



SUOMENLINNA
SVEABORG

A sustainable tourism strategy for Suomenlinna

THE GOVERNING BODY OF SUOMENLINNA
2015



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UNESCO foreword

UNESCO's approach to sustainable tourism at World Heritage properties promotes a shared responsibility for the conservation of our common heritage amongst all stakeholders. Our focus is to provide capacity and tools to manage tourism efficiently, responsibly and sustainably based on local context and needs. The starting point has been to encourage World Heritage site managers to develop sustainable tourism strategies for their sites.

I took this message to the 40th anniversary celebration of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna in September 2013 which initiated our current engagement. I am pleased to say that this engagement continues today.

Over the past year, we have, together with the support of the Nordic World Heritage Foundation, initiated a pilot process to help the participating sites realize the goal that by 2016 all World Heritage properties in the region have, or are in the process of developing, a sustainable tourism strategy as part of their overall management system.

We applaud Suomenlinna for taking a leading role in this important process. Over the past year, you have put in place the fundamental building blocks of this strategy through community outreach and stakeholder collaboration.

Communication, interpretation, signage and storytelling – these are fundamental to communicating and protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the site and they are all part of the tourism strategy presented in this report. These measures together with the Visitor centre will improve the reception and experience of visitors in order to handle their increasing numbers and to adapt the site to this demand.

For UNESCO it is important to celebrate and acknowledge good practice. We commend your efforts and look forward to our continued collaboration along this important journey.



PETER DEBRINE
PROGRAMME SPECIALIST
WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE

A model destination for sustainable tourism

Suomenlinna is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Finland. Due to its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is also one of the country's internationally best-known attractions. Taking simultaneously into consideration the needs and aims of dozens of stakeholders, 800,000 visitors and 800 residents makes site development a challenging undertaking. This sustainable tourism strategy is aimed at the sustainable and continuous development of Suomenlinna as an internationally valued and authentic sea fortress.

UNESCO has highlighted sustainable tourism as one of its focus areas. In 2013–2014, Suomenlinna participated in sustainable tourism planning for World Heritage Sites along with 14 other World Heritage Sites located in the Nordic countries and the Baltic region. This UNESCO Project strengthened Suomenlinna's commitment to becoming a model destination for sustainable tourism and one that shares its knowledge and expertise with others.

Together with its stakeholders in the tourism industry, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna has created a sustainable tourism strategy that serves the dual objectives of site conservation and tourism development. The strategy provides Suomenlinna's stakeholders with an instrument and common guidelines that help conserve its World Heritage value.

This sustainable tourism strategy is a step towards a common future. Creating a high-quality Suomenlinna experience involves all stakeholders at the site. Realising the goals and measures outlined in the strategy requires a strong commitment and contribution from everyone. We would like to thank all of our partners for being ready to move from words to action. At the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, we are committed to going down the path of sustainable tourism in partnership with our stakeholders to ensure that Suomenlinna will become an internationally recognised model destination for sustainable tourism.

We will achieve this through active cooperation and open dialogue.



ULLA RÄIHÄ
DIRECTOR
THE GOVERNING BODY OF SUOMENLINNA

Executive summary

Suomenlinna is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the most popular tourist attractions in Finland. Suomenlinna's appeal lies in its history, sights and maritime environment. Each year, more than 800,000 people visit Suomenlinna. The majority of the visitors come to this sea fortress during the summer season, but winter tourism has developed year by year.

Visitors have high expectations of World Heritage sites. They expect that the cultural and natural value of the site is conserved in a professional manner, and that the site is maintained in a way that respects its unique spirit. The site must offer high-quality products and services, as well as excellent customer service. Sites that meet the expectations of cultural tourists are successful – also in a financial sense. Suomenlinna's local economic impact on Helsinki's tourism industry is many times higher than the cost of this World Heritage site. Every euro invested in Suomenlinna produces at least a seven-fold return in the local economy in Helsinki. Suomenlinna is a unique site that deserves to be well cared for.

Suomenlinna combines large visitor numbers with cultural values that require conservation measures, the need among the Helsinki region's population to have local recreational sites, and the day-to-day life of residents. Sustainable tourism methods must be leveraged to ensure the site's cultural, social, ecological and economical prosperity.

This strategy was prepared with the aim of making Suomenlinna a model destination for sustainable tourism. It provides guidance to tourism functions in supporting the conservation of Suomenlinna's cultural and natural value and increases awareness of the site's World Heritage value. A further goal is to support tourism service providers in leveraging World Heritage values as added value in their business operations.

This sustainable tourism strategy is intended to minimise the harmful impacts of tourism on Suomenlinna's conservation and maintenance. At the same time, it promotes the opportunities of service providers to engage

in financially profitable business operations, thereby contributing to the vitality of the area. A prosperous Suomenlinna is one that maintains its authentic character, generates well-being for visitors in line with the purpose of a World Heritage Site, and sets an example for other cultural heritage sites. This sustainable tourism strategy includes a separate action plan that, combined with the strategy, constitutes a roadmap for the development of tourism at Suomenlinna from now until 2020.

This strategy was produced by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, the World Heritage Site Manager, in partnership with its stakeholders in the tourism industry. The involvement of a broad range of stakeholders is crucial, as visitors do not differentiate between the producers of tourism services. The visitor experience is created as a result of the service chain. The strategic choice of the service providers at Suomenlinna is to work together to develop their operations in the chosen direction and to maintain harmonised communications and an agreed-upon standard of quality.

Operating at a protected site requires that tourism service providers respect cultural values, but it also provides them added value via the Suomenlinna brand and via membership in a valuable network through which service providers can develop their operations. In addition, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna provides entrepreneurs and other operators with various benefits related to coordination and communication. Through high-quality restoration and maintenance of the World Heritage Site, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna creates and strengthens the structures on which service providers can build their products.

According to our strategic vision, in 2020 Suomenlinna will be an internationally valued sea fortress where tourism and conservation share the common goal of maintaining an authentic and viable World Heritage Site. Suomenlinna is also a place where entrepreneurs find success by providing high-quality services, where residents have a good quality of life, and where visitors enjoy participatory experiences that increase their well-

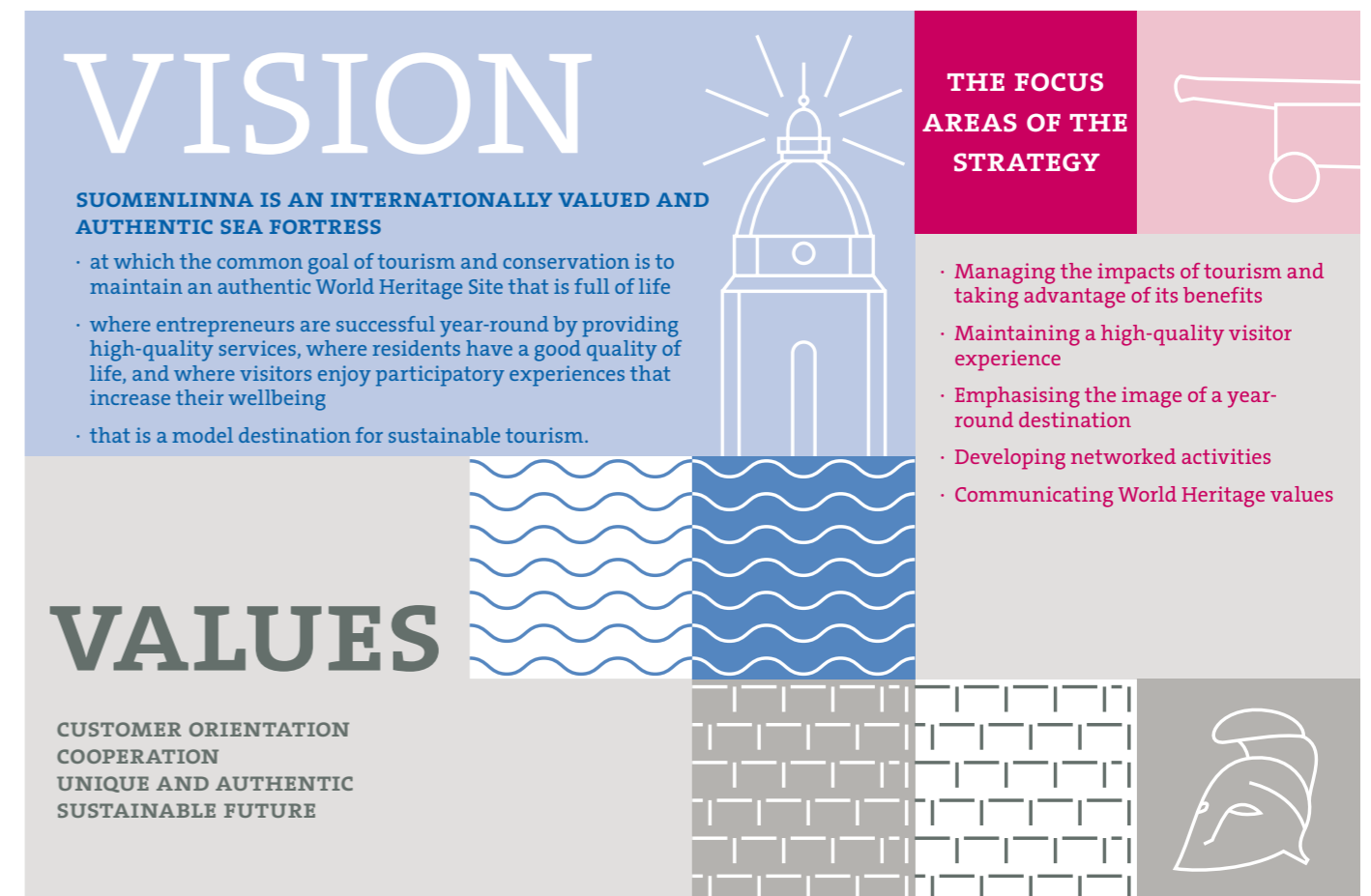
being. In 2020, Suomenlinna will be a model destination for sustainable tourism.

Five focus areas were selected for the development of the sustainable tourism strategy:

- managing the impacts of tourism and taking advantage of its benefits
- maintaining a high-quality visitor experience
- emphasising the image of a year-round destination
- developing networked activities
- communicating World Heritage values

All of Suomenlinna's tourism industry stakeholders and local tourism operators must direct their own and joint development efforts towards achieving these goals. This will ensure that, in 2020, tourism at Suomenlinna will support the conservation of World Heritage, quality has become a strength, the site has a stronger image as a year-round destination, networks operate effectively, and the site's entrepreneurs and other operators work together in communicating World Heritage values.

No individual stakeholder can achieve these goals on their own, but collectively we are stronger.



The strategic framework

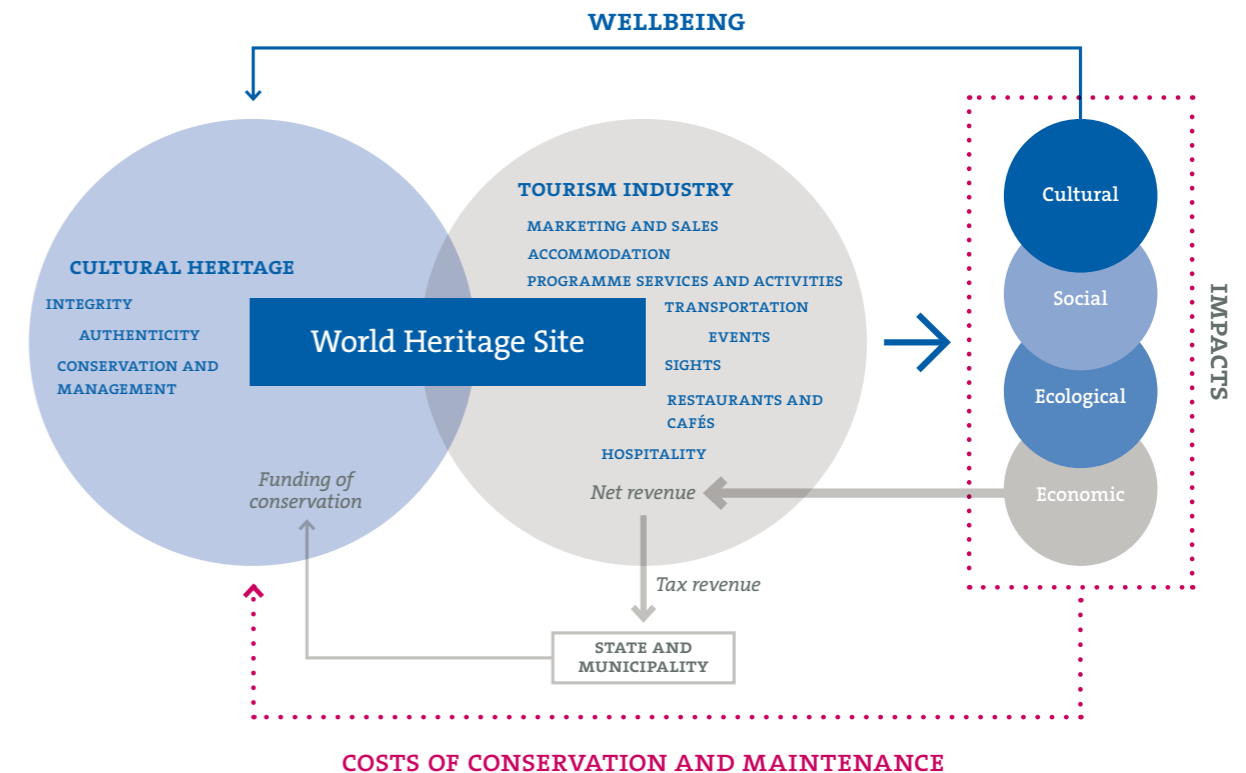
Suomenlinna's tourism strategy is anchored in the framework of sustainable tourism. UNESCO defines sustainable tourism as follows: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities". This is based on the definition of sustainable tourism by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Sustainable tourism is one of the focus areas of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. In early 2015, UNESCO published its policy guidelines for sustainable tourism in World Heritage Sites.

Policy Guidelines for sustainable tourism and the safeguarding of heritage

- Tourism development and visitor activities that contribute to and not damage the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of their heritage values.
- Tourism that generates sustainable socio-economic development and equitably contributes tangible as well as intangible benefits to local and regional communities in ways that are consistent with the conservation of the properties.
- All stakeholders cooperate through effective partnerships to maximise conservation and presentation outcomes, whilst minimising threats and adverse impacts from tourism.
- The contribution of tourism development and visitor activities ensure the protection and safeguarding of culture and heritage requires continuing and proactive planning and monitoring, which must respect the capacity of the individual property to accept visitation without degrading or threatening heritage values.
- Site management understands the relevant tourism supply chain and broader tourism destination issues, including congestion management and the quality of life for local people.
- Planning for tourism development and visitor activity is undertaken in an inclusive and participatory manner, respecting and empowering the local community including property owners, traditional or indigenous custodians, while taking account of their capacity and willingness to participate in visitor activity.
- Tourism infrastructure and visitor facilities are carefully planned, sited, designed, constructed and periodically upgraded as required to maximise the quality of visitor appreciation and experiences while ensuring there is no significant adverse impacts on heritage values and the surrounding environmental, social and cultural context.
- Management systems have sufficient skills, capacities and resources available when planning tourism infrastructure and managing visitor activity to ensure the protection and presentation of their identified heritage values and respect for local communities.
- Relevant public agencies and heritage property management apply a sufficient proportion of the revenue derived from tourism and visitor activity to ensure the protection, conservation and management of their heritage values.
- Tourism infrastructure development and visitor activity contributes to local community empowerment and socio-economic development in an effective and equitable manner.

This sustainable tourism strategy follows Suomenlinna's first tourism strategy, which was published in 2006 and later updated in 2009. This strategy also relates to the World Heritage Site management plan completed in 2014, which guides Suomenlinna's management and development.

The strategy provides guidance to tourism functions in supporting the conservation of Suomenlinna's cultural and natural value. Furthermore, it increases awareness of



the site's World Heritage value, thereby creating added value for the site's businesses, communities, residents and other stakeholders.

As a World Heritage Site and one of Finland's most popular tourist attractions, Suomenlinna plays a significant role in integrating culture and tourism. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna creates operating conditions at the site to facilitate the development of cultural tourism and promotes cooperation between the tourism industry and stakeholders in the fields of art and culture. According to the definition provided in Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020, cultural tourism involves producing tourism products and services to visitors for business purposes in a manner that respects the local cultural resources. The aim is to create experiences and opportunities to become familiar with cultural resources, to learn from them, and to become engaged with them. This strengthens the construction of the visitors' identities, as well as understanding and appreciation of one's own culture and other cultures.

This strategy is also based on the Roadmap for Growth and Renewal in Finnish Tourism for 2015–2025 published by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, according to which the following priorities must be taken into account in the development of tourism:

- the principles of sustainable tourism
- continuous quality development with a focus on the customer
- safety throughout the service chain
- the principles of tourism for everyone (accessibility), taking the site's target group into consideration
- authenticity, local characteristics, Finnish qualities
- experiences, storytelling, service design
- leveraging digitisation

As such, the development of tourism in Suomenlinna is based on the principles of its World Heritage Site status, sustainable tourism and Finland's national tourism strategy.

COMMON HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

Suomenlinna is a sea fortress built on islands off Helsinki, with construction starting in 1748. The fortress represents Finland's most valuable cultural property. The administrative area of Suomenlinna comprises 80 hectares of land and 80 hectares of surrounding water areas. Suomenlinna is spread over eight islands, and all of the land—except the plot on which the church is located—is owned by the Finnish state.

Suomenlinna has a broad range of stakeholders, including state administrative offices, various units of the City of Helsinki, numerous businesses, private parties and third-sector operators. The fortress is home to a day-care centre, school, church, library and shop, along with museums, cafés, restaurants and various cultural services. Also located in Suomenlinna are the Naval Academy, the Suomenlinna Prison, a Coast Guard station and a base for Finnish Customs vessels. There are one hundred leasable business premises in Suomenlinna. Suomenlinna is also a district of Helsinki that is full of life with 800 residents and 400–500 people working there depending on the season. Each year, more than 800,000 people visit Suomenlinna.

The conservation and management of Suomenlinna is arranged pursuant to national legislation. The organisation responsible for the implementation of conservation and management is the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, a government agency operating under the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna is also the World Heritage Site Manager. The agency is responsible for Suomenlinna's restoration, maintenance, presentation and administration. The Governing Body has approximately 80 year-round employees. The restoration, management and administration of Suomenlinna are funded with funds from the State budget and with profits from the operations of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, which cover approximately 60% of operating costs. In 2014, the budget of the Governing Body was approximately EUR 12 million.

GUIDED BY UNESCO

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention is aimed at conserving cultural and natural heritage for future generations. To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value (OUV). National significance alone is not enough. The List includes cultural heritage sites, natural heritage sites and mixed sites. There are approximately one thousand World Heritage Sites in total.

World Heritage Sites must fulfil one or more of the criteria set by UNESCO. In addition, they must satisfy the conditions of integrity and authenticity and meet UNESCO guidelines related to their management, administration and protection. Decisions on the selection of new World Heritage Sites are made by the World Heritage Committee.

The sustainable planning and management of sites constitutes one of the key



challenges related to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The UNESCO Sustainable Tourism Programme 2013–2015 emphasises the role of proactive measures in the management of tourism, as well as leveraging the positive impacts of tourism while managing negative impacts. World Heritage Sites at which conservation and tourism are complementary activities are model sites for sustainable tourism.

The World Heritage Convention obligates states to ensure that their World Heritage Sites remain as authentic as possible. In Suomenlinna, these conservation efforts are guided by the Suomenlinna World Heritage Site Management Plan (2014), which the Governing Body of Suomenlinna drafted in cooperation with stakeholders. The Management Plan is intended as an instrument that brings together the parties involved and provides guidelines for operations. The Management Plan includes an action plan that defines the concrete actions to be taken and their schedule. The plan is reviewed every six years in conjunction with periodic reporting to the World Heritage Centre.

SUOMENLINNA AS A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Suomenlinna was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991 along with Old Rauma as Finland's first World Heritage Sites. The fortress was seen as a unique example of the military architecture of its era. A special feature of Suomenlinna is that it has served in the defence of three realms: Sweden, Russia and Finland. The sea fortress also has special significance due to its status as a living, tended and inhabited district of the city of Helsinki.

Suomenlinna is a bastion fortress that is irregular in shape as a result of being built on a cluster of rocky islands with highly variable terrain. Since the early days of Suomenlinna, the defensive structures of the fortress have also served purposes such as storage and accommodation. Suomenlinna follows the Central European bastion fortress tradition and its essential elements remain authentic to this day. The site illustrates several significant historical development stages related to fortification technology and dock construction. The dry dock at the heart of the fortress was the state of the art in 18th century technology and is still in use. There are also dozens of historical underwater sites in the vicinity of Suomenlinna.



Finland's seven World Heritage Sites

- Old Rauma (1991)
- Fortress of Suomenlinna (1991)
- Petäjävesi Old Church (1994)
- Verla Groundwood and Board Mill (1996)
- Bronze Age Burial Site of Sammallahdenmäki (1999)
- Struve Geodetic Arc (2005)
- High Coast / Kvarken Archipelago (2006)

DESCRIPTION OF THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

TOURISM TRENDS

Tourism is one of the few sectors that has continued to see global growth in spite of the prevailing economic situation. Over 20 million overnight stays were registered in Finland in 2013, of which foreign tourists represented 5.9 million. The share of foreign tourists increased by approximately 1% from the previous year. The growth was primarily attributable to Asian tourists. The number of Chinese tourists travelling to Finland has increased very rapidly compared to other European countries. Continued growth is expected, particularly from the Asian markets, but also from Europe.

However, domestic tourists represent the primary source of demand in the Finnish tourism sector. In 2013, domestic tourists represented 71% of the registered overnight stays. In the long run, growth can only be achieved in the international tourism market. Foreign tourists also spend more money than domestic tourists. Tourism revenue from foreign tourists, which is comparable to exports, amounted to EUR 4.3 billion in 2013. Tourism revenue has increased steadily and is expected to continue to grow. Demand in the Finnish tourism sector is affected by the situation in Russia. Russians constituted the largest group of foreign visitors to Finland in 2013. However, tourist arrivals from Russia declined substantially in 2014, as did the euro-denominated spending of Russian tourists.

Tourism is a significant source of employment and export revenue. In 2013, the value added in the tourism sector accounted for 2.7% of Finland's GDP. Compared to other industries, the value added in the tourism sector was larger than that of the food industry, twice as large as that of the agricultural sector, and many times higher than that of the much talked about Finnish gaming industry. The Finnish tourism sector comprises nearly 30,000 businesses and employs some 185,000 people.

The use of electronic sales and marketing channels is increasing, which creates new opportunities with respect to customer service and the reachability of the tourism industry. In addition, social media along with mobile and smart applications enable the far-reaching and real-time sharing of travel experiences. It is essential to take this into consideration in the development of tourism and customer service.

SUOMENLINNA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

The precise definition of a tourist destination often depends on who is defining it. For a foreign tourist, depending on the point of departure, the destination can be Europe, the Nordic region, Finland, Helsinki, or even Suomenlinna. As a tourist destination, a smaller destination is always part of a larger whole. From this perspective, Suomenlinna is perceived as one destination in Helsinki by tourists from elsewhere in Finland or from abroad.



Suomenlinna is not merely one attraction in the larger tourist destination that is Helsinki. Instead, the fortress offers all of the services considered typical of a tourist destination, including accommodation, albeit on a small scale. Visitors to the fortress do not differentiate between the various service providers they use. Instead, the visitor experience is based on the destination as a whole. Service providers in Suomenlinna should focus their activities and development efforts on a jointly chosen direction and make a commitment to harmonised communications and a consistent level of quality.

From the perspective of tourism development, Suomenlinna has certain special characteristics in an international, national and local sense. Suomenlinna’s status as a World Heritage Site has made it internationally recognised. At the national level, Suomenlinna is an important component of Finnish cultural heritage and, with over 800,000 annual visitors, one of the most popular attractions in the country. The number of visitors to the fortress in a single summer month can exceed the total number of annual visitors to Finland’s most popular museums and castles. Suomenlinna has also been a popular recreational area for several decades among people living in the greater Helsinki area.

Suomenlinna is a significant pull factor for the Helsinki tourist region. As a well-known destination, it plays an important role in the region’s tourist marketing and image creation all year round. Successful marketing requires continuous dialogue and marketing development efforts with Helsinki Marketing Ltd. The Helsinki City Executive Office’s Economic Development division is a significant partner in the strategic development of tourism.

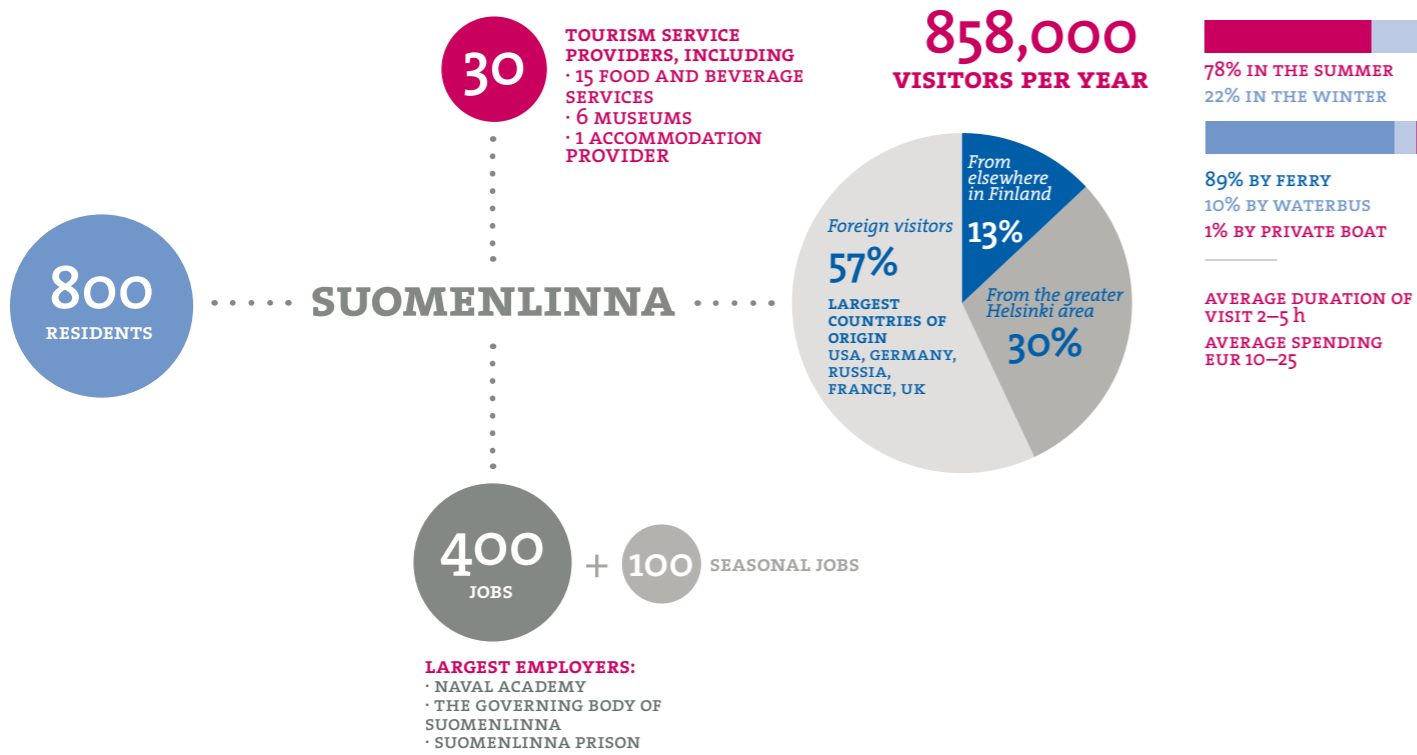
The Governing Body of Suomenlinna compiles key statistics on tourism in Suomenlinna annually and conducts a visitor survey once every four years. The first study of Suomenlinna’s local economic impact was carried out in 2014. The Governing Body distributes the findings of studies and summarised research data to entrepreneurs and other operators. The City of Helsinki produces information on statistics and trends for the Helsinki tourist region as a whole and distributes the information via its website. Understanding and monitoring these key figures and indicators is important in developing the site as part of the broader tourist region.



TOURISM AT A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The fortress was made into a national symbol of the newly independent country of Finland when it was renamed from the original Sveaborg ('Castle of Sweden') to Suomenlinna ('Castle of Finland') in 1918. Even as early as in the 1930s, Suomenlinna was among Finland's most popular tourist attractions, despite the Finnish Defence Forces still having a strong presence at the fortress. The initial push for Suomenlinna's museum operations and tourism came when the islands of Kustaanmiekka and Susisaari were transferred in 1919 to the State Archaeological Commission, which later became the National Board of Antiquities. The first services aimed at visitors were Café Piper, opened in 1928, and the Ehrensivärd Museum established in 1930. Landing rights were revoked in 1948 and, in the year of the 1952 Helsinki Summer Olympics, Suomenlinna saw the opening of Restaurant Walhalla and the launch of ferry traffic operated by a new ferry.

Suomenlinna's visitor statistics point to a steady increase. In the early 1990s, the annual number of visitors was approximately 300,000. Suomenlinna being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991 did not immediately result in a spike in visitor numbers. Instead, it took until the 250th anniversary of the fortress in 1998 until a new era of tourism in Suomenlinna began. Several new visitor services were introduced at Suomenlinna and various events were organised, ensuring that Suomenlinna received significant media exposure throughout the year. In that 250th jubilee year, the number of visitors exceeded 600,000 for the first time. In 2009, the number rose to over 700,000 for the first time, and the milestone of 800,000 annual visitors was reached in 2013.



VISITORS TO SUOMENLINNA

Suomenlinna's visitor figures are tracked on the basis of the passenger volumes of ferries and waterbuses. Visitors arriving on their own vessels are added to this figure, and resident and commuter traffic is removed from the total. Visitor surveys that provide more comprehensive data on visitors and their experiences in Suomenlinna are conducted once every four years. The most recent survey was carried out in 2014.

According to the 2014 visitor survey, visitors spend a relatively short time in Suomenlinna considering the site's diverse offering of services and experiences. The majority of visitors spend 2–5 hours in Suomenlinna and come in small groups of 2–5 people. Visitors tend to spend relatively little during their visits. Half of the respondents indicated they spent less than EUR 10 during their visit, while just under a third said they spent EUR 10–25.

The share of foreign visitors has seen a steady increase. The share of foreign visitors is higher in the winter season at nearly 70% of the total. The countries accounting for the largest numbers of foreign visitors are the United States, Germany, Russia, France and the United Kingdom.

Visitors to Suomenlinna are divided into two main groups: greater Helsinki area residents who come to spend their free time outdoors, and tourists who come to see the sights. Suomenlinna is also a destination for student visits, conferences and banquets. Corporate customers are highlighted among visitors from the spring to Midsummer and in August, as these are the peak periods for Suomenlinna as a venue for company events and conferences. Corporate customers are an important target group for Suomenlinna, as they typically use a wide range of services during their visit. Private events mostly take place in the summer season, but there has been an increase during the winter season in recent years.

A record-high number of 858,000 people visited Suomenlinna in 2014. Suomenlinna is clearly a summer-oriented destination, but it has plenty to offer to visitors all year round. In 2014, some 77% of the visitors came during the summer season from May to September. However, visitor figures for the winter season have seen an increase in recent years. The peak month for Suomenlinna is July, when the number of visitors can even exceed 200,000. February is the slowest month with 20,000 visitors.

According to visitor surveys, Suomenlinna's appeal lies in its history, sights, nature and maritime ambience. Foreign visitors cite the same factors but also mention the site's peaceful and idyllic atmosphere. The journey through the sea is also seen as one of the factors behind Suomenlinna's appeal. More than 80% of the respondents

INFORMATION ON VISITORS TO SUOMENLINNA FROM THE YEARS IN WHICH VISITOR SURVEYS WERE CONDUCTED:

	1997	1999	2002	2006	2010	2014
Visitors to Suomenlinna	502,000	645,000	682,000	678,000	736,000	858,000
From the greater Helsinki area (%)	65	52	48	36	32	30
From elsewhere in Finland (%)	17	24	16	19	13	13
Foreign visitors (%)	17	24	37	45	55	57
Culturally oriented visitors (%)	22	21	45	42	45	57
Number of visitors in the winter season (October–April)	115,000	132,000	169,000	142,000	165,000	197,000



in the 2014 visitor survey indicated that none of the negative factors mentioned in the survey hindered their enjoyment of Suomenlinna. The most frequently highlighted negative factors among those listed in the survey were long walking distances, getting lost, and having to wander around.

Some 66% of the respondents indicated they are aware of Suomenlinna being on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Awareness of Suomenlinna's World Heritage Site status was unchanged from the previous survey conducted four years prior. The respondents' improvement suggestions included more signage and information on sights and attractions. They also indicated that they would like to see more services open in the winter season. In addition to the visitor survey conducted once every four years, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna continuously collects customer feedback from visitors and takes it into consideration in tourism planning.

STAKEHOLDERS COLLECTIVELY CREATE THE SUOMENLINNA EXPERIENCE

There are some 30 tourism service providers operating in Suomenlinna and collectively creating the visitor's Suomenlinna experience. Many of the enterprises and organisations producing tourist services are small microbusinesses with a single employee and for some of them, tourism is only a side business. The tourism business is seasonal. The summer is the busiest tourist season, while in the spring and autumn, entrepreneurs in Suomenlinna are kept busy by corporate customers in particular.

Distinct service categories include restaurant and café services (12 operators), museum and exhibition services (6 museums and 2 galleries), water transport operators and Suomenlinna's sole provider of accommodation services. Several artisans and other operators in the field of arts have premises in Suomenlinna. They also play an important role in the stakeholder network and in the creation of the Suomenlinna brand.

Suomenlinna is also the operating location for organisations and public entities that directly or indirectly influence the visitor experience or site management. These include the Naval Academy, Suomenlinna prison, Viaporin Telakka association, the Suomenlinnaseura residents' association, and many other associations operating in Suomenlinna. Through ambitious and close cooperation, the diverse network of stakeholders can achieve or even exceed the high expectations of visitors.

The Governing Body of Suomenlinna collects feedback from tourism service providers and uses it in site planning. Twice a year, the agency organises a networking event for tourism operators aimed at distributing current information. Interaction also plays an important role. Every spring, the Governing Body organises information sessions for tourism service providers and their seasonal employees to communicate information on Suomenlinna and its operations. While the Governing Body is responsible for providing official tourist information in Suomenlinna, visitors must be able to obtain information that supports their visit at all open service points. The Governing Body also organises annual training events for stakeholders on subjects that support Suomenlinna's operations.

According to the Suomenlinna entrepreneur survey (2014), they consider Suomenlinna to be an attractive and unique operating environment. The respondents considered Suomenlinna's World Heritage Site status to be fairly significant to their operations. They mentioned that the World Heritage Site status obligates them to

operate at a high level of quality while increasing Suomenlinna’s significance and making it more interesting to the public. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna is the most important cooperation partner for a large proportion of the entrepreneurs and other operators, but cooperation with other tourism service providers was seen to be almost equally important.

PRESENTATION AND MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Communication aimed at presenting information on the World Heritage Site and its values is designated as a task for the Site Manager in the World Heritage Convention.

The key messages of the communications strategy (2014) of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna are as follows:

- Suomenlinna represents our shared universal heritage
- Suomenlinna is an important part of Finnish history
- Suomenlinna is a district of Helsinki that is full of life and a home and place of work to hundreds of people

The objectives of communications aimed at visitors are as follows:

- to present Suomenlinna above all as a historic sea fortress and a World Heritage Site
- to change Suomenlinna’s image from ‘a nice place for a picnic’ to a highly valued historic destination
- to present Suomenlinna as a year-round destination that is worth visiting in any season
- to share information on Suomenlinna’s services and events
- to present the restoration and maintenance of the fortress, i.e. the work done by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna

Marketing communications are carried out in cooperation with Suomenlinna’s tourism service providers and Helsinki Marketing Ltd. The Governing Body is responsible for Suomenlinna’s marketing communications as a whole and it also presents the services of Suomenlinna’s tourism service providers on its various communication channels. The tourism service providers are responsible for the development, sales and marketing of their own products and services. The Governing Body supports entrepreneurs and other operators and works closely with them. The common goal of all stakeholders is to use their activities to support the collectively agreed message of Suomenlinna as a destination. Cooperation between stakeholders is important for ensuring the accuracy of communications and strengthening the message.

The Visitor Centre operated year-round by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna in the immediate vicinity of the main quay plays a central role in the presentation of Suomenlinna. During the summer season, visitors are also served by Suomenlinna Helpers, outdoor advisors stationed at the ferry pier and at Suomenlinna Centre. In 2014, a total of 120,000 visitors used the services of the Visitor Centre and the outdoor tourist advisors.

As the Site Manager, the Governing Body publishes the Suomenlinna brochure and maintains the suomenlinna.fi website. Both of these are offered to the international audience in nine languages: Finnish, Swedish, English, French, German,

Spanish, Russian, Japanese and Chinese. The social media channels used by the Governing Body include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. Many of Suomenlinna’s tourism service providers are also active on social media.

One of the key channels for the presentation of the site is the Suomenlinna Museum. As the main museum of the fortress, it provides information on Suomenlinna’s history, restoration and current maintenance. The Ehrensward Society is responsible for the Suomenlinna Museum.

Visitor movement and service accessibility is supported by a visitor guidance system, a key part of which is the main route that runs through the fortress and includes the most important sights. Visitors can also refer to on-location signage and mobile routes. In the development of the site, efforts have also been made to improve accessibility to the extent that it is possible at a historical site.

According to the visitor survey, Suomenlinna’s most important information sources are the suomenlinna.fi website and various social media channels. Respondents cited friends and family as the second-most important source of information. According to the Suomenlinna entrepreneur survey, the suomenlinna.fi website is also the most important information source for tourism service providers, followed by social media, the Visitor Centre and the Governing Body’s newsletter aimed at entrepreneurs and other operators.

Guided tours and group packages at the fortress are handled by the authorised Suomenlinna guided tour provider, the Ehrensward Society, which also provides training for tour guides. In 2014, more than 30,000 visitors participated in guided tours organised by the Society. In addition to traditional guided tours, the Society produces an adventure tour for children that is based on historical facts. The adventure tour makes Suomenlinna more familiar to children, parents and school groups.

SITE DEVELOPMENT AND THE COORDINATION OF TOURISM OPERATIONS

The importance of the overall experience is emphasised at a tourist destination that includes a large number of various operators. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna is responsible for coordinating tourism operations and their development with a long-term perspective. This sustainable tourism strategy constitutes the most important guideline in this coordination effort.

The Governing Body of Suomenlinna creates and strengthens the structures on which tourism service providers can build their products and services. With the exception of tourist information services and the rental of conference and banquet facilities, the Governing Body itself is not a tourism service provider. Instead, its role is one of facilitation, development and coordination.

As the site administrator and owner of real estate, the Governing Body regulates tourism operations by renovating and renting premises for use in functions that are compatible with the spirit of the fortress. The Governing Body can also support events and functions that are compatible with World Heritage values. In developing and coordinating tourism operations and carrying out marketing communications, the Governing Body takes an overall view of this World Heritage Site.

In their operations, Suomenlinna's tourism service providers are able to leverage the added value generated by the World Heritage brand and the large volume of solvent visitors to this highly valued destination. Tourism service providers also have access to a network of operators through which they can develop their own operations. The Governing Body provides many benefits to on-site operators: regular meetings, joint marketing opportunities and training. Through its networks, the Governing Body promotes Suomenlinna's entrepreneurs and other operators and their contribution to the overall experience of the destination.

Tourism service providers operating in a protected UNESCO World Heritage Site accept that their operations are subject to certain restrictions. Limitations on outdoor advertising are one such example. A visitor guidance system that is coordinated by the World Heritage Site Manager and fits the landscape ensures that the site remains as authentic as possible.

SUOMENLINNA'S LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

The local economic impact of tourism refers to the spending by visitors at the site and its neighbouring area as well as the direct, indirect and multiplier impacts generated by the spending. Evaluating the local economic impact of tourism is part of the assessment of sustainable tourism.

The local economic impact of visitors to Suomenlinna on the Helsinki region was studied for the first time in 2014. The aim of the study was to assess the income and employment effects of visitor spending in Suomenlinna's local environment in Helsinki. The study shows how the money tourists spend in Suomenlinna circulates in the local economy, what kind of income impact the spending by visitors has and how this affects local employment.

According to the study, the local economic impact of spending by visitors to Suomenlinna is EUR 35 million. This minimum impact figure only comprises spending by the 26% of visitors who indicated in their survey responses that Suomenlinna was the only or the most important destination on their trip. As the tax revenue spent on the conservation and maintenance of the fortress via the budget of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna amounts to approximately EUR 5 million per year, it can be concluded that this investment has a sevenfold return in the form of the income effect on the local economy in Helsinki. Suomenlinna has a beneficial effect particularly on the tourism industry in Helsinki.

More detailed information on the analysis of the visitors' local economic impact and the methodology employed is provided in a Master's Thesis published in 2014 on the local economic impact of spending by visitors to Suomenlinna.



THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE STRATEGY

SWOT ANALYSIS OF SUOMENLINNA

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Suomenlinna’s tourism were evaluated in cooperation with stakeholders at two workshops arranged in October 2014, with a total of 62 participants.

The inhabitants of Suomenlinna participated in the analysis effort as part of a resident cooperation meeting arranged by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna in November 2014. The results of the resident satisfaction survey conducted in November 2014 were taken into consideration in the development of the sustainable tourism strategy. The inhabitants of Suomenlinna and tenants of business premises who participated in the survey were asked to assess the degree of disturbance caused by tourism.

As part of the process of planning the sustainable tourism strategy, common development guidelines were also discussed with the City of Helsinki units responsible for tourism development and marketing.

Strengths: A UNESCO World Heritage Site in the heart of Helsinki

Suomenlinna’s strengths are linked to the way cultural and natural elements come together at a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the immediate vicinity of central Helsinki. Suomenlinna is a large and diverse destination that gives visitors the opportunity to experience something new on multiple visits. Suomenlinna also suits a broad range of budgets. Suomenlinna is perceived as a well restored and managed destination that deserves a place on the itinerary of any visit to Helsinki. It is also seen as a unique setting for conferences, banquets and other events. Suomenlinna is also considered an interesting partner in various development and pilot projects.

In leveraging the strengths, it was considered essential that the existing strong Suomenlinna brand and the UNESCO World Heritage Site status, as well as Suomenlinna’s excellent location in the heart of Finland’s most important tourist area and the densely populated Helsinki region, are utilised to the fullest extent possible.

The results of the resident survey regarding the positive development of minimising disturbances from tourism indicate that visitor management has been successful. Local residents perceive tourism as causing less disturbance than before, despite the fact that the number of visitors has increased.

Collaboration between the service providers, and the operations of the various organisations concerned must be strengthened and developed further. Emphasis should be put on Suomenlinna’s comprehensive service offering, particularly in the summer season. Suomenlinna’s improved off-season service offering should also be presented more clearly, and entrepreneurs and other operators must be committed to the proactive planning of opening hours and compliance with the communicated opening times.

STRENGTHS

- Layers of history – located between the East and West
- Maritime atmosphere and island nature
- A diverse destination that suits a range of budgets
- A district of Helsinki that is full of life
- Four seasons
- A large area with plenty to experience over several visits
- Strong, well-known Suomenlinna brand
- UNESCO World Heritage Site value and brand
- Located near central Helsinki
- A unique venue for conferences, banquets and events
- An essential destination on any visit to Helsinki
- A well restored and managed destination
- Exceptionally good resources for a World Heritage Site
- Effective World Heritage Site Manager
- An interesting partner for development projects
- Tour guide authorisation system
- Microentrepreneurs with authentic and flexible operations
- Effective network cooperation
- Open all year round, also on Mondays
- Diverse services during the peak season
- Good brochure and website

WEAKNESSES

- Seasonality
- Unbalanced visitor structure
- Strong image of being a summer destination
- Accessibility during the winter season
- Perceived as a remote place where it is challenging to operate
- Weather
- Availability of services in the winter season
- Lack of interpretive information
- Insufficient product selection
- Lack of goal-oriented marketing and sales
- Variation in quality between services
- Service chain management
- Slow rate of renewal of the service offering
- Lack of insight into the target group and trends
- Narrow expertise
- Lack of networking and cooperation
- Inadequate flow of information
- Rigidity of leasing business premises
- Cost structure, profitability
- Passivity and being stuck in old ways
- Lack of a critical evaluation of operating methods

OPPORTUNITIES

- Development of year-round tourism
- Improving public perceptions of accessibility
- Agile productisation of tourism services
- Developing the quality of products and services
- Development of interpretive information
- More tight-knit networking, also with external parties
- Visitors contributing to the costs of conservation
- A model destination for sustainable tourism
- Taking advantage of research data and trends
- Product development
- Cultural tourism, local identity and stories
- Diverse artisan community
- Targeting products and services at nearby areas
- Leveraging nature based tourism
- Developing food products
- More efficient use of premises
- Increased sense of ownership through volunteering
- Development of Helsinki as a maritime capital
- The nearby new island destinations
- Development of year-round tourism in Helsinki
- Increasing interest in World Heritage and cultural heritage
- Active senior citizens

THREATS

- Declining funding for conservation and maintenance
- Declining public funding for the tourism industry
- Fragmentation of Suomenlinna’s administration
- Political decision-making
- Prolonged recession of the world economy
- Juxtaposition of conservation and tourism
- Residents’ negative attitudes towards increasing tourism
- Conduct that is not compatible with such a valuable site
- A decline of Helsinki’s competitiveness and attractiveness
- Intensifying competition over free time
- Dependent on a single visitor group
- Declining perceived quality
- Reduction in operations and residents, turning the site into a mere museum
- Excessive number of visitors causes wear and tear, creates congestion and results in disturbances
- Unauthorised tour guides
- A negative perception of the site’s safety
- The deteriorating condition of the Baltic Sea
- Impacts of climate change on local weather

Weaknesses: Perceived as a remote summer destination

Adapting business to seasonal variation and the drastic changes in customer volumes is perceived as a challenge for tourism service providers. Concerns were expressed with regard to services coping with the crowds during the peaks of the summer season on the one hand, and the lack of services during the slow winter season on the other hand.

The largest challenge for Suomenlinna in the off-season is related to public perceptions. Even among the residents of the greater Helsinki area, a significant proportion of people are unaware that the fortress is open and served by ferries all year round. As an operating environment, Suomenlinna is perceived as remote and challenging.

The management of the destination's service chain and the quality of products and services at different service points is also currently perceived as a weakness, as is the slow rate of product development and the narrowness of expertise. The workshop participants questioned whether Suomenlinna is stuck in the old ways of doing things and unable to critically evaluate operating methods. Tourism service providers also highlighted network cooperation, which had been considered a strength, as a weakness due to its limited nature.

In discussing how to eliminate or circumvent weaknesses, the participants pointed out that the winter season, in particular, involves operational weaknesses as well as the challenge of public perception, which must be tackled by a collective effort by all stakeholders. The weaknesses also included issues that are beyond the site's control, such as weather. The workshop participants also pointed out that weather can also be seen as simply a matter of appropriate clothing and communication. Weather can also be turned into an experience that suits certain target groups.

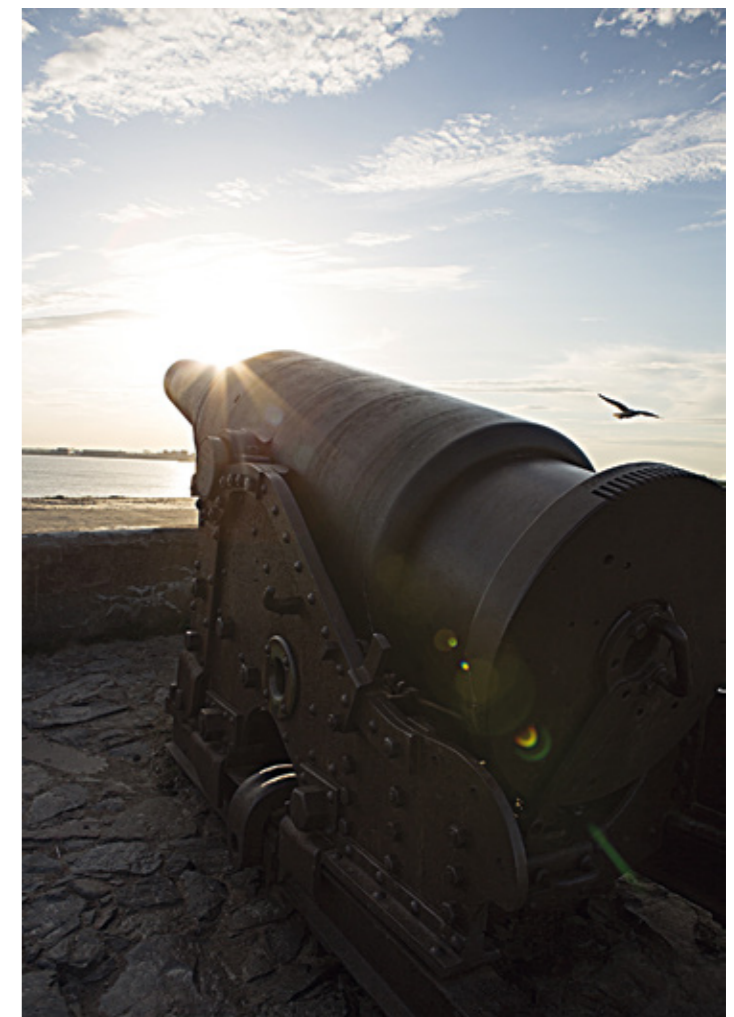
Among service weaknesses, attention should be paid to the limited amount of interpretive information available. This has been the subject of feedback from foreign visitors in particular. The availability of services in the winter season can be influenced through new lease agreements and cooperation between service providers aimed at promoting the extension of the peak season and participation in off-season events. Entrepreneurs and other operators can naturally influence the quality of Suomenlinna's services to a significant extent. This requires commitment and a long-term effort with respect to the development of their own operations as well as the development of the whole site.

Opportunities: Working together to manage weaknesses and leverage opportunities

Interest in Helsinki as a tourist destination has increased steadily. Suomenlinna is an integral part of the Meri-Helsinki plan, which aims to develop Helsinki as a maritime capital. The plan is expected to move forward in the near future with the gradual opening to visitors of Suomenlinna's neighbouring islands of Vallisaari and Kuninkaansaari.

General trends in tourism include the local way of life and stories, both of which are compatible with Suomenlinna's strengths. The rising trends of food and nature based tourism can also present opportunities to Suomenlinna for finding new visitor groups and improving quality. Engaging visitors in concrete conservation and maintenance efforts aimed at promoting the preservation of the site is also becoming more popular.

The management of Suomenlinna's weaknesses was highlighted as a key theme in the discussion on how to leverage opportunities. Influencing the perception of



Suomenlinna’s accessibility, participation in extending the peak season, agility in service productisation and quality improvement are areas that require a collective effort by entrepreneurs and other operators. None of them can manage the weaknesses alone, but collectively they are powerful. Suomenlinna must keep up with new information and also sense future trends. Taking advantage of the wave of external development and developing competencies play a key role in turning weaknesses into strengths.

The innovative development of strengths and productising them to create experiences constitutes one important opportunity for Suomenlinna. Suomenlinna and its tourism service providers should incorporate the added value generated by the World Heritage status into its success factors.

Threats: Decreasing resources and declining appeal

Suomenlinna’s entrepreneurs and other operators consider the weak macroeconomic situation and a reduction in public funding for this protected site as threats. The decrease in public funding for the tourism industry requires entrepreneurs to have greater competence, engagement and responsibility. The potential juxtaposition of tourism and conservation activities, and attitudes among Suomenlinna’s residents turning negative towards tourism, were also seen as possible threats.

A potential decline in Helsinki’s attractiveness could also have an impact on Suomenlinna. The opening of many new attractions in the region can lead to a waning of interest in Suomenlinna among local visitors. In this era of social media, a decline in Suomenlinna’s image with respect to perceived quality could even start from an isolated occurrence and quickly impact the site as a whole.

Systematic and planned activity to benefit the destination by both the Site Manager and other operators is key to circumventing or eliminating threats. Longer-term efforts can mitigate the potential threat of stagnating operations, a reduction in services and Suomenlinna’s population, and Suomenlinna turning into a mere museum site. The management of growing numbers of visitors also plays a key role in mitigating and eliminating disturbances caused by wear and tear as well as crowds. Maintaining a high-quality image of a World Heritage Site is in the shared interest of all of Suomenlinna’s tourism service providers and they must work together to achieve it.

VISION AND VALUES

Suomenlinna’s tourism vision is derived from the Governing Body of Suomenlinna’s Vision 2017. The core content of the vision has been supplemented to include the perspectives of Suomenlinna’s diverse field of operations in the spirit of sustainable tourism. Suomenlinna’s tourism vision for 2020 is as follows:

- Suomenlinna is an internationally valued and authentic sea fortress
- at which the common goal of tourism and conservation is to maintain an authentic World Heritage Site that is full of life,
 - where entrepreneurs are successful year-round by providing high-quality services, where residents have a good quality of life, and where visitors enjoy participatory experiences that increase their wellbeing
 - that is a model destination for sustainable tourism.

Suomenlinna’s tourism values were collectively defined as part of the Quality1000 (a Finnish quality programme tailored for the hospitality industry) training for Suomenlinna’s tourism service providers in 2008–2009. The values were also dis-

cussed in meetings involving all tourism operators. The values have stood the test of time and remain deserving of commitment:

- Customer satisfaction: quality, professionalism, safety, experience
- Cooperation: openness, authenticity, providing assistance, cooperation facilitated by the diversity of operators
- Uniqueness and authenticity: appreciation, a cultural environment where people still live to this day
- Sustainable future: sustainable tourism, the entrepreneur’s security, environmental values

FOCUS AREAS IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Suomenlinna’s World Heritage Site Management Plan (2014) defines six strategic focus areas: the architecture and structures of the fortress, the cultural landscape, visitor management and cultural tourism, the vitality of the local community, transportation and sustainable development. All of these focus areas specified in the management plan are also of key importance from the perspective of sustainable tourism, and they are taken into account in Suomenlinna’s operations and development.

Of the long-term goals outlined in the strategy of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna (2012), the following are closely linked to tourism: a World Heritage Site that is managed in an exemplary manner, a year-round destination for cultural tourism that meets international expectations, and strategic property use and management.

These strategic goals were linked to the outcomes of the stakeholder workshops. The following five focus areas for Suomenlinna’s sustainable tourism strategy 2015–2020 were then derived from the above-mentioned inputs:

- Managing the impacts of tourism and taking advantage of its benefits
- Maintaining a high-quality visitor experience
- Emphasising the image of a year-round destination
- Developing networked activities
- Communicating World Heritage values

Managing the impacts of tourism and taking advantage of its benefits

Tourism always has economic, social, ecological and cultural impacts. Some of the impacts are positive while some are negative. The action plan that constitutes an appendix to this sustainable tourism strategy will include a roadmap for managing the impacts of tourism.

Suomenlinna’s local economic impact on Helsinki’s tourism industry is many times higher than the cost of this World Heritage site. This impact will be communicated to all stakeholders. The results will be utilised in providing justification for financing and in forging partnerships.

The sustainable tourism strategy is aimed at minimising the negative impacts of tourism while promoting its positive impacts and maximising their benefit in the interest of Suomenlinna’s conservation. These matters are often also a question of communicating accurate information and creating an appropriate impression. For many tourists, sustainability is a deciding factor in purchase decisions. This makes it important to consider how the efforts to promote sustainability are communicated to visitors and stakeholders.

Tourism and the revenue streams it generates promote Suomenlinna's conservation and maintenance. In the future, visitors must have the opportunity for concrete participation in promoting conservation and the opportunity to act as ambassadors of Suomenlinna's conservation. The implementation of this sustainable tourism strategy and its action plan minimises maintenance costs and the negative impacts of tourism on local residents, while increasing the revenue of service providers. Good resource allocation ensures that Suomenlinna maintains its authentic character, generates well-being for visitors in line with the purpose of a World Heritage Site, and sets an example for other sites.

Maintaining a high-quality visitor experience

Visitors must be made to feel welcome in Suomenlinna. A visit to Suomenlinna must be a consistent service experience, with all of the parties involved recognising their responsibility for its realisation. The range of services must be diversified through the introduction of new services that suit a World Heritage Site. The most important target group of a World Heritage Site, culturally oriented customers who are active in using services, are lost if the quality and service offering fails to meet their expectations. Two perspectives must be considered in the development of quality: operational reliability, which refers to the basic level of quality, and continuous renewal, which refers to sensing future trends and taking proactive measures. The continuous improvement of quality is a basic precondition for profitable business.

Suomenlinna and the products and services offered there create wellbeing for the visitor. After the visit, the visitor is willing to recommend Suomenlinna and its services to others. Suomenlinna's public awareness and valuation will increase in the eyes of customers as well as funding providers. Strengthening Suomenlinna's desired image of high quality will reinforce its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) while supporting conservation objectives and local services and preventing negative side effects and harmful conduct.

Emphasising the image of a year-round destination

Suomenlinna is open every day throughout the year. The site's attractiveness in the winter season must be enhanced in order to improve economic sustainability. Suomenlinna's weaknesses related to the winter season are its limited service offering and the perception of being difficult to reach. Visitors must be offered diverse services and a guaranteed service level all year round. Entrepreneurs and other operators need a more consistent revenue stream. The tourist season will be extended at both ends and the winter season will be enlivened, particularly by focusing on events. The site's carrying capacity will be taken into account in tourism development and increases in summertime visitor volumes will not be actively sought by substantially increasing the frequency of the ferry service further.

Extending the tourist season will improve the profitability of local businesses, which ensures more diverse services outside the summer season to visitors and residents alike. The year-round profitability of business activity creates continuity and commitment among service providers to engage in long-term operation. The increased use of Suomenlinna's conference and banquet facilities creates revenue for the Governing Body of Suomenlinna and other service providers and gives visitors opportunities to see the many interesting interior spaces of the fortress all year round.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Implement sustainable tourism principles and monitoring, which will be incorporated into leases
- Conduct a carrying capacity survey
- Engage in closer cooperation, particularly with various City of Helsinki offices

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Update the quality and assessment system and make a commitment to it
- Update the general guidelines for the visitor guidance system and implement changes
- Increase the number and quality of tourist information's customer contacts



EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Collectively build a stronger image of Suomenlinna as a year-round destination
- Engage in closer cooperation in product and service development
- Increase the use of conference and banquet facilities

Developing networked activities

People must be provided more opportunities to feel a sense of ownership and local pride in relation to Suomenlinna. Developing Suomenlinna as a World Heritage Site is reliant on several local, regional and international networks. Network cooperation must be increased and its quality must be improved. A further goal is to increase the number of people involved with the site and their level of activity as part of the Suomenlinna network.

Cooperation between Suomenlinna’s entrepreneurs and other operators must be enhanced, and more cooperation is needed with the Helsinki City Executive Office’s Economic Development division, Helsinki Marketing Ltd, Metsähallitus and Finland’s other World Heritage Sites. Internationally, best practices are exchanged particularly in cooperation with Nordic and Baltic World Heritage Sites and European fortresses.

The societal impact of Suomenlinna and the Governing Body will increase, as will appreciation of the work they do in producing wellbeing in society. A growing number of people feel a sense of ownership of Suomenlinna. The site’s service offering will improve and the Governing Body of Suomenlinna will see increased rental revenue when high-quality operators that match Suomenlinna’s desired image seek to create partnerships with Suomenlinna. Suomenlinna spreads best practices to other sites and applies best practices learned from others.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Develop new methods of civic participation
- Create commitment among members of the public to site conservation
- More partnerships for the Suomenlinna network
- Active communication within the Suomenlinna network of tourism service providers

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Create an interpretive master plan for Suomenlinna
- A guide for entrepreneurs and other operators with tools for understanding and leveraging World Heritage values
- Add more World Heritage information in the residents’ guide

Communicating World Heritage values

The communication of Suomenlinna’s history, stories and World Heritage values to visitors will be increased and diversified. Suomenlinna’s Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) will be worded in a manner that is understandable and inspirational to the audience. The message will be adapted to suit the various target groups of the fortress.

The communication of World Heritage values will be implemented in accordance with Finland’s national World Heritage strategy, the Governing Body’s overall strategy, the communications strategy and this sustainable tourism strategy. It is important for the successful communication of World Heritage values that all of Suomenlinna’s stakeholders, such as tourism service providers and local residents, understand and appreciate Suomenlinna’s World Heritage values. Entrepreneurs and other operators must also acknowledge the values and make active use of them.

Suomenlinna’s World Heritage communications will engender commitment among its audience to the conservation goals of this World Heritage Site. The World Heritage Site status offers service providers added value for their marketing communications. Satisfied visitors will become well-informed advocates. Visitors gain a better understanding of Suomenlinna’s exceptional value and conduct themselves accordingly. When leaving Suomenlinna, visitors are able to give a one-sentence answer to the question “What is Suomenlinna?”.



COLLECTIVELY CREATING A MODEL DESTINATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The aim of Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy is to develop Suomenlinna into a model destination for sustainable tourism, where entrepreneurs are successful year-round by providing high-quality services, where residents have a good quality of life, and where visitors enjoy participatory experiences that increase their wellbeing. Using this sustainable tourism strategy as the guideline for the long-term development of tourism in Suomenlinna will result in the following types of collective efforts.

TOURISM SUPPORTS THE CONSERVATION OF OUR COMMON HERITAGE

The negative impacts of tourism in Suomenlinna will be managed better, while the positive impacts are emphasised and communicated more clearly. Tourism in Suomenlinna is recognised as an important part of the future of the tourism industry in Helsinki and Finland as a whole. Visit Finland has adopted the World Heritage Site of Suomenlinna as a highlight of regional marketing and it features more prominently as part of Finland's country image.

Tourism and conservation are seen as mutually beneficial activities. The revenue streams generated by tourism in Suomenlinna, which also benefit conservation efforts and the vitality of the local community, are recognised in decision-making. Suomenlinna's recognised strengths are leveraged more effectively and the brand value created by Suomenlinna and UNESCO is utilised in full. As an important target audience, the residents of the greater Helsinki area have been taken into account in service and product development.

QUALITY HAS BECOME OUR STRENGTH

All of the entrepreneurs and other operators are committed to collectively producing and developing a high-quality visitor experience. All tourism service providers have implemented a quality management system that ensures high quality throughout the fortress. Quality is perceived as both reliability and continuous renewal. Increasingly ambitious steps forward must be taken with regard to satisfying customers' quality requirements. Suomenlinna's entrepreneurs and other operators have significantly improved their competence in the area of product development and productisation, and they are able to better respond to the challenges of a changing operating environment, both individually and collectively.



A STRONGER IMAGE AS A YEAR-ROUND DESTINATION

Entrepreneurs and other operators actively contribute to transforming Suomenlinna's image of being a summer destination to that of a year-round destination. The marketing communications of all of Suomenlinna's operators repeat the message, in pictures and words, of a year-round destination and the experiences it offers. New products, packages and services for specific target groups have been created in cooperation with Suomenlinna's service providers and external operators. The effectiveness of the sales and distribution channels used for products and services has improved. The site is presented with high quality and in a diverse manner, including the use of new technologies, and safety aspects are at an excellent level.

SUCCESS THROUGH EFFECTIVE NETWORKS

Networked activities have increased. New partnerships have been identified across industry boundaries following a broad and open-minded assessment of objectives. This has led to increased profitability for Suomenlinna's operators, greater interest in Suomenlinna as a destination, and added value for Suomenlinna. In the networked operating model, the network members play an active role in the operations of Suomenlinna. The Governing Body actively distributes information on the activities of its networks to Suomenlinna's tourism service providers, which ensures that the latest available information, expertise and trends are utilised in a manner that benefits Suomenlinna. Internal network cooperation in Suomenlinna has become even more active. This has enabled the more agile productisation of services and the improved purchasability of service packages.

New kinds of partnerships open doors for Suomenlinna to collaborate with well-known events in the region. They liven up the slow season and bring new audiences to Suomenlinna in the summer season. New partnerships have helped to create a few off-season events that are well-known in the greater Helsinki area. In cross-sectoral cooperation and particularly in cooperation between the creative industries and the tourism industry, service design has been utilised to develop products and services that support Suomenlinna's presentation and stories and illustrate its role in the local community.

COLLECTIVELY COMMUNICATING OUR COMMON HERITAGE

The systematic communication of World Heritage values has provided clearer support for the performance of the Site Manager's primary task of preserving the site. Suomenlinna's World Heritage values have been made visible and understandable to the various parties concerned. Entrepreneurs and other operators, Suomenlinna's inhabitants, the residents of the greater Helsinki area and visitors all benefit from this in their own way. Suomenlinna is recognised as a site that represents the world's common heritage and the people of Helsinki are increasingly proud of the World Heritage Site located in their city. Entrepreneurs and other operators have been provided with tools for leveraging the added value generated by World Heritage as part of the success factors of their operations.

Visitors are offered various opportunities for concrete participation in Suomenlinna's conservation, which makes them value the site even more. Participatory activities have also provided local residents and visitors with new opportunities

to meet and learn from each other. An advocate network of "Suomenlinna Ambassadors" has been created.

Guidelines pertaining to World Heritage education have been prepared in cooperation with other Finnish World Heritage Sites. Suomenlinna's role as a diverse place of learning is widely recognised and Suomenlinna offers clear and easy-to-use packages that support the curricula of various educational institutions, grade levels and school subjects.

THE ROLES OF SUOMENLINNA'S STAKEHOLDERS

Success is achieved by having everyone work toward the same goal and by having a clear division of responsibilities. All parties concerned must know their role as part of the big picture. The work everyone does in their own business or association always has an effect on the work done by other operators and Suomenlinna as a whole.

The role of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna is focused on guiding and enabling tourism functions. This is reflected in areas such as strategic property use through the signing of leases and managing the use of outdoor areas, signage and premises in ways that are compatible with Suomenlinna's status as a World Heritage Site. The Governing Body is responsible for the presentation of Suomenlinna and marketing communications concerning Suomenlinna as a whole. This work is done in cooperation with Suomenlinna's tourism service providers, and their multi-channel marketing communication activities support the overall objectives. Suomenlinna's marketing communications and development efforts involve active cooperation with Visit Helsinki and Visit Finland, but also with other networks. Repeating the right message reaches a larger group of potential visitors than isolated individual efforts.

The Governing Body is also responsible for the long-term comprehensive development and coordination of tourism in Suomenlinna with the help of this sustainable tourism strategy. The Governing Body brings together tourism service providers in particular, but also other operators to ensure that common goals are achieved through cooperation. Identifying new partnerships across industry boundaries for the Governing Body as well as other operators opens up new opportunities for Suomenlinna as a whole. As a world-class destination, we want to work with the best possible partners.

Tourism service providers are responsible for adapting their business activities to the quality standards required of a World Heritage Site while also leveraging the brand value derived from the World Heritage Site status. Quality and a comprehensive customer experience can only be achieved when all of the parts function well. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. In a constantly changing world in which visitors and consumers also undergo changes, individual tourism service providers and Suomenlinna's operators collectively must ensure that products and services are continuously developed further. Developing high-quality services for the right target groups at the right times requires cooperation between entrepreneurs and other operators. The Governing Body supports tourism service providers in product development efforts, and Suomenlinna is also supported in this respect by Visit Helsinki and Visit Finland.

Suomenlinna also provides opportunities for successful cooperation in smaller networks. Industry-specific cooperation involving smaller networks created by businesses in the same field can provide effective support for Suomenlinna and its objectives as a whole. One such example is the Suomenlinna museum operators' cooperation group, which has got off to a good start. Cooperation around a specific theme can also produce concrete results. One such example could be goal-oriented product and service development related to pupils, children or young people, or joint development efforts related to local food products.

ACTION PLAN AND FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

Suomenlinna’s sustainable tourism strategy will be reviewed and revised following the updating of the World Heritage Site Management Plan and Periodic Reporting to UNESCO. The next round of these activities will take place in 2019, and the revision of the sustainable tourism strategy will begin in 2020. The sustainable tourism strategy includes an action plan that will be available to all interested parties via the suomenlinna.fi website.

In order to ensure that Suomenlinna’s sustainable tourism strategy will be implemented and kept up to date, the action plan will be used as a concrete guideline for operations. Its realisation will be monitored and reported on annually. The action plan will be reviewed with entrepreneurs and other operators annually at Suomenlinna’s tourism network meeting. The review will also include a discussion on the status of the action plan’s realisation and potential changes that may be required. Minor updates to the strategy may be made as necessary during the strategy period.

More information

Suomenlinna’s World Heritage Site Management Plan (2014) and the related action plan on the Suomenlinna website: www.suomenlinna.fi/en/world-heritage/preserving/

Lempiäinen, Erika and Ruoho, Sanna: Suomenlinna visitor survey 2014. Thesis. Degree Programme in Hospitality, Tourism and Experience Management, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-201505117341> (only available in Finnish)

Heikkilä, Laura 2014: Local economic impacts of visitor spending in Suomenlinna sea fortress in 2014. Master’s Thesis. University of Helsinki, Faculty of Science, Department of Geosciences and Geography. <http://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/153117> (only available in Finnish)

More information on sustainable tourism at World Heritage Sites on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism>

Nordic World Heritage Foundation report “Towards a Nordic-Baltic pilot region for World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism”: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/857/>

Information about World Heritage in Finland on the Ministry of Education and Culture website: http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Kansainvaeliset_asiat/kansainvaeliset_jaerjestoet/unesco/maailmanperinto/?lang=en

National tourism roadmap 2015–2025 “Achieving more together – the Roadmap for Growth and Renewal in Finnish Tourism” on the Ministry of Employment and the Economy website: http://www.tem.fi/en/enterprises/tourism/roadmap_of_tourism_2015-2025

Statistics and studies on tourism in Finland: <http://www.visitfinland.com/about-us/tourism-finland/>

City of Helsinki tourism statistics: <http://www.visithelsinki.fi/en/professional/why-helsinki/statistics-and-research/helsinki-tourism-statistics>

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