



BEST PRACTICE: HELSINKI, FINLAND



Key Challenge

Resilience building and crisis management.

Type of Solution

Adoption of a tourism strategy and monitoring framework;
Stakeholder participation and management.

Case Classification

Type of Destination | Urban

Territorial Level | NUTS 3

Size of the Tourist Area | 214.3 km²

Population | 674,500 in 2023

Type of Tourism | Coastal, maritime and inland water; Cultural; City; MICE.

Tourism organisation | The Tourism and Destination Management unit is a subdivision of Business Helsinki, a unit of the city.

Main Stakeholders Affected | Local authorities/ government; ALL tourism service providers; Local residents; Tourists.

Additional Challenges Covered | Appropriate local tourism strategies and policies to accelerate the transition to sustainable and resilient tourism.

Context & Background

Helsinki, located on the coast of southern Finland, has one of the busiest passenger ports in Europe and is one of Finland's most important tourism destination with over 4.14 million overnight stays in 2023. Economically, in 2023 tourism contributed 2.55 billion euros to Helsinki's total income and employment in tourism amounted to 8,806 person-years. Helsinki is characterised by a diverse range of tourism offerings and has been pursuing a consistent and comprehensive sustainability strategy for years.

Key Challenge

Due to its exposed geographical location (difficult accessibility, border with Russia), Helsinki has always been more sensitive to possible risks. The Covid pandemic and Russian aggression in Ukraine demonstrated the vulnerability of the tourism ecosystem.



Implementation of Solutions: To better assess potential risks for tourism and to prepare for possible crises or changes in the environment, comprehensive crisis prevention plans and instruments have been developed through the project “*Leading the safety in tourism in the Helsinki Area*”.

SOLUTIONS

- [*The City of Helsinki's safety information*](#) provides information on how safety and undisturbed operation of the city is ensured and provides residents and tourists with information such as weather warnings, water supply disruptions, air quality information, emergency numbers, etc.
- The [*Safety and Preparedness Team*](#) in the City Council coordinates the city's general safety and security matters and steers the city's preparedness for crisis. The team works closely with all concerned stakeholders.
- The [*Helsinki Tourism and Event Safety Steering Group*](#) leads the destination's tourism safety work and meets regularly. It has selected and approved [*safety indicators*](#) to track the development of the destination's safety issues.
- As part of a two-year project to develop tourism safety in Helsinki (2020-2022), a safety plan for tourism and events in Helsinki was developed and last updated in 2023. In this context, Compass, a [*Handbook on Safety in Tourism and Events in Helsinki*](#), was published and disseminated to tourism partners with a [*promotional video*](#).
- [*DataLokki*](#), a data platform launched in 2023, provides open and up-to-date data and indicators on Helsinki's tourism and events sector, improving stakeholders' knowledge to guide their own product development and manage risks with predictive information.
- [*Helsingin tekijät-network*](#) (Makers of Helsinki), a joint network with more than 140 members from the tourism, events and hospitality sectors, offers its network members a digital collaboration platform, knowledge sharing, training and peer learning, helping them to be more resilient to changes.

Replicability potential: High (requires intense collaboration with the stakeholders).

Cost & funding source: The project “Leading the safety in tourism in the Helsinki Area” (2020–2022) was part of the funding of tourism revitalization projects by the Finnish Ministry of Business and Employment. The project's budget was almost 200,000 euros. After its completion, updating of safety materials and safety coordination will be funded by the City of Helsinki and its stakeholders.



Success Factors & Barriers Regarding the Implementation

Success factors: Good cooperation within Helsinki's tourism ecosystem and with international organisations; Networking and collaboration with neighbouring destinations to jointly build mutual support systems in times of crisis.

Barriers: Limited resources of the DMO; Lack of understanding within the city administration of how the tourism sector works (crises affect many tourism stakeholders, including tourists, and not only city residents).

Results and Impacts

- Thanks to the DMO's numerous crisis prevention measures, the tourism sector is taken into account in the emergency plan at city level. In addition, cooperation with VisitFinland on crisis prevention at national level has improved.
- New members with additional expertise are strengthening the Helsinki Tourism and Event Safety Steering Group.
- By mapping the potential risks in the region and clarifying communication roles within the DMO team, crisis preparedness was improved.

Takeaways

- Know your relevant stakeholders for crisis prevention and strengthen relationships with them.
- Regularly identify stakeholders' safety contacts and find the best ways to communicate in case of a crisis or emergency.
- Clarify the roles of each member of your network in the event of a crisis. In particular, understand your role as a DMO in tourism safety development, safety communication and crisis management.
- Remember to actively update materials and plans and regularly remind your network where to find the latest information.

Useful Links

- [The City of Helsinki's safety information](#) | City of Helsinki
- [The Tourism safety materials and information](#) | City of Helsinki
- [DataLokki](#) | City of Helsinki

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