

# Helsinki on the global stage

## Benchmarking Helsinki's Brand in a Global Context

**The Business of Cities,  
for City of Helsinki & Helsinki Marketing  
December 2020**



Helsinki

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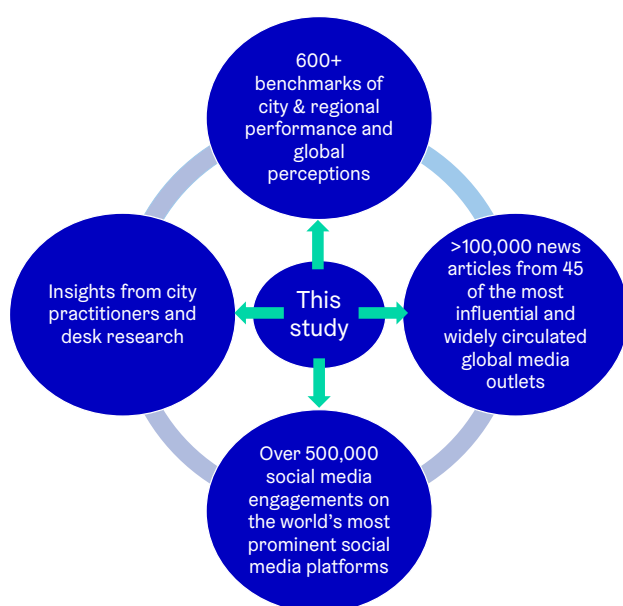
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# Executive Summary

This report provides an ‘outside-in’ brand analysis of how Helsinki is perceived by the world, based on analytics of the world’s 600 city benchmarks, crowd-sourced data platforms, social and print media, and the perspectives of international city leaders and commentators.

These tools are used together to observe the change in Helsinki’s external perception and recognition since 2015 and the current balance of Helsinki’s recognition among international audiences.

## The data underlying this report



Helsinki is entering a new cycle, accelerated by the shock and effects of Covid-19. After having emerged in the 2000s as a niche hub of technology and entrepreneurship, in the last cycle Helsinki has looked to established itself as a for-

ward-thinking city, distinctive within the Nordic system, with enhanced focus on digitisation, citizen participation and leadership on sustainability.

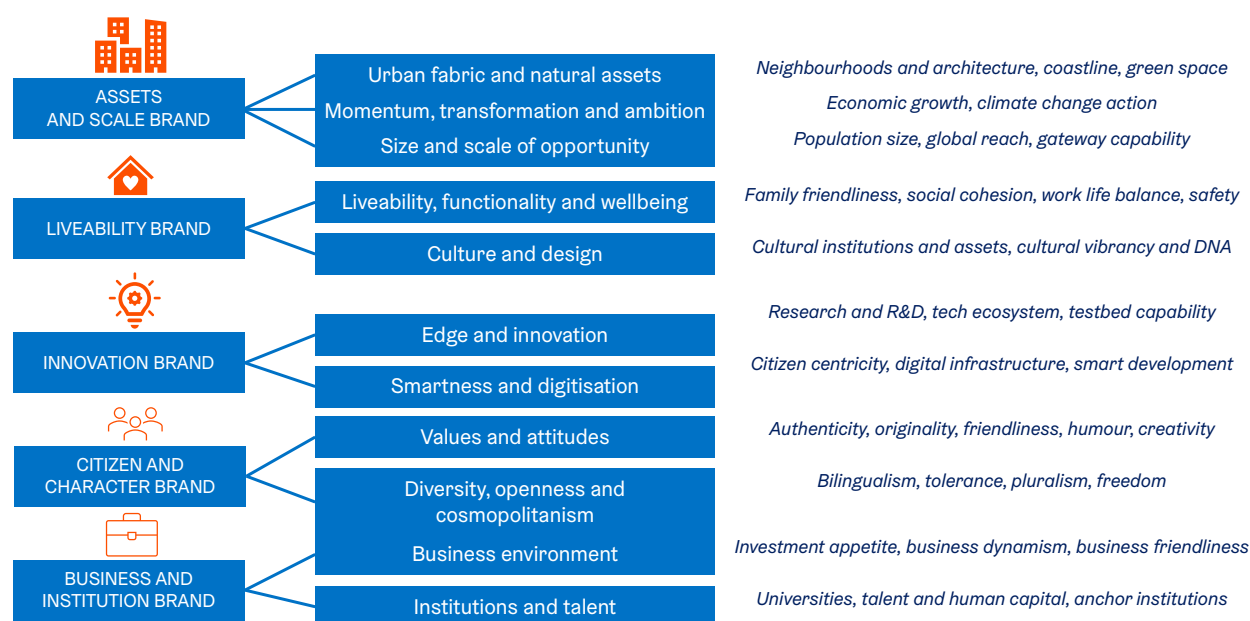
Covid-19 now creates new questions about what Helsinki’s success model will look like. There are clear choices ahead about what Helsinki will try to achieve, how it will build on the successes from previous cycles, and in what ways it will use strategic communication and identity-building to guide and shape priorities.

With these choices in mind, this report assesses the strength and the balance of Helsinki’s brand identity across different audience segments.

International experience suggests that the balance of a city’s brand identity affects the ability of medium-sized and more remote cities in smaller national markets to become more visible and expand the variety and value of its proposition to the rest of the world. Brand balance shapes not only the visitor economy offer, but also the credibility of a location for business, investment, study and innovation. It impacts on talent attraction and retention. A broad base of appeal responds to the reality that audiences are fluid: today’s tourist visitor could be tomorrow’s student, resident or investor.

As such, this paper assesses Helsinki’s brand power across five sub-themes, co-created with the City of Helsinki and Helsinki Marketing. This framework has been designed to assess exactly where and how Helsinki’s brand identity registers internationally (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The brand framework underlying this report**



The combined analysis has revealed the following six core findings for Helsinki:

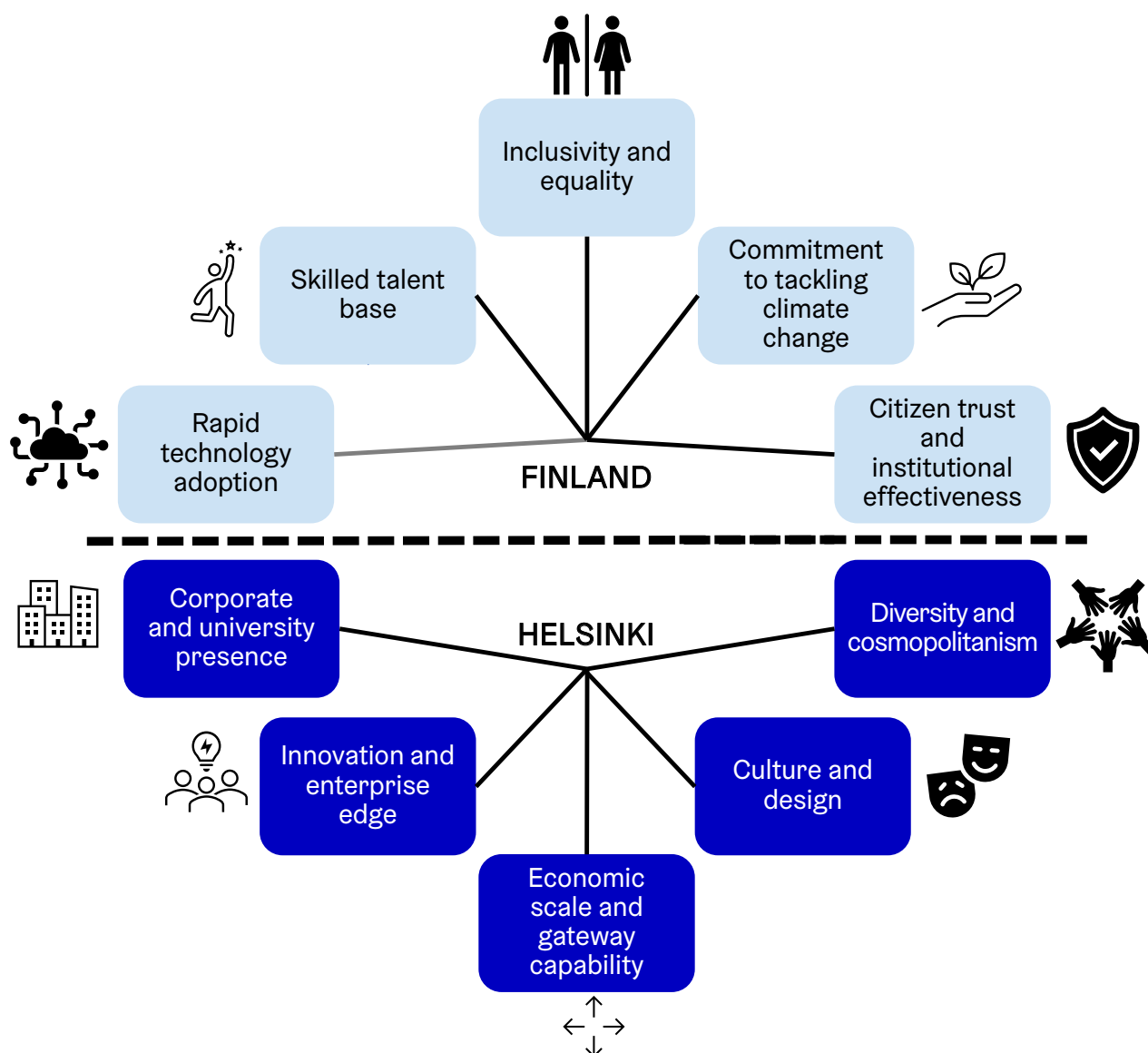
- 1. The world is becoming more aware of what differentiates and defines Helsinki.** Helsinki has been acquiring a reputation as a ‘good’ and responsible city, with efficient systems, high quality of life and a commitment to implementing forward-looking policy. Helsinki also has fewer of the perceived externalities associated with successful cities. Global attitudes and sentiment towards Helsinki are more likely to be positive than for other Nordic capital cities.
- 2. Helsinki’s overall visibility and endorsement in international arenas is still behind comparable cities.** Coverage in global media has grown significantly, but it is less present in the benchmarks and commentary in travel, lifestyle, and millennial-oriented media that generate a lot of global attention. Other cities are also making more progress on digital platforms, leveraging more endorsement from influencers and third parties with large global followings.
- 3. Helsinki is well regarded among those who already know the city well, but does not yet receive the benefit of the doubt from those who do not.** Audiences with ‘on the ground’ experience of the city continue to rate the city more favourably than external expats or commentators. This suggests that there is a ‘positive surprise’ for those who visit, and that there are opportunities to mobilise those who are already ‘fans’ and build affinity among those who are less familiar.
- 4. Helsinki’s form, character and fun are not well known or cherished.** The city’s ‘icons’ – its neighbourhoods, districts, architecture and public spaces – are less visible or appreciated than in comparable cities. Helsinki is also not yet viewed as a compelling first-choice city for culture, creativity, vibrancy and entertainment. High praise for the city’s compactness, walkability and safety far outweigh endorsement for the city’s ‘fun factor’ and talent appeal.
- 5. Helsinki’s reputation for openness, welcome, or friendliness to fast-scaling business is limited.** The city is less commonly associated with hospitality, energy or warmth, while easy support for investors and newcomers is less observed about Helsinki compared to other cities. Although Helsinki’s start-up initiatives are on the radar, the city is not as strongly associated with larger businesses, private sector innovation, or with a wider culture of enterprise.
- 6. Helsinki’s brand has room to catch up with the product.** Helsinki’s objective performance, in

terms of its ability to deliver positive outcomes for citizens, is improving faster than perceptions. Helsinki stands out as the only Nordic capital where overall perceptions lag behind objective performance. Strong performance has not yet driven wider positive reputational spillovers to the same extent as in other cities.

Looking ahead to the next strategy cycle, these findings point to a few imperatives for Helsinki:

- 1. Match the noble aims to a big picture vision.** Helsinki has made progress by being visible in tech, policy and innovation networks, and seeking validation as a highly functional and 'no nonsense' city. But in order to cross over beyond this core group of enthusiasts to a broader base of appeal, it may need to match these agendas with a big picture vision of what kind of city Helsinki really wants to be. It is not yet clear that Helsinki is seeking the type of reputation that it would need to win the support and affection of rest of the world. A clearer sense of a) what the innovation and functionality is in aid of, i.e. what city Helsinki really wants to be, and b) what innovation and functionality really mean for citizens, visitors and prospective residents, seems to be an important priority.
- 2. Beware of overplaying the tech story.** Helsinki's headway in tech and smart living is registering but there is a risk this crowds out other elements of the city and accidentally conveys the city as impersonal, efficient and even robotic. Helsinki needs a tech story that prioritises the end goals rather than the technical means – the human outcomes of being able to make a living, form strong communities, and welcome and understand other people.
- 3. Communicate Helsinki's soul, magic and emotion.** Helsinki can communicate enthusiasm for its future in more natural, less rigid ways, that evoke the distinctive character of the people of Helsinki and the variety of its neighbourhoods and experiences.
- 4. Show that Helsinki is part of something bigger, without compromising on quality.** In some cases, the overriding perception of Helsinki is still one of a small and remote city – especially relative to the Scandinavian capitals. To overcome this perception, Helsinki can show how it connects to its region and to other neighbouring cities – it can: a) communicate the scale of its market and offering more precisely and confidently; b) promote its connection to other cities regionally – e.g. as part of a Baltic Sea group of cities; and c) demonstrate its gateway capability to connect Europe with fast-growing Asian markets. All of the above can help to make Helsinki seem not only bigger in itself, but also part of a broader proposition, and more present on the global stage.
- 5. Enlist businesses to broaden the promotional effort.** Helsinki's innovation and technology brand does not currently translate into a reputational business advantage, as is the case in other Nordic capitals. In order to better integrate the two brands and more confidently communicate the link to economic dynamism and business friendliness, Helsinki can enlist the businesses that are taking advantage of innovation to help promote what innovation adds to productivity, reach and enterprise. There is scope for more businesses to communicate Helsinki's innovation advantage, not only City Hall. This can also help to ensure that Helsinki's innovation brand spills over into other areas and does not become a narrow 'tech' brand.
- 6. Develop an urban brand that can complement the national brand.** Helsinki is understood by the world as a clearly Finnish city. But although the Finnish brand is becoming clearer, it is still very much a brand that is focused on broad national aggregates (such as rapid technology adoption, gender and income equality, and commitment to tackling climate change). As a result, it lacks a deep place specificity. Helsinki has an opportunity to engage national government and promotion agencies to promote Helsinki as a place that brings together these national qualities with the additional urban and metropolitan attributes of decision-making power, enterprise culture, economic scale, cosmopolitanism and corporate presence. This will also require innovative tactics to demonstrate that Helsinki's more distinctive elements complement and strengthen the national brand (see below).

## Model of interdependencies and complementarities between Finnish brand and Helsinki brand



Helsinki is not the only city that faces these imperatives. Helsinki is part of a distinct group of high-performing, rapidly globalising cities – sometimes called ‘New World Cities’ – that are smaller, more specialised, and have distinctive points of difference and opportunity relative to larger and more established global cities (see page 23).





This group of cities that Helsinki is among has, in general, gradually started to shift their approach to strategy and branding. They recognise that in

order to attract the people, the audiences and the opportunities they really want, and meet the expectations others place on them, they have to build different kinds of approach in the way they organise, promote and deliver their strategies (see below).

**Table 1: The evolving success model for ‘New World Cities’ strategy and identity development**

	Old cycle success model	New cycle success model
<b>Priority agendas</b>	Tourism attraction and visitor brand FDI metrics Internationalisation and emerging markets	Talent stickiness, sustainability and innovation Business brand & citizen brand support visitor brand Placemaking, experience, spontaneity and human connections
<b>Asset promotion and target audiences</b>	Multiple campaigns in different sectors: siloed approach to promoting assets Focus on single niches and specific audiences	Recognition and promotion of all assets together Achieve cross-over appeal and avoid lock-in
<b>Delivery</b>	Primarily City Government led Dedicated agencies operating in siloes One off incentives and tools Individual short-term campaigns	Partnership-led - businesses, institutions and civic actors play shaping and ambassador roles Longer term strategies and reforms Invite people to ‘touch’ and ‘feel’ the city Integrated campaigns linked to big picture vision Coordination and complementarity with national level
<b>Scale</b>	Just the City	The Whole City-Region

**Key data points at a glance**

	2019–2020		5-year change
Visibility in global benchmarks	<b>43<sup>rd</sup> globally</b> (average among peers = 40th)		
5-year change in influencer kudos	<b>+11%</b> (average among Scandinavian peers = -6%)		
Perception vs. performance gap	<b>-7 places</b> (average among peers = +/- 0)		
Fastest growing brand niche*	<b>Liveability, functionality &amp; wellbeing</b> (+10% since 2015; values and attitudes +2%; momentum, transformation and ambition +1%)		-
Fastest shrinking brand niche*	<b>Urban fabric</b> (-8% since 2015; culture and design -4%; size and scale -1%)		
Global media profile (2019-20 index)	<b>94</b> (average among peers = 100)		
Social media buzz (2020 index)	<b>99</b> (average among peers = 100)		

Source: The Business of Cities research. Change in number of endorsements by influencers = change in number of verified users Tweeting about Helsinki, 2014-2019. Perception vs. performance gap = difference between aggregate rank across all perception benchmarks and all studies based on objective performance. Global media profile index = number of articles mentioning Helsinki in 45 of the most globally influential news outlets, relative to population size. Social media Buzz Index = number of Instagram hashtags containing city name per 10,000 residents and international visitors.



## Helsinki's performance among its 10 city Peer Group

5-year change in global media presence	Perceptions among audiences with long-term familiarity	Relative Instagrammability and Instagram Buzz	Absence of negative sentiment in online conversation	Global surveyed reputation and perception
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>

Visibility in global benchmarks	Presence in 'top city' media features	Social media visibility	Presence in global media (size adjusted)	Perceptions among unfamiliar audiences
7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>

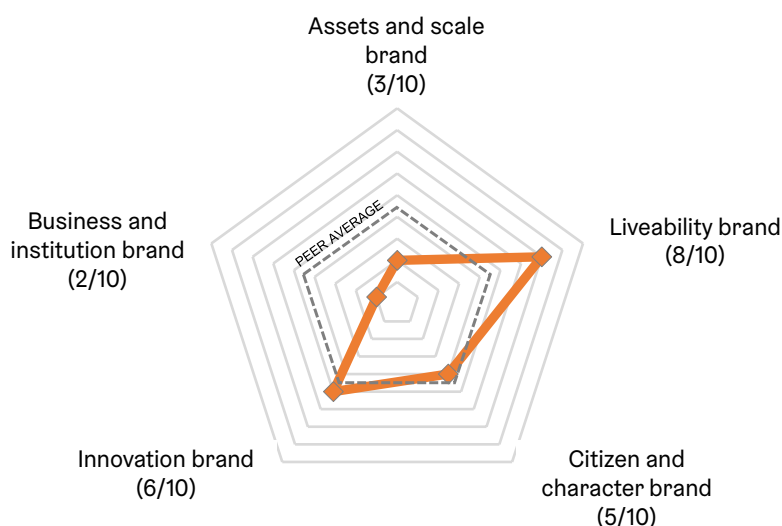
Source: The Business of Cities research. Top global media presence = number of articles mentioning Helsinki in 45 of the most globally influential news outlets. Relative Instagrammability and Instagram Buzz = number of Instagram hashtags containing city name per 10,000 residents and international visitors. Absence of negative sentiment in online conversation = % of negative mentions as proportion of total mentions in wider online conversation (Google). Global surveyed reputation and perception = aggregate position across all global perception and reputation surveys. Social media visibility = total number of hashtags containing the city name (Instagram).

## Helsinki's brand balance in 2020

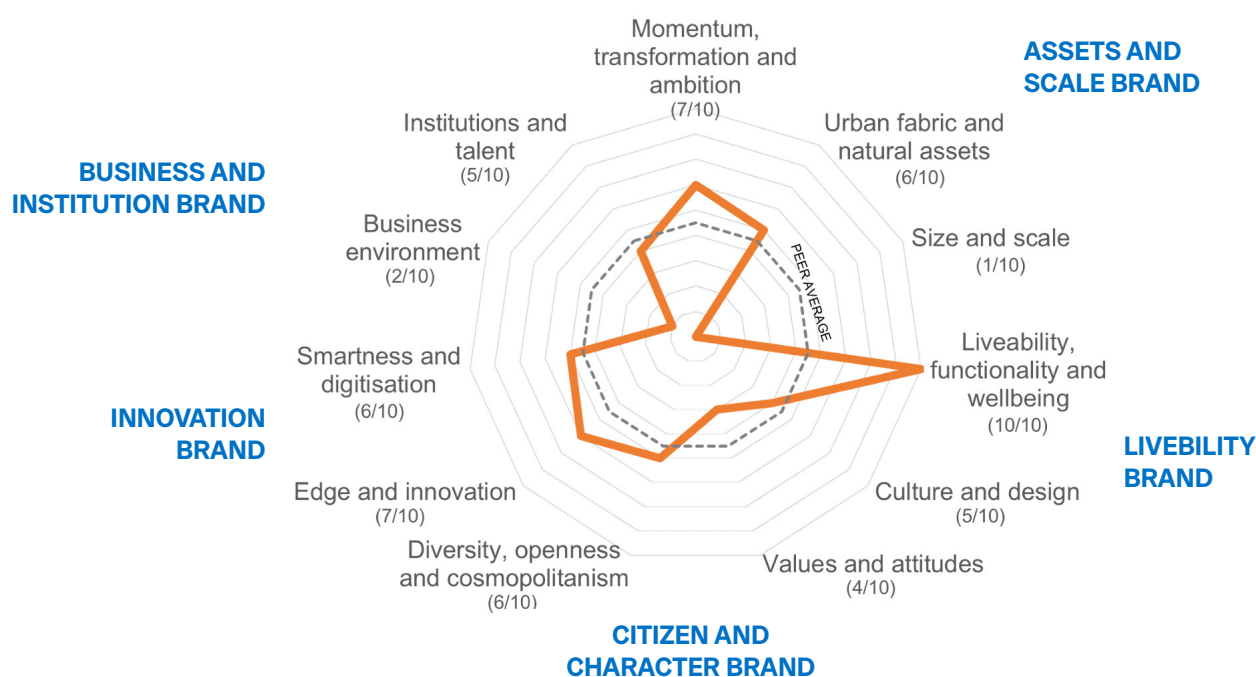
Across all approaches and datasets, liveability emerges as Helsinki's strongest brand advantage, with a score of 8/10 compared to a peer average of 5/10.

This strong liveability brand masks a divergence between different elements: while Helsinki's reputation for liveability, functionality and wellbeing is very clear, its culture and design strengths are not as widely visible. The two main areas where Helsinki's brand is less visible than that of its peers are for business and institutions (2/10) and assets and scale (3/10). This is mainly due to the lower visibility of Helsinki's size and scale (1/10) and its business environment (2/10).





Source: The Business of Cities research. Includes Helsinki and peer cities' scores across all datasets relating to brand strength, including global benchmarks (50% weighting), online conversation (40% weighting) and social media presence (10% weighting). See Appendix for full methodology.



Source: The Business of Cities research. Includes Helsinki and peer cities' scores across all datasets relating to brand strength, including global benchmarks (50% weighting), online conversation (40% weighting) and social media presence (10% weighting). See Appendix for full methodology and breakdown of scores.

## About the methodology

Each of the four evidence bases (benchmarks, media, social media, and peer insight) provide distinctive insights for Helsinki (see table below). This is because

they naturally involve different kinds of audience and perspectives, and because the time horizon or data availability varies across these different sources.

Evidence base	Type	Scope	Approach	Specific insights for Helsinki
<b>Benchmarks</b>	Visibility in the benchmarks	600+ benchmarks of city and regional performance and perception	Global review and ELO algorithm to compute aggregate scores by theme	How recognised is Helsinki in global studies & surveys? How is this changing?
	Scores in the benchmarks			Is perception in sync with performance? What can Helsinki really shout about?
<b>Global media</b>	Visibility in global media	>100,000 news articles	Review of articles mentioning Helsinki from 45 of the most widely circulated global media outlets	In which markets is Helsinki more or less resonant? How is this changing?
	Recurrent themes in global media			What do high level commentators focus on? How has this changed?
<b>Social media and online conversation</b>	Instagram analysis	>500,000 social media engagements	Total no. of hashtags relative to population and visitor throughput, breakdown of top 55 hashtags	How visible is Helsinki? What role do visitors play in endorsing Helsinki?
	Twitter analysis		Coverage of Tweets spanning key phrases for Helsinki*	What is Helsinki's potential global brand reach? What resonates the most among celebrities & influencers?
	Online conversation		Review of nouns and adjectives used to describe Helsinki in key phrases logged by Google**	How positively do the general public view Helsinki? How are all-round impressions of the city changing?
<b>City practitioners and competitor insights</b>	City practitioner intelligence	Interviews with 10 city practitioners in Helsinki's peer cities		How do other similar cities view Helsinki?
	Competitor analysis	Review of peer city plans, policies, strategies and brand collateral		How are other cities branding themselves? What are the shared lessons?

\*Verified Twitter users includes individuals, news outlets and organisations. \*\* The key phrases include: "Helsinki is a \* city", "Helsinki is famous for \*", "Helsinki is described as \*", "Helsinki is renowned for/known for \*", and "Helsinki is a city of \*" (Where \* is any word used to describe the city)

Wherever possible we have observed the overall findings across different sources, and overall there was consistency in findings on Helsinki among different approaches. In some cases they reveal slightly contrasting findings which deserve explanation. For example:

- For **urban fabric**, the evidence suggests that there is positive acclaim from critics and reviewers but that this has not translated into a general brand identity:
  - Top global media commentary has maintained a consistent focus on Helsinki's urban fabric, including its mix of architecture, functional design and associations with Art Nouveau.
  - The general public in key target markets are describing Helsinki less often in terms of its urban fabric than in the past - but because there is a narrower overall range of associations people make about Helsinki, there is still a higher share of references to Helsinki's urban fabric than in the other Nordic capitals.
  - The all-round global resonance of Helsinki's neighbourhoods, districts and architecture on Instagram is not as high as in other cities.
- For **culture and design**, the evidence also suggests that international commentators and promoters applaud Helsinki's efforts but that these characteristics have not penetrated wider consciousness as much as in other cities:
  - Global media commentators who are familiar with the city's DNA of design, communicate strongly about it.
  - The Instagrammability of Helsinki's cultural events – such as Lux, Helsinki Day and pride celebrations - remains high.
  - But the likelihood of the general public in key target markets describing Helsinki from a culture and design lens has plateaued, after an earlier surge of interest linked to its 2012 World Capital of Design status.

- Helsinki's **business and institution brand** is as visible as that of other cities in the global online conversation (although lower than in Nordic cities), but the city's business strengths and institutional prowess is much less visible in performance benchmarks, global surveys, and social media engagements.

In most cases, the data indicates that Helsinki's brand progress has occurred through channels where people 'in the know' remark on the city's positive changes, but there is a gap between these brand drivers and the wider perception of the city as a whole.

**The 6 key findings that emerge from all 4 evidence bases, and are consistent across the different approaches, are summarised below.**

## In Brief: The 6 key findings

Below we summarise the 6 key findings of the report, as introduced on page 4.

## 1. The world is becoming more aware of what differentiates and defines Helsinki.

**Since 2015, Helsinki has been acquiring a reputation as a 'good' and responsible city.** It has begun to register in global studies and media commentary as a leading-edge city in niches relating to smart development and green growth. Global commentators have become more likely to describe it as ambitious, progressive and forward-looking, with efficient systems and a high quality of life. People are now less likely to

describe Helsinki using generic or commonplace first impressions.

**Helsinki has fewer of the perceived externalities associated with successful cities.** As a result, Helsinki remains more highly regarded on average than many larger and more established cities. Despite not having quite as strong a brand overall, global sentiment towards Helsinki is currently more positively disposed than in the other Nordic capitals. Fewer people comment on cost, expense or immigration challenges, and appreciation for efficiency and liveability is higher. This positivity partly reflects Helsinki's lower overall profile, and the city's capacity to exceed prior expectations.

**Figure 2: Evolution of nouns and adjectives used to describe Helsinki in the global conversation, 2014-15 and 2019-20**



### Fastest growing terms used to describe Helsinki, 2014–2015 to 2019–2020

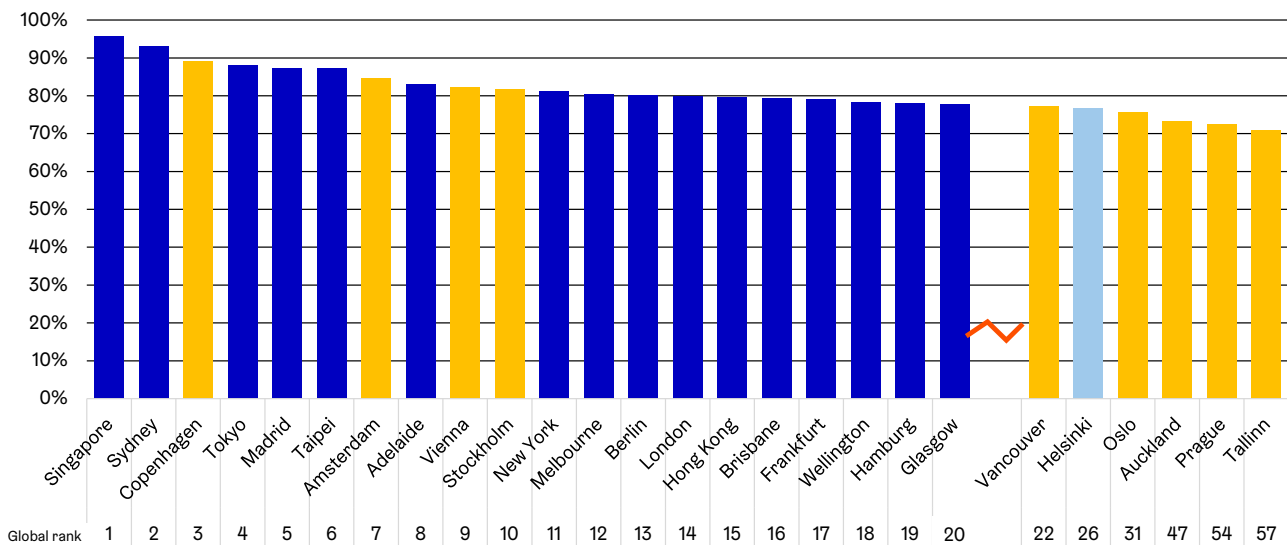
	Change in proportion of total online mentions
Compact	+3.3%
Modern	+1.4%
Vibrant	+1.1%
Seaside	+1.1%
Nature	+1.0%

### Fastest declining terms used to describe Helsinki, 2014–2015 to 2019–2020

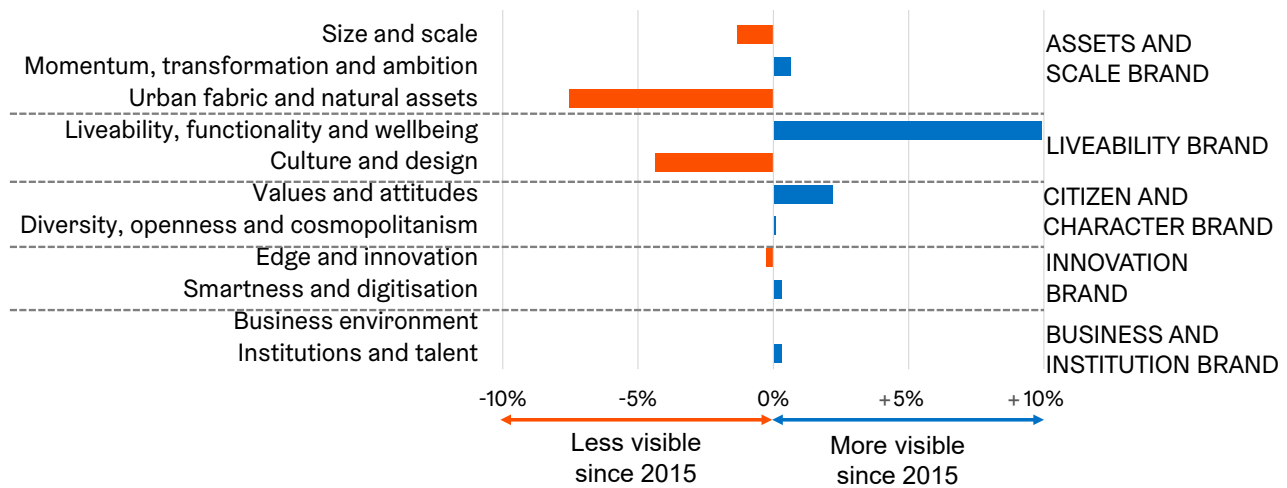
	Change in proportion of total online mentions
Beauty	-2.5%
Architecture	-3.4%
Beautiful	-3.6%
Great	-3.9%
Cathedral	-6.4%

Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology.

**Figure 3: The top 20 most highly regarded cities in perception-only benchmarks, plus Helsinki and peers, 2019-20**

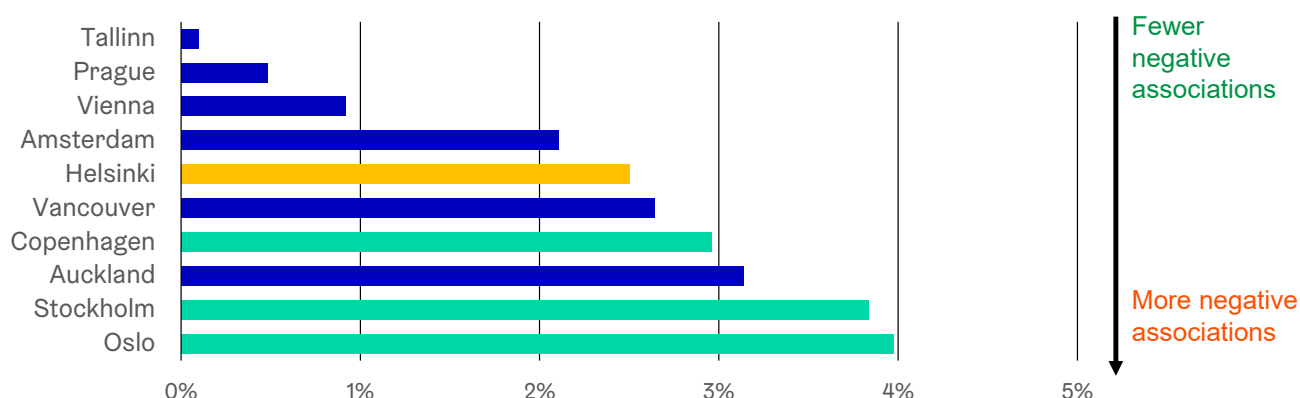


**Figure 4: Change in relative visibility of Helsinki's various brand segments in the global conversation, 2014-15 to 2019-20**



Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for notes on methodology. \*Data based on a sample and should be treated as indicative.

**Figure 5: Negative mentions as a % of total mentions in the global conversation, 2019-20**



Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology. \*Data based on a sample and should be treated as indicative.

## 2. Helsinki's overall visibility and endorsement in international arenas is still behind other comparable cities.

**Helsinki's visibility in global studies that compare cities has plateaued since 2015, while in other cities it has increased.** Its status as a capital city, and its reputation for liveability, innovation and efficiency means it continues to be shortlisted often, despite its smaller size. But Helsinki is less visible in the new generation of travel, lifestyle, millennial-friendly and media benchmarks which generate a lot of attention and traffic. This means the city's sharper edges are not as recognised.

**Despite fast growth, Helsinki's visibility in the global media is still behind peer cities.** Visibility has been growing from a much lower base, yet the only markets where Helsinki is more visible than its peers are Russia and France. Helsinki is also not yet as prominent in the 'top tier' global media conversation, with a smaller increase in the most influential news outlets over the past 5 years. Helsinki has been mainly picking up low to medium value credit in the global media to this point.

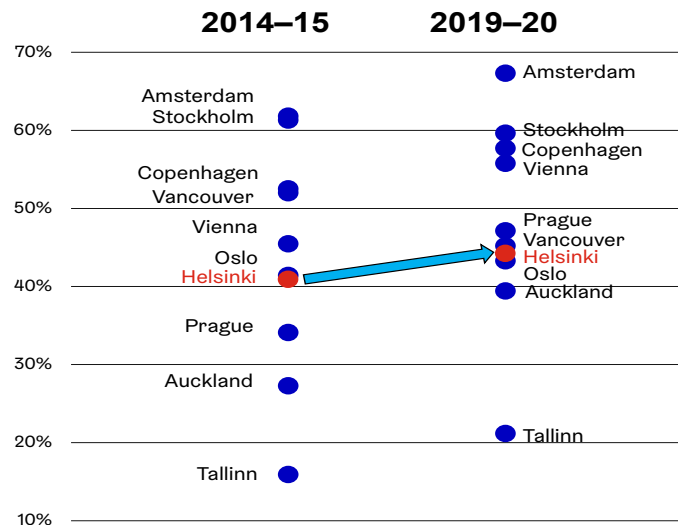
**Others are moving ahead of Helsinki for digital visibility.** Helsinki does not capture the same share of online recommendations, stories and references as its peers, and its visibility and reach among 'Influencers' has not increased as fast as in some other Nordic cities. The types of individuals and organisations endorsing the city online are not as widely followed as in the rest of the Nordics, and Helsinki also benefits from fewer new-generation influencers such as You-tubers, Bloggers and Social Media Influencers compared to this group. This suggests there is a challenge around widening the base of civic and third-party endorsement that may become even more important post-Covid.

**Figure 6: Helsinki's performance and visibility in the global benchmarks**

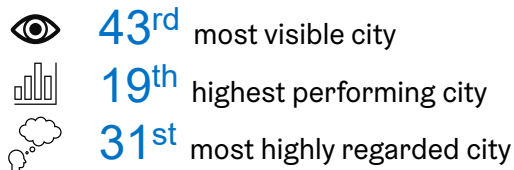
**At a glance: Helsinki in the benchmarks**

	2014–15	2019–20
Visibility in global benchmarks	=40 <sup>th</sup>	43 <sup>rd</sup> →
Aggregate score in performance benchmarks	31 <sup>st</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup> ↑
Aggregate score in benchmarks with perception measures	34 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> ↑

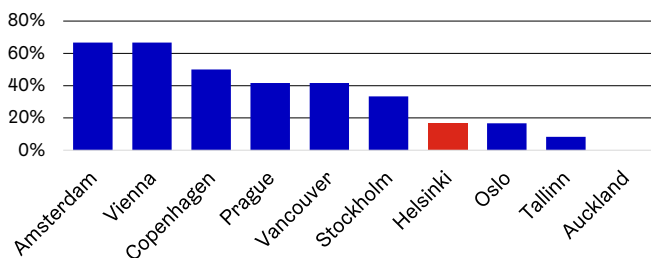
**Helsinki's visibility in the benchmarks**



**In 2019-20, Helsinki is the:**



**Helsinki's visibility in next-generation media and travel benchmarks of the 'top cities'\***



\* Benchmarks produced by media and travel companies or other less established benchmark producers, analysing 60 or fewer of the world's 'top' cities, July 2017 to June 2020.

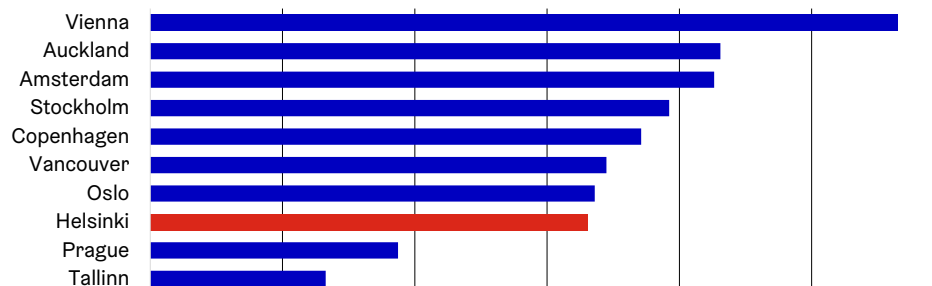
**Figure 7: Helsinki's visibility in the global media, relative to peers**

**Helsinki's media visibility**

(2014/15 to 2019/20)

**+247%**

**Helsinki's visibility relative to its size (2019-20)**



**Visibility in the agenda-setting global conversation in 2019-20**

(relative to size, 100 = peer average)

**67**

**8<sup>th</sup> among peers**

**Visibility in dedicated tech media in 2019-20**

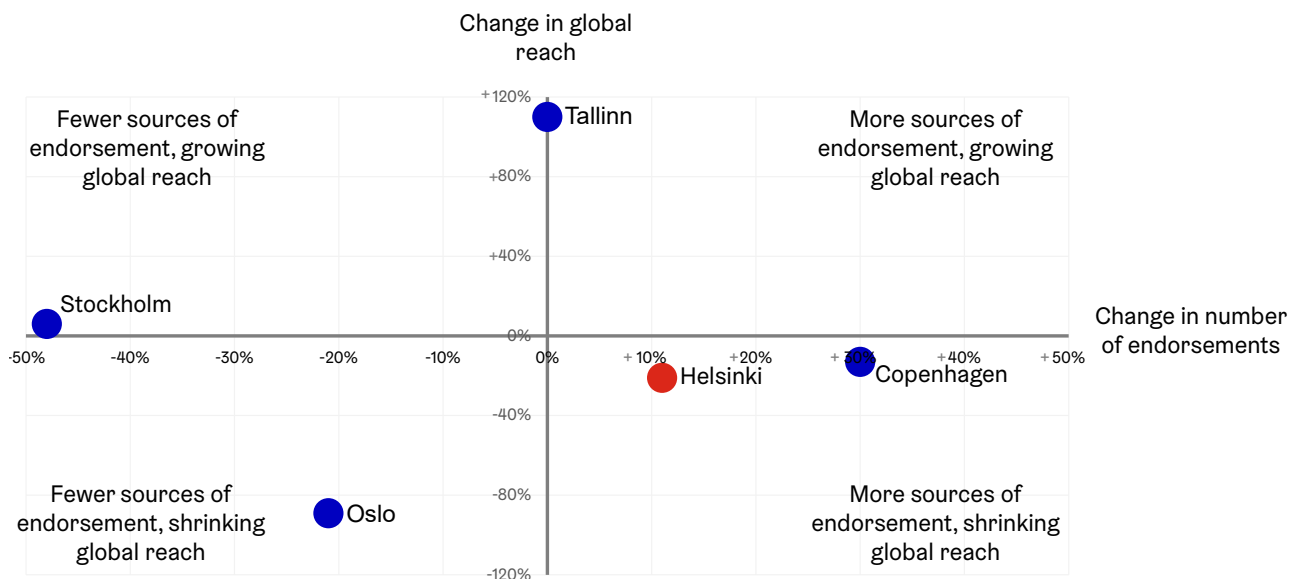
(relative to size, 100 = peer average)

**103**

**5<sup>th</sup> among peers**

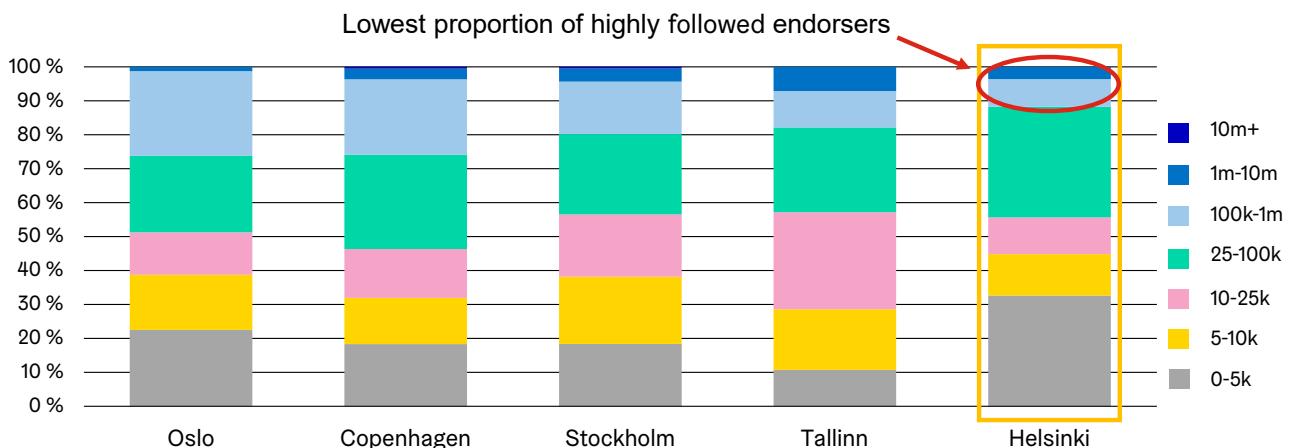


**Figure 8: Change in number of tweets (x) and global reach among verified Twitter users (y), 2014-2019**



Source: The Business of Cities Research. \*Data based on a sample and should be treated as indicative.

**Figure 9: Breakdown of verified Twitter users Tweeting about Helsinki and the other Nordic cities by number of followers in 2019**



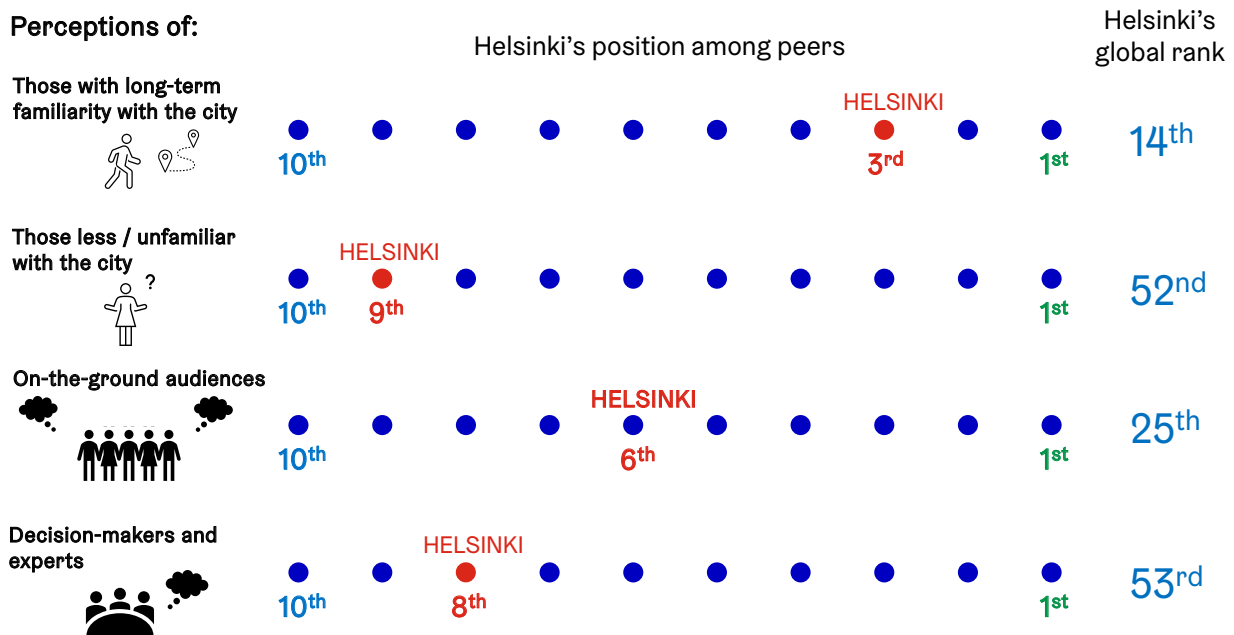
Source: The Business of Cities Research. \*Data based on a sample and should be treated as indicative.

### 3. Helsinki is well regarded among those who already know the city well, but does not yet receive the benefit of the doubt from those who do not.

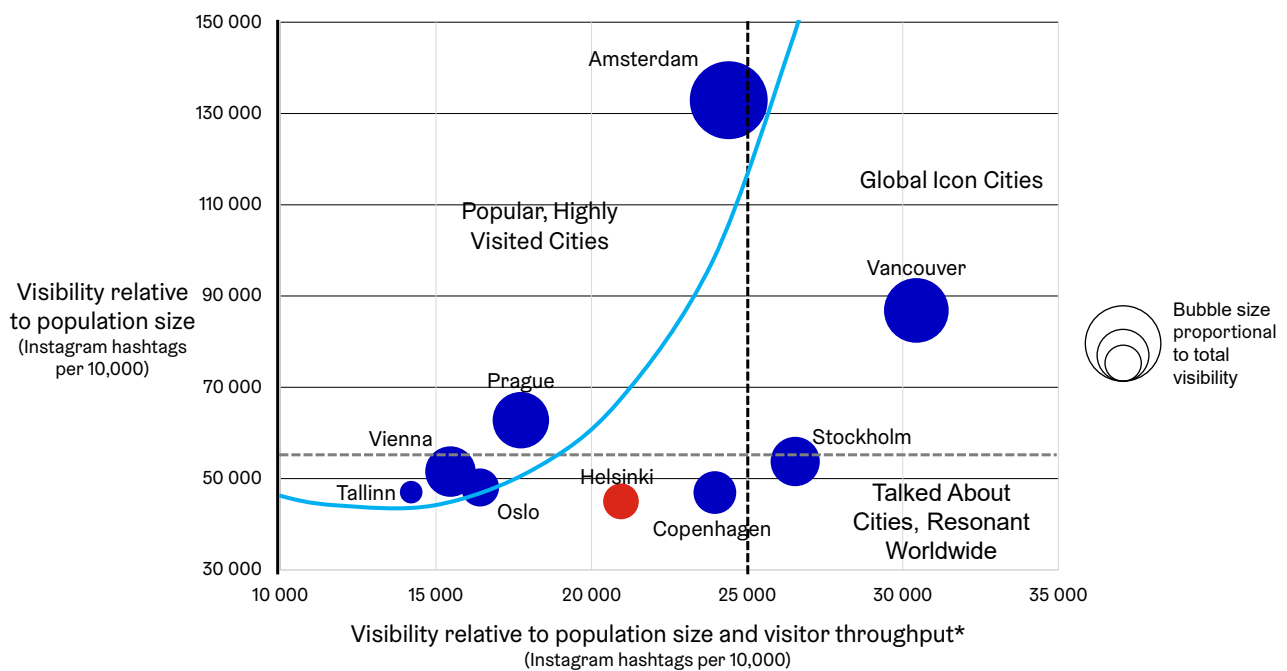
Audiences with ‘on the ground’ experience of Helsinki, such as citizens and frequent visitors, rate the city more favourably than external experts or commentators, like investment allocators or global business executives. ‘Influencers’ who have visited the city regularly praise its cultural and culinary scene,

but this contrasts with the much lower visibility of Helsinki’s cultural strengths in the wider online conversation. This suggests that there is a certain element of ‘positive surprise’ for those who visit the city, and that Helsinki is part of a group of cities that are not yet widely talked about unless visited. This compares with widely talked about cities that resonate globally (e.g. Stockholm), popular and highly visited cities (e.g. Prague, Amsterdam), or global ‘icon’ cities that combine these characteristics (e.g. Vancouver).

**Figure 10: Helsinki's aggregate position among benchmark surveys, across different audiences**



**Figure 11: Helsinki and peer cities' visibility on social media, absolute and relative to population size and visitor throughput**



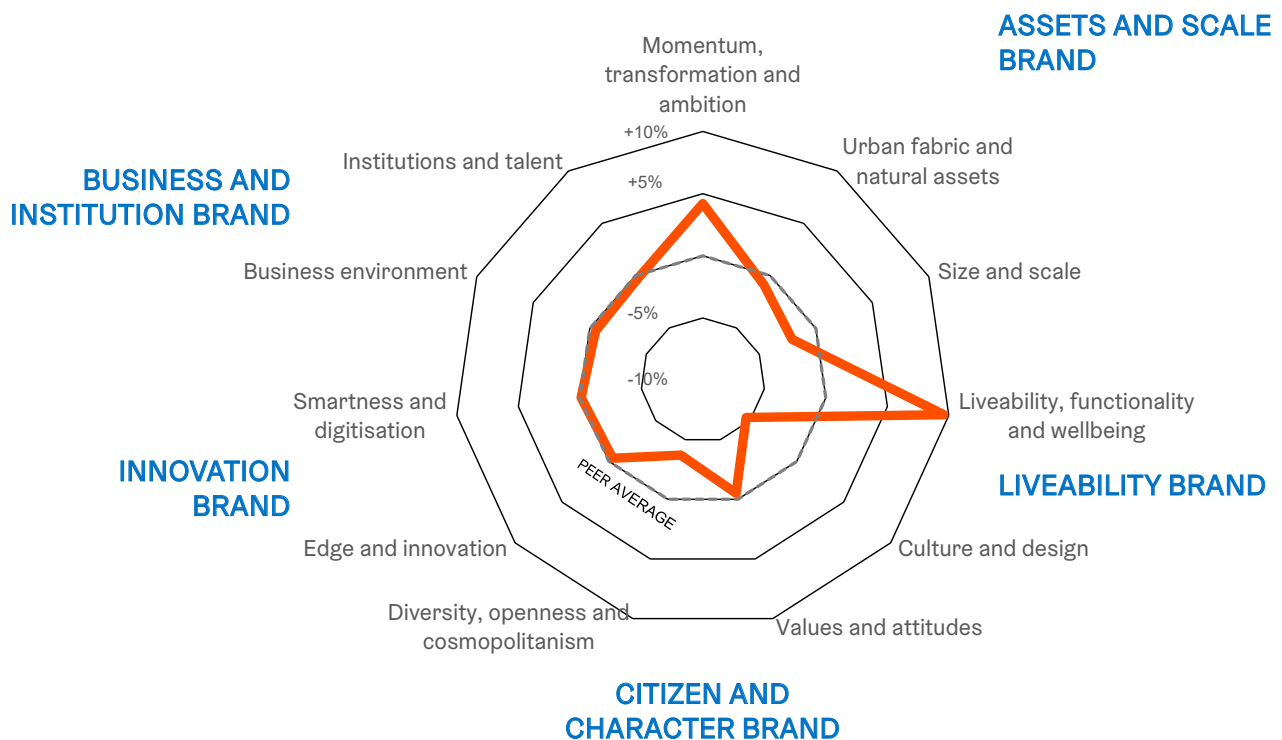
Sources: The Business of Cities research, Instagram, Eurostat, local sources.

#### 4. Helsinki's form, character and fun are not yet well known or cherished.

**Helsinki's neighbourhoods, districts and public spaces are not yet front of mind in the global imagination.** Helsinki is less visible than its peers in global studies of the best places for creativity, buzz, visual appeal, architecture, and placemaking, while the global conversation highlights that Helsinki's districts and neighbourhoods are not as visible as in cities such as Amsterdam, Auckland and Vancouver. Helsinki's 'icons' – its architecture, its skyline, and major projects – are not yet visible.

**Helsinki is not yet viewed as a compelling first-choice city for culture, creativity, vibrancy or experience.** The global studies and conversation highlight that high praise for the city's compactness, walkability and safety far outweigh endorsement for the city's 'fun factor' or talent appeal. Helsinki is not widely perceived as a first-choice city for talent to relocate to, and gaps persist around foreign and local resident satisfaction with both the cultural scene and cultural opportunities. Meanwhile there has also been a plateau in global public attention on the city's culture and design strengths following an earlier surge of interest and momentum linked to the city's status as the 2012 World Capital of Design.

**Figure 12: The relative visibility of Helsinki's brand sub-segments relative to its peers in the online conversation, 2019-20**



Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology.

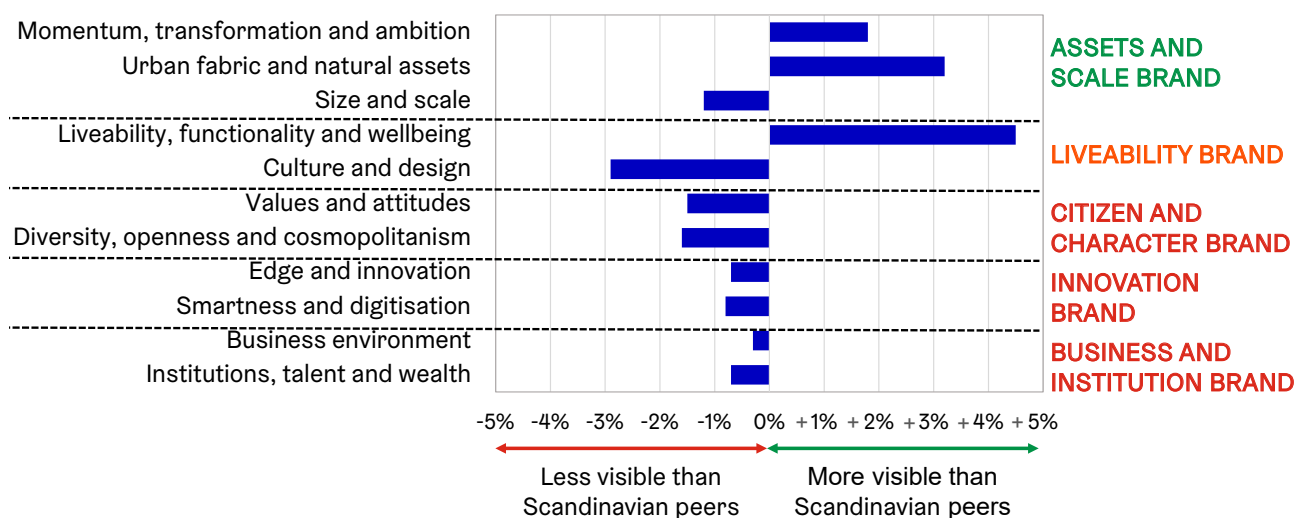
## 5. Helsinki's reputation for openness, warmth, citizen character, and friendliness to fast-scaling business, is limited.

**Helsinki's reputation for openness, warmth and citizen character is less well developed than in the other Nordic cities.** Friendliness and knowhow among investors and newcomers is less observed about Helsinki compared to other cities. The city is not widely associated with hospitality, energy or openness.

**Scandinavian cities are more renowned than Helsinki for scalable business opportunities.** Although Hel-

sinki's start-up initiatives are on the radar, the city is not associated with larger businesses, private sector innovation, or for a wider culture of enterprise. Global audiences are less likely to describe Helsinki in terms of its business dynamism, investment friendliness, or access to opportunity and talent, especially relative to Stockholm and Copenhagen. Finding innovative ways to promote Helsinki as a locus for the broader Finnish reputation of citizen trust and openness, and to involve businesses more directly in promoting the city's enterprise advantage, will be important imperatives in the next cycle.

**Figure 13: The visibility of Helsinki's brand sub-segments relative to its Nordic peers, 2019-20**



Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology.

6. Helsinki’s brand has room to catch up with the product.

Helsinki’s objective performance, in terms of its ability to deliver positive outcomes for citizens, visitors and investors, is improving faster than perceptions. Helsinki is now in the global top 20 for all-round performance, but perceptions have not yet caught up. Global studies attest to Helsinki’s large talent and skills base and resilient economic fundamentals, even relative to top international performers.

But on the ground progress has not always been matched by elevated brand or perception in these areas. Helsinki also stands out as the only Nordic capital where perceptions now lag behind objective performance. The city’s strong performance in terms of wellbeing and sustainability has not yet driven wider positive reputational spillovers, as has been the case elsewhere. This seems to be primarily linked to low levels of familiarity and limited awareness about the business and innovation proposition.

Figure 14: Summary of Nordic cities’ all-round performance and perception in the global benchmark studies

	Aggregate rank among performance measures / 200 cities	Aggregate rank among perception measures / 200 cities	Reputational (dis) advantage
Copenhagen	14th	3rd	+11
Stockholm	15th	10th	+5
Oslo	33rd	31st	+2
Helsinki	19th	26th	-7

Source: The Business of Cities research.

# Introduction

## This report

This report, undertaken by The Business of Cities on behalf of the City of Helsinki and Helsinki Marketing, benchmarks Helsinki's brand in a global context. It provides an 'outside-in' analysis of how Helsinki is performing and is perceived in global perspective, based on a review of:

1. The world's 600 comparative studies of city measurement
2. Crowd-sourced data platforms that measure citizen perceptions
3. Appearances in online, social and print media
4. The views and strategies of marketing and economic development leaders in cities.

The aim is to identify Helsinki's full range of advantages, areas where objective performance diverges from perception, and opportunities to improve visibility and reputation. A key objective is to inform decision making about Helsinki's global positioning, international marketing, and promotional objectives and strategies, by reviewing its position vis-à-vis comparator cities across all the latest benchmarks and datasets and analysing which aspects and characteristics are more or less significant among global media and city commentators.

The report is NOT a comparative assessment of Helsinki's brand strategies, governance, fiscal or policy models. It is not a recommendation of new policies that Helsinki should adopt. Nor is it a comprehensive competitiveness analysis of Helsinki.

Instead the aim is to allow the global benchmarks and the datasets from global media and the online conversation to 'speak for themselves' as a key collective source of insight about how Helsinki is recognised, valued and judged among international audiences.

The report is split into 2 main parts:

- Part 1 – Benchmarking Review
- Part 2 – Media Analysis (Global Media Analysis and 'Influencer' Review)

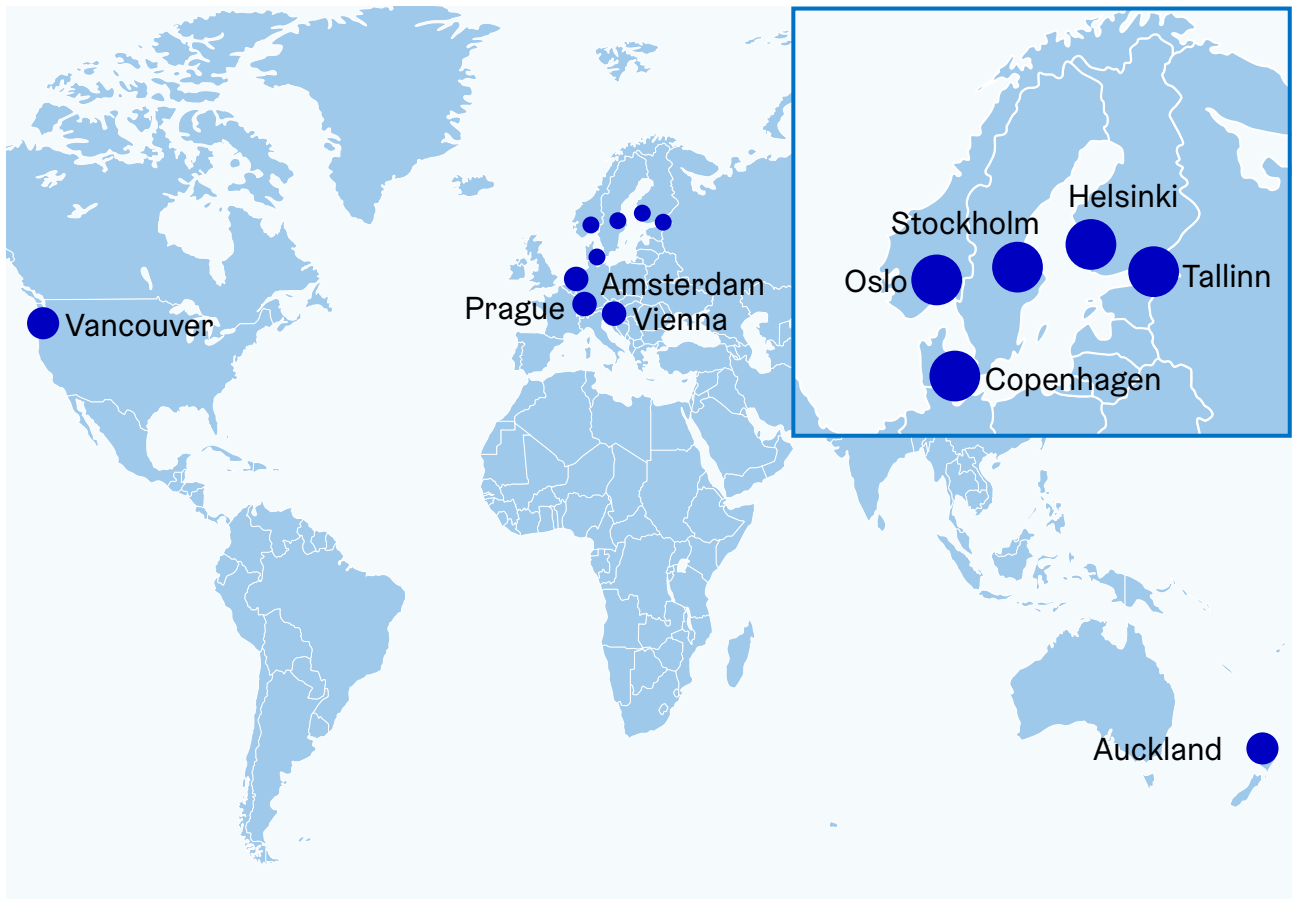
A separate note distils insights from interviews with city practitioners and peer city strategies to explore how leaders in Helsinki's peer cities perceive Helsinki, and what approaches others are taking to long-term brand and identity, including in response to Covid-19. The main findings from these interviews are in line with and substantiate the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

## A note on methodology, peers and scale

This report compares Helsinki both to the rest of the world's cities and to a smaller set of 'peer' cities that share many of Helsinki's characteristics. These include:

- Smaller population size (metropolitan population between 0.75 and 3 million)
- High quality of life
- Efficient infrastructure platform
- Developed or fast-growing innovation ecosystem

The peer cities are: Amsterdam, Auckland, Copenhagen, Oslo, Prague, Stockholm, Tallinn, Vancouver and Vienna (see map below).

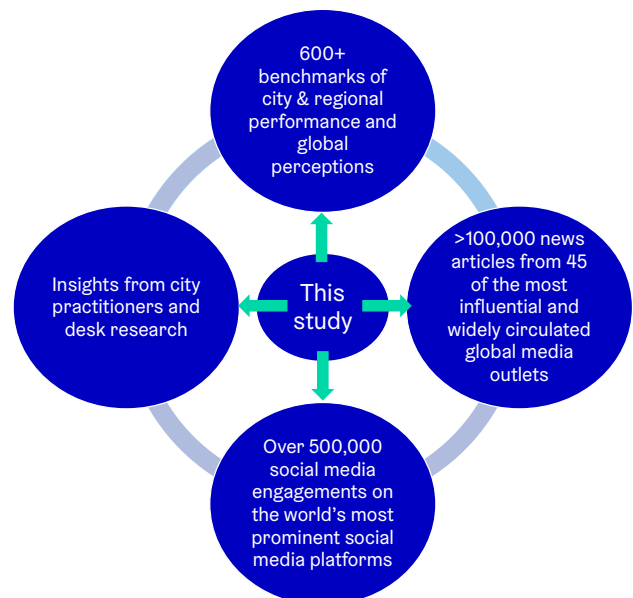


## What we have reviewed for this report

Parts 1 and 2 of this report draw on the combined data from:

- Over 600 global benchmarks of city and regional performance and global perceptions
- Over 500,000 social media engagements on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Google
- Over 100,000 global news articles drawn from 45 of the most influential and widely circulated global media outlets

## The data underlying this report





## Helsinki in the world of cities

For several years now, Helsinki has been a part of a distinct group of high-performing, rapidly globalising cities that seek a different success model to the larger and more established global cities. One popular name for this cohort of cities is the ‘New World Cities’ - so-called because in the last and current economic cycles they have deliberately been seeking competitive advantage on the global stage.

Unlike the ‘established’ world cities such as London, New York and Tokyo that host dense corporate and decision-making functions, these cities are smaller, more specialised, and have distinctive points of difference and opportunity (e.g. strong metropolitan leadership, compact growth, efficient infrastructure platforms, institutional strength, and innovation capabilities). Many of Helsinki’s closest ‘peer’ cities, such as Copenhagen, Oslo, Vienna and Vancouver, are also a part of this group (see also below).

### The ingredients that unite the ‘New World Cities’



Despite its innovation track record, in performance terms Helsinki currently stands out most of all for its quality of life advantages. From 2017-2019, Helsinki was the 7th highest performing ‘New World City’ on aggregate for quality of life: safety, affordability, family friendliness, wellbeing, social cohesion and equality.

Helsinki, like these other ‘New World Cities’, is on a journey that will entail clear choices about how to best use strategic communication and identity-building to guide and shape priorities. Specifically with regards to brand and identity, Helsinki is shifting as the success model evolves.

**Figure 15: The recognised strengths of different ‘types’ of city competing for position and opportunities**



Source: JLL and The Business of Cities (2019).

# Part 1: Recognition in Global Benchmarks

## Summary

- 1. Improving perceptions of Helsinki over the past five years in major studies reflect its clearer reputation as an efficient, liveable and green city.** The city has fewer associations with negatives commonly associated with larger cities, such as congestion, unaffordability and social inequality.
- 2. Helsinki's all-round visibility in the global benchmarks has remained stable since 2015:** its status as a capital city, and its reputation for liveability, innovation and efficiency means it continues to be shortlisted in many studies, despite its smaller size. But Helsinki is less visible in the new generation of travel, lifestyle, millennial-friendly and media benchmarks which generate significant attention and traffic - this may reduce opportunities to promote the city's edges.
- 3. Helsinki is much more highly rated among those with deep familiarity with the city than it is among those who have never visited or are less familiar.** Audiences with 'on the ground' experience, including citizens, frequent visitors and expats, continue to rate the city more favourably than external observers, such as investment allocators and global business executives.
- 4. Since 2015 Helsinki has started to be more recognised for its improved all-round performance.** It receives regular recognition for its sustainable development and climate action efforts, its talent and skills base, and its resilient economic fundamentals. But this progress has not been matched by elevated brand or perception in these areas.
- 5. Helsinki is registering as a leading-edge city in key niches.** This is not only limited to inherited green assets and environmental quality; there is also smaller but growing recognition of the city's innovation strengths, its leadership, and its ability to promote green growth.
- 6. Global trust in Helsinki is building but perception gaps also exist.** Helsinki appears to be admired as a high performing city, but perceptions of vibrancy and opportunity have fallen behind others. More studies highlight that global talent does not perceive Helsinki as a city to relocate to, and foreign and local residents want more from the city's cultural scene and career opportunities.
- 7. In benchmarks Helsinki's reputation as an efficient and fair city is much sharper than its reputation as a city of culture and experience.** Helsinki continues to receive endorsement from specific high-profile individual and media studies, including from influential magazines and journalists, but this tends to be more for its physical attributes and policy initiatives than for its cultural character.
- 8. Helsinki's neighbourhoods, districts and public spaces are not yet front-of-mind in the global imagination.** Helsinki is less visible than its peers in global studies of the best places for creativity, buzz, architecture, and placemaking, and does not gain high city-level scores.
- 9. Helsinki's digital visibility has fallen behind other cities, as the competition for online airtime becomes fiercer.** Helsinki does not capture the same share of online recommendations and references as its peers, which suggests opportunities for more civic and third party endorsement.
- 10. The world expects Helsinki to be a pacesetter, and the city needs to ensure the real 'product' does not fall behind its brand in some areas.** International perceptions are high about Helsinki's approach to data, citizen engagement and individual wellbeing, in fact higher than its observed performance or outcomes in these areas. The business, digital and physical platforms in a post-Covid context will need to match a now widespread expectation that Helsinki is a trailblazer.

## Introduction to Part 1

The core benchmarking review (Part 1) consists of three main sections:

1. **Context**
2. **Summary observations on Helsinki's visibility, performance and perception**
3. **Helsinki's brand segments**

### Context

#### What we have reviewed

There are now over 600 comparative studies and indices that measure how cities are doing. These use both objective performance indicators and also perceptions among global audiences (e.g. investors, smart cities experts, financial executives, etc.). More ways to measure and compare cities exist than ever before.

It is tempting to read just one or two studies. Many cities go further and focus on only those trusted benchmarks that are repeated year on year. This approach looks at all of them, to capture the full perspective for Helsinki.

Benchmarks do more than just provide an international perspective on how a city is doing. They also exert influence by informing and shaping the perceptions and decisions of mobile asset allocators, such as businesses, investors, media, and institutions. Their public visibility means they also inform the choices made by mobile talent, and the appetites of global visitors and entrepreneurs. Through providing an international lens for comparison, they change how Helsinki thinks about itself and how the world thinks about Helsinki. Ultimately, they can help Helsinki to understand its competitiveness, advantages, and reputation.

#### A note on methodology, 'peers' and scale

In some cases, Helsinki is also compared to full spectrum of the world's **smaller city regions** (metropolitan population less than 2 million), or the world's **small to medium sized city regions** (metropolitan population <2.5 million), in order to illustrate where Helsinki is among the global leaders in these size categories.

Wherever Helsinki's aggregate scores are reported, across multiple benchmarks, Helsinki is being compared to the world's top 200 most globalised economies, as measured by the number of commercial HQ links, and any peer cities that do not classify as such (e.g. Tallinn). In these cases Helsinki is compared with the most globally networked economies that appeared in at least 1 benchmark that included some element of subjective judgement in 2014-15.

This part of the report also distinguishes between:

- Purely perception-based measures (e.g. investor perceptions of future real estate prospects)
- Studies that contain both objective performance measures and some elements of subjective judgement or perception (e.g. studies of cultural vibrancy that look at the number of museums and galleries but also satisfaction with cultural facilities)
- Objective performance measures (with no element of subjective judgement or perception) - e.g.: number of Fortune 500 HQs, number of museums and galleries, etc.

# Helsinki in focus: Summary observations

This section of the paper answers the following questions:

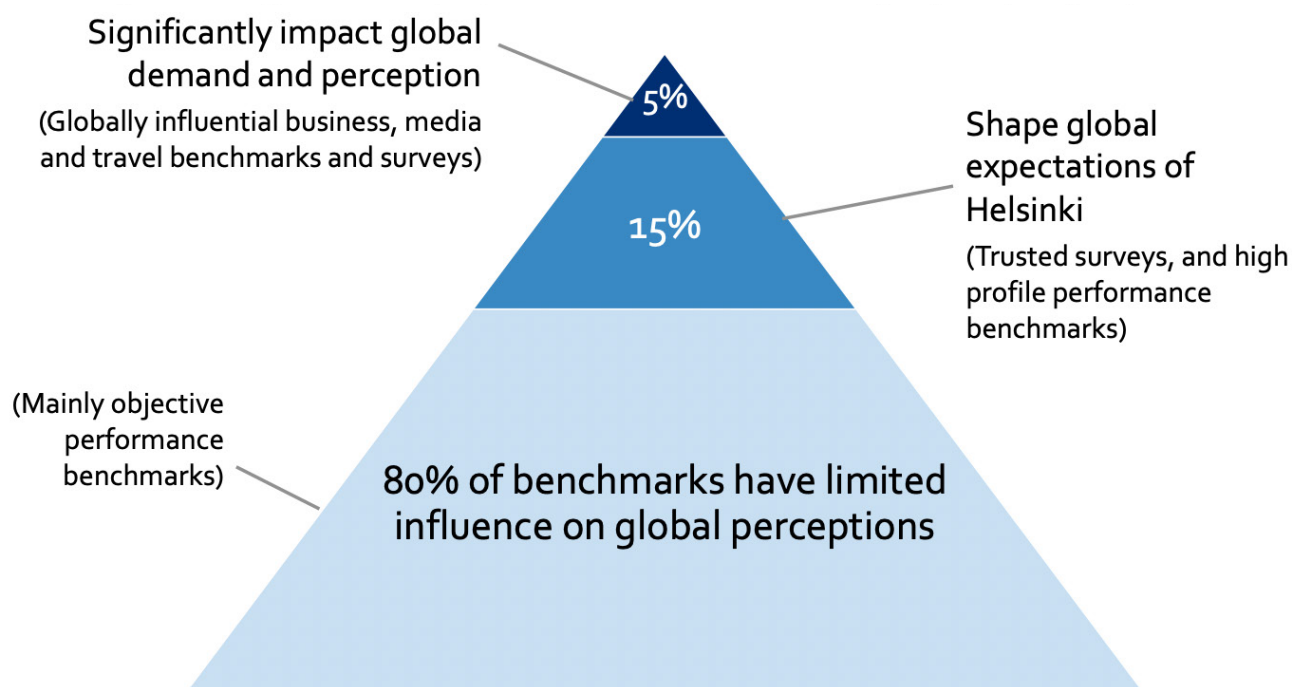
1. What are the different ways that benchmarks can be used to measure success? How successful is Helsinki according to these different measures?
2. What has changed since 2015, in terms of Helsinki's overall perception and performance?
3. How has Helsinki's visibility in global benchmarks changed over the past five years?
4. What are some of the areas where Helsinki can compete with the global leaders?
5. What are the main specific areas where Helsinki's performance or perceptions have risen or fallen over the past five years?

## What are the different ways that benchmarks can be used to measure success? How successful is Helsinki according to these different measures?

There are many different ways of measuring city 'success'. Benchmarks offer one way of doing so. But benchmarks are not a direct indication of Helsinki's brand potential, for several reasons:

- Most benchmarks still measure objective performance, not perceptions (see below)
- Few benchmarks have significant impact on global demand and perceptions of cities
- There are time lags between cities' real improvements and how they are perceived
- Many benchmarks still focus on a narrow set of global customers
- Some perception studies tend to have a geography bias

**Figure 16: The global landscape of benchmarks and their relationship to global perception**



**Most benchmarks have limited effect on how cities are perceived globally: they are designed to show the difference between how cities are doing in objective indicators** (see Figure 16) – e.g. the number of tourist arrivals, annual air pollution, or volumes of real estate investment attracted. They capture the real outcomes for citizens, residents, visitors and investors, and show what areas are real strengths for the city. In these types of measures, Helsinki is doing well.

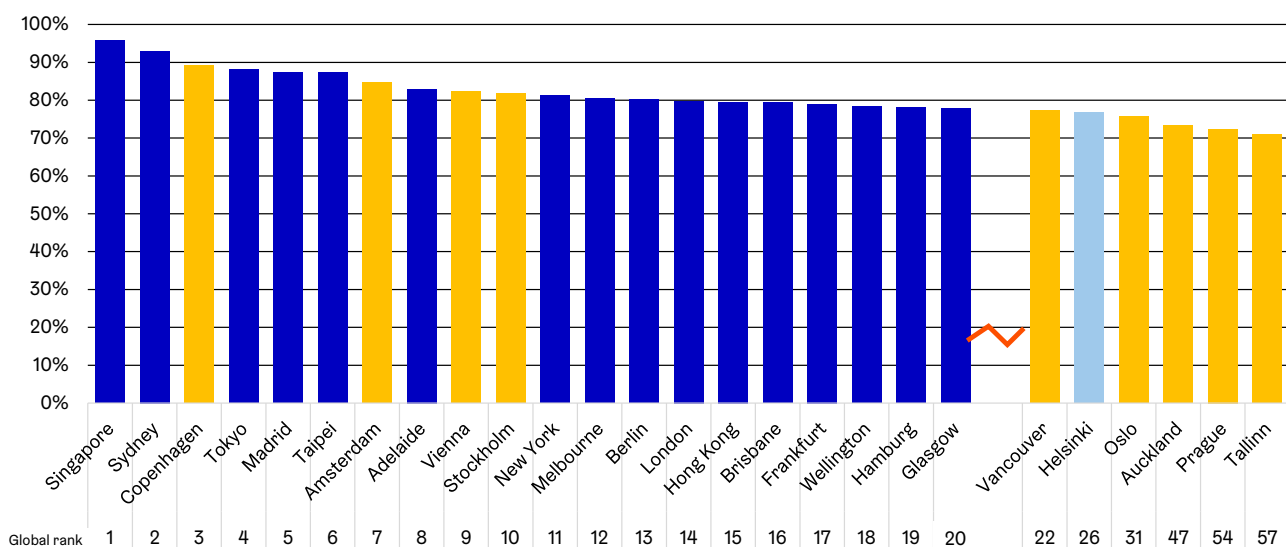
**But Helsinki does not yet score as highly in the perception-based benchmarks.** Its performance on the ground is very good, but it is not immediately perceived by the rest of the world as a great place to move to, do business with, or enjoy experiences in. As a result, in 2020 Helsinki is now the only Nordic capital where overall perceptions strongly lag behind how well it is really doing. One of the main challenges for Helsinki in the next cycle will be to leverage the city's measurable progress and success to drive a broader base of global perception about the city (see Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Summary of Nordic cities' all-round performance and perception in the global benchmark studies**

	Aggregate rank among performance measures / 200 cities	Aggregate rank among perception measures / 200 cities	Reputational (dis) advantage
Copenhagen	14th	3rd	+11
Stockholm	15th	10th	+5
Oslo	33rd	31st	+2
Helsinki	19th	26th	-7

Source: *The Business of Cities* research.

**Figure 18: The top 20 most highly regarded cities according to the pure perception benchmarks, plus Helsinki and its peers, in 2019-20**



## What has changed since 2015?

### Perception

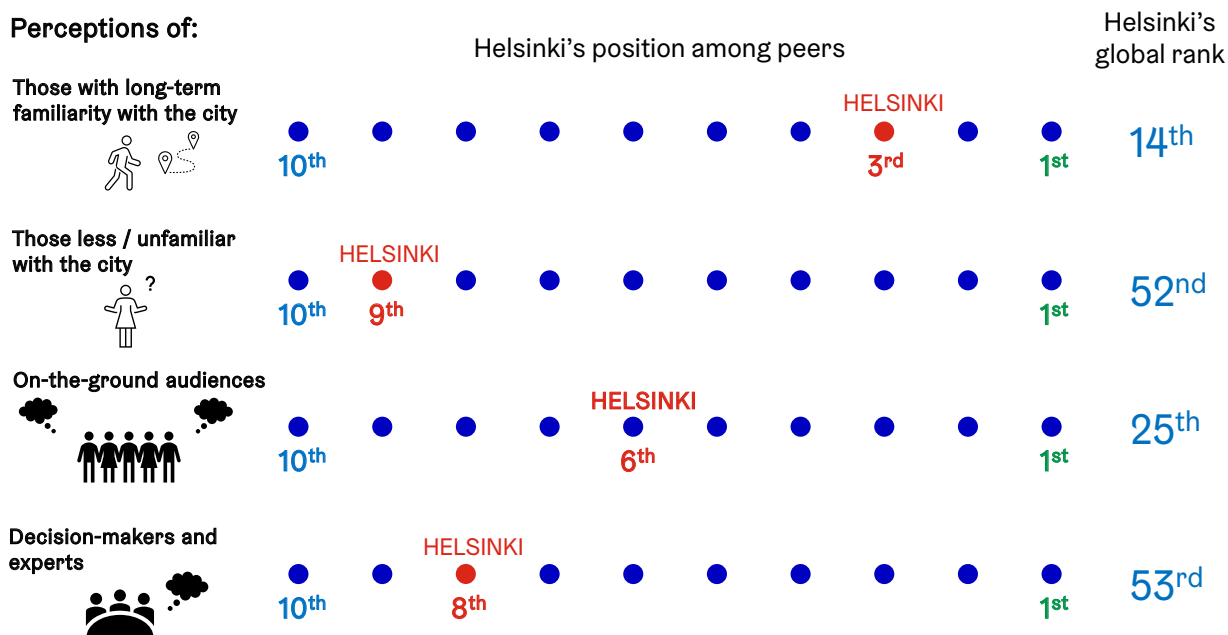
**Perceptions of Helsinki relative to the wider world of cities have been fairly stable.** Helsinki has climbed from the no. 34 best perceived city on aggregate in 2014-15 to the no. 31 city in 2019-20, when including all comparative city measures that have a perception component. This rises to 26<sup>th</sup> among perception-only measures. Yet Helsinki remains 6<sup>th</sup> among its 10 peers – slightly behind Tallinn and Oslo and far behind Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Stockholm and Vienna.

**Overall, Helsinki has been developing its reputation as a ‘good’ city, with efficient systems and a high quality of life, but the world does not have a clear view as to why Helsinki is compelling or inviting.** This has led to Helsinki slipping behind the global leaders in studies that focus on, for example:

- Expert perceptions of how ‘smart’ the city is (54<sup>th</sup> out of 100 cities)
- Foreign resident perceptions of the ease of settling into life in the city (59<sup>th</sup> out of 82 cities)
- Student recommendations of universities (82<sup>nd</sup> out of 121 cities globally)

**Helsinki is much more highly regarded among those with long-term familiarity with the city (e.g. citizens, residents, and expats) than those who have potentially never visited or have lower familiarity (the general global public, including visitors, students and external commentators).** Helsinki is the 14<sup>th</sup> most highly regarded city among internal audiences, or those who have prior long-term familiarity with the city (3<sup>rd</sup> among peers), but the 52<sup>nd</sup> most highly regarded among audiences who do not necessarily have any real experience of the city (9<sup>th</sup> among peers, ahead only of Prague) (see Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Helsinki’s aggregate position among benchmark surveys, across different audiences**



### Performance

**Helsinki has witnessed strong improvements in its performance since 2015, which have not yet been matched by the same level of brand progress.** Looking across all objective performance measures, Helsinki has climbed from being the no. 31 city on aggregate in 2014-15 to the no. 19 city in 2019-20. But so far perceptions have not yet caught up with improv-

ing performance - Helsinki is the 31st most highly regarded city in 2019-20, up from the 34th most highly regarded in 2014-15 (see Figure 20). This is partly due to Helsinki’s relatively low familiarity among external audiences compared to other cities.

**In more areas performance is ahead of perception.** For examples, in terms of the strengths of its universi-




ties, investment appetite, and business fundamentals, there is a clear opportunity for Helsinki to communicate and promote its strengths in order to correct perceptions, improve visibility and strengthen recognition (see Figure 21).

There are also a few areas where perceptions are currently running ahead of performance, because of Helsinki's reputation for technology. In terms of digital infrastructure; health, work-life balance and well-being; and cultural institutions, Helsinki can leverage this cyclical advantage to promote its assets.

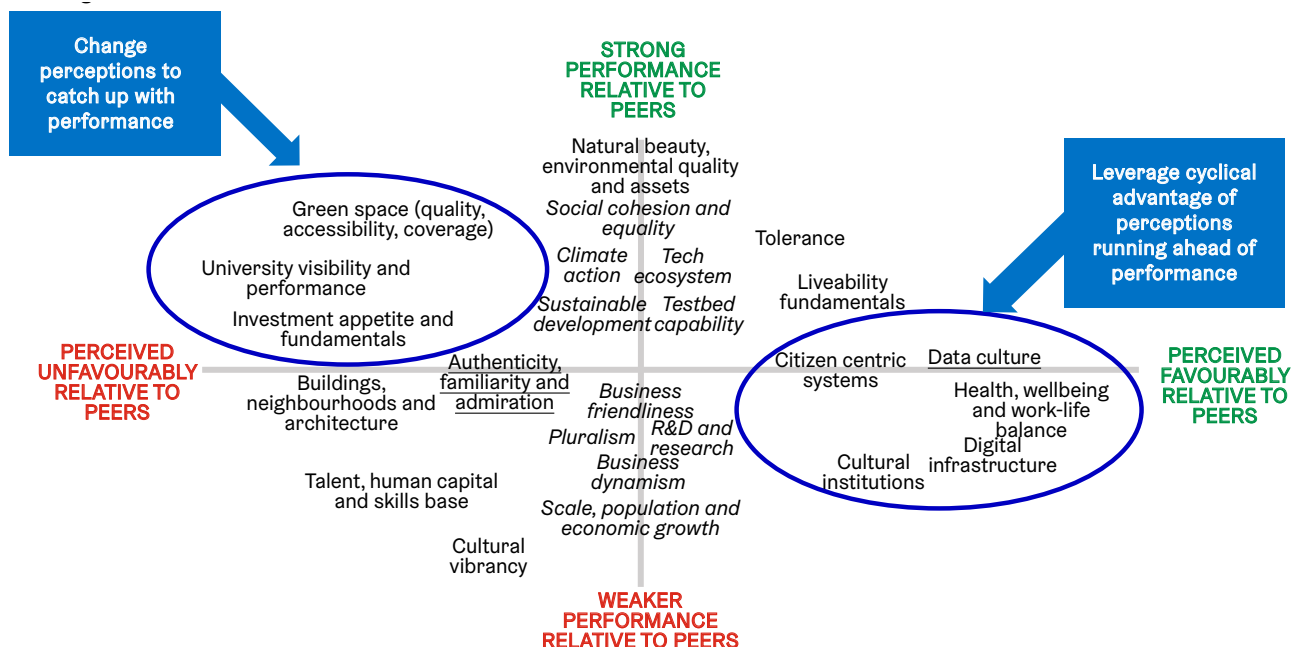
**Figure 20: Helsinki's visibility and aggregate scores in the benchmarks, 2014-15 and 2019-20**

	2014-15	2019-20
Visibility in global benchmarks	=40 <sup>th</sup>	43 <sup>rd</sup> →
Aggregate score in performance benchmarks	31 <sup>st</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup> ↑
Aggregate score in benchmarks with perception measures	34 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> ↑

In 2019-20, Helsinki is the:

 **43<sup>rd</sup>** most visible city  
 **19<sup>th</sup>** highest performing city  
 **31<sup>st</sup>** most highly regarded city

**Figure 21: Summary of perceptions and performance of Helsinki relative to its peers in 2019-20**



*Italics* = performance measures only (unable to judge how perceived via benchmarks alone)  
Underlined = perception measures only (unable to judge how performs via benchmarks alone)



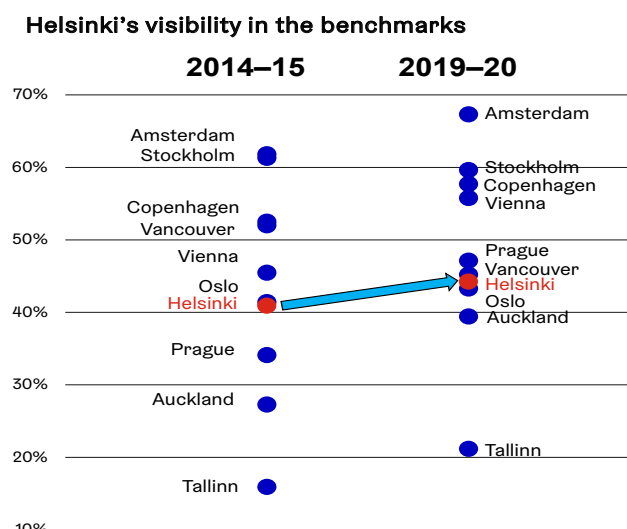
## How has Helsinki's visibility in global benchmarks changed?

Helsinki's visibility among the hundreds of global studies and benchmarks is important. Higher visibility in the benchmarks:

- Creates a larger evidence base for strategic conversation
- Offers opportunities to understand reputation (how the world sees Helsinki), and to change how Helsinki thinks about itself
- Enhances scope to impact decisions and impressions of mobile talent and asset allocators
- Provides more opportunities for Helsinki to excel and to promote its high scores
- Visibility in high-profile studies drives enhanced visibility and performance in many others

**Helsinki's visibility has remained quite stable since 2015.** In 2014-15, Helsinki was the joint 40<sup>th</sup> most visible city in the benchmarks globally (based on frequency of appearance), or 6<sup>th</sup> among smaller city regions, behind Stockholm, Copenhagen, Dublin, Zurich and Vancouver. In 2019-20, Helsinki is 43<sup>rd</sup>, and though it has been overtaken by some European capitals such as Prague and Lisbon, it is still more visible than other larger cities such as Frankfurt and Warsaw. Overall, Helsinki's visibility has increased from around 40% to around 48%. As the 7<sup>th</sup> most visible city in its peer group, its visibility remains on a par with that of Oslo, but far behind Stockholm (18<sup>th</sup>) and Copenhagen (21<sup>st</sup>) (see Figure 22).

**Figure 22: Helsinki's visibility in global benchmarks relative to its peers, 2014-15 to 2019-20**



Because Helsinki is a capital city and known for its liveable and sustainable attributes, it is often included in many popular global studies on smartness, governance and future cities (see Figure 23). Over time, talent and labour market, sustainability and environment and smartness and governance have all become more widely studied in the benchmarks, adding to Helsinki's emerging performance advantage.

**But Helsinki continues to be omitted from some high-profile studies due to its smaller size and scale.**

As the world's 210<sup>th</sup> largest economy, Helsinki can sometimes be overlooked, and as the Nordic's fourth largest capital, studies can be reluctant to over-weight this part of the world in a global analysis. It is also more commonly absent from popular 'top lists' of cities produced by media and travel companies, where it is only the 7<sup>th</sup> most visible among its peers and appears in around 3 times fewer such benchmarks than Vienna and Amsterdam (see Figure 24).

Some cities bridge the gap by making themselves a more compelling and obvious choice for inclusion in these studies. This includes for example efforts to:

- Foster wider civic and corporate alliances to broaden the promotional effort and more effectively convene the city region (e.g. Barcelona, Oslo)
- Create their own benchmarks to highlight niches and specialisations (e.g. Vancouver, Rotterdam)
- Engage directly with index producers in benchmarks that are of strategic significance (e.g. Tel Aviv, San Diego)

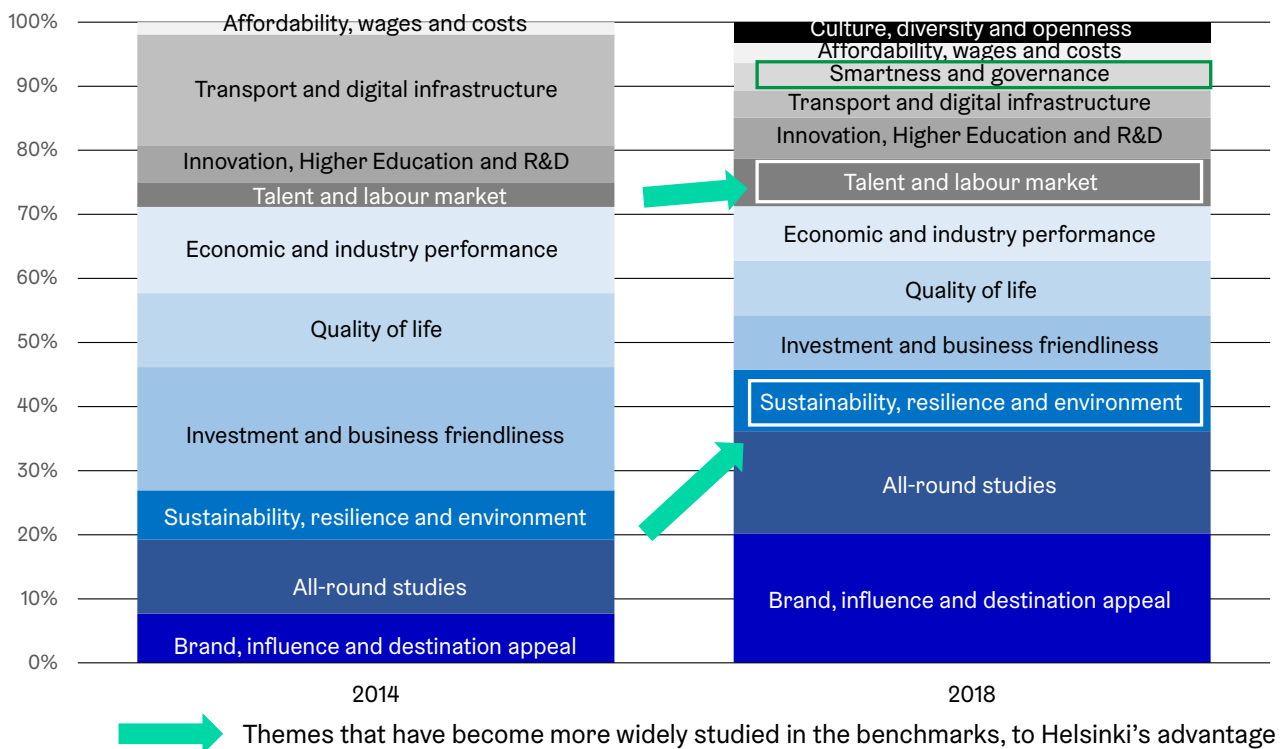
**Helsinki's neighbourhoods, districts and public spaces are not yet visible in the global imagination.**

Across the global rankings of the 'top' neighbourhoods, public spaces or districts for creativity and buzz, visual appeal and architecture, placemaking and 'coolness' since 2016, none of Helsinki's neighbourhoods feature. Neighbourhoods in the Scandinavian capitals feature much more prominently (e.g. Grunerlokka in Oslo, Södermalm and Hornstull in Stockholm, and Nørrebro in Copenhagen) (see also Section 3.1).

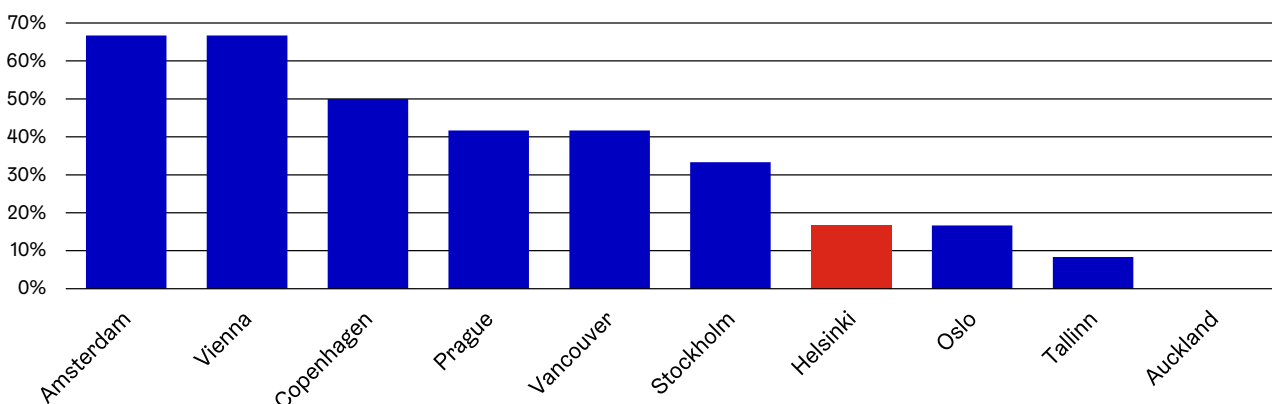
**Finally, Helsinki's digital and online visibility has declined in recent years, as the competition has grown.** In the main measure of the number of stories, references and recommendations shared online about cities, Helsinki has fallen from 69<sup>th</sup> in 2016 to

178<sup>th</sup> in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Partly as a result of this decline, Helsinki is now firmly in the middle of the pack compared to its peers for its total share of online mentions (5<sup>th</sup> out of its 10 peers).<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 23: Changes in what the world compares cities for, 2014-2018**



**Figure 24: Helsinki's visibility in the new generation of benchmarks of 'top cities' produced by media and travel companies**



*\* Benchmarks produced by media and travel companies or other less established benchmark producers, analysing 60 or fewer of the world's 'top' cities, July 2017 to June 2020.*

## What are some of the areas where Helsinki can compete with the global leaders?

The past five years of Helsinki's progress have seen the emergence of several areas where Helsinki is catching up to, on a par with, or even ahead of the globally leading cities. In many cases, these are areas that extend much further than environmental and sustainability performance, where the city has long been considered a leader both in Europe and globally. The areas where Helsinki can compete globally include the intensity of its innovation ecosystem and university-industry collaboration, the maturity of its clustered specialisations, some aspects of its digital infrastructure, its concentration of talent and sustainability expertise, and its all-round reputation among global citizens.

### Intensity of innovation ecosystem and university-industry collaboration

Helsinki is recognised globally for the strength of its innovation ecosystem relative to its size, and for its established culture of university-industry collaboration. Specific areas where Helsinki stands out include:

- **Intensity of venture capital investment.** Helsinki is ahead of Chicago, on a par with Washington DC, and catching up to Singapore.<sup>3</sup>
- **Attraction of FDI into tech startups.** Helsinki is 4<sup>th</sup> globally, ahead of Barcelona, Berlin and Boston.<sup>4</sup>
- **Propensity of industry to collaborate with universities.** On average, across top rated universities, >7% of publications published in Helsinki are published in collaboration with industry, which is not far behind the global leader of San Diego (9.1%). Helsinki is also ahead of London and other smaller research powerhouses such as Austin, Oslo, and is 3<sup>rd</sup> in Europe behind Stuttgart and Glasgow.<sup>5</sup>

### Maturity of clustered specialisations

Helsinki is increasingly recognised as being a 'top' global city for specific high-tech clusters. These include:

- **Strength of gaming cluster.** Helsinki is 2<sup>nd</sup> globally for the number of gaming companies.<sup>6</sup>
- **Specialisation in AI.** Helsinki is 18<sup>th</sup> globally for the number of high-innovation firms in AI, on a par with LA and Chicago.<sup>7</sup>

### Digital infrastructure

Helsinki has also been gaining recognition for specific aspects of its digital infrastructure in recent years. Helsinki stands out for its:

- **High mobile internet download speeds.** Helsinki ranks 18<sup>th</sup> for 4G signal strength.<sup>8</sup>

### Concentration of talent and sustainability expertise

As well as establishing itself as a hotspot for talent and human capital, Helsinki has also emerged as a leader for the concentration of talent working in sustainability and green growth industries. Helsinki stands out for:

- **The number of green jobs.** Helsinki ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> globally for the number of jobs in sustainability and other green growth sectors, ahead of London Washington DC and Amsterdam.<sup>9</sup>
- **Its all-round concentration of talent and human capital.** Helsinki is 14<sup>th</sup> globally, ahead of New York, Tokyo and Berlin.<sup>10</sup>

### Global citizen admiration and reputation

Helsinki ranks 11<sup>th</sup> for all-round admiration, reputation and familiarity among global citizens, ahead of London, Barcelona and Toronto.<sup>11</sup> Helsinki is more able than some of these leading cities to capture the global imagination of what it means to be a high functioning, efficient city across all areas, including safety,

**There are also several areas where Helsinki is recognised as a leader among smaller city regions.** This particularly applies to areas relating to the city's global reach, the size and scale of its innovation economy, and its status as a host of high-level conventions and sports events. For example, among smaller city regions, Helsinki is:

### Global reach

- In the top 20% globally for the **number of air passengers** (16<sup>th</sup> / 80)<sup>12</sup>
- In the global top 15% for the **globalisation its economy** (13<sup>th</sup> / 107)<sup>13</sup>
- In the global top 10 for **all-round commercial attraction/economic strength** (7<sup>th</sup> / 80)<sup>14</sup>

### Innovation Economy

- 1<sup>st</sup> for the all-round **size, scale and growth trajectory of its innovation ecosystem** (1<sup>st</sup> / 196)<sup>15</sup>
- 1<sup>st</sup> globally for the **number of VC deals** between 2015 and 2017<sup>16</sup>
- The global leader for the **number of high-innovation firms in AI**<sup>17</sup>
- 1<sup>st</sup> in Europe for the **number of jobs in the new app economy**<sup>18</sup>
- 6<sup>th</sup> globally for the **size and scale of its fintech ecosystem**<sup>19</sup>
- 7<sup>th</sup> for **all-round ingredients for innovation**<sup>20</sup>
- 8<sup>th</sup> globally for the **total amount of VC investment** attracted between 2015 and 2017<sup>21</sup>

### Conventions and sports events

- 3<sup>rd</sup> globally for **hosting high-impact sporting events** (out of 113)<sup>22</sup>
- In the global top 5 for the **number of high-level rotating meetings and conferences** hosted (5<sup>th</sup> / 184)<sup>23</sup>

### What are the main areas where Helsinki's performance as a city is being more recognised, and becoming less recognised?

Over the past five years, Helsinki has been recognised for its improvement in areas relating to sustainability and the environment, human capital and skills base, and all-round economic prospects. For example, Helsinki:

- Has climbed from 29<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> globally for **adoption of renewable energies** (2018 – 2019)<sup>24</sup>
- Has improved from 29<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> in the major measure of **all-round environmental friendliness and sustainability** (2017 – 2020)<sup>25</sup>
- Has seen its **all-round economic growth prospects** improve from being the 21<sup>st</sup> highest rated in 2015 to 14<sup>th</sup> in 2018<sup>26</sup>
- Has climbed 30 places from 83<sup>rd</sup> to 53<sup>rd</sup> in the major measure of **human capital and skills base** (2016 – 2020)<sup>27</sup>

There are also signs that **global trust and admiration of Helsinki is growing**, and that this is mainly due to improved perceptions about the city's ability to provide a high quality of life, clean environment, and efficient infrastructure platform. For example, Helsinki:

- Has climbed from 14<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> in the major crowd-sourced measure of **citizen sentiment about environmental quality and pollution** (2016 – 2020)<sup>28</sup>
- Has improved from 30<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> for **global citizen admiration and reputation** (2015 – 2018)<sup>29</sup>
- Has climbed from 36<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> in for **citizen perceptions of overall quality of life** (2016 – 2020)<sup>30</sup>

However, Helsinki is not as often perceived as a city of vibrancy and opportunity compared to others.

This is particularly the case for perceptions relating to cultural vibrancy and expat job opportunities. For example, Helsinki:

- Has fallen from 95<sup>th</sup> to 109<sup>th</sup> in the major measure using crowd-sourced review data to assess the **perceived quality of the city's cultural, culinary and entertainment scene** (2016 – 2020)<sup>31</sup>
- Has slipped from 26<sup>th</sup> to 47<sup>th</sup> in the major global survey of **expat experience**, due mainly to a growing sense of difficulty settling into life in the city and finding job opportunities (2018 – 2019)<sup>32</sup>

# How are the different edges of Helsinki's brand revealed in global performance benchmarks?

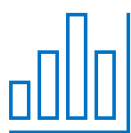
Different segments of Helsinki's brand gain recognition in global benchmark performance. Helsinki's five brand segments are reviewed in turn:

1. Assets and scale brand
2. Liveability brand
3. Citizen and character brand
4. Innovation brand
5. Business and institution brand

For each of the themes and sub themes, Helsinki's aggregate position relative to its 10 peers across all available measures is computed to show how performance matches up to perception. Where no perception measures exist (e.g. for edge and innovation), only performance is shown. A score of 10/10 indicates that Helsinki is top of its peer group (a score of 1/10 indicates Helsinki is bottom).

## Assets and scale performance brand

### Urban fabric and natural assets



Performance  
8/10



Perception  
5/10

### Buildings, neighbourhoods and architecture

**Helsinki is not yet well known for the quality of its buildings, neighbourhoods and streetscapes.** In the major measure of visitor perceptions of the quality of stations, ports and airports, Helsinki ranks 29th globally – or 7<sup>th</sup>/8 measured peers.<sup>33</sup> For expert perceptions of architecture, Helsinki rates 44th – 7th among its peers.<sup>34</sup>

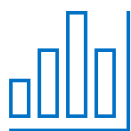
### Natural beauty and environmental quality

**Helsinki's environmental quality remains one of the city's most recognisable assets.** For urban green space, cleanliness, pollution, water and air quality, Helsinki is recognised by both academic, expat and crowd-sourced benchmarks to be among the global top 10. For residents' perceptions of pollution and the environment, Helsinki has improved from 14th in 2016 to 1st in 2020, with satisfaction rates of over 90% for air quality, drinking water quality and access, and comfort with spending time in the city.<sup>35</sup> 92% of foreign residents currently living in the city rate the environment positively, compared to a global average of 71%.<sup>36</sup>

### Green space

**Despite being recognised as a global leader for the amount and accessibility of green space, high local expectations mean Helsinki does not get as much credit in studies of local perceptions of the quality of outdoor areas and parks.** Helsinki rates 13th globally for the amount of green space per person (3rd out of 9 peers) and 11th for green coverage as a percentage of total area (4th out of 9 peers), but slightly lower for residents' perceived quality of green spaces and parks (6th out of 10 peers).<sup>37</sup> Although resident satisfaction with parks and green spaces is very high – at 84% – it is still not as high as in the Scandinavian capitals, Vancouver or Vienna.<sup>38</sup>

## Momentum, transformation and ambition



Performance  
6/10

### Scale, population and economic growth

**Helsinki's relatively small size still precludes it from being included in some studies, and lowers its scores in others.** As the 210<sup>th</sup> largest economy globally, Helsinki is not a top choice city to be included in 'top' lists that begin by looking at the world's top 150 or 200 cities. And in many cases, a focus on absolute numbers and flows means Helsinki's is not as visible as it might otherwise be. For example, in the major measure of annual air passengers, Helsinki ranks 113<sup>th</sup> globally, or 8<sup>th</sup> among peers, but Helsinki would be in the global top 20 if segmenting cities by population size.<sup>39</sup> In some cases, appearing in more studies may be conditional upon Helsinki more strongly promoting its effective scale, which can include efforts to highlight the scale of the market and cultural offering, and to demonstrate the city's role as a gateway between Europe and Asia.

**Helsinki is highly recognised as one of the world's pre-eminent hosts of high-level rotating meetings and conferences, despite its relatively small size.** Despite a slight decline in absolute terms, from 23<sup>rd</sup> in 2015 to 32<sup>nd</sup> in 2019, the city is still in the global top 5 among smaller city regions for this measure.<sup>40</sup>

### Climate change action

**Helsinki continues to be recognised as a global leader for all-round environmental leadership and climate change action.** In a new major measure of the scope of government initiatives to promote sustainability and environmental health, as well as mean annual exposure to air pollution, Helsinki is 2<sup>nd</sup> globally, and in a new study of vision and leadership on public transport sustainability, Helsinki is 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>41</sup> Helsinki is also in the global top 20 for low CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the scope and ambitiousness of climate targets, although Helsinki's peers also score very highly, meaning Helsinki tends towards the middle of its peer group for these measures.<sup>42</sup>

**Helsinki is not yet as widely recognised for adoption of renewable energy or provision for electric vehicles** – both areas that may become more central to city brand following Covid-19. Helsinki has improved from 28<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> globally for renewable energy share, but remains 7<sup>th</sup> among its 10 peers, well behind the Scandinavian capitals, Vancouver, Vienna and Auckland.<sup>43</sup> Helsinki is also one of the only cities among its peer group along with Auckland and Tallinn to rank outside the global top 30 for the concentration of electric vehicle charging points.<sup>44</sup>

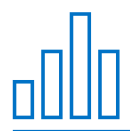
### Sustainable development efforts

**Helsinki's wider sustainable development efforts continue to be picked upon in the global studies.** For example, the city is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in Europe for progress towards the SDGs, behind Oslo and Stockholm but ahead of Copenhagen, and recently emerged as the city with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of jobs in 'green growth' industries globally, ahead of London, Washington DC and Amsterdam.<sup>45</sup>

**Recent shifts in global attention towards sustainable practice and policy adoption in specific high-profile industries may threaten Helsinki's future visibility in this area.** Helsinki has fallen slightly in the new major measure of sustainable MICE tourism as more cities have voluntarily signed up to be included, and now ranks 19<sup>th</sup> globally, or 3<sup>rd</sup> among the 5 measured peers.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, the sustainability of Helsinki's real estate industry also puts the city in the middle of the pack, rating 56<sup>th</sup> globally or 5<sup>th</sup> among 9 peers.<sup>47</sup>

## Liveability performance brand

### Liveability, functionality and personal wellbeing



Performance  
10/10



Perception  
10/10



### Liveability fundamentals: safety, affordability, and family friendliness

**Local perceptions of Helsinki's quality of life remain extremely positive and visible.** In the major crowd-sourced measure of local perceptions of safety and criminal activity, Helsinki now ranks in the global top 25, or 2<sup>nd</sup> among its peers.<sup>48</sup> Together with improvements to local purchasing power, this has also helped to drive Helsinki's improvement in the all-round measure of perceived quality of life, from 36<sup>th</sup> in 2016 to 25<sup>th</sup> in 2020.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, in a new study of the best cities for families, based on perceptions of over 5,000 families, Helsinki ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> globally for perceived family friendliness, and in the global top 30 for perceived neighbourhood child-safety (4<sup>th</sup> among peers).<sup>50</sup>

**But favourable local perceptions have not yet spilled over into the global imagination, nor are they reflected in Helsinki's scores in the most high-profile, comprehensive studies of 'quality of life.'** In the latest IPSOS-Mori poll of tens of thousands of global citizens about which cities they would most like to visit or live or work in, Helsinki rated lower than all of its peers except Prague as a favoured destination in which to live.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, in the extremely high profile Mercer study of 'quality of living', Helsinki ranks outside the global top 30, or 8<sup>th</sup> among its peers.<sup>52</sup> This suggests that Helsinki faces an imperative to more fully communicate its liveability advantages to global audiences – especially relative to its Scandinavian neighbours.

### Health, work-life balance and wellbeing

**Helsinki's association with health and wellbeing continues to be at the front and centre of the global studies, and is a major reputational advantage for the city.** Helsinki has the highest satisfaction level with the environment (including air and water pollution) of any city in the world, and from 2014 to 2018, citizens' average level of reported happiness was higher than anywhere else globally.<sup>53</sup>

**Helsinki's health, work-life balance and wellbeing brand runs slightly ahead of performance.** Helsinki rates 54<sup>th</sup> out of 100 cities for healthcare expenditure, or 9<sup>th</sup> among its peers.<sup>54</sup> But satisfaction with the affordability, accessibility and quality of healthcare is much higher: 78% of expats find medical care affordable (vs. 55% globally), while 86% say it is easily available (vs. 73%), and crowd-sourced data from local res-

idents also highlight a consistently high satisfaction rate.<sup>55</sup> Helsinki can take advantage of these results to more fully communicate its health credentials.

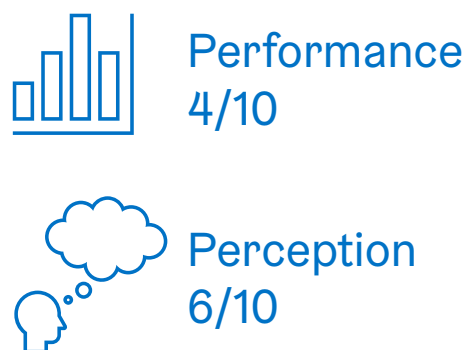
### Social cohesion and equality

**Helsinki's track record of promoting social cohesion and equality continues to be very visible, and a major reputational advantage for the city.** On average, across all measures in these areas, Helsinki ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> among its peers. Helsinki also ranks in the global top 10 across multiple areas that drive its recognition as one of Europe's most egalitarian societies, including social cohesion, the strength of maternity and paternity laws, the culture of business providing equal opportunities for women, and gender wage gap.<sup>56</sup>

### Culture and design

#### DNA of design and culture

**Helsinki's inherent culture and design strengths are not yet highly recognised in the global studies.** This is partly due to a lack of benchmarks on cultural DNA and design, and a tendency to measure 'culture' by assessing concentrations and review scores of specific institutions e.g. retail stores, museums and galleries, as opposed to the number of jobs in cultural industries or the size of design clusters, where Helsinki performs much more strongly.



### Cultural institutions and assets

**Helsinki's cultural institutions are not yet highly visible in the global measures, due mainly to the city's smaller size and scale.** Across the major 'objective' measures of cultural offering, Helsinki consistently ranks in the bottom half of its peer group. For example, Helsinki is 54<sup>th</sup> for the number and size of its major cultural and visitor institutions (6<sup>th</sup> / 9 peers), and 18<sup>th</sup> for the number of cultural exhibitions (6<sup>th</sup> / 9).<sup>57</sup>



**Helsinki's cultural assets are more recognised in studies where perceptions and measures of quality are included.** For example, in a major global survey of fashion experts on the quality of fashion institutions and the city's fashion scene, Helsinki emerged as being just outside the global top 20, or 1<sup>st</sup> among its peers.<sup>58</sup> However, expats are less satisfied with leisure and cultural options in Helsinki than in other cities, with 15% unhappy with the current offering compared to an average of 12% globally.<sup>59</sup>

### Cultural vibrancy

**Helsinki's cultural vibrancy is not widely picked up on in the global studies.** In the major measure of cultural vibrancy, which considers the number of cultural amenities and world-class cultural events, the attractiveness of the shopping and dining scenes, and opportunities for cultural interaction, the city ranks 47<sup>th</sup> out of 48 leading global cities.<sup>60</sup> The perceived quality of the city's cultural, culinary and entertainment scene, as measured by the number of high-quality cultural experiences recommended by locals and visitors, has also declined relative to other cities.<sup>61</sup> Helsinki is however recognised as a global leader for the concentration of in-demand cultural retail amenities and experiences, ranking in the global top 10 and ahead of San Francisco, Austin and Los Angeles.<sup>62</sup>

**Helsinki gets some endorsement from specific high-profile individuals, but this is more for its physical and policy initiatives than for its cultural character.** For example, in the major annual survey of cultural experts on city attractiveness, cultural vibrancy and quality of life, Helsinki has climbed 6 places to 6<sup>th</sup> since 2016, but this is due mainly to the unveiling of the new central library and contemporary art museum, plus construction of affordable housing in the suburbs.<sup>63</sup>

## Citizen and character performance brand

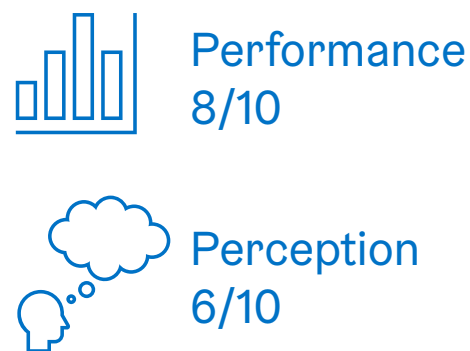
### Values and attitudes



### Authenticity, familiarity and admiration

**Helsinki is not highly visible in studies of the world's "best" cities for authenticity, familiarity and admiration.** Helsinki is the only city apart from Prague and Auckland to have not appeared in any of the four major global surveys of the 'top' cities for all-round appeal in the past two years. In the major annual survey of over 10,000 global citizens about the best cities for infrastructure, governance, economy, safety, beauty and appeal, Helsinki ranks just outside the global top 10. This is a high score that the city can look to promote, but still puts the city 4<sup>th</sup> among its 6 measured peers, behind Copenhagen (3<sup>rd</sup>), Vienna (4<sup>th</sup>) and Stockholm (5<sup>th</sup>).<sup>64</sup>

### Diversity, openness and cosmopolitanism



### Tolerance and bilingualism

**Helsinki's status as a tolerant and accepting city continues to shine through in the global studies.** Helsinki consistently ranks in the top 3 in its peer group and the global top 15 across the measures of LGBT friendliness and inclusion. The city was also in the global top 3 in a one-off study of the world's most welcoming cities to tourists, partly as a result of its lower levels of overtourism and higher willingness of locals to help with giving directions, relative to others.<sup>65</sup>

**Helsinki is less recognised for its expat welcome.** In the major global expat survey, Helsinki ranks 48<sup>th</sup> out of 82 cities for the proportion of expats who feel welcome in the city, or 4<sup>th</sup> among its peers. Nearly half of expats living in the city find it difficult to make friends (compared to an average of 35% in other global cities), and one third are unhappy with their social life (compared to 27%). As a result, Helsinki is 74<sup>th</sup> out of 82 cities for 'friends and socialising', or 8<sup>th</sup> among its 10 peers ahead of Copenhagen and Stockholm. Meanwhile, for expats' perceived ease of learning the language and integrating without being able to speak it, Helsinki ranks 58<sup>th</sup> globally, or 7<sup>th</sup> among its peers. This puts Helsinki ahead of Copenhagen (62<sup>nd</sup>), but well behind Oslo (37<sup>th</sup>) and Stockholm (19<sup>th</sup>).<sup>66</sup>

## Innovation performance brand

### Edge and innovation



### R&D and impactful research

**Helsinki is not yet globally recognised for its R&D and research capabilities in the few studies that currently exist.** It ranks among the bottom half of its peer group both for the number and national share of high-impact scientific publications, and wider conditions for R&D (e.g. number of and openness to researchers, expenditure on R&D, number of patents and academic conferences).<sup>67</sup>

### Tech and innovation ecosystem

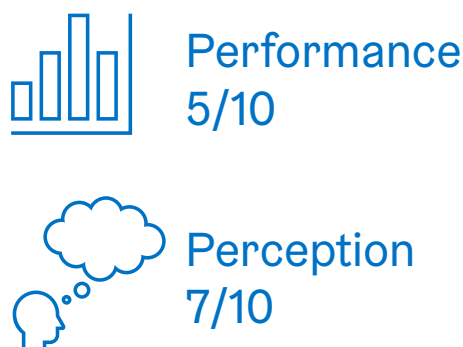
**Helsinki continues to gain recognition as one of Europe's most pre-eminent innovation hubs – especially relative to its size.** The city ranks in the global top 10 for the number of gaming firms and attraction of FDI into tech start-ups, and in the global top 30 for the strength of its ICT cluster and the number of VC deals.<sup>68</sup> The only area where Helsinki ranks in the bottom half of its peer group is for its fintech ecosystem, where it is 60<sup>th</sup> globally, or 6<sup>th</sup> among its peers.<sup>69</sup> Helsinki can use these scores to more widely promote the city.

**Helsinki's innovation ecosystem is not as recognised for its affordability, funding availability or industry connections.** European start-up founders that chose Helsinki as a top 3 city in which to start-up in the next 12 months highlight very high satisfaction with the start-up ecosystem (95% satisfaction) and business regulations (88%), but satisfaction with talent availability (77%), the depth and breadth of industry connections (76%), funding availability (71%) and value for money (56%) has fallen to low to medium levels. This explains why Helsinki has fallen from being the 20<sup>th</sup> most highly regarded city among start-up founders in 2016 to the 35<sup>th</sup> most highly regarded in 2019, and suggests that the next imperative for Helsinki will be to fully harness the existing innovation ecosystem. This can include efforts to more strongly align the region's business and innovation brands by enlisting businesses within the city region to highlight what innovation has added to productivity, reach and enterprising potential, and add an important new element to the city's innovation brand.<sup>70</sup>

### Testbed capability and future industries

**Helsinki's status as a testbed for future solutions and industries has become increasingly visible.** For example, Helsinki is evaluated to be in the global top 20 for the number of innovative tech firms specialising in AI (2<sup>nd</sup> among peers), in the global top 25 for the number of blockchain start-ups and transactions (2<sup>nd</sup> among peers), and in the European top 10 for the number of jobs in the app economy (3<sup>rd</sup> among peers).<sup>71</sup>

## Smartness and digitisation



### Citizen centric systems and data culture

**Aside from an association with government digitisation, Helsinki has yet to achieve full recognition for the citizen centricity of its core systems.** In the major measure of citizen perceptions of the use of smart apps to improve wellbeing, perceptions of Helsinki residents led the city to gain an A rating for its fundamental city systems and structures, but a B+ rating for its use of technology to improve citizen outcomes. Helsinki ranks 4<sup>th</sup> among its peers, despite being in the global top 10.<sup>72</sup>

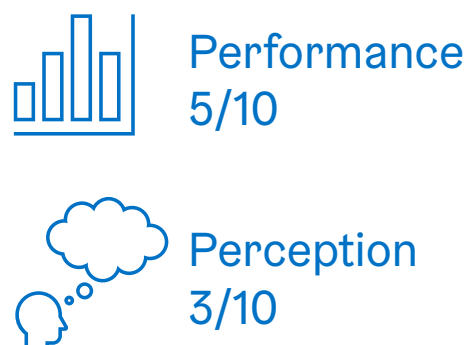
**The willingness of Helsinki residents to concede personal data to improve the efficiency of service delivery is however increasingly recognised in the global studies.** The same major survey shows that Helsinki residents are more willing to provide, for example, location data to improve traffic congestion, and facial recognition data to reduce crime rates, relative to other cities.

### Digital infrastructure

**Helsinki's digital infrastructure progress has not yet registered strongly in the global studies.** Although Helsinki records some strong scores in this area, it is consistently in the middle of the pack relative to its peers. For example, Helsinki is in the global top 25 for existing high-speed communications infrastructure and the availability, trial and implementation of local 5G services, but many of Helsinki's peers are evaluated to be even better, meaning Helsinki is 7<sup>th</sup> among its peer group.<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile, for 4G speeds, Helsinki is 18<sup>th</sup> globally, but 5<sup>th</sup> among its peers.<sup>74</sup>

## Business and institution performance brand

### Business environment



### Investment appetite and fundamentals

**Helsinki continues to be highly recognised for its track record of attracting investment, especially relative to its size.** Helsinki ranks just outside the global top 25 for the number of new, job-creating investments (2<sup>nd</sup> among its peer group), and just outside the global top 30 for the number of specific R&D investments (top of its peer group).<sup>75</sup> Helsinki's market fundamentals are also very strong: average yields, rents and take-up in recent years put the city 4<sup>th</sup> among its peers, and ahead of the Scandinavian capitals.<sup>76</sup>

**Perceptions of future real estate prospects are less positive.** In the most recent survey among European investors, Helsinki rates 21<sup>st</sup> out of 31 cities, or 6<sup>th</sup> out of its 7 peers, for perceived future real estate prospects. This may be due to lower amounts of current investible stock in fast-growing sectors such as logistics relative to Stockholm and Copenhagen, and an influx of new retail space in recent months, which, together with the impact of Covid-19, may lead to falling rents and increased shopping centre vacancy over the long term.<sup>77</sup>

### Business dynamism

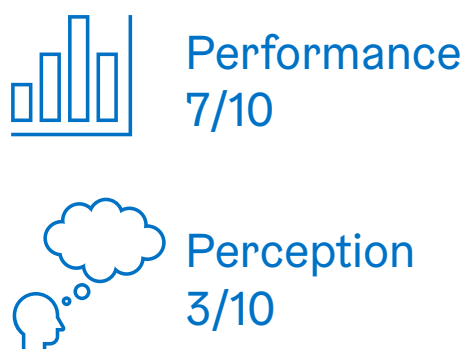
**Helsinki's status as a dynamic and high productivity economy has not yet registered as strongly.** In the major global study of all-round economic strength, Helsinki ranks in the top half when compared to other top-performing global cities (23<sup>rd</sup> out of 48 cities), but not as strongly relative to its peers (4<sup>th</sup> out of 6).<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, in the major measure of economic productivity and corporate HQ presence, Helsinki ranks favourably relative to its peers (4<sup>th</sup> out of 9 cities), but less so relative to the rest of the world (78<sup>th</sup> globally).<sup>79</sup>

**Helsinki's financial sector is currently in a cycle of reputational disadvantage, where perceptions have not yet caught up to real performance.** In the major global study of financial sector strength, which combines perceptions of financial experts with objective performance measures, Helsinki stands out for having the 4<sup>th</sup> largest negative discrepancy between perception and performance among its peer group, suggesting that Helsinki's financial sector performs better than it is currently perceived. It is also interesting that Helsinki has the lowest perception ratings among its peer group except Tallinn, with an average assessment around 10% lower than in Amsterdam and Vancouver.<sup>80</sup>

### Business friendliness

**Helsinki is recognised for its affordable real estate costs and high levels of business freedom, but less so for the all-round transparency of its real estate sector.** In the latest measures, Helsinki emerges as having the 3<sup>rd</sup> most affordable real estate costs among its peer group, and ranks in the global top 15 for all-round business freedom.<sup>81</sup> However, Helsinki ranks in the bottom half of its peer group both for the ease of the real estate transaction process and the regulatory and legal transparency of the real estate sector.<sup>82</sup>

### Institutions and talent



### Talent, human capital and skills base

**In recent years, Helsinki has become recognised as a talent hotspot, with a high concentration of skilled professionals and the fundamental ingredients necessary to support and retain a growing talent base.** In a new major study that considers higher education attainment and provision, high-tech employment and millennial population growth, Helsinki ranks in the

global top 15, ahead of Berlin, New York and Tokyo and 2<sup>nd</sup> among its peers behind Oslo.<sup>83</sup> Helsinki is also in the top half of its peer group for ingredients to retain and grow its existing talent base.<sup>84</sup>

### Perceptions of global talent have not yet caught up.

In a global IPSOS survey of global citizens about the locations they would choose to move to for work, Helsinki ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> globally, or joint 6<sup>th</sup> among its 9 measured peers ahead of Prague, and in a similar survey of digital experts, it is one of 5 peers to not make the global top 30.<sup>85</sup> These results are indicative of a growing imperative to 'sell' the distinctive 'urban' attributes of the city to the global skilled and remote workers, who increasingly base relocation decisions on considerations relating to vibrancy, cultural experience and depth of opportunity, alongside career and job fundamentals.

### University visibility and performance

**Helsinki's universities are not yet strongly recognised for their visibility or performance.** In the major global study of university performance, Helsinki ranks 60<sup>th</sup> globally on average, or 6<sup>th</sup> among its 8 measured peers ahead of Vienna and Prague.<sup>86</sup> And for popularity among employers seeking to hire excellent graduates, Helsinki's universities are evaluated to be 67<sup>th</sup> globally, or behind all measured peer cities except for Copenhagen.<sup>87</sup> However, Helsinki's universities are becoming more recognised for their innovation and STEM contributions: in a new study of the number of higher education institutions offering degrees in computer science, technology and other innovation-focused programmes, Helsinki is in the global top 35, and 4<sup>th</sup> among its 10 peers.<sup>88</sup>

# Part 2: Media and Influencer Analysis

## Introduction to Part 2

The media and influencer analysis consists of three main sections:

### 1. Helsinki in the global conversation

- How visible is Helsinki in the global conversation?
- How has Helsinki's visibility in the global conversation changed? What parts of its brand have become more or less visible over time?
- How visible are the different parts of Helsinki's brand in the global conversation, relative to its peers? Where is Helsinki's brand over- and under-represented?
- How positive is the global conversation about Helsinki?

### 2. Helsinki in the global print media

- What are some of the high profile descriptions of Helsinki?
- How visible is Helsinki in the global print media?

### 3. Helsinki on social media

- How is Helsinki described on social media and how has this changed over time?
- What are some of the most widely shared articles and posts about Helsinki?
- What are some of the most visible descriptions of Helsinki among global influencers?
- What types of 'influencer' can Helsinki leverage to build its brand and identity?

This part of the report is based on a review of over 500,000 global news articles and over 100 million combined social media engagements. It tracks Helsinki's visibility and perception in:

- The global conversation (among eight target markets – the US, UK, India, China, Russia, South Korea, Germany and France)
- A sample of the most high-profile and widely circulated digital media outlets, both globally and among the target markets
- Global social media

It identifies the areas where Helsinki's brand is more or less visible relative to its 'peer' cities, and opportunities to improve visibility and reputation.

As with part 1, this part of the report is **not** a comprehensive assessment of Helsinki's visibility across the whole world, nor is it an assessment of how Helsinki's visibility compares to the whole spectrum of global cities. It also is not an assessment or recommendation of the new policies that Helsinki should adopt.

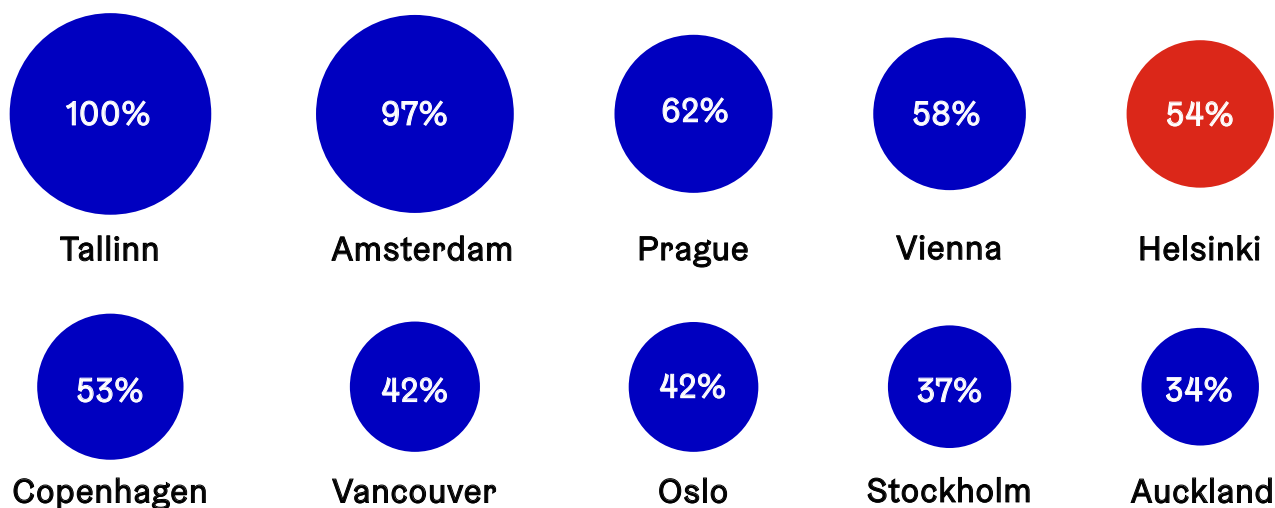
# Helsinki in the global conversation

## How visible is Helsinki in the global conversation?

This section reviews Helsinki's all-round visibility in the global online conversation, by analysing a sample of specific mentions of Helsinki logged by Google (see Appendix for methodology).

Compared to its size, Helsinki is more visible than most of its similar 'peer' cities, including the other Nordic cities. A review of a sample of all online mentions of Helsinki specifically relating to the city logged by Google shows that Helsinki is still only about half as visible as Amsterdam, but significantly more visible than Oslo and Stockholm, once the sizes of the cities are considered (see Figure 25).

**Figure 25: Online visibility of Helsinki and its peer cities compared to population size, relative to Tallinn (most visible)**



Source: The Business of Cities Research. See Appendix for methodology. \*Data based on a sample and should be treated as indicative.

## How has Helsinki's visibility in the global conversation changed?

Over the past five years, as Helsinki's visibility in the wider digital conversation has grown, so too has the number and variety of terms used to describe the city. In 2014-15, nearly half (44.6%) of all nouns and adjectives used to describe Helsinki in the global conversation related to its inherited urban fabric and nat-

ural assets, highlighting the region's beauty, charm, architecture and cathedral.

This was nearly 4% higher than the average among Helsinki's peers, or 10% higher than on average among the Scandinavian cities. Vague references such as 'great' and 'amazing' were also highly prominent (see Figure 26).



**Figure 26: Evolution of nouns and adjectives used to describe Helsinki in the global conversation, 2014-15 and 2019-20**

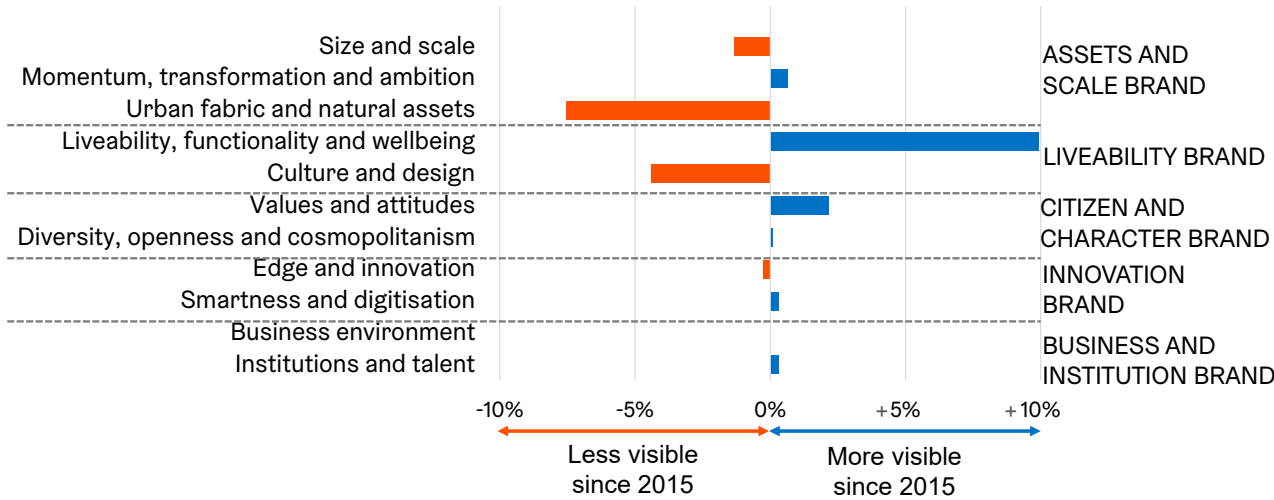


Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology.

Over the past five years, global audiences have become more aware of what Helsinki stands for, and what defines it as a city. In 2019-20, although references to urban fabric and natural assets are still visible, they have declined by more than 7.5% as a proportion of the total – a higher decline in relative terms than in any peer city except for Tallinn and Stockholm. Other commonplace references that may be used to rate first impressions of the city, and which do not differentiate Helsinki from other cities – such as ‘great’, ‘lovely’ or ‘wonderful’ – have also significantly declined relative to the total.

Helsinki’s momentum, efficiency and liveability have become more visible. References to Helsinki’s modern and vibrant character, its status as a compact, progressive and forward-looking city, and its liveability advantages – such as its safety, quietness and access to nature – have significantly increased (see Figure 27). In 2019-20, ‘compact’, ‘vibrant,’ ‘walkable’ and ‘clean’ are all in the top 10 most commonly used adjectives to describe Helsinki, while references to Helsinki’s ‘coolness’ and openness have also grown (see Figure 28).


**Figure 27: Change in relative visibility of Helsinki’s various brand segments in the global conversation, 2014-15 to 2019-20**



Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for notes on methodology.


**Figure 28: Top 10 fastest growing and fastest declining terms used to describe Helsinki, 2014-15 to 2019-20, relative to total online mentions**

**Top 10 fastest growing terms used to describe Helsinki (relative)**



	Change in proportion of total online mentions
Compact	+3.3%
Modern	+1.4%
Vibrant	+1.1%
Seaside	+1.1%
Nature	+1.0%
Quiet	+1.0%
Safe	+0.8%
Attractive	+0.8%
Cool	+0.8%
Open	+0.8%

**Top 10 fastest declining terms used to describe Helsinki (relative)**



	Change in proportion of total online mentions
Wonderful	-1.2%
Charming	-1.7%
Expensive	-1.9%
Amazing	-2.0%
Garden	-2.2%
Beauty	-2.5%
Architecture	-3.4%
Beautiful	-3.6%
Great	-3.9%
Cathedral	-6.4%

Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology.

**However, over the same period, Helsinki's level of association with culture and design has fallen.** The proportion of total online mentions relating to Helsinki's culture and design strengths has declined from just over 20% in 2014-15 to just over 15% in 2019-20, while in the other Nordic cities it has grown or stayed the same. This may reflect an earlier surge of global interest in Helsinki's culture and design scene following its status as the World Capital of Design in 2012, but suggests that Helsinki's cultural brand has not continued its momentum.

### How visible are the different parts of Helsinki's brand in the global conversation relative to its peers?

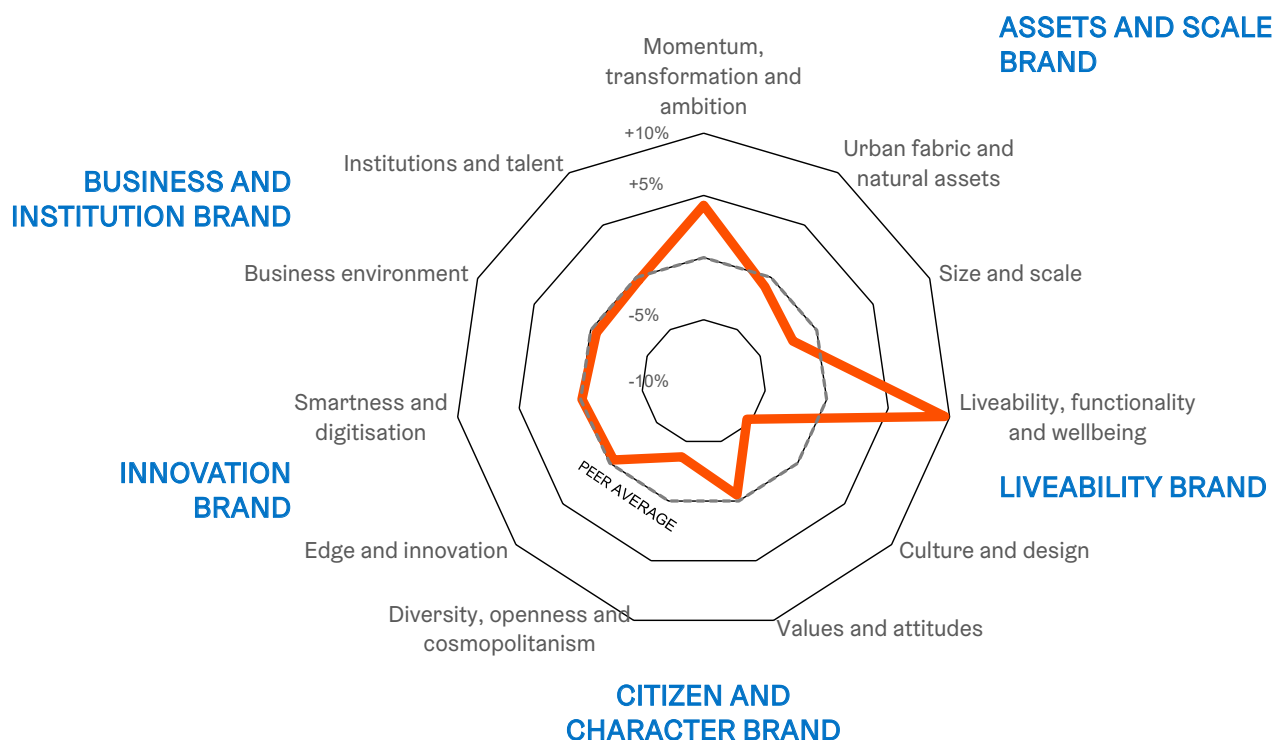
**The global conversation focuses much more on Helsinki's liveability and wellbeing and its momentum and ambition than on its culture, character or innovation and business potential.** References to Helsinki

in the global conversation are much more highly skewed towards the city's liveability advantages and its momentum, transformation and ambition than in other cities. References to Helsinki's urban fabric, its cultural and design advantages, its diversity and cosmopolitanism, and its size and scale, are less visible (see Figure 29).

For example, Helsinki contrasts with Prague, where more than half of nouns and adjectives used to describe the city relate to the city's form and fabric, such as architecture, buildings and bridges; and with Vienna, where culture is the dominant association (e.g. classical music and the opera, gastronomy and historical heritage). Helsinki also contrasts with cities like Amsterdam and Auckland, where descriptive references to liberalism, freedom and openness; and cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism; are much more common respectively.



**Figure 29: The relative visibility of Helsinki's brand sub-segments relative to its peers in the online conversation, 2019-20**



Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology.

Overall, this means that compared to other cities, Helsinki's liveability brand is more visible, but its citizen and character brand is less visible (see Figure 30). This data demonstrates that innovative tactics to highlight the ways Helsinki provides a locus for Finland's broader reputation for citizen trust and openness, but also adds distinctive 'urban' attributes such as cosmopolitanism and 'buzz', may be important in the next cycle.

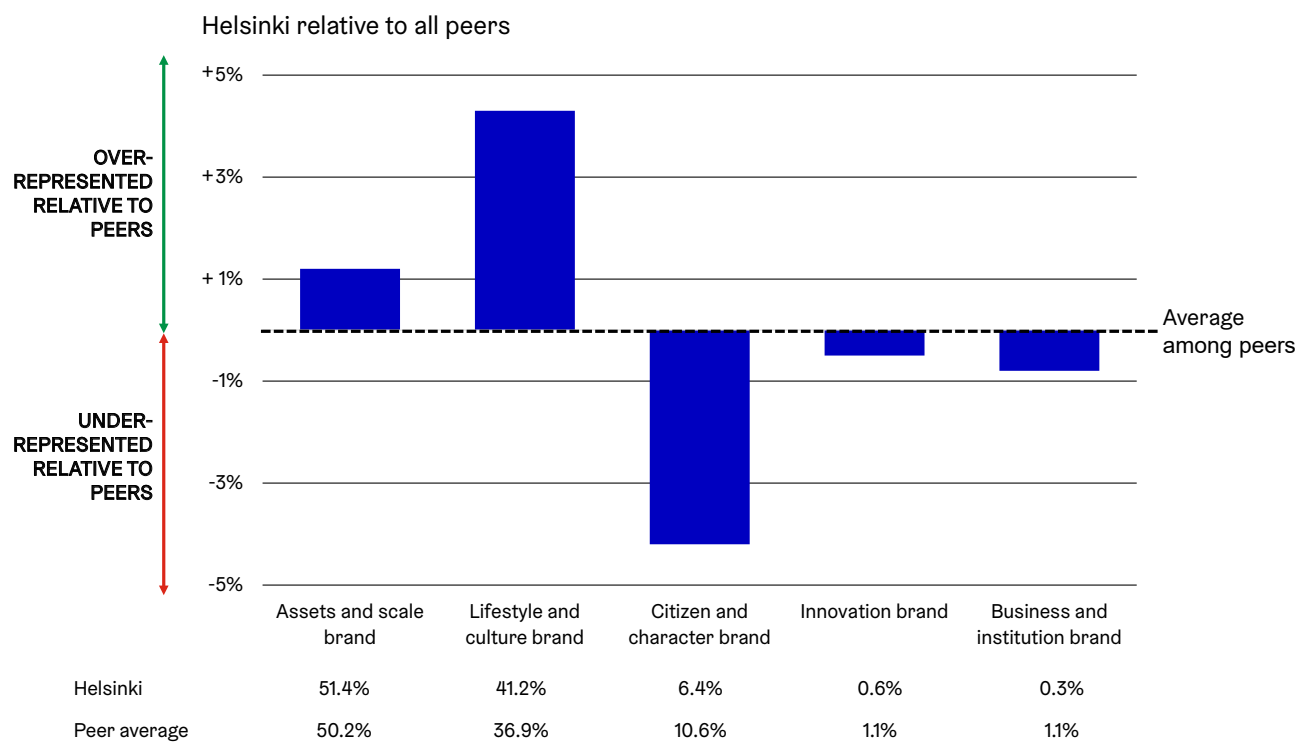
**Compared to the Scandinavian capitals, Helsinki is not yet as renowned for its culture and diversity, or for its innovation and business advantages.** Relative to these cities, Helsinki is less likely to be mentioned as an example of a diverse or cosmopolitan city, or as a highly cultural city. References to Helsinki's innovation and business brand, and its size, scale and opportunity are also lower (see Figure 31).

For example, around 17% of total mentions of Helsinki relate to its culture. This is quite a lot lower in relative terms than in Oslo (21%), where references to the city's museums and art galleries, and recently completed Opera House, are more common. Simi-

larly, Stockholm's innovation edge is much more visible than Helsinki's, with global audiences being nearly five times more likely to describe the city as 'innovative' or renowned for innovation. This is mainly due to the presence of high-profile, highly visible 'unicorn' firms within the city, and partly due to city positioning efforts designed to draw attention to Stockholm's status as an innovative, pro-business destination.

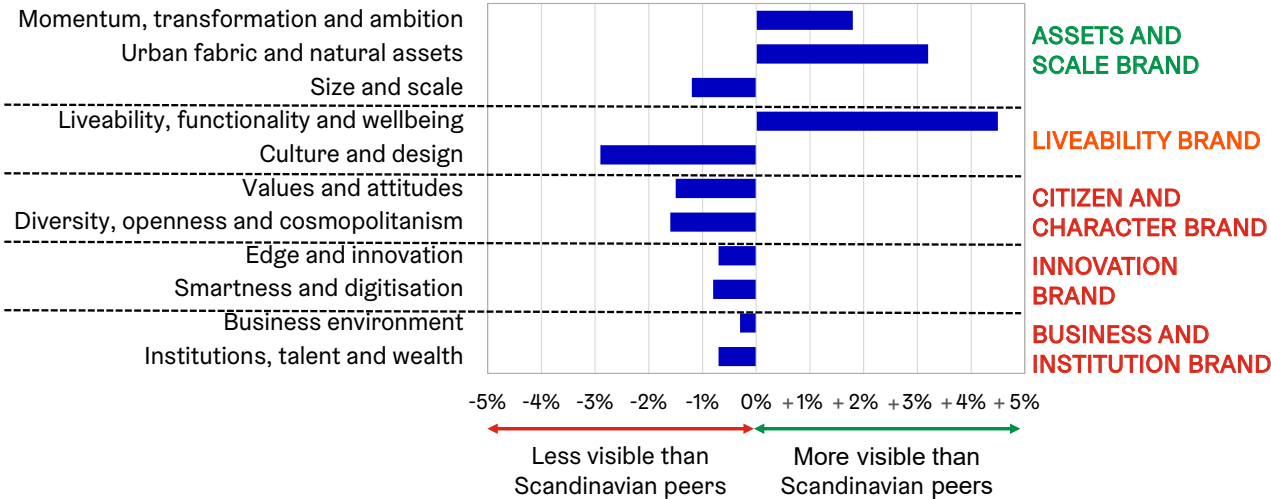
The data on size and scale also indicate that Helsinki's status as a regional hub city is less visible than is the case for the other Scandinavian capitals. The global conversation points to a certain level of ongoing perception of Helsinki as a relatively small and remote city, with far fewer references to its economic size and scale. This data suggests there is an imperative for Helsinki to more confidently show how it connects to its region and to other neighbouring cities, for example through communicating the scale more precisely, promoting its status as part of a broader region such as the Baltic Sea group of cities, or even demonstrating its gateway capability to connect Europe with fast-growing Asian markets.

**Figure 30: The relative visibility of Helsinki's various brand segments relative to its peers, 2019-20**



Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology.

**Figure 31: The visibility of Helsinki's brand sub-segments relative to its Scandinavian peers, 2019-20**



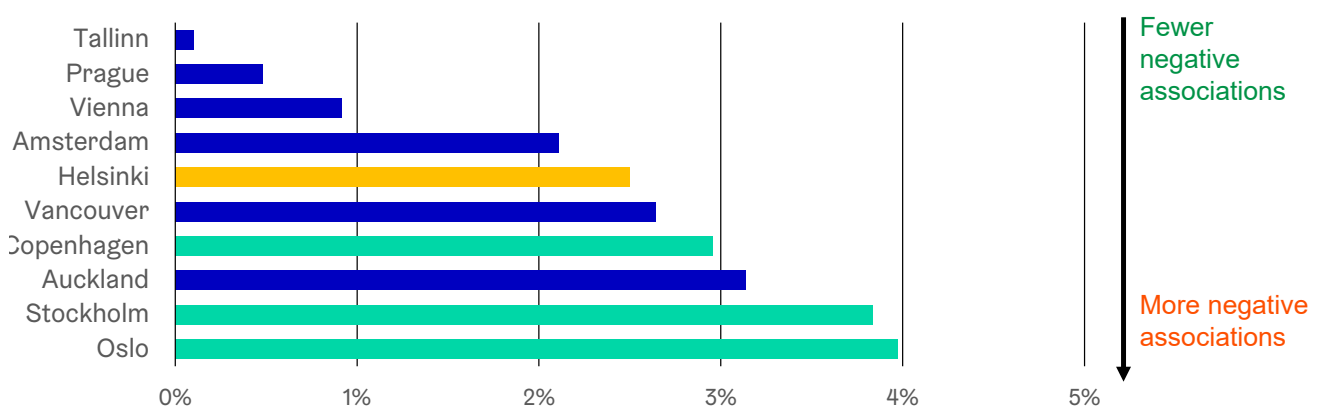
Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology.

## How positive is the global conversation about Helsinki?

**Global conversation about Helsinki is more positive than in the Scandinavian cities, which are more likely to be described as expensive.** Around 87.5% of the global conversation on Helsinki is positive, while around 10% is neutral. 2.5% of mentions about Helsinki are negative, which is slightly higher than the average among Helsinki's wider peer group (2.2%), but

much lower than the average of the Scandinavian cities (3.6%) (see Figure 32). Although Helsinki is more often described as 'boring' or 'lacking sun' compared to these cities, there are many fewer references to cost and expense. Global positivity about Helsinki has remained relatively stable over time, while in other cities – particularly the Scandinavian cities – it has fallen, as concerns about cost have become more prominent. Overall, Helsinki has the 5th lowest percentage of negative mentions among its wider peer group.

**Figure 32: Negative mentions as a % of total mentions in the global conversation, 2019-20**



Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology. \*Data based on a sample and should be treated as indicative.

# Helsinki in the global media

**This section of the report analyses Helsinki's visibility in top global media outlets.** It reviews 45 media outlets in total – a combination of 30 of the most influential and widely circulated media outlets globally<sup>89</sup>, chosen to represent a global spread; and an additional 15 outlets from selected 'deep dive' markets that are of strategic interest to Helsinki's positioning. This additional group includes the top 3 most widely circulated media outlets in each of the UK, US, India, China, Russia, South Korea, France and Germany where they were not already included.

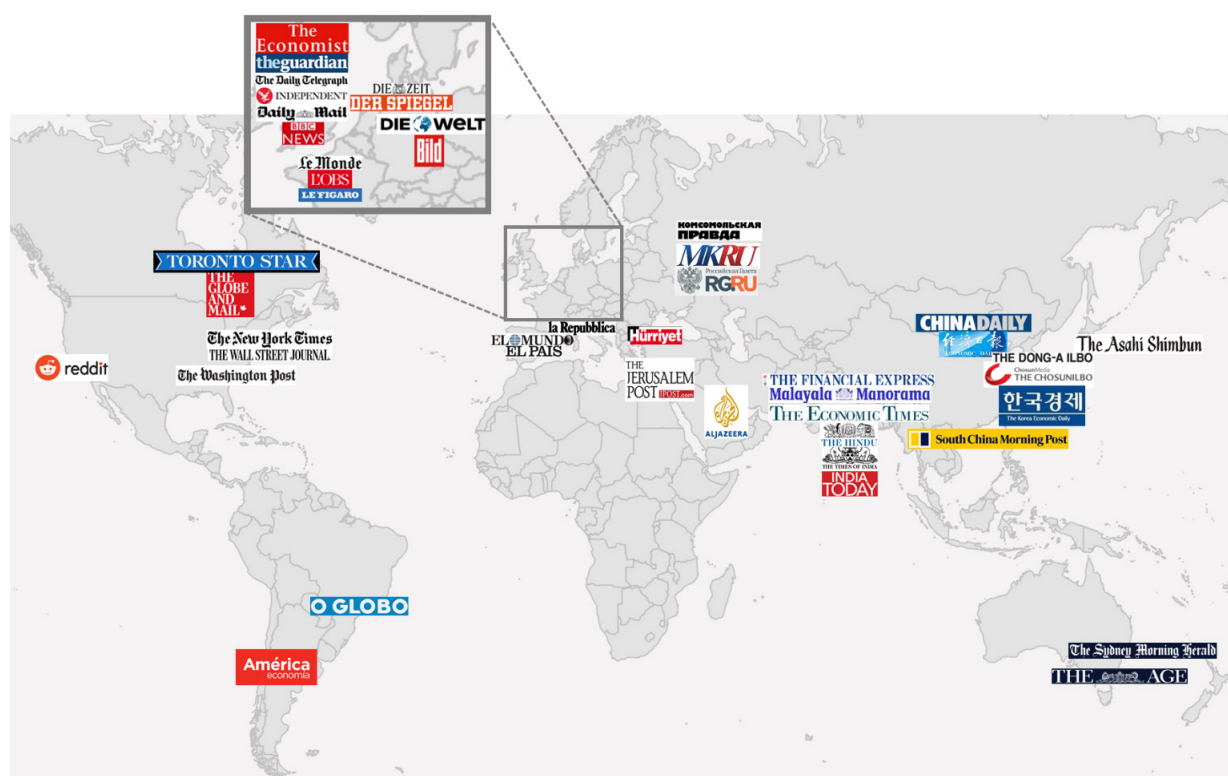
**As is the case in other cities, 95% of references to Helsinki in global media refer to local news incidents, such as crimes, sporting events, celebrity or political visits, or, more recently, the coronavirus outbreak.** Few high-profile media articles in top global outlets offer sustained or substantive commentary on Helsinki as a place today, or its opportunities, strengths

and challenges. Yet these 5% are important for driving overall impressions of the city. Appearing in more of these types of media, where Helsinki is implicitly and explicitly assessed and promoted, is strategically valuable, as it helps to transmit global identity, establish reputation among global audiences, and act coherently across different markets, where opportunities are contested through international competition.

## What are some of the high-profile descriptions of Helsinki?

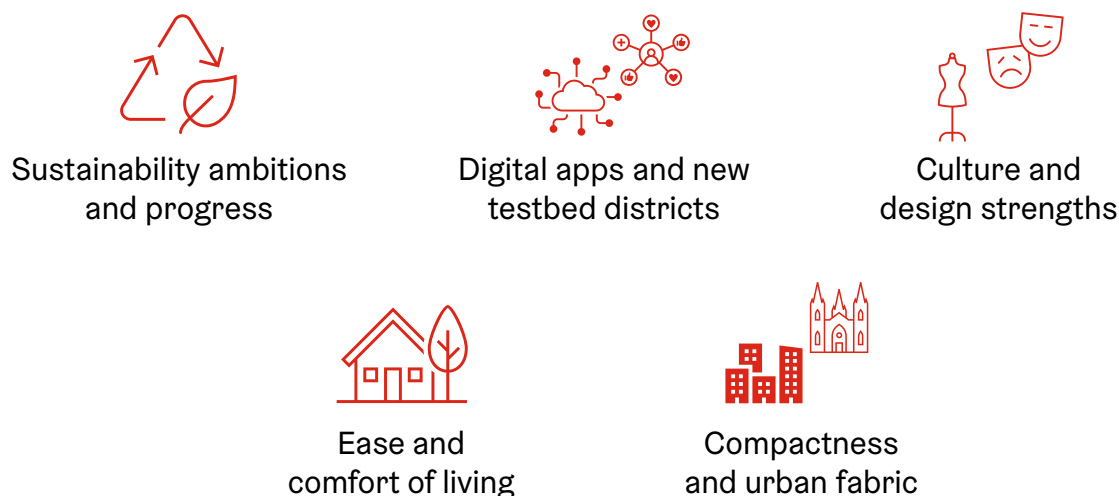
**Most of the high-profile global media that do specifically focus on Helsinki tend to be drawn to five themes.** The relative prominence of these themes is also highlighted by the below selection of quotes, drawn from top global media outlets during the past year (see Figures 33, 34).

## Map of the global media outlets consulted for this study



See Appendix for full list of sources consulted.

**Figure 33: The five most prominent themes in Helsinki's coverage in the top global media**



**Figure 34: Quotes used to describe Helsinki in online media, 2019-20**

### **Sustainability ambitions and progress**

*"If you take a walk in the back streets, and enter a small shop or cafe, there are no shopping bags, no overpacking, receipts are electronic instead of paper... You can [really] feel the character of the city."*

**Asahi Shimbun, Japan, 2020**

*"Ultima, in Helsinki, is pioneering a closed economy system where they not only reduce waste and recycle nutrients but [also] are cultivating their own food on an urban site, thereby making the whole food production and consumption system highly efficient."*

**Al Jazeera, Qatar, 2019**

*"In Helsinki, where nature trails and clean coastal waters are part of the fabric of everyday life, more than 75% of hotel rooms are certified as environmentally friendly". Helsinki is also at the forefront of responsible fashion with stores selling upcycled or second-hand clothes and several fashion "libraries" that have clothes for loan."*

**The Guardian, 2020**

### **Digital apps and new testbed districts**

*"Ten years ago, Kalasatama, northeast of the Finnish capital, was just a gigantic industrial wasteland. Since then, ultramodern buildings have sprung up on every street corner in this district of Helsinki, transformed into a giant laboratory, to test new solutions."*

**Le Monde, France, 2019**

*"Cities like Helsinki have already taken the concept of mobility chains further. There are great apps there that offer mobility services: I stand here and want to go there, and then [the apps] find out which rental bike I can use or where I can change to the subway to get there faster."*

**Der Spiegel, Germany 2020**

*"Kalasatama, a declining industrial zone and port in the Finnish capital Helsinki, is transforming into a smart city that preserves nature while promoting welfare through smart technologies and environmentally friendly solutions. The transportation system [has been] improved and autonomous buses are also operated using IoT and artificial intelligence technology."*

**Dong A Ilbo, South Korea, 2019**

*"In Helsinki, a single application gives access to half a dozen means of transport. Its designers have even offered motorists the opportunity to exchange their car for this magical tool, which offers them all the services, "including a car when they need it."*

**Le Monde, France, 2020**

## **Culture and design strengths**

“Helsinki Fashion Week - a well-known stage for innovative designers from all over the world - sees [Coronavirus] as [an opportunity]. Instead of models, the young designers send avatars over a virtual catwalk, and the entire fashion week takes place digitally.”

***Bild, Germany, 2020***

“From world-famous brands to small privately owned shops, [The Design District] is home to more than 200 fashion, interior and gallery shops, and is a treasure trove of designs full of new discoveries.”

***Asahi Shimbun, Japan, 2020***

“Helsinki is a travel destination full of design and art... Design can be encountered anywhere...Even chairs placed in train stations and parks feel unusual design elements.”

***Dong A Ilbo, South Korea, 2019***

“Digital fashion weeks have become a reality, be it in London, Paris or Shanghai. But it is the upcoming showcase in Helsinki, starting July 27, that many are tracking. Considered a fringe fashion week with its focus on sustainability over the last three years, it seems to be in for much more recognition this month.”

***The Hindu, India, 2020***

## **The ease and comfort of living in the city**

“Helsinki is an orderly, clean, well-kept city - and silent - you will not hear a voice louder than another, not even a horn...”

***El Pais, Spain, 2020***

“Here in Helsinki, our family is facing our second Nordic winter and the notorious darkness it brings. Our Finnish friends keep asking how we handled the first one and whether we can survive another. Our answer is always the same. As we push our 2-year-old daughter in her stroller through the dismal, icy streets to her wonderful, affordable day-care center or to our friendly, professional and completely free pediatric health center, before heading to work in an innovative economy where a vast majority of people have a decent quality of life, the winter doesn’t matter one bit.”

***New York Times, USA, 2019***

“[In Helsinki], one has the feeling that everything is designed for the delight of the citizen, for the enjoyment of the senses, but also to make life more comfortable.”

***El Pais, Spain, 2020***

“Zero pedestrians died [in Helsinki] last year. The policy measures that achieved that feat are varied, but all centre around battling the primacy of the car. Lowering speed limits is key. Other changes include safer street design, road tolls, more expensive parking, and replacing much of the street parking with wider sidewalks and bike lanes. Investment in transit has spurred ridership.”

***Toronto Globe and Mail, Canada, 2019***

## **Compactness and urban fabric**

“Then, [we did] a half tour of the city. Really a half tour, by the way, because Helsinki is very small, you can do everything by foot.”

***Der Spiegel, Germany, 2019***

“Though Helsinki was attacked during the Second World War, its delightful mix of architecture with influences from Russia, Scandinavia and other Baltic nations has survived.”

***India Today, 2019***

“Oodi, in Helsinki, Finland... [is] the current star of the library world.”

***The Guardian, UK, 2020***

“Helsinki is a treasure trove of Art Nouveau, not frizzy and playful as in Central Europe, but straightforward and strict. The best example of this is the main station, a total work of art made of granite.”

***Die Welt, Germany, 2019***

## How visible is Helsinki in the global print media?

**Despite rapid growth, Helsinki's visibility in the global print media is still quite far behind compared to other cities.** The number of articles mentioning Helsinki in a sample of the most widely circulated and globally influential news outlets, including among Helsinki's target markets, has increased by nearly 250% since 2014-15. This compares to an average of 150% among its wider peer group, or 110% among the Scandinavian capitals. But Helsinki's visibility has been growing from a much lower base. Although Helsinki's visibility is now broadly on a par with Oslo and Prague, the city still ranks 8<sup>th</sup> among its wider peer group for all-round media visibility relative to its size, and is still far behind Stockholm and Copenhagen (see Figure 35). It is striking that Helsinki is more visible in Russian and French media compared to its wider peer group (+174% and +36% compared to the average among Scandinavian cities respectively), but less visible in all other markets. Helsinki is especially less visible in Canadian, US, and UK media (-44%, -51% and -61% respectively) (see Figure 36).

**Helsinki is still not yet as visible in the very 'top tier' global news outlets.** Among a global sample of 10 of the most widely circulated and influential news sources, in 2019-20 Helsinki appeared in around half as many articles as Vienna, Copenhagen and Auckland, once population size is taken into account, and ranks 8<sup>th</sup> among its wider peer group.<sup>90</sup> Although the number of articles mentioning Helsinki in these 'top tier' news outlets has nearly doubled since 2014, this is a far lower rate of change compared to Helsinki's all-round media visibility, which has more than tripled over the same period. This suggests that Helsinki has mainly been picking up low to medium value credit, and that the challenge in the next cycle will be for Helsinki to improve visibility in the elite global conversation.

**For a city of its size, Helsinki is surprisingly visible in dedicated tech media.** Relative to its size, Helsinki appeared in more articles in top global technology sources in 2019-20 than Vienna, Auckland and Prague, and only slightly fewer than in Copenhagen, ranking 5<sup>th</sup> in its wider peer group. This is indicative of a high level of global awareness of, and appetite to comment on, Helsinki's technology, smartness and digitisation strengths, among global audiences. This can be an important advantage for Helsinki moving forwards.<sup>91</sup>

**Helsinki's leadership on the big global agendas of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become very visible in the English-speaking media.** In analysis that provides substantive commentary on Helsinki, the city's leadership on green infrastructure and mobility, its track record of adopting and deploying smart technologies, and its wider progress on sustainability, are highly visible. In particular, coverage focuses on Helsinki's adoption of MaaS and mobility on demand apps, the efficiency of public transport, progress reducing car dependency and the use of technologies to accelerate efforts to provide remote care for elderly populations. As is the case in the wider conversation, Helsinki's work-life balance and wellbeing credentials are also highly visible.



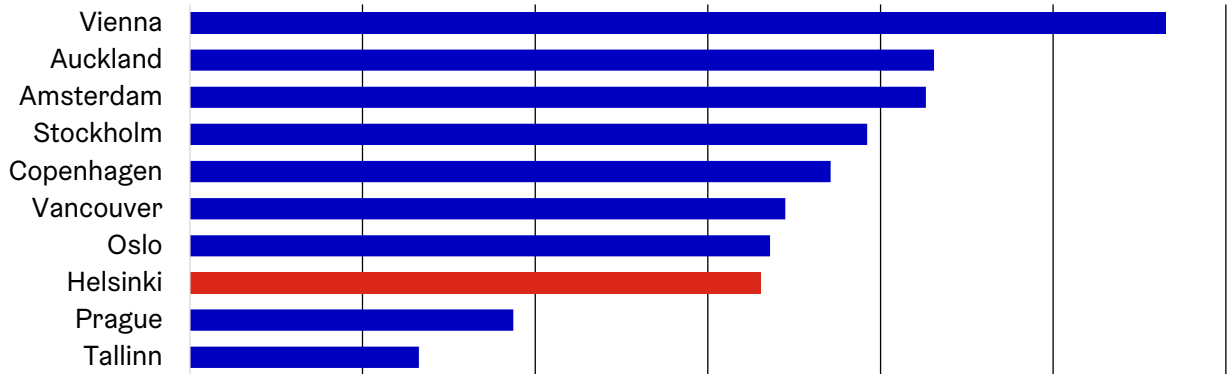
Figure 35: Helsinki's visibility in the global media, relative to peers

Helsinki's media visibility

(2014/15 to 2019/20)

+247%

Helsinki's visibility relative to its size (2019-20)



Visibility in the agenda-setting global conversation in 2019-20

(relative to size, 100 = peer average)

67

8<sup>th</sup> among peers

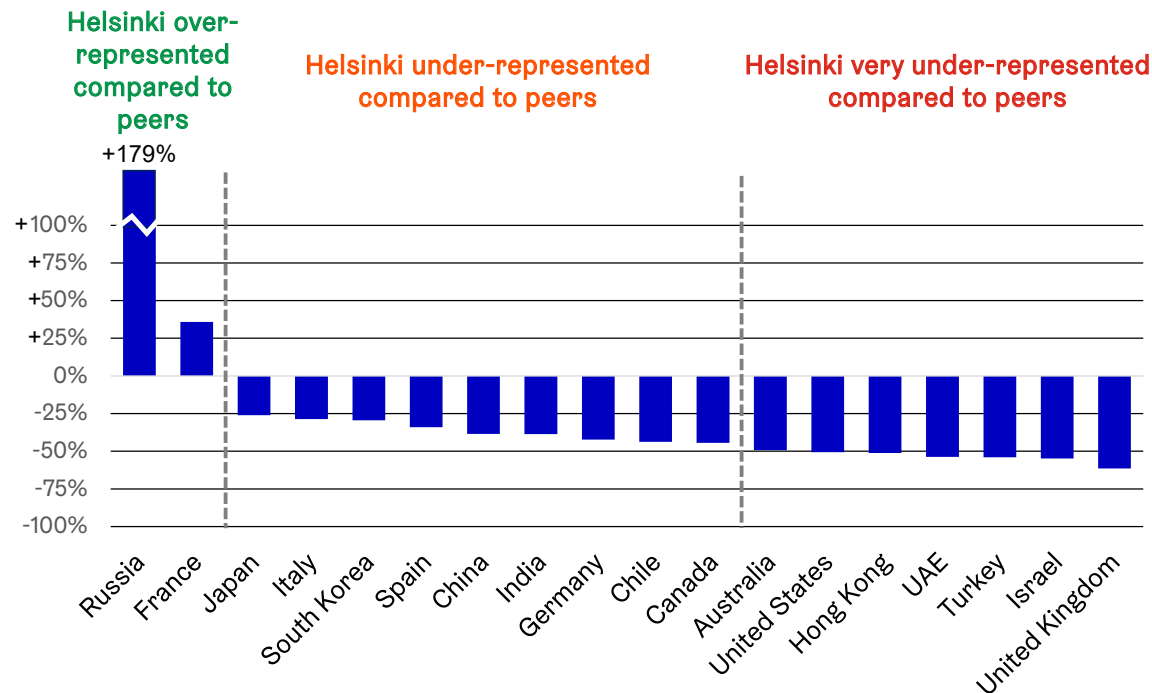
Visibility in dedicated tech media in 2019-20

(relative to size, 100 = peer average)

103

5<sup>th</sup> among peers

Figure 36: Helsinki's media visibility in major global markets, relative to peers, 2019-20



# Helsinki on social media

This section of the report analyses Helsinki's visibility on social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram. It reviews the differences in Helsinki's visibility among the general global public and 'verified' users or 'influencers', and tracks how Helsinki's visibility on social media, including total volume of activity and relative breakdown by theme, has evolved over time.

## How is Helsinki described on social media and how has this changed over time?

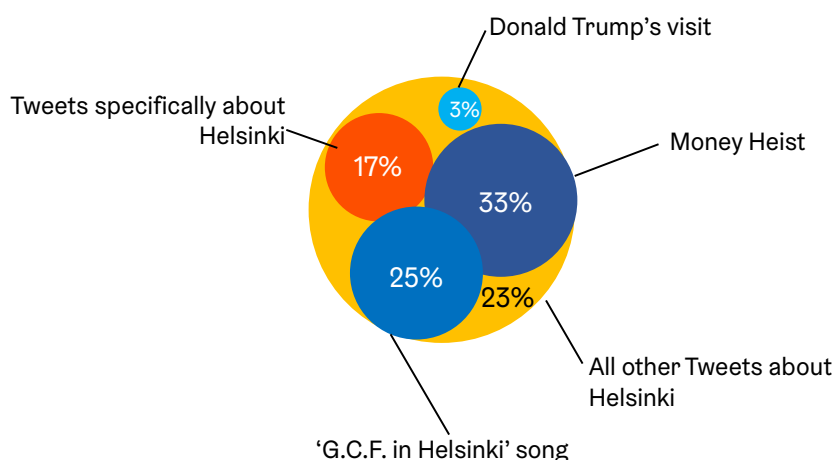
**Looking across all social media users, Helsinki's visibility has been increasing over the past five years.** The number of total unique public comments about Helsinki made on Twitter has grown nearly threefold, while the total number of Tweets has more than doubled. The potential global reach, in terms of global audience size, has also nearly doubled. This is partly related to a global shift in who is Tweeting about the city. In 2014-15, six of the top ten countries for the number of Tweets relating to Helsinki (including Finland) were in Europe, with the rest made up of Canada and the US, Australia and India. In 2019-20, the landscape is much more global: only four of the top 10 are European, and the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Nigeria are part of the mix. This suggests that Helsinki is also beginning to resonate

more strongly in more distant markets and may be an important advantage going forwards.

**But Helsinki is relatively unique among its peer group for sharing its name with more than one major global cultural product not at all related to the city.** 'Helsinki' is also a major character in a new Netflix film – 'Money Heist' – and features in the title of a popular song by a Korean pop group. As such, over half of total tweets containing the phrase 'Helsinki is...' posted over the past year refer to events or entities that are not relevant to the city. This raises an important question for Helsinki about how to 'cut through the noise' on global social media. As a guide, around one sixth of total tweets referencing Helsinki relate specifically to Helsinki's characteristics, while just over one fifth are about events or entities relating more tangentially to the city (such as sporting events, crimes, or other phenomena).

**The rest of this section analyses the Tweets falling into the 'Tweets specifically about Helsinki' category in Figure 37.** This excludes Tweets about Donald Trump's visit (unless about Helsinki as the host city), sporting events, crime, and other phenomena that took place in the city by chance but do not reflect or affect users' overall perceptions of the city.

**Figure 37: Relative breakdown of social media coverage specifically featuring 'Helsinki' in 2019-20**

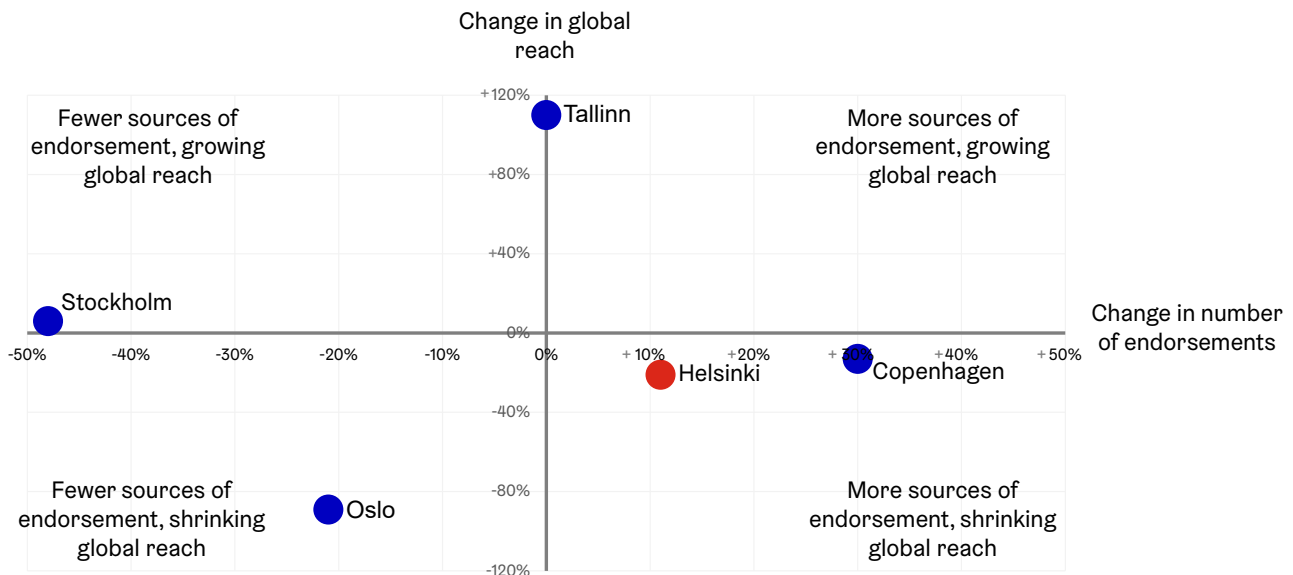


Source: The Business of Cities research. See Appendix for methodology. \*All other tweets About Helsinki includes references to e.g. sports teams, local news events, weather, etc. Based on 10% sample of all Tweets containing the phrase "Helsinki is..." in 2019-20 (c. 1,750 Tweets). Data should be treated as indicative.

**But among more influential circles, Helsinki's visibility and reach has increased less rapidly.** The number of tweets specifically about Helsinki (as opposed to anything relating to Money Heist or other unrelated cultural artefacts and entities) among all verified Twitter users<sup>92</sup> has increased by more than 10% since 2014, putting Helsinki in the middle of the pack relative to its Northern European peers. However, Helsin-

ki's total global reach, in terms of the cumulative number of people that can potentially see these Tweets, has declined by nearly a quarter (see Figure 38). This puts Helsinki in contrast to cities such as Stockholm and Tallinn, where global reach has been accelerating, and in contrast to Copenhagen, where the number of endorsements has increased more rapidly.

**Figure 38: Change in number of tweets (x) and global reach among verified Twitter users (y), 2014-2019**



Source: *The Business of Cities Research*. Based on a sample - data should be treated as indicative.

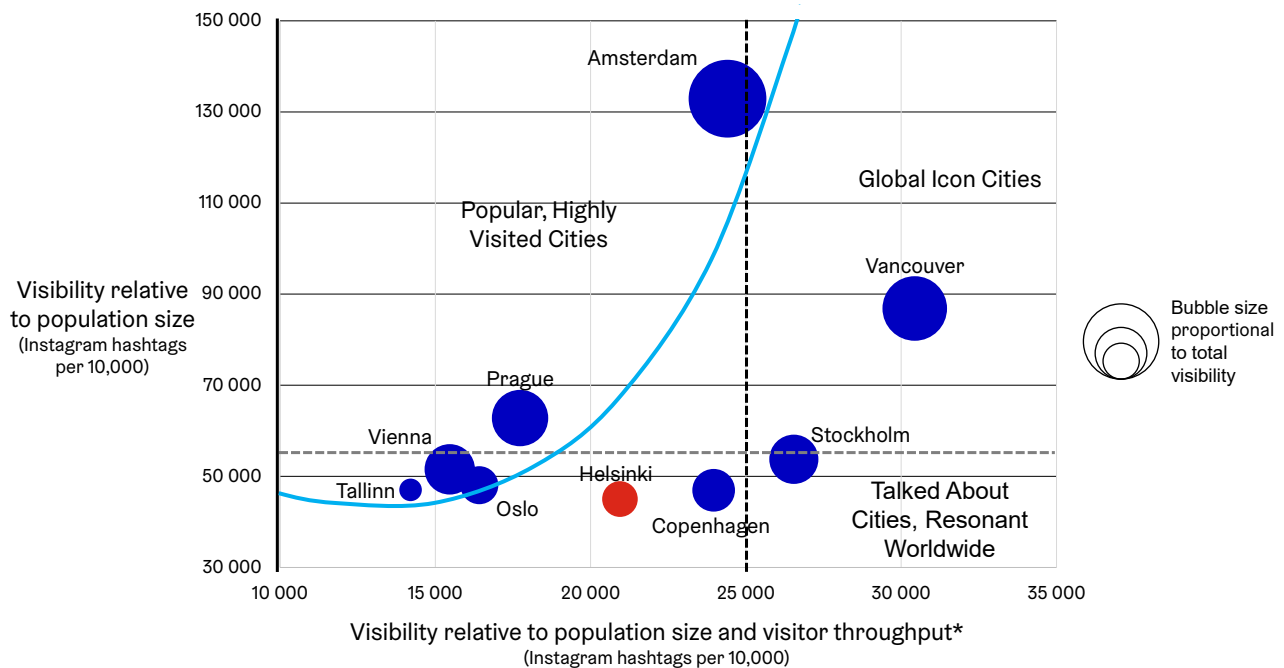
**Overall, Helsinki appears to be a part of a group of cities that are not yet widely talked about on social media unless visited.** In absolute terms, Helsinki's overall visibility on social media<sup>93</sup> puts it near the bottom of its peer group, ahead of Auckland and Tallinn but still relatively far behind the Scandinavian capitals. Relative to population size and visitor throughput, Helsinki performs slightly better. Figure 39 shows that while there are a small number of very highly talked about cities on social media in relation to their size and visitor profile, most cities are clustered towards the lower end of the spectrum. Helsinki fits in somewhere in the middle, but does not yet classify as a popular and highly visited city (e.g. Prague, Amsterdam), a widely talked about city that resonates globally (e.g. Stockholm) or a global 'icon' city that combines these two characteristics (e.g. Vancouver).

**Although there has been an increase in the number of verifiable endorsers of Helsinki, these endorsers are for the most part not highly influential or highly followed celebrities or organisations, as is the case in some other cities.** For example, Stockholm regularly features in Tweets by The Economist, Sky News and the World Economic Forum, plus globally renowned authors and commentators such as Nate Silvers and Dinesh D'Souza. Meanwhile in Copenhagen, globally famous musicians and personalities such as 5 Seconds of Summer and reality TV star Gemma Collins are also part of the mix. The relative absence of such organisations and influencers Tweeting about Helsinki means there are fewer people able to potentially see tweets from high-profile, influential users that could change their perceptions of the city (see Figure 40). Sample data suggests that Helsinki has the lowest proportion of highly followed endorsers (>100,000 followers) Tweeting about the city among this core group of 5 Nordic peers.

However, despite having the lowest proportion of high-influence endorsers (with over 100,000 followers), Helsinki performs quite well for the number of mid-level influencers. Helsinki has also improved slightly since 2014 for the proportion of users Tweet-

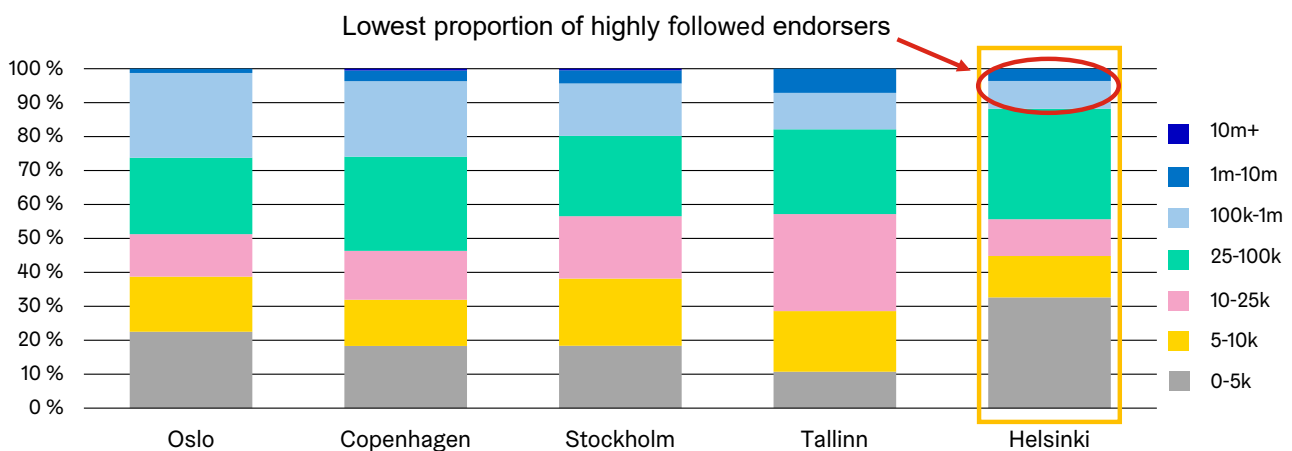
ing about the city with over 1 million followers. In the next cycle, a focus on attracting more endorsement from 'super influencers' with large global followings may help Helsinki to address some of the more stubborn misperceptions that still exist about the city.

**Figure 39: Helsinki and peer cities' visibility on social media, absolute and relative to population size and visitor throughput**



Sources: The Business of Cities research, Instagram, Eurostat, local sources.

**Figure 40: Breakdown of verified Twitter users Tweeting about Helsinki and the other Nordic cities by number of followers in 2019**



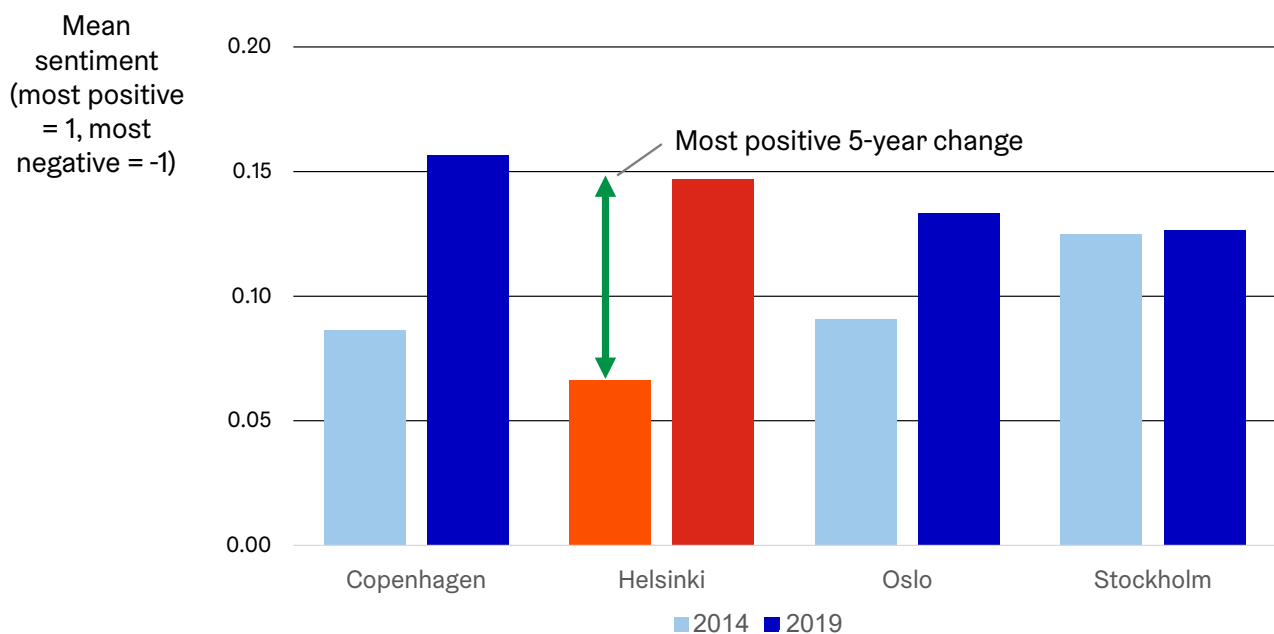
Source: The Business of Cities Research. Based on a sample - data should be treated as indicative.

**Influencers and endorsers are talking about Helsinki more and more positively on social media.** An analysis of Tweets posted by influencers, news outlets and organisations users shows that average sentiment has increased faster in Helsinki than in any of the other 3 Nordic capitals, and that Helsinki is now the 2<sup>nd</sup> most positively talked about among this group (see Figure 41).

**Helsinki is also on a par with the Scandinavian capitals for sentiment relating to city assets.** The same

sentiment analysis suggests that verified Twitter users rate the city's beauty, architecture and design, cleanliness and greenness, and food, culture and nightlife scenes on a par with, ahead of, or only slightly below the average among Scandinavian capitals. Positive overall sentiment across all three of these areas reinforces the idea of 'positive surprise' for visitors experiencing Helsinki's assets for the first time, and suggests an imperative for the city to encourage prospective travellers to 'see for themselves.'

**Figure 41: Mean sentiment of Tweets posted by influencers, news outlets and organisations, Helsinki and Scandinavian peers**



Source: The Business of Cities research. \*Based on all Tweets from verified users containing the phrase "Helsinki is". Data should be treated as indicative.

## Helsinki on Instagram

Helsinki's current Instagram visibility and edges suggest that:

- **Overall, Helsinki is as 'Instagrammable' as its peer cities.** The number of hashtags containing "Helsinki" relative to the city's population size and visitor throughput (20,950) is on a par with the peer average (21,100), and higher than in some highly visited cities such as Prague and Vienna.
- **Helsinki is well recognised for its airport and for cultural events such as Lux, Pride celebrations and Helsinki Päivä.** The hub connectivity between Europe and Asia is a clear advantage, while specific cultural events with a wider sense of appeal receive strong coverage (see Figures 42 and 43 and Appendix for full list of hashtags).
- **Helsinki's districts and neighbourhoods are less visible than in peer cities.** In cities such as Amsterdam, Auckland and Tallinn, there are many more references to specific areas of the city, including individual neighbourhoods (e.g. Amsterdam Centraal, Amsterdam Oost), the Old Town, or the CBD.

**Figure 42: Relative visibility of the 50 most popular Instagram hashtags containing the phrase "#Helsinki"**



**Figure 43: Helsinki's Instagrammability and Instagrammed edges, relative to peer cities**

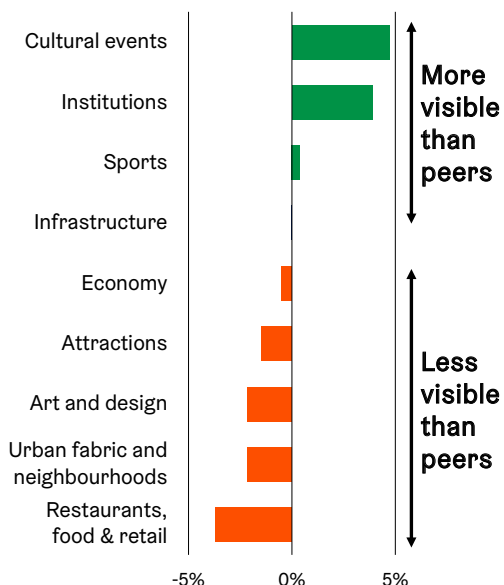
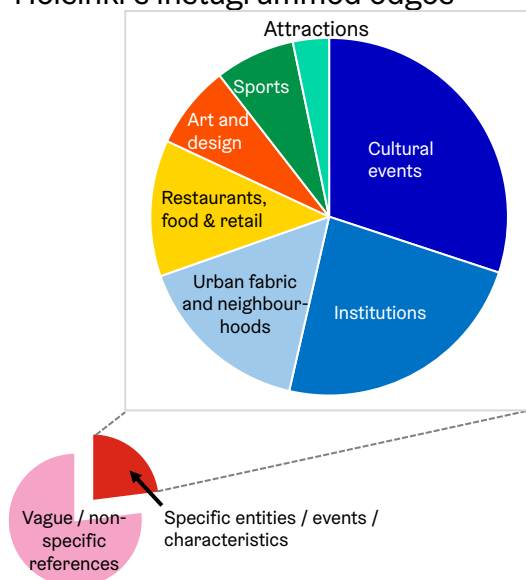
### Helsinki's Instagrammability

(relative to population size and visitor throughput, 0% is peer average)

**-1%**

### Most visible edges relative to peers

#### Helsinki's instagrammed edges



+

Source: Instagram. Instagrammability = number of hashtags relative to population size and visitor throughput. Most visible edges based on % of hashtags among top 55 most popular hashtags containing "Helsinki" falling into each category.

## What are some of the most widely shared articles and posts about Helsinki?

**The most widely shared media pieces about Helsinki among influencers tend to focus on the city's functionality, smartness and close-knit community.** In 2019-20, references to its status as a European Smart Tourism Capital, its walkability and compactness, and its equality and respect for human rights, all resonate strongly outside of Finland. The range of popular hashtags across the full 2015-2020 period, across all individual influencers, verified news outlets and organisations outside of Finland, highlights:

- Positive resonance of Helsinki campaigns such as 'no hiccups', 'hel yes' and 'Functional City'

- The visibility of high-level events, summits and bids such as Slush, Open Innovation 2.0 conference, Data Economy 2019, the Trump-Putin Summit, and bid for the European Medical Agency
- Endorsement of Helsinki as a hub for innovation, and IoT and smart technologies
- Helsinki's association with healthy lifestyle such as cycling, walking and veganism
- Endorsement from high-level, trusted organisations such as Lonely Planet, Deloitte and Mastercard



	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020
Top 10 hashtags among Verified Twitter users	#Helsinki #publictransport #Finland #ATPGlobal #NLamb2015 #history #NATO #innovation #cities #perspective	#Helsinki #travel #Finland #CompactofMayors #21to21 #lp #smarticities #OI2Conf16 #helyes #Slush2015	#Helsinki #news #IoT #Tech #SmartCity #KISS #Finland #WIREDAwake #startups #VisitHelsinki	#Helsinki #EMAHelsinki #myhelsinki #Finland #FutureofMobility #CityMobilityIndex #nohiccup #sharedmobility #finland #MaaS	#Helsinki #smart #urbanization #Finland #cities #HelsinkiSummit #CityPossible #cycling #vegan #EUTourismCapital	#Helsinki #cities #COVID19 #OodiLibrary #FunctionalCity #GlobalGoals #Finland #takewalks #Dataeconomy2019 #design

From 2014-15 to 2019-20, the most widely circulated and endorsed Tweets about Helsinki among influential circles include references to:

- The Trump-Putin summit
- The Hartwall Areena ice rink
- The Slush start-up conference
- The city's efforts to reduce car dependence
- The cost of hotel room service

#### Figure 44: Most retweeted tweets and articles about Helsinki among individual influencers in 2019-20

"#Helsinki is one of the first cities to be selected as a European Smart Tourism Capital. In addition to meeting the existing criteria, a city also needs plans in place to continue to develop initiatives. Helsinki is aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030."

"Helsinki is about functionality, community, freedom of speech, equality and respect of human rights."

"In April of 2019, the Mayor of #Helsinki, #Finland launched the Helsinki Energy Challenge, a one million euro reward for anyone who can come up with a solution to get rid of coal in the city's heating supply. Helsinki aims to be carbon-neutral by 2035."

"The message in #Helsinki is heard loud and clear and peacefully: #BlackLivesMatter."

"#Helsinki is an intimate and compact capital, making the harbour city of Nordic cool a winner in the walkability stakes."

Source: The Business of Cities Research. \*Based on all Tweets containing the phrase "Helsinki is...". See Appendix for full list of most widely circulated and endorsed Tweets about Helsinki across the full five-year period.

## What are some of the most visible descriptions of Helsinki among global influencers?

As well as providing endorsement for Helsinki's culinary, cultural and nightlife scene, global influencers also celebrate the city's forward-thinking infrastructure and mobility platform and its leadership on smart technologies. Over 20% of all Tweets by ver-

ified users that specifically comment on Helsinki are about the city's adoption of smart and next-generation technologies. 18% also celebrate its vibrant cultural scene, reflecting the positive surprise for those who visit it. Helsinki can look to leverage these 'influencers', both at home and abroad, in order to correct widely held misperceptions about the city and also improve visibility of the areas where Helsinki is under-represented compared to other cities.

**Figure 45: Quotes used to describe Helsinki among global 'influencers' in 2019-20, by number of followers**

"The first thing I noticed about Helsinki is how incredibly CLEAN it is, especially for a bigger city... Coincidentally, it also has the best Casino!"

**Ash, Youtuber, 150k followers**

"Helsinki is an awesome destination with a lot to see and do."

**Nomadic Matt, NYT best-selling author, 120k followers**

"Taking cities back thru hospitality, friendship & food. 'Restaurant Day' began in Helsinki - is Edin[burgh]/Glas[gow]/Dun[dee] next?"

**Lesley Riddoch, Scottish Journalist, 60k followers**

"What a friendly and attractive airport Helsinki's is! Security staff from most countries, incl. UK, should be sent to charm school here."

**Peter Jones, NYT best-selling author, 40k followers**

"Helsinki is so expensive change disappears from my pockets every time I cough in public."

**Siyanda Mohutsiwa, pan-African writer, 40k followers**

"Has anyone ever written a good explainer on why Helsinki is such a big hub for mobile game studios? There are so many amazing ones..."

**Blake Robbins, VC investor, 30k followers**

"The food in Helsinki is not good. It's GREAT."

**The midnight, LA-based band, 30k followers**

"Finland's capital city, Helsinki, is a design-lover's dream - from the gorgeous DesignMuseo to a dedicated Design District to iconic architecture. It's no wonder it was crowned the World Design Capital in 2012."

**Prachi Joshi, global travel writer, 10k followers**

Source: The Business of Cities Research. \*Excludes news outlets and organisations (only individual 'influencers'). See Appendix for full list of Helsinki's most important Twitter 'influencers', including news outlets and organisations, and the most retweeted Tweets each year, across the full 5-year period.

## What types of ‘influencer’ can Helsinki leverage?

**The types of ‘influencer’ regularly mentioning Helsinki online includes both ‘direct’ influencers such as celebrities and travel bloggers, and ‘accidental’ influencers such as tech analysts, journalists and politicians.** In 2019, nearly half of all individual ‘influencers’<sup>94</sup> Tweeting about Helsinki were journalists, ambassadors, or foreign correspondents – over 10% more than the average among Scandinavian capitals. However, Helsinki does not yet have as much of a presence or visibility among tech analysts, VC investors and entrepreneurs, relative to these other cities, which may be one reason for the lower visibility of this segment of Helsinki’s brand in comparison to others. Helsinki also stands out for having the lowest proportion of Youtubers, bloggers and social media influencers Tweeting about the city, at around 10% lower than the Scandinavian average. This is significant, as such ‘influencers’ are increasingly trusted sources for recommendations on cities to visit and invest in, especially among digitally native younger generations.

**Although external influencers mentioning Helsinki on their public platforms are spread across the globe, as a whole, influencers are mainly located within Finland.** The United States (39), United Kingdom (22), India (9), Germany (6), Canada (4), Netherlands (4) and Australia (4) are all in the top 10 countries for the number of verified users Tweeting about Helsinki in the past year, which may be an important advantage for Helsinki in terms of its ability to further amplify its global reach, in the next cycle. However, the proportion of Tweets specifically about Helsinki among all verified users, originating from accounts registered outside of Finland, is significantly lower than on average among the Scandinavian capitals (63% compared to 89%). The evidence suggests that the more mature and more highly globalised cities tend to have not only stronger resonance among highly influential celebrities and social media influencers, but also have influencer profiles that are more heavily based on outside-of-country endorsement.

# Appendix

## Brand framework underlying this report

Brand segment	Brand sub-segment	Example themes
Assets and scale brand	Urban fabric and natural assets	Neighbourhoods and architecture, coastline, green space
Assets and scale brand	Momentum, transformation and ambition	Economic growth, climate change action
Assets and scale brand	Size and scale of opportunity	Population size, global reach, gateway capability
Liveability brand	Liveability, functionality and wellbeing	Family friendliness, social cohesion, work life balance, safety
Liveability brand	Culture and design	Cultural institutions and assets, cultural vibrancy and DNA
Innovation brand	Edge and innovation	Research and R&D, tech ecosystem, testbed capability
Innovation brand	Smartness and digitisation	Citizen centricity, digital infrastructure, smart development
Citizen and character brand	Values and attitudes	Authenticity, originality, friendliness, humour, creativity
Citizen and character brand	Diversity, openness and cosmopolitanism	Bilingualism, tolerance, pluralism, freedom
Business and institution brand	Business environment	Investment appetite, business dynamism, business friendliness
Business and institution brand	Institutions and talent	Universities, talent and human capital, anchor institutions

## Methodology for summary spidergram

For each of the 11 brand sub-areas, the following datasets were inputted into an ELO algorithm, an in-house programme that rates cities or regions by comparing their performance in every possible permutation against a list of other cities/regions. The system produces the most accurate comparative assessment of city/region performance, as it accounts for the fact that some cities/regions appear in more benchmarks than do others, and that each benchmark measures a different number of cities.

- All performance and perception benchmarks
- % of social media mentions relating to that theme as a proportion of total specific mentions
- % of total online mentions relating to that theme as a proportion of total specific mentions

Within each of the 3 measures, the algorithm began by considering the sub-areas in each brand area to ensure that all sub-areas were weighted equally (e.g. to ensure that 'size and scale' was weighted the same as 'momentum'). The 3 measures were weighted accordingly: benchmarks (50%), online mentions (40%), social media mentions (10%).

The final ranks for each city, for each of the 5 themes were converted into scores out of 10, where the top ranked city for e.g. assets and scale brand received a score of 10, and the bottom ranked city a score of 1.

### **Full list of scores for Helsinki's brand sub-segments:**

- Momentum, transformation and ambition: 7/10
- Urban fabric and natural assets: 6/10
- Size and scale: 1/10
- Liveability, functionality and wellbeing: 10/10
- Culture and design: 5/10
- Values and attitudes: 4/10
- Diversity, openness and cosmopolitanism: 6/10
- Edge and innovation: 7/10
- Smartness and digitisation: 6/10
- Business environment: 2/10
- Institutions and talent: 5/10

### **Extended methodology for media and influencer analysis**

#### **Review of the online conversation**

##### **Approach**

To review descriptions and observations about Helsinki and its peers, we used Google to search for five different sentences about each city (in English and in the appropriate local languages), from August 2014-August 2015 and from August 2019-August 2020, in seven of the eight target markets (UK, US, India, China, Russia, France and Germany – South Korea excluded due to limited sample size).

For each city, we undertook a total of 35 searches – one for each of the five sentences, in each of the 7 target markets, and noted down all the adjectives and nouns that were returned by Google and used specifically to describe Helsinki, screening to account for the same article being reproduced multiple times.

The five sentences used for each city (x) were:

- (x) is a \* city
- (x) is a city of \*
- (x) is famous for \*
- (x) is renowned for/known for\*
  - (x) is described as \*

(Where \* is any word used to describe the city)

When exact translations were not possible, the closest possible fit was used.

Where nouns and adjectives appeared together – e.g. warm climate – they were separated if this did not change the meaning (e.g. beautiful landscapes), but kept together if the adjective was specifically being used to describe the noun rather than the city itself (e.g. unique gastronomy).

We then grouped all the nouns and adjectives into eleven categories based on which brand sub-segment of the Helsinki brand framework they referred to within the city. All nouns and adjectives that: a) were too vague (e.g. great, amazing, excellent); b) could have featured in more than one category; or c) did not fit into any of the sub-segments, were discounted.

We then summed the total number of nouns and adjectives describing Helsinki in each sub-segment and compared these numbers to the average among its peers to obtain relative percentage scores. In some cases, sub segments have been grouped together, to give an indication of how visible Helsinki's 5 main brand segments are compared to other cities.

### **Media analysis**

#### **List of sources consulted**

Aashi Shimbun, Japan; Al Jazeera, UAE; America Economia, Latin America; BBC News, UK; Bild, Germany; China Daily, China; Chosun Ilbo, South Korea; Der Spiegel, Germany; Die Welt, Germany; Die Zeit, Germany; Dong-A-Ilbo, South Korea; Economic Daily, China; El Mundo, Spain; El Pais, Spain; Financial Express, India; Hurriyet, Turkey; India Today, India; Komsomolskaya Pravda, Russia; Korea Economic Daily, South Korea; La Repubblica, Italy; Le Figaro, France; Le Monde, France; L'Obs, France; Malayala Manorama, India; Moskovskiy Komso-molets, Russia; New York Times, United States; O Globo, Spain; Reddit, United States; Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Russia; South China Morning Post, Hong Kong; The Age, Australia; The Daily Mail, United Kingdom; The Daily Telegraph, United Kingdom; The Economic Times, India; The Economist, United Kingdom; The Globe and Mail, Canada; The Guardian, United Kingdom; The Hindu, India; The Independent, United Kingdom; The Jerusalem Post, Israel; The Sydney Morning Herald, Australia; The Times of

India, India; The Toronto Star, Canada; Wall Street Journal, United States; Washington Post, United States.

### Notes to individual figures

*Figure on overall visibility relative to population size.* Overall figures calculated by summing the total number of adjectives and nouns used to describe each city relative to that city's (metropolitan) population size, and then indexing to the city with the highest level of relative visibility (Tallinn).

*Figure on change in relative visibility of Helsinki's various brand segments.* Figures calculated by subtracting the percentage of nouns and adjectives referring to each brand sub segment (as a proportion of the total) in 2014-15, from the percentage in 2019-20.

*Figure on top 10 fastest growing and declining terms used to describe Helsinki.* Figures calculated by subtracting the percentage frequency of each noun/adjective (as a proportion of the total) in 2014-15 from the percentage frequency in 2019-20.

## Review of social media

### Approach

For twitter results, we reviewed all Tweets containing the phrase 'Helsinki is...' from July 2014-June 2015 and July 2019-June 2020. In some cases we split the results by general and 'verified' users, or by Tweets and Retweets (see notes to individual figures below).

In light of the difficulty of accurately capturing descriptions of cities on social media, this was deemed to be specific enough to filter out background noise but broad enough to include a representative sample.

Any potential future interactions of the work may build on this approach, by also including phrases such as:

Phrase	Example
"Helsinki could..."	Helsinki could be the tech capital of Europe.
"Helsinki should..."	Helsinki should get more recognition for its start-up scene.
"...Is/isnt Helsinki"	Why isn't Helsinki recognised as an architectural hotspot?
"Helsinki has..."	Helsinki has the best public library I've ever seen.
Helsinki doesn't...	Helsinki doesn't need any more restaurants.
"In Helsinki"	Street homelessness doesn't exist in Helsinki.
"...Like Helsinki"	I wish Manchester had a central library like Helsinki's.

### Notes to individual figures

*Figure on relative breakdown of social media coverage.* Figures relating to the % of all Tweets and Retweets containing the phrase "Helsinki is..." across the five year period.

*Figure on breakdown of types of 'influencer' talking about Helsinki on social media.* Based on the % of all Tweets by individual verified Twitter users (excluding organisations and news outlets) from 2014-15 to 2019-20.

*Figure on Helsinki and peer cities' visibility on social media relative to population size and visitor throughout.* \*International overnight visitor arrivals in 2019. Figures for Tallinn based on assumption that total number of visitors in January-June 2019 equal to total number in July-December. Figures for Oslo based on extrapolation of 2016 results (assuming constant annual average increase from 2012-2016).

## Full list of the most popular Instagram hashtags containing the phrase “#Helsinki”

	No. of hashtags	% of total hashtags containing “#Helsinki”
#visithelsinki	572,566	8.51%
#myhelsinki	527,431	7.84%
#helsinkiofficial	117,454	1.75%
#igershelsinki	91,698	1.36%
#luxhelsinki	60,809	0.90%
#helsinkiairport	60,555	0.90%
#helsinkirestaurants	47,086	0.70%
#helsinkilove	45,499	0.68%
#helsinkicathedral	37,328	0.55%
#helsinki vantaa	37,186	0.55%
#helsinki pride	35,230	0.52%
#detailsofhelsinki	32,870	0.49%
#helsinki city	31,791	0.47%
#helsinki finland	31,291	0.46%
#helsinki secret	28,480	0.42%
#helsinki online	26,631	0.40%
#thisishelsinki	25,710	0.38%
#helsinki päivä	19,822	0.29%
#’itähelsinki	18,924	0.28%
#helsinki designweek	17,529	0.26%
#helsinki vampires	15,409	0.23%
#helsinki tattoo	15,106	0.22%
#helsinki bynight	13,613	0.20%
#helsinki vantaa airport	13,129	0.20%
#helsinki 2018	12,279	0.18%
#helsinki hat	12,200	0.18%
#helsinki art	11,503	0.17%

	No. of hashtags	% of total hashtags containing “#Helsinki”
#helsinki cityrun	10,532	0.16%
#helsinki graffiti	9,493	0.14%
#helsinki streets	8,806	0.13%
#helsinki cup	8,247	0.12%
#helsinki art museum	8,232	0.12%
#helsinki life	8,187	0.12%
#helsinki zoo	7,721	0.11%
#helsinki food	7,643	0.11%
#helsinki architecture	7,303	0.11%
#helsinki fashionweek	6,697	0.10%
#helsinki ilikkuu	6,108	0.09%
#löylyhelsinki	5,815	0.09%
#helsinki photographer	5,758	0.09%
#helsinki lambda club	5,548	0.08%
#helsinki shopping	5,522	0.08%
#helsinki horseshow	5,521	0.08%
#helsinki halfmarathon	4,899	0.07%
#helsinki ila casadepapel	4,838	0.07%
#helsinki contemporary	4,288	0.06%
#helsinki 2019	4,066	0.06%
#helsinki university	3,993	0.06%
#helsinki summer	3,849	0.06%
#helsinki today	3,846	0.06%
#helsinki streetart	3,687	0.05%
#helsinki pride 2019	3,390	0.05%
#helsinki pride 2018	3,283	0.05%
#helsinki firefighters	3,249	0.05%



**Full list of Helsinki's most important Twitter "influencers", including news outlets, organisations and institutions, and individual influencers**

Year user last tweeted about Helsinki*	Account	Type	Country	No. of followers	No. of different Tweets about Helsinki*	Positive, neutral or negative?
<b>Media</b>						
2018-19	Washington Post	News outlet	United States	16,350,000	1	Neutral
2014-15	Forbes	News outlet	United States	16,150,000	1	Negative
2014-15	Hindustan Times	News outlet	India	7,710,000	1	Positive
2015-16	Lonely Planet	Travel magazine	Global	6,290,000	1	Positive
2019-20	China Daily	News outlet	China	4,390,000	1	Positive
2017-18	USA Today	News outlet	United States	4,140,000	1	Neutral
2019-20	The Independent	News outlet	United Kingdom	3,320,000	1	Positive
2014-15	Conde Naste Traveller	Travel magazine	United States	3,210,000	1	Positive
2018-19	Travel Magazine	Travel magazine	London	2,780,000	2	Positive
2017-18	Incredible India	Ministry of Tourism	India	2,460,000	1	Positive
2019-20	Fast Company	Business magazine	United States	2,360,000	2	Positive
2015-16	Digital Trends	Tech publication	United States	2,140,000	1	Neutral
2018-19	New York Times World	News outlet	United States	2,070,000	1	Positive
2019-20	Wallpaper	Design magazine	United Kingdom	2,020,000	2	Positive
2016-17	Architectural Digest	Design magazine	-	2,000,000	1	Positive

Year user last tweeted about Helsinki*	Account	Type	Country	No. of followers	No. of different Tweets about Helsinki*	Positive, neutral or negative?
<b>Businesses and institutions</b>						
2019-20	World Bank	Global financial institution	United States	3,370,000	1	Neutral
2017-18	Deloitte	Consulting firm	-	520,000	2	Positive
2018-19	Microsoft Education	Software company	United States	390,000	1	Positive
2017-18	Gatwick Airport	Airport	United Kingdom	370,000	1	Positive
2015-16	American Library Association	Association	United States	210,000	1	Positive
2016-17	McKinsey Global Institute	Consulting firm	Global	160,000	1	Positive
2014-15	Nesta	Innovation foundation	United Kingdom	110,000	1	Positive
2018-19	EPP Group	Political institution	Belgium	110,000	1	Neutral
2018-19	Mastercard	Financial provider	United States	100,000	1	Positive
2015-16	Schiphol	Airport	Netherlands	100,000	1	Positive
<b>Individuals</b>						
2018-19	Larry Madowo	Foreign Correspondent	United States	2,000,000	1	Negative
2015-16	Akshar Pathak	Influencer	India	2,000,000	1	Negative
2016-17	KISS	Band	-	1,600,000	1	Positive
2018-19	Wolf Blitzer	News anchor	United States	1,520,000	1	Positive
2017-18	Bret Baier	News anchor	United States	1,450,000	1	Neutral
2018-19	Jack Posobiec	Political activist	United States	1,030,000	3	Neutral
2018-19	Martha Karua	Politician	Kenya	980,000	1	Neutral
2017-18	SophieKasaei	Influencer	Australia	880,000	1	Positive
2018-19	Alexey Venediktov	Radio personality	Russia	740,000	1	Neutral
2017-18	Eva Golinger	Attorney and author	-	540,000	1	Neutral

## Full list of most widely shared and endorsed Tweets among ‘Influencers’, news outlets and organisations

	No. of retweets	No. of favourites
<b>2014-15</b>		
Helsinki is the most expensive city in the world for hotel room service	182	85
How Helsinki became a public transportation paradise	49	48
Tap water in Helsinki is luxuriously soft and fresh #RousInternationalTapWaterReport	44	171
Think your city’s transportation strategy is ambitious? #Helsinki is planning to go (almost) carless	42	50
What if car ownership became a thing of the past? Helsinki wants to make that a reality	39	23
<b>2015-16</b>		
Helsinki is a great place to visit with kids #lp #travel	50	71
I’m not entirely sure, but I think the whole population of Helsinki is less than the population of Hauz Khas Village on a Saturday night.	32	50
#Helsinki is pledging to become carbon neutral by 2050. #CompactofMayors #21to21	22	9
The city of #Helsinki is using #IoT to cut costs and improve the quality of its buses	17	15
Helsinki is a beautiful place. The tap is better than bottled for sure.	16	192
<b>2016-17</b>		
Helsinki is painting masks on these famous statues in an epic #KISS tribute! @lonelyplanet	677	1,597
Maria O-1: Helsinki is turning an abandoned hospital into a massive startup campus	32	43
This app is trying to kill the car, and Helsinki is doing its best to help it	27	16
Why @VisitHelsinki is your next EU stopover. #VisitHelsinki #FeelFinnair	24	55
Helsinki is trying to ditch car ownership—this new “mobility service” app should help	21	28
<b>2017-18</b>		
Helsinki is a familiar setting for past US/Soviet and US/Russian summits: -Pres Ford met there with Brezhnev in 1975, Pres GHWBush with Gorbachev in 1990, Pres Clinton with Yeltsin in 1997	162	283
This SLUSH start-up event in Helsinki is the most extraordinary global business gathering I’ve ever seen	62	207
How #Helsinki is bringing #smartcity #innovation to its core	17	11
The #US-#Russia summit in #Helsinki is a very positive development. It continues @POTUS’s global diplomatic initiative to reduce tensions and foster better understanding.	17	28
Finland’s capital Helsinki is being considered as a location for the first formal Trump-Putin summit, according to a Wednesday media report.	10	17

	No. of retweets	No. of favourites
<b>2018-19</b>		
Helsinki is a lovely city with lots of history. More history coming tomorrow with the @realDonaldTrump and Russian President Putin summit.	100	1,019
The practice rink at Hartwall Areena in Helsinki is carved out of the bedrock. One of the coldest (and coolest) rinks I've been in.	87	620
Helsinki is lined up to see the historic Trump-Putin summit #Helsinki2018	80	224
Helsinki is just like your city. It's dark as death at 5pm and it's colder than your ex's heart. Or as it is known here, a good day.	66	510
Secret notes, champagne and reindeer: Helsinki hosts a U.S.-Russia summit once again	34	58
<b>2019-20</b>		
The new library in Helsinki is hailed as "book heaven."	19	78
There is a 1 million euro reward for anyone who can come up with a solution to get rid of coal in the city's heating supply.	15	58
The third Saturday of any February, May, August, and November in Helsinki, is Restaurant Day where anyone can open an eatery.	11	36
One of the best ways to see Helsinki is with SpåraKoff, a pub on wheels!	8	69
Apps, VR and utopian neighbourhoods: Why Helsinki is Europe's smartest city	7	24

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91 E.g. Gizmodo, TechCrunch, Wired, The Verge

92 Including individual 'influencers', news outlets, businesses and organisations

93 Calculated according to the total number of Instagram hashtags containing the word "Helsinki"

94 Verified users that does not include news outlets, organisations or businesses







Helsinki