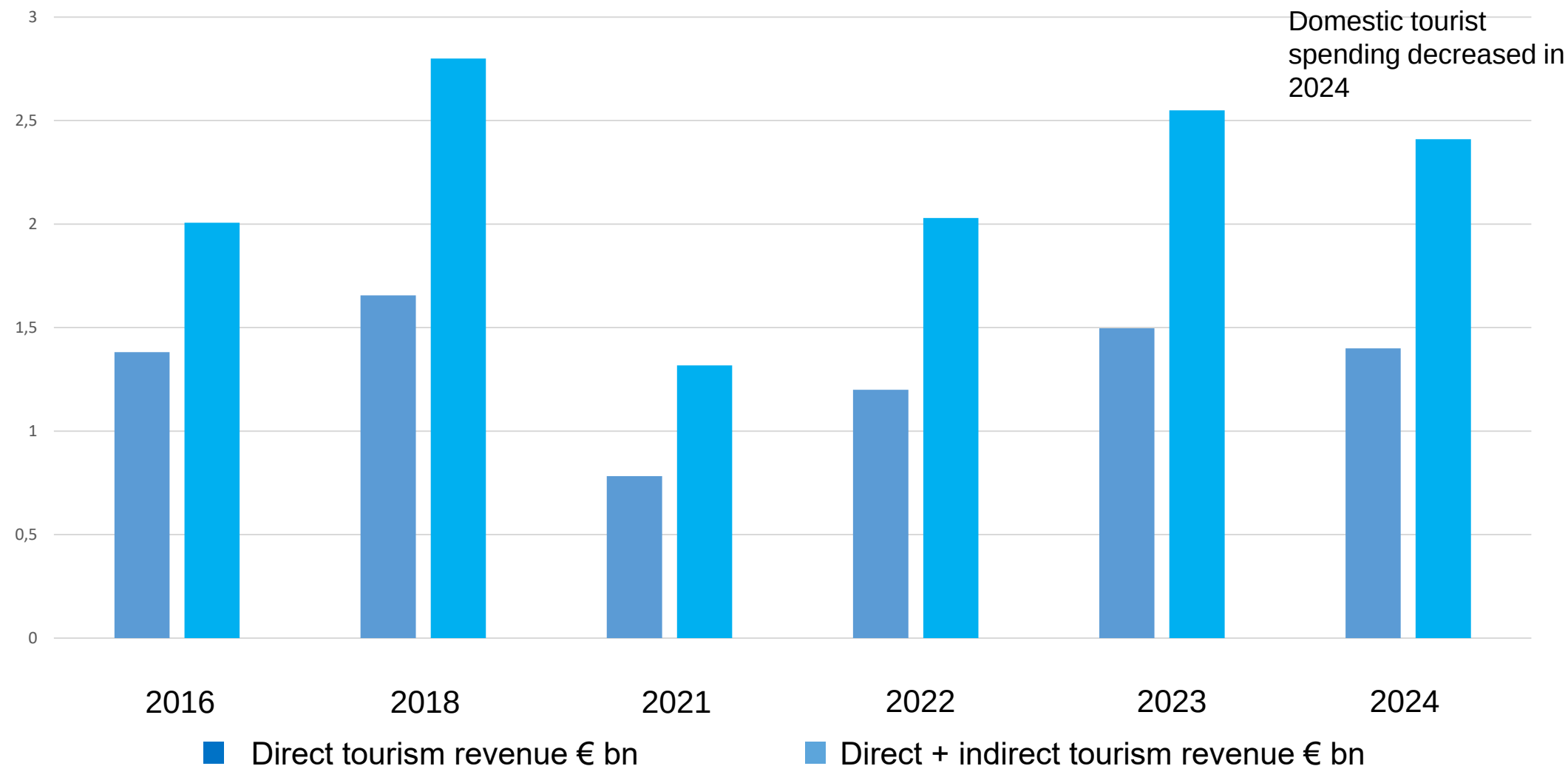


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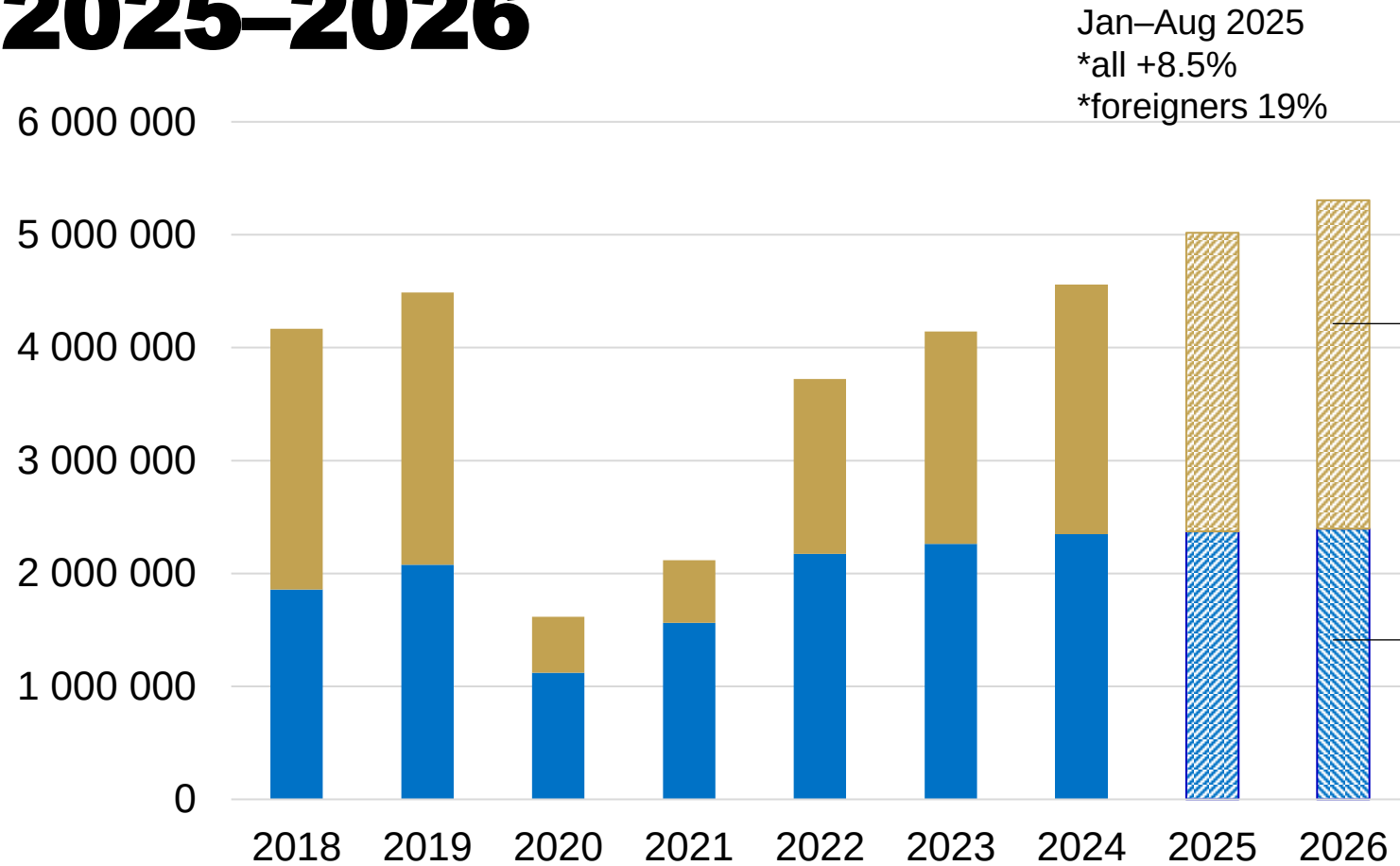
international organisation congresses
63,438 attendees (+23%)
HELSINKI PARTNERS

Helsinki's tourism revenue

€ BN



Registered overnight stays in 2018–2024 and estimate for 2025–2026



Helsinki

+1.4% in 2024 vs 2019

Foreign

Finnish

Source: Statistics Finland, accommodation statistics

Image: Lapland Hotel Boulevard

2024 key figures for registered overnight stays in tourism in Helsinki

Room occupancy rate
59.2%
(+4.5 %)

Average price of a foreigner's overnight stay €81.08
(+1%)

Average room price
€125.64 (+2%)

Foreign accommodation sales
€179 million(+17.6%)

RevPAR (EUR)
€74.34 (+6.3%)

Domestic accommodation sales
€177 million (+5%)

RevPAR = average accommodation sales revenue per available room. Calculation formula: RevPAR = average room price * room occupancy rate. Growth figures compared to 2023.

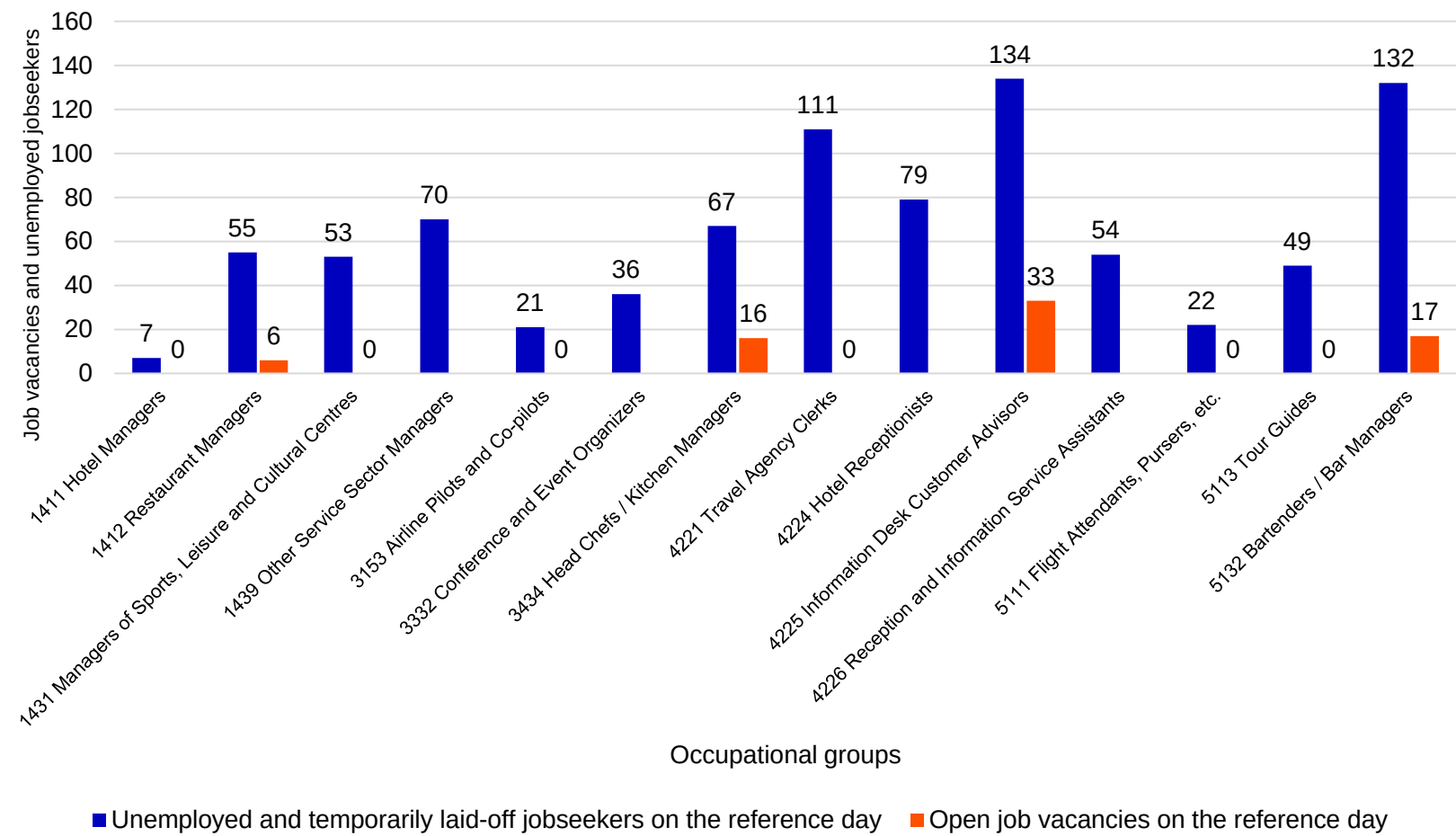
Sources: DataLokki
Statistics Finland, Rudolf service
Statistics Finland

Helsinki

- 80 accommodation establishments, 13,076 rooms in use
- The number of foreign overnight stays is approaching the number of domestic stays: 48% of overnight stays were by foreign visitors. Between January and August 2025, the figure was already at the same level as in 2019, i.e. 53%.
- Helsinki's market share of overnight stays by foreign visitors in Finland was 35% (34.2% in 2019).
- Although the number of overnight stays has been steadily growing, already exceeding the 2019 level, occupancy rates and many other business profitability indicators still remain at a lower level due to factors such as increased capacity.
- January–August 2025:
 - Occupancy rate 63.1 %
 - RevPAR €78.32
- Large-scale events and congresses significantly increase occupancy rates and revenue per room of accommodation establishments in Helsinki.

Employment in the tourism and events sector

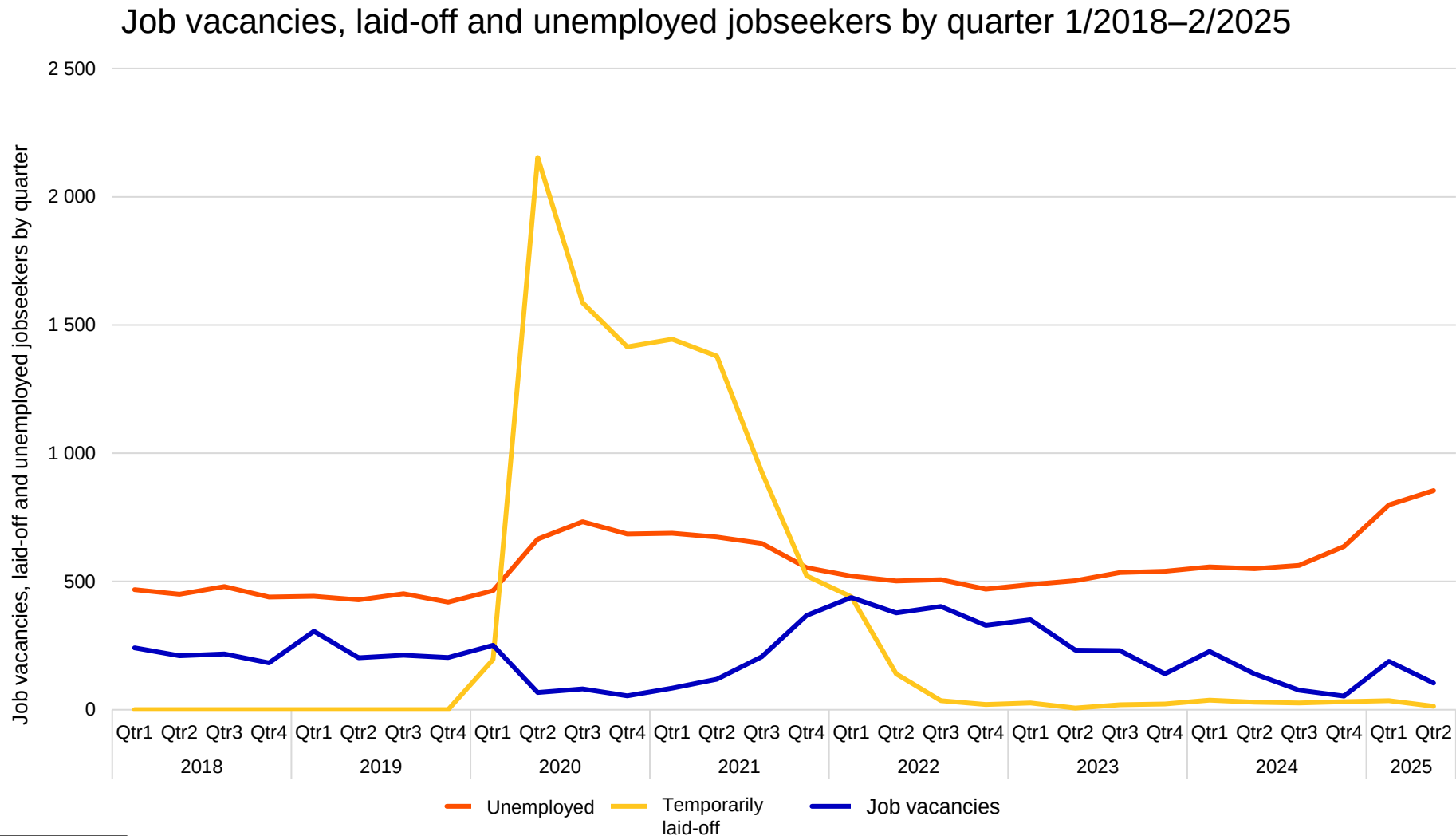
Unemployed jobseekers and job vacancies during the month across different tourism-related occupational groups, July 2025



- In the accommodation and food service sector, unemployment started to rise in the last quarter of 2024 and continued to rise in the first half of 2025. At the same time, the number of job vacancies has fallen.
- In July 2025, the largest groups of unemployed jobseekers were bartenders and customer advisers at information desks. The share of part-time work among the employees of hotels and restaurants and the events sector is 45%, which is significantly higher than in many other sectors. The use of temporary agency workers is also common. For example, in restaurants, up to a quarter of employees work for a temporary staffing agency. Similarly, in the accommodation and food service sectors, the share of people with a foreign background among employees in the sector in Helsinki is high, around 41% in 2023 (Statistics Finland).
- The number of tourism establishments was 8,127 in the last quarter of 2024, marking a decrease of 414 from 2023. (Statistics Finland)
- The events sector in Finland employs around 20,000 people on a permanent basis and between 120,000 and 175,000 on a temporary basis. It involves service business activities in complex business networks such as festivals and concerts, fairs and corporate events. The sector is generally labour-intensive and temporary, but it has suffered from a lack of recognition and fragmented regulation. Around half of the entire country's operators, turnover and number of staff in the sector are located in Uusimaa; Helsinki-based businesses are not specified in the sector survey.

- The job vacancies and unemployed jobseekers figures used as data sources reflect the situation at the end of the month. Jobseekers include the unemployed and those laid off.
- Sources: Employment Service Statistics – 2205. Job vacancies by occupation, industry and sector. Employment Service Statistics – 1205. Jobseekers by occupation and employment, report of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 27 January 2023, Event Industry Finland's industry report

Employment in the accommodation and restaurant sectors 2018–2025



Observations:

- The number of unemployed people in tourism occupations remained relatively stable at the quarterly level between 2022 and 2024 but increased more sharply between the last quarter of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025.

Source: Statistics Finland

Visitor experience in Helsinki

Public customer review data shows that Helsinki-based service providers have been able to meet customer expectations well over the past year.

- General sentiment has improved by +0.6% over the past year. The sentiment towards services in Helsinki is also better than in the Nordic peer cities of Stockholm and Copenhagen.
- Based on around 80,000 public customer reviews, services in Helsinki receive positive feedback on their quality of service, food and drink, and facilities. By contrast, common areas for improvement in services include booking processes, availability and inclusivity. (Data Appeal 22 September 2025)

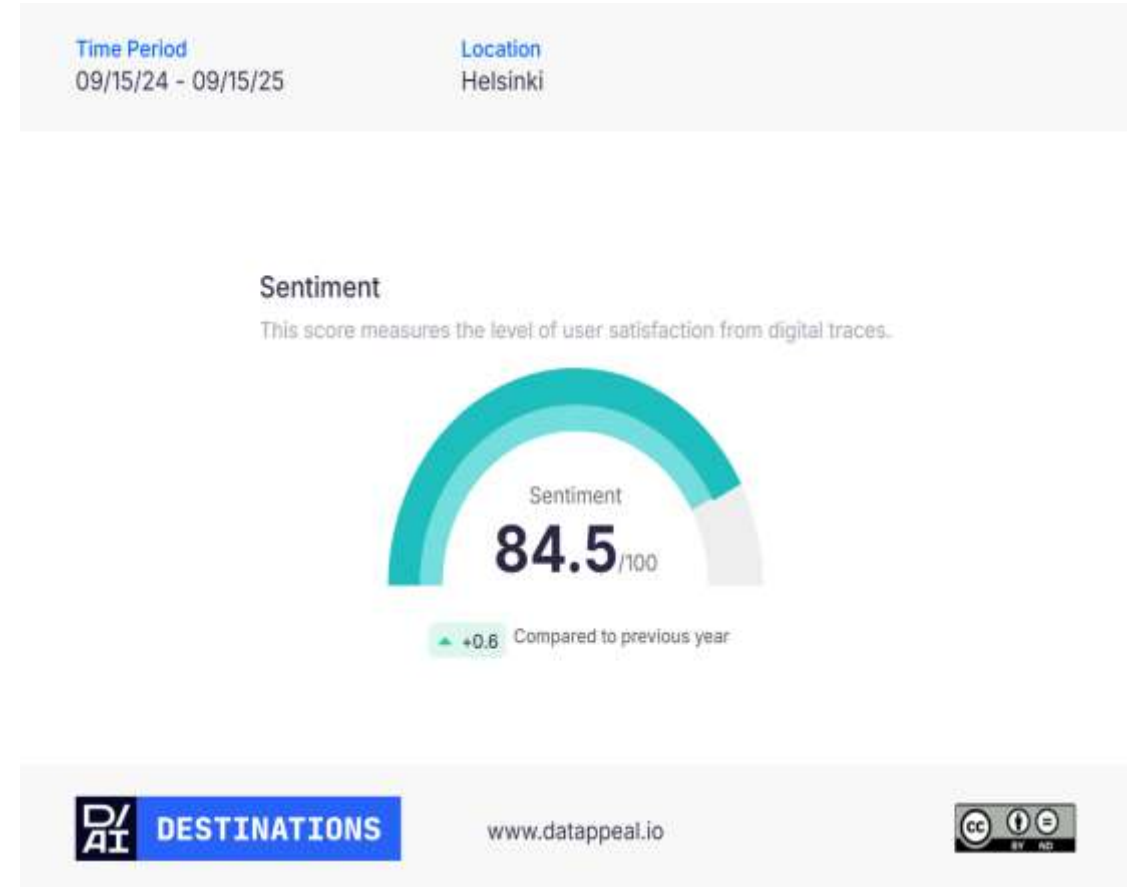
Helsinki's visitor experience survey shows that people's willingness to recommend Helsinki is at an excellent level: NPS **67.27** (22 September 2025)

Recommendability of Helsinki as an event city (NPS)

- **77** (2024 visitor surveys, sample 50,000 people)
- **79** (2025 visitor surveys, sample 28,000 people)

Source: Sponsor Insight: event visitor surveys 2024 and 2025

*NPS: measures customers' willingness to recommend and loyalty



Helsinki is a good city for events

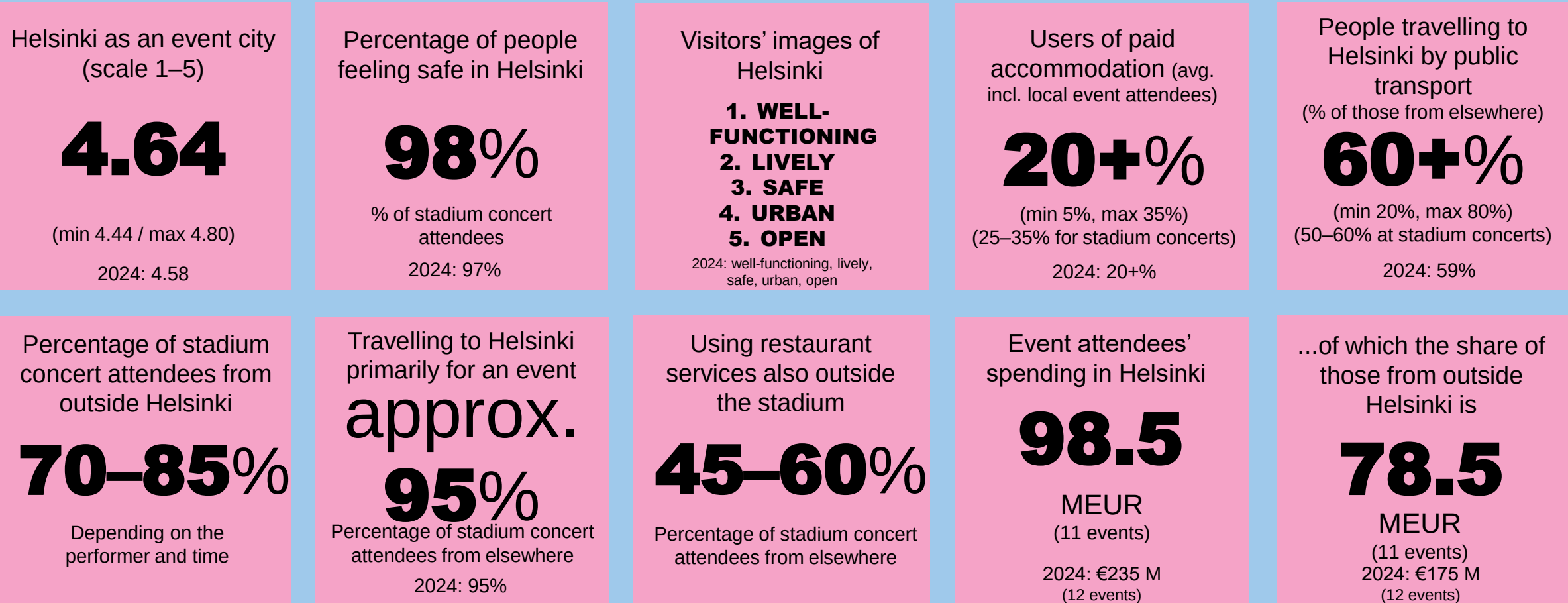
(Visitor surveys 2024: Coldplay, Metallica, Bruce Springsteen, PMMP, Tuska, Flow, Sideways, Helsinki Festival, the Finland-Sweden athletics competition, Helsinki Cup, Tall Ships Races, Helsinki City Running Day = N 50,000)

“Based on your event experience, is Helsinki a good city for events?” (on a scale of 1–5) 4.58	Percentage of people who feel safe in Helsinki 97% (min 95, max 99)	What adjectives describe Helsinki based on your event experience? 1. WELL-FUNCTIONING 2. LIVELY 3. SAFE 4. URBAN 5. OPEN	Helsinki’s recommendability as an event city (NPS) 77 (min 68, max 84, rest of Finland BM 48)	Travelled to Helsinki by public transport. (% of those from elsewhere) 59% (min 19%, max 82%)
“As a local resident, I am proud that the event was organised here” (Question only for Helsinki residents) 77% (approx. 47,515 visitors)	Percentage of respondents from outside Helsinki being in the city for an event 95% (approx. 218,312 visitors)	“Attending the event improved my satisfaction with my life” 95% (approx. 276,945 visitors)	Event attendees’ spending in Helsinki 235 MEUR	Event attendees’ spending in Helsinki share of people from outside the city 175 MEUR

Helsinki is perceived as a good city for events

Visitor surveys 2025, N=28,171 (Robbie Williams, Iron Maiden, Ultra Bra, Katri Helena, Tuska Festival, Teurastamo Festival, A la Park Festival, Hellsinki Metal Festival, Helsinki Cup, Helsinki City Running Day, the *Naisten Kymppi* ('Women's Ten') run, the ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships, Allas Live shows)

(Visitor surveys 2024, N 50,000 (Coldplay, Metallica, Bruce Springsteen, PMMP, Tuska, Flow, Sideways, Helsinki Festival, the Finland-Sweden athletics competition, Helsinki Cup, Tall Ships Races, Helsinki City Running Day)



International congresses

Year	Congresses / attendees	Economic impact*
2024	187 / 63,438	€117.4 M
2025, estimate	135 / 70,000	€129.5 M
2026, confirmed	14 / 11,000	€20.4 M
2027, confirmed	8 / 21,500	€39.8 M
2028, confirmed	6 / 23,500	€43.5 M

2024 most popular fields:

- Natural sciences and mathematics 21%
- Medicine and health sciences 19%
- Social sciences, history and security 19%

- 70% of congress attendees are in Helsinki for the first time.
- 2/3 could consider Helsinki as a leisure time destination after attending the congress.

Notes

- For congresses, the years vary, making the growth non-linear.
- Helsinki receives a lot of general interest – Finland is currently the most popular congress destination in the Nordic countries.
- For business meeting customers, the sales process is faster – they are still being sold the year 2026.

Implementation of the Helsinki Tourism and Events Programme – final report

Helsinki



Strategic objectives

- A.** Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events
- B.** Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events
- C.** Helsinki is a smart destination and a functional event city



A. Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events

B. Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events

C. Helsinki is a smart destination and a functional event city

Strategic choices

A.1. International visitors will generate the growth in tourism	B.1. Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality at the forefront of development	C.1. Smart development of tourism and events is based on knowledge
A.2. Events strengthen the liveliness and vitality of Helsinki	B.2. Helsinki residents, inclusiveness and social and cultural sustainability at the core of development	C.2. City space-related decisions support tourism and events
A.3. International congresses and major events as drivers of growth	B.3. Helsinki is a world leader in sustainability, verified by indices and certifications	C.3. Helsinki is a functioning platform for events

Prerequisites for the development

A.4. Distinctive urban culture, food and unique nature enhance the city's appeal	B.4. The availability of skilled labour is vital for the sectors	C.4. Promoting companies' digital capabilities to increase their competitiveness
A.5. Good transport links and smooth customer paths as prerequisites for competitiveness	B.5. Focusing on comprehensive safety is a prerequisite for the city's appeal	C.5. Growth and renewal through accelerating innovation in the tourism and event sectors

Implementation of measures

A.1.	1	A.3.	7	A.5.	6	B.2.	5	B.4.	1	C.2.	4
A.1.	2	A.3.	8	B.1.	1	B.2.	6	B.4.	2	C.2.	5
A.1.	3	A.3.	9	B.1.	2	B.2.	7	B.4.	3	C.2.	6
A.2.	1	A.4.	1	B.1.	3	B.2.	8	B.4.	4	C.3.	1
A.2.	2	A.4.	2	B.1.	4	B.2.	9	B.5.	1	C.3.	2
A.2.	3	A.4.	3	B.1.	5	B.2.	10	B.5.	2	C.3.	3
A.2.	4	A.4.	4	B.1.	6	B.2.	11	B.5.	3	C.3.	4
A.2.	5	A.4.	5	B.1.	7	B.3.	1	B.5.	4	C.4.	1
A.2.	6	A.4.	6	B.1.	8	B.3.	2	B.5.	5	C.4.	2
A.2.	7	A.4.	7	B.1.	9	B.3.	3	C.1.	1	C.4.	3
A.3.	1	A.4.	8	B.1.	10	B.3.	4	C.1.	2	C.5.	1
A.3.	2	A.5.	1	B.1.	11	B.3.	5	C.1.	3	C.5.	2
A.3.	3	A.5.	2	B.2.	1	B.3.	6	C.1.	4	C.5.	3
A.3.	4	A.5.	3	B.2.	2	B.3.	7	C.2.	1	Implemented Partially implemented Not implemented Action deemed unnecessary	
A.3.	5	A.5.	4	B.2.	3	B.3.	8	C.2.	2		
A.3.	6	A.5.	5	B.2.	4	B.3.	9	C.2.	3		

KPIs of the Tourism and Events Programme

Helsinki on elävä ja kansainvälisesti vetovoimainen matkailu- ja tapahtumakaupunki	2021	2022	2023	2024	Ennuste 2025	Tavoite 2026
Rekisteröidyt yöpymiset kasvavat (2021)	2,1 milj.	3,7 milj.	4,1 milj.	4,5 milj.	5 milj.	5 milj.
Kansainvälisten järjestökongressien määrä kasvaa (2021)	143	158	202	187	150	450
Varmistuneiden hotelli-investointien määrä yhteensä vuosina 2021–26 ja monimuotoisuus kasvavat (2021) (under construction)	8	12	11	8	7	10
Matkailuyritysten määrä kasvaa, toimialojen toimipaikkojen määrä (2021)	7 674	8 300	8 541	8 127	8 000	8000
Tapahtumapaikkojen luokittelu	ei	ei	ei	ei	ei	kyllä
Helsingin suurtapahtumien määrä (10 000 os. >), kasvusuuntainen (UUSI -2024)	-	-	23	36	26	Systemaattinen seuranta, kasvu positiivista
Rekisteröityjen yöpymisten viipymä pitenee	1,8	1,7	1,7	1,7	1,8	1,9
Helsinki on kansainvälisesti kestävyys edelläkävijä ja ratkaisija matkailu- ja tapahtuma-aloilla	2021	2022	2023	2024	Ennuste 2025	Tavoite 2026
Sustainable Travel Finland-merkkien määrän kasvu	16	26	60	90	100	200
Helsingin kumppanuustapahtumien ympäristöohjelmien määrä (päivitetty 2025)	N/A	N/A	100 %	N/A	65 %	100 %
Helsingin sijoitus Global Destination Sustainability (GDS)-indeksin vertailussa nousee	16	12	4	1	1	1
Asukkaiden tyytyväisyys matkailuun ja tapahtumiin säilyy hyvällä tasolla	hyvä	hyvä	hyvä	hyvä	hyvä	hyvä+
Hiilijalanjälkilaskurin käyttäjien määrä (Visit Finlandin Hiilikuri)	0	0	5	7	10	200
Tapahtumien hiilijalanjälkilaskurin latausten määrä (päivitetty 2025)	ei	ei	114	267	300	300
Helsinki on älykäs vierailukohde ja toimiva tapahtumakaupunki	2021	2022	2023	2024	Ennuste 2025	Tavoite 2026
Tuotteiden määrä matkailun DataHub-tietokannassa kasvaa	164	256	380	485	550	500
Tiedolla johtamisen alustan käyttäjämäärät kasvavat*	0	0	74	119	160	150

*Number of registered users, platform opened in summer 2023

Tourism and events are promoted through cooperation, networking

The City is allocating resources to network-like management of the tourism and events ecosystem. Various cooperation groups have increased and intensified cooperation between different operators in pursuing the objectives and have also increased understanding of the importance of tourism and events in the City Group.

Helsinki's Advisory Working Group for Events

- A group consisting of managers of tourism businesses and other stakeholders outside the City
- Four meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Tourism and Attraction Services unit

Tourism Cooperation Group of the City Group

- A group consisting of managers of businesses and divisions
- Four meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Tourism and Attraction Services unit

Sustainable Tourism and Events Action Group

- An internal group of the City
- Four meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Tourism and Attraction Services unit

Tourism Safety Management Group

- A team made up of representatives of the City, security authorities and businesses
- Two meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Tourism and Attraction Services unit

Helsinki Visitor Experience Management Model Steering Group

- An internal group of the City Group
- Four meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Tourism and Attraction Services unit

Major Events Coordination Group

- An internal group of the City's senior management
- Four meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Brand, Events & Marketing unit

Advisory Working Group for Events

- A group consisting of managers of event businesses and other stakeholders outside the City
- Began operating in 2024. Three meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Brand, Events & Marketing unit

Events Coordination Group

- An internal group of the City
- Eight meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Brand, Events & Marketing unit

Events Field Team

- An internal group of the City, reinforced by the police and HSL
- Seven meetings a year
- Coordination responsibility: Brand, Events & Marketing unit

The development of tourism and events is also supported by **several other practical action groups**. Active participation in several international, national and regional cooperation forums, e.g. from the perspective of advocacy, new knowledge and information exchange in tourism and events in Helsinki. Additionally, the City has been organising an annual event seminar for stakeholders in autumn (with over 300 attendees), as well as an event info event from spring 2025 onwards. Both aim to provide stakeholders with up-to-date information on events in Helsinki.

Cooperating with the Makers of Helsinki partnership network for growth

- The Tourism and Attraction Services unit administrates and manages the City Group's joint Makers of Helsinki partnership network for the tourism, events and restaurant sectors, subject to a membership fee. Together with the City Group, the operators are developing a sustainable and smart tourism and event city and raise the international profile of Helsinki.
- Network members meet regularly at morning coffee gatherings, networking events, theme group meetings and various workshops, and on familiarisation trips for international travel operators. The network also has access to a broader view of the tourism and events platform DataLokki. Regular familiarisation visits to the sites and services of network partners are organised. The network is also provided with up-to-date information and support for business development.
- The number of partners in the Makers of Helsinki network has increased from 74 in 2022 to 157 in 2025. Over the

period of 2022–2025, an average of 126 people per event attended the network meetings and 60 people attended the morning coffee gatherings. Partners' satisfaction with the activities ranges from 4.2 to 4.4 (on a scale of 1–5). For cooperation with the Tourism and Attraction Services unit, the score ranges from 4.4 to 4.5 (on a scale of 1–5).

- Network activities have been expanded over the years of the Tourism and Events Programme, e.g. through increasing event and restaurant content, providing recruitment events, cooperating with start-ups, a joint event with Visit Espoo's partner network, organising familiarisation trips for travel operators intended for network partners, and launching the activities of theme groups. There are groups for 11 different themes, working together to develop the theme in question.
- In 2024 and 2025, a 5% discount on the partnership fee has been granted to businesses with a valid national Sustainable Travel Finland certificate.

Implementation of the Tourism and Events Programme by objective

Helsinki



A. Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events

Strategic choices

- A.1.** International visitors will generate the growth in tourism
- A.2.** Events strengthen the liveliness and vitality of Helsinki
- A.3.** International congresses and major events as drivers of growth

Prerequisites for development

- A.4.** Distinctive urban culture, food and unique nature enhance the city's appeal
- A.5.** Good transport links and smooth customer paths for visitors as prerequisites for competitiveness



A.

Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events

Summary

A.1. International visitors will generate the growth in tourism.

- Overnight stays by international tourists have increased steadily throughout the programme period.
- Helsinki's tourism marketing efforts have focused on international markets.
- The main target markets during the reporting period were Germany, the UK, the US and Japan. Tactical campaigns targeting Sweden and the Netherlands were also launched in 2025. In 2024, the City successfully carried out a more extensive multi-channel Helsinki Happiness Hacks campaign with Visit Finland, the lessons from which have been applied to planning in 2025, and the Happy Helsinki concept has served as the overarching theme for all awareness-raising as of 2025.
- Several international media groups, travel operators and congress organiser clients visited Helsinki.
- The Myhelsinki.fi online service was completely rebuilt in 2024 and launched in January 2025.
- Helsinki Tourist Information serves around 120,000 customers every year. Helsinki Tourist Information's customer satisfaction rating is 4.7 out of 5.

A.2. Events strengthen the liveliness and vitality of Helsinki

- Surveys show that Helsinki is a good city for events in terms of economic, social and environmental impact, as well as safety and security. Events play an important role in the enlivening of the city centre, and event pilots facilitate the flexible introduction of new kinds of event concepts and venues, while also improving the City organisation's understanding of events and their organisation.
- Close cooperation between the City organisation and event organisers, residents, various authorities and national and international networks in the sector is developing Helsinki into an increasingly functional and lively event city.
- Long-term development of Helsinki's event partnerships in cooperation with event organisers and other stakeholders makes events look and feel more and more like Helsinki, and something that residents can also be proud of.
- An Advisory Working Group for Events has been set up and network communication aimed at the events sector has been strengthened.

A.

Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events

A.3. International congresses and major events as drivers of growth

- International congresses and major events are drivers of growth in Helsinki. They also increase the knowledge capital of specialists working in Helsinki and create a platform for international networking. Large-scale events and congresses need well-functioning event areas and facilities to succeed. In order to keep Helsinki in the race, the development of venues is crucial. To support this development, the City has implemented a Tourism and Events Master Plan, major event venue survey work, a 500–1,000-person event venue survey, a master plan for market squares and plazas, and has started work to update the venue cards of event areas. Furthermore, events and the infrastructures that they require have been taken into account in the planning and renovation of the parks of Kaisaniemi, Töölönlahti and Ala-Malmi. In the pre-construction phase in Malmi (Malmi Airport) and the Helsinki Zoo area (Olympic Stadium area), events and their needs have been taken into account in the overall planning.
- Major events significantly enhance the vibrancy and attractiveness of Helsinki. The 2024 Tall Ships Races event is a great example of this, as is the 2024 special food year ‘Feast Helsinki’. The exceptionally busy Olympic Stadium event summer was also seen and heard throughout Helsinki and beyond. During Coldplay’s gigs, the phenomenon of ‘Coldsinki’ was born, and the media also picked up on it. The most popular stars of 2025 stadium events were Finnish names: Katri Helena and Ultra Bra. New festivals were also established, such as A La Park, Teurastamo Festival and Oddfest at the Lasipalatsi square, where art, business and society met in new ways.
- 2024 and 2025 have been peak years in Helsinki in terms of international congresses, and the City is winning congress application calls on a regular basis. One major success in congress sales work during the reporting period was Helsinki winning the competition to host the 16,000-attendee Lions Clubs International Convention in 2031.

A.4. Distinctive urban culture, food and unique nature enhance the city’s appeal

- In late 2023, Helsinki kicked off its food year with a successful MICHELIN Guide Ceremony Nordic Countries event, an open call for events, Helsinki’s food concept and story, and marketing and communication work. During 2024, Helsinki’s reputation and image as a food city increased significantly by many indicators. More than 800 food events were organised at the time. Between 24 May and 16 June, the Feast Helsinki weeks featured 134 food events attended by 200,000 residents and visitors.

A.5. Good transport links and smooth customer paths for visitors as prerequisites for competitiveness

- The City had regular dialogue with transport companies to open up new connections.
- Helsinki’s visitor experience management model and visitor experience measurements started in August 2023 together with pilot sites such as ports, the airport, VR, the Finnish Forestry Agency (Metsähallitus), hotels and Helsinki Tourist Information.
- Close cooperation with Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) facilitates smooth and ecological transport during major events and congresses, any additional transport services and the arrangement of exceptional routes during events.

A.1. International visitors will generate the growth in tourism

- Overnight stays by international tourists have increased steadily throughout the programme period.
- Large-scale events and congresses significantly increase occupancy rates and revenue per room of accommodation establishments in Helsinki.
- Helsinki's tourism marketing efforts have focused on international markets, the main theme being 'Happy Helsinki'.
- The main target markets during the reporting period were Germany, the UK, the US and Japan. Tactical campaigns targeting Sweden and the Netherlands were also launched in 2025.
- In 2024, the City successfully carried out a larger multi-channel campaign entitled Helsinki Happiness Hacks with Visit Finland, and the lessons learned were used in the planning of the 2025 measures. The Happy Helsinki concept has served as the overarching theme for all awareness-raising since 2025.
- In spring 2025, the work started with the 'We Couldn't Be Happier' campaign, followed by an international sauna campaign in the wake of the Eurovision Song Contest.
- Between 2022 and 2024, 1,200 articles about Helsinki were published in international media. 5,475 media hits were received through the City's press releases. The estimated reach of the media work through articles was 363 million people. The annual reach is affected by events that attract international attention in Helsinki, such as the Helsinki Biennial, which was held in 2023 and 2025. Between 2022 and 2024, almost 40 million people were reached through influencer work, through 2,500 mentions.
- Press conferences were held in cities such as New York, Tokyo and London.
- In 2023, the number of visitors on Myhelsinki.fi almost reached the 2019 level. In 2024, the total number of followers across all social media channels was 503,236. The MyHelsinki.fi channel for visitors and talent had 701,500 international sessions, while the Helsinkipartners.com channel for BtB target groups had 44,908. The Myhelsinki.fi online service was completely rebuilt in 2024 and launched in January 2025.
- There have been around 350 sales meetings with international travel operators each year and around 250 clients have participated in familiarisation visits for travel operators.
- In Helsinki, tourist information is provided both face-to-face and through electronic channels. Helsinki Tourist Information serves around 140,000 customers every year. The mobile 'Helsinki help' concept facilitates taking tourist information to places where tourists need it, such as ports and various large-scale events. Helsinki Tourist Information systematically produces customer insight data to support the development of operations and to share with stakeholders. Helsinki Tourist Information's customer satisfaction rating is 4.7 out of 5.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Improving functionality, in terms of both processes and aspects such as accessibility.

A.2. Events strengthen the liveliness and vitality of Helsinki

- According to event impact reviews in both 2024 and 2025, Helsinki is a well-functioning, lively, urban, open and safe city for attending events. Furthermore, the reviews show that Helsinki residents are proud of the large number of different events organised in the city. The reviews also show that the events produced by the Helsinki Events Foundation are the most meaningful regionally and even nationally. For example, people from a wide range of demographics living in Uusimaa find the annual Night of the Arts, Helsinki Festival, Helsinki Christmas Market and LUX to be among the most interesting major Finnish events.
- The utilisation of events in Helsinki's external communication and marketing has been strengthened in cooperation with the Communications Department of the City Executive Office, Helsinki Partners, the Culture and Leisure Division and the Events Foundation. This work will be continued, strengthened and developed in the coming years as well.
- Event pilots facilitate event trials in the future as well. Pilots can also be developed into more permanent models, as a piloting approach yields good understanding of how well different areas work at events, and close cooperation with event organisers develops the city to become an even better and more lively event city. The pilot trials started in 2023 with the Mamma Mia! musical in Kaivopuisto and U Nation events at Kansalaistori Square. Carried out as trials in 2024, concerts held at Kasarmitori Square yielded a good result from the perspective of attendees, the City and Helsinki residents alike. The 2025 pilot trials are A La Park in Meripuisto Park, SaunaVision in Töölönlahti Park and the Superterassi summer terrace on Kasarmitori Square. The main lessons learned from these events were the findings related to the City's services and service processes; these will be developed in the future, particularly alongside work to update Helsinki's venue cards.
- Even closer and more visible cooperation than before has been carried out on the City's partnership events. Additionally, partnership activities with events will be developed on an increasingly sustainable and functional basis. This will be reinforced through development work on event partnership categorisation and management (event partnership levels, updating the assessment criteria, communication and marketing measures); this work will also help the City better identify new potential partnerships for the coming years.
- Events play an important role in the enlivening of the Helsinki city centre. Event partnerships, Helsinki's own events such as The Tall Ships Races 2024 and the events of the Feast Helsinki food year (especially the Feast Helsinki food weeks from 24 May to 16 June 2024), international concerts at the Olympic Stadium, the 2025 ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships, major international congresses and many other events brought hundreds of thousands of people from Finland and abroad to the city centre. 2025 has been the peak year for congresses in Helsinki. Various events also have a significant impact on hotel occupancy rates and the rest of the service sector.

A.2. Events strengthen the liveliness and vitality of Helsinki

- The City's Advisory Working Group for Events ensures that businesses in the event sector are heard when it comes to the promotion and development of events. The task of the working group is to jointly identify and prioritise measures to promote the competitiveness and growth of events in Helsinki. The group also makes concrete proposals to the City, as well as monitors and assesses the development of the operating environment and phenomena of the events sector in Helsinki, nationally and globally. In addition, network communication for the events sector has been significantly strengthened.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Strengthening the attraction of major events and congresses
- Further developing the event pilots and sharing the lessons learned from them
- Developing event surveys and utilising them more extensively
- Developing the levels, assessment and utilisation of event partnerships
- The significance of events for enlivening the city centre is important in cooperation with the events sector, operators in the city centre and Helsinki residents
- Utilising event communication and marketing as a tool to promote Helsinki's reputation and attraction work

Helsinki – a good and impressive city for events based on media analyses

According to the 2024 domestic media analysis:

Events and the phenomena, arrangements, venues and pricing related to them are a hot topic in the media and discussions alike. The biggest media attention is given to major events that move large crowds.

- Traditionally, news coverage of events is at its peak in the summer season. In 2024, the media often truthfully referred to Helsinki's exceptionally busy year of events. The busy summer event season sparked a debate in the media about dynamic pricing, which was most clearly reflected in both hotel and ticket prices.
- Three times more positive than negative news coverage of events. News coverage of event venues mainly neutral. In terms of event objectives, venues received more negative than positive mentions. The functionality of events was highlighted in terms of aspects such as traffic arrangements and potential security risks.
- News coverage of the venues strongly reflected both the growing dominance of the Olympic Stadium as a venue and the absence of the "Helsinki Hall". In addition, the Suvilahti Event Hub, Wholesale Market and Helsinki Garden projects were also frequently mentioned in discussions.
- Named venues** by number of mentions in the **media**: Olympic Stadium (3,829), Senate Square (2,293), Market Square (2,148), Ice Hall (1,734), Kansalaistori Square (1,044), Suvilahti (736), Narinkkatori (492) and Tokoinranta (97).
- Named events** by number of mentions in the **media** (top 10): Coldplay (891), May Day (882), Helsinki Book Fair (815), Flow Festival (685), Matka Travel Fair (613), Helsinki Pride (527), Tuska Festival (481), PMMP (455), Helsinki Festival (427) and Bruce Springsteen (425).

According to the 2024 international media analysis:

- The analysis suggests that Helsinki receives international media attention, particularly through design, fashion and various cultural events. The Helsinki Biennial has established itself in the international media spotlight. Although the event was not held in 2024, it received plenty of attention.
- The articles either focused on food culture or presented Helsinki as a destination through food culture. The subject of the news was the MICHELIN Guide Ceremony Nordic Countries gala, which brought extensive visibility to Finnish food culture and Finnish restaurants. The MICHELIN awards ceremony clearly stood out from other events in terms of both publicity and reach. According to the media analysis, the articles also highlighted happiness and gave visibility to Helsinki as a city for congresses and events.
- Mentions of events were very different in Finnish and international media, with only Flow Festival featured prominently in mentions in both analyses.

Helsinki

Sources: Retriever and Helsinki Partners' international media analysis

Image: My Helsinki Material Bank



Partners – Events & Hotels

Top Partners	No. of Mentions	Estimated Reach	AVE
Events			
Michelin Ceremony	34	8 188 387	3 029 703 €
Flow Festival	19	481 849	178 284 €
Fashion in Helsinki	18	2 645 194	978 722 €
Helsinki Design Week	17	1 070 112	395 941 €
Helsinki Biennial	12	658 946	243 810 €
Helsinki Christmas Market/ Tuomaan Markkinat	8	707 068	261 615 €
Habitare	7	268 591	99 379 €
Radical Health Festival	6	546 637	202 256 €
Slush	4	221 894	82 101 €
Baltic Herring Festival	4	305	113 €

A.3. International congresses and major events as drivers of growth

International congresses

- Based on Helsinki Partners' annual delegate surveys, Helsinki consistently receives positive feedback from both congress organisers and delegates. In 2025, Helsinki has been estimated to host 125 congresses with around 56,590 delegates. This is the result of long-term development work. To increase the number of congresses, Helsinki Partners is constantly carrying out active attraction and sales work. It works in close cooperation with Helsinki's major tourism and event operators and also actively engages in dialogue with international operators and networks in the sector. By mid-September 2025, more than 270 international congress or business event organisers had been met and 87 brought to see Helsinki.
- In 2024, Helsinki hosted 187 congresses with a total of 63,438 delegates. Helsinki hosted almost a third of all congresses in Finland in 2024. Tampere took second place (77 congresses) and Espoo third (73 congresses). In addition to scientific congresses, the city hosted a number of international business events, but these are very difficult to measure. In addition to tourism revenue, international congresses and major events are a driver of growth and science. They also increase the knowledge capital of specialists and researchers working in Helsinki and create a platform for international networking.
- A total of 12 international congress organisers and 61 business event agents visited Helsinki in 2024. Nearly 350 congress and business event organisers were met at various sales events. 21 congress offers for future years were won (46,000 delegates) and 16 offers were made. It is worth noting that 2024 was a very busy congress year and the congresses held took up human resources, as they involved developing legacy programmes left in the city after the congress, among other things. An example of this is the brain health challenge for school pupils by the EAN Congress (neurologists).

Major events and international sporting events

- Major events act as accelerators for the culture, sports and other sectors, as well as the events sector in general. Events generate growth and jobs in the service sector and bring revenue for the public economy. Events also have significant potential that is yet to be utilised in full to attract international tourists. Furthermore, the City's own expertise in both the events sector and the organisation of major events is increased through the arrangements required by major events.
- National cooperation has been intensified in the field of major sports and exercise events by combining and strengthening the expertise of cities, while also raising Helsinki's profile as an organiser of major international sporting events.
- Helsinki is carrying out close national-level cooperation on major sporting events in the Sport Event Management Finland project, which aims to develop Finland's attractiveness and vitality through improving the operating conditions for major international sporting events.
- Helsinki played a prominent role in the preparation of a national bidding strategy for sporting events, launched in August 2025, which involves developing Finland's and simultaneously Helsinki's strategy related to international sports event application processes. The aim of this strategic work is to identify Finland's strengths, resources and opportunities for cooperation between cities, extending all the way to 2040. The strategy work is coordinated by Tapahtumateollisuus ry and Sport Event Management Finland (SEMF), and it is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the cities.
- As part of the work related to the Sport Event Management Finland network, an annual Nordic Event Hosts Meeting seminar is held with Nordic event cities.

A.3. International congresses and major events as drivers of growth

- Major sporting and cultural events and international competitions have a significant impact on the vitality of the city centre and the whole of Helsinki and Finland.
- The City of Helsinki contributed to the organisation of several major sports and exercise events in Helsinki, e.g. by acting as a partner and streamlining the event organiser's processes in the city.
- Examples of major sports and exercise events in Helsinki in 2024–2025 and their economic impact.
 - Finland-Sweden athletics competition with 44,000 visitors, estimated economic impact €4.9 M
 - Helsinki Horse Show with over 50,000 visitors, estimated economic impact €10.2 M
 - ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships with 18,000 visitors, estimated economic impact €2.3 M
 - Helsinki City Run with over 20,000 participants, estimated economic impact €3 M
 - Finland-Netherlands FIFA World Cup qualifier with 30,000 visitors, estimated economic impact €2 M
 - Helsinki Cup, with 300,000 visitors, estimated economic impact €16.2 M, in addition to which the event employed hundreds of young people
 - IFSC Climbing World Youth Championships with over 600 participants from 57 countries

Major sporting event application processes that have been in the application phase during 2024–2025 and an estimate of their economic impact in Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences' (JAMK) advance survey:

- Eurobasket 2029, first round of the European Basketball Championship, estimate of the economic impact in Helsinki: €25.2 M
- European Athletics Championships 2030, estimate of the economic impact in Helsinki: €44 M
- World Gymnaestrada 2031, estimate of the economic impact in Helsinki: €25.1 M

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Thanks to a number of good congress years, Helsinki has gained a reputation as a reliable and popular congress location. An increasing number of both congress and business event operators now require financial support or other subsidies for their events. In an increasingly competitive environment, subsidies such as free HSL tickets and a reception at the City Hall for delegates are vital when making congress offers. The global economic and political situation is further intensifying competition, which means that Helsinki must have sufficient resources to be visible and thus remind international congress and business event organisers of its existence.
- Major event application processes are worth pursuing, as long as things are done in a sustainable way, taking into account Helsinki's infrastructure potential.
- Helsinki will make use of the national sports event bidding strategy to be completed in 2026 in its own sports event attraction work and is closely involved in the preparation of the strategy.
- In 2024, Helsinki utilised its operating model for major events in the organisation of major events (The Tall Ships Races 2024 Legacy).
- Helsinki focuses on the application processes for sporting events in which national sports federations have a strong presence. We believe that, given the current circumstances and resources available, this is the most effective way for us to promote the acquisition of major sporting events and championship competitions in Helsinki.
- Participant and spectator events, championship competitions and other major sporting events are surveyed and pursued for Helsinki, and they may be recurring international sporting events or one-off championship events.

A.4. Distinctive urban culture, food and unique nature enhance the city's appeal

- In 2024, the Feast Helsinki food year strengthened Helsinki's appeal by putting restaurant and food culture at the heart of the city's identity, vitality and sustainable tourism. The food year brought together local operators, developed food tourism and increased city residents' pride in their own food culture. Through the theme, a record number of food-related events, occasions, pilot projects and business and educational cooperation activities were carried out in Helsinki. The Feast Helsinki food year showed that food is not just an experience – it is a strategic attractor. Accordingly and deservedly, food and food culture are now prominently featured in the new City Strategy.
- During the Tourism and Events Programme, the access of operators in the sector to agile information provision on upcoming major events has increased through DataLokki, the Makers of Helsinki network's events and public communication. Suppliers have also been heavily briefed on selected significant events, such as the 2024 Tall Ships Races, the EAN congress and Feast Helsinki weeks, to help them anticipate future customer flows in developing their own activities.
- The seascape has been utilised on many familiarisation trips for travel operators, media trips and events during the Feast Helsinki food year. Updating the City's Maritime Strategy has been informed by the views of tourism operators and sustainable tourism perspectives.
- Throughout the programme period, marketing and communication have highlighted food, culture, design, architecture and events alike through sustainability. As of the beginning of 2025, these matters have been communicated internationally under the Happy Helsinki umbrella theme. In particular, the maritime nature in the centre of the capital city has been seen as a factor differentiating Helsinki from the rest of Finland.
- At the beginning of 2025, a design-themed event was held to bring together operators in the design and creative sectors, tourism entrepreneurs and City organisations to consider the diversity of design in their own activities and operating environments in different ways.
- In 2025, the City's partner event Helsinki Design Week celebrated its 20th anniversary; the City's partnership focused on areas such as the Helsinki Design Award and a 'Happiness'-themed anniversary exhibition and symposium.
- The international contemporary art event Helsinki Biennial was held between 8 June and 21 September 2025 in Vallisaari, in Esplanade Park and at HAM Helsinki Art Museum. The third edition of the Biennial reached around 568,000 visitors in the summer of 2025. Free transport was provided to and from the Biennial in Vallisaari in 2023 and 2025. The international design competition for the new Museum of Architecture and Design, which started in April 2024, culminated in the publication of the results on 11 September 2025 and took the project forward. A decision on the 13 Aalto Works buildings, proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2025, is expected to be issued in 2026. The renovation of Finlandia Hall was completed and the *Koe Aaltojen tarina* ('Experience the Story of the Aaltos') – *Finlandia* exhibition, an experiential journey to the roots of the Aaltos' creativity and the heart of Finnishness, was opened.
- Helsinki's distinctive urban culture has been highlighted in marketing and communications, with examples such as sauna campaigns, happiness and the Helsinki lifestyle.
- Design and culture emerged in Helsinki's identity survey as strong key themes that clearly distinguish Helsinki from other destinations and could be a strong source of attraction for the city in the future.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- The Feast Helsinki food year theme was a very effective communication and PR tool, and it increased the international attractiveness of Helsinki particularly in terms of food. A similar communication and marketing model bringing different operators of the City together should be used in the future as well. It is advantageous for the City to implement clear event-based overarching themes with crystallised objectives. And these objectives can be pursued by an increasing range of internal and external stakeholders of the City through platform thinking, working together towards a collectively set goal.

A.5. Good transport links and smooth customer paths for visitors as prerequisites for competitiveness

Cooperation to attract and establish new flight and ship routes and operators

- Marketing cooperation has been carried out with Finavia and airlines to attract new routes and operators and to maintain connections. Marketing materials have been provided to airlines to support the opening of new routes. The results will come with a delay.
- Helsinki's tourism data has been used in the development of flight connections. A report was commissioned on routes used in 2025, including occupancy rates and flight searches, yielding information on potential new routes and the status of existing routes. The information will be used for cooperation with Finavia and airlines.
- The City has been working hard with the Port to restore the number of international cruises to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. The number of vessels is about one third (97) of the highest number recorded in 2019 (300). The current occupancy rate of vessels is very good, over 85%. The cruise season has been extended to the Christmas season and to start in January. More ships will have spent nights in Helsinki between 2024 and 2025 than before the pandemic, and in 2026, seven ships that change cruise passengers are expected in Helsinki for the first time. In these interchanges, passengers start or end a cruise in Helsinki, and this is very likely to increase the number of overnight stays and the length of stay before and after the cruise.

Development of the visitor experience

- Helsinki's visitor experience management model was created in spring 2023 together with more than 100 operators. Feedback on visitor experience is being collected through multiple channels and actively monitored. Improvement needs identified from the feedback, such as those related to taxi safety, information in different languages at service locations and public transport signposting, have been taken forward in line with the management model.
- The visitor experience in Helsinki is at a very good level, and according to data from the DataAppeal platform (which collects open interface customer feedback from channels such as Google, TripAdvisor, etc.), the sentiment in Helsinki is better than in Stockholm, Tallinn or Copenhagen. Customer paths have been defined in the context of the visitor experience management model and were further refined in the summer of 2025 through a joint survey with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences on Helsinki's congested areas and directing customers away from the city centre, which identified a need for more visible street signage in addition to digital channels.

A.5. Good transport links and smooth customer paths for visitors as prerequisites for competitiveness

Findability and accessibility of marine sites

- Tourism perspectives have been actively brought into the work to update the strategy for maritime Helsinki in 2025. Marine sites are also taken into account in the work on the City's Tourism and Events Master Plan.

Cooperation on transport connections and arrangements for events

- The Olympic Stadium is the largest event arena in Finland, where efficient transport solutions for all modes of transport are of the utmost importance. Transport arrangements at the venue have been thought through and tackled together with event organisers, the City, HSL, the authorities and stadium operators, in close cooperation with taxi operators and electric scooter companies as well. A shared traffic arrangement template was created for the Iron Maiden concert, and this plan was primarily used for events at the Olympic Stadium in the summer of 2025. The development work will continue in the autumn of 2025 towards more sustainable solutions.
- With regard to congresses, the programme period involved piloting financial cooperation with hotel chains on HSL travel tickets.
- Active negotiations have been carried out with HSL during the application phase for major events and congresses on a suitable ticket price level.

Sustainable transport of cruise passengers and development of tourist bus services

- An international cruise passenger arrival survey was conducted in the summer of 2024. According to the survey, 19% of cruise passengers travelled only by bus, 28% only on foot and 30% combined bus and walking. Up to 60% of travellers explored Helsinki independently on foot. In the spring of 2025, both pedestrian and driving lane signs were completed on the LHD pier of Hernesaari Harbour.
- The status of the action plan for the development of tourist bus transport drawn up by the Urban Environment Division in 2021 was reviewed in the autumn of 2024. Many of the measures of the plan are still yet to be implemented due to a lack of resources in the Urban Environment Division. A survey was carried out in January 2025 in which transport operators were asked which measures of the plan are the most important to implement and still relevant. The survey was carried out as part of the baseline data collection process for the Tourism and Events Master Plan.

The role of Helsinki Tourist Information in developing the tourist experience

- Helsinki Tourist Information's digital channels and services have been developed further. The chat service is now powered by artificial intelligence. In addition to a traditional paper map, Helsinki Tourist Information provides a customised digital guidebook and map that gives visitors access to a wide range of up-to-date information about Helsinki through a single application. The app uses artificial intelligence to produce translations, so locations can provide information for their guests in almost 30 different languages. The browser-based application has 700–1,700 users per month.

A.5. Good transport links and smooth customer paths for visitors as prerequisites for competitiveness

Recommendations for the next programme period

- In order to ensure year-round growth in tourism and increase the occupancy rate of existing accommodation establishments, new regular transport connections must be attracted to Helsinki. Cooperation with airlines, shipping companies and service providers must continue and attractive programmes must be created to balance the seasons.
- Attractive offerings must be developed for visitors in the city centre and other districts, with clear guidance to services to ensure accessibility and convenience. This will also enable us to avoid congestion and tourist pressure.
- The visitor experience must be monitored and responded to in accordance with the City's visitor experience management model. More and more operators must be urged to be active on feedback channels and utilise them as marketing tools and revenue generators.
- Resources must be added/allocated to the development of tourist bus transport in the city, so that this form of public transport is taken into account in other urban infrastructure development measures.
- Traffic arrangements during events should be developed at the city level to be more sustainable and functional for event visitors, residents and other operators alike, also at event venues other than the Olympic Stadium area.
- Signposts guiding visitors to the main places to visit in the street infrastructure are essential and must, based on many workshops held in the past, be made visible to increase the smoothness of transport and the feeling of safety. The signs must also take into account the service needs of foreign language speakers.

B. Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events

Strategic choices

B.1. Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality at the forefront of development

B.2. Helsinki residents, inclusiveness and social and cultural sustainability at the core of development

B.3. Helsinki is a world leader in sustainability, verified by indices and certifications

Prerequisites for development

B.4. The availability of skilled labour is vital for the sectors

B.5. Focusing on comprehensive safety is a prerequisite for the city's appeal

Helsinki



B. Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events

Summary

B.1. Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality at the forefront of development

- Helsinki has been heavily allocating resources to the sustainability of tourism by means such as calculating the city's carbon footprint twice. Emissions from district heating and electricity have decreased, causing the emissions of Helsinki-based tourism businesses to have also decreased significantly.
- Travelling to Helsinki continues to be a major problem from a climate perspective.
- In Helsinki, the carbon footprint of event attendees is low compared to the rest of Finland.

B.2. Helsinki residents, inclusiveness and social and cultural sustainability at the core of development

- Every two years, the City conducts a survey charting the opinions of Helsinki residents on tourism and events. The results are very positive, and the development of tourism and events has the support of residents.
- The City has implemented a tourism inclusiveness development programme, but its results are only minor so far and further efforts are needed.
- In 2023, both a social responsibility compass and a carbon footprint calculator for the events sector were launched. Feedback on the compass was collected from event operators in 2024.
- In 2024, the City conducted a responsibility survey with operators in the events sector. The survey charted the attitudes and actions of operators in the events sector in terms of sustainability. Taking sustainability into account was considered very important (average rating of 9.24 on a scale of 1 (not important) to 10 (very important) / 62 respondents).
- 86% of the events sector operators considered it important that the City requires its event partners to take concrete measures related to sustainability and responsibility.

B.3. Helsinki is a world leader in sustainability, verified by indices and certifications

- Helsinki took first place in the Global Destination Sustainability Index in 2024 and again in 2025.
- In 2025, Helsinki became the first major city in the world to receive the Green Destinations GSTC certification. The GSTC is the world's strictest travel destination certification standard, supported by the UN.
- Helsinki has been involved in the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) programme since 2019. The aim has been to achieve the STF certificate by 2025, but this objective will not be met due to its demanding nature.
- Currently, around 60–70% of Helsinki's partnership events have a sustainability certificate of some kind. Two new sustainability certificates have been added to the events sector: the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and the WWF certificate.

B.4. The availability of skilled labour is vital for the sectors

- Unemployment in the tourism and events sectors has increased in 2025. At the same time, some businesses are having challenges with finding skilled and motivated labour. Recruitment events, employer dates and recruitment-oriented brief training courses have been organised for operators.

B.5. Focusing on comprehensive safety is a prerequisite for the city's appeal

- In the changed geopolitical situation of Finland following the spring of 2022, the importance of measures related to public security, emergency preparedness and security communication has perhaps increased more than in the original Tourism and Events Programme in 2022–2025. Finland remains one of the safest countries in the world to travel, as measured by the safety indices monitored. Our services and environment are well maintained. Together with service providers, we have prepared for and clarified roles in different emergency situations and produced shared safety materials and instructions.

B. Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events

Action plans that supplement the Tourism and Events Programme and steer the development of sustainable tourism

The development of sustainable tourism in Helsinki is supported by plans that refine the Tourism and Events Programme and address issues such as the climate, social responsibility and regenerative tourism. The plans go into more detail on the subject than the Tourism and Events Programme and highlight measures that need to be taken. The plans have been systematically implemented over the programme period.

- Helsinki Tourism Sustainability Policy
- Climate roadmap for tourism
- Preparedness and adaptation of tourism and events to climate change
- Helsinki's Roadmap for Circular and Sharing Economy
- Extending the length of stay in tourism in Helsinki
- Involvement of Helsinki residents in the development of the tourism and events sectors
- Inclusivity action plan for the tourism and events sectors
- Helsinki visitor pressure management plan
- Management of social tourism pressure in Helsinki
- Action plan for regenerative tourism
- Internal training on sustainability
- Tourism and event safety management plan

B. Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events

Projects promoting sustainable tourism during the Tourism and Events Programme period

Projects play an important role in the promotion of sustainable tourism. They bring additional resources to often under-resourced development while also increasing cooperation between businesses and tourism areas.

- Promoting sustainability in businesses is often still perceived as “something extra.” It is therefore very important that businesses can be supported by the public sector.
- The Tourism and Events Programme has put sustainability at the heart of competitiveness, and strong support for businesses has therefore been a strategic choice.
- There have been numerous sustainability-promoting projects during the programme period, and these projects have helped Helsinki-based tourism and events sector businesses to become world leaders in sustainability.
- The projects have involved supporting the preparation of carbon footprint calculations for businesses, certification application processes and training in areas such as reducing food waste and circular economy.
- The projects have also involved building a common story and sustainability verbalisations, as well as pilot marketing for international markets. International travel operators have also been invited to visit Helsinki.
- The projects have also built international cooperation with other tourism destinations and benchmarked other destinations. The projects play an important contributing part in networking.
- The projects have also contributed to supporting Helsinki’s own resources, and they have made it possible to recruit sustainable tourism specialists into the City’s organisations.

Projects such as the following have been active in the Helsinki region during the Tourism and Events Programme period. Helsinki has acted as the project manager and/or financier in some of the projects, and as a beneficiary in others.

- KOKEMO – Conference and Business Events as Drivers of Innovation and Sustainability in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area
- Climate Neutral Destinations BSR
- Carbon Neutral Experience 1, 2 and 3
- Sustainable growth for Tourism: Southern Finland
- Digi+Carbonless 1 and 2
- Food Waste Ecosystem

B.1. Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality at the forefront of development

- Helsinki's previous strategy period set a target of carbon neutrality by 2030. The tourism and events sectors must also respond to the global climate crisis through their own actions. By leading the way, Helsinki can gain a significant competitive advantage.
 - Helsinki has signed the UN's Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, committing itself to achieving zero emissions in tourism by 2050.
 - A Climate Action Plan has been created for tourism in Helsinki, pictured on the next page.
 - The carbon footprint of tourism in Helsinki was calculated together with many other municipalities in Uusimaa twice during the programme period. The calculation model has been developed further, rendering the figures from the two surveys incomparable. The survey work increases understanding of where climate change efforts in tourism should be targeted.
 - Helsinki's district heating production is approaching carbon neutrality. Similarly, electricity produced in Finland is nearly emission-free. This is also a major advantage for tourism businesses operating in the city, such as roughly 80 hotels for which heating and electricity are major sources of emissions.
 - The Urban Environment Division and the Communications Department of the City Executive Office have collaborated to implement a carbon footprint indicator for events. The indicator has been applied to events during the programme period.
 - The City has been working with Visit Finland to create a carbon footprint indicator for tourism businesses, called *Hiilikuri* ('Carbon Discipline'). The indicator has been provided to businesses, but it has seen regrettably little use. Only seven businesses in Helsinki are using the calculator. On the other hand, large businesses in particular have calculated their own carbon footprint at a commendable level, but by using a tool other than *Hiilikuri*.
 - Helsinki and Tampere have jointly established an Urban Climate Leaders in Tourism group, which includes leading tourism operators such as Messukeskus, SOK, Scandic, Strawberry and Linnanmäki. The group aims to be an international leader in climate work in tourism.
 - Both written and video support materials have been created for tourism customer service representatives working in Helsinki, such as guides, hotel receptionists, museum employees and restaurant staff, to increase understanding of responsibility and make communication easier. Additionally, a guide has been created for travellers on how to travel around Helsinki as sustainably as possible.
 - Helsinki is a member of the sustainability working group of the events sector lobbying organisation Tapahtumateollisuus ry.
 - During the programme period, tourism businesses in Helsinki have risen to the absolute top of the world rankings when comparing the number of companies' environmental certifications. This indicates that the businesses are highly committed to protecting the environment.
- The City organisation has a Sustainable Tourism and Events Action Group as part of its City-level sustainable development working group. The group features a wide range of representatives of the City's different divisions, with expertise in areas such as equality work, accessibility, inclusion, environmental protection, marketing, and tourism and events. The group has met a total of 15 times over the programme period.

B.1. Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality at the forefront of development

Developing environmental sustainability in event production

- Statistics have been collected on the carbon footprint of partner events and the use of environmental certificates.
- Event organisers have been encouraged to use the City's carbon footprint calculator.
- Sustainability has been discussed at annual event seminars and information events organised by Helsinki. Furthermore, the responsibility section has been strengthened both on the hel.fi website for event organisers and in the event partnership assessment process.
- The Tourism and Events Programme has also focused on practical actions, such as taking into account and developing the ending time policies and environmental impacts of events, and the programme has involved encouraging operators to reduce their use of disposable plastic products at events by piloting a Green Cup project.
- The City conducted a sustainability survey with operators in the events sector in late 2024. Concrete measures to promote sustainability will be designed and implemented based on the understanding gained from the survey.
- According to the Salmi Eventlizer visitor survey, the average transport carbon footprint of an event visitor in Helsinki is relatively low (0.08 kgCO₂e/km) compared to the rest of Finland, where the carbon footprint of transport in 2024 was 0.12 kgCO₂e/km. The change in the carbon footprint is particularly affected by a change in the vehicle stock and the development and active use of public transport. Helsinki has excellent public transport, and event visitors are encouraged to come to the venue by public transport, by bicycle or on foot.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Emissions from tourism remain a major challenge for the development of tourism in Helsinki. Finland is an island in terms of tourism, and air and sea transport cause significant climate emissions. On the other hand, factors such as Helsinki's excellent situation in terms of heating and low-emission electricity is an advantage from the point of view of sustainable tourism. The City's work to combat climate change must be continued diligently.
- Helsinki has created a Tourism Impact Assessment sheet to monitor the impact of tourism on the environment. It should be noted, however, that environmental protection and regenerative tourism are still in their infancy. Efforts to monitor and protect the environment must be increased as tourism is expected to grow.
- Measuring the carbon footprint is still in its early stages. In an ideal situation, all tourism businesses and event operators in Helsinki would measure their emissions and take active steps to reduce them. However, this is not the case at the moment.
- Concrete measures can be taken in the events sector based on the results of the City's sustainability survey.
- The different divisions' ongoing event sustainability projects should be looked into and attached to where possible. Pilot events in particular are a good platform for project trials.
- Partner events should be required to have a sustainability certificate and information on valid environmental certificates should be compiled on the website.
- The tourism sector is still at an early stage of adapting to climate change. Extensive cooperation, training and resources are needed to ensure that preparedness and adaptation are at the required level in the sector.
- Related to the previous point, it is also important to prepare for a possible future trend of more and more tourists heading north because southern Europe is too hot, water is scarce and holiday destinations suffer from too much tourism. In other words, climate change may change all the attraction factors of tourism in Helsinki during the upcoming programme period.
- Helsinki is in a unique position compared to many of its competitors. Its leadership in climate work should be used in international marketing and to attract tourists to whom environmental issues are important.

B.2. Helsinki residents, inclusiveness and social and cultural sustainability at the core of development

Involvement of Helsinki residents in the development of the tourism and events sectors

- The wellbeing of Helsinki residents must be the starting point for all development. The tourism and events sectors have many positive impacts on the city. However, it is also possible that without systematic destination management, negative impacts may be caused by tourists or event attendees.
- The City has a plan in place for involving Helsinki residents in the development of tourism and events.
- In cooperation with Helsinki Tourism Foundation, the City conducted a survey on residents' attitudes towards tourism and events in 2023 and 2025. The survey was also conducted in 2019 and 2021 (with regard to tourism). Local residents' views on the tourism and events sectors are very positive and have remained at the same level on average across all editions of the survey.
- The City has conducted a survey for local residents in 2023 and 2025 on improvement needs in tourism in Helsinki. The improvement needs identified in the survey have been acted on where possible. Many of the issues raised have broad implications for the entire City organisation or its subsidiaries. The issues raised include the number of public toilets and the development of tourist bus transport. The number of toilets has been increased and a plan has been drawn up to improve bus transport.
- Every year, the City has organised a tourism-themed event for Helsinki residents. The event has been held at the City Hall and online in alternating years. The aim has been to openly inform local residents about tourism developments and plans, and also to give Helsinki residents an opportunity to express their own views.
- The City's annual reports on the participation of Helsinki residents in the development of tourism and events are available on the City's tourism operator website. These reports go into more detail on the aforementioned issues. See the summary on the next page.
- The involvement of young people as future operators in the events sector has been promoted by actively involving them in the planning and development of major events through the Flow School and Emma School projects in 2020–2025.
- The City's 2024 event surveys show that Helsinki residents are proud of the large number of different events organised in the city. According to annual event impact surveys, Helsinki is a well-functioning, lively, safe and urban city for events. Similarly, surveys show that the City's own events produced by the Helsinki Events Foundation are the most meaningful regionally and even nationally. For example, people from a wide range of demographics living in Uusimaa find the annual Night of the Arts, Helsinki Festival, Helsinki Christmas Market and LUX to be among the most interesting major Finnish events.

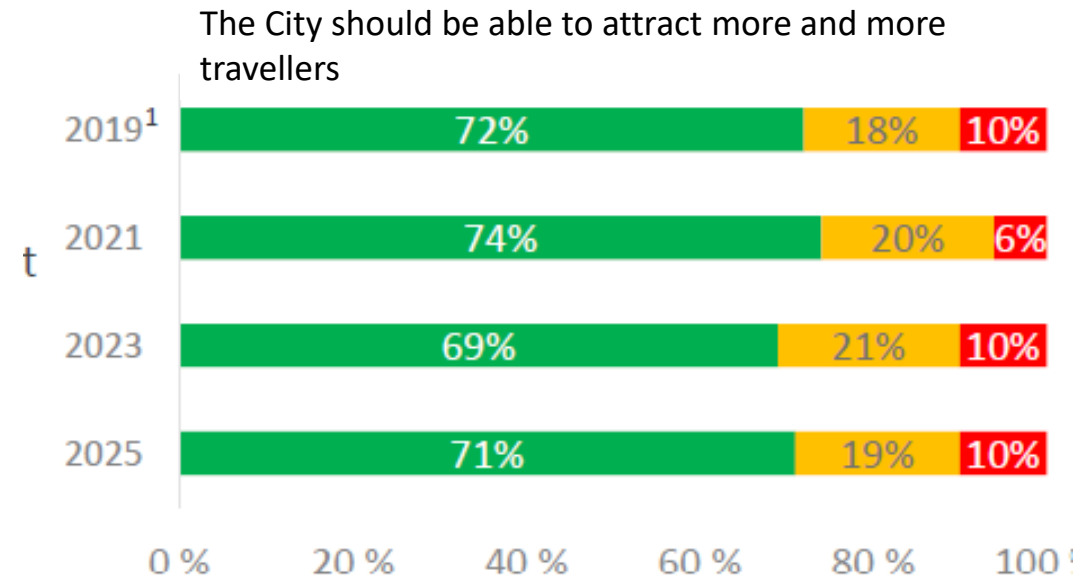
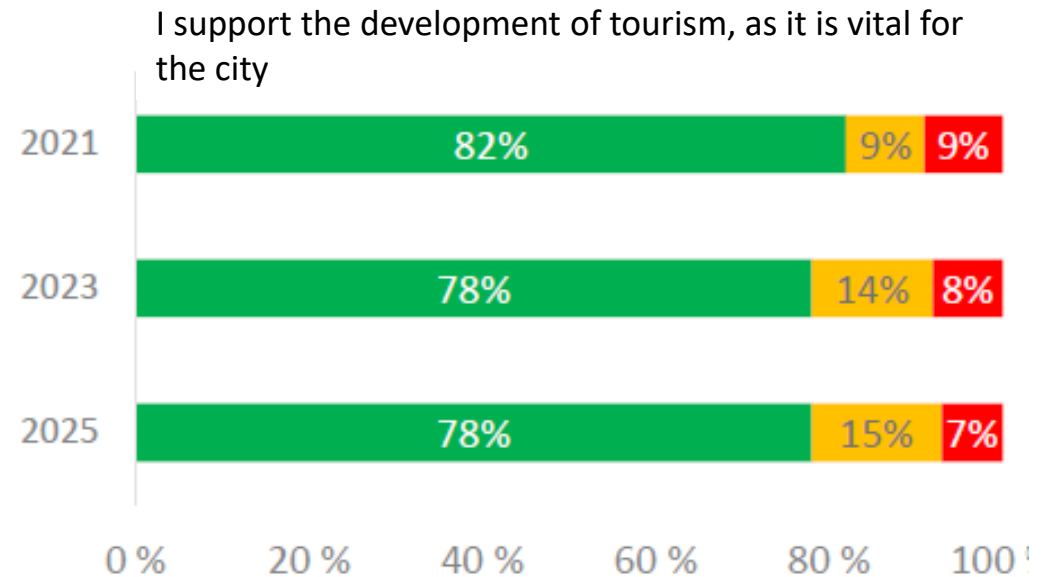
Inclusivity in tourism and events

- Helsinki has clear strengths in terms of promoting inclusive tourism. Helsinki placed second in the European Commission's Access City Awards in 2022 and third in the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Awards in 2023. Finland has been the happiest country in the world for eight consecutive years.
- An analysis and action plan for inclusive tourism was created for the City in 2023, which is used to promote this matter.
- Although the situation is relatively good and progress has been made, e.g. through the national Sustainable Travel Finland programme, this is an area that has been overshadowed by other development measures during the current programme period.
- Inclusivity-related indicators have also been included in the 2025 PowerBI statistical report on sustainable tourism.

Attitudes of Helsinki residents towards tourism in 2025

- Almost 80% of Helsinki residents are proud of their home city as a tourism destination and support the development of tourism.
- The impacts of tourism are perceived primarily as positive, particularly in terms of the economy and cultural life.
- 78% report that they are happy to help and guide travellers (cf. 73% in 2023).
- Main drawbacks according to Helsinki residents
 - Untidiness and littering
 - Congested crowds

Source: Resident survey on tourism in Helsinki 2025, Helsinki Tourism Foundation



Helsinki residents' attitudes towards their home city and events at a good level

- 80% of Helsinki residents still feel comfortable in their home city, which is almost the same figure as in 2023 and 2019 but 7 percentage points lower than in 2021.
- Events are seen as bringing internationality to Helsinki, having a positive impact on the city's economy, increasing the vitality of Helsinki and generating international visibility.
- A significant proportion of respondents, well over half, felt that events have a positive impact on the attractiveness of Helsinki and wanted Helsinki to actively seek to host major events.
- Women were slightly more likely than men to see events as increasing the vitality and internationality of Helsinki and having a positive impact on the city's economy. Residents aged 15–24 are less likely than others to believe that events have a positive impact on the city's economy and contribute to internationalisation and vitality. However, they no longer differ with other age groups on how events impact the attractiveness of Helsinki.
- The difference with the 2023 survey is that respondents would like more attention to be paid to the local population when planning events. Furthermore, there is growing support for the ambition to host major events, and more respondents believe that events have a positive impact on the economy of Helsinki.

Source: Resident survey on tourism in Helsinki 2019, 2023 and 2025, Helsinki Tourism Foundation & Visitory Oy



B.2. Helsinki residents, inclusiveness and social and cultural sustainability at the core of development

Social and cultural sustainability

- If the number of tourists in Helsinki were to grow very rapidly and uncontrollably, we could see phenomena similar to those in Barcelona or Amsterdam, where the pressure created by tourists on the city has reached a level that is no longer acceptable to the local population. This also increases the pressure on nature.
- Helsinki has created an action plan for managing visitor pressure. The plan lists a range of pressure management indicators and measures that can be used to manage and potentially reduce visitor pressure.
- Helsinki does not have a problem of too much tourism, and figures show that the city is still very far from the situation of the aforementioned cities. However, the situation must be actively monitored and measures must be taken quickly where needed.
- This work is also supported by a map-based Tourism and Events Master Plan, completed in spring 2025, which examines tourism flows and tourism-related infrastructure.
- During the Tourism and Events Programme period, a city-level social responsibility compass has been developed in cooperation between different operators to support event organisers.
- In autumn 2024, a debate was held on the role of the Sámi population, especially when it comes to souvenir shops. The Sámi Parliament and Sami Duodji ry were involved in the discussion. The final result of the process was a guide for the sale of Sámi products, which was distributed to souvenir shops in Helsinki.
- The responsibility working group of Tapahtumateollisuus ry aims to directly tackle issues in the event sector nationally, and in connection with this work, materials such as a guide on ethical recommendations for volunteering were produced in 2025. Helsinki is actively represented in the group.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Involving local residents has been a long-running endeavour, and comparable statistics are available from 2019 onwards. This work must be continued systematically.
- There is still much to be done in the promotion of inclusive tourism. From Helsinki's perspective, the potential of inclusive tourism is very high and should be invested in much more than before.
- Work on visitor pressure management must be continued and related indicators developed. Measures to ease visitor pressure on the most popular destinations must be continued. At the same time, however, it must be ensured that the resources allocated are proportionate to the small scale of the problem.
- The status of Europe's only indigenous people must continue to be safeguarded. In addition to the aforementioned guide, the situation must be monitored in the upcoming programme period and it must be ensured that the rights of the Sámi are not violated in the context of tourism.
- The City must continue to be actively involved in Tapahtumateollisuus ry's sustainability work, training courses and sustainability working group.

B.3. Helsinki is a world leader in sustainability, verified by indices and certifications

- Helsinki and Finland rank at the top of countless indices. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Happiness Index, in which Finland has been at the top for eight years.
- From a tourism perspective, the three indices and certifications stand out: the Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) index, the Green Destinations certificate and the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) programme.
 - The objective set for the programme period was to be at the top of the GDS index. This objective was achieved in autumn 2024. The index measures the sustainability of a destination with around 80 different questions. Meeting the criteria of the index is demanding, and it has taken Helsinki years to reach first place. Helsinki's ranking in the index has been as follows: 18, 16, 12, 4, 1 and 1.
 - In 2023, Helsinki set out to pursue the world's strictest tourism destination sustainability certification. In spring 2025, Helsinki became the first major urban destination to receive the Green Destinations GSTC certificate. Achieving the certification was a major effort, and the final report contained answers to around 280 questions and was over 120 pages long. This is an exceptional achievement on a global scale.
 - Helsinki has already been a pilot destination in the national STF programme since 2019. Helsinki as a tourist destination has not yet applied for the STF destination label, but the city is already very close to meeting the prerequisites for it.
- The EU's new directives on green claims, the 'empowering consumers for the green transition' directive and the Green Claims Directive (Green Claims preparations discontinued for the time being) are significantly tightening the legislation. Helsinki is in a uniquely good position in terms of the tightening regulation and can thus gain a significant competitive advantage.
 - 99% of Helsinki's hotel capacity (hotels with more than 50 rooms) is certified. Similarly, sights, congress facilities, the airport and other tourism operators are certified at an exceptionally high level.
 - 60–70% of the City of Helsinki's partnership events utilise a sustainability programme (the most common being the EcoCompass environmental certificate). Events with the EcoCompass certificate receive a 30% discount on the land use fee. The first event (Katri Helena concert at the Olympic Stadium) received the Nordic Swan Ecolabel in 2025.
 - The Helsinki Events Foundation, which produces the City's own events, has the EcoCompass certificate. Furthermore, some of its events have the EcoCompass certificate.

B. Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events

Sustainable Travel Finland programme

- The “backbone” of sustainable tourism development in Helsinki is the Sustainable Travel Finland programme run by Visit Finland, a unit of Business Finland. The programme is aimed at businesses in the tourism sector, as well as tourist destinations such as Helsinki. Helsinki has been involved in the programme since its pilot phase in 2019. The programme covers all areas of sustainability, namely environmental, climate, social and cultural responsibility and economic sustainability.
- Helsinki has supported businesses in acquiring the Sustainable Travel Finland label through a variety of measures, such as training courses, workshops and information briefings. Visit Finland has done the same. Additionally, the Helsinki Tourism Foundation has supported several businesses in obtaining an external environmental certification, such as the Good Travel Seal or the Green Activities certificate.
- In September 2025, tourism businesses in Helsinki had around 85 Sustainable Travel Finland labels. This is well below the target level. The aim of the Tourism and Events Programme is for Helsinki-based businesses to have 200 certificates by 2026. This objective will not be achieved.

B.3. Helsinki is a world leader in sustainability, verified by indices and certifications

Recommendations for the next programme period

- As part of the VivaCity Challenge project, Helsinki has co-authored a so-called white paper on the relevance and necessity of indices and certifications as a tool for promoting sustainability. The white paper was published in July 2025.
- For a small travel destination, it is very important to stand out from the masses. Sustainability is a natural strength of Helsinki, providing a competitive advantage. From a visibility and awareness point of view, it is recommendable to continue along the chosen path and continue to aim for the rank of the most sustainable destination in the world.
- On the other hand, it is worth noting that during the past programme period, a significant amount of resources has been allocated to pursuing objectives such as reaching first place in the GDS index and receiving the Green Destinations certification. It should be critically assessed whether the aforementioned are right ways to allocate the City's limited resources.
- It should also be critically assessed whether travellers are aware of these certifications and indices and whether they have an impact on their purchasing decisions. In leisure time travel, awareness is probably very low, while among travel operators and congress and conference organisers, awareness is at a higher level and also has a significant impact on destination choices.
- It is important to continue the certification work on events and venues in the upcoming programme period.

B.4. The availability of skilled labour is vital for the sectors

- Unemployment in the tourism and events sectors has increased in 2025. At the same time, some businesses are having challenges with finding skilled and motivated labour.
- The challenges related to labour supply and matching have been addressed by Helsinki's Advisory Working Group for Tourism together with the most important tourism and event businesses in Helsinki. Joint measures have also been planned and implemented with educational institutions. A commissioned master's thesis entitled 'Industry Employer Branding for tourism and hospitality – towards attraction and retention' was presented at a Makers of Helsinki network meeting and discussed in the Advisory Working Group for Tourism. A panel discussion on the attractiveness and future drivers of the sector was also held in the spring of 2025.
- A separate employment service has been implemented for the retail, tourism and restaurant sectors as a purchased service to recruit skilled labour for the sectors. Around 400 workers have been employed in the sectors through the service between August 2022 and May 2025. Around 10% of the clients have been directly employed in the tourism sector. Around 50% of those recruited in the sectors are employed on a permanent basis or for more than 12 months, while around 40% of the clients who have participated in the service have been foreign language speakers.
- In cooperation with the Careeria vocational education institution, the City will hold a group-format training course entitled *Matkailualan tulevaisuuden tekijät* ('Future Makers of the Tourism Sector') near the end of the year (ending in early 2026) for jobseekers interested in the tourism sector and entrepreneurship. As part of the training course, the students will plan their own business activities in the tourism sector or, alternatively, use service design methods to develop the activities of a single partner business.
- Additionally, employers in the sector have been supported in providing employment through the pay subsidy system and the Helsinki benefit.
- In cooperation with employers in the tourism, restaurant and events sectors, the City held the Helsinki Hospitality Job Fair recruitment event in 2024 for the second time. The event involved 11 businesses, three educational institutions and more than 400 jobseekers. The event was found to be useful.
- The specialist expertise and field of work of those working in the events sector is very broad, including aspects ranging from sales, production planning and implementation details to safety and security. In the current situation, it is challenging to identify the number of study places and students or the exact kind of further training needed in the sector as a whole, as there are no specific studies for the events sector. Because of this, the City is actively working with Tapahtumateollisuus ry, which aims to systematically improve the training situation in the events sector.
- The availability of labour has been ensured by training new talent, e.g. event-specifically. Examples of this are the Flow School and Event School projects, the first of which started as a pilot during the period of operation and has established itself over the years as a good method.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Cooperation with the Employment Services, educational institutions, businesses and other operators promoting employment must be increased even further.

B.5. Focusing on comprehensive safety is a prerequisite for the city's appeal

- The promotion of tourism and event safety has been carried out in accordance with the City's tourism and event safety management plan completed in February 2022. The plan has been updated annually and further refined through participation in the EU Crisis Management project in 2024.
- The Tourism and Event Safety Steering Group has been active since the beginning of 2023. The steering group is coordinated by the Tourism and Attraction Services unit and includes representatives from the City's external communications department, the preparedness team, Helsinki Partners, the Brand, Events & Marketing unit, Food Safety, HUS, the Rescue Department, the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency, Visit Finland and a tourism business representative from a hotel chain. The steering group has defined minimum criteria for safety management and selected safety indices to be monitored at the level of Helsinki, the country and the world. The indices are updated annually on the public PowerBI platform.
- A 'Makers of Safety' theme group consisting of businesses in the Makers of Helsinki network started its activities in 2025. An emergency communications team has been appointed for the Tourism and Attraction Services unit. The roles of the different operators in communication about safety have also been determined.
- Safety-related materials have been produced for businesses to use, such as Compass – A Handbook for Safety in Tourism and events in Helsinki, the digital tool and safety guide *Lokikirja* ('Logbook'), the *Matkailijan turvallinen polku* ('Safe Path for Travellers') instructions and safety theme information pages on the cooperation platform of the Makers of Helsinki network.
- The City has been holding an annual seminar on tourism and event safety (e.g. on 30 October 2025) for a wide audience, with more than 100 attendees. Additionally, smaller training courses have been held on subjects such as preparedness and crisis communication.
- Tourism and event safety messages have been developed in cooperation with business operators and the City's crisis communications department for both the City's own channels and for use by businesses. The messages on subjects such as safe taxi use, preventing pickpocketing and the general safety situation are utilised on websites, at hotels, in tourist information services and on the Visit Finland website.
- The impacts of safety management and the implementation of the shared model are monitored through selected safety indices, visitor experience feedback and feedback from members of the Makers of Helsinki network.

B.5. Focusing on comprehensive safety is a prerequisite for the city's appeal

- Event security is inherently proactive, as all event organisers are obligated to provide the authorities with detailed descriptions and accounts of security measures already in the permit application phase. Based on these accounts, the City also reviews the safety of future events, e.g. in the Events Field Team. Furthermore, a separate meeting of the authorities is held for each major event, covering all aspects of safety and security, from crisis communication to attendee guidance.
- Helsinki is also a member of Tapahtumateollisuus ry's safety working group. There are also other working groups in the events sector, in which all representatives of the sector carry out thinking work for the development of the entire sector, and they also engage in dialogue with public authorities and other parties.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Continuing active preventive safety and security work through existing safety network structures.
- Organising emergency preparedness exercises with internal and key stakeholders of the organisation.
- Taking both physical and psychological safety factors into account in safety and paying special attention to appropriate communication.
- We will also build international contact networks to develop safety and security measures and communication.
- We will continue concrete measures to increase event safety at the city level, e.g. with regard to exceptional traffic arrangements for events at the Olympic Stadium.

C. Helsinki is a smart destination and a functional event city

Strategic choices

- C.1.** Smart development of tourism and events is based on knowledge
- C.2.** City space related decisions support tourism and events
- C.3.** Helsinki is a functioning platform for events

Prerequisites for development

- C.4.** Promoting companies' digital capabilities to increase their competitiveness
- C.5.** Growth and renewal through accelerating innovation in the tourism and event sectors



C. Helsinki is a smart destination and a functional event city

Summary

C.1. Smart development of tourism and events is based on knowledge

- The development of and decision-making related to Helsinki as a tourism and events city are based on systematically collected, reliable and up-to-date data in the DataLokki – Helsinki Destination Insights service, which supports decision-making. This data has helped the City and businesses to anticipate future visitor numbers, plan marketing measures and optimise shifts, etc.
- Indicators were created for verifying and monitoring smart tourism.
- Research on the impacts of events and knowledge-based management have been developed in different ways. For example, Helsinki is examining an increasing number of events in the city using harmonised methods.

C.2. City space related decisions support tourism and events

- The Tourism and Events Master Plan has been completed and implementation is underway.
- During the period, the following aspects have also been surveyed in support of the Master Plan:
 - Venues for major and mass events in Helsinki, indoor event venues for 500–1,000 people, master plan for the squares and plazas of the City of Helsinki. Work has also started on updating the venue cards of public areas in Helsinki.

C.3. Helsinki is a functioning platform for events

- The City's e-services have been completed. The technical development of the Varaamo platform and the expansion of its services have been completed.
- In 2025, Helsinki has completed and commissioned the model of the project for licensing and supervision by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, a customer-oriented one-stop shop service developed for the e-services of public administration.

C.4. Promoting companies' digital capabilities to increase their competitiveness

- The visibility of the digital products of businesses and services on the channels of Helsinki and Visit Finland increased between 2022 and 2025, enabling visitors to find services that interest them and thus bringing more revenue to businesses. The content of public events has been moderated and published on the City's communication channels, such as the event calendar, at a rate of more than 2,000 posts per year, contributing to the City's attractiveness.
- New skills related to data and digital technology have been achieved by the staff of businesses as part of the Makers of Helsinki network, e.g. through AI training, a data seminar and a programme for improving digital visibility. New skills can help a business to innovate and improve service concepts and processes.

C.5. Growth and renewal through accelerating innovation in the tourism and event sectors

- The business activities of Finnish businesses have been supported, particularly through the Sustainable Growth for Tourism project: Southern Finland project and the pilots of the new map service of Helsinki Tourist Information. The pilots have resulted in new products and/or product features with demand and international growth potential. A TestBed model for tourism innovations was designed during the Tourism and Events Programme.

C.1. Smart development of tourism and events is based on knowledge

- The development of and decision-making related to Helsinki as a tourism and events city are based on systematically collected, reliable and up-to-date data. The *DataLokki – Helsinki Destination Insights* service was launched in 2023 and has been developed further in a user-oriented manner. By September 2025, DataLokki had 150 registered users and at least 2,500 sessions/year. The number of users is in line with the City's target, but the usage rate of the service has been lower than expected, and the data has not sufficiently reached business managers and decision-makers. Despite reliable and up-to-date data, the importance of tourism and events is not sufficiently understood in the public discussion. A survey on businesses' knowledge-based management capabilities and a qualitative survey on motivation levels found that businesses' know-how with regard to utilising data outside their own organisation is still in its infancy. This conclusion also explains the somewhat low usage rate of DataLokki. Various methods have been tried in applying the data in the sector, with varying degrees of success. Data popularisation and communication about DataLokki were stepped up during 2025. The DataLokki landing page hel.fi/datalokki was overhauled, and the service was communicated about through campaigns, dedicated events and communication channels. Additionally, a decision on the continuation of the DataLokki service will be made by the end of 2025.
- Helsinki has been developed into a sustainable and knowledge-managed tourism destination of the future as part of the VivaCity Challenge project. The second year of the project, 2025, has involved an identity survey on Helsinki, the creation of a regenerative tourism action plan, a data value assessment and a programme for improving the digital visibility of businesses. In autumn 2025, the consultants of the VivaCity Challenge were set to be utilised in drawing up development outlines for a new development programme.
- A reference framework and indicators were created for smart tourism to verify and monitor the development of different areas of smart tourism. Based on a preliminary analysis, the basics are in order (baseline 2025) but need to be developed further in a determined manner during the new strategy period.
- During the Tourism and Events Programme, research on the impact of events has been developed in a variety of ways. Helsinki is examining an increasing number of events in the city using harmonised methods. The results obtained will help in future planning, implementation and decision-making processes. During the operating period, social and environmental perspectives were added to the surveys in addition to economic impact. This has yielded information on visitors' spending and sense of safety, as well as the carbon footprint of event attendees. During the operating period, information on events in Helsinki has been brought to operators, both through event surveys and the DataLokki database of upcoming events.

C.1. Smart development of tourism and events is based on knowledge

- The interface of the Linked Events database is utilised at the national and international level as a pioneer in measuring the number of public events organised in the city. The statistics are not absolute, but they provide an estimate of aspects such as the total number of public events, the type of event, popular times, visitor numbers and event certifications. This information is important for advocacy and event development. No other city in Finland or the world is known to measure the number of public events with such accuracy. The number of events in Helsinki has grown year by year, and at its best, Helsinki has up to 6,000 public events per month.
- Unlike the tourism sector, the events sector does not have an official obligation to systematically report data and collect data that is naturally formed this way. During the operating period, Tapahtumateollisuus ry has created a knowledge-based management model for the six largest cities in Finland, the aim of which is to help provide an understanding of what data is essential to collect, how to collect data systematically and how to analyse the data collected for both internal and external stakeholders. The next step is to move on to the implementation phase in each city, including Helsinki.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- The procurement period of the DataLokki – Helsinki Destination Insights service will end in October 2026. Integrating the service into City-wide systems requires a City-wide ICT architecture model for the intermediate storage and agile maintenance of external data sources. Without this, the DataLokki service as it is today will be dependent on solutions and maintenance provided by third parties. Alternatives for the solution architecture model will be surveyed and a sustainable continuity plan will be developed for the model.
- The good cooperation with the Makers of Helsinki network in knowledge-based management should be continued. Several user-oriented methods and formats should be used to collect and apply data – using only one method is not effective based on the results.
- The sector is in the early stages of utilising data outside the organisation. The value of data and the business benefits that it brings are not recognised. The City must continue to support the sector, popularise data and carry out cooperation in accordance with the national model for knowledge-based management in tourism.
- Helsinki's identity survey is the starting point for the brand, product development, communications and marketing. Helsinki will set out to reach target groups that fit the identity of the place and are commercially viable, rather than generically and inefficiently offer “everything for everyone.”
- The development of areas of smart tourism should be monitored on an annual basis and the results should be utilised to support the planning of measures.
- Promoting the knowledge-based managements of events should be continued and cooperation should be carried out between the six largest cities (comparing collected and analysed event data on a shared platform).

C.2. City space related decisions support tourism and events

- To facilitate the growth of tourism and events, a comprehensive Master Plan focusing on land use was prepared, identifying Helsinki's current tourism and event priorities and future development directions. The work was commissioned by the City of Helsinki and carried out by FCG Finnish Consulting Group, with the support of a steering group consisting of representatives of the City, the Economic Development Department, the Communications Department and the Urban Environment Division. The plan was developed as an interactive process. The starting point was the current land use situation and the development opportunities it creates, as well as the trends that will guide the tourism and events sectors going forward. The plan was developed for the long term, so the effects of the different trends and growth scenarios have been taken into account in the development plan and vision. The work will be used in defining future strategic objectives related to the development of tourism and events, in the Helsinki City Plan implementation programme being updated, and in future land use plans and implementation. The aim is for tourism and events operators and investors to also utilise the work to support their planning and decision-making processes.
- Additionally, the following aspects were analysed to support the Master Plan:
 - Helsinki's venues for major and mass events, the situation report on which was completed in 2025. The areas examined were Suvilahti, Käpylä Sports Park and Messukeskus, the Olympic Stadium area and Myllypuro Sports Park. Other suitable venues for major events include Oulunkylä Sports Park, Malminkenttä and Kivikko Sports Park.
 - Indoor event venues for 500–1,000 people, the report on which was completed in spring 2025. The aim was to gain an understanding of the current state of venues specifically suitable for business events and a list of potential future venues.
 - The City of Helsinki's Market Squares Master Plan was completed in 2025. The plan includes visions for the City's major market square areas, with implementation schedules and classifications. In connection with this work, the City's public area event venue cards will be updated from 2025 onwards.
- The hotel capacity of Helsinki has increased by around 3,000 rooms during the programme period. New hotel projects have diversified Helsinki's accommodation services and increased its international appeal. The proportion of hotels with an environmental certificate has risen from 63% to 99%, highlighting the accommodation sector's commitment to sustainable development. A few new hotel projects are still in the pipeline, but far fewer than at the start of the Tourism and Events Programme. An updated version of the Helsinki Hotel Investment Guide was published in 2025.

C.2. City space related decisions support tourism and events

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Utilising the Tourism and Events Master Plan and other related accounts in City-wide decision-making to ensure that the long-term strategic development of tourism and events is taken into account comprehensively.
- Strengthening cooperation with the Urban Environment Division. For example, exceptional periods in transport services (e.g. the 2027 metro shutdown), major street renovations and other works affecting tourism and events should be anticipated well in advance, and decisions that work for businesses, residents and visitors should be built.
- Active development, planning and implementation of Helsinki's major event areas in a City-wide manner and with business operators to ensure both short and long-term solutions.
- The City in an active role in the development of event arenas.
- Investing in increasing the occupancy rate of existing hotels instead of promoting new hotel projects.

C.3. Helsinki is a functioning platform for events

- During the operating period, Helsinki has completed and commissioned the model of the project for licensing and supervision by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, a customer-oriented one-stop shop service developed for the e-services of public administration.
- The Varaamo service, which is part of Helsinki's digital ecosystem, has been developed during the operating period. It enables residents and different communities to reserve City facilities for private use. After several years, the development work was completed in 2023, and now the Varaamo service can also use the City's Helsinki profile and opening hours app. These greatly increase the usability of the service.
- Veikkaus Arena and Finlandia Hall returned to event use, and sites such as Messukeskus, Kulttuuritalo and the Olympic Stadium have strengthened their own event offerings through measures such as major renovations and innovative facility development.
- By the end of the operating period, the event-related grant mechanisms and processes of the Culture and Leisure Division or possibly other divisions will be clarified to make them more customer-oriented.
- Accounts and master plans related to event areas and venues will strengthen the development of Helsinki's event venues.
- The number of event terraces in Helsinki has increased in recent years. The terraces are used to hold many daytime concerts and other events, and the operating models for these events should be developed in cooperation with the organisers.

Recommendations for the next programme period

- It should be surveyed whether there is a need to carry out a user experience analysis on the new e-service platform on a recurring basis, e.g. every two years.
- If the positive trend continues and the popularity of event terraces grows further, a noise notification obligation for daytime events will be considered when the environmental protection regulations are updated.
- Attention should be paid to the city-level communication and marketing of resident-oriented events that receive a grant from the Culture and Leisure Division.

C.4. Promoting companies' digital capabilities to increase their competitiveness

- The City has supported businesses' business skills and digital capabilities by organising training courses, webinars and workshops. Businesses' digital visibility was improved through a so-called digital influence pilot, in which businesses received an analysis of their own digital visibility and specialist advice on how to improve their visibility through concrete measures. The visibility of businesses' digital product offerings on the channels of Helsinki and Visit Finland has increased during the programme period.
- The role of the City as a key player in promoting the integration of different systems has been clarified. The City is seen as a facilitator and a platform, but promoting practical visibility needs active efforts from the sector. The City cannot assume the role of a vendor or maintain product information in databases without the businesses themselves being active. The number of responses received in the City's digital capability survey for businesses was not high enough to generalise the results across the whole sector.
- The number of DataHub products in the national tourism product database increased **from** 164 to over 500 products during the programme period, in line with the target. This growth has been supported through means such as clinics, communications and personal contacts with tourism businesses. The importance of the DataHub service for the tourism sector in Helsinki has declined during the programme period. DataHub partly overlaps with the City of Helsinki's own databases, and data does not flow automatically between the City's databases and DataHub. Visit Finland has not gained any significant additional visibility for the DataHub product information on channels other than its own, either. On the channels of the City of Helsinki, such as the myhelsinki.fi website, DataHub only brings value to activity products (not to events or physical locations such as restaurants or hotels).
- The City's events database (Linked Events) publishes more than 2,000 tourism-attracting events organised by third parties every year, moderated by the Tourism and Attraction Services unit. The event database and notification form for third parties have been improved and the system's technical challenges have been addressed. Hobby activities provided by third-party operators have been given their own moderation process and responsible party at the City, which has clarified the notification and moderation practices. However, there have been significant bugs in the database during 2025, hindering its use. The challenges are partly due to a lack of systematic development of the event database, which lacks a business-related product owner at the City. This is a significant shortcoming for such an important and publicly visible database.
- The City's location register has been developed in small steps and is actively utilised. However, the database lacks photographs of the locations. The importance of photos in marketing communications has increased further, and despite communications in the sector regarding the matter, the number of photos in the register has not increased as much as hoped. During 2025, there have been significant bugs in the database, hindering the presentation of information on the myhelsinki.fi website.
- The future and digitalisation skills of businesses were developed as part of the events of the Makers of Helsinki network. Among other things, the network was provided with workshops on knowledge-based management, a data seminar in November 2024 and two AI training courses, which were very popular.
- The client relationship management system (MS Dynamics) of the City of Helsinki's Economic Development Department has usability issues. The system has significantly slowed down the communication and registration process for B2B events organised by the City. Significant usability challenges have been identified in City-wide centralised systems compared to more agile smaller solutions.

C.4. Promoting companies' digital capabilities to increase their competitiveness

Recommendations for the next programme period

- The importance of databases needs to be clarified in the upcoming programme's indicators, e.g. what weight the City's own databases have in relation to Visit Finland's DataHub, which still contains only a fraction of all tourism and event products in Helsinki and does not give them significantly more visibility than the City's own databases – in fact, the result can even be worse.
- Supporting the growth of digital and future skills in the sector. Training courses and pilots are popular.
- Developing the digital visibility and discoverability of businesses through concrete pilots and support services.

C.5. Growth and renewal through accelerating innovation in the tourism and event sectors

- In the spring of 2023, a meeting of tourism and event businesses and Helsinki-based start-ups was organised in connection with the Makers of Helsinki network's meeting. 10 start-ups introduced themselves to the network, after which the businesses got to talk to each other. The start-ups were selected in collaboration with the business service growth company team of the Economic Development Department. 70% of the respondents to a feedback survey regarding the event found the presentation of start-ups useful, and a few cooperation projects were also launched. Additionally, the growth company team has been coaching new tourism start-ups.
- The Sustainable Growth for Tourism: Southern Finland project pilot selected three data-utilising solutions to support the business growth of tourism businesses to be tested with tourism businesses. One solution piloted in the project was completed for commercialisation (March 2024).
- Helsinki Tourist Information introduced a modern digital guidebook and interactive map on the Reveel platform, which attractively presents local services on the traveller's own device with automatic translations. The service is produced by a Helsinki-based start-up. The same service is used by several businesses in Helsinki, supporting the formation of a resource-efficient and scalable ecosystem instead of individual applications. The company has also gained international clients and funding to expand its business.
- In 2025, a TestBed model for tourism innovations was designed to help develop the attractiveness of tourism in Helsinki. The theme of the first innovation challenge is winter activity products suitable for individual travellers. The application round will be carried out in autumn 2025, and the aim is to start trials with the selected businesses in early 2026.
- During the programme period, the Education Division has systematically increased positive cooperation during the Helsinki Learns theme week (former Helsinki Education Week) with the leading education innovation company HundrED, creating a close-knit and successful HundrED Innovation Summit in Helsinki, where global education developers can also learn about Helsinki's excellence and innovation in the field during the seminar.
- Between 2023 and 2025, the City has accelerated a range of agile event platform trials by carrying out close transactional cooperation with these new event concepts. Through these, new operating methods and venues have been piloted, and the traditional boundaries of events have been pushed. In 2023, the Mamma Mia! musical in Kaivopuisto and the U Nation event at Kansalaistori Square tested these venues with new event concepts. In 2024, event venues were tested through a May Day event at Kansalaistori Square and concerts at Kasarmitori Square. Several event concepts and modes of operation were tested through the Feast Helsinki programme. During Coldplay's gigs, the concept of 'Coldsinki' was created by a representative of the artist, the event organiser and the City, and the media also picked up on it.
- Positive experiences make trial activities more agile and diversified. In 2025, an event concept called SaunaVision was developed in six weeks and the Töölönlahti event venue was tested. Additionally, the Superterassi summer terrace project at Kasarmitori Square involved experimenting with maximum event duration and a new event concept in the city centre. The A la Park festival involved testing a new maritime event venue and an event concept combining high-quality food, drink and cultural content.

C.5. Growth and renewal through accelerating innovation in the tourism and event sectors

Recommendations for the next programme period

- Productisation workshops rarely result in new products that can be purchased digitally. The productisation pipeline needs a clear incentive and continuum to have new products displayed and available for purchase on digital channels.
- Piloting and further implementations of the Testbed programme, taking into account the identity of Helsinki and the needs of tourists with knowledge-based management
- Bringing together businesses from different sectors in the Makers of Helsinki network for added synergic benefits.
- Active continuation and utilisation of event pilots and partnerships, e.g. focusing on the vitality of the Helsinki city centre.

Helsinki