

Sustainability path for Helsinki-based enterprises in the tourism, restaurant and event sectors



Helsinki

**Business
Helsinki**

The City of Helsinki aims to be an international pioneer and solution provider in sustainability, tourism and events

A clear path towards sustainability has been created for Helsinki-based companies.
This path includes **three** mutually supportive tools.

Think Sustainably – a quick and easy way to start and communicate sustainability work
Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) – a national programme covering all aspects of sustainability
Environmental management system/certificate – includes certification by an external operator.

The City of Helsinki's Tourism and Destination Management unit supports companies on this path, for example by organising training, supporting them in acquiring certifications and providing up-to-date information.

Cooperation in the Makers of Helsinki network will require the STF label by the end of 2025
(or equivalent if the STF label is not applicable).

1 Think Sustainably

A local, quick and easy way to communicate the company's sustainability work. By fulfilling the minimum requirements of the criteria, you can get featured in the Think Sustainably section at MyHelsinki.fi.



2 Sustainable Travel Finland (STF)

A national path that focuses on longer-term development of sustainability in the company's operations, resulting in an STF label and increased international visibility.



3 Environmental management system/certificate

To be awarded the STF label, you must obtain an internationally recognised environmental certificate audited by a third party. Read about the options and find a certificate that fits your service.

Continuous development of sustainability

Participate in training sessions, join the Makers of Helsinki network and subscribe to the tourism newsletter to stay up to date on sustainability development in your company.



Think Sustainably



Sustainable Travel Finland (STF)

Managed by	Helsinki Partners (City of Helsinki)	Visit Finland (Business Finland)
For whom	All service providers in Helsinki	All Finnish travel companies and destinations
Level of difficulty	Very easy and low-threshold service – start here	A slightly less comprehensive programme with a very clear 7-step path. Can be started in parallel with the Think Sustainably service.
End result	Improved operations in the company and visibility in the Think Sustainably section at MyHelsinki.fi	Improved operations in the company, the STF label and more visibility on Visit Finland's channels
Criteria	Based on criteria that consider ecological sustainability, the fight against climate change and the dimensions of social sustainability	Based on a globally recognised standard and criteria that consider all dimensions of sustainability
Auditing	No audit, based on trust	The programme requires external certification and an online audit by Visit Finland (e.g. Green Key, Nordic Ecolabel, Ekokompassi)

A nighttime aerial photograph of a city, likely Helsinki, with a large body of water in the foreground and middle ground. The city lights are reflected on the water. A bright full moon is visible in the dark blue sky. The text "Why join?" is overlaid in white.

Why join?

4.5.2023

First name Last name

Ready-made tool

Both services serve as a practical and concrete toolkit that enables companies to adopt sustainable practices and choices in their daily operations.

Credibility

Both services are based on criteria developed with experts that consider all dimensions of sustainability: environmental, social, cultural and economic.

Improves corporate image

According to studies, companies that operate sustainably are more competitive. In the future, customers will increasingly look for sustainable products, and sustainable companies will be valued in the labour market.

Helps with communications

The STF label and the Think Sustainably service help communicate your sustainability actions internally, to customers and to stakeholders in a credible and transparent way.

Transparency

Anyone can check online how many companies are involved in the service and what criteria they meet.

Increases know-how

Incorporating sustainability issues into a company's everyday operations improves employees' skills and also develops the company's know-how and saves money.

Guides development

The STF label and the Think Sustainably service help communicate your sustainability actions internally, to customers and to stakeholders in a credible and transparent way.

Free, easy to start

Joining either service does not cost anything, but in order to receive the STF label, your company must have an environmental certificate or other proof of being a pioneer in sustainability.

More visibility

STF is a criterion for many kinds of visibility cooperation with Visit Finland. Starting from 2025, cooperation with the Makers of Helsinki network will primarily be restricted to STF-labelled companies. International marketing is more credible when everyone does things the same way.

1



Think Sustainably

Helsinki



A more sustainable lifestyle for everyone

Toolbox for businesses

Think Sustainably is open to all service providers that meet the minimum requirements of the service criteria.

The criteria enable an overview of the different areas of sustainability and provide companies with information on how to develop their operations in a more sustainable direction.

The service can be used to make the company's own sustainability work visible while pushing others to develop their operations to be more and more sustainable.

The aim is not to seek perfect companies that meet all the criteria but to encourage an effective number of solutions leading to a better lifestyle.

The service relies on the service provider's knowledge of its own operations and its willingness to carry out sustainability work, and also assumes that the company regularly familiarises its employees with the company's values and sustainability.



Where do I start?

1

Evaluate your own service using the [Think Sustainably criteria](#) to find out which criteria you meet in your own service category.

Please note that the information is reviewed by a person in charge of it.

2

Fill in the [form according to your service category](#) by selecting the criteria your service meets on the form, and submit the form.

The service categories are: Restaurants, Attractions, Accommodation, Shopping, Events and Venues.

3

If your service meets at least the minimum criteria in your service class, it will be classified as a sustainable choice in the content of MyHelsinki.fi.

This means that a green corner marking and the criteria you have met will be added to the information of your service on the MyHelsinki.fi website.

4

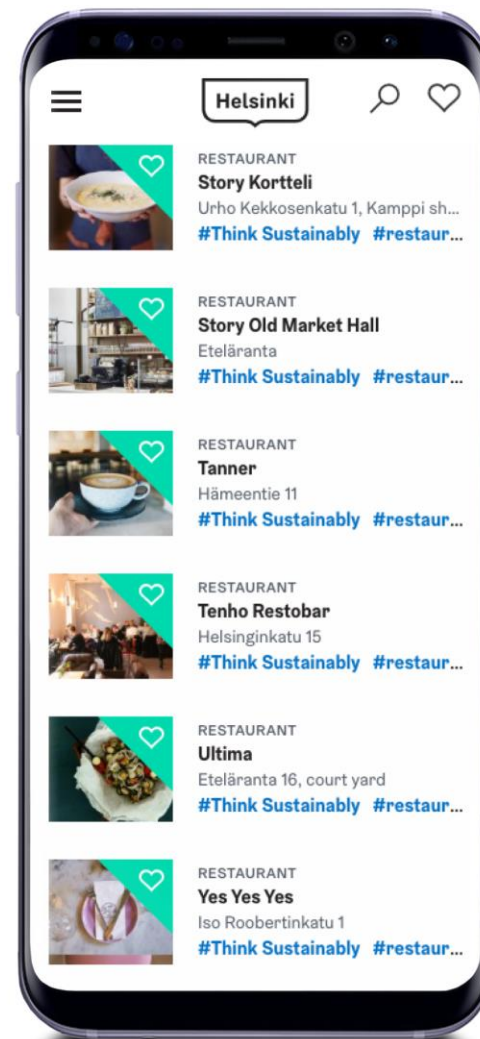
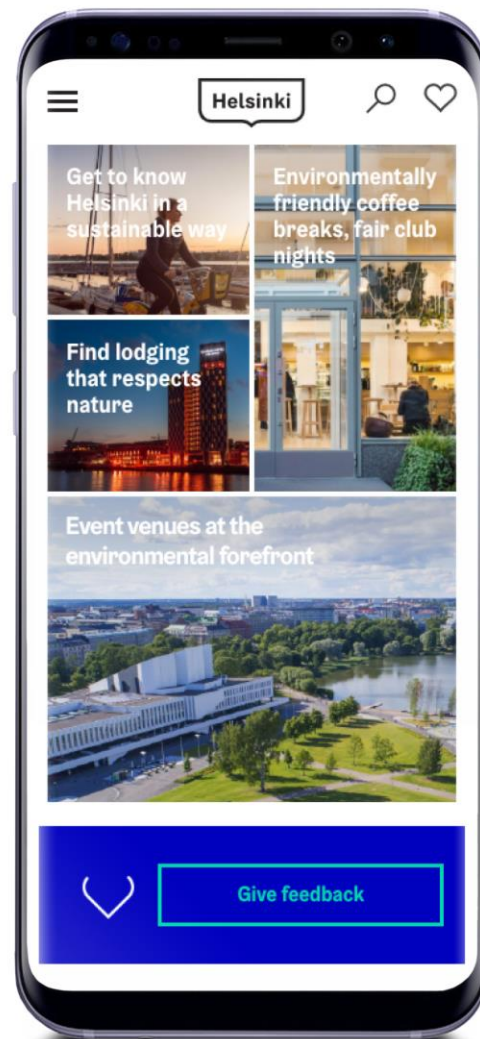
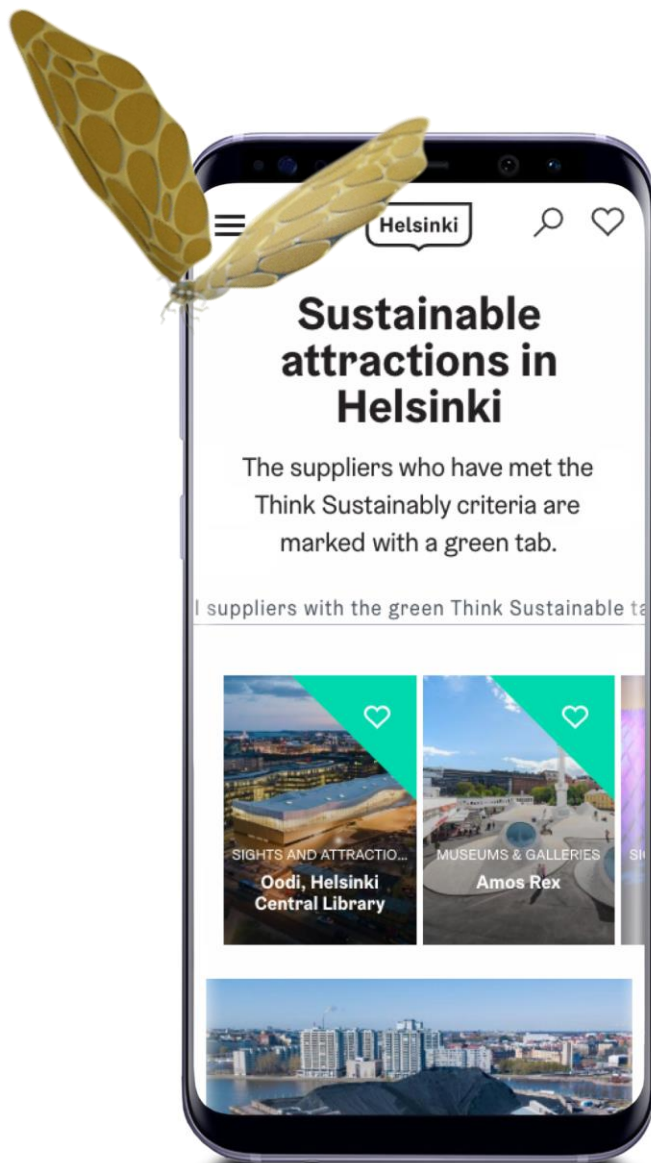
You will be notified of your admission into the service and will have the opportunity to announce it with digital or physical Think Sustainable stickers that will be sent to those who want them.

If the minimum criteria are not met, you will also receive a notification indicating how many criteria are missing.

5

Your service will be highlighted in the [Think Sustainably section](#) at MyHelsinki.fi, gaining more visibility on the website.

Please note that according to the service promise of MyHelsinki.fi, all content contained in articles is curated by local content providers.



2



Sustainable Travel Finland programme

Helsinki



Sustainable travel development path

The Sustainable Travel Finland programme provides companies and destinations with a 7-step development path for sustainable travel. The steps on the development path are verified on the STF online platform. When the company /destination has completed all the steps of the documentation, they send the application to Visit Finland for review.

Each step is associated with certain criteria, for which the programme provides tools that are examined for compliance. Naturally, the measures for sustainable travel will not be achieved all at once; it is a development path.

The STF label is regularly renewed so that we can be sure of continuous improvement. In support of the programme, an e-guide for sustainable travel has been created to ensure the operator's basic knowledge of the development of sustainable travel and provide information on the criteria of the Sustainable Travel Finland programme.



Where do I start?

1

Start by [creating a profile](#) and joining the e-guide to sustainable travel. Start the path in the section 'STF path'. Please also remember to fill in a public profile and the information describing the company's operations.

You can perform the seven steps of the path in any order. The platform will show you the steps you have completed.

Helsinki

2

Designate a person responsible for sustainable travel and make a plan on how you will promote sustainable travel and how the staff will commit to it.

Sign the principles of sustainable travel.

There is no ready-made model for the plan; you can make a plan that suits your company. The e-guide offers a comprehensive package for the systematic start of work.

3

Read the e-guide and let us know if you have participated in STF training. After that, fill in a self-assessment form that will serve as a baseline survey of your company.

Prepare a development plan for your company using the self-assessment and the frame prepared for development plans.

In drawing up the development plan, you can take advantage of the model and its guiding questions.

4

Add a link that communicates your sustainability on your company's website.

Add your company's environmental certificate information or apply to become a pioneer company.

Commit to fulfilling the national indicators for sustainable travel.

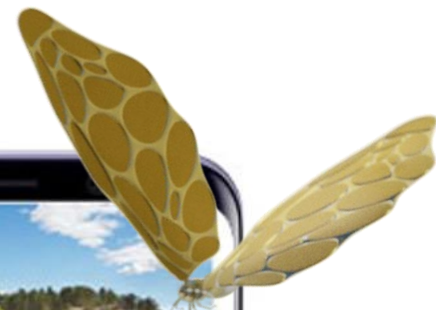
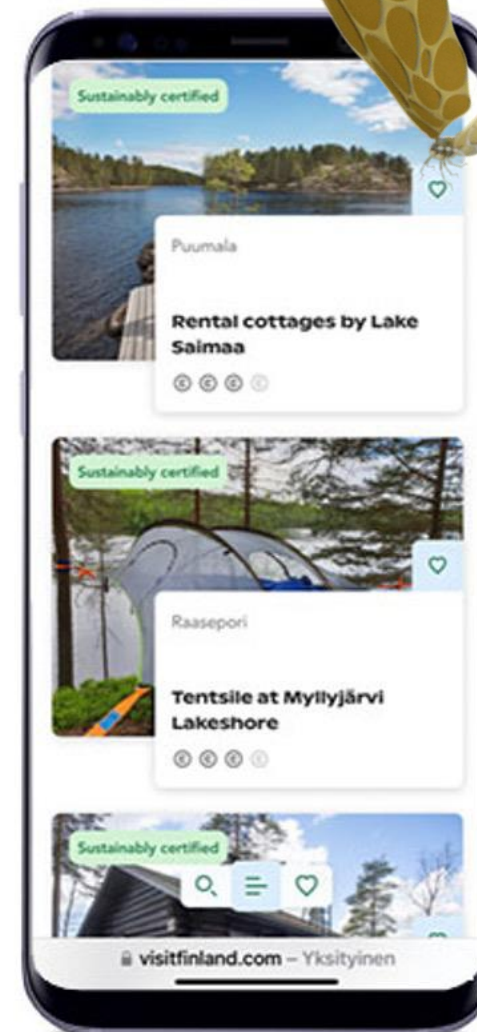
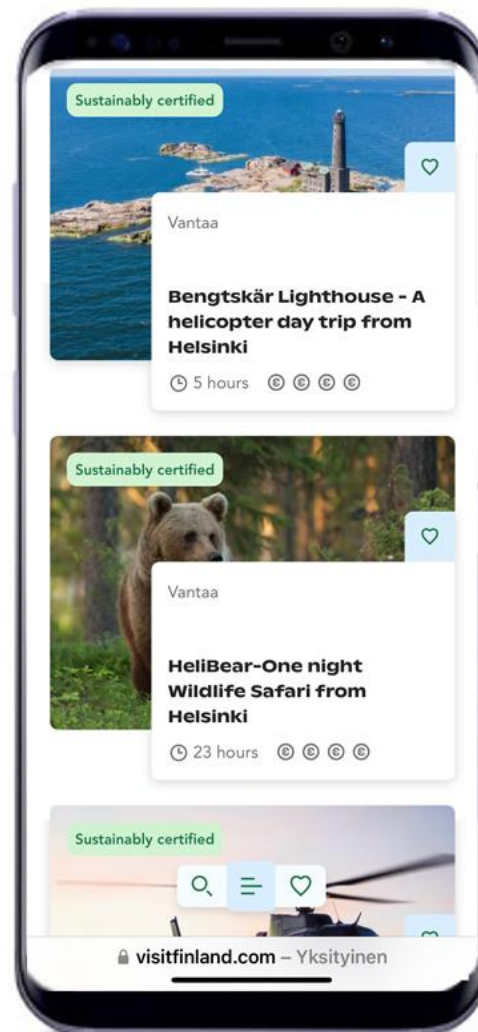
The sustainability communication page must also be available in a language other than the national language.

5

Download the visual guidelines of the STF label and accept the rules and the user agreement.

After you have successfully completed all the steps of the path, you can apply for the label.

This includes completing the seven steps, creating a public profile, self-assessment and information describing the company's operations.



3

Environmental certifications

Helsinki



Environmental certifications



ISO 14001

ISO 20121

Sustainable travel development path

There are dozens of different programmes, schemes and certifications available for tourism companies to develop sustainable travel activities.

Tourism companies also utilise the tools offered by the certificates in a variety of ways; many certificates provide baseline surveys, a continuous development model, support for communication and guidance for the preparation of an action plan.

Some schemes and programmes cover all areas of sustainable travel, while others emphasise minimising environmental impacts. Almost a thousand tourism companies in Finland are already involved in some kind of sustainable development programme and are thus committed to acting sustainably.

Visit Finland has mapped out credible and reliable certifications for the Finnish travel industry. These certifications are also accepted under the STF programme.



	BIO-sphere	Blue Flag	ECEAT Finland	EGLA Corporate Certificate	Ekokompassi	EMA S	EU Ecolabel	Good Travel Seal (+Virus Aware Seal)	Geo Golf	Green Activities	Green Globe	Green Key	Hi-Quality & Sustainability	ISO 14001	ISO 20121	Nordic Ecolabel	Kirkon Ympäristö diplomi	Roope-satama	TourCert	Travelife for accommodation	Travelife for tour operators	WWF Green Office
Accommodation services	•		•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•		•				•		
Restaurant services	•		•	•	•	•		•			•	•		•		•					•	
Travel agencies, tour operators, equipment services	•			•	•	•		•			•			•	•				•		•	•
DMC/Incoming activities	•			•	•	•		•			•	•		•	•				•		•	•
Programming services, tour guide services	•			•	•	•		•		•	•	•		•	•						•	•
Themed and cultural attractions and their services	•		•	•	•	•		•			•	•		•	•		•				•	•
Services of nature sites	•		•		•			•			•	•			•							
Guest marinas	•	•			•	•		•			•			•				•				
Golf courses	•			•	•			•	•		•			•							•	
Meeting, congress and event services	•		•	•	•	•		•			•			•	•	•					•	•
Retail	•			•	•	•		•			•			•		•					•	
Offices	•			•	•	•		•			•			•							•	•
Sports/exercise venues and their services	•			•	•	•		•			•			•	•						•	•
Passenger transport or related (transport) activities	•			•	•	•		•			•	•		•							•	
Equipment rental, including sports equipment and car rental (offices)	•			•	•	•		•						•							•	•
Passenger ship transport	•			•	•	•		•						•							•	

	Ecological	Social	Cultural	Economic
Biosphere	•	•	•	•
Blue Flag	•	•		
ECEAT Finland	•	•	•	•
EGLA	•	•	•	•
Ekokompassi	•			
EMÄS	•			
EU Ecolabel	•			•
Good Travel Seal (+Virus Aware Seal)	•	•	•	•
Geo Golf	•			
Green Activities	•	•	•	
Green Globe	•			
Green Key	•	•	•	
Hi-Quality & Sustainability	•	•	•	•
ISO 14001	•	•	•	•
ISO 20121	•	•	•	•
Kirkon Ympäristödiplomi	•	•	•	•
Nordic Ecolabel	•			
Roope-satama	•			
TourCert	•	•	•	•
Travelife for accommodation	•	•	•	•
Travelife for tour operators	•	•	•	•
WWF Green Office	•			

Helsinki

Business Helsinki

www.hel.fi/matkailuelinkeino

Juha Riehunkangas
Expert, Network Cooperation
Tourism and Destination Management unit
tel. +358 40 552 1976
juha.riehunkangas@hel.fi

Jukka Punamäki
Senior Advisor, Sustainable Tourism
Tourism and Destination Management unit
Tel. +358 44 713 1753
jukka.punamaki@hel.fi