

A nighttime photograph of a public swimming pool in Helsinki. The pool is illuminated with warm yellow lights, and several people are seen swimming and standing on the pool deck. In the background, the city skyline is visible, featuring the illuminated dome of the Helsinki Cathedral and other historic buildings. The water in the pool reflects the lights from the buildings and the pool deck.

Helsinki

**Helsinki – the world's
most sustainable travel
destination**

Fact.

In 2024, Helsinki was ranked number one for the first time in the GDS-Index, which evaluates travel destinations' sustainability performance.

In 2025, Helsinki was also the first big city in the world to be granted the Green Destinations GSTC certificate. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council sets the world's strictest set of criteria for assessing the sustainability performance of travel destinations.



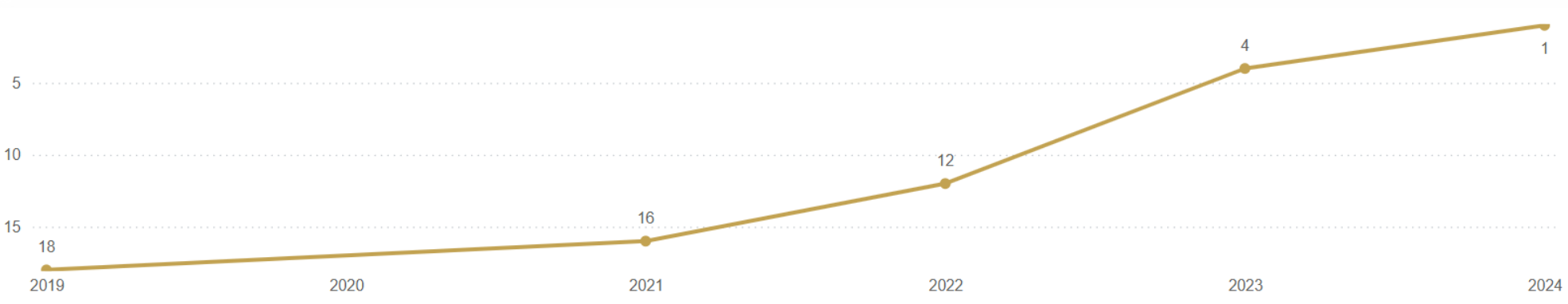
The GDS-Index is one of the most reliable tools for assessing the sustainability of travel destinations

The Global Destination Sustainability Index evaluates the sustainability of 100 destinations around the world using 77 indicators across four key areas:

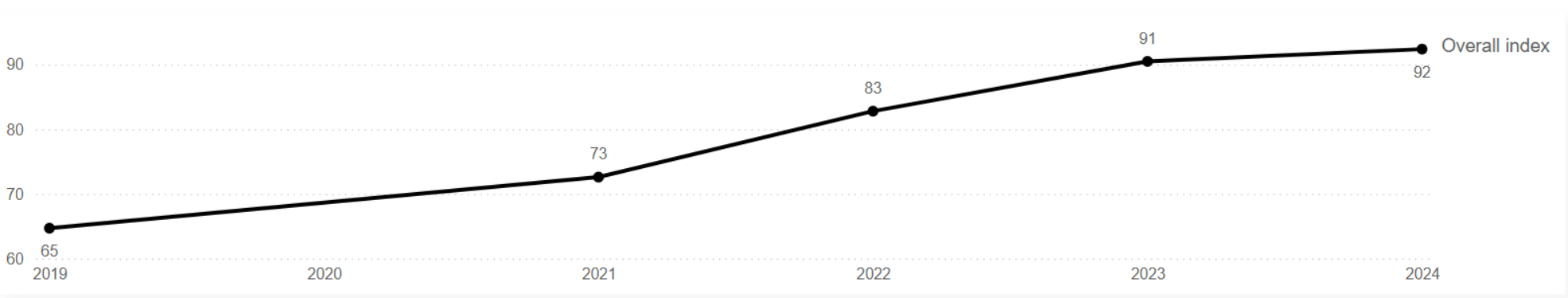
- Environmental performance
- Social performance
- Supplier performance
- Destination management and strategy

Ranking in the index

Glogbal Destination Sustainability Ranking



Glogbal Destination Sustainability Overall Index Score



Top-40 destinations of the 2024 GDS-Index vs the 2023 GDS-Index

	2024	2023		2024	2023		2024	2023		2024	2023
Helsinki* 1	92.43	90.49	Aalborg 11	82.98	87.70	Cork 21	77.18	77.86	Barcelona 31	75.57	74.52
Gothenburg 2	90.83	94.64	Glasgow 12	81.88	87.47	Victoria 22	77.17	66.15	Svendborg 32	75.52	77.06
Copenhagen* 3	88.19	91.73	Zurich 13	81.08	84.35	Tampere 23	76.96	78.33	Brisbane 33	75.23	73.07
Bergen 4	86.49	90.15	Bilbao 14	80.27	78.83	Melbourne 24	76.61	77.53	Songkhla 34	74.89	79.56
Aarhus 5	85.68	88.64	Lyon 15	80.16	82.85	Galway 25	76.06	71.85	Faroe Islands 35	74.88	77.31
Bordeaux 6	83.37	87.10	Goyang 16	78.90	82.66	Berlin* 26	75.92	76.69	Montreal 36	74.54	75.12
Singapore* 7	83.37	81.83	Reykjavik* 17	78.28		Tirol 27	75.80	82.53	Quebec City 37	73.74	64.43
Oslo* 8	83.26	92.46	Middelfart 18	77.80	82.16	Clare 28	75.77	72.01	Limerick 38	73.51	71.39
Belfast* 9	83.14	86.40	Kerry 19	77.65	80.61	Dublin* 29	75.69	63.89	Horsens 39	73.06	62.03
Sydney 10	83.13	77.21	Paris* 20	77.24	80.12	Stockholm* 30	75.57	86.74	Odense 40	72.87	79.94

*Capital Cities

Top sustainable cities 2024

Leaders by Category



Environmental

1	Helsinki	88.06
2	Copenhagen	85.82
2	Gothenburg	85.82
3	Aarhus	83.58
3	Tampere	83.58



Supplier

1	Helsinki	93.24
1	Oslo	93.24
2	Glasgow	87.84
2	Gothenburg	87.84
2	Reykjavik	87.84



Social

1	Aarhus	96.88
1	Aalborg	96.88
1	Copenhagen	96.88
2	Gothenburg	93.75
2	Helsinki	93.75



Destination Management

1	Gothenburg	95.27
1	Helsinki	95.27
2	Lyon	93.92
3	Bordeaux	92.57
3	Copenhagen	92.57
3	Goyang	92.57

Helsinki was also the first big city in the world to earn the Green Destinations GSTC certificate.

The GSTC sets the world's strictest set of criteria for assessing the sustainability of travel destinations, and certification requires full compliance with the criteria. It can therefore be concluded that Helsinki is a trendsetter in sustainable tourism.

Helsinki



What is GSTC?

[The Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#) standards are a tool created in 2007 to measure and develop sustainability performance in the tourism industry. They were created by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Foundation, UN Tourism, the Rainforest Alliance and other partners.

The GSTC standards are the world's strictest and most comprehensive set of criteria for measuring the sustainability of travel destinations and include more than 280 items that examine operations from environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability perspectives as well as sustainable governance.

There are three GSTC-accredited certification bodies in the world: **Green Destinations**, EarthCheck and Vireo Srl.



Green Destinations

- Helps travel destinations and tourism businesses develop more sustainable practices
- Provides certifications, assessments and training programmes to help destinations make improvements in terms of quality and sustainability
- Promotes sustainable tourism by sharing good practices and supporting tourism businesses around the world



Tangible sustainability

Helsinki invests in transparent sustainability, which is why a high ranking in the GDS-Index and the GSTC certification are important. In Helsinki, sustainability is not only a green claim used for marketing purposes but part of the structure and everyday life of the city.

Tightening EU legislation will ensure that environmental claims made to consumers are based on reliable and verified data. This objective is also supported by the proposed Green Claims Directive, which aims to prevent misleading environmental claims and greenwashing by companies.

Helsinki



Helsinki's goal to be the world's most sustainable travel destination has now been achieved.

Achieving the sustainability goals set out in the Helsinki City Strategy in 2021 has required **determined cooperation between various stakeholders in the city, as well as a strong commitment to the wellbeing of the environment, people and local businesses.**

Helsinki



Thank you!