

City of Helsinki's Climate Action Plan for tourism 2023–26

Helsinki

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Visit Finland, Novago Yrityskehitys Oy (the Carbon Neutral Experience project) and Visit Tampere were represented in the steering group.

Goal of halving emissions from tourism

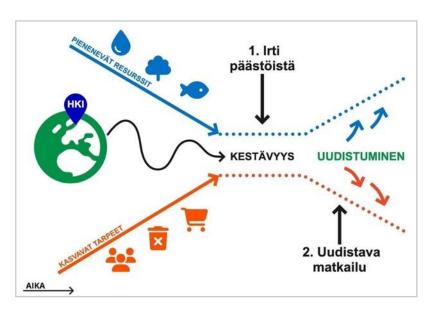
The City of Helsinki's Climate Action Plan for tourism 2023–26 aims to halve the emissions from tourism in Helsinki by 2030. It complements the Carbon-neutral Helsinki 2030 emission reduction programme. The Action Plan takes a stand on the carbon neutrality goals and emissions reduction plans of the entire tourism ecosystem, with an emphasis on the city organisation's own influence.

Based on the City Strategy and the Helsinki Tourism and Events Action Plan 2022–2026, Helsinki wants to be the most sustainable destination in the world. Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality are at the forefront of tourism development, and these factors are being achieved by four measures: The cooperation of the Makers of Helsinki network in the field of carbon neutrality competence, the promotion of carbon footprint calculation, the international cooperation to promote the best practices of carbon neutrality, and the promotion of compensation opportunities.¹

The climate action plan based on the objective of the UN initiative Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism ("Glasgow Declaration") to halve emissions from tourism by 2030 and achieve zero emissions as soon as possible before 2050. The structure of the action plan follows the five pathways defined by the declaration, to which Helsinki has also committed: *Measure, Decarbonize, Regenerate, Collaborate, Finance.* Measurable impacts are linked around two themes in particular – emissions reductions and regenerative tourism.

The challenge of sustainable development can be summarised as an image in which humankind and every company, city and individual are "squashed" between two changes: natural resources are dwindling at an increasingly rapid pace while the population, environmental damage and consumption keep growing. Achieving sustainability means that we stop the narrowing of our living space. At the same time, we create readiness for regeneration and growing our living space. Tourism as a regenerative force means increasing the living space of humanity and nature through tourism business, tourists' own actions and the related development and decision-making.²

The programme was prepared as close group work coordinated by the Tourism and Destination Management Unit in May 2023. The work was aided by a steering group representing a wide range of tourism operators. The programme will be updated and its indicators will be monitored annually. In addition, the programme will be reviewed when necessary in situations where, for example, decision-making issues new policies that affect



¹Helsinki Tourism and Events Action Plan 2022–2026, Measures and indicators appendix. Available (23/05/2023): hel.fi/static/kanslia/elo/toimenpiteet-ja-mittarit.pdf

² This is based on the funnel metaphor of the Natural Step, see <u>naturalstep.ca/understanding-the-problem</u>

tourism or the city's climate goals.

DECREASING RESOURCES
Eliminating emissions
SUSTAINABILITY
REGENERATION
GROWING NEEDS
Regenerative tourism
TIME

Climate impact of tourism globally and in Finland

Tourism generates about 8% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions³, which means that its carbon footprint is globally significant. Its emissions are also on the rise. According to a UNWTO/ITF study, carbon dioxide emissions from tourism increased by at least 60% from 2005 to 2016. Transport is responsible for approximately 75% of tourism-related emissions, and air travel accounts for 40% of emissions from transport. Accommodation, dining, shopping and other activities account for about 25% of emissions.⁴

The greenhouse gas intensity of the Finnish tourism sector (672 kg/EUR 1 million) is 80% higher than the EU average (372 kg/EUR 1 million), mainly due to our northern location and the related conditions, such as the high energy consumption of buildings and long distances.⁵ In 2021, the emissions intensity of Finnish air travel per passenger was on average 47% (194 kg CO2e/passenger) higher than the EU average (132 kg CO2e /passenger)⁶.

The emissions from tourism are created by moving around (getting to the destination, moving around the destination and between destinations), accommodation, dining, activities and shopping. Of these, getting to the destination is by far the largest and most significant source of emissions. The second largest share comes from accommodation, alongside which shopping generates a significant amount of emissions, even exceeding those of accommodation in some situations. Therefore, emissions reductions should focus on these sources, while still being aware of the other sources as well.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) predicts that air travel will return to the 2019 levels in 2024 and will continue to grow clearly thereafter⁷. Similarly, Finnish tourism is expected to return to the pre-pandemic levels in 2024–2025⁸. However, as tourism grows, emissions should decrease, both in relative terms (compared to the number of tourists and the turnover of the sector) and in absolute terms (total emissions). In order to mitigate climate change and promote ecological sustainability, effort should be made to find ways to improve the sustainability of tourism by, for example, reducing the climate impacts of tourism companies and changing the nature of tourism (prolonged stays and promotion of local destinations). This will put the entire tourism sector on an ecologically sustainable foundation and ensure that growth yields more benefits than disadvantages.

³ Lenzen, M., Sun, YY., Faturay, F. et al. 2018. The carbon footprint of global tourism. Nature Climate Change 8, 522–528. doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0141-x

⁴ Transport-related CO2 Emissions of the Tourism Sector. UNWTO 2019. <u>e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789284416660</u>

⁵The EU tourist statistics. 2023. Greenhouse gas intensity of tourism. <u>tourism-dashboard.ec.europa.eu/</u>

⁶The EU tourist statistics. 2023. The emissions intensity of air travel. tourism-dashboard.ec.europa.eu/

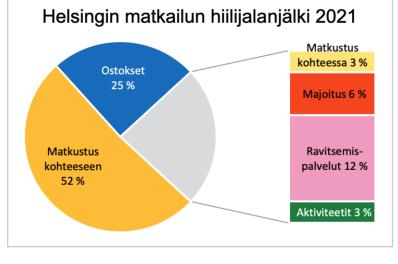
⁷ IATA. 2022. Global Outlook for Air Transport Sustained Recovery Amidst Strong Headwinds. <u>iata.org/en/iata-repository/publications/economic-reports/global-outlook-for-air-transport---december-2022/</u>

⁸ Visit Finland. 2023. Tourism forecasts. visitfinland.fi/suomen-matkailudata/matkailun-ennusteet

City of Helsinki and tourism – climate goals

The carbon footprint of the City of Helsinki was assessed for the first time in spring 2023 as part of the Carbon Neutral Experience project of Uusimaa municipalities. In the pilot calculation, the carbon footprint of tourism in Helsinki was 822.1 kt CO2e in 2021. The amount of emissions per tourist was 0.20 t CO2e.9

Due to the effects of the pandemic, the tourism year of 2021 was unusual, but the distribution of emissions is still revealing. Travelling to the destination accounts for about half of the emissions. A quarter consists of shopping (although not all of it is attributable to tourism). The last quarter is divided into catering services (12%), accommodation (6%), activities (3%) and moving around the destination (3%).



Helsinki tourism carbon footprint 2021 Moving around the destination 3% Accommodation 6% Catering services 12% Activities 3% Shopping 25% Travelling to the destination 52%

The exact baseline of emissions reduction targets will be determined later, on the basis of the destination level calculation concerning 2022. The aim at this stage is for each tourism sector to aim to halve its emissions in the period 2022–2030. The target will be adjusted to be more precise once the distribution and magnitude of emissions for 2022 are known.

The measures for 2023–26 focus on reducing emissions from catering services. accommodation and activities. In terms of emissions from shopping, the commerce sector is doing extensive and active work on the sustainability change in consumer behaviour and offerings. In the development of transport, the general principle of the planning of transport in Helsinki is already to prioritise the needs of pedestrians, followed by cyclists, public transport, business transport and lastly, passenger cars. 10

Climate goals of the City of Helsinki

The entire city organisation of Helsinki aims to be carbon-neutral by 2030. Although tourism mainly takes place in companies, the city also has services and activities that affect the actions of tourists. These include public transport, decisions and entities related to infrastructure and city planning, solutions related to events and venues, as well as various regulations. The cityrun climate work is guided by the Carbon-neutral Helsinki emissions reduction programme¹¹, which already includes a large number of measures that affect tourism, either directly or indirectly.

⁹ Carbon footprint of tourism in Helsinki 2021. novago.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Helsingin-matkailun-hiilijalanjalki-2021.pdf

¹⁰ City of Helsinki > Urban environment and traffic > Sustainable and smooth traffic (retrieved on 1 June 2023): https://www.hel.fi/fi/kaupunkiymparisto-ja-liikenne/kaupunkisuunnittelu-ja-rakentaminen/suunnittelun-ja-rakentamisentavoitteet/kestava-ja-sujuva

11 The Carbon-neutral Helsinki programme: https://helsinginilmastoteot.fi/en/city-act/helsinki-climate-objectives-

monitoring/

City climate actors and programmes that are important for tourism:

- Helsinki Partners: helsinkipartners.com
- Helsingin kaupunkitilat: kaupunkitilat.fi/meista/
- Port of Helsinki: https://www.portofhelsinki.fi/en/responsibility/environmental-responsibility/carbon-neutral-port
- HSL: https://www.hsl.fi/en/hsl/responsibility
- Korkeasaari: Korkeasaari.fi/suojelutyo/ymparisto/
- Land-use-oriented overall plan for Helsinki tourism ("masterplan of tourism"), will be completed in 2023–24

A: Eliminating emissions

Objective: Helsinki wants to be a pioneer in climate-friendly tourism and measuring the climate impact of tourism

A1: Promotion of climate work in tourism companies

Through the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) programme of Visit Finland, companies have access to a wide range of tools, such as coaching, information packs and a carbon footprint calculator with support services. Helsinki even contributed to the development of these tools in 2020–2021 within the framework of the Carbon Neutral Tourism project. The City of Helsinki has also developed a CO2 calculator for events.

Unlike the measures in the action plan for tourism and events, compensations are not included in the selection of means for the next few years, as the regulation of different forms of compensation has not yet been established, and the focus of the measures of companies and Helsinki should, at this stage, be on the implementation of the actual emissions reduction.

Measures 2023	Responsible bodies and actors
The roles of tourism sector networks and the responsibilities of different actors will be clarified for the implementation of the action plan. This includes, for example, - orienting the role of the Makers of Helsinki network more strongly towards the development of sustainable tourism. - Clarifying the role of the Think Sustainably service and deciding on the service's future development - See also C1: Cooperation with tourism companies	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Companies' awareness of the climate impact of tourism will be improved and the topic will be highlighted in communications and events.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
The actors of the event sector will be encouraged to prepare climate goals and a climate roadmap to reduce emissions. They will also be encouraged to calculate their carbon footprint with the carbon footprint calculator for events that is provided by the city.	Brand and Events Unit, Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Regular training will be organised for companies using things such as The STF programme coaching packs and tools. Training topics: - Calculation of the carbon footprint and reporting of the results - Reduction of emissions, preparation of a climate roadmap - Communications of sustainable tourism - Regenerative tourism (productisation and business models)	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Measures 2024–2026	
Companies that act to reduce the carbon footprint and are involved in programmes of sustainable tourism will be supported by increasing their visibility and developing effective incentives for them.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Tourism sector operators will be guided to use renewable energy and be energy-efficient in all their operations.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit

Climate-friendly tourism services will be productisated, taking into account things such as longer stays and staycations.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
In the development of tourism-related mobility, investments will be directed to emissions-free modes of transport.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit

Indicators:

- Carbon intensity of tourism and its sectors (both in companies and at destination level)
- How many tourism companies or events measure their carbon footprint
- How many companies have a 2030 climate goal and an emissions reduction plan

Carbon footprint calculators:

- CO2 calculator for the tourism sector co2calc.visitfinland.fi/en
- Carbon footprint calculator for events: www.hel.fi/fi/yritykset-ja-tyo/yritykset-ja-yrittajat/tapahtuman-jarjestaminen/vastuullisuus-tapahtumissa/ymparistovastuu
- Carbon footprint calculator for organisations: blogs.helsinki.fi/hiilifiksu/laskuri/

A2: Tourism marketing in accordance with climate goals

Travelling to the destination causes about half of the carbon footprint of tourism in Helsinki. For this reason, even a relatively small change in the distribution of tourists' countries of origin can produce a significant reduction in travel emissions. A domestic traveller is almost always a better option from the climate point of view than a foreign one. Long flights cause the most emissions, so the longer a tourist coming from far away spends at the destination, the lower the travel emissions per travel day. Therefore, tourism marketing should aim to:

- make destination selections with sustainability principles in mind.
- aim the communications at tourists coming from as close to the destination as possible, including the municipalities' own residents.
- Inform companies and tourists on climate-friendly and regenerative practices and market the tourism services (including the lengthening of the stay) that implement them.

Measures 2023	Responsible parties
The Tourism and Destination Management Unit's climate expertise will be increased through the unit's internal sustainability training programme.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Measures 2024–2026	
When making target group decisions, pioneer tourists interested in sustainable consumption and regenerative tourism will be highlighted.	Helsinki Partners
Part of the communications will target Finland and the city's own residents (staycation, events, etc.).	Communications Departments, Tourism and Destination Management Unit

Indicators:

- Tourists' perception of Helsinki as a sustainable travel destination (from the STF tourist survey)
- Indicators for the analysis of Helsinki's international reputation
- The average length of tourists' stay in Helsinki (Source: Statistics Finland)
- Country of origin of incoming tourists (Source: Statistics Finland)

A3: Carbon footprint of tourism in Helsinki

In spring 2023, the first overall calculation of the travel destination's carbon footprint was carried out. This calculation will be developed over the years through extensive national and international cooperation. Visit Finland's carbon footprint indicator will provide more accurate information on companies' emissions in the future, and thus cumulatively on the emissions of the entire city.

Measures 2023	Responsible body and actors
The methods of destination-level carbon footprint calculation will be actively developed in cooperation with other travel destinations and practices for regular destination-level calculation will be established.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
The carbon footprint of tourism in Helsinki will be calculated and the results will be published annually, also as open data whenever possible.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Measures 2024–2026	
A destination-level emissions reduction plan will be prepared. The plan will include sector-specific targets for emissions reduction (at least: travelling to the destination, moving around the destination, accommodation and activities) and the roadmap will be made to reflect these targets.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
As part of the monitoring of the climate action plan, scenarios of the emissions development of tourism in Helsinki will be prepared so that the emissions reduction plan for 2027–2030 will be ready before the term of this action plan ends.	

Indicators:

- Helsinki's destination-level carbon footprint
- Achievement of destination-level climate goals
- The number (pcs) and share (%) of companies calculating their carbon footprint by tourism sector
- Carbon footprint key figures of the companies at the destination

B Regenerative tourism

Objective: Helsinki aims to be the world's most sustainable tourist destination

The idea of regenerative tourism is that the tourist leaves the destination in a better condition than it would be in without the tourist. From the local level, the impact on nature, people, communities and the economy will expand, and eventually it will affect the entire ecosystem and the planet. Humans and nature are closely connected and develop together, on a reciprocal basis.

In terms of climate change mitigation and the related preparedness, regenerative tourism aims to address the root causes of environmental change: Ecosystems will be protected and restored, their carbon absorption will be supported, and nature's ability to provide us with diversity, water resources and food will be protected. At the same time, effort will be made to ensure that the operations of the tourism sector support local communities against the effects of climate change and help them adapt to the changes. All activities will aim to help visitors and host communities find a balance with nature.¹²

In 2022, the share of Helsinki's nature reserves rose to 4% of the city's land area. In water areas, nature reserves cover 1%. In accordance with the city strategy, at least five new nature reserves are established annually. Nature reserves increase biodiversity and natural carbon assimilation, but as tourist attraction factors and elements of an urban space that supports well-being, urban biodiversity and all things green are important.

The well-being of Helsinki residents must be the starting point for all development. The aim of regenerative tourism in Helsinki is to provide tourists with an experience of a sustainable and innovative way of life, which they can also take with them and make part of their own daily life. The implementation of services and the operations of companies are managed so that they do not cause harm to people or nature near or far; instead, they improve the quality of life and conditions for everyone.

Measures 2023	Responsible body and actors
The meaning of regenerative tourism in Helsinki will be defined, instructions for productisation will be prepared for companies and indicators for monitoring effects and their further development will be prepared for the city.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Measures 2024–2026	Responsible body and actors
The services and approach of regenerative tourism will be included in the marketing and communications of tourism.	Helsinki Partners
Training and productisation workshops on regenerative tourism will be organised for Helsinki-based companies. The workshops will utilise things such as the coaching packs of the STF programme.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Whether climate change affects some tourism sector companies differently and whether the climate efforts of the tourism sector discriminate against some groups of people will be investigated. Guidelines on fairness related to climate will be prepared as a	e.g. Climate Unit and Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance

¹² Glasgow Declaration, emissions reduction pathway of regeneration

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source material for productisation.	

Indicators:

- Number of new product and service concepts of regenerative tourism (with STF)
- Other indicators of regenerative tourism (to be developed), e.g.

 Placement of accommodation services in relation to protected and green areas
 - Number of vegetarian restaurants (share of all)
 - Locations of STF companies' service points and other local-level indicators

C: Cooperation

OBJECTIVE: The world's most sustainable travel destination is built together

C1: Cooperation with tourism companies

Cooperation with Helsinki's key tourism companies ensures that the entire industry is involved in climate work and that the impacts not only concern the city's own measures.

Measures 2023–26	Responsible body and actors
The main content of the Makers of Helsinki network will be expanded to be "Makers of Sustainable Helsinki". Network members that actively promote sustainability get a discount on the membership fees.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Helsinki Partners' marketing cooperation primarily with entities involved in responsible tourism programmes.	Helsinki Partners
A climate work group for tourism, Urban Tourism Climate Leaders , will be established and, from among tourism companies, about ten of the most significant climate work pioneers will be invited to join the group.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
The staff working in the customer interface of the tourism sector will be trained on how customers can be directed to make responsible choices.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit

C2: Cooperation with educational institutions

The green transition of tourism requires learning new things. It is important for students in the industry to embrace and learn about the contents of sustainable tourism so that they can apply them in their work life in the future. Educational institutions also carry out important research and development work on the sustainability of tourism.¹³

Measures 2023–26	Responsible body and actors
The climate work in Helsinki's tourism sector will be showcased at educational institutions providing tourism sector and sustainable development studies.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Climate-related final projects in the tourism sector and tourism- related final projects in the environmental sector will be promoted, and research cooperation on sustainable tourism will be carried out with institutions of higher education.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit

Cooperation between Haaga-Helia and Visit Finland as of 2021 (retrieved on 29 May 2023)

STF programme made part of hospitality management studies at Haaga-Helia (in Finnish, retrieved on 29 May 2023)

C3: Cooperation with in Helsinki residents

Regenerative tourism aims to ensure that tourism supports local communities against the effects of climate change and helps them adapt to climate change.

Measures 2023–26	Responsible body and actors
The 2022–2024 action plan for Helsinki residents' share of the development of the tourism and event sectors will be followed with an emphasis on climate issues. ¹⁴	Tourism and Destination Management Unit

C4: Cooperation with tourists

Tourists' awareness drives the industry forward when they know to demand sustainability and companies know to meet this demand. Instead of individual sustainable options, the aim is to create an entire offering; freedom of choice and product packages.

Measures 2023–26	Responsible body and actors
The perspectives, interest and market potential of tourists in Helsinki regarding sustainable and regenerative tourism will be investigated through border research, cooperation with educational institutions and the city's own studies. ¹⁵ ¹⁶	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
The entire operating model of the Tourist Information unit will be changed to actively serve the promotion of sustainability among tourists. Tourist Information will always primarily highlight sustainable products and the best practices related to different selection situations.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit

C5: Domestic and international cooperation

Helsinki is an international pioneer and solution provider in sustainability, tourism and events. Cooperation can be conducted in relation to things such as standardisation, research, funding applications, support and training for companies and improved awareness.

Measures 2023–26	Responsible body and actors
Practices and experiences related to carbon footprint calculation and the implementation of the climate action plan will be shared transparently with other destinations, both domestic and international, and the creation of common measuring standards will be promoted.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Active work will be carried out in the CityDNA network, Global Destination Sustainability Movement, the European Capital of Smart Tourism group and the European Smart Destinations programme, and the tourism work of the Eurocities network will be followed closely.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit

¹⁴ hel.fi/static/kanslia/elo/Asukkaiden_osallisuus_matkailu_ja_tapahtuma_aloilla_toimintasuunnitelma_2022_2024.pdf

^{15 &}lt;u>wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2023/WTTC_Consumer_Trends_Report_2023-A_world_in_motion.pdf</u>

¹⁶ globalnews.booking.com/download/31767dc7-3d6a-4108-9900-ab5d11e0a808/booking.com-sustainable-travel-report2023.pdf

Cooperation indicators:

- Participation of the Makers of Helsinki network in the STF programme, the Think Sustainably programme, the Glasgow Declaration and the carbon footprint measuring.
- Implementation of the Urban Tourism Climate Leaders group
- Number of final projects per year, number of implemented courses, number of participants
- Demonstrations of Helsinki's climate work and climate action plan per year
- Research projects (ongoing projects per year) and research publications per year
- Helsinki residents' satisfaction with the impacts of tourism and their own opportunities for influencing
- Tourists' choices and perception of Helsinki as a sustainable travel destination

D: Resources

OBJECTIVE: Helsinki makes tourism part of green transition

Finland and Helsinki are already known as sustainable and responsible travel destinations. Implementing the Climate Action Plan for tourism in Helsinki requires sufficient resources. Investing in the green transition of tourism ensures that the tourism sector supports the Carbonneutral Helsinki 2030 programme and the sustainable growth of tourism in Helsinki. Green transition and climate change mitigation are the themes of many funding opportunities, and Helsinki is an experienced leader and partner in development projects.

Measures 2023–2026	Responsible parties
National and international project funding will be applied for actively, in cooperation with other destinations.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
Effort will be made to add to projects support for companies' climate work for the purpose of the product development of low-carbon and regenerative tourism.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit
With funding from Business Finland or Sitra, an investing programme of regenerative tourism for Helsinki-based companies will be launched as part of the operation of the Urban Climate Leaders group.	Tourism and Destination Management Unit

MONITORING AND INDICATORS

- Projects launched and their budgets
- Amount of support for companies
- Other monitoring of projects

E: Indicators

A: Eliminating emissions

Promotion of climate work in tourism companies:

- Carbon intensity of tourism and its sectors (both in companies and at destination level)
- How many tourism companies or events measure their carbon footprint
- How many companies have a 2030 climate goal and an emissions reduction plan

Tourism marketing in accordance with climate goals;

- Tourists' perception of Helsinki as a sustainable travel destination
- Indicators for the analysis of Helsinki's international reputation
- The average length of tourists' stay in Helsinki (Source: Statistics Finland)
- Country of origin of incoming tourists (Source: Statistics Finland)

Carbon footprint of tourism in Helsinki:

- Helsinki's destination-level carbon footprint
- · Achievement of destination-level climate goals
- The number (pcs) and share (%) of companies calculating their carbon footprint by tourism sector
- Carbon footprint key figures of the companies at the destination

B Regenerative tourism

- Number of new product and service concepts of regenerative tourism
- Indicators to be developed, for example:
 - Placement of accommodation services in relation to protected and green areas
 - Number of vegetarian restaurants (share of all)
 - Locations of STF companies and other local-level indicators

C: Cooperation

Cooperation with tourism companies:

- Participation of the Makers of Helsinki network in the STF programme, the Think Sustainably programme, the Glasgow Declaration and the carbon footprint measuring.
- Implementation of the Urban Tourism Climate Leaders group

Cooperation with Helsinki residents:

 Helsinki residents' satisfaction with the impacts of tourism and their own opportunities for influencing (Source: Helsinki resident survey)

Cooperation with educational institutions:

- Number of final projects per year, number of implemented courses, number of participants
- Demonstrations of Helsinki's climate work and climate action plan per year
- Research projects (ongoing projects per year) and research publications per year

Cooperation with tourists:

 Tourists' choices and the perception of Helsinki as a sustainable travel destination (STF programme's tourist survey)

D: Resources

- Projects launched and their budgets
- Amount of support for companies
- Other monitoring of projects



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