

Helsinki Roadmap for Events

A framework for promoting
events in Helsinki



Helsinki



Background

Helsinki aims to be the most functional city in the world and create the best possible conditions for quality urban life. Our unique urban culture is the foundation of a good life. Culture is what makes Helsinki unique, promotes participation, advances civilisation, reduces segregation and cultivates community-wide commitment to Helsinki.

Cities are above all places and communities – not sets of rules. Helsinki has set its sights on becoming a highly functional platform and incubator of a diverse urban culture.

Eventness has been actively developed in Helsinki, with tangible results for years. The city is already one of the most popular congress locations in Northern Europe. Of the several urban events that have been developed in Helsinki, many have been picked up around the world, including Restaurant Day. The city's event offering is characterised by its diversity and comprehensive cultural foundations. The citizens of Helsinki are hardworking event producers of grassroots phenomena to large-scale events.

With the advance of urbanisation, competition

between cities is also ramping up on a global scale. Cities rely on events as a tool for developing not only reputation and brand, but for cultivating an attractive local culture. Events play an increasingly significant role in tourism, but instead of massive events, it is local, more idiosyncratic, events that are on the rise.

Helsinki is one of Europe's fastest growing and developing cities. The city also enjoys a key role in the development of urbanisation, which we are promoting with a vibrant ecosystem of events. On our path of evolving as a city, events serve as temporary prototypes for the future Helsinki.

The events are also important from a humane perspective. As digitalisation becomes more prevalent in our everyday lives, we are also increasingly feeling the need for real-world experiences. This is where events are particularly effective.

Events evoke inspiration, enthusiasm and optimism through experiences. Events elicit interaction which creates connections between current and potential Helsinki residents and visitors. From the social atmosphere perspective, events help

eradicate a silo mentality. The most successful events help create cohesion and understanding between people.

Events also help build bridges within the city's organisation. Events allow us to accelerate organisational development, understanding and collaboration.

The previous Helsinki Roadmap for Events was published in 2010. With the adoption of the new City Strategy, it was time to update the roadmap. Eventness is at the core of the new City Strategy. The roadmap is designed to update the role, objectives and development of eventness to contribute to the success of the City Strategy. The roadmap also aims to facilitate event coordination within the city's organisation to ensure successful implementation

of the City Strategy. The roadmap contains a list of concrete measures on how to achieve its objectives.

With the ongoing roadmap programme, the city is also outlining the city's vision for art and culture, developing the city's sports and recreation environment, easing the event permit process, implementing the national strategy for major international events, mapping digitisation programmes for the city and various sectors, and reviewing grants. The roadmap is based on 43 interviews (22 face-to-face and 21 telephone interviews), four rounds of workshops (97 participants) and an online survey yielding 104 replies. The interviews and workshops included participants from within the city organisation, event organisers and public authorities. The online survey was designed for event organisers.





Objectives – Helsinki, a city of international, lively and attractive events

According to the City Strategy of Helsinki, eventness is defined as a strategic focus area that aims to promote vibrancy and well-being. High-quality and easily accessible culture and sports events bring people together and add to social cohesion and understanding. Events have diverse sociocultural and significant economic multiplier effects. Helsinki aspires to be a versatile, internationally attractive city of culture, sports and events. In this respect, we are looking to streamline our ability to make decisions, react and be proactive through a controlled change of pace in organisational processes. A key part of this cultural transition is easing bureaucracy and improving the efficiency of decision-making models and service processes.

Objectives

1. Events support and contribute to the realisation of the City Strategy's objective of becoming an international, vibrant and fascinating city of events.

- **The eventness of Helsinki is based on *originality*.** We are not looking to compete for the same events

with the rest of Europe; we focus on unique experiences. Helsinki's identity is reflected in the events through creativity, a sense of community and its idiosyncratic character. Localness becomes global, and small events become far-reaching movements.

- **Helsinki's eventness is *versatile*.**

This versatility means choice for eventgoers. Choice is the result of a colourful and contrasting selection of events. We want to create a Helsinki where there are smaller and larger events, work and leisure events, events for children, young people, adults and senior citizens, events representing various cultures, free and paid events, and commercial and non-commercial events. Eventness is developed through a holistic approach, from grassroots to major international events. The city's in-house event production does not compete with the event selection but contributes to it.

- **Events are held *all over the city around the year*.**

Our aim is to support the creation and development of interesting events throughout the city and our unique archipelago. The autumn, winter and spring

season require inventiveness, but event organisers have already proved their ability to find inspiration from slush (Slush), while the City of Helsinki has embraced greyness (Vuoden harmain päivä, Greyest day of the year) and darkness (Lux). We want to reinforce our support for year-round eventness.

- **Events help contribute to the internationalisation of Helsinki.**

We look to participate in building the international profile and attraction of key events held in Helsinki.

- **Eventness is open and elicits participation.**

The foundations for eventness (e.g. facilities and infrastructure) are further developed. Events aim to create interaction and understanding between people. Events are accessible.

2. Event development is based on responsibility.

Helsinki is committed to responsibility in all areas of its operations. Responsibility is also key in event development. Responsibility is reviewed from three perspectives.

Environmental responsibility

Environmental responsibility is reviewed, for example, in the following contexts:

- The EcoCompass environmental management system. The EcoCompass will be implemented

more extensively in event partnerships. For example, in the sports sector, the EcoCompass will be introduced in all locations in 2020, which makes it easier for event organisers to implement the system.

- Accessibility. Events are organised in venues that are efficient in terms of operations, capacity and traffic connections.

Social responsibility

Social responsibility is reviewed, for example, in the following contexts:

- The safety of every visitor. Safety encompasses a variety of aspects, none of which is neglected. In Helsinki, safety is supported for each and every event visitor and event employee at all times.
- Accessibility. Events are accessible to everyone.
- Volunteer work. Voluntary work undertaken at all events complies with the law, justice and good practice.
- Employment. Organisers are encouraged to employ young people, students and people who face difficulty in finding employment.

Financial responsibility

- Events have been proved to have a significant indirect impact on the entire economy. Events maintain the attractiveness of the city. From the city's perspective, financial responsibility requires understanding and operating in accordance with



this principle – for example, by actively supporting the development of existing professional and recreational events, as well as the creation of new ones.

- From the perspective of event organisers, responsibility means a commitment to preventing informal economy.

Various aspects of responsibility often go hand in hand. In events, the city's financial responsibility is related to event locations and infrastructure. In turn, this contributes to event's eco- and budget-friendliness.

Event criteria are an essential tool in the development of environmental and social responsibility which steer and promote events organised with the city. Commitment to the criteria will be required, and compliance will be monitored more extensively.

3. Eventness is functional.

A functional and safe event environment for everyone is the strength of our city and the prerequisite for the development of the event ecosystem. Helsinki is already known for its functionality. For example, the summit between the presidents of the United States and Russia held in the summer of

2018 garnered significant international recognition for how well the event was organised. In the context of events, functionality necessitates developing the city's operations. The key here is to create an environment that facilitates event organisation. This means predictability, uncomplicated support and cooperation models, smooth communications and available information, support in growth and internationalisation, and accounting for events in urban planning and infrastructure development. Developing functionality is essential for the introduction of new event ideas, the development of new operators and the implementation of achievable programmes.

- The city is **a functioning platform for events**.
- The city is a reliable partner for event organisers. Collaboration is streamlined and standardised.
- Events are systematically produced and **utilised to harness** and develop the capability of the entire city organisation.
- Internal **coordination and information flow is developed**.
- A quicker and more **agile culture of operations is created**.
- **Services for event organisers are improved and streamlined** to make Helsinki a desirable location and event partner.





Key measures for implementing the roadmap and achieving objectives

An extensive list of measures for achieving the objectives has already been defined for achieving the objectives. They are described in Appendix 2. The objectives and measures of the roadmap cover a period of several years. The first changes will be visible to event organisers and visitors already during 2019. The measures are evaluated during biannual major event-steering group meetings.

APPENDICES:

1. Description of event categories
2. List of measures
3. Organisations and responsibilities
4. Description of customer journey map

Photography: page 1 and 5 Vesa Laitinen, p. 2 Jussi Hellsten, p. 3 Eetu Ahanen, p. 4 Jussi Eskola, p. 6 Lauri Rotko, p. 7 Julia Kivelä.