

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. Helsinki sustained the first place in the ranking in 2025.

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.

In 2026, Helsinki continued its success in sustainability work by earning the national Sustainable Travel Finland label.

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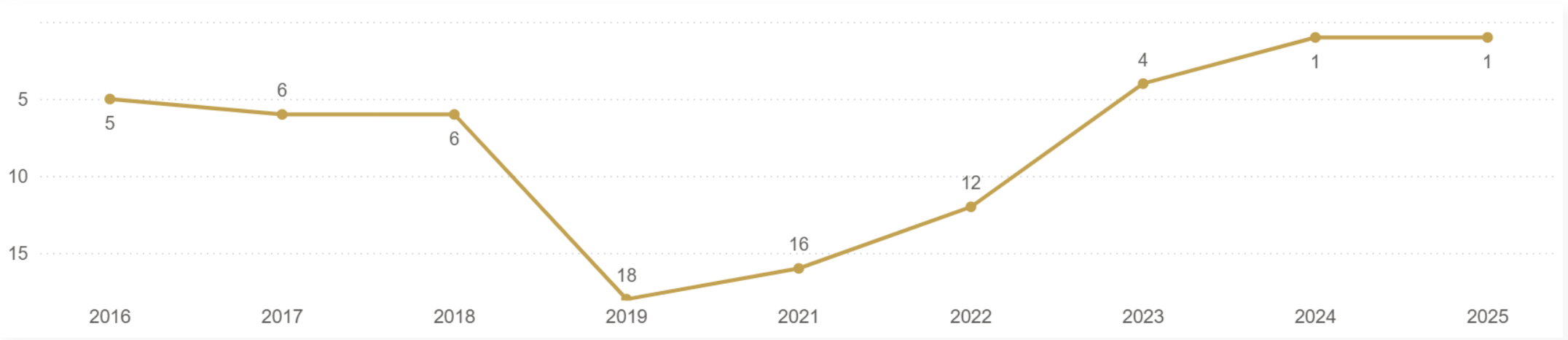
# **The GDS-Index is one of the most reliable tools for assessing the sustainability of travel destinations**

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

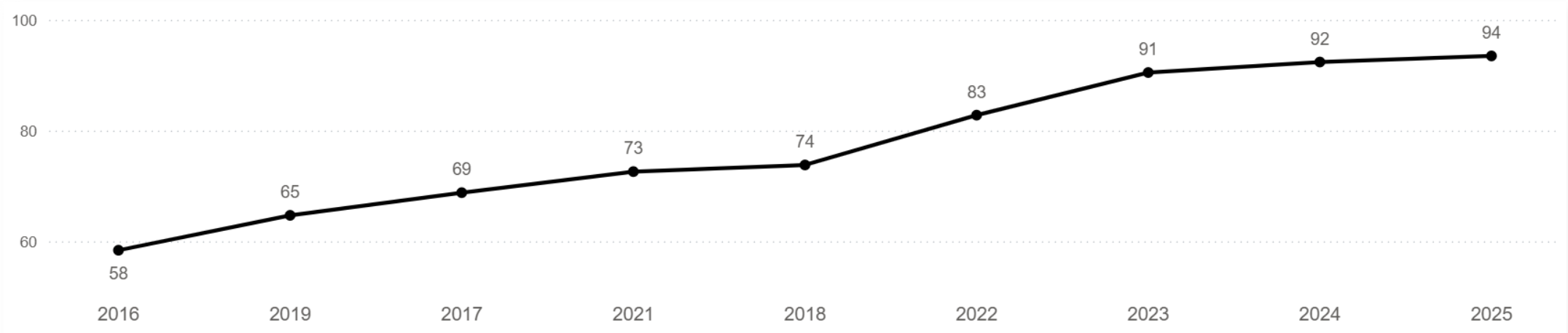
- Environmental performance
- Social performance
- Supplier performance
- Destination management and strategy

# Ranking in the index

Global Destination Sustainability Ranking



Global Destination Sustainability Overall Index Score



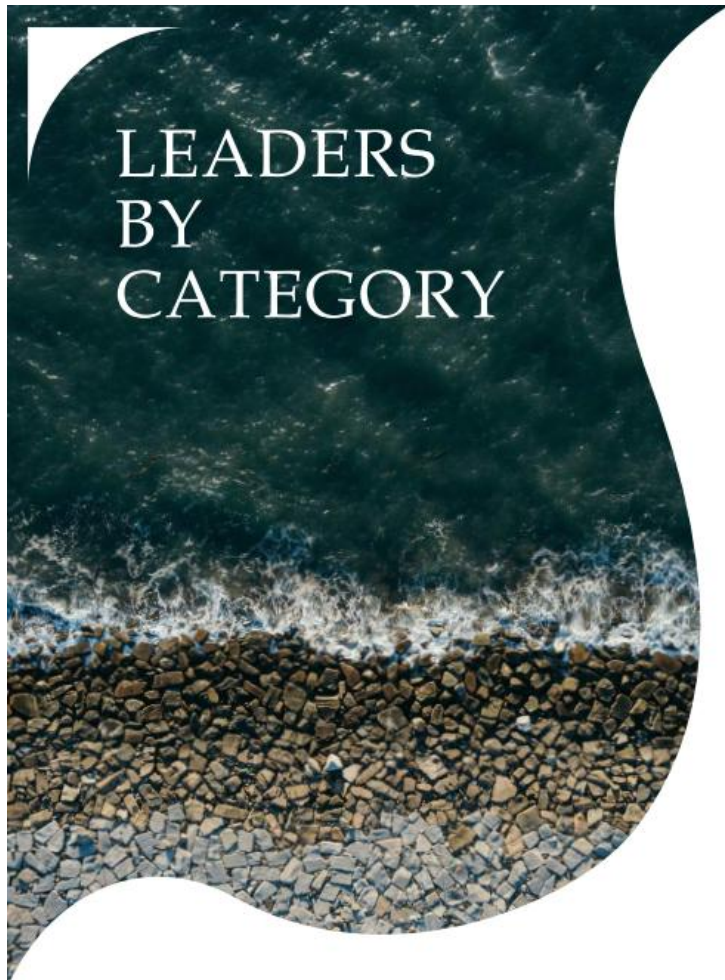
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# Top-40 destinations of the 2025 GDS-Index vs the 2024 GDS-Index

	2025	2024		2025	2024		2025	2024		2025	2024				
Helsinki*	1	93.52	92.43	Melbourne	11	83.03	76.61	Bilbao	21	79.82	80.27	Luzern	31	75.69	72.82
Gothenburg	2	91.51	90.83	Kerry	12	82.80	77.65	Basel	22	79.59	71.40	Marseille	32	75.00	
Copenhagen*	3	88.76	88.19	Singapore*	13	82.34	83.37	Quebec	23	79.13	73.74	Kumamoto	33	74.54	63.42
Aalborg	4	87.06	82.98	Barcelona	14	81.88	75.57	Stockholm*	24	79.13	75.57	Milan	34	74.31	70.18
Glasgow	5	86.00	81.88	Goyang	15	81.65	78.90	Sydney	25	78.56	83.13	Manchester	35	73.79	63.27
Tampere	6	85.76	76.96	Brisbane	16	81.19	75.23	Clare	26	77.24	75.77	Ostersund	36	72.71	65.71
Aarhus	7	85.15	85.68	Berlin*	17	80.50	75.92	Victoria	27	77.06	77.17	Strasbourg	37	71.79	66.97
Lyon	8	84.40	80.16	Cork	18	80.08	77.18	Songkhla	28	76.84	74.89	Limerick	38	71.34	73.51
Belfast	9	84.40	83.14	Dublin*	19	80.05	75.69	Galway	29	76.84	76.06	Ljubljana*	39	70.76	64.16
Reykjavik*	10	83.72	78.28	Montreal	20	79.82	74.77	Faroe Islands	30	75.92	74.88	Amsterdam*	40	69.72	61.81

\*Capital Cities

# Top sustainable cities 2025



LEADERS  
BY  
CATEGORY



## Environmental

1	Helsinki	91.04
2	Tampere	88.06
3	Göteborg	87.31
3	Copenhagen	87.31
4	Stockholm	85.82



## Social

1	Helsinki	92.11
1	Göteborg	92.11
1	Reykjavik	92.11
1	Singapore	92.11



## Supplier

1	Helsinki	94.87
2	Göteborg	92.31
3	Tampere	91.03
3	Glasgow	91.03
4	Reykjavik	88.46



## Destination Management

1	Copenhagen	95.95
2	Helsinki	95.77
3	Göteborg	94.59
3	Basel	94.59
4	Goyang	93.24

# 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.

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# What is GSTC?

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

The GSTC standard is the world's strictest and most comprehensive set of criteria for measuring the sustainability of travel destinations and include more than 280 questions 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.

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# 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



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# Sustainable Travel Finland

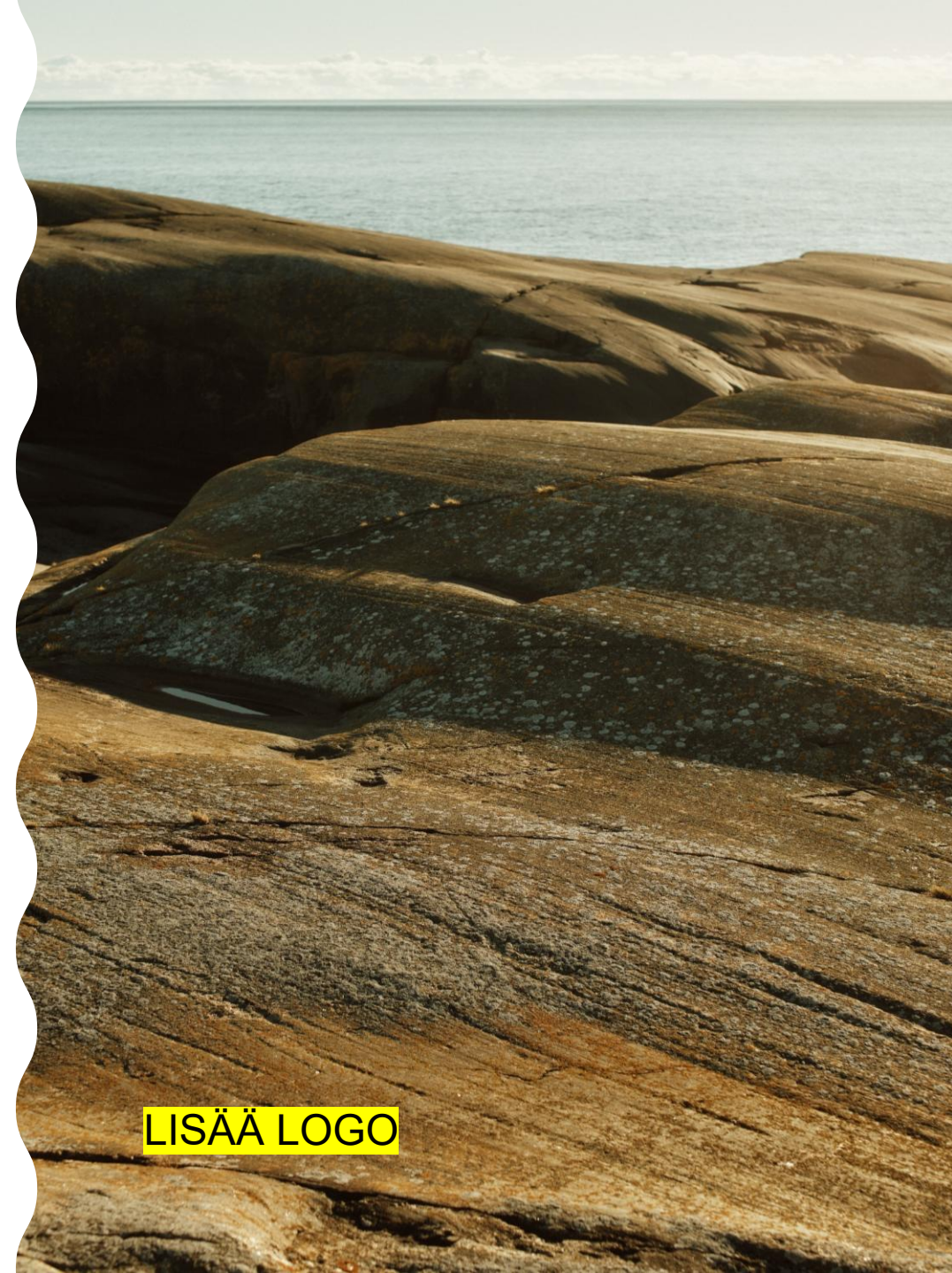
The [Sustainable Travel Finland](#) (STF) label is a recognition awarded by Visit Finland that requires either GSTC certification or that at least 51 percent of the region's tourism businesses have completed the STF program. Helsinki meets both criteria.

The program is built on a seven-step path that offers businesses and destinations a comprehensive toolkit for adopting responsible practices.

It is a program open to all operators in the Finnish tourism industry and free of charge. It adheres to international sustainable tourism standards. The program is regularly audited by a third party.

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LISÄÄ LOGO



# Tangible sustainability

Helsinki invests in transparent sustainability, which is why a high ranking in the GDS-Index and the GSTC certification are important. The national STF label completes this picture by verifying sustainability at the domestic level. 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.

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# 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.**

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**Thank you!**