



Congress
Network
Finland

Benchmarking Kraków
8-9 May, 2025

A Short Presentation of CNF

Kaiju Pitkänen, Chair of the Board

The story begins in 2011

Finland Convention Bureau ry - FCB ry 1974-2010

Non-profit association with 60 members

Marketing Finland as a destination for international congresses and corporate events



In 2010 most FCB activities were transferred to the Finnish Tourist Board -> Today part of Business Finland / Visit Finland.

Marketing Finland as a destination for international congresses and corporate events.



Congress Network Finland - CNF ry was founded in 2011/2012

Non-profit association with 60 members.

Maintaining a network and enabling cooperation and professional development within the industry.

CNF Today

- **70 members** around the country
 - Destinations, Venues, Hotels & Restaurants, Special Services
- **A network for professionals** within the Finnish meetings industry, not a sales platform nor a destination marketing organisation
- **CNF offers** to its members
 - Education and professional knowledge within the industry
 - Benchmarking and networking possibilities
 - Educational trips and visits
 - Information on international and national research and surveys
- **Membership fees and event registration fees** to finance annual activities
- **Strategy 2025 – 2027**
 - Strengthen the network
 - Increase national awareness, and
 - Highlight the customer perspective

Structure

Board of Directors

- 6 volunteers elected for a two-year term, including the Chair & Vice-Chair
- Designated areas of responsibility: Communications; Meetings, education & benchmarking; Finances; Congress Award
- No more than half of the board members can resign at the same time to ensure continuity

Membership Categories

- 4 categories: Destinations; Venues; Hotels & restaurants; Special services
- Each category has a chairperson to run a minimum of two meetings per year with current topics on the agenda

Office Services

- Part-time secretary

Outsourced services, such as accounting

Annual Activities

- Spring Meeting with educational sessions
- Congress Award Ceremony (to a congress organiser/team for promoting the visibility of Finnish medical expertise internationally, funded by the Finnish Fair Foundation)
- Booth at the annual KONGRESSI meetings & events trade show (CNF Partner Village)
- 2-day Autumn Meeting (Autumn Days) with an educational programme
- Category activities during both annual meetings
- Benchmarking trip to a European destination (Oslo, Dublin, Berlin, Stockholm, Amsterdam...)
- Active dialogue with key players within the meetings and events industry (Finland Convention Bureau - FCB, Finnish Event Industry Association – TATE, etc.)

Communications

Focus area

- Highlight the general awareness of the association as a professional network
- Increase the number of members and their loyalty
- Inform members about the annual educational activities

Tools and channels

- Member bulletins, website, Facebook, LinkedIn, press releases
- Password-protected website for members only

Typical content

- Association & industry news and articles, industry events
- Members' news, open vacancies
- Research information, latest statistics
- Board Members' Blog



“Our vision is to be a strong and well-known network of professionals in the meetings industry that creates success for its members.”

Finland as a Congress Destination

- Finland is the 16th most popular congress country in the world and the number one in the Nordic countries
- In 20 years of statistics, Finland ranks 19th
- From 2004 to 2023, 4075 international congresses that meet the UIA criteria were held in Finland (1.7% of all globally recorded).

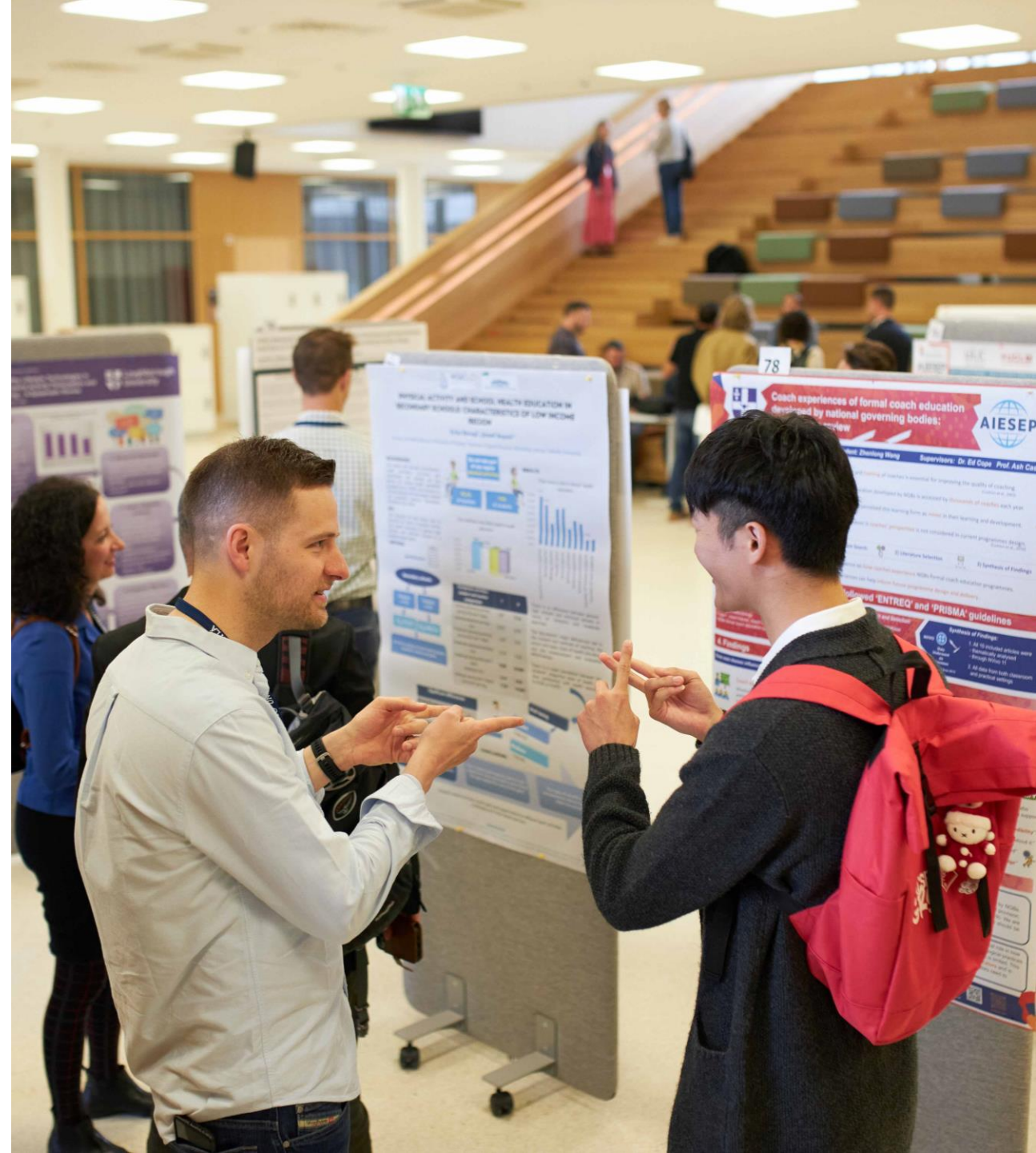


Visit Finland

Finland
Convention Bureau

Congress Year 2024

- 584 congresses were held, which is 55 more than in 2023
- 116,928 participants attended, which is almost 37,000 more than in 2023
- June was the busiest month, followed by September, May, October, and August
- 85% were in person events



Finland from the perspective of a congress participant



- More than half of the congress participants spend time in Finland besides the congress days
- Participants appreciate the ease of getting around and the helpfulness of the locals
- The sense of safety is at a high level.

Source: FCB Delegate Survey
<https://www.visitfinland.fi/suomen-matkailudata/fcb-delegaattitutkimus>



Visit Finland

Finland
Convention Bureau



What does 2025 hold for the global business events industry?

- Sustainability is a strategic imperative
- Face-to-face interactions as an economic driver
- Technology is an enabler, not a substitute
- Personalisation meets data-driven insights
- Geopolitical and economic resilience
- Workforce transformation & talent development



Visit Finland

Finland
Convention Bureau



Kiitos!

Welcome to Finland!

Ines Antti-Poika

Head of Business Events

+358 50 386 3472

ines.antti-poika@businessfinland.fi

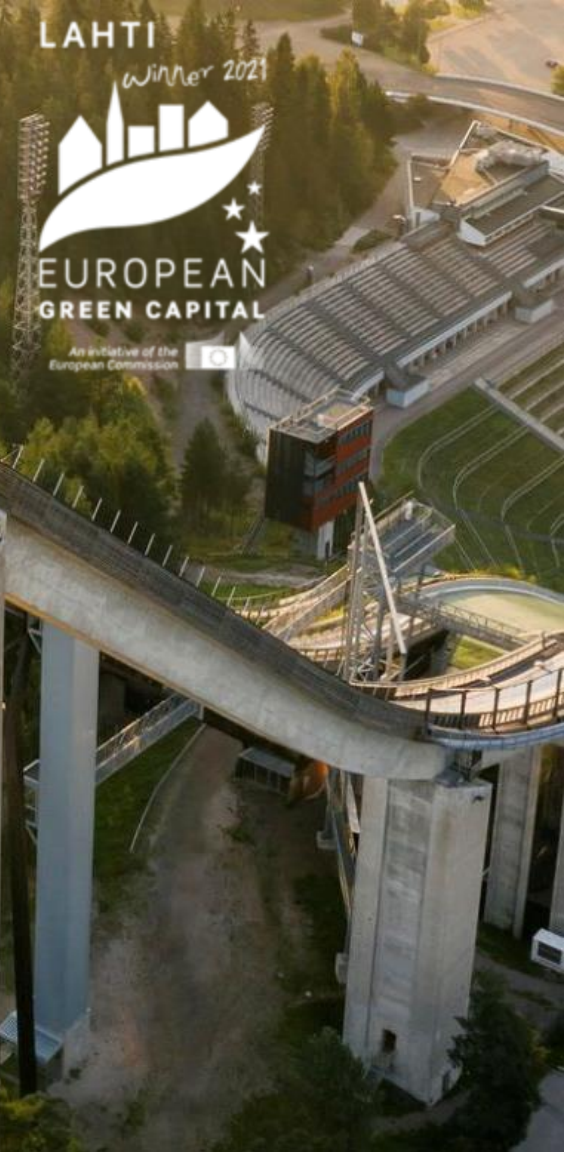


<https://fcb.visitfinland.com/en/>

Lahti

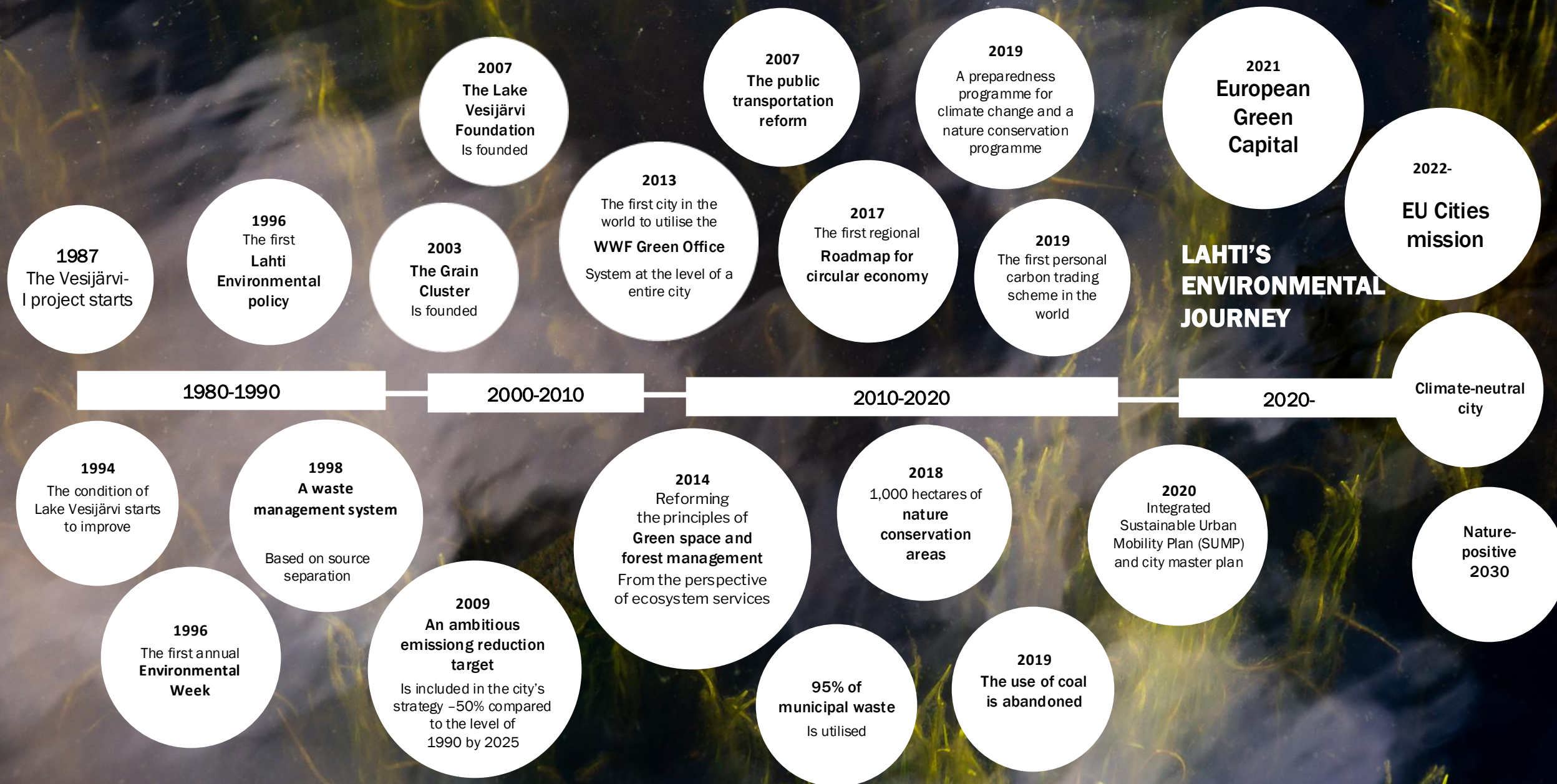
Lahti – Leading Environmental City

Lahti Convention Bureau
Anu Kärkkäinen ja Susanna Jokinen
9.5.2025



***It all started with
cleaning up Lake
Vesijärvi***







Strategy 2030

Lahti – enduring change

Finland's leading green city delivers a comfortable standard of living and success for local businesses.



EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL

An initiative of the
European Commission



Lahti 2021

Finland's first and only European Green Capital

EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL, COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

Applicants for the European Green Capital Award 2021 were assessed on their performance in 12 key environmental indicators:

1. Climate change: Mitigation
2. Climate change: Adaptation
3. Sustainable urban mobility
4. Sustainable land use
5. Nature and biodiversity
6. Air quality
7. Noise
8. Waste
9. Water
10. Green growth and eco-innovation
11. Energy performance
12. Governance

European Green Capitals

2010 – Stockholm
2011 – Hamburg
2012 – Vitoria-Gasteiz
2013 – Nantes
2014 – Copenhagen
2015 – Bristol
2016 – Ljubljana
2017 – Essen
2018 – Nijmegen
2019 – Oslo
2020 – Lisbon
2021 – **Lahti**
2022 – Grenoble
2023 – Tallinn
2024 – Valencia
2025 – Vilnius



What's next?

LAHTI
Climate neutral
Nature positive 2030
Waste free 2050



District heating production (GWh)



LAHTI



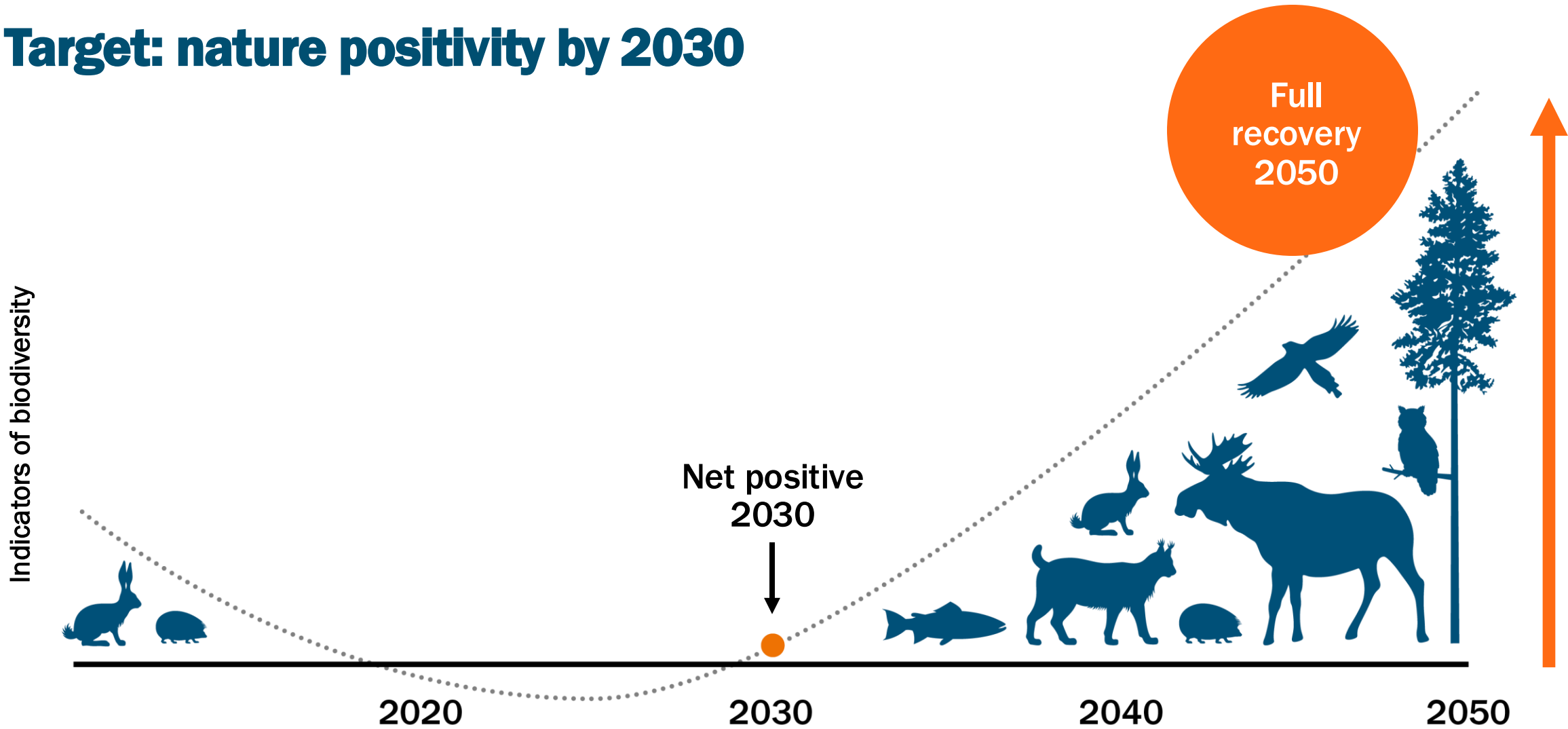
Nature-positive

Nature positivity = human impact on nature is more positive than negative

- Creating a roadmap to achieve the targets
- Developing a model that can be scaled up to other cities



Target: nature positivity by 2030





Economical benefits of sustainability



Thank you!

TANJA JÄRVENSIVU

TAMPERE-TALO GROUP & SUSTAINABILITY



A FORWARD-LOOKING EVENTS COMPANY

- || **Tampere-talo Group** is Finland's largest and most versatile cultural and congress company, producing over 1,000 events annually for both public and corporate audiences.
- || In 2023, the Group's revenue reached €18.2 million, and its events gathered over 517,000 visitors.
- || The Group consists of the parent company **Tampere-talo Ltd**, owned by the City of Tampere, and the subsidiary **Talo Events** Ltd is responsible for venue rentals and organizing events at Tampere Hall and Tuulensuu Palace, as well as producing corporate events at various locations across Finland.
- || Events produced by the Group generate €50 million in economic impact annually for the Tampere region (Synergos 2018). Notable productions, like the Snow Queen ice ballet, alone have brought €3.4 million in regional event income (Salmi Analytics 2022).
- || The Group employs 65 permanent staff and engages around 400 freelancers and contractors across its productions.
- || Tampere Hall is also home to the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, the à la carte Restaurant Tuhto, the world's only Moomin Museum, and is complemented by Finland's first Courtyard by Marriott hotel.
- || Our values: Respect, solution orientation, sustainability, and courage.



THE FOUNDATION OF SUSTAINABILITY

THE BEGINNING

When the doors of Tampere Hall were opened in 1990, we had no idea what kind of challenges we would encounter right from the start. The energy and operating costs of our property were surprising with their enormity and costs, and our company quickly found itself in a difficult situation. We had to act, and quickly. The solution was found in working together.

Our staff rolled up their sleeves and started looking for ways to reduce energy consumption. We started with small actions, such as filling the water tanks in the toilets with bottles to reduce water consumption and adjusting the automation and air conditioning systems. Simple actions grew into bigger changes. In 1992, we took a significant step by starting the construction of our own environmental management system – as far as we know, as the first congress building in the world.

THE PRESENT DAY

Over the years, we have implemented solutions that reduce environmental impact, strengthen communities, and support the regional economy.

One of our biggest leaps has been the introduction of energy and environmental solutions, thanks to which Tampere Hall has become a carbon-neutral congress and concert centre – the first in Finland. In fact, **Tampere Hall was also the first congress centre in the Nordic countries to receive the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, back in 2014**, and continues to operate under its strict environmental criteria.

We have made long-term investments in energy efficiency, and **these solutions have generated over €5 million in savings** during the lifetime of Tampere Hall.

To ensure that **all operations under the subsidiary** meet the same environmental standards, **Talo Events Ltd obtained its own EcoCompass (Ekokompassi) certification in summer 2024**. This allows all events produced by the subsidiary – both in-house and off-site – to be covered under verified environmental management practices.

Through these actions, we have reduced the environmental impact of our operations and built a sustainable foundation for the future.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Sustainability guides our daily operations. Every decision and action aims to ensure that our operations create sustainable impacts on the environment, people and society as a whole.

- **Nature:** We favour renewable energy sources, innovative real estate solutions and support biodiversity.
- **People:** We work for equality, accessibility and safety.
- **Community:** We support local vitality and create events and jobs that benefit society as a whole.

We aim to continue to be known as a sustainability trendsetter in our industry.



"I remember a special moment from this year when I had a conversation with one of our visitors in an evening at the Tuulensuu Palace. He said that our spaces are not just buildings, but meeting places where people can realize something about themselves and the world. That moment reminds us all of why we do this work – we create events and experiences that will live on in people's minds."

Paulina Ahokas, CEO

LOOKING AT 2024: MILESTONES

1



Sustainability Award Commitment 2050

Tampere-talo Ltd received the Sustainability Award for its sustainability commitments (2023). The award was given in recognition of Tampere-talo's long-term work to promote environmental responsibility and sustainable development.

2



EcoCompass certificate

Talo Events Ltd received the EcoCompass certificate, which is part of the Finnish environmental education and certification system. The certificate is awarded to organizations that are committed to responsible environmental practices and actively promote sustainable development. It acknowledges Talo Events' investment in improving environmental responsibility.

3



Winning the Finnish Organic Championship 2024

Tampere Hall's restaurants won the Organic Finnish Championship 2024 competition, which is Finland's most prestigious competition for the use of organic food in restaurants. The competition rewards restaurants that promote the use of organic ingredients and sustainable food culture. The victory is a recognition of our restaurants' commitment to sustainable food choices and the use of organic products.

4



Hyvän Tekijät 2024 recognition

The Tampere Hall Group received the Hyvän Tekijät 2024 award, which was awarded to organisations that use resources to take social responsibility.



5



International attention in Forbes magazine

In an article published by Forbes magazine in October on Finland's environmental friendliness, Tampere Hall was given its own section, which presents sustainability measures and sustainable development. The article was also published in 11 other international journals. The international visibility shows that Tampere Hall's sustainability work has also been appreciated on a global level.



SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT



STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Tampere-talo Group's sustainability management is based on strategic planning, strong management commitment and the active role of personnel. Our sustainability work is long-term, and it focuses on concrete goals and indicators based on the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

The Sustainability Working Group, established in 2024, has played a special role in promoting our sustainability work. It acts as an internal support network that helps plan, implement and communicate sustainability actions. The members of the working group share information about sustainability with their own teams, participate in the development of projects and act as sustainability ambassadors throughout the organization.

DOUBLE MATERIALITY ASSESSMENT

We have carried out a comprehensive double materiality assessment to help us focus our sustainability actions on the most strategically significant sustainability themes. The mapping covers both internal and external impacts and provides valuable information on how we can best contribute to the SDGs.

The most important sustainable development goals for the Tampere-talo Group's operations.



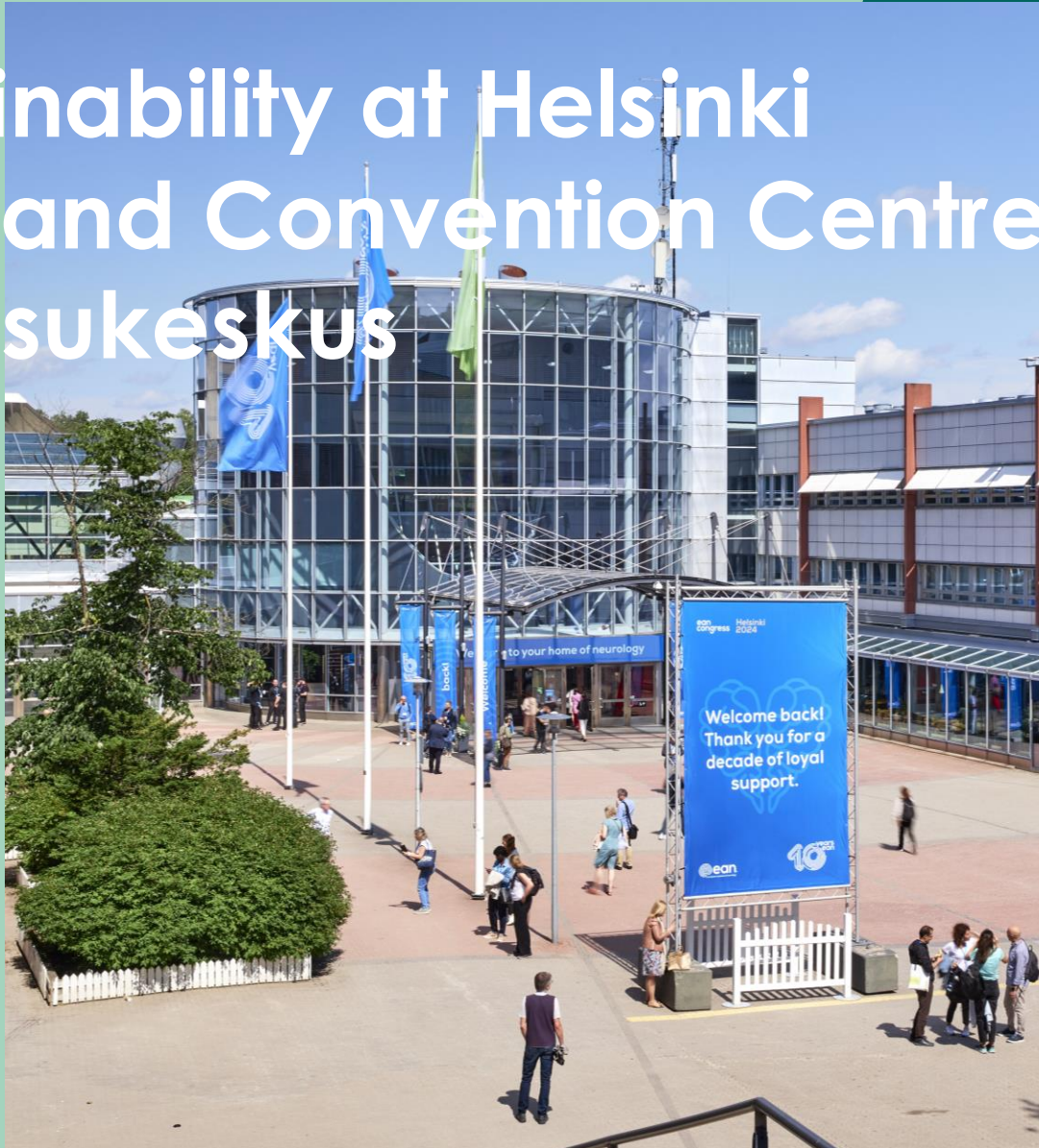


THANK YOU



TAMPERE-TALO

Sustainability at Helsinki Expo and Convention Centre - Messukeskus



- Messukeskus is a pioneer in the events industry.
- The first venue in Finland to be certified by ISO 14001 environmental management system already in 2009.
- ISO 20121 Sustainable Event Organiser Certificate was piloted in 2019 with a large international congress.
- The updated ISO 20121:2024 will be applied with another large international congress in 2025.
- We report on our sustainability efforts using the ESG framework and considering the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (since 2020).

We take responsibility for the environment, people and financial sustainability



Environmental sustainability



Social sustainability



Financial sustainability



Sustainability report 2024:

<https://www.messukeskus.com/en/about-us/sustainable-activities/>

Sustainability is about taking action – whether large or small

- In 2024, Messukeskus brought revenues of **EUR 245 million** to the Helsinki metropolitan area.
- The solar power plant on our roof produces enough electricity to power **168 one-bedroom apartments** for a year (419 MWh).
- Messukeskus is a **City of Helsinki Climate Partner** and a Sustainable Travel Finland company.
- In 2024, we recycled **23%** of our waste, while **77%** was sent for energy production.
- **Up to 99%** of the structures and materials used at our events are reused! Furniture, carpets, drapes, etc.
- We have **worked with** Live Vocational College and the Finnish Committee for UNICEF since 2018. From 2025, we have the Finnish Red Cross and Helsinki Missio as new partners.
- Our goal is to be carbon neutral by 2030.

And 100 other actions...



Legacy examples from Messukeskus

LIVE Foundation cooperation at international congresses

- Students from LIVE Foundation (students with need of special support in education) were guiding congress participants at the airport and Pasila train station, and helping at the congress venue (meeting rooms, lunch breaks etc.).
- Students gained valuable work experience with international visitors
- Congress organiser was pleased with help at no cost.

Case Alzheimer Europe 2023:

- The Finnish *Muistiliitto* recorded an online training on “How to support a person with dementia in customer services”.
- This was distributed to the venue and hotel staff and other service suppliers in Helsinki.

Case EAN 2024:

- Brain Health Mission raised awareness among school children about the importance of taking care of your brain.
- Children of different ages participated in the mission with group work, and the best performances were awarded at the City Hall.
- In addition, the Congress, in collaboration with Finnish organising partners, participated in the Women’s Fun Run event to highlight the importance of physical exercise for brain wellbeing.

Our hometown Helsinki as a leading city

- In 2018, Helsinki became the second city in the world and the first in Europe to commit to assessing and reporting on its progress towards the UN's SDGs at the local level.
- Helsinki ranks number one in the international Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index, which measures the sustainability of travel destinations.



DEVELOPING SUSTAINABILITY IN MICE SECTOR

Karoliina Korpela

Project Manager, Visit Espoo / Enter Espoo



Co-funded by
the European Union

ENTER
ESPOO



SUSTAINABLE
TRAVEL
FINLAND™

VISIT ESPOO

- Visit Espoo is the official tourism marketing company and convention bureau for the city of Espoo.
 - Part of Enter Espoo Oy, city owned marketing company.
 - Visit Espoo is the service brand for business events & tourism marketing
- One of the most important tasks of our meeting and congress team is to help and support in planning and organising various type of events.
- As a destination, together with our partners we are committed to Visit Finland's Sustainable Travel Finland programme.



SUSTAINABLE
TRAVEL
FINLAND™



VISIT ESPOO



Nuoksio Reindeer Park. Photo: Kathrin Deter

Congresses and Corporate Events as drivers of Innovation and Sustainability in the Helsinki Capital Region

- Goal is to enhance the industry's competitive advantage by making the capital region the world's most sustainable destination for congresses and corporate events.
- Funding: EU / Helsinki Uusimaa Regional Council, Enter Espoo Oy, Cities of Helsinki and Vantaa
- 1.3.2024 – 28.2.2026



Co-funded by
the European Union

ENTER
ESPOO



Helsinki is the world's most sustainable destination in 2024, according to the Global Destination Sustainability Index.

Global Destination Sustainability Index 2024

Helsinki was granted the Green Destinations GSTC certificate in March 2025. Helsinki is the first big city in the world to receive it.

Global Sustainable Tourism Council

Espoo was awarded the Sustainable Travel Finland label 2024.

Visit Finland





Hawkhill Cottage Resort

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL FINLAND PROGRAMME

- Launched by Visit Finland
- provides companies and destinations with a concrete toolkit for developing sustainable tourism → 7-step sustainable tourism development path
- It includes; economical, ecological and socio-cultural aspects of sustainability.



Visit Finland



**SUSTAINABLE
TRAVEL
FINLAND™**₄₂



Visit Finland

SUSTAINABLE
TRAVEL
FINLAND™

1180

COMPANIES
PARTICIPATING
STF PROGRAM¹

Environmental actions by companies in the STF programme

99%

actively participate
in actions to mitigate
climate change²

49%

measure carbon
footprint²

41%

participate in
actions to protect
biodiversity²

62%

make sustainable
choices in catering²

90%

work to reduce
water consumption²

69%

share of renewable
energy in total energy
consumption²

9%

OF AREA COVERED
BY NATURE RESERVES
AND NATIONAL PARKS⁴

387

COMPANIES WITH
VALID STF LABEL¹

65

DESTINATIONS
PARTICIPATING
STF PROGRAM¹

Stakeholder satisfaction

61%

of employees
feel comfortable
in their work³

86%

of employees
are satisfied
with their work
community³

54%

of employees
are considering
switching their field³

32%

SHARE OF SEASONAL
WORKERS AMONG
EMPLOYEES¹

1472

NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT
BUILT CULTURAL
ENVIRONMENT⁵

1. STF HUB
2. STF Indicator survey 2023
3. PAM Member survey 2023
4. Metsähallitus, Statistics Finland
5. National Board of Antiquities

Sustainable Tourism in Finland 2023

HOW WE HELP BUSINESS EVENT INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABILITY?



Co-funded by
the European Union

ENTER
ESPOO



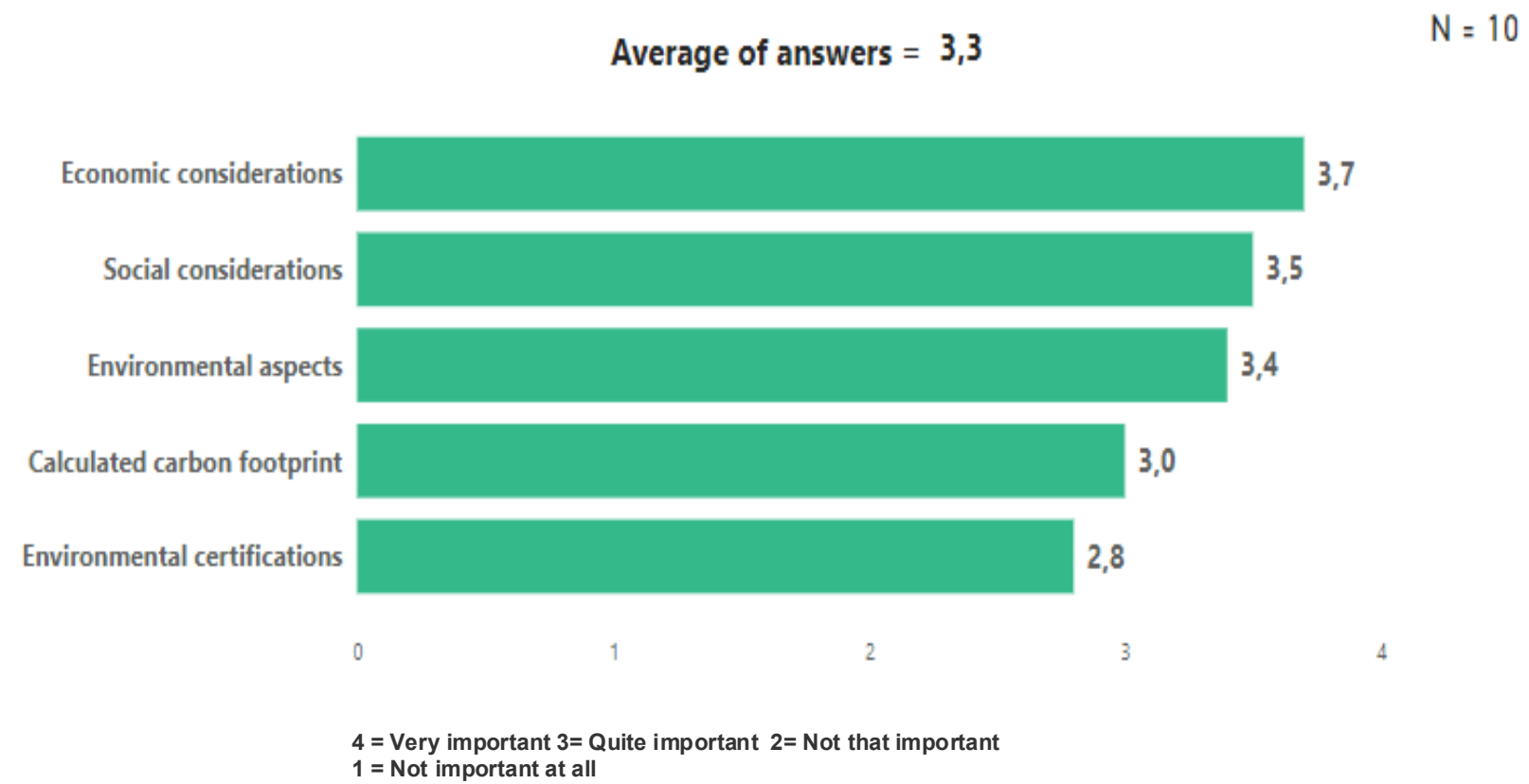
PURCHASE CRITERIA AND NEEDS OF MEETING AND CONGRESS ORGANIZERS

Focus on Sustainability and Responsibility

- Interview Study:
 - 10 interviews with international meeting and congress organizers
- Survey:
 - 220 responses from companies and organizations organizing meetings and congresses in Finland

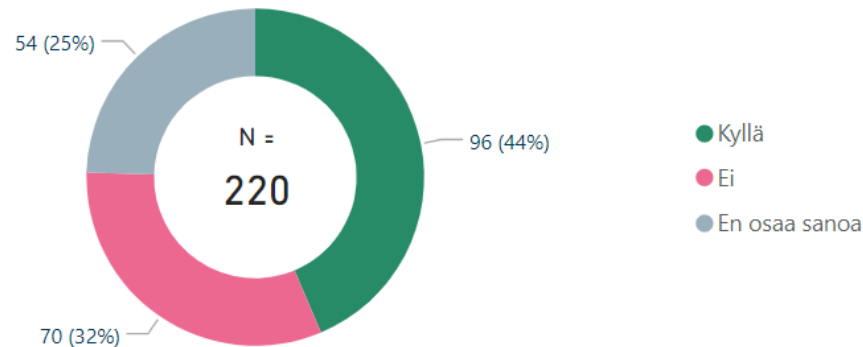


IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY



SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

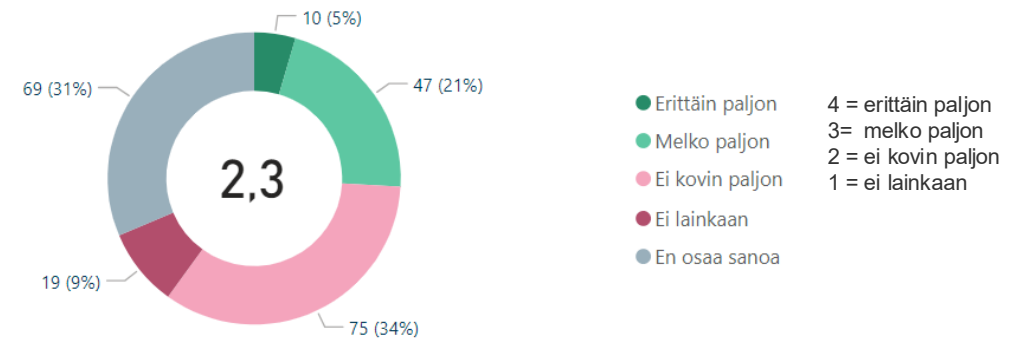
Onko yrityksellänne / organisaatiollanne olemassa vastuullisuusohjeistus, joka ohjaa tapahtumien järjestämisessä?



- 44 % of respondents (96) had sustainability guidance for event planning and management

Vaikuttavatko EU:n kiristyvät kestävyysraportoinnin ja vastuullisuusviestinnän direktiivit ostopäätöksiinne tapahtumia järjestettäessä?

N =
220



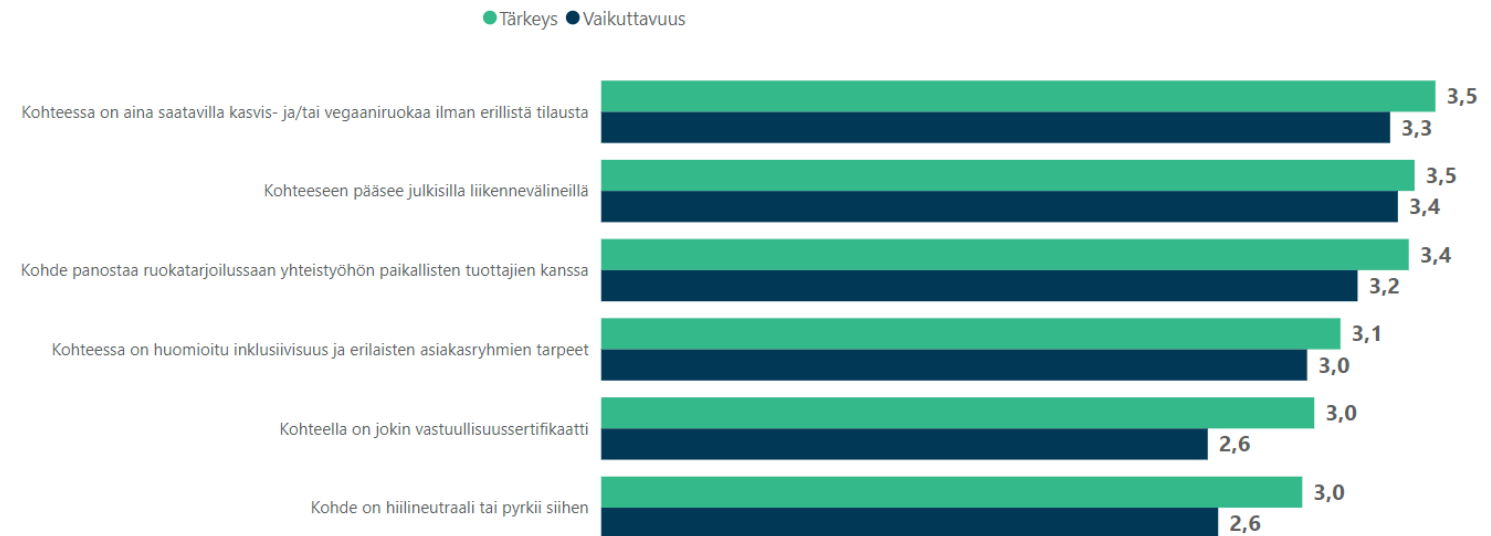
- 60% of respondents (132) stated that the EU's tightening sustainability and responsibility communication directives influence their purchasing decisions when organizing events, at least to some extent.

KEY SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS FOR A VENUE

1. Plant-based and/or vegan food is always available without special request
2. The venue is accessible by public transportation
3. The venue collaborates with local producers in its food and beverage offerings
4. Inclusivity and the needs of diverse customer groups are taken into account
5. The venue holds a recognized sustainability certification
6. The venue is carbon neutral or actively working towards carbon neutrality

Vastuullisuustekijät (1–4)

N = 220



1 = ei lainkaan tärkeä 2= ei kovin tärkeä 3= melko tärkeä 4 = erittäin tärkeä. EOS ei laskettu mukaan keskiarvoon



SUPPORTING COMPANIES TO GET ECOLABELS

Good Travel Seal, Green Key, Ekokompassi

CARBON FOOT PRINT OF THE EVENT OR SERVICES

By calculating the carbon footprint of the most popular meeting and congress products, companies can gain a competitive advantage.

- Company-specific support
- Webinars
- Carbon Foot Print Cliniques on Teams



PRODUCTIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE MEETING & CONGRESS

Workshops:

- CSRD, Green Claims & Evolving Corporate Responsibility Regulation
Impacts on sustainability communication and product descriptions
- Incorporating Accessibility and Social Responsibility
How to effectively articulate these aspects in product descriptions and marketing
- Shared Narrative of the Helsinki Region
Introduction and practical use in promoting sustainable meetings and congresses



VERBALIZING A SHARED STORY FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENT INDUSTRY IN HELSINKI REGION

- Defining Unique Selling Points
- Story, main messages
- Workshops
- Testing
- Implementation





WHERE THE HAPPIEST EVENTS HAPPEN

Bring your congress or event to the Helsinki region, a capital of happiness and intellect, ranked the world's most sustainable destination. Here, Nordic charm meets a modern city vibe, and our certified venues ensure that you don't have to worry about a thing. The changing seasons, dazzling Finnish nature, and a sense of freedom provide memorable adventures between meetings. Enjoy human-scale spaces, easy-to-use public transportation, and friendly, hospitable locals. Better yet, come discover it all for yourself!



HELSINKI REGION USP'S

- Nordic charm & global feel
- The world's most sustainable travel destination
- Intellectual capital & wild ideas
- Human-scale, effortless functionality

Karoliina Korpela, Enter Espoo / Visit Espoo, karoliina.korpela@espoo.fi

KOKEMO Congresses and Corporate Events as drivers of Innovation and Sustainability in the Helsinki Capital Region -project

Picture: Salla Repo / Visit Espoo



Co-funded by
the European Union

ENTER
ESPOO



Vantaa



Helsinki-Uusimaa
Regional Council