

An aerial night photograph of Helsinki, Finland. In the upper left, a large white cruise ship with 'SILJA LINE' written on its side is docked in the harbor. The city's historic architecture is illuminated with warm lights, and the sky is a deep twilight blue. In the foreground, a large square is filled with a Christmas market, featuring numerous small wooden stalls with glowing interiors, strings of warm white lights, and a carousel on the right. A large white statue of a figure holding a cup is visible in the bottom right corner.

# Helsinki tourism and events programme 2022 – 2026

New horizons - growth through sustainability.

Helsinki





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# Summary

Helsinki is Finland's most important tourist destination and event city. In Helsinki, the vibrant urban culture, complete with events, tourists and restaurants, has been adopted as a key strategic priority for promoting vitality and well-being.

This tourism and events programme is a joint document of the Helsinki City Group operators to support the long-term development of the tourism and event sectors for 2022–2026. The programme guides the operations of the City Group for the benefit of the tourists, residents, event visitors, local businesses and other actors.

The programme includes the following three strategic goals:

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

The city's vitality and appeal are promoted by investing in attracting international tourists and strengthening events, with a particular focus on year-round attractiveness and comfort of the residents. Helsinki's competitiveness regarding international congresses and major events will also be supported. The prerequisites and development targets include broadening the diverse and lively range of events, strengthening the appeal of the distinctive urban culture, food and nature, and improving accessibility and customer paths.

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

Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality are at the forefront of development. Sustainability is considered a differentiation factor and competitive advantage for Helsinki. The goal is to be the most sustainable destination in the world. At the same time, the well-being of Helsinki residents will be emphasised as the starting point for all activities. Social sustainability and inclusiveness will also be further

developed and used as a resource. Sustainable development will be promoted by pursuing, for example, the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) label and the top position in the Global Destination Sustainability index. The availability of labour and safety are prerequisites for all operations and must, therefore, be invested in.

## **C** Helsinki is a smart destination and a functional event city

Helsinki was chosen as the smartest travel destination in Europe (European Capital of Smart Tourism) in 2019. Helsinki now has every chance of becoming the world's smartest and most functional visitor destination in cooperation with the companies, scientific community and residents. All development is based on knowledge management, something we will focus on significantly in the coming years. Smartness and functionality also include considering the needs of tourism and events in the city's decision-making. To this end, we will implement a Master Plan for Tourism and Events, a comprehensive map-based development plan defining the long-term goals for developing tourism and event locations. The one-stop-shop principle and other improvements related to functional event city will also be promoted. A prerequisite to this is that the digitalisation of companies continues, something that should be supported. We will also ensure that the city provides the best possible platform for innovations and new partnerships.

The tourism and events programme was approved by the City of Helsinki's Economic Development Division on 9.5.2022. The implementation and monitoring of the programme is primarily the responsibility of the City Executive Office's Economic Development department's Tourism and Destination Management Unit and the Communications department's Brand unit, working in close cooperation with Helsinki Partners, the Helsinki Event Foundation and the city divisions. The tourism and events programme has 14 specified indicators used to monitor the achievement of the objectives regularly. A concrete action plan has been derived from the objectives, choices and prerequisites for the development outlined in the programme, and it will be updated periodically.

# Preface

Helsinki and its travel, tourism and event industries have developed significantly in recent years, thanks to unprecedented growth and decision-makers working together. In 2021–2025, we will follow a city strategy entitled A Place of Growth to develop Helsinki into the smartest and most sustainable travel destination in the world. During the strategy period, we will pay particular attention to the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and the effects of the war of aggression against Ukraine.

In this situation, the city also needs new sources for growth. These can be found in the service sectors, and tourism and events are among the most potential ones. The growth potential is illustrated by the 5% growth rate of tourism before the pandemic and the increased willingness of people to travel, seek new experiences, meet each other and feel that they belong after all the crises.

However, the sustainable growth and renewal of tourism and event and other related sectors requires new forms of cooperation and partnerships. In many areas, cooperation is already working well. That said, we now need to increase it further to promote big issues and tap the unused potential of Helsinki. We have the opportunity to do something bigger and innovative by combining the resources of urban operators, businesses and other sectors more closely and finding new ways of cooperation between the various industries. The tourism and events programme is one concrete step towards achieving this goal.

Helsinki's appeal and services will continue to stand out in international competition provided we invest especially in our natural strengths and a good operating environment. It is important to understand that

we do not compete so much with other Finnish operators in tourism but with our Nordic reference cities in particular. Tourism and events enliven the city in many ways, creating new services and complex social and cultural impacts with significant economic multiplier effects.

The city's ambitious goal of being carbon neutral by 2030 also provides a framework for the goal in the tourism and events sectors. The objectives and strategic choices defined in the programme will systematically take us toward the goal.

Data and digitalisation help Helsinki to manage smart tourism and events. We strive to find solutions to the challenges of the residents and businesses. With analysed high-quality data, we can anticipate customer needs, support the competitiveness of businesses and be more effective in enhancing our operations. Digitalisation enables an even more sustainable operating environment that can predict and confidently respond to changes and crises, including global warming.

The significance of tourism and events is much greater to Helsinki than is usually perceived. They may well become even more important in the future if we can seize the great opportunities ahead of us. By focusing on our strengths and creating new ones, we may get to enjoy significant growth in the future.

*Juhana Vartiainen,  
Mayor,  
City of Helsinki*



# 1. Introduction: why, what and how

Helsinki is Finland's most important tourist destination and event city. In Helsinki, the vibrant urban culture, complete with events, tourists and restaurants, has been adopted as a key strategic priority for promoting vitality and well-being. Besides the significant economic multiplier effects, tourism and events promote understanding, social cohesion and tolerance between people and cultures.

Helsinki's tourism and event sectors are expected to grow and renew in the coming years. However, growth and renewal cannot be taken for granted. The global economic situation is unstable, and the latest information from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on global warming is more alarming than ever. The effects of the coronavirus pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine are likely to be felt for a long time. Also, the demands of customers have increased, meaning that innovative long-term cooperation between several parties is required to provide high-quality experiences sustainably. Increasingly fierce competition makes developing Helsinki's attraction and vitality through cooperation between various actors more important than ever – even vital.

This programme is a joint document of the Helsinki City Group operators to support the long-term development of the tourism and event sectors. It provides strategic goals, choices, and prerequisites for developing closely interlinked themes and sectors for 2022–2026, beyond the city strategy period ending in 2025.

The programme guides the operations of the City Group for the benefit of the tourists, residents, event visitors, local businesses and other actors. The common programme clarifies the goals for the businesses and communities and enables the production of even more attractive experiences. It will also strengthen and deepen the cooperation between City Group operators. The goal is to increase vitality, appeal, renewal and growth in a sustainable and smart way.

The interactive preparation process (section 6) of the tourism and events programme involved a wide range of actors participating in numerous meetings. They consisted of City Group representatives and operators outside the city.

The key steering strategy in the tourism and events programme is the Helsinki City Strategy. The tourism and events programme also considers Helsinki's priority areas for economic development and a wide range of existing roadmaps, strategies, guidelines and commitments ([Appendix 1](#)).

In addition, the programme utilises Helsinki's earlier programme for sustainable tourism (which lacks official approval due to the coronavirus pandemic) and the content of the current roadmap for events. The UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Destination Sustainability Index and the national Sustainable Travel Finland programme are also taken into account. The goals of the new programme are in line with those in the previous roadmap, but social responsibility, knowledge-based management and the sector's ecosystem, for example, are further emphasised. As for tourism, the new programme places greater emphasis on sustainable operation, the importance of knowledge-based management and recovery from crises.

A business impact assessment has been carried out for the programme. The programme measures have also been analysed on the basis of the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([Appendix 3](#)). The results indicate that the programme contributes in particular to the following ten SDGs:



The development and operational activities of tourism and events are managed and coordinated by the City Executive Office's Economic Development and Communications departments (events and brand), but measures are implemented in collaboration between various City Group operators. Key operators in the city organisation include the Culture and Leisure division and the Urban Environment division. Key operators among the City of Helsinki subsidiary organisations include Helsinki Partners Ltd, Helsinki City Premises Ltd, and Helsinki Event Foundation organising Helsinki's own major events. ([Appendix 2](#)).

Some programme measures require changing the operating procedures and a new collaborative way to develop the tourism and event sectors. Some measures will also require additional resources and a reallocation of existing resources to achieve the desired

results. The implementation and achievement of the programme goals will be monitored annually and adjusted in accordance with the plan (section 6), if necessary.





## 2. Current situation

### Tourism has significant multiplier effects

In recent years, Finland and Helsinki's tourist and hospitality sector has grown and internationalised more rapidly than other industries. Tourism has become an important export sector (2.7% of GDP in 2019). Tourism is highly labour-intensive (147,000 employees in Finland), employing large numbers of young people and immigrants. In Helsinki, the number of jobs in the tourism industry is estimated at 35,600. However, with the coronavirus pandemic, challenges in labour supply and demand have increased further.

Tourism generates significant cash flows and tax revenues for Helsinki. In 2018, tourists spent approximately EUR 1.7 billion in Helsinki, which is approximately twice as much as in the entire region of Lapland, for example. In 2020, however, tourism income generated in Helsinki dropped by more than 50 per cent from 2019. The multiplier effects are significant: one tourist euro brings about 60 cents to other sectors. Overnight stays recorded in Helsinki increased by more than 50 per cent between 2009 and 2019, totalling more than 4.5 million in 2019 (compared to 23 million overnight stays in Finland as a whole). In 2021, the number of overnight stays in Helsinki was only half that of 2019. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, most of these were domestic visitors. Tourism has had a significant impact on Helsinki's service offering and cityscape. It brings business to many shops, restaurants and other services and enriches the local service offering. Tourism greatly impacts the vitality of the city centre. It has helped Helsinki increase its service offering, support international transport connections and improve the city's international appeal also from the point of view of investments and skilled labour.

### Helsinki sets an example for other event cities

Helsinki has been developing events for a long time now, with good results. The city is widely recognised as a reliable and safe event city, rated as the most popular congress city in the Nordic countries and the 12th most popular in the world. In addition, many urban grassroots events developed in Helsinki, such as Restaurant Day and Dinner Under the Sky, have been exported as concepts around the world. While

creating attractive and vibrant local culture and experiences for residents and visitors, the events can also be used effectively to improve and bolster the city's reputation and brand.

According to the reports by the Finnish event industry association and a survey by the Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (ETLA), the Finnish event industry is worth EUR 2.35 billion to the national economy, with 3,200 companies and nearly 200,000 employees (20,000 full-time and 120,000–170,000 temporary). It amounts to 1.2% of Finland's GDP. The majority of the event industry actors operate in Helsinki and the Helsinki metropolitan area. Events also provide a reason for people to travel or visit Helsinki at a specific time.

### External drivers of change

The coronavirus pandemic has had an exceptionally strong impact on Helsinki tourism and event sectors through strict restrictions. Viral variants, the rate of vaccination in different countries, varying restrictions in Finland and other countries, the global economic situation and people's carefulness all affect the recovery of the tourism and event industries. The recovery from the coronavirus pandemic began in Helsinki in the summer of 2021, thanks to domestic visitors. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has had and will have an impact also on Helsinki tourism and events. The extent of the impact depends on the duration of the war. Sanctions against Russia affect, among other things, the rise in prices and, thereby, the competitiveness of companies. The closure of Russian airspace has reduced Asian flight connections to Helsinki, in particular, and also affected other flight routes. The weakened sense of security has had some impact on people's willingness and readiness to travel, their perceptions and, possibly, willingness to invest. As it stands in April 2022, some events and group trips have been cancelled and postponed, cruise programmes and the number of cruise visits have been changed, reservation times have shortened, questions about the security situation have increased, fuel fees have been added to consumer prices, costs have risen, purchasing power has weakened and accessibility to Finland from Asia, in particular, has deteriorated. The absence of a major international-level event arena due to sanctions is also a clear competitive disadvantage.





### 3. Future outlooks

The pace of change is increasing, with individual global phenomena, events, megatrends and crises also impacting Finland. The development of the industries that are an integral and interactive part of society is greatly influenced by political, economic, societal, technological and environmental factors.

#### Cities as drivers of change

Global megatrends support the growth of Finland and Helsinki. Urbanisation will continue, which is one reason why the population of Helsinki and the level of demand and number of visitors to the city are expected to increase. Interest in cities that are not among the best-known and congested is expected to increase.

The continuous technological development creates new opportunities in the industries and business, including serving customers during the pre-trip inspiration, planning and booking phases, as well as during and after the trip or event. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, augmented reality, big data analysis, metaverse and autonomous means of transport affect people's daily lives and leisure time and, therefore, the development of the industries.

Traditional industry divisions and value chains will change across the board. Business and value-creating data will be created in networks of platforms. The use of consumer and open data between different operators will play an increasingly important role. The growing platform economy networks also affect the operating models and methods of promoting and developing Helsinki's industries. The significance of value networks also grows through ecosystems, with the participating companies cooperating and finding new ways to create value and business models both nationally and internationally.

#### Sustainable development

The importance of sustainable development will continue to grow in the activities of the city, companies and customers alike. Therefore, industries should be developed by reinforcing positive and reducing negative environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts. In the future, sustainability will increasingly include things like active participation in the

protection of the cultural and natural environment, low-carbon food and drink production, sensitivity to local heritage, carbon-neutral operation and maximisation of the local economic impact. Helsinki is well prepared to respond to the challenges posed by climate change and positively impact the choices of individual consumers.

#### Transformation of consumption habits

Consumption habits are rapidly changing and becoming fragmented. Customers assume different roles and have service expectations based, for example, on their travel company and the kind of experiences and values they are looking for. Growing consumption trends include staycation (holidaying and leisure activities locally or near home), DIY vacations (Do It Yourself) and combining work and leisure time by having a workation (combination of work and a vacation), flexcation (working remotely on a holiday destination) and bleisure (holidays mixing business and leisure). Other factors to consider include the growing number of senior citizens, three-generation trips, the special characteristics of the millennial, generation Z's consumer habits and the rapid growth of individual travelling compared to group travelling. More emphasis is placed on personal well-being in leisure time and on holiday and business trips. Demand for luxury experiences is also expected to increase.

As for events, emphasis will be on providing opportunities for sustainably organised events, safety, and equal experiences for all customers by means of hybrid events, for example. Competition for international congresses will be more fierce. The winners will be those able to offer services that are both responsible as a whole and well-functioning and come with attractive incentives.

The recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is expected to occur through local, domestic and European customers. Forecasting the future in the current situation is difficult, but many predict that tourism will return to "normal" in 2024. According to the latest Finnish event industry association's membership survey, the recovery of major events and event organisers will take approximately a year. The survey did not account for possible global uncertainties, such as the war of aggression against Ukraine.



# 4. Strategic goals of the tourism and events programme

The Helsinki City Strategy 2021–2025, entitled “A place of growth”, provides the basis for the goals and measures of the tourism and events programme.

“An appealing city also attracts travellers. We will develop Helsinki into the smartest and most sustainable travel destination.”

“Events have an important role in making Helsinki an enjoyable, dynamic and attractive city. When it comes to events, Helsinki acts as a responsible developer and a trustworthy and inspiring partner. It also acts as an effective event platform and is a popular conference host. People and businesses find the city easy to work with when arranging events, big or small. Helsinki should be able to offer event organisers and businesses assistance according to a one-stop-shop principle. Permit requirements will be relaxed so facilities and areas can be more easily available for all types of events and cultural purposes. Helsinki will work to improve its competitiveness as a host of cultural and sporting events, fairs, international conferences and other large events in cooperation with groups that are active in this field.”

“Those active in the industries of art and culture and hospitality and events have faced several kinds of hardships. We must resolutely address these issues in the coming years and eliminate the city’s care backlogs.”

Helsinki City Strategy 2021–2025

## 4.1 Strategic goals

Increasing the city’s vitality and appeal, promoting sustainable development and managing city and eco-system-wide activities based on knowledge and data are central to developing and promoting the tourism and event sectors. It is also important to take advantage of digitalisation opportunities and streamline the city’s decision-making and cooperation.

The three strategic goals of the Helsinki Tourism and Events Programme up to 2026 are as follows:

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

To achieve the three strategic goals, we have chosen strategic focus areas for the period and six entities. These will provide the prerequisites for the development and support of long-term improvement in the fields of activities (Table 1). Section 5 includes more detailed descriptions of the choices and prerequisites. There is also a separate implementation action plan that will be regularly updated throughout the programme’s validity period. The action plan defines the responsible parties and entity-specific indicators for monitoring the implementation.

Table 1: Strategic goals, choices and prerequisites for the development

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



## 4.2 Key quantitative objectives and indicators (KPI)

Several quantified objectives and indicators have been set for each of the strategic goals, the implementation of which is monitored regularly (Table 2). The objectives were set based on the current situation. They are moderate due to the coronavirus

pandemic and Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. Besides the measures to be taken, external factors, such as the general economic situation, will influence the achievement of the objectives.

Table 2: Key objectives and indicators

Strategic goal	Current situation	Objective for 2026
Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events		
More registered overnight stays (2021) <sup>1</sup>	2.1 million	5 million
More congresses of international organisations (2021)	143	450
Increase in the total number of confirmed hotel investments in 2021–26 and diversity (2021)	8	30
More tourism enterprises and outlets in the sectors (2021)	7674	8000
Development and classification of event locations (NEW)	no	yes
More major events in Helsinki	N/A	N/A
Prolongation of registered overnight stays	1.8	1.9
Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events		
More Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) labels <sup>2</sup>	16	200
More events with environmental certifications	N/A	N/A
Helsinki improves its ranking in the Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) index <sup>3</sup>	16	1
Resident satisfaction with tourism and events remains at a good level <sup>4</sup>	good	good+
More carbon footprint calculator users <sup>5</sup>	0	200
Helsinki is a smart destination and a functional event city		
More products in the tourism DataHub database <sup>6</sup>	164	500
More users for the knowledge-based management platform	0	150

1 In 2019, there were 4.5 million overnight stays recorded

2 The Sustainable Travel Finland programme is a national tourism sustainability programme by Visit Finland (Business Finland). The programme includes sections for tourist destinations and businesses. The destinations are required to answer 209 questions. The indicators can be found [here](#).

3 The Global Destination Sustainability index is an international sustainability index designed especially for travel destinations. Its four main categories are the environment, social responsibility, businesses and destination management. The index includes 71 indicators. The indicators can be found [here](#).

4 [Helsinki Tourism Resident Survey 2021](#).

5 Carbon footprint calculator for tourism businesses as part of the Sustainable Travel Finland programme

6 Visit Finland’s national travel [product database](#).





# 5. Strategic choices and prerequisites for the development

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

In building the comfort, liveliness, vitality and attractiveness of Helsinki, a significant role is played by the diverse offering of events, culture and restaurants as well as the maritime nature – exceptionally rich even on an international scale – and diverse green spaces. These strengths result in genuine experiences that are of interest to Helsinki residents and also to an increasing number of visitors to the city. Safety, compact size, functionality, comfort and high quality of life are also key factors in the city's attractiveness. Historical layers, historical stories and distinctive city districts are part of this structure. A vibrant and attractive city centre is very important for Helsinki, and its development is also supported through tourism and events.

Helsinki's success depends on coping with increasing international competition. From the perspective of the national economy and the city, the development of tourism to Finland is the most effective way to increase the income from tourism. Investments in major international events, congresses and corporate events in Finland are also worthwhile, as the participants spend more money and stay longer than traditional leisure visitors. In addition, the promotion of international tourism and events supports the work towards attracting investments, companies and talent.

In order to strengthen the vitality and attractiveness of the city, it is very important that Helsinki develops into an even more vibrant and interesting event city from the perspective of the city residents and various customers. Events attract local residents and domestic and foreign visitors alike. Interesting, diverse, high-quality and functional events serve as a motive to come to Helsinki and enjoy a variety of accommodation options and various restaurant and programme services in addition to the event.

Tourism and events are strongly intertwined in building awareness about Helsinki and in increasing the city's attractiveness and, above all, its vitality. The sectors feed and support each other, especially from the point of view of strengthening Helsinki's competitiveness.

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

There is limited potential for growth in the domestic market. However, domestic tourism acts as a market generating demand, for example, in the context of changing international political situations and fluctuations in demand from international markets. Growth is achieved by investing particularly in various international target groups, emphasising Helsinki's value base, strengths and sustainability. The selected target groups are looking for a genuine and sustainable experience, are curious and interested in the local culture and stories. In Helsinki, the urban pulse and peace of nature are balanced. From the point of view of responsibility and risk management, no market or target group should be overemphasised.

In accordance with its own strategy and annual plan, Helsinki Partners implements international tourism marketing in cooperation with the city. According to studies, the most receptive audiences for Helsinki are found in Europe (UK, Germany and France) and Japan. In addition, media work and tour operator sales in particular will be carried out in the USA, as well as tactical marketing in Sweden and other neighbouring markets. Ultimately, the country-specific targeting of marketing will be based on research data and an assessment of the world situation. Helsinki residents and domestic tourists will be served through, for example, the Myhelsinki.fi online service, social media and Tourist Information. At the same time, Helsinki's events will be used to increase the attractiveness of

the city, even out seasonal fluctuations and extend the stay of visitors.

### **A.2. Events strengthens the liveliness and vitality of Helsinki**

Events have an important role in making Helsinki an enjoyable, dynamic and attractive city from the perspective of city residents and visitors alike. The image of Helsinki will increasingly be built on the basis of events and their marketing and communications activities. The goal to make the event offering of Helsinki as wide, interesting and diverse as possible by means of, among other things, various event concepts and experiments. Year-round events that spread widely from the city centre to different parts of the city strengthen the vitality of Helsinki and local companies and bring residents and visitors together, thereby increasing a sense of solidarity and mutual understanding. Events and the vitality they bring will be strengthened in Helsinki with the Culture and Leisure Division's separate entity relating to recovery from the pandemic.

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

It is essential to make use of international event activities in promoting the city's strategic objectives and in achieving opportunities for influence and growth. The economic impact of international events is also significant. Growth is sought from major international events as well as congresses and corporate events. International events will help to strengthen the Helsinki brand, awareness about the city and its attractiveness. The city will greatly benefit from the increased international awareness and visibility, strengthened networks and grown expertise achieved through congresses and major events.

Helsinki is characterised by work-related tourism. Approximately one-half of the registered overnight stays consist of work-related travel and one-quarter of these consist of international congress travel. The role of work-related travel may be increasingly important in the future, even if short meetings are held virtually. Work-related travel can also combine elements of leisure travel, making visitors stay longer.

Helsinki is investing in sporting and cultural events, which is a globally significant and growing business. In addition to their interesting content, major international events provide excellent platforms for various activities and innovations that promote the goals of society, cities, sports, culture and companies. The goals of major international events are related to, for example, work on the country's image, economic

activities and employment, communality, tourism or the development of sports facilities.

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

Helsinki's appeal factors are diverse. The cultural life and offering of the city are interesting and varied. Building on our unique urban culture, we will be able to highlight the distinctive character of Helsinki, which makes the city more attractive all year round, increases cultural understanding and also promotes the commitment of the citizens to their hometown. Nature and the sea are an integral part of Helsinki and its culture, and they play a key role in increasing the appeal of the city.

The aim is to strengthen the image of Helsinki as a vibrant and pulsating centre of urban culture. Interesting content includes destinations like Central Library Oodi and the new Architecture and Design Museum, themed walks, responsible city events, visual arts destinations and events like the Helsinki Biennial as well as archipelago experiences like hiking and saunas (UNESCO status of the sauna tradition). Nature, and especially the unique combination of urban environment and nature, the so-called Urban Nature, will be given a more prominent role as Helsinki's international strength and appeal factor. Maritime Helsinki will remain one of the city's most important development areas, with Suomenlinna as its jewel. The development of Helsinki's nightlife and night-time economy will continue as part of the city's various activities. Tourism and events are part of the development of the night-time economy, but the night-time development is primarily linked to the city's service development.

Internationally, but also regionally, food has become an important appeal factor for tourism. Helsinki has a number of innovative restaurants, a high-quality and varied food offering, interesting market halls, markets and other food culture operators and culinary experience providers. Investing in food tourism promotes the competitiveness of the tourism and food sector, a vibrant urban culture, the recognition and image of our food culture, and the strengthening of the positive image of Helsinki. Food, restaurants and food tourism products are part of strengthening Helsinki's international image.

Cooperation between event, restaurant and tourism operators will be developed and intensified to the mutual benefit of all operators. Closer cooperation will create more memorable and responsible food experiences for Helsinki residents and visitors, further increasing the attractiveness of the city.



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

From the point of view of transport links, Finland is an island. Good transport accessibility of Helsinki is a vital prerequisite for the tourism industry and events of international interest. Tourists' and event visitors' travel chains, customer path at the destination and the resulting experience constitute an entity involving dozens of different actors. Functional travel chains making use of public transport and cycling opportunities as well as the digital availability of services can promote the creation of a customer-oriented path to Helsinki and the experiences it offers. The city can bring together various actors and promote a comprehensive customer experience by developing

an operating model for managing the visitor experience at the destination level. The role of Tourist Information as part of customer experience management will also be increased, especially by relying on digital solutions.

Cooperation with Finavia and the Port of Helsinki will be intensified in order to attract and establish new air and sea routes and operators. Together with the Port of Helsinki, smooth visits are ensured for international cruise customers, with particular emphasis on walking, cycling and public transport. The implementation and further development of the Port of Helsinki development programme plays a key role in the development of customer paths in the city centre in particular. This development work will also influence the upcoming Architecture and Design Museum and the functionality of the Market Square area.

## B.

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

Helsinki is committed to sustainability in all its activities. According to many international indicators, Helsinki and tourism, as well as events as part of it, are doing well in terms of sustainable development. Sustainability is developed from an ecological, socio-cultural and economic perspective. Promoting sustainable destinations and activities requires strengthening the positive effects and minimising the negative effects. It should be noted that sustainability and growth are not opposites of each other. Culturally, socially, ecologically and economically responsible choices can achieve growth in the profitability of business operations, for instance. Sustainable growth and renewal will become a reality if public and private actors and consumers change their practices responsibly and on a long-term basis. Succeeding in this also requires systematic planning, measuring, monitoring, communication and support for companies and other operators on the path towards certification and continuous development of operations. As a pioneer in the sustainability of tourism and events and a solver of future challenges, Helsinki can achieve significant competitive advantage. This also supports the economic development priority of developing business that solves globally relevant problems.

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

The City of Helsinki aims to be carbon-neutral by 2030. The tourism and event sectors must also respond to the global climate crisis with their own actions. By being a pioneer, Helsinki can achieve significant competitive advantage. At the same time, Helsinki can be an active promoter of the carbon handprint on a global scale.

The development of sustainability in the tourism and event sectors is a comprehensive entity. It is necessary to increase cross-sectoral cooperation in addition to the existing cooperation. By setting up a joint sustainability action group for the tourism and event sectors in the city, sustainability can be promoted systematically, persistently and with extensive expertise. The promotion of international cooperation is also central to the sharing and exploitation of best practices and the creation of new knowledge and

skills. Important actions include the further development and widespread deployment of carbon footprint calculators and extensive promotion of carbon compensation.

By investing in reporting, it is possible to increase important stakeholders' awareness and understanding of the activities carried out. In future, the progress of sustainable development in the tourism and event sectors will be reported annually as a separate subset in connection with normal annual reporting.

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

The well-being of Helsinki residents must be the starting point for all development. The tourism and event sectors have a number of positive effects on the city. However, it is also possible that tourists or event participants will have negative effects. While Helsinki rejoices in the increase of diversity and internationalisation, the development of culturally sustainable tourism must be ensured. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, overtourism was a significant phenomenon in many European cities, and the adverse environmental and mobility impacts of events could put an excessive strain on residents. These can be managed using, for example, mobility data.

The well-being and comfort of Helsinki residents in their hometown must be at the core of interactive development and decision-making. Indeed, the city is investing in active dialogue with residents. Cooperation with the borough liaisons will be intensified from the point of view of tourism and events in order to better involve residents and communities in the development work. Residents' satisfaction with tourism and events will be measured regularly. In addition, Airbnb-type accommodation, which has provoked a lot of discussion, will be actively monitored and developed.

Helsinki is a safe and equal destination for tourism and events in many ways, especially when compared to many other destinations around the world. The city must communicate its values and operating methods internationally in a credible manner. This gives Helsinki a competitive advantage as a city of tourism and events where everyone is welcome, regardless of their age, sexual orientation, religion, culture or





special needs. The LGBTQ community constitutes a significant tourist target group, often sharing the value base that Helsinki aims to represent as a city. Accessible services and communication about them are important from the perspective of many different target groups, since up to a quarter of tourists need accessible services when travelling. This development is supported by existing programmes, such as Think Sustainably and Sustainable Travel Finland.

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

In order for tourism and Helsinki as a destination to be able to respond to changing demand and secure their future, development must be sustainable. Tourism businesses and other operators must therefore adapt their operations in an increasingly responsible direction. In addition, the work must be carried out in a credible manner, enabling the results to be measured. As a tourist destination, Helsinki must also further develop its own activities in the various areas of sustainability. The national Sustainable Travel Finland programme provides companies and tourist destinations with a toolkit for developing sustainable tourism, which enables them to adopt sustainable measures and choices as part of their daily activities and to work actively to reduce consumption and optimise operations. It also provides comprehensive information about the progress of sustainability in the city and Finland. The programme includes a total of 209 sustainability questions for tourist destinations. As a tourist destination, Helsinki aims for the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) label by 2025.

From the perspective of international visibility, comparability and credibility, the city is aiming for a top position on the Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) index by 2025. The index is an international sustainability index designed especially for travel destinations. Its four main categories are the environment, social responsibility, businesses and destination management. The index includes 71 indicators. In 2021, Helsinki ranked at 16 out of 73. Helsinki is already doing many things very well, such as environmental issues, but reporting, measurement and the lack of English-language material have been challenges in many places in previous years. With systematic and long-term efforts, reaching the top position in the international index is possible.

The Think Sustainably service on the MyHelsinki.fi website has already achieved an important role both

in the corporate social responsibility path and in international media. However, the visibility of the service must be improved and the number of actors involved in the service significantly increased in order to make responsible choices as easy as possible for locals and visitors.

In future, all Helsinki partnership events will be required to implement the EcoCompass or a similar environmental programme, and other events will be instructed to use the Think Sustainably service.

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

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, labour challenges in the tourism and event sectors were affected by many different forces of change, such as decreasing age groups, low work-related immigration, the effects of digitalisation on work tasks and skills requirements, global interdependence and changes in economy. In addition, as a result of the pandemic, a large number of employees have moved to other industries to work or started studies in a new field. The availability of labour has become an acute obstacle to growth. Wage and salary levels, working conditions, availability of affordable housing and the general attractiveness of the sectors contribute to the labour challenge in the sectors. Without clear investments to ensure the availability of skilled labour, the sectors will not be able to achieve the desired growth path.

The challenge must be solved by a variety of complementary measures taken by the city, ministries, agencies, educational institutions, labour market organisations and other stakeholders. The aim of this cooperation is to find solutions to the challenges in labour availability and mismatch. Helsinki can play a more significant role in promoting cooperation, especially as the local government pilot on employment enables the city to develop services based on the needs of jobseekers and employers in its own area and to allocate resources in a new way. In addition, the role of the City of Helsinki in training skilled labour and entrepreneurs in the event industry and increasing knowledge must be further strengthened. It is also important to continue to develop fair terms of employment in cooperation with various actors.

Key measures to improve employment opportunities in the tourism and event sectors include increasing the sectors' ability to attract and keep talent, work-related immigration and diversity.

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

The significance of safety and security in customer decision-making will be further emphasised, whether it is about health security, uncertainty about the global security situation, cybersecurity threats, security of programme services and events or a general sense of security. Investing in safety and security also brings economic benefits, as the benefits of the work are reflected in the city's attractiveness, customer volumes and the quality of tourism and events. However, this requires significant efforts and cooperation with the entire ecosystem, including various authorities.

Helsinki has created a tourism safety management plan, which was completed in late 2021. The plan also supports the development of event security. The development plan to be implemented describes, among other things, the minimum criteria for safety management, the establishment of a safety workgroup, a common model for safety management, safety communication and impact measurement. The geographical position of Finland as a neighbouring country of Russia affects the image of Finland and Helsinki, especially in terms of security. Helsinki's international communications and marketing must pay particular attention to strengthening safety and security.





Helsinki was chosen as the smartest travel destination in Europe (European Capital of Smart Tourism) in 2019. Helsinki now has every chance of becoming the world's smartest and most functional visitor destination in cooperation with the companies, scientific community and residents.

Digitality and new technologies will play a decisive role in the development and renewal. Companies that take advantage of digital solutions are also growing and internationalising faster than others. Digital development is constantly shaping the tourism and event sectors. While Finns are making use of international services and technology, it is necessary to develop local expertise and support new domestic innovations. A smart destination also provides customers with the smoothest path from dreaming to gaining experiences.

The systematic use of knowledge at different stages of decision-making, both within the City Group and in tourism and event companies, is of paramount importance for renewal, growth and competitiveness. Skill levels related to knowledge-based management and digitalisation in the tourism and event sectors must be raised ambitiously. In addition, something unique can be achieved by supporting cooperation between actors in ecosystems and encouraging them to engage in bold pilots and innovation. The city must have a functional operating environment that provides operators with opportunities for growth and renewal and smooth paths to the services offered by the city.

The City of Helsinki has many different roles in the events of the city: for example, Helsinki can serve as an enabler, platform or host city of events. Due to the diversity of roles, in order for events to be implemented, the city's internal networks must be functional and committed, and resourcing for the various roles and responsibilities must be allocated across organisational and unit boundaries. A well-functioning event environment is one of our city's strengths and a prerequisite for the development of the event ecosystem. The functionality of the city has been proven by, among other things, many major international events organised here. In the context of events, functionality means, above all, continuous development of the city's own activities, utilisation of digital tools and close cooperation with actors in the field.

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

Knowledge-based management is a vital prerequisite for success in international competition. Information is needed to support the development of the urban environment and the city's activities and to develop the expertise, product development and business of various actors. The city's own decision-making is also based on extensive data. Knowledge-based management involves managing data and, in particular, analysing it and utilising it in day-to-day leadership. Among other things, knowledge-based management of operations allows seeking innovative solutions for improving the operating environment, customer experience and accessibility as well as for identifying bottlenecks. Sustainability cannot be developed without data, refined analyses and decision-making based on them. Information is also used to carry out effective advocacy work, highlighting Helsinki's status as Finland's largest tourist destination. Helsinki has long been a pioneer in openly sharing information, for example, through the content of the Helsinki Region Infoshare service. This work needs to be continued but also expanded and deepened, taking into account the specific needs and characteristics of the tourism and event sectors.

In order to support the development of tourism and events, a knowledge-based management tool will be implemented in cooperation with actors within the city and stakeholders outside the city organisation. Knowledge-based management within the city is emphasised. In the same way, the skills of the industry are supported especially through the Makers of Helsinki network.

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

Comprehensive, more systematic and long-term development of tourism and events must be carried out in the city as part of the planning and construction of the urban environment. Among other things, the city should better understand how the hotel market develops in different regions and take into account things like clear shortcomings in the offering or the possible challenges of overtourism. The best places to centralise restaurant activities should be determined more specifically. The most suitable locations

for events must be specified, taking into account noise, traffic and space requirements. In addition, it must be ensured that the city has a sufficient number of functional indoor and outdoor spaces for organising events. The mapping and definition of natural sites from the point of view of tourism and the carrying capacity of the sites must be taken into account in the plan. Similarly, questions about the location of campsites and the use of city-owned properties for tourism or events must be resolved as part of the overall picture. The role of various city districts in tourism and events needs to be addressed; for example, the potential of Arabianranta as a tourist destination is currently underexploited. Comprehensive planning should also include event areas outside the city centre and their use for the city's events. The placement of terraces and the needs of nightlife, for example, are also part of the whole. When planning the entities described above, it is important to take into account the challenge of overtourism that emerged before the pandemic.

Several new hotels have been completed or will be completed in Helsinki within a short time. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought uncertainty to some of the hotel projects. However, it is important to note that Helsinki is still a significantly smaller destination in terms of hotel capacity than Stockholm and Copenhagen, for example. Helsinki's ability to afford to increase and diversify its hotel capacity despite the uncertain times is supported by enabling international growth in tourism, the attractiveness of Helsinki, Finnair's Asia strategy (the strategy must be reviewed due to the war in Ukraine), Finavia's

significant investments in the airport, good accessibility and the continued interest of investors.

In support of the long-term goals of the development of tourism and event areas, where the aforementioned areas of development are widely taken into account, the city will prepare a comprehensive development plan, the Master Plan. In addition, when assigning its plots and organising design and other competitions, the city ensures that the terms of the planning and competitions enable new operators and concepts to be located in Helsinki. Helsinki Partners will actively continue to promote and coordinate hotel projects. Hospitality operators investing in Helsinki are required to commit to internationally recognised environmental certificates.

## C.3. Helsinki is a functioning platform for events

Ease and digitalisation from the event organiser's point of view are at the core of the development of events. Ease means, among other things, predictability, easily understandable support and cooperation models, smooth communication and finding information, support in growth and internationalisation, and taking events into account in urban planning and the development of the city's own infrastructure. The one-stop shop principle for events means that the city builds clear operating models and instructions for event organisers. This is made concrete, in particular, through customer-oriented digital content and operating models and tools to be developed.





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

The tourism and event sectors are becoming increasingly digitalised. Success in competition requires continuous investments in, among other things, the discoverability, multi-channelling and automation of products and services. Preparation for the use of virtual reality and artificial intelligence must start now at the latest. Knowledge-based management and overall digital capability also go hand in hand.

It is important to identify the city's role as a key actor in promoting the integration of different systems. The creation of a digital product offering for companies and the distribution of product inventory are supported, for example, as part of the development work of Visit Finland's DataHub and MyHelsinki Open API and through the growth of expertise.

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

Helsinki is one of the leading startup hubs in Northern Europe. Put together, the tourism and event sectors constitute one of the most important sectors for the city. By combining these two entities with other sectors, new innovations and companies can be created. The city can play a more active role as a platform for new innovations and experiments.

The City of Helsinki aims to bring together companies and operators in the tourism and event sectors with companies in other sectors, especially startups. In addition, the city recognises the benefits of its test-bed activities for tourism and events. By creating new opportunities for companies and communities to pilot products and services in the city's operating environment, it is possible to generate new business and also increase digital capability. For example, city events and events organised by other parties in which the city is involved can serve as platforms for various pilots. At best, experimentation activities spawn successful companies capable of creating products that serve new customer target groups.





# 6. Preparation and follow-up of the tourism and events programme

## Preparation of the programme

The Tourism and Events Programme was approved by the City of Helsinki's Economic Development Sub-committee on 9.5.2022.

The creation of the programme was led as a joint effort by the Economic Development/Tourism and Destination Management Unit and the Communications/Brand unit. The programme was developed extensively, involving the entire ecosystem. The programme was discussed by the following groups, among others:

- The Makers of Helsinki network, which consists of about one hundred tourism companies.
- The Helsinki Tourism Advisory Board, which consists of twenty or so tourism companies in Helsinki or other significant stakeholders.
- The City Group's Tourism Cooperation Group, which consists of the heads of key city divisions and units who contribute to the development of tourism in the city. Key operators include the Urban Environment and the Culture and Leisure divisions.
- Event cooperation groups, i.e. the event steering group and the on-site event group.

The programme was discussed in a number of smaller workgroups, which mainly involved representatives of the city's various divisions and actors of the City Group. These included:

- Helsinki Partners Ltd
- Urban Environment, Education, and Cultural and Leisure divisions
- Helsinki Event Foundation
- Helsinki City Premises Ltd
- HAM, Helsinki City Museum
- Port of Helsinki

The programme was also worked on at the Helsinki Tourism Seminar and other events open to a wide range of people. Before being taken to the Economic Development Sub-committee, the programme was also discussed by the management groups of the Economic Development Division and the Communications Unit as well as the City Executive Group.

Not everything was reinvented, but the work also utilised the previous roadmaps for tourism and events. In addition, the programme utilised the already completed roadmap for sustainable tourism, which was not taken to the final decision-making due to the pandemic. Other actors' roadmaps and strategies were also very widely taken into account in the work. These are described in Appendix 3.

A business impact assessment and SDG analysis have been carried out for the programme.

## Publication, follow-up and deployment

The programme will be published and maintained on the City of Helsinki website. The progress of the programme will also be monitored on the same website with the help of certain indicators. An annual report on the progress of the programme will be created in cooperation between the Tourism and Destination Management Unit and the Brand unit, utilising normal reporting on the implementation of activities. The content and implementation of the programme will be presented at various workgroups and other events. The implementation and updates will be communicated at the meetings of the Economic Development Sub-committee, if necessary.

The programme will primarily be deployed through annual action plans and existing City Group workgroups or similar.





# Appendices

## Appendix 1.

### Background strategies and programmes

#### City's internal strategies and programmes

##### Helsinki City Strategy

The City Strategy was completed in autumn 2021 and will be valid until 2025.

[Source](#)

##### Industrial policy priorities – Economic Development

1. Strengthening business and innovation environments that support companies' competitiveness
2. Growing, renewing and diversifying entrepreneurship and business operations in Helsinki
3. Improving the likelihood of Helsinki residents finding employment and ensuring sufficient skilled labour for companies
4. Increasing the attraction of Helsinki as a city of sustainable tourism, culture and events
5. Developing Helsinki into an increasingly attractive city for international talent, companies and investments
6. Businesses that solve globally relevant problems are being developed in Helsinki
7. Increasing the vitality of the city centre

[Source](#)

##### Restaurant development plan – Economic Development

- P1 Supporting restaurant entrepreneurs to make the sector more attractive
- P2 Promoting cooperation between various Experience Economy sectors
- P3 Developing the responsibility of Helsinki restaurants
- P4 Creating a shared vision for the restaurant ecosystem and operating conditions for cooperation to achieve the vision
- P5 Developing Helsinki's reputation as an interesting food city

**Source:** The plan is available from Economic Development

##### Helsinki's brand and marketing strategy policies – Communications

- Helsinki's brand and marketing strategy policies will be completed in summer 2022.
- The update of the brand concept will highlight the core of the brand and create tools for the effective deployment of the concept both within the city organisation and in cooperation with a number of stakeholders.
- Based on the City Strategy, the marketing strategy will make choices about thematic priorities and will target measures to selected target groups.



## City of Helsinki's communication policies – Communications

- The City of Helsinki's communication policies and guidelines 2019

[Source](#)

## Policies and priorities for international activities – Strategy Department

To be completed on 13 June 2022.

## Helsinki Maritime Strategy 2030– Economic Development

1. Helsinki is an attractive and functional sea city.
2. Maritime services and recreational possibilities are available to everyone.
3. Helsinki treasures its sea nature.

[Source](#)

## Helsinki roadmap for work, study and entrepreneurship-based immigration 2022–2025 – Labour Force and Immigration

Creating the roadmap is the responsibility of the Labour Force and Immigration unit. The roadmap will be submitted to the Economic Development Sub-committee for decision-making in spring 2022.

Preliminary themes from the roadmap:

- Helsinki as an attractive destination for the migration of experts and companies
- Helsinki as a service provider for international experts and companies
- Helsinki as an employer for international experts
- Helsinki as a lobbyist

## Economic policy goals for land use

The economic policy goals for land use address the city's land use issues extensively from an economic policy perspective. In addition, the document sets out policies with which the city can promote the prerequisites for entrepreneurial activities in the coming years.

### Tourism

- When assigning its plots and organising design and other competitions, the city ensures that the terms of the planning and competitions enable new operators and concepts to be located in Helsinki. Operators are required to commit to internationally recognised environmental certificates.
- Helsinki will systematically increase and diversify the accommodation capacity in the city area through private projects. In order to diversify the offering, the city actively attracts new hotel operators and investments, with particular emphasis on the following quality requirements:
  - expanding the offering, particularly focusing on hotels in the luxury and economy categories and on various innovative concepts;
- attracting new international chains to the city.

### Events

- The city will continue to develop existing and emerging event areas and spaces according to the event roadmap and so that the prerequisites for organising events
- will be taken into account in the planning process sufficiently in advance.
- The accessibility of public urban space will be improved, taking into account various activities, and opportunities for cultural activities will be increased through temporary activities, continuous area surveys and place-making thinking.
- The city's permit and notification requirements for events will loosened.
- City-owned premises will be opened up for various uses in support of events.

[Source:](#)

## Vitality project for the city centre – cooperation group between the City of Helsinki and the business sector to strengthen the vitality of the city centre

The City of Helsinki aims to ensure that the city centre remains Finland's most diverse concentration of workplaces, services and leisure opportunities and is accessible to all throughout the year. To this end, the city will intensify its cooperation with various operators in the city centre. At the same time, Helsinki also wants to ensure the good accessibility of the city centre by all means of transport and at all times of the year.

[Source](#)

## Helsinki tourism safety development plan – Travel and Tourism

A development plan created by the Tourism and Destination Management Unit of the Economic Development Division provides guidelines for the development of tourism safety.

1. Minimum criteria for the safety management of tourism have been specified and will be followed.
2. It will be ensured that there is an active safety workgroup for tourism in Helsinki with clear specifications, roles and communications.
3. A common safety management model will be maintained, developed and monitored.
4. Safety will be made visible by communicating: a common way of communicating in everyday life and in crisis situations.
5. The implementation and impact of the common model of safety management will be measured.

[Source](#)

## Development of tourist bus services – action plan – Urban Environment

The demand for tourist bus services has grown in recent years due to the tourism growth. The objective is to provide tourists with easy alternative modes of transport to explore the city and ensure smooth tourist bus services for the appropriate target groups to see Helsinki. The work aims to present guidelines for the near future for improving the smoothness of tourist bus services through an action plan.

- General planning principles and operating models
- Information and cooperation
- Parking spaces
- Infrastructure measures
- Services for transport operators and tourists

[Source](#)

## Cultural environment programme – City Museum and Urban Environment

The programme will be completed in late 2022. A draft of future policies.

The cultural environment programme is a joint policy of the City Museum and the Urban Environment Division on the most important characteristics of the cultural environment and their management and utilisation in Helsinki.

Helsinki is a sustainably growing and reasonably-sized capital city where you can take root. Its strength lies in localness and the present cultural environment and landscape.

- Helsinki is an interesting and international city that has a living history and values its cultural environments.
- Helsinki has urban culture in a cultural landscape and an urban environment.
- Helsinki is a diverse city of contrasts experienced by residents and visitors.
- Helsinki is a city that changes and works sustainably.



## Nature service policy – Urban Environment

The work will start in 2022 – to be completed at the end of the year, contact person Kaisa Pajanen, Urban Environment Division.

## Art and culture in Helsinki 2030 – Culture and Leisure

In Helsinki, art and culture are at the heart of good life and the development of the city.

- Art helps Helsinki face and change the future.
- Art and culture are key forces in the development of Helsinki.
- The lives all Helsinki residents are part of the common spirit of Helsinki.

[Source](#)

## Human Rights in Helsinki

Human Rights in Helsinki collects information about the city's efforts to improve equality and prevent discrimination. The site is aimed at both local residents and city employees. The site includes the city's equality and non-discrimination plans, various ways to promote equality and non-discrimination as a city employee, and information about the Gender Equality Commission, Non-Discrimination Commission, Elderly Citizens Council and Council on Disability.

[Source](#)

## City's environmental policy and reporting

Goals have been set in eight thematic areas:

- climate protection
- air protection
- noise control
- protection of the sea and water bodies
- nature and soil conservation
- procurement, waste and materials efficiency
- environmental awareness and responsibility
- environmental management and partnerships

[Source](#)

## Helsinki Roadmap for Tourism 2018–2021 – Economic Development

The Tourism and Events Programme also takes into account the work already done in the past and the guidelines of the previous roadmaps, which are largely in line with the new programme.

[Source](#)

## Helsinki Roadmap for Events 2019 -> Communications

In the case of events, too, it is more a question of updating the previous roadmap than of inventing completely new policies.

[Source](#)

## Sustainable Tourism Programme 2020–2025

The programme had been completed and was about to be submitted to the Economic Development Sub-committee for decision-making in spring 2020 but, due to the pandemic and the consequent change in the operating environment, it was decided to postpone the decision until later. The Tourism and Events Programme replaces the Sustainable Tourism Programme and has made full use of the work done.

### Themes of the programme

1. The well-being of the local community as a starting point for everything – interaction with the local community
2. Sustainable growth together – development of tourism in cooperation with companies
3. Bold choices towards climate wisdom – actions by the city's various divisions in response to climate challenges
4. Knowledge-based tourism management – city-internal tourism management measures

[Source](#)

## City Group operator strategies

### Helsinki Partners Ltd

- To be completed in April 2022.

### Helsinki City Premises Ltd

- To be completed in May 2022.

## Event Foundation – Helsinki Event Foundation's strategy update 2022–2025

### The foundation's mission: Shared joy creates sustainable Helsinki

Our events make Helsinki a better place to live. The joy they bring to the city is experienced together with others, thereby strengthening the sense of inclusion, cohesion and trust and creating conditions for socially sustainable growth.

### Objectives for the strategy period

1. To build social sustainability
2. To grow by reaching new audiences
3. To enable growth by developing partnerships
4. To create interface management models

## Port of Helsinki Development Programme 2022 – Port of Helsinki

The Port of Helsinki will take one of the largest leaps of development in its history when Tallinn traffic will be centralised to the West Harbour and Stockholm traffic to Katajanokka. Implementing the development programme will take about ten years.

[Source](#)



## Programmes, guidelines, indices and commitments related to the city's tourism and events

### Sustainable Meeting operating model for Meeting Planners

Helsinki Marketing (now Helsinki Partners) has created guidelines for organising sustainable events.

[Source](#)

### Instructions for providing accommodation in a flat

The purpose of these instructions is to clarify when a permit is required for transferring the right of occupancy of a flat and when such provision of accommodation is considered professional and not occasional, short-term letting of a private home.

[Source](#)

### Knowledge-based management specification

Final report on the knowledge-based management specification work by the Tourism and Destination Management Unit in spring 2022.

[Source](#)

### Sustainable Travel Finland programme

The programme involved 73 or so companies, with 17 companies awarded the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) label (April 2022).

[Source](#)

[Criteria](#)

### Management Plan, Fortress of Suomenlinna – Unesco World Heritage Site 2020–2024

The Management Plan process consists of four stages: a description of the history and the present state, the priorities for the future, the implementation, and the action plan. The plan is governed by the values of Suomenlinna and the goals of sustainable development. The action plan is being updated on the website of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna. Priorities for the future based on the values of Suomenlinna will guide the work done there for decades to come.

- Suomenlinna for all!
- The significance of history and the spirit of the place
- Suomenlinna as a Helsinki city district
- Services in Suomenlinna

[Source](#)

### Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy:

Strategy focus areas:

- Management of the impact of tourism and repatriation of benefits
- Maintaining high-quality visitor experiences
- From a summer destination to a year-round destination
- Increasing network-oriented activities
- Communication of World Heritage values

[Source](#)

### Principles of sustainable tourism in national parks, nature and historical sites and World Heritage Sites – Metsähallitus

In Helsinki, Metsähallitus is active in particular on Vallisaari island. There are also key stakeholders related to Nuuksio and Sipoonkorpi National Parks. Suomenlinna is a World Heritage Site.

[Source](#)

### The Global Destination Sustainability Index

Helsinki's ranking in 2021 was 16/73.

[Source](#)

[Criteria](#)

### The Glasgow Declaration

The declaration will be signed in 2022.

[Source](#)

### Lisbon Declaration on Cities for all: building cities for citizens and visitors

The declaration was signed on 5 April 2019.

[Source](#)

### Nur-Sultan Declaration on 'Smart Cities, Smart Destinations'

The declaration was signed on 10 October 2019.

[Source](#)

### The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Helsinki is committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, reporting them to the UN. The Tourism and Events Programme also follows the goals.

[Source](#)

[Helsinki and the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)



## External stakeholder strategies and programmes

### MEAE – Finnish Tourism Strategy 2019–2028

Finland's updated tourism strategy identifies four priorities that will facilitate the sustainable growth and renewal of the tourism sector:

1. supporting sustainable development
2. responding to the digital transformation
3. improving accessibility, taking into account the needs of the tourism sector
4. ensuring an operating environment that supports competitiveness.

[Source](#)

### MEC – Roadmap for cultural tourism

The aim is to draw up a roadmap for the development of national cultural tourism. The roadmap is to support the goal to strengthen cultural tourism set out in the Government Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin and Finland's updated tourism strategy for 2019–2028.

[Source](#)

### Visit Finland Strategy (a Business Finland unit)

#### Vision

Finland is the world's leading sustainable travel destination. We add value to our society and customers and care for our unique environment. Finland is the first choice for mindful travellers.

#### Economic growth

1. Increasing demand

#### Sustainability

2. Developing sustainable travel

#### Competitiveness

3. Developing digital accessibility/competitiveness
4. Leading with knowledge
5. Impactful networks and partnerships

[Source](#)

### Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council – Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2022–2025

In 2030, Helsinki-Uusimaa will be well ahead

1. in climate change mitigation: our objective is to be a carbon-neutral region in 2030.
2. in economic competitiveness: our objective is to increase Helsinki-Uusimaa's research and development expenditure to five per cent of the region's gross domestic product.
3. in well-being: our objective is to achieve an employment rate of 80 per cent in Helsinki-Uusimaa by the end of 2030.

[Source](#)

### MEAE – Employment roadmap for accommodation, catering and tourism industries

The employment roadmap for accommodation, catering and tourism services is being drawn up by the accommodation, catering and tourism sector group. The aim is to ensure the availability of skilled labour throughout Finland. Companies' opportunities to grow and invest depend on labour supply. Sector-specific groups will provide recommendations on measures by the end of 2022.

[Source](#)

### Finland Promotion Board – Main guidelines and annual key themes of Finland's country image communications

Finland Promotion Board's work is based on networking. The Management Group is responsible for giving an opinion on issues related to the country image and determining the main guidelines and annual key themes of country image communications.

[Source](#)

### EU Sustainable Tourism Strategy

European Parliament resolution of 25 March 2021 on establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism.

[Source](#)



## Appendix 2.

### Ecosystem description

A key factor in Helsinki's success is close cooperation with the ecosystem as a whole. The city compensates for the scarcity of resources with good cooperation between the various actors and the resulting synergies.

#### The city's internal organisation

Development of the tourism and event sectors is promoted by several divisions and units in the city organisation.

##### Economic Development/Travel and Tourism

The Tourism and Destination Management Unit under the Economic Development department is responsible for the comprehensive development of tourism and restaurants in cooperation with other city operators, companies and the rest of the ecosystem.

- Makers of Helsinki network

The Makers of Helsinki network is an operating model established for cooperation between companies and other operators in the tourism, event and restaurant sectors. The network is managed by the Tourism and Destination Management Unit in cooperation with the Brand unit and Helsinki Partners. The network includes over a hundred membership fee-paying operators in key positions in the tourism, event and restaurant sectors. The network aims to intensify cooperation between the companies and the city and industry to jointly promote the success of the tourism, event and restaurant sectors. The cooperation between the sectors and companies is to be further intensified during the programme period.

- A dedicated communication plan will be drawn up for the tourism, event and restaurant sectors. Currently, a company in Helsinki can receive messages from many different City Group actors without any synchronisation. It is understandably confusing. In future, communications should be carried out based on the one-stop-shop principle.
- Groups supporting the unit's work

The Tourism and Destination Management Unit has launched two cooperation supporting groups in 2022.

- The Helsinki Tourism Advisory Board consists of twenty or so tourism companies or other significant operators in the field in Helsinki.
- The City Group's Tourism Cooperation Group consists of the heads of key city divisions and units who contribute to the development of tourism in the city. Other key operators besides the City Executive Office include the Urban Environment and the Culture and Leisure divisions.

##### Communications/Brand unit

The Brand unit under Communications is responsible for the comprehensive development of events in cooperation with other city operators, companies and the rest of the ecosystem. The Brand unit is also responsible for Helsinki's brand and marketing strategy city-wide.

- Major event-steering group
- Event steering group
- On-site event group
- Brand coordination group
- An Event Advisory Board is to be established, consisting of various event operators and influencers in the sector
- Coordination group for international communications and marketing (under the responsibility of the Communications' External Communications unit)

##### Sectors specifically related to events and their services

- The Urban Environment Division plays a significant role when it comes to public events organised in public spaces. The division's various services authorise the necessary permits for public events, from land use to noise reports.
- The Culture and Leisure Division supports the mental and physical well-being of city residents, active citizenship and civilisation by awarding grants for events, for example. The division's various cultural centres, Tiivistämö and sports facilities provide excellent venues for all operators, from major international events to independent city resident activities.
- Education Division

##### Sustainability action group for the tourism and event sectors

In spring 2022, a sustainability action group for the tourism and event sectors will be established as part of the city-level sustainable development working group. The group will include representatives from Carbon-neutral Helsinki, Environmental Services and other key operators. A subdivision will be set up to promote the contents of the GDS index and the STF programme. The subdivision will work in close cooperation with Helsinki Partners in conjunction with the development of the Think Sustainably service.

##### Safety workgroup for the tourism and event sectors

In accordance with the development plan implemented in the Tourism and Destination Management Unit under the Economic Development department, a safety workgroup for the tourism and event sectors will be established in the city in 2022. The central task of the group is to ensure that the cooperation between the various actors in the city works seamlessly in relation to the tourism and event industry needs.

##### Borough liaisons in city districts

Each major district in Helsinki has its own borough liaison who helps residents find the right influencing channels in Helsinki. The borough liaisons provide information, guidance and advice regarding participation and influencing opportunities. They support cooperation between area-specific operators and organise events such as the Mayor's resident evenings. The tourism and event sectors will be one of the major areas for development for the borough liaisons. The aim is to ensure the involvement of local residents in the cooperation and development of the industries.



## City Group’s subsidiary organisations

### Helsinki Partners Ltd

Part of the City Group, Helsinki Partners is responsible for increasing the city’s international competitiveness and appeal, attracting international companies, investments, talent and visitors and B2B events, as well as building the city’s global reputation and brand. Helsinki Partners’ activities include attracting tourists and congresses, active public relations and media work, and close cooperation with companies. The company is also responsible for the maintenance, content production and development of the MyHelsinki.fi website and MyHelsinki social media channels.

### Helsinki Event Foundation

Part of the City Group, Helsinki Event Foundation organises significant public events such as Helsinki Festival, Lux Helsinki, Helsinki Day, Helsinki’s New Year’s Eve celebrations, Baltic Herring Market and Helsinki Christmas Market.

### Helsinki City Premises Ltd

Part of the City Group, Helsinki City Premises Ltd is responsible for the development of the premises and areas it rents out. The company’s mission is to raise Helsinki’s profile as a more attractive and competitive city by developing the city’s urban and food culture and market and market hall operations, ensuring their flexible and cost-effective organisation.

### Kiinteistö Oy Kaapelitalo

Kiinteistö Oy Kaapelitalo (Kaapeli) is a property management company owned by the City of Helsinki that owns, renovates and rents old industrial premises for art and cultural purposes. The objective is to provide functional and inspiring spaces for different forms of culture.

### Olympic Stadium

The renewed Olympic Stadium is the largest arena for events in Finland, offering an impressive setting for international events. The stadium is also the most desired and famed meeting point for physical activities, sports, entertainment and tourism.

### Finlandia Hall Ltd

Finlandia Hall is a subsidiary organisation of the city operating under market conditions. Finlandia Hall’s role in the city’s meeting and congress sector, in particular, is significant. Finlandia Hall is closed for renovation between 2022 and 2024, with Little Finlandia serving as a replacement facility.

## Cooperation with stakeholders outside the city

The city cooperates extensively with various stakeholders. Below are some key organisations and other bodies with which we cooperate.

### Finnish stakeholders

- Visit Finland (international marketing, digital development, sustainable development)
- Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council (Helsinki-Uusimaa tourism expert group)
- Association of Tourism Organisations in Finland – Suoma ry (Helsinki-member, representative on the Board of Directors, i-division)
- Finnish event industry association (close cooperation in promoting the event sector as a whole)
- Event cities’ cooperation group
- Congress Network Finland ry – CNF
- Finland Promotion Board and Finland Promotion Board Task Force
- Finnish Association for Tourism and Restaurant Services (MaRa) and Association of Finnish Travel Industry (SMAL) (no membership, close dialogue with each other)
- Other tourism regions (close cooperation with Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere, Turku and Oulu, for example)

### International stakeholders

Helsinki’s success as a travel destination depends on international visitors. Helsinki must also be at the heart of international development discussion and work to be relevant as a destination.

- European Capital of Smart Tourism (Helsinki won the EU Commission’s initiative in 2019)
- European Tourism Association – ETOA
- Nordic Tourism Collective
- European Cities Marketing – ECM (with Helsinki Marketing’s CEO on the Board 2019–2022)
- World Tourism Cities Federation– WTCF (with the Mayor on the board)
- Eurocities City Branding and Attractiveness working group
- Cruise Baltic
- International Congress and Convention Association – ICCA
- Global Destination Sustainability Movement – GDS
- The City Network on Food & Gastronomy – Delice



Appendix 3.

SDG analysis

SDG analysis tool



SDG analysis of city-level guidance documents

Name of the programme/plan Roadmap for Tourism and Events 2022–2026

19 April 2022

Impact on the UN Sustainable Development Goals



Positive, direct	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Positive, indirect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negative, indirect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negative, direct	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More information required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

City Strategy sustainability goals specifically promoted by the programme	In Helsinki, the vibrant urban culture, complete with events, tourists and restaurants, has been adopted as a key strategic priority for promoting vitality and well-being. Besides the significant economic multiplier effects, tourism and events promote understanding, social cohesion and tolerance between people and cultures.
Assessment of the effectiveness of the programme/plan objectives in relation to the SDG and strategy goals	The roadmap for tourism and events plays a key role in promoting the sustainable development goals for travel and events in Helsinki. The roadmap observes the sustainable development goals extensively and with an ambitious approach. In particular, the roadmap contributes to SDGs 8, 9, 11 and 12, with several other goals promoted indirectly. Sustainability is actively monitored using the Global Destination Sustainability Index, for example. Tourism and events also include negative environmental impacts. Therefore, it is very important to reduce these through the goals and show an example to others. That said, tourism and events produce many positive social and economic impacts. The tourism and event industry employ a significant number of young people and immigrants, in particular.



The image features a stylized map of Finland. The landmass is represented by a solid teal color, while the surrounding water is a light blue. The word "Helsinki" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font inside a white-outlined speech bubble that points to the capital city's location on the southern coast of Finland.

**Helsinki**