

An aerial photograph of Helsinki, Finland, during a vibrant sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the city. The sky is filled with wispy clouds, some of which are illuminated from below. In the foreground, a wide, multi-lane road with tram tracks runs vertically. Several cars and a tram are visible on the road. To the left, a large, historic building with a prominent clock tower stands out. In the background, the Helsinki Cathedral with its distinctive white walls and red domes is visible. The overall scene captures the beauty of the Finnish capital at dusk.

City of Helsinki's focus areas for international engagement

Helsinki

This document replaces the roadmap for international operations approved by the City Board's Economic Development sub-committee (11/12/2017, § 22). It details objectives set in the City Strategy 2017–2021 and the roadmap for Helsinki's international marketing (the Economic Development sub-committee 11/12/2017, § 22).

The purpose of the document is to guide the planning, prioritisation, execution, marketing and coordination of the city's international activities as carried out at the City Executive Office – particularly in the recently established Unit of International Affairs – and all city divisions.

1. Starting points for Helsinki's international engagement

Urbanisation is one of the global megatrends of our times. **The United Nations (UN) has estimated that 68 per cent of the world's population will live in urban areas by the year 2050.** The importance of cities as solvers of the great challenges of our times will inevitably grow. Cities are solution-oriented, pragmatic and agile as they look for answers to the challenges posed by social segregation, climate change and digitalisation. Global competition increasingly means competition between cities and urban regions rather than between nation states.

The role of cities stands out most on issues where decisions and actions taken at the global level will have a direct impact on people's day-to-day lives. In spite of the fact that cities are situated everywhere in the world, are steeped in different cultural origins and vary greatly in size and level of development, common solutions to the challenges may arise anywhere. Merging the local and the global points of view at the city level lies at the core of the city's international engagement.

Digital innovations, artificial intelligence and the sharing economy give rise to opportunities to generate solutions and to test them through scaling up. Consequently, we will live in a world **where intercity networking and exchange of data and information could be one of the world's most effective ecosystems for change.** Adding global collaboration with businesses and NGOs to the mix results in an entirely new paradigm that requires a substantially revised approach towards international engagement compared to traditional city diplomacy.

International engagement comes in many forms, and is an integral part of most basic functions of the city. While collaboration with the Finnish national government and its agencies is necessary, Helsinki advances its international goals independently and in cooperation with other cities.

1.1 The City Strategy's international outlook

Helsinki's vision is to be the most functional city in the world. Thus, it seeks to create the best conditions for urban life for its residents and for visitors. The city's strategic intent is to continuously make gradual improvements everywhere to make life for its citizens more pleasant and effortless. Helsinki wants to be better each and every day.

The City Strategy has a comprehensive international outlook. The growth of Helsinki's international attractiveness and competitiveness are preconditions for the achievement of many of strategy's goals. **Digitalisation and combating climate change are the most critical development areas,** affecting virtually everything that the city does.

To reach the strategic goals, comprehensive internationalisation is required. A long-term vision of Helsinki's role and status as a global player is required for the city to evolve into a better place for its citizens, remain globally competitive, shoulder its global responsibilities and attract people, innovations and investments.

The UN has estimated that 68 per cent of the world's population will be urban by the year 2050

Helsinki forms a trust-based community that aims to be an international influencer and a strong promoter of democracy and tolerance. Helsinki advances not only goals that are vital for Helsinki's own success on the global stage, but also goals that facilitate favourable progress for the whole country. Helsinki should have a voice in international fora that take effective action for the benefit of the whole world. International cooperation gives Helsinki an opportunity to advance agendas that are of critical importance to its success in a global context.

1.2 Helsinki's current international engagement

The city of Helsinki's operations are by default international. An international outlook is an integral part of the operations of both the various departments of the City Executive Office and the city's divisions. To realise the city's overall goals,

however, it is essential to centrally coordinate the overall international strategy and the actions that derive from this strategy.

In 2017, the development and implementation were of particular focus for the city's leadership; the Economic Development Department's Competitiveness Unit, which was responsible for, among other things, the city's international operations and the coordination and steering of EU projects; Helsinki Marketing (company responsible for Helsinki's international marketing and communications aimed at attracting visitors, professionals and investors); Forum Virium Helsinki and Helsinki Business Hub.

In 2018, a new Communications Department was set up at the City Executive Office. It encompassed, among other functions, external communications (including international communications, visits and protocol matters) and marketing. Meanwhile, a new International Affairs Unit was established, with responsibility for the coordination of city-wide international affairs including, *inter alia*, coordination of the division's international activities, strategic city partnerships and networks, generation of market analyses and knowledge, and EU cooperation and -advocacy. All city units are engaged in international cooperation and receive visitors as part of their basic operations. As before, the city leadership is in charge of the city's strategic international operations.



2. Focus areas for international engagement

From the point of view of international engagement, a successful implementation of the city strategy means that Helsinki will evolve into a city that is a better home for its citizens, more attractive for enterprises, investments, innovations and skilled people and a more interesting location for visitors.

In order to attain these goals, Helsinki will have to learn from the best practices of other cities. It will have to actively look for solutions and models that other cities have to offer and that could be applied to Helsinki or developed further here. The development of Helsinki's expertise and capabilities is a key factor in making the vision of the world's most functional city come true. The efficiency of the city's international engagement can be improved by giving priority to matters where Helsinki has something exceptional to offer globally.

2.1 Rationale for improving international engagement

The world's rapid pace of change requires Helsinki to react fast and to be able to anticipate. The model and structure for international engagement should be flexible and enable agile operations.

Helsinki has to find its place relative to its closest competitors. This requires real-time monitoring and benchmarking. In addition to following up on the strategic goals of the city's international engagement, the new International Affairs Unit will need to constantly identify potential need to modify objectives due to the evolution of international cooperation and/or competition. At all times, however, the activities should strive for the goals set in the city strategy.

New collaboration partners include, *inter alia*, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Urban-20 city network founded by the capitals of the G20 countries, the C40 network, World Culture Cities Forum, SCALE Cities network, the bilateral collaboration with London concerning digitalisation, and the collaboration with London, Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York concerning the ethical use of data. There are also cooperation initiatives with companies, such as with MasterCard's City Possible network, where Helsinki is a founding member.

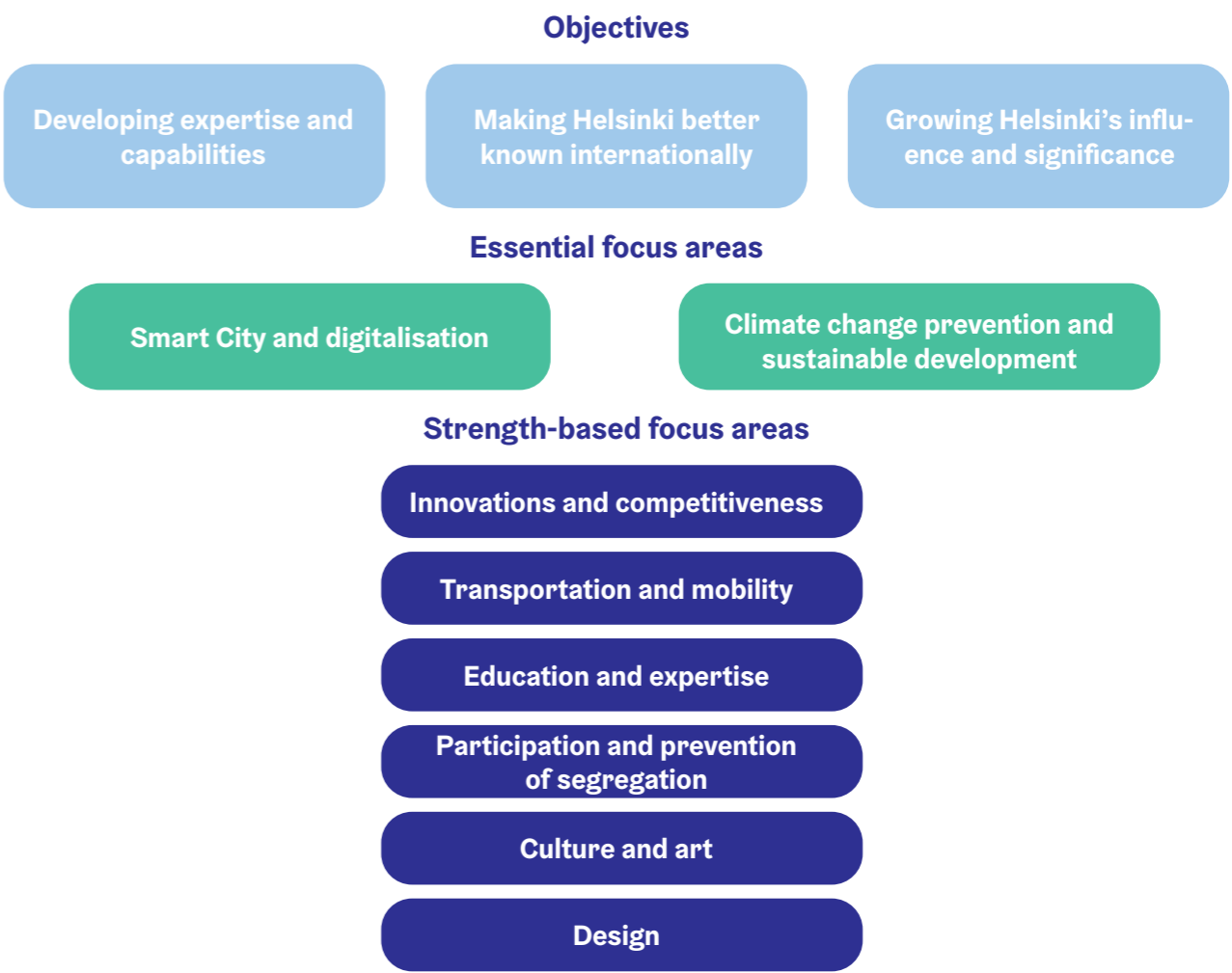
Helsinki has to prioritise also its international engagements. **Helsinki focuses on topics and functions which give the city the greatest benefit relative to its goals, and where it has the most to offer for others.**

2.2 Objectives of international engagement

In all its engagements, Helsinki aims to evolve into a better city for its residents. International engagements support this goal through the development of expertise and capabilities, making Helsinki better known internationally and growing Helsinki's influence within the international community.

1. Development of expertise and capabilities

As the world develops at an accelerated pace, global changes must be approached more broadly than in a pursuit of short-term success. Long-term success requires foresight, fact-based comprehension and the sharing of best practices with others.



As cities become increasingly important and collaboration among them deepens, it is not sensible to generate innovations and solutions and to conduct pilots on your own, but rather in interaction with the international ecosystem. It is not necessary to do everything yourself. **At its best, international interaction will generate solutions that Helsinki would not be able to create on its own.**

International interaction is based on cooperation and partnership not only with other cities, but also with business, NGOs, research institutions and interest groups. Networks have evolved around various themes, where knowledge and views are shared and projects carried out jointly. Joint projects are an essential mode of collaboration, whereby cities try to find common solutions by means of moonshot challenges, for example. High-level influencing within city networks is also essential to deepen strategic understanding. The

goal of all these modes of international interaction is to learn new best practices and to improve the implementation of the city strategy.

A systematic approach to international cooperation improves the sharing of best practices and the development of expertise and the city's learning process. To be able to find applicable solutions, clear goals need to be defined and necessary resources for the cooperation must be invested. The new International Affairs Unit aims to not just have a comprehensive view of Helsinki's international engagements, but to also have an understanding of the actions and the means needed for the implementation of goals and focus areas.

International engagement cuts across all of the city's activities, but bodies that have particular importance in reaching the goals are: the senior leadership of the city, the International Affairs

Unit, the Communications Department, Helsinki Marketing, the Economic Development Department, Helsinki Business Hub, Forum Virium Helsinki and all the city divisions.

2. Making Helsinki better known internationally

Helsinki's international reputation and recognisability play a critical role in efforts to enhance the city's appeal and prosperity. A strong reputation and an interesting profile underpin the city's endeavours to attract professionals and visitors.

Helsinki's citizens and their activities are the essential elements in making the city's reputation. For the success of Helsinki's international engagement and its appeal, it is vital that Helsinki's international image corresponds to reality. Based on recent experience, further influencing, marketing and communications work is needed in this regard. Image-building is a multifaceted effort that involves city communications and marketing, the tourism industry, businesses, and the city's own projects. Helsinki should pay particular attention to the marketing of its global successes and to being present in essential networks. Helsinki's visibility in international media needs to become more diversified.

Helsinki's citizens and their activities are the essential elements in making the city's reputation

In tourism development, Helsinki focuses on serving a segment of travellers that is more limited in numbers, but with more positive multiplier externalities for the city, i.e. quality instead of quantity. Smart and sustainable solutions are the focus of tourism development, which means taking into account the prevention of unwanted phenomena that accompany the growth of tourism, and striving to offer smooth services. Cooperation with international players in tourism will be intensified. Digitalisation of tourism services will be developed.

Making Helsinki attractive for professionals and investors also plays a key part in the efforts to make the city better known. To this end, the

city advances, among other things, suitable new projects where international investors and partners are involved as a matter of course. The city will actively seek possibilities to involve international investors, especially in tourism, the hotel business, the start-up community as well as in research and development in connection to new technologies and business areas. Helsinki participates in international fora whose key objective is to raise the level of investments.

Key players here are the city's senior leadership, the Communications Department, Helsinki Marketing, the Economic Development Department, Helsinki Business Hub, Forum Virium Helsinki and all city divisions.

3. Growing Helsinki's influence and importance

Growing Helsinki's international influence and importance means **that the city's voice will be heard on global fora and in networks and debates where the world's most vital problems are being addressed.** It also entails that Helsinki will be able to efficiently influence global issues that are important for its city strategy.

To reach this goal, the city strives to maintain concrete collaboration with a selection of key global influencer cities (currently Beijing, New York and the nearby capitals), to take part in the workings of international networks where the world's most essential challenges are being tackled (such as C40 and U20) and to participate in fora and programmes or projects where it is possible for Helsinki to contribute in a manner that brings clear benefits or solution models with clear added value with respect to capabilities and expertise being developed.

In future, Helsinki will not conclude new twin or sister city agreements, unless it is connected to an explicit strategic goal or concrete common operations that are beneficial to Helsinki. All network memberships should have a clear project owner in the city organization and they should directly bolster Helsinki's aim of becoming the world's most functional city.

The city's senior leadership, the bodies that are in charge of development and innovation and the International Affairs Unit play a key role in accomplishing these goals.

2.3 Focus areas for international engagement

The city of Helsinki prioritises its objectives for international impact and more specifically defines the areas where it will pursue a more prominent international position. Digitalisation and sustainable development are megatrends, which must be addressed. In addition, Helsinki has defined six focus areas within its city strategy, where it already has a strong standing globally and in which it can contribute positively on the global urban stage.

Smart City and digitalisation

Smart City principles are a widely shared feature of city development. Central to this development is the collection and utilisation of data in a broad range of urban functions – e.g. transportation, energy supply and waste management – and in services provided to residents – e.g. schools, libraries and health care. **Smart City technology advances the ability of city organizations to involve their citizens in the development of the city.** Smart City solutions also strengthen cities' resilience and capacity to manage and anticipate risks.

At its best, international interaction will generate solutions that Helsinki would not be able to create on its own

Digitalisation shapes the world faster than any previous transformation. It is essential for urban development to understand the impact of digital solutions and services, as well as artificial intelligence, on how people live, work and travel in future. Ultimately, digital services will play a decisive role in the production of all urban services.

Digitalisation transforms the shape of international collaboration, making it increasingly efficient to operate as part of the global community. Due to the revolution in media and online tools, the geographical location of cities is becoming

less relevant and cities' capacity to generate significant solutions for the benefit of the whole world is enhanced. Helsinki is very well placed in terms of its size and characteristics to benefit from these developments.

Helsinki's strategic objective is to be **world leader in providing access to and in the utilisation of public data**, and be world champion in making use of digitalisation. To accomplish these goals, Helsinki looks in its international engagements to interact with cities that are pioneers in the development of digitalisation and in the utilisation and management of data.

Climate change prevention and sustainable development

Sustainable development – particularly the prevention of climate change – is one of the most important themes of global city collaboration. The UN's Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be met without the active participation of cities.

The SDGs cannot be met without the active participation of cities

Putting the Agenda 2030 goals into practice at the city level is a growing trend in international collaboration. Following New York City, Helsinki was the second city in the world to have committed to a Voluntary Local Review (VLR), i.e. to submit a city-level report to the UN on its implementation of the SDGs in line with New York City's model. Helsinki and New York City share the objective of expanding the number of cities committed to the VLR model and hence of setting up a network that will strengthen the ability of cities to advance and influence the implementation of the UN goals together with states.

As a globally networked city, Helsinki highlights sustainable values and acts as a pioneer for local implementation of global responsibilities in all its activities. Helsinki advances intercity cooperation through relevant key networks (e.g. C40), by acting as a testing platform for various scalable experiments, by networking with relevant busi-

nesses, by generating solutions, either on its own or through cooperation with others (e.g. through the Smart & Clean Foundation) and by exerting influence on international fora that develop sustainable solutions.

Pursuant to its Carbon Neutral Helsinki 2035 Action Plan and in line with international trends, Helsinki is committed to accomplishing the goal of carbon neutrality and endeavours to find innovative energy solutions. Helsinki has set for itself the goal of reducing emissions by 60 per cent by year 2030 and has brought forward its target of carbon neutrality from 2050 to 2035.

Emissions reductions and circular economy projects will be carried out in Helsinki together with the business community and residents. Helsinki wants increasingly to serve as a platform for interesting and successful innovations that also generate new exports opportunities for businesses.

1. Innovations and competitiveness

Helsinki's objective is to be one of Europe's most enticing locations for innovative start-ups and the most attractive knowledge hub for companies and individuals that want to make the world a better place. To realise this, the city must offer excellent operating conditions both for growth companies and for the R&D operations of large international enterprises.

Innovations and solutions that have scalability potential have to be tested somewhere. Helsinki is sufficiently large for developing and testing significant innovations systematically, and sufficiently small to make it easy to do so in practice. The city is a good testing ground for scalable solutions that actors all over the world are trying to create to meet global challenges.

To serve as a platform, Helsinki must maintain an active and networked ecosystem internationally. The transformation of the Maria01 area into the largest campus for growth companies in Northern Europe is a key precondition for Helsinki's success. The Meilahti campus will also be further strengthened as an internationally significant innovations and business environment within the health industry.

The city will conceptualise and nurture – together with universities and the private sector – new ecosystems and knowledge clusters, which will serve its goal to become an international pioneer for new technologies and future urban solutions. The new players and clusters will also give Helsinki more visibility and a more powerful brand as a hub for cutting-edge expertise, which will enhance Helsinki's appeal to international professionals, growth companies and the R&D operations of big companies. At the same time, they will also contribute to the sustained development of Helsinki's strengths, for instance in the field of education, and enable Helsinki to keep leading the way.

To support the development of innovations, Helsinki is dependent on close collaboration with start-up sector players and networks (such as Slush) and on cooperation with academia and research. The city aims to serve not only as an enabler but also as a promoter of international cooperation. An example of this is New York City's NYCx Cyber Challenge set up in late 2018, in which Helsinki is one of the main city partners.

Making Helsinki attractive for professionals and investors also plays a key part in the efforts to make the city better known

2. Transportation and mobility

Mobility, i.e. people's modes of travel and movement, will change radically in the next few decades. This is due to, among other things, climate change prevention objectives, urbanisation, energy consumption, the principles of the sharing economy and digital innovations.

Helsinki is a pioneer in comprehensive intelligent traffic systems. The city advances the transition to a demand-based traffic system and serves as a testing platform for the commercialisation of new intelligent mobility services that



the new Transport Code has enabled (such as Mobility as a Service) and for the development of technologies of the future.

Helsinki is a global trailblazer in the concept of Mobility as a Service. Maintaining this position, however, requires constantly more conscious and active steps. The model is an excellent example of Helsinki's ability to generate public-private innovations. To deploy the model more comprehensively, the city needs to make a conscious commitment to broad-based collaboration with companies.

New digital tools enable telecommuting for many jobs. People still often relocate for a job, but the phenomenon is in flux. Increasing mobility provides Helsinki with an increased opportunity to attract talent, but at the same time, it creates a more direct state of competition with other metropolises of the world.

The Helsinki metropolitan area has a growing and busy airport, whose development is essential from the point of view of mobility. More than 20 million travellers pass through the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport annually. Finnair's Asia strategy has guaranteed a steady growth in Asian – and particularly

Chinese – tourists, which affects the build-up of Helsinki's appeal in Asia substantially. The Port of Helsinki is Europe's busiest passenger harbour, serving 12.3 million passengers annually.

Travelling is increasing and evolving globally. Helsinki has acknowledged the opportunities but also the challenges that this brings. As living standards improve, urban environments become more functional and a good life is more widely on offer in urban settings, a growing share of the world's population is able to choose where they live based on other factors than work.

3. Education and expertise

Around the globe, education is being transformed because of digitalisation, inequality, demographic changes and climate change. Innovations in education that are born out of the merger of pedagogical and technological expertise are needed. Already now, the City of Helsinki

and its schools serve as innovation platforms, where you are able to develop new physical, virtual and digital learning environments. **Thus, Helsinki is showing the way in education by giving international companies the opportunity to develop products jointly with the world's best school system.**

Education paves the way for a meaningful life and wellbeing. The principle of lifelong learning is receiving an additional boost with ever-faster digitalisation. Helsinki will be turned into an innovative, experimental city for lifelong learning. Collaboration with leading Finnish and international universities, cultural institutions, developers and companies will advance the build-up of a new trial ecosystem.

Education will also increase the city's competitiveness and generate vitality and culture. The availability of talent is a prerequisite *sine qua non* as companies choose their locations. For Helsinki to grow, international immigration is needed. The city will strive to increase immigration at a time when competition for skilled labour between the world's metropolises is getting stiffer. Helsinki's assets in the competition are, *inter alia*, a safe and functional living environment, a high level of education and functional public services. High-standard education is an important reason for international professionals to make the choice of settling in Helsinki. The city will increase availability of English-language schooling and enable wider usage of English in municipal services.

Finnish education is world-renowned for its quality, its good learning results and equal access. Education in Helsinki has attracted international attention to the degree that not all visitor groups can be accommodated currently. Likewise, international courses for teacher development cannot be arranged at present. At the same time, there is demand for the export of early childhood education, comprehensive education, general upper secondary education and vocational education to many countries. Helsinki will have to outline and determine its role in such education export.

Education and learning are key building blocks for Helsinki's and Finland's international repu-

tation, and as a matter of course a global issue. The improvement of education is an essential indicator of development for any city in the world. This opens up possibilities for Helsinki's international engagement that have not as yet been exploited fully.

Besides education, Helsinki invests widely in a cultured society. Lifelong learning and the prevention of segregation are intertwined as objectives for the development of the city. Internationally, Helsinki leads the way in library services. A large share of the city's inhabitants are students. **The collaboration with universities and research centres complements the image of Helsinki as a leading city for expertise, learning and culture.**

4. Participation and prevention of segregation

Helsinki's success is based on solid trust between the city and its citizens. The city's functionality, its ability to engage people in decision-making, its capacity to advance the realisation of modern democracy on a practical level and to react without prejudice to the opportunities provided by new technology are based on the city residents' high level of education and their access to open information.

As urbanisation progresses, the widening gap between the different realities of urban dwellers constitutes one of the greatest challenges that any city faces. Helsinki has managed to contain segregation better than most international peer cities. While certainly benefiting from its relatively small size, Helsinki has nevertheless implemented several measures that would be highly impactful were they to be shared with other cities in the world, as they are scalable solutions at the core. Helsinki strives also in future to remain a European top example of a city that prevents segregation.

Helsinki consolidates its position as an international forerunner in participation and transparency. The experiences of inclusion and participatory budgeting will be shared with other cities actively.

Helsinki's success is based on solid trust between the city and its citizens

5. Culture and art

The active pursuit of cultural activities and various events at the grassroots level and through high-standard international exchange comprises a means to improve cultural and social comprehension.

Helsinki is a diverse city for culture and events. It promotes tolerance, increases international interaction and enables the emergence of interesting destinations and events. The support provided to activities that are of interest locally will also pave the way for the growth of the city's international appeal.

The objective is to continue creating new, unique visit destinations, such as the Oodi Central Library and Amos Rex. The Baana and Töölönlahti areas will be transformed into a high-quality and internationally renowned hub for culture and leisure that will add to the city's appeal. The development of the Suvilahti area into a permanent events venue that stands out globally will be explored. Helsinki strives to further enrich its evolving mix of museums. It is committed to the development of the new Helsinki Biennial focused on public art.

To Helsinki, an attractive city centre is its calling card and a vital necessity. Maintaining the appeal of the Kauppatori (Market Square) area and its surroundings in particular requires substantial revisions. There are international examples of regional development projects that combine the development of urban space with an emphasis on the local and the unique and an implementation that stands out internationally.

Most of the art and culture that is produced in and imported to the city is international by default. The city's focus areas in international culture involve art and culture organisations that are actively engaged in international operations (such as the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and Helsinki Art Museum), organisations that are actively engaged in bringing international performances to Helsinki (such as the Helsinki Festival and Flow Festival), the international operations of grassroots players, as well as the operations of arts and culture associations. The city continues to support these forms of international work in diverse ways in future.

6. Design

Helsinki is an internationally attractive design city that on a global scale has extraordinarily much to show for its pioneering work as a utiliser of design. **The combination of design, digitalisation and dialogue renders Helsinki a city with a good user experience for its inhabitants.** Its citizens

experience design in their daily lives through well-run services and functional urban spaces. The history and future developments of design and architecture simultaneously comprise elements that make Helsinki stand out in ever-stiffer international competition.

Helsinki does not view design just as a method to develop its services, but it is also seen as a systemic means to transform its operational culture. A nimble and customer-oriented culture enhances and speeds up the development of the city.

Collaboration with other design capitals of the world and the UNESCO City of Design members, as well as a strategic partnership with Helsinki Design Week, open up interesting opportunities for Helsinki. Design knowledge may complement other focus areas of international engagement and give rise to interesting ways to stand out internationally.



3. Coordination of international engagement

With the establishment of the new joint International Affairs Unit, a new operational model is needed for a comprehensive coordination of the city's international engagement.

The mayor leads all key international initiatives and strategic measures. The deputy mayors are in charge of the city's international advocacy and representation in their areas of responsibility. The rest of the city leadership will engage internationally within the jointly agreed focus areas.

All city divisions and departments engage inherently in active international collaboration that is jointly coordinated. The most significant international initiatives and measures will be discussed in the city management team.

The joint city-level coordination group for international affairs has been set up to take care of the comprehensive coordination of international operations. The group coordinates strategic international measures and follows up on them. The group includes the head of the International Affairs Unit, the director for strategic initiatives, the mayor's senior advisor, the deputy mayors' special advisors, the director of communications, the international officers of the city divisions as well as representatives of the library services, Forum Virium Helsinki, Helsinki Marketing and Helsinki Business Hub. The group may at its discretion alter its composition as needed.



