

# Progress of the Helsinki Tourism and Events Programme

Situational briefing 5/2024

Helsinki

City Board Economic Development sub-committee meeting 10 July 2024



# Meeting the targets of the programme – Summary

- Meeting the targets of the programme was influenced by four major external factors: to some extent, the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, the situation in the Middle East and the global economic situation. The war in Ukraine has a significant impact on tourism, which is reflected through lack of Russian tourists and the weakened access to Finland from the important Japanese and Chinese markets due to the Russian overflight ban. For example, Chinese group travel to Finland did not receive a restart permit until in August 2023.
- The event industry also suffers from the effects of the war. One example of this is that large, international world tours no longer schedule dates in Russia, which causes Finland to also often miss tour dates. In addition, Helsinki does not currently have an event arena for large, international events, and the situation is highly critical for both concert organisers and major event applications. The number of hotel stays in Helsinki has increased month by month since the pandemic. The positive impact of events on hotel occupancy, especially during summer events, is significant.
- Overall, the measures of the programme have progressed smoothly. Most of the measures have been launched and have progressed within the framework of existing plans. Some of the measures are scheduled to start later in the programme period. The development of maritime Helsinki, the improvement of signage, the venues development plan and the preparation of the land use plan for tourism and events, i.e. the Master Plan, have not progressed according to the planned schedule.
- One particularly positive development is the increased commitment of companies to move forward the measures of the programme and the tightening of cooperation between companies. This can be seen, for example, in the increase in the number of members of the Helsinki Makers Network, in the number of event participants, and in the service offering implemented through corporate cooperation. In addition, cooperation between the Tourism and Destination Services unit and the Brand and Events unit has grown tighter with the joint programme. In addition, it should be noted that several other sectors, departments and units of the city have been involved in promoting the measures. However, there are still challenges in how the city's various actors understand the needs of tourism and event management or how they consider them when preparing the city's plans and development measures. Since the city joined the Event Industry Federation as a society member, the city has received a great deal of background support in growing the understanding of the event industry within the city's organisation.
- In addition to the measures presented in the programme, foundational work has also been carried out to promote tourism and events.

# Situation for Tourism and Events

Helsinki



# Tourism in Helsinki continued to grow in 2023

- Helsinki is the most popular tourist destination in Finland by many measures and the gateway to tourism in Finland. In 2023, the number of registered overnight stays by tourists in Helsinki increased by 11.3%, which means they have returned to 2018 levels. Among others, more than 4.1 million overnight stays, a 33% share of all international overnight stays in Finland, higher tourism income than in Lapland as a whole and a 40% share of international NGO congresses in Finland make Helsinki a significant tourist destination. In addition to this, Helsinki was visited by many day visitors and tourists, who stayed overnight with relatives and friends, as well as in paid home accommodation. In January-March 2024, registered overnight stays increased by 7.1% compared to the corresponding period last year. Helsinki's sustainable values, active culture, unique events, diverse food selection, closeness to nature and marine environment are its main advantages as a travel destination.
- From a global perspective, Helsinki is an exotic destination, where the summers are not too hot and which does not have similar levels of mass tourism as Southern Europe. Finland's accession to NATO has also put Finland and Helsinki on the world map. Last year saw the opening of new tourist attractions such as the Hakaniemi Market Hall, the Amos Andersons Hem Home Museum and Kulttuurikasarmi. The Helsinki Biennale took over Vallisaari and more of the rest of Helsinki than before with its artworks. There were a great deal of interesting events and exhibitions, a diversification of the range of accommodation and services, and openings of several new restaurants.
- However, the geopolitical situation and economic uncertainty have affected the recovery of tourism in Helsinki. The prolonged wars in Ukraine and the Middle East will continue to create uncertainty in 2024. The longer flights from various destinations in Asia to Helsinki, the opening of Finland to Chinese group tourism as late as August 2023, a slower than expected return of Japanese tourism due to, for example, the economic situation, St. Petersburg's absence from international cruise ship and event production routes, the absence of a large event arena and the weakened finances of consumers pay are issues that have affected the development of tourism and events in Helsinki, as well as the profitability of companies. The possible increases in VAT rates will also affect the competitiveness of tourism and events.
- However, there are also many positive signs. The awareness of Finland and Helsinki has grown and the travel sentiment towards Finland has increased. The number of purchased flights to Helsinki has increased significantly from the previous year. The announcement of the unveiling of Michelin stars for the Nordics in Helsinki, revealed in January, put a lot of eyes on Helsinki, and the Edible Helsinki food year has aroused more interest than expected. The choice of Finland as the happiest country in the world for the seventh time has also increased interest in Helsinki. This is made use of, for example, through the Helsinki Happiness Hacks campaign. In addition, the victory in the international Viva City Challenge, Helsinki will be developed into a "Future Proof Destination" with external support.

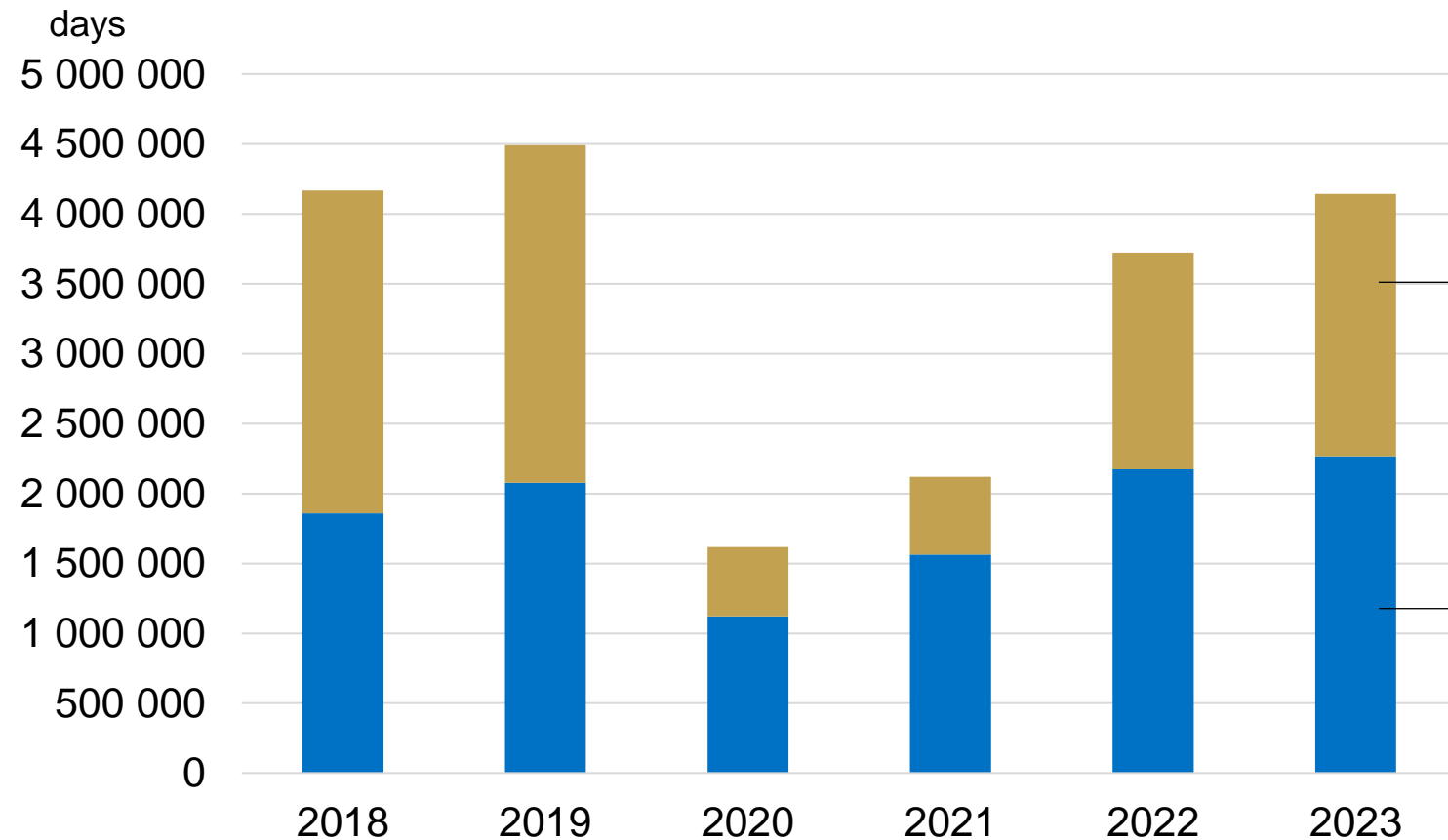
# New record for domestic overnight stays

- In 2023, most international visitors came to Helsinki from the United States, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The growth has been highest from Japan, China and Hong Kong, but the numbers are not yet at pre-pandemic levels. Tourism from these countries started off slower than expected in 2023. (Statistics Finland)
- Domestic tourism in Helsinki grew significantly in 2022 after the coronavirus pandemic. The number of domestic visitors increased even more in 2023, which proves that people in Finland still want to travel to the capital and find new experiences in the city. Business travel accounted for over 44% of all registered overnight stays. There were 202 international NGO congresses.
- Visitors also stayed outside hospitality businesses, such as in private homes. Their share is estimated at about 20% of all overnight stays. Helsinki also saw many visitors who stayed for a day, including people on international cruises and domestic day trippers.
- The number of passengers passing through the Port of Helsinki continued to recover from the COVID years with a total number of passengers at 9.1 million. 98 cruise ships docked in Helsinki, which is less than the previous year. After St. Petersburg exclusion from the cruise routes, the attractiveness of Helsinki and other destinations in the Baltic Sea must rise to achieve the pre-pandemic figures. Liner services carried a total of 8.9 million passengers, which was 12.2% more than in the previous year. (Port of Helsinki)
- The number of flights and passengers at Helsinki Airport was stable throughout the year (roughly 10,000 international flights and 2,000 domestic flights per month). In 2023, the total number of air passengers was 15.3 million (+18.9% compared to 2022). Six new flight routes opened. There are direct scheduled flights to Helsinki Airport from approximately 130 destinations around the world. (Finavia)
- In 2023, a total of 433,422 museum visitors visited the Helsinki City Museum's branches (in 2022, a total of 302,517 visitors). The visitor target of 396,000 was exceeded by 9.5%. The second Helsinki Biennale was held in Vallisaari, at HAM and on the mainland at Baana, Oodi, Stoa and Kauppatori, as well as online from 11 June to 22 October 2023. From Helsinki, the Biennale is a significant investment in visual arts, and the event boosted Helsinki's reputation as a city of culture and visual arts. However, at the time of the Helsinki Biennale, only 55,900 visitors visited Vallisaari (in 2021, a total of 147,000 visitors), due to higher ship ticket prices than last time, among other things.
- Most of the hotels that were under construction during the pandemic have been completed. In 2023, four new accommodation establishments opened. In 2024, three new accommodation establishments have opened or are opening, as well as some changes to the concepts of existing hotel properties and hotel expansions. Virtually all new projects have some kind of environmental certification and hotel operators are committed to sustainable tourism goals. The projects have increased the accommodation capacity of Helsinki by several thousand rooms. The city is no longer actively attracting foreign actors and operators to the hotel sector.

# Helsinki is an excellent city for events

- VTT estimates that the turnover of the Finnish event industry was €2.6 billion in 2022 (previous report 2019: €2.35 billion/ event industry turnover). 2023 was the first full calendar year with all pandemic restrictions lifted and, for example, based on turnover data from ticket sellers, the figures for 2023 have been clearly better than 2022.
- The event industry has recovered well – sales are already anticipating a return to the 2019 level. Helsinki's event year 2023 was good in terms of impact, versatility and functionality. In terms of venues, the situation is still challenging due to the closure of one of the most significant venues in Helsinki and the whole of Finland due to war-related sanctions. In addition, the long-term projects for significant venues (Helsinki Garden and Suvilahti Event Hub) have not progressed as hoped and are causing uncertainty in the Helsinki event field.
- In 2023, 37,779 events were announced in the Helsinki event calendar, which were divided into 14 different event types (LinkedEvents interface). During the biggest events of 2023 (mass events > 10,000 participants/ event), hotel occupancy rates averaged over 80%, and approaching 100% with some events.
- The increase in costs has been significant in recent years, up to tens of percent. Although ticket prices have also been raised at many events, the profitability of the industry has fallen from the previous year. The general uncertainty in the corporate economy has been particularly reflected in B2B transactions, but the recovery in consumer transactions has been rapid and the sector has returned to the pre-pandemic growth speeds.
- The event industry is still not sufficiently perceived as an industry and that introduces its own challenges to the operation and success of the industry. Identified challenges related to the event industry include, for example, the Assembly Act, the activities of the Regional State Administrative Agencies, the future expected increase of the value added tax on event tickets from 10% to 14% (which, if realized, will significantly affect the economic development of the sector). In addition, event pricing, liquor legislation, security and other regulatory agility require improvement. There is an opportunity to find quick solutions, if there is a will.

# Registered overnight stays in Helsinki 2018–2023



Helsinki

Source: Statistics Finland, accommodations

Foreign

Domestic



@ MyHelsinki/Lapland Hotels Boulevard

# Key figures for 2023 in registered overnight stays for tourism in Helsinki

**Occupancy rate**  
**56.3%**  
**(+4.3pps)**

**Average price of a foreign stay**  
**€80.68**  
**(+3.9%)**

- The number of foreign overnight stays is approaching the number of domestic overnight stays, 45.3% of overnight stays were foreign (53.7% in 2019).

**Average room price**  
**€123.47 (+1.0%)**

**Foreign accommodation sales**  
**€320 million**

- Helsinki's market share of foreign overnight stays in Finland was 33% (34.2% in 2019).

**RevPar (EUR)**  
**€69.92 (+9.2%)**

**Domestic accommodation sales**  
**€169 million €**

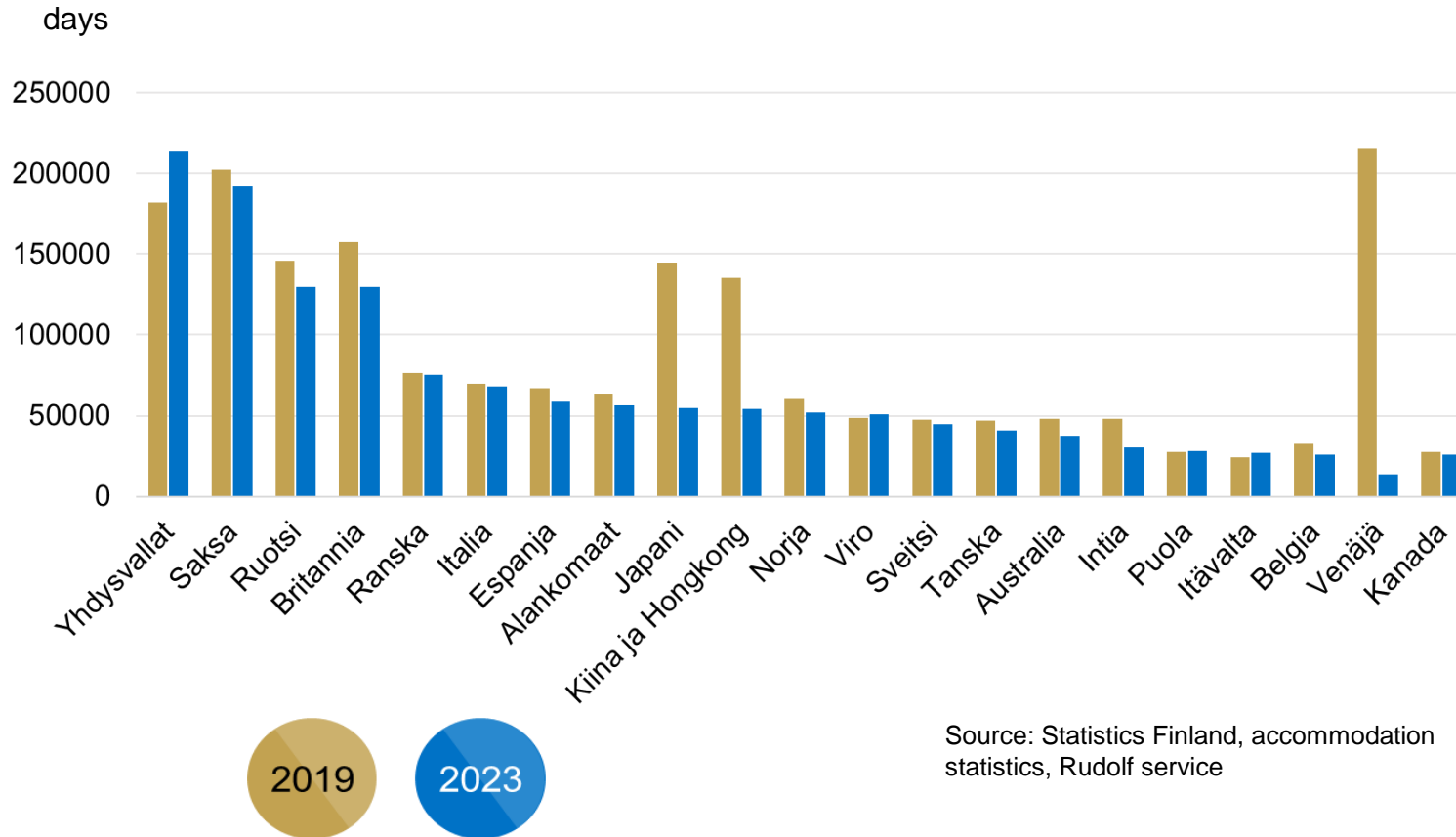
- Although the number of overnight stays has been steadily increasing, having already reached the level of 2018, at the same time, utilisation rates and many other indicators of business profitability are at a low level as a result of the increased capacity, among other things.

RevPar = Average revenue per occupancy per available room. Formula: RevPar = Average Room Price \* Room Occupancy. Growth rates compared to 2022.

Sources: DataLokki  
Statistics Finland, Rudolf service  
Statistics Finland



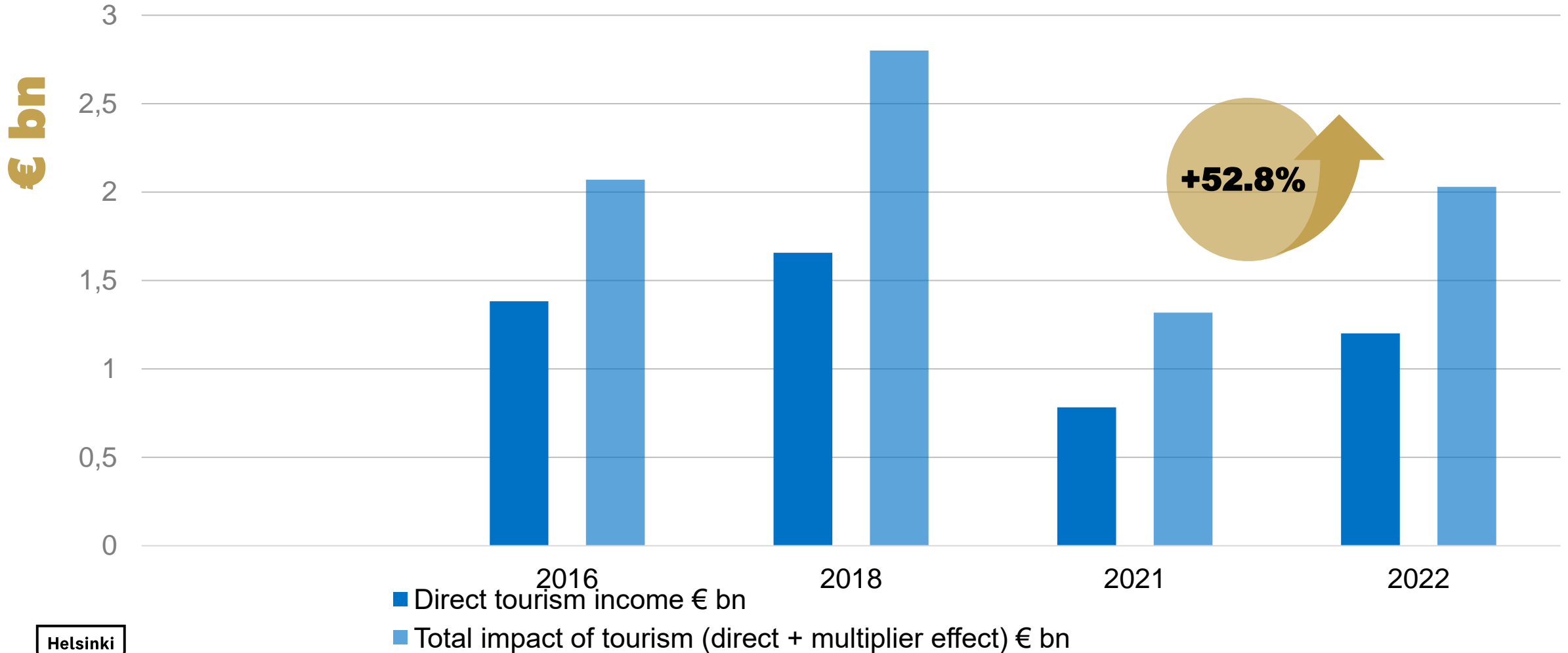
# Registered foreign overnight stays in Helsinki in 2019 and 2023



Source: Statistics Finland, accommodation statistics, Rudolf service

- The USA emerged as the most important international source market in 2023. Growth from the USA was 44% compared to 2022. The growth is based, among other things, on increased direct flight connections, active sales work and increased awareness of Finland through NATO membership.
- The 15 largest source markets account for about 67% of foreign overnight stays.
- The biggest growth is from Japan (157%) and China and Hong Kong (169%), but the numbers are still small.
- International demand as a whole is growing. The market is divided into strong top markets, growing potential markets and a wide range of important destination countries.
- The income generated through international tourism is comparable to export income. In addition, we receive the benefit of Finnish VAT.

# Tourism income in Helsinki in recent years



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*Preliminary estimate for 2023: direct tourism income €1.4 billion  
Total direct and indirect tourism income €2.3 billion*

Source: TAK Oy

# Tourism income in Helsinki by industry in 2022

		Direct tourism income		Direct tourism employment (man-years)	
	Accommodation and restaurants	€607 million	51% 	3,739	66% 
	Fuel sales and retail	€366 million	31% 	874	15% 
	Transportation services	€121 million	10% 	533	9% 
	Recreation and other services	€103 million	9% 	518	9% 
	Total	<b>€1,196 million</b>	100% 	<b>5,666</b>	100% 



# Employment and impact on income tax revenue 2022



Direct man-years  
caused by tourism  
**5,666** man-years,

**+17.3%**

change compared to mountain 2021

Overall impact of  
tourism on  
employment

**6,800** man-  
years

Direct salary income  
for those employed in  
tourism

€ **190** million

Municipal tax  
revenue from direct  
wage income

€ **26** million

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Note: in total, about 30,000 people in Helsinki work in the tourism sector. In addition, temporary work is commonly used, with an estimated 15% of all employees, and up to 25% for restaurants.

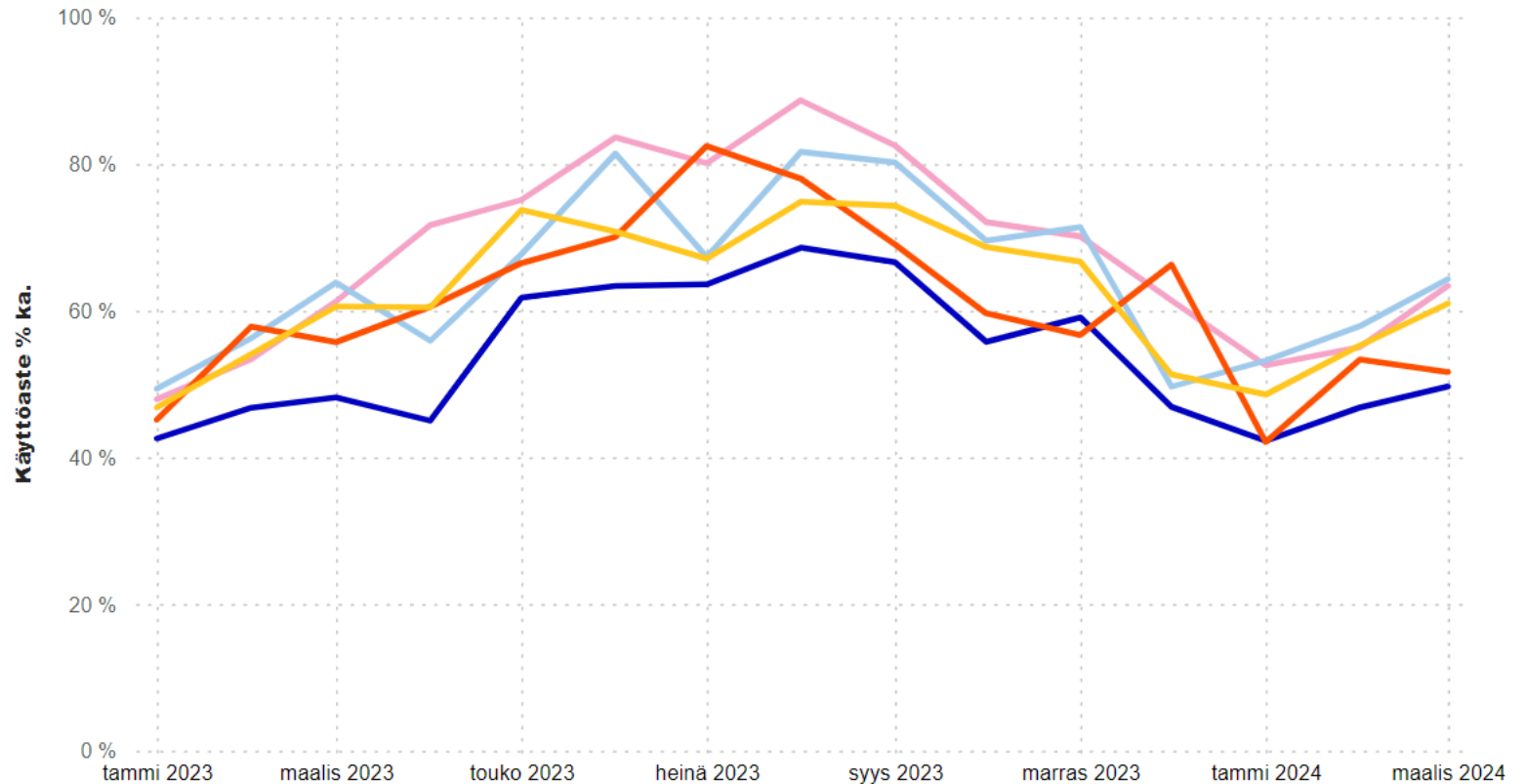
Source: TAK Oy

# Monthly utilization rates in control cities 2023

- Tourism in the Nordic capitals has recovered at different rates after the pandemic, due to the structure of urban tourism, the share of domestic tourism, as well as the location and accessibility of the main markets.
- Occupancy rates in Helsinki have remained lower than others due to, among other things, increased hotel capacity
- In Copenhagen, international tourism has grown the most. In addition to Copenhagen, only Oslo has surpassed the 2019 level. Other cities are expected to reach their 2019 overnight stays at the end of 2024 or early 2025.

## Hotellien käyttöaste % verrokkimaiden pääkaupungeissa

Kaupunki ● Helsinki ● Kööpenhamina ● Oslo ● Tallinna ● Tukholma



Source: TourMis

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# Accommodation capacity continues to grow

- The hotel market is slowly recovering and hotel performance is expected to reach pre-pandemic levels in less than two years. Accessibility, the revival of tourism demand, the opening of market opportunities for new types of hotel concepts, especially in the higher hotel category, the growing interest in Helsinki, and the economic and political markets have been considered in this assessment. New hotel projects are in preparation, but the city is no longer actively attracting foreign actors and operators to the hotel sector.
- **Four accommodation establishments** were opened in 2023. In addition, several hotels are undergoing alteration and repair work, such as Hotel Kämp.
  - Noli Malmi, Vanha Helsingintie 19, 238 studios, March
  - Noli Herttoniemi, Työjohtajankatu 11, 263 studios, May
  - Radisson Red Helsinki, Vuorikatu 24, 195 rooms and suites, October
  - Hotel Maria, Mariankatu 23, 117 rooms and suites, December
- Opened/opening in 2024
  - CityBox Helsinki, Siltasaarenkatu 12, 178 rooms, February
  - Hobo Hotel Helsinki, Kluuvikatu 4, 184 rooms, revamped concept, April
  - Grand Hansa Hyatt, Mannerheimintie 5, 224 rooms and suites, May
  - Solo Sokos Hotel Pier, Katajanokanlaituri 4, 164 rooms, estimated August
  - Bob W, Kasarmikatu 40, renovated concept to replace a closed hotel, September

Helsinki

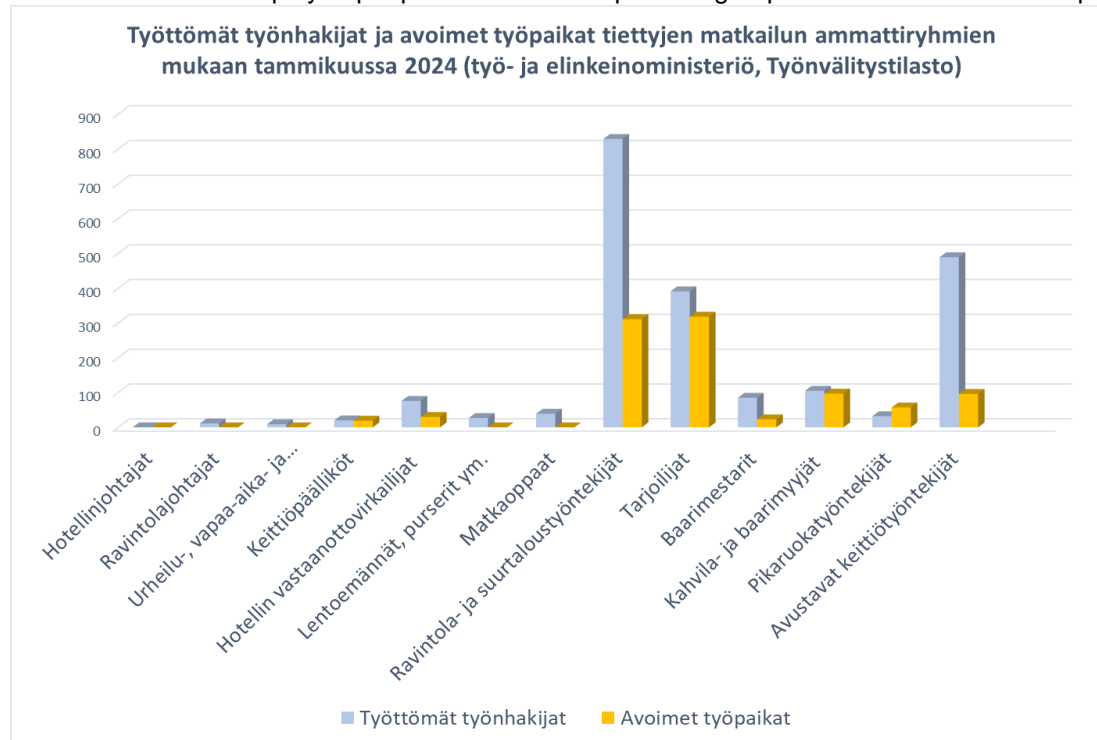


# The share of part-time work in the tourism and event industries is high

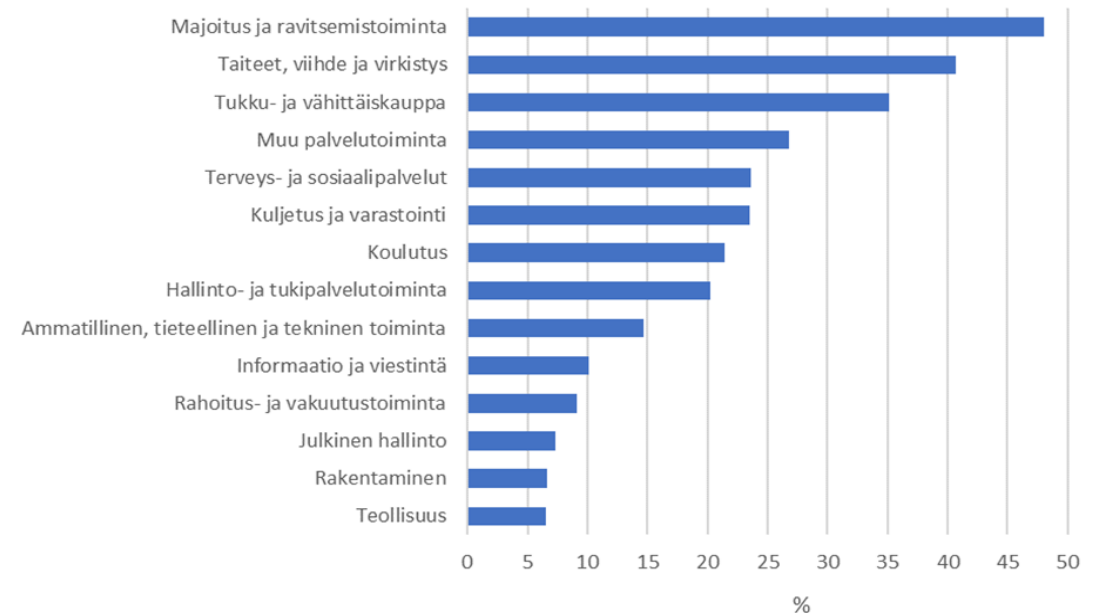
- In the hospitality industry, over 26% more people had been employed in the last quarter of 2023 than in the first quarter (Statistics Finland). The number of jobs in Helsinki increased by 7.3% during the same period. In January 2024, the largest number of unemployed jobseekers were restaurant and catering workers. Part-time work accounts for 45 percent of employees in the hospitality and event industries, which is significantly higher than in many other industries. The use of temporary workers is also common. For example, in restaurants, up to a quarter of employees are employed by a staffing agency. Similarly, in the hospitality industry, the share of people with a foreign background among the sector's employees in Helsinki is high, at around 39% in 2022 (Statistics Finland, employment statistics).
- The number of unemployed people in certain occupational groups has increased over the past

year and the number of jobs has decreased. It is difficult for companies to particularly find skilled and motivated employees.

- In the Q4 of 2023, the number of establishments in the tourism sector was 8,541, while it was 8,324 in Q1, that is, the number of establishments increased by 217 in 2023 (Statistics Finland, establishment counter).
- The situation regarding skilled workers in the event industry has eased in 2023 compared to 2022.



**Osa-aikatyön osuus toimialan kaikista palkansaajista Helsingissä v. 2023**



# Helsinki - a good and impressive event city based on surveys held in 2023

- In 2023, 15 events with a total of more than 400,000 visitors were surveyed. Responses to surveys were received from 30,721 visitors.
- Based on the results:
  - As an event city, Helsinki is open, safe and lively (average 8.7 on a scale of 0-10).
  - Events in Helsinki are socially influential (average 3.95 on a scale of 0-5).
  - The average NPS (Net Promoter Score) for audience events is 75 (top 88 and bottom 55). The figure is very high and indicates high customer satisfaction and the willingness to recommend events in Helsinki.
  - The carbon footprint of event visitors in Helsinki is low compared to the national level, 0.041 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/km compared to the average carbon footprint of all event visitors in Finland, which is 0.113 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/km\* (study Salmi Eventlizer\*)
  - Major events in Helsinki have a significant impact on vitality and, for example, hotel occupancy rates. At the time of the following events, hotel occupancy rates were particularly high: Flow Festival, Helsinki Cup, Helsinki Horse Show, Helsinki Pride, the Finland-San Marino European Football Qualifier, JVG Stadium Concert, Kaija Koo Stadium Concert, MAMMA MIA! Musical, Naisten Kymppi, Sideways, Tuska Festival, U Nation.

Helsinki



Photo: Jussi Eskola

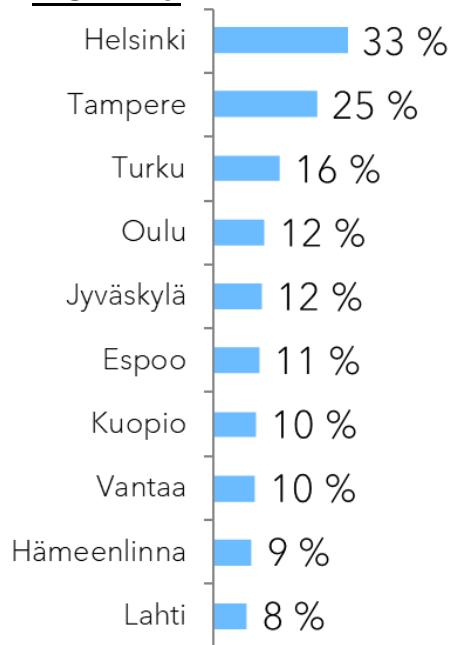


# Interest towards events in Helsinki

Which of the following cities' events are you interested in?

(e.g. cultural, sporting and musical events, festivals, etc.)

## TOP 10



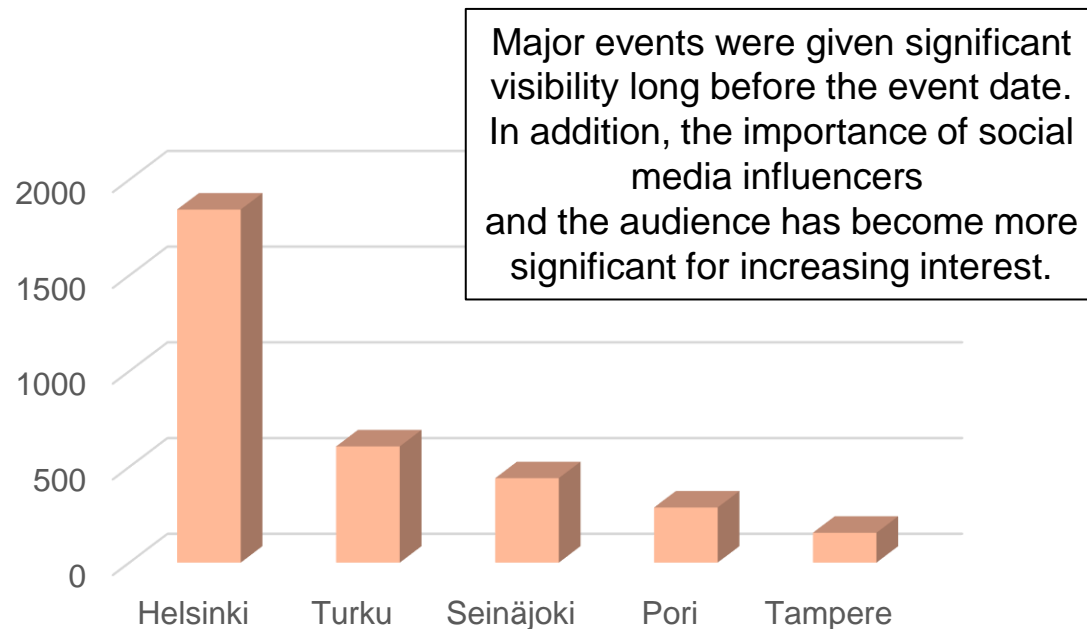
Nearly 1.5 million adult Finns are interested in events that take place in Helsinki

N=1537 according to demographic structure (Population 18+ )

Helsinki

4 June 2024

Visibility of annual events in online media May-August 2023



Major events were given significant visibility long before the event date. In addition, the importance of social media influencers and the audience has become more significant for increasing interest.

The figure shows how many online media news pieces or articles mentioned the event held in the city each year.

Source: Sponsor Insight, Tracker 2023 June-August

# Public event attendance in Helsinki 2023

- **Helsinki City Running Day, 12–13 May** (15,000 runners)
- **Samba Carnaval, 5–11 June** (30,000 visitors)
- **Sideways, 8–10 June** (26,000 visitors)
- **Helsinki Day 12 June** (120,000 visitors)
- **Helsinki Pride Week, 26 June–2 September** (100,000 procession)
- **Tuska Festival, 1–2 July** (49,000 visitors)
- **Helsinki Cup, 10–15 July** (20,000 players)  
+audience
- **Flow Festival, 11-13 August** (90,000 visitors)
- **Helsinki Festival 15 August – 1 September** (220,000 visitors)
- **Helsinki Design Week, 8-17 September** (50,000 visitors)
- **Helsinki Horse Show, 18-22 October** (55,000 visitors)
- **Slush, 30 November – 1 December** (25,000 visitors)
- **Helsinki Christmas Market 1–22 December** (350,000 visitors)
- **New Year's celebration** (70,000 visitors)
  
- **Messukeskus:** over 1 million event visitors
- **Events at the Olympic Stadium:** During operating year 2023, the Olympic Stadium was visited by a total of approximately 725,000 people, of whom a total of **474,599** were **event visitors**.

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Photo Jussi Helsten

# Major sporting and cultural events

- Major sporting and cultural events have a significant impact on the vitality of the city centre of Helsinki, the whole of Helsinki, and Finland.
- The City of Helsinki contributed to the organisation of several major sports and exercise events in Helsinki, including:
  - By partnering with and streamlining the event organiser's processes in the city
  - Supporting event organizers financially (both financially and also VIK/facility rental subsidies).
- Examples of major sports and exercise events in Helsinki in 2023 and their economic impact.
  - Helsinki Horse Show, which attracted 50,000 spectators and an estimated economic impact of €10.2 million
  - Helsinki Cup, with approximately 25,000 participants, an estimated economic impact of €16.2 million, in addition to employing hundreds of young people
  - Helsinki City Running Day, with over 15,000 participants and an estimated financial impact of €2.6 million



# Event visitors' spending in Helsinki 2023, surveyed audience events

The event visitors spent a total of **€96.5 million** on the audience events surveyed in 2023, of which **€67.5 million** came from outside Helsinki and **€29 million** from locals.

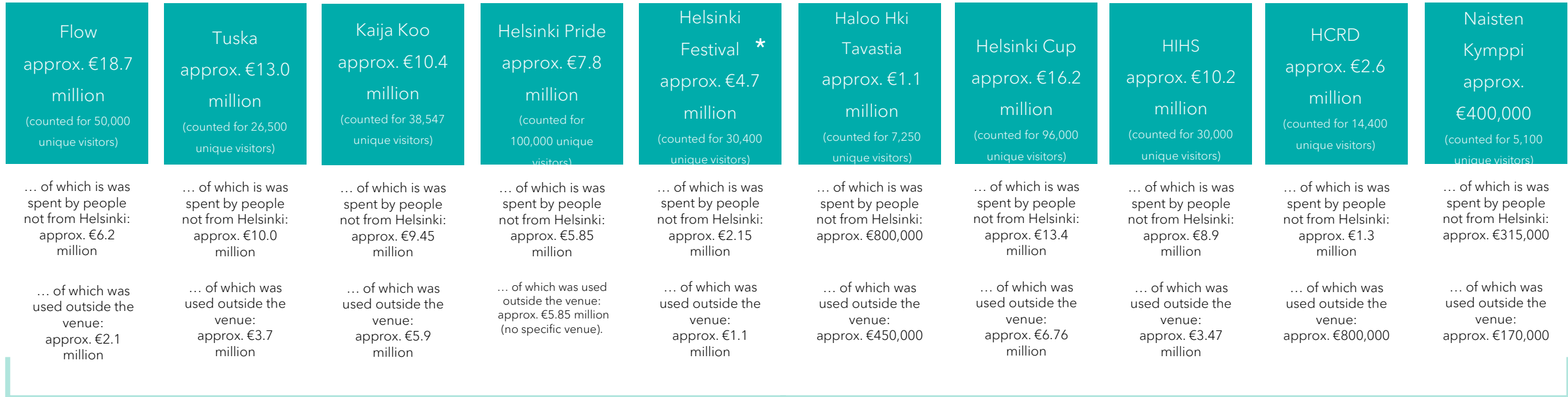


**The surveyed events saw about 660,000 visitors:**

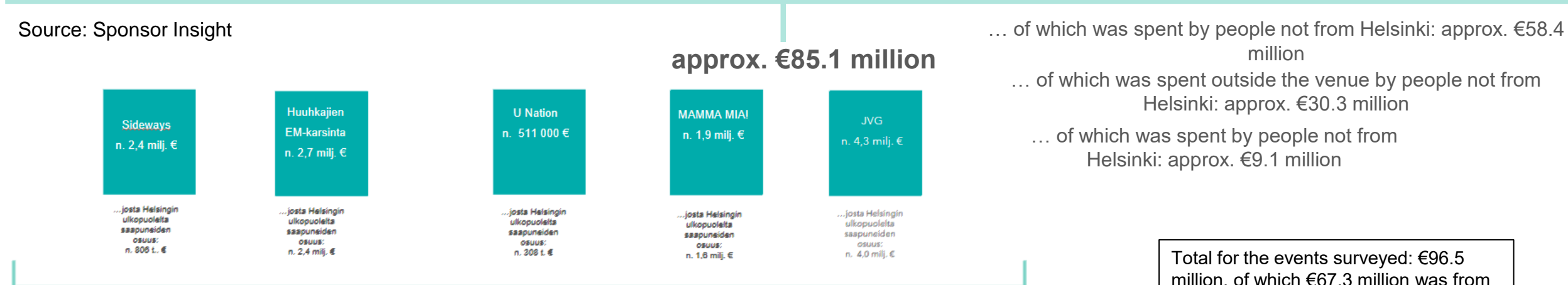
Flow, HCRD, Haloo Helsinki!, Helsinki Cup, HIHS, Helsinki Pride, Finland-San Marino European Qualifier, Helsinki Festival, JVG, Kaija Koo, MAMMA MIA!, Naisten Kymppi, Sideways, Tuska and U Nation.

**Average spending** approx. €146/ visitor

# Surveyed spending of event visitors Money Spending in Helsinki 2023



Source: Sponsor Insight



Source: Salmi Eventlizer

Total for the events surveyed: €96.5 million, of which €67.3 million was from people not from Helsinki



approx. €11.4 million

# Progress of the Tourism and Events Programme



# Strategic targets

- A.** Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events
- B.** Helsinki is an international pioneer in sustainability and solution-maker for the tourism and event industries
- C.** Helsinki is a smart place to visit and a functional event city



**A. Helsinki on elävä ja kansainvälisesti vetovoimainen matkailu- ja tapahtumakaupunki**

**B. Helsinki on kansainvälisesti kestävyysedelläkävijä ja ratkaisija matkailu- ja tapahtuma-aloilla**

**C. Helsinki on älykäs vierailukohde ja toimiva tapahtumakaupunki**

### Strategiset valinnat

A.1. Matkailun kasvu syntyy kansainvälisistä vierailijoista	B.1. Ympäristön kestävyys ja hiilineutraalius kehittämisen kärkenä	C.1. Matkailun ja tapahtumien älykäs kehittäminen pohjautuu tietoon
A.2. Tapahtumallisuus vahvistaa Helsingin elävyyttä ja elinvoimaa	B.2. Helsinkiläiset, inklusiivisuus sekä sosiaalinen ja kulttuurinen kestävyys kehittämisen keskiössä	C.2. Kaupunkitilaan liittyvät päätökset tukevat matkailua ja tapahtumallisuutta
A.3. Kansainväliset kongressit ja suur tapahtumat kasvun moottoreina	B.3. Helsinki on kestävydessä maailman kärjessä indeksien ja sertifiointien avulla todennettuna	C.3. Helsinki on toimiva tapahtumien alusta

### Kehittymisen perusedellytykset

A.4. Omaleimainen kaupunkikulttuuri, ruoka ja ainutlaatuinen luonto vetovoiman vahvistajina	B.4. Osaavan työvoiman saataavuus on toimialojen elinehto	C.4. Yritysten digitaalisen kyvykkyyden edistämällä lisää kilpailukykyä
A.5. Hyvät liikenneyhteydet ja sujuvat asiakaspolut kilpailukyvyyn perusedellytyksinä	B.5. Kokonaisvaltaiseen turvallisuuteen panostaminen on vetovoiman perusedellytys	C.5. Kasvua ja uudistumista matkailun ja tapahtumien innovaatio-toimintaa kiihdyttämällä





# Monitoring and progress of the programme

<b>Helsinki on elävä ja kansainvälisesti vetovoimainen matkailu- ja tapahtumakaupunki</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Tavoite vuonna 2026</b>
Rekisteröidyt yöpymiset kasvavat (2021)	2,1 milj.	3,7 milj.	4,1 milj.	5 milj.
Kansainvälisten järjestökongressien määrä kasvaa (2021)	143	158	143	450
Varmistuneiden hotelli-investointien määrä yhteensä vuosina 2021–26 ja monimuotoisuus kasvavat (2021) (under construction)	8	12	11	30
Matkailuyritysten määrä kasvaa, toimialojen toimipaikkojen määrä (2021)	7 674	8 300	8 541	8000
Tapahtumapaikkojen luokittelu	ei	ei	ei	kyllä
Helsingin suur tapahtumien määrä, kasvusuuntainen (UUSI - 2024)	-	-	-	systemaattinen seuranta, kasvu positiivista
Rekisteröityjen yöpymisten viipymä pitenee	1,8	1,7	1,7	1,9
<b>Helsinki on kansainvälisesti kestävyden edelläkävijä ja ratkaisija matkailu- ja tapahtuma-aloilla</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Tavoite vuonna 2026</b>
Sustainable Travel Finland-merkkien määrän kasvu	16	26	60	200
Helsingin kumppanuustapahtumien ympäristöohjelmien määrä (päivitetty 2024)	N/A	N/A	100 %	100 %
Helsingin sijoitus Global Destination Sustainability (GDS)-indeksin vertailussa nousee	16	12	4	1
Asukkaiden tyytyväisyys matkailuun ja tapahtumiin säilyy hyvällä tasolla	hyvä	hyvä	hyvä	hyvä+
Hiilijalanjälkilaskurin käyttäjien määrä (Visit Finlandin Hiilikuri)	0	0	60	200
Tapahtumien hiilijalanjälkilaskurin latausten määrä (päivitetty 2024)	ei	ei	164	300
<b>Helsinki on älykäs vierailukohde ja toimiva tapahtumakaupunki</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Tavoite vuonna 2026</b>
Tuotteiden määrä matkailun DataHub-tietokannassa kasvaa	164	256	380	500
Tiedolla johtamisen alustan käyttäjämäärät kasvavat*	0	0	74	150

\*Number of registered users, platform opened summer 2023

# Tourism and Events Collaboration Groups 2023

The city focuses on network-style management of the tourism and event sector's ecosystem.

The groups work to improve cooperation between different actors and, on the other hand, increase understanding of the importance of tourism and events in the City Group.

## City Group Tourism Cooperation Group

- Internal city group
- Four meetings per year
- Responsibility for coordination: Tourism and Destination Services Unit

## Helsinki Tourism Advisory Group

- Leading stakeholder group of travel businesses and other non-city operators
- Four meetings per year
- Responsibility for coordination: Tourism and Destination Services Unit

## Tourism and Event Sector Sustainability Task Force

- Internal city group
- Four meetings per year
- Responsibility for coordination: Tourism and Destination Services Unit

## Tourism Safety Management Team

- A group made up of the city, safety authorities and a business representative
- Two meetings per year
- Responsibility for coordination: Tourism and Destination Services Unit

## Major Event Coordination Group

- Internal team of the city's top management
- Two meetings per year, four times per year in the future
- Responsibility for coordination: Brand & Events Unit

## Event Coordination Group

- Internal city group
- Nine meetings per year
- Responsibility for coordination: Brand & Events Unit

## Event Field Group

- Internal city group that includes the police and HSL
- Seven meetings per year
- Responsibility for coordination: Brand & Events Unit

## Events Advisory Group

In preparation this year, will be operational within 2024.

- Responsibility for coordination: Brand & Events Unit

The development of tourism and events is also supported by several other practical action groups. In addition, they actively participate in several international, national and regional cooperation forums, for example, from the point of view of the advocacy of tourism and events in Helsinki, new learning and exchange of information.

# Helsinki Makers Network

- The City maintains a membership fee-based Helsinki Makers network, in which actors, together with the City, develop Helsinki into a sustainable and smart tourism and event city and increase its international reputation.
- The members of the network meet for regular morning coffee, at networking events, sector-specific meetings, a recruitment event aimed only at the network, and during introductions for international tour operators. In addition, a broader view of the DataLokki platform has been opened for the network, regular visits to network partners' locations and services have been continued alongside already existing network benefits, such as the available up-to-date information and business development measures.
- In 2023, 27 new partners joined the network and in the first quarter of 2024, six new partners had joined. In March 2024, the network had grown to 142

partners. Network meetings were attended by an average of 123 people/event in 2023 and morning coffee info sessions by 45-88 people/session. The partners' satisfaction with the activities was 4.13 (on a scale of 1 to 5) and cooperation with the Tourism and Destination Services Unit at 4.2 (on a scale of 1 to 5).

- The content of the event-like nature of network activities has been increased and we have actively sought new actors in the event industry. All actors in the event industry were able to join the network with an introductory offer of €500/year in 2023, regardless of the size of their turnover. Restaurant operators will also be actively sought to join, especially during 2024.
- In 2024, a 5% discount on the membership fee will be granted to companies that have a valid national Sustainable Travel Finland certification.

# Key measures from the past year

Helsinki



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

## **Strategic choices**

- A.1.** Growth in tourism is based on international visitors
- A.2.** Events boost Helsinki's vitality and vibrancy
- A.3.** International congresses and major events as drivers of growth

## **Basic requirements for development**

- A.4.** Distinctive urban culture, food and unique nature as drivers of attractiveness
- A.5.** Good transport connections and smooth customer paths for visitors as basic requirements for competitiveness



# A.

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

### Summary

#### A.1. Growth in tourism is based on international visitors.

- Helsinki's reputation received a boost with active public relations and communication work. In order to attract foreign visitors, 718 sales meetings with international customers were held in 2023. In addition, 250 tour operator customers visited Helsinki.
- In early 2024, the Helsinki Happiness Hacks campaign was launched in cooperation with Visit Finland.
- In 2023, the tourist information service served a total of 128,000 customers face-to-face and in digital channels.

#### A.2. Events boost Helsinki's vitality and vibrancy

- According to studies, Helsinki is a good event city from the perspectives of economic, social and ecological impact, as well as safety. From the point of view of revitalizing the city centre, events are of great importance, and various event experiments provide good information about the functionality of the areas in the events. The city organization's close cooperation with event organizers helps to develop it into an even better and more vibrant event city.
- The long-term development of Helsinki's event partnerships in cooperation with event organisers will result in events that look and feel more and more like Helsinki.

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

- International congresses and major events act as drivers of growth in Helsinki. In addition, they increase the knowledge capital of the experts working in Helsinki and create a platform for international networking. Major events need functional event areas and facilities to be successful. Helsinki is completing a preliminary study on a "well-functioning major event area" in cooperation with the Tuska Festival
- Major events significantly strengthen Helsinki's liveliness and attractiveness. A major event in 2024, the Tall Ships Races 2024, serves as an excellent example of this, as does the special culinary theme of 2024, "Edible Helsinki".

#### A.4. Distinctive urban culture, food and unique nature as drivers of attractiveness

- Towards the end of the year, the measures for the Helsinki Food Year were launched for the unveiling of the Nordic Michelin stars, open event submissions, as well as Helsinki's food concept and story, and marketing and communication work.
- Cooperative measures were taken with stakeholders regarding e.g. sustainable products and length of stay of cruise passengers

#### A.5. Good transport connections and smooth customer paths for visitors as basic requirements for competitiveness

- Regular dialogue took place with transport companies to open new connections.
- The management model for the Helsinki tourism experience and the measurement of the tourism experience began in August 2023, together with pilot sites like ports, the airport, VR, Metsähallitus, hotels and the tourist information centre.

# A.1. Growth in tourism is based on international visitors

- Helsinki Partners has conducted targeted marketing communications in 2023 in Germany, the UK, the USA and Japan.
- 474 articles about Helsinki were published in international media, of which 48% were in the so-called "first category", that is, media that are very interesting in terms of quality and reach. 1823 media hits were received through press releases. The estimated reach of the media work through articles was 98 million people, an increase of +69% compared to the previous year. The estimated total reach, including TV audiences, was 250 million people. The growth was generated by, for example, interest in the Helsinki Biennial. Influencer work reached more than 20 million people through 1234 mentions. Press conferences were held in London and New York.
- The number of followers grew to 503,236 by the end of the year across all digital channels. The MyHelsinki.fi channel, aimed at visitors and experts, saw 701,500 international sessions and the Helsinkipartners.com channel, which focuses on BtB target groups, saw 44,908.
- Helsinki's detailed brand strategy, City for Good Life, was adopted in international marketing and, as a result, image, video and marketing and sales materials were extensively revamped. Helsinki's positive image improved in all selected target markets.
- There were 718 sales meetings with international customers. In addition, 250 tour operator customers visited Helsinki.
- Helsinki participated in the Matka 2024 fair in the Business Forum area and as a Matka Workshop partner.
- In early 2024, the Helsinki Happiness Hacks campaign was launched in cooperation with Visit Finland.
- In 2023, the tourist information service helped a total of 128,000 customers face-to-face and in digital channels (chat, email, phone). Tourists could receive face-to-face service at the year-round tourist information point on Aleksanterinkatu, as well as in the summer by Helsinki Help agents at the pavilion on Lyypekinlaituri, at ports and around the city, as well as at the largest international congresses. Customer satisfaction with the service remained at an excellent level of 4.75/5.
- The digital customer service of Tourist Information was developed by introducing lists of digital hints. At the end of 2023, we launched a development pilot for a digital map service. The tourist information service was transferred to the urban joint Telia ACE, through which the telephone and live chat services of the tourist information service are managed.



## A.2. Events boost Helsinki's vitality and vibrancy

- According to the 2023 event surveys, Helsinki is an open, lively and safe event city, and overall satisfaction with the events is high at 8.7/10. The events held in Helsinki are also socially impressive at 3.95/5 and the carbon footprint of the event visitors is low.
- The use of events in Helsinki's external communications and marketing has been boosted in cooperation with the City Executive Office's communications department, Helsinki Partners, the cultural and leisure industry, and Events Helsinki. This work will also continue to be bolstered and developed in the coming years.
- Event pilots will also provide an opportunity for experimentation in the coming years. Pilots can also evolve into more permanent models, as the pilot approach provides a good understanding of how different areas function for events, and close cooperation with event organisers helps to develop the city into an even better and more vibrant event city. The 2023 trials produced a good result from the perspectives of the visitors, the city and city residents. Two paid events were carried out as pilots: TheU Nation electronic dance music festival 1-2 July on Kansalaistori Square and the MAMMA MIA! musical performance in Kaivopuisto on 13–23 July. According to event studies, the financial impact of the pilots amounted to a total of €2,375,000. In terms of social impact, the most important factors for event visitors were leisure (34%) and the social aspect (17%). The impact of the event on local culture was also felt to be important at 4.36/5.
- In addition, the city's partnership events will be carried out in even closer cooperation and partnership activities will be developed on an increasingly sustainable and functional basis. In addition, we will seek new interesting partnerships for the coming years.
- For the revitalization of the city centre, events are of great importance. Event partnerships, Helsinki's own events, such as the upcoming Tall Ships Races 2024 event and the Edible Helsinki Food Year events (especially Edible Helsinki Food Weeks 24 May – 16 June 2024), international tour concerts at the Olympic Stadium, large international congresses and many other events bring hundreds of thousands of people from both Finland and abroad to the city centre. Various events also have a significant impact on hotel occupancy rates and the rest of the service sector.

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

### Congresses

- 202 congresses were held in Helsinki, with a total of 38,695 participants. Helsinki is proven to be the most important congress city in Finland. The second place was shared by Espoo and Turku, both of which held 57 congresses during last year. (Visit Finland 13 March 2024). International congresses and major events act as a driver of growth in Helsinki. They also increase the knowledge capital of the experts working in Helsinki and create a platform for international networking.
- A total of 14 different international congress organisers and 37 corporate event agents made an excursion to Helsinki in 2023. An offer was made for 30 international congresses. This year, Helsinki won 12 congresses for upcoming years, with an estimated number of 14,400 participants. The economic impact of these congresses is estimated at €22.65 million. Helsinki Partners worked closely with local tourism and event companies and was in active dialogue with other international sales and marketing organisations.

### Major events

- Based on the National Major Event Strategy – Vibrant and internationally interesting
- Finland for international events 2023–2033 – and the Helsinki Major Event Survey (2023), a proposal will be prepared for further measures related to major event applications in Helsinki. Further measures will be discussed in the Major Events Coordination Group.
- During the spring of 2024, in cooperation with the major event organizers at SuviLahti (Tuska and Flow), a preliminary study "well-functioning major event area" will be completed. This preliminary study will serve as a basis for future further studies.
- Major events act as accelerators for the cultural, sports and other fields, as well as for the event industry in general. The events generate growth and jobs in the service sector and boost the public economy. There is also significant and as yet untapped potential in events to attract international tourists. In addition, the organization of major events boosts the city's own expertise in both the events sector and the organization of major events.

### Major sporting events and competitions

- National cooperation has been consolidated regarding major sports and exercise events by combining and strengthening the expertise of cities, while at the same time boosting Helsinki's reputation as an organiser of major international sports events.
- Sport Event Management Finland, a Ministry of Education and Culture project, aims to develop Finland's attractiveness and vitality by improving the operating conditions for major international sports events.
- As part of the Sport Event Management Finland network, an annual Nordic Event Hosts Meeting seminar is held with Nordic event cities.

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

### Overview of major event applications

#### Confirmed major events:

- The Tall Ships Races Helsinki 2024, 4–7 July 2024
- Synchronized Skating World Championships 2025, 4–5 April 2025

#### Confirmed major event applications, timeframe 2024-2026:

- World Gymnaestrada 2031, July 20-26, 2031

#### In the report:

- European Championships in Athletics 2030, 06/2030, to be confirmed in autumn '24

#### Major events applied for but not won:

- UEFA Women's EURO 2025, joint Nordic major event call (UEFA Final Meeting 4 April 2023). The event application was won by Switzerland.

#### Targets for 2024-2026:

- Boost Helsinki's capability and resourcing regarding applications for major international events.
- Apply for major international events that support and implement the targets of the City Strategy in Helsinki and tighten cooperation internationally through improved networking.

Ensure that resources and investments are up-to-date.



## A.4. Distinctive urban culture, food and unique nature as drivers of attractiveness

- Maritime Helsinki is one of the city's key attraction factors. The Helsinki Biennial was presented as a top product of maritime excellence. The new Maritime Helsinki project manager's late start at the end of 2023 slowed down the systematic coordination and promotion of the maritime nature. A Maritime Seminar was held in early 2024 to promote the theme. The product offering for cruise passengers was developed together with stakeholders in a more sustainable direction.
- Helsinki's appeal for visitors and tourists has been developed by taking care of the requirements and attractiveness of cultural activities. Cultural environments were strongly highlighted in Helsinki's cultural environment programme as factors of attractiveness for tourism with diverse examples.
- Towards the end of 2023, preparations began for Helsinki Food Year 2024. Helsinki does not have a valid food strategy, so a food concept and story as well as a marketing and communication plan were implemented to support urban co-creation, communication and marketing, which distinguishes Helsinki, particularly in international competition. At the beginning of January 2024, we published information on a Michelin star unveiling event for Nordic restaurants, which would be hosted by the City of Helsinki (27 May 2024). The event is one of the most famous food industry events in the world and will bring the industry's top Nordic players to Helsinki. The goals and primary measures of the Helsinki Food Year were announced at a stakeholder event at the Matka 2024 trade fair to 130 partners. In January, an open call was launched with the aim of offering operators in the sector the opportunity to introduce surprising and wild flavours to Helsinki for both event guests and city residents to try out during the food year and especially during the early summer's Edible Helsinki event. At the end of May, over 500 food-related events and experiences had been announced, more than 100 for Edible Helsinki Food Weeks. A food storytelling workshop was organised to support the operators, surveyed the taste of Helsinki and various measures were taken to increase cooperation between the actors in the field.
- To support the launch of the Helsinki Happiness Hacks campaign, a happiness product development workshop was arranged for businesses.
- The implementation plan for the new Architecture and Design Museum was completed as a result of a two-year project. The versatile and internationally distinctive new museum is expected to boost the attractiveness of Helsinki and Finland. According to the plan, the museum could open in the new building in the South Harbour of Helsinki in 2030. The design competition was launched in April 2024.
- Methods and products to extend the a stay were developed together with the Helsinki Makers Network.

## A.5. Good transport connections and smooth customer paths for visitors as basic requirements for competitiveness

- Cooperation with Finavia and airlines has been carried out to attract new flight routes and operators, as well as to increase the attractiveness of Helsinki.
- The Port of Helsinki and the City have cooperatively promoted sustainable cruise travel in particular.
- Several talks have been had in connection with the measures of the operational programme for the development of tourist bus transportation and the challenges of pick-up and drop-off traffic, unfortunately not always in a tourism-friendly manner.
- Helsinki actively strives to develop the visitor experience for tourists in the long term. The measurement of the visitor experience of Helsinki as a tourism destination began in August 2023 together with pilot targets, such as the ports, Helsinki Airport, VR, Metsähallitus, hotels and the tourist information service. The first results have been taken forward in accordance with the management model for the tourist experience, which was drawn up in spring 2023.
  - A survey was opened in the DataLokki tourism database, and approximately 600 responses were received during the first six months.
  - The development points that have emerged in the responses have been taken forward in the city organization in accordance with the management model, as well as to business operators in network events.
- The City of Helsinki has supported HSL in their ticket type development in terms of event requirement specifications, so that in the future, HSL can provide a more comprehensive visitor experience for major events and congresses.
- Continuous cooperation is carried out with HSL to improve the public transport services for major events, such as extended public transport schedules during the event, exceptional transport routes and additional service. 61% of the visitors to the studied events in 2023 arrived in Helsinki specifically by train or bus.
- Together with the companies, we built a model in which Helsinki and its partners offer free public transport tickets for congresses or events of more than 1,000 people and discounted public transport tickets for congresses or events of more than 100 people. The implemented model will help Helsinki to respond to the ever-increasing competition between conference and event cities.

# B. Helsinki is an international pioneer in sustainability and solution-maker for the tourism and event industries

## Strategic choices

**B.1.** Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality as the forefront of development

**B.2.** Helsinki residents, inclusion and social and cultural sustainability at the heart of development

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

## Basic requirements for development

**B.4.** The availability of skilled labour is the lifeblood of the sectors

**B.5.** Investing in comprehensive security is a basic requirement for attractiveness



# B. Helsinki is an international pioneer in sustainability and solution-maker for the tourism and event industries

## Summary

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

- Helsinki is aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030. The goal has received support from the city through the provision of tools to tourism and accident companies for measuring measure their carbon footprint and by encouraging companies to certify their operations.
- The reduction of emissions is a process that the vast majority of companies have started.

### **B.2. Helsinki residents, inclusion and social and cultural sustainability at the heart of development**

- According to a regular survey, residents have a very positive view of tourism, events and their growth and development. This is a situation that we should also maintain in the future.
- Helsinki is an inclusive destination for tourism and events, but the city has not yet fully exploited the benefits of inclusivity. Businesses have been given support for their operations through prepared guides, trainings and seminars. In the coming years, additional efforts will be needed to stimulate the interest of international customers. The work done by Helsinki Partners plays a key role in this.

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

- Helsinki has climbed from 16th place to 4th place in the international Global Destination Sustainability Index over the past two years. The index measures the sustainability of a destination extensively with over 70 questions.

### **B.4. The availability of skilled labour is the lifeblood of the sectors**

- The tourism and event industries face challenges in finding skilled and motivated workers. Recruitment events, employer dates and short training-recruitment sessions have been arranged for the operators. In addition, the Good Jobs at Events! service has served as a tool for finding employment.

### **B.5. Investing in comprehensive security is a basic requirement for attractiveness**

- Helsinki's development plan for tourism and event safety has been updated in early 2024. More and more focus as been put into security work in cooperation with the sector.
- Several safety indices and other indicators indicate that Helsinki is still one of the safest tourist destinations in the world. However, using this information to build Helsinki's reputation requires more investment.

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

- In the city organization, there is a sustainability action group for the tourism and event sectors as part of the city-level working group on sustainable development. The group has a wide representation from different sectors of the city, covering, among others, expertise in equality work, accessibility, inclusion, environmental protection, marketing, as well as tourism and event management. The group has met four times in the past year.
- The goal of Helsinki is to be carbon neutral by 2030. The tourism and event industries must also respond to the global climate crisis through their own actions. By being a pioneer, Helsinki can achieve a significant competitive advantage.
  - Helsinki has signed the UN's Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, a commitment to reducing emissions from tourism to zero by 2050.
  - A climate road map for Helsinki tourism has been prepared: the Climate Action Plan, image on the next slide.
  - For the first time, the carbon footprint of tourism in Helsinki was calculated together with other municipalities in the Uusimaa region. This data serves as a bottom line for monitoring.
  - The Urban Environment Division and the Communications Department of the City Executive Office have jointly implemented a carbon footprint indicator aimed at events. The indicator has been deployed at events during the past year.
  - Together with Visit Finland, the city has worked to create a carbon footprint indicator for tourism companies. The indicator has been implemented in companies over the past year.
  - Helsinki and Tampere have co-founded the Urban Climate Leaders in Tourism group, which includes leading tourism operators such as Messukeskus, SOK, Scandic and Linnanmäki. The group strives for international leadership in climate work for tourism.
  - For tourism customer service agents in Helsinki, such as guides, hotel receptionists, museum employees and restaurant staff, we have created both written and video support material to boost their understanding of sustainability and facilitate communication.
  - Helsinki participates in the sustainability working group of the Event Industry Federation of Finland.
- Reducing emissions in the tourism sector is a long-term process to which the entire ecosystem must be committed. The process is ongoing and tools have been introduced to businesses. As effective measurement methods are still lacking, it is challenging to demonstrate the results. However, an increasing number of companies are participating in the Sustainable Travel Finland programme (about 150 on the path and 65 marks), and about 60 companies are using the Hiilikuri carbon footprint calculator. This growing pool of committed businesses shows that the process is underway and that we are heading in the right direction.



# Climate roadmap for tourism in Helsinki

33 measures for 2023–26, including training and productising for tourism companies, cooperation between educational institutions, new operating methods for the tourist information service, the monitoring of the carbon footprint on the destination level, and the development of new financing methods for innovative tourism.

## A: Eliminate emissions

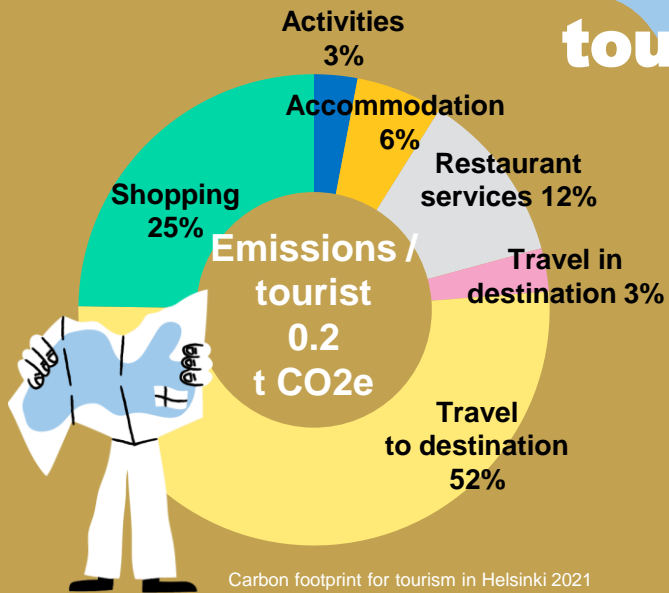
## B: Innovative tourism

## C: Cooperation

## D: Resources

## E: Indicators

**Target:  
Emissions halved  
by 2030**



## B.2. Helsinki residents, inclusion and social and cultural sustainability at the heart of development

### Engage Helsinki residents in the development of the tourism and event sectors

- The well-being of Helsinki residents must be the starting point for all development. The tourism and event sectors influence the city in many positive ways. However, it is also possible that without systematic tourism management, tourists or event visitors will have a negative impact.
- The City follows the "Engagement of Helsinki residents in the development of the tourism and event sectors" plan.
  - In cooperation with the Helsinki Tourism Foundation, we carried out a study on the residents' attitude towards tourism and events in 2023. The study was also carried out in 2019 and 2021 (for tourism). Local perception of the tourism and event sectors is very positive. The study will be carried out every two years, the next time in 2025.
  - The Development targets for tourism in Helsinki 2023 survey was carried out in the spring of 2023. The development targets highlighted in the survey have been promoted during the past year. The development of maritime Helsinki, among others, has accelerated with the help of a new employee. On the other hand, some development themes have progressed more slowly.
  - The report on the engagement of Helsinki residents in the development of the tourism and event sectors is available on the website of the City of Helsinki's tourism operators.

### Inclusiveness of travel and events

- The analysis of the current state of the inclusiveness of tourism and events in Helsinki was carried out in the spring of 2023. On the basis of the analysis and its recommendations for action, the city has set out to promote inclusiveness more systematically than before.
  - In the autumn of 2023, we held the "Tourism belongs to everyone" event at City Hall.
  - In October 2023, an event seminar for event actors was held at City Hall. The essential content was the responsibility and sustainability of the events.
  - The personnel of the Tourism and Destination Services unit and Helsinki Partners have received training on the topic.
  - We have begun to edit the content of the image banks towards a more inclusive direction.
  - In marketing materials, efforts have been made to take the themes of inclusiveness into account better than before.
  - Inclusivity is increasingly taken into account in the development of Helsinki Partners' new MyHelsinki 2.0 website.
  - Related guides have been compiled for use by tourism companies on the website of the City of Helsinki's tourism operators.
  - The social sustainability of the event industry has been in development with the actors of the events sector.
  - The Social Responsibility Compass for Event Organizers was prepared in cooperation with the event sector and published at the end of 2023.
  - Helsinki studied the social impact of choice partnership events during the summer of 2023. The result was good at 3.95/5 (including the impact of the event on the well-being of the individual, local culture, diversity, equality and living environment).

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

- The city is aiming for the top position on the international Global Destination Sustainability Index by 2026. Helsinki's ranking in the index rose by eight points in 2023. Helsinki now holds the 4th rank of the index. Helsinki's total index rose from 82.8% to 90.5% in a year. The index has approximately 70 indicators, which will continue to guide the development work around the sustainability of tourism and events. The top 20 destinations in the index are available on the next page.
- The Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) programme, maintained by Visit Finland, supports tourism companies' and the city's measures towards more sustainable tourism. Helsinki has been part of the programme since its inception, and aims for the STF badge as a tourist destination by the end of 2025. This means that 51% of tourism companies operating in international markets must also have a company-specific STF mark. Training courses and company-specific Sustainable Travel Finland path coaching have been held for companies. In addition, companies have received financial support to acquire environmental certificates through projects and the Helsinki Tourism Foundation. Starting in 2024, companies will receive a 5% discount on the membership fee of the Helsinki Creators Network, if they have completed the STF mark.
- The city has started the certification process for the Green Destinations. The certification supports Helsinki's work towards becoming the world's most sustainable travel destination. The certification will be completed in the summer of 2024.

# GDS Index

			2022	2023
1	Gothenburg		92.98	94.64
2	Oslo*		83.18	92.46
3	Copenhagen*		86.70	91.73
4	<b>Helsinki*</b>		82.80	90.49
5	Bergen		88.36	90.15
6	Aarhus		83.45	88.64
7	Aalborg		86.41	87.70
8	Glasgow		84.09	87.47
9	Bordeaux		85.10	87.10
10	Stockholm*		84.08	86.74
11	Belfast*		84.01	86.40
12	Zurich		80.16	84.35
13	Lyon		83.00	82.85
14	Goyang		78.34	82.66
15	Tirol		80.93	82.53
16	Middelfart		80.51	82.16
17	Singapore		71.14	81.83
18	Nyborg		<b>new</b>	81.64
19	Kerry		82.43	80.61
20	Skelleftea		71.84	80.54

Helsinki

Business  
Helsinki

\* Capitals

Source: <https://www.gds.earth/2023-results/>

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

- Finding skilled workers had been a challenge for the tourism sector for years, and the pandemic only made that situation worse. In terms of the event sector, the situation has gotten worse, especially as a result of the pandemic.
- Challenges in the availability and skills match of the workforce have been a point of discussion in the Helsinki Tourism Advisory Group with the most significant companies in the tourism and event sectors in Helsinki. In addition, joint measures have been planned and implemented with educational institutions.
- Helsinki Employment Services has organised two large recruitment events and smaller tailor-made recruitment events for operators in the tourism, restaurant and event sectors. The target groups have been, for example, event workers with workforce training, retail and horeca sector workers over 50, as well as foreign-language workers in the horeca sector. Five tailor-made short recruiting courses were organised in cooperation between Employment Services and Stadin AO.
- In cooperation with employers in the tourism, restaurant and event sectors, the city held the second Tourism Makers recruitment event in February 2024. The event included 11 companies, three educational institutions, and more than 400 job seekers. Both the companies and the job seekers found the opportunity useful. In connection with the marketing of the recruitment event, we ran a social media campaign on the importance, growth, and employment opportunities in tourism. It reached over 221,000 unique people.
- Good Jobs at Events! is a service built by the City of Helsinki in 2022 that connects employers and Helsinki-based job seekers in the event industry. Through the service, employers in the event industry can find employees for different jobs. It is possible to receive short and longer-term wage subsidies for employment, as well as support for the training and orientation of employees.

## B.5. Investing in comprehensive security is a basic requirement for attractiveness

- The importance of security in customers' decision-making is significant, whether it is health security, uncertainty about the world's security situation, cybersecurity threats, the security of program services and events, or a general sense of security.
- Helsinki's development plan for tourism and event safety for 2021–2025, which was completed in 2022, was updated in 5/2023 and again in 2/2024. Systematic implementation of the plan is ongoing. The Compass, a handbook for businesses, completed in 2022, was also updated in 2023. Other practical security-enhancing materials, such as the Logbook, were also prepared to support the businesses.
- Businesses have received support in crisis communication related to the war in Ukraine and at the beginning of the energy crisis. The growth of corporate security expertise has been supported with a security seminar, workshops, awareness-raising sessions and communication. The security communication competence of people working with tourism and events in the City Group was bolstered through targeted training.
- The Tourism and Event Security Management Team, led by the Tourism and Destination Services unit, was active. The group consists of 11 members from the city organisation, various authorities and a business representative. Helsinki-level tourism security indicators were defined in spring 2023 with the management team for monitoring the safety situation and evaluating the effectiveness of the measures. The monitoring of indicators has been compiled in the Helsinki's tourism database, DataLokki.
- Helsinki was included in the EU Crisis Management programme 10/2023–03/2024, which aimed to improve the sustainability and security management of the tourism sector. In the course of the programme, the tourism and event safety management plan was updated and stakeholders were more strongly committed to the tourism security network. In addition, discussions have been held on the national level on the promotion of tourism security.
- Helsinki advanced the recruitment of a city-level event security coordinator in late 2023, and the security coordinator started in their role in the spring of 2024.
- Helsinki is a member of event sector lobbying group Tapahtumateollisuus ry's security working group, which aims to develop sector-wide security issues on a wide scale at the national level.

# C. Helsinki is a smart place to visit and a functional event city

## Strategic choices

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

C.2. Decisions regarding urban spaces support tourism and the needs of events

C.3. Helsinki is a functional platform for events

## Basic requirements for development

C.4. Fostering the businesses' digital capabilities boosts competitiveness

C.5. Accelerating tourism and event innovation to promote growth and renewal



# C. Helsinki is a smart place to visit and a functional event city

## Summary

### **C1 Smart development of tourism and events is based on knowledge**

- The development and decision-making of a tourism and event city is based on systematically collected, reliable and up-to-date information to the DataLokki – Helsinki Destination Insights service, which supports decision-making. With this knowledge, the city and companies have, for example, anticipated the future number of tourists and optimized work shifts.

### **C.2. Decisions regarding urban spaces support tourism and the needs of events**

- The preparation of a master plan for tourism and events, i.e. a land use plan, has started slowly due to both the lack of cooperation within the city and the importance of the matter not being fully understood.

### **C.3. Helsinki is a functional platform for events**

- In 2023, the City of Helsinki commissioned studies on the economic, social and ecological impacts of 15 public events. The results were very good for Helsinki in all areas. Event studies are one important tool in developing Helsinki into an even better event city, which will continue to be carried out. The utilisation of Helsinki's new feedback system in event development work remained limited, but will become important in the future.

### **C.4. Fostering the businesses' digital capabilities boosts competitiveness**

- The visibility of the digital product offering of companies and services Helsinki and Visit Finland's channels increased from 2023 to 2024, which allows tourists to find the services that interest them, bringing more revenue to companies. In particular, the contents of public events have been moderated and published in the city's communication channels, such as the event calendar with more than 2,000 events, which contributes to the city's attractiveness.
- New future and digitalisation expertise has been created for the companies' staff as part of the Helsinki Makers network's operations. This boosts the renewal of the sector and, for example, the brainstorming for new types of service concepts and processes.

### **C.5. Accelerating tourism and event innovation to promote growth and renewal**

- The business activities of Finnish companies received particular support with pilots of the Sustainable Growth for Tourism Companies: South Finland project and Helsinki Tourism Information's new map service. The pilots have resulted in new products and/or product features with high demand and international growth potential.



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

- Helsinki won an extensive consulting package as part the international City Destination Alliance organisation's activities. With the win, top consultants can be acquired free of charge to support the development of Helsinki into a future sustainable and knowledge-first tourist destination. The so-called *VivaCity Challenge* project was launched in January 2024, when consultants visited Helsinki for interviews with the city's management and key stakeholders. The end result of the three-year project is "Future Proof Destination" and the basis for a new tourism strategy. The project defines, among other things, what is the DNA of tourism in Helsinki and what kind of visitors we want to invite here, how data can used to create the greatest benefits for the sector, and how the achievements of sustainable tourism can be better communicated to the world.
- Based of the development and decision-making of a tourism and event city, we have systematically collected up-to-date information. *DataLokki – Helsinki Destination Insights* was launched in May 2023, based on extensive studies and cooperation. DataLokki compiles travel and event information in Helsinki in a one-stop-shop, visualizing it in information panes. In this way, it becomes effortless to share and utilise information inside and outside the city. In addition, it promotes the competence, product development and business activities of various actors and supports the city's decision-making. By the end of 2023, the DataLokki had 74 registered users and 2,000 visits. The number of users and the number of visits are growing. The implementation was supported by training, verbal data analyses and the creation of an overview that engages the Helsinki Makers Network. The concrete utilisation of data has not been as active as intended, and the information has not yet sufficiently reached the companies' management and decision-makers. Despite the availability of reliable and up-to-date information, the importance of tourism and events is not sufficiently understood in public debate. Systematic work on the discoverability of DataLokki and the usability of the data will continue.
- In 2023, the City of Helsinki commissioned Sponsor Insight and Salmi Eventlizer to compile impact reports (10 and 5 pcs, respectively) on the economic and social impacts of selected public events in Helsinki. In addition, we studied the carbon footprint of event visitors. The results obtained were impressive from both an economic and a socio-environmental point of view. These studies will continue in 2024 and the results will be used in the development of events. The Sport Event Management Finland project includes a policy line: Knowledge-based management and financing development of the sports event industry; the project will be used to carry out, for example, selected event application assessments and event impact studies.

## C.2. Decisions regarding urban spaces support tourism and the needs of events

- The aim of the tourism and events master plan, i.e. the land use plan, is to create a basis for the long-term strategic development of tourism and events, taking into account their current and future needs. Preparatory work for the plan is ongoing, with the aim of completing the preliminary study (current status and needs) in 2024. The work has had a slow start, with particular challenges regarding cooperation within the city and understanding the importance of the matter.
- Since 2022, a tourism expert has also been invited to the regional construction and planning service meetings coordinated by the City Executive Office, such as the city centre and the West Harbour. Similarly, representatives of the Tourism and Destination Services unit have participated in tourism-relevant regional development projects coordinated by the Urban Environment Division.
- The Tourism and Destination Services unit has participated in the updating of Building Control's "Guide to accommodation activities in apartments", introducing the tourism perspective to the content and participating in the national legislative debate on the topic.
- The Brand and Events unit has regularly participated in meetings of the Malmi Airport and Kalasatama project groups coordinated by the City Executive Office. Separate events have been held for event organizers on the construction and development phases of these areas, where the conditions for construction in the areas for event use have been reviewed at the city level year by year.
- The Brand and Events unit has been in close cooperation with area development projects coordinated by the Urban Environment Division.
  - Eläintarha Area Project Group
  - Pilot experiments at Kaivopuisto and Kansalaistori
  - Kaisaniemi and Hesperia Park renovation projects
  - Development work in the Hanasaari power plant area
  - Idea and concept design for Töölönlahti
  - Overhaul of the Senate Square infrastructure for event use
  - City of Helsinki Business Cooperation Group for the development of the city centre

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

- The one-stop-shop for events, i.e. electronic notification and permit services for event organisers, has been in preparation in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Preparations for its introduction are set to begin in the autumn of 2024. There are various obstacles that have contributed to the slow progress and uncertainty this work, both on the part of the state administration and the city's organisation. At the moment, it seems that, at least in the initial phase, it will not be introduced as a digital one-stop-shop.
- Section 42 of the city's building code, concerning the organization of events, was amended in 2023 so that it is possible to organize longer-term events without the permission of Building Control. The current duration is two weeks, which is changing to two months. On the national scale, this change has been seen as a positive development for the sector.
- Event pilots began in the summer of 2023 in cooperation with Live Nation at Kansalaistori Square and Kaivopuisto Park. The results were good and the trial model will be continued in the future, if possible. Through event pilots, it is possible to get introduce new event concepts in Helsinki, as well as new interesting event venues for the use of events, and at the same time develop processes within the city.
- The city carried out a residents' survey on the environmental impact of events in 2022, the results of which showed that residents were well aware of the positive economic, liveliness and reputation effects of the events. Littering and urination in the vicinity of the events were considered to be greater disturbance factor than noise. As a result of the resident survey, noise guidelines for outdoor events were drawn up for 2022-2025. The noise guidelines are also supported with a prioritization method managed by the Communications Department of the City Executive Office, in which the practices of event organizers are scored in terms of functionality, internationality, brand value and environmental responsibility. This operating model was also used in 2023 and is still being developed.
- A decision was made to continue the Major Events Coordination Group for 2023–2025. The working group discusses strategic guidelines regarding major events and events in Helsinki. Other event work groups will also continue to work on their own areas. Preparation of the External Advisory Board for Events has begun and its activities are due to start in the autumn of 2024. The Advisory Board will be established to provide the city with a more continuous strategic connection to the event industry. The aim of the group is to promote measures important to the event industry and, where applicable, to bring issues into the city's decision-making process. Membership in the group is thought to consist of regular members and annually changing members.
- Strengthening industry networks: In October 2023, the first post-pandemic Helsinki event seminar was held for 260 participants. Twelve new event industry operators joined the Helsinki Makers Network. Strengthening and developing the network with the event industry will also be a key focus in 2024.

## C.4. Fostering the businesses' digital capabilities boosts competitiveness

- The role of the city as a key actor in promoting the integration of different systems has been identified. The city has supported the business acumen and digital capabilities of small businesses by organising webinars and workshops. The visibility of businesses' digital product offerings in the channels of Helsinki and Visit Finland grew significantly from 2023 to 2024.
- In the national travel product database, the number of DataHub products increased from 256 to 380. The goal is to further increase the number to 450 products by the end of 2024. Growth has been supported by communication and personal contact with tourism businesses. Growth is held back by the lack of a two-way interface from the city's databases to Visit Finland's DataHub, through which information would be automatically transferred.
- Over 2,000 events that attract tourists, organised by external operators, were published in the city's Linked Events database. A new third-party notification form was opened in the event database, which allows an event organizer outside the city to submit their events to the event calendars and channels in Helsinki. The new form replaced the old, out-of-database form that had already become obsolete for security reasons. Challenges have emerged in the usability of the new form, but user testing, among other things, is in the plans to improve this.
- The city's location register changed the access rights to the location images in order to increase the future visibility of the sites in the marketing channels of third parties. The importance of image material has been communicated to the sector, but despite this, it has been observed that companies rarely update their images. Images have become ever more important in marketing communications.
- Future and digitalisation skills at companies were developed as part of the events of the Helsinki Makers Network with, for example, keynote speeches on artificial intelligence and the metaverse and a workshop on future trends.
- The customer management system, MS Dynamics, was introduced in April 2023. The system enables the efficient processing of business information and monitoring of the revenue growth of the partner network. However, the system has some usability issues and the pace of development has been slower than originally planned.

## C.5. Accelerating tourism and event innovation to promote growth and renewal

- In connection with the Helsinki Makers Network meeting in spring 2023, we also scheduled a meeting of tourism and event companies and Helsinki-based startups. 10 startups presented themselves to the network, after which the companies got to talk to each other. Startups were selected in cooperation with the growth company team of the Economic Development Department's business services. 70% of the respondents to the feedback survey at the event found the introduction of startups useful, resulting in the launch of a few cooperation projects. During the past year, six new tourism-related startups have been coached by the growth company team.
- Sustainable boost for tourism businesses: In the experiment of the South Finland project, we sought and selected three data-driven solution models that support the business growth of tourism companies for testing with tourism companies. One of the solutions piloted in the project was completed as a commercial product by March 2024.
- At the turn of the year 2023-2024, Helsinki Tourist Information introduced a modern digital guidebook and an interactive map on the Reveel platform, which highlights local service offerings on the tourists' own devices in an attractive manner with automatic language translation. A Helsinki-based start-up is behind this service. The same service is also utilised by several companies in Helsinki, which supports the formation of an ecosystem instead of individual applications.
- In the summer of 2023, two pilot events (U Nation at Kansalaistori Square and Mamma Mia at Kaivopuisto) were implemented by partners. Both pilots focused on the new way to use the event area.

**Helsinki**