

SUOMENLINNA
SVEABORG

A sustainable tourism strategy for Suomenlinna

BRIDGE TO POST-PANDEMIC TOURISM AT THE
WORLD HERITAGE SITE 2021–2023



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Foreword

The management plan of Suomenlinna World Heritage Site outlines that tourism development, like other development measures, must be based on the pillars of sustainable development and the Outstanding Universal Values of the site.

Sustainable tourism is not exclusively on the agenda of World Heritage Sites. The same focus is present in the Finnish tourism strategy 'Achieving more together – sustainable growth and renewal in Finnish tourism' published by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Visit Finland's Sustainable Travel Finland programme and the City of Helsinki's Roadmap for Tourism.

From these starting points, we set out to update Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy. However, just when the strategy work began, an unexpected change in the operating environment took place and we had to adapt to a situation where international tourism was almost completely disrupted. Due to the uncertain situation, we shortened the strategy review period and decided to focus on building a bridge for Suomenlinna tourism in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy, our tourism network is looking for ways to meet the smaller number of visitors and the needs of a customer base with more domestic tourists. We rely on and contribute to national and local projects that develop sustainable tourism practices. The service providers are committed to developing events and service packages that use the site's strengths, which give Finns who are well acquainted with Suomenlinna new reasons to visit the fortress.

During the coronavirus pandemic, we launched and participated in several digital development projects, where we looked for efficiency in the management of visitor flows and the discoverability of services. All measures are based on a clear communication of the Outstanding Universal Value, considering the different target groups. It commits visitors to the goals of protecting Suomenlinna.

The development of world-class visitor services for twenty years has not been wasted. It is a strong knowledge base on which the tourism service providers of Suomenlinna can renew their product and service portfolio to appeal to customers who increasingly value responsibility and sustainability.

Ilari Kurri

Director, Governing Body of Suomenlinna



1. Sustainable tourism in a World Heritage Site

Suomenlinna is a historic sea fortress and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The fortress is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Finland. Suomenlinna is also a neighborhood of Helsinki with about 800 residents. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna is a government agency operating under the Ministry of Education and Culture that restores, maintains, and administers Suomenlinna and provides information about the fortress.

The strategic direction for the development of the World Heritage Site is expressed in the management plan, which was prepared in cooperation with the stakeholders of Suomenlinna. The plan, published in 2019, is based on the site's values and sustainable development goals. The development of sustainable tourism was raised as one of the most important goals of sustainable development in the management plan of Suomenlinna. Within each of the pillars, tourism services are of considerable importance.

First sustainable tourism strategy was prepared for Suomenlinna in 2015. Its update in 2020 was postponed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of 2021, the network of tourism service providers decided that the update would continue to commit to the development focus areas agreed in 2015.

The coronavirus pandemic will affect tourism in Suomenlinna in the following years. The number of visitors will be smaller than before, and the visitor profile will be more focused on Finnish visitors. Health safety is paramount in a changed operating environment. Domestic visitors, especially those coming from the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, must be motivated to become regular customers of Suomenlinna and visit the site during different seasons.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as 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.**

In Suomenlinna, the development of sustainable tourism considers all four dimensions of sustainability: **economic, social, ecological and cultural.**

In the UNESCO definition, sustainable tourism is tourism that respects both local people and the traveler, cultural heritage, and the environment.

Sustainable tourism can be regarded as **an objective to be pursued, and it may even be inaccessible in some respects.** Sustainable tourism activities aim to achieve this goal. Thus, sustainable tourism is a process through which the goal of sustainable tourism can be achieved.

A PROSPEROUS SUOMENLINNA FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES WILL BE SYSTEMATICALLY ALLOCATED

SUOMENLINNA FOR ALL!

- We develop Suomenlinna as an open and accessible resource.
- We preserve Suomenlinna for future generations to experience, and therefore, we are committed to sustainable tourism.
- In Suomenlinna, decision-making is based on open interaction. The state, the city, the private sector and civil society all participate, each playing a specific role.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORY AND THE SPIRIT OF PLACE

- The use and development of the site are based on the protection and management decisions derived from the Outstanding Universal Value and local values of Suomenlinna.
- We enable experiences of history and nature.
- The balance between protection and use form the basis for the development of Suomenlinna.

SUOMENLINNA AS A HELSINKI CITY DISTRICT

- People live, work and visit World Heritage Site Suomenlinna.
- Suomenlinna is accessible by water.
- The financial and human resources allocated to Suomenlinna are regularly agreed between the city and the state.

SERVICES IN SUOMENLINNA

- Services in Suomenlinna support the vitality of the local community and are there for everyone.
- Services are based on an understanding of the World Heritage Site as a whole.
- The success of services in Suomenlinna is based on their quality and year-round availability.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Climate action • Cooperation and partnership • Sustainable tourism

VALUES Strong spirit of place • Multilayeredness and continuity • Vibrant and versatile • Harmony and diversity

*) UN sustainable development objectives. The actions on the Guidelines of the Future are based on these objectives.

The main pillars of Suomenlinna management plan. Sustainable tourism was selected as one of the Agenda 2030 focus areas in Suomenlinna.

VISION

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.



THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE 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

The vision and focus areas of Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy.

2. Creating a destination for sustainable tourism with Suomenlinna's partners

Suomenlinna's service providers include more than 30 tourism service providers, whose cooperation creates the visitor experience of Suomenlinna. Many businesses are small micro-enterprises and, for some, tourism is only a secondary activity. Clear service groups comprise restaurant and café services (12 operators), museum and exhibition services (6 museums and 2 galleries), water transport service providers and accommodation services (2). Several artisans and other operators in the field of arts have premises in Suomenlinna. Suomenlinna has communities and public actors that directly or indirectly influence the visitor experience or the management of the site. These include the Naval Academy, Suomenlinna prison, Viaporin Telakka association, the Suomenlinnaseura residents' association, and many others.

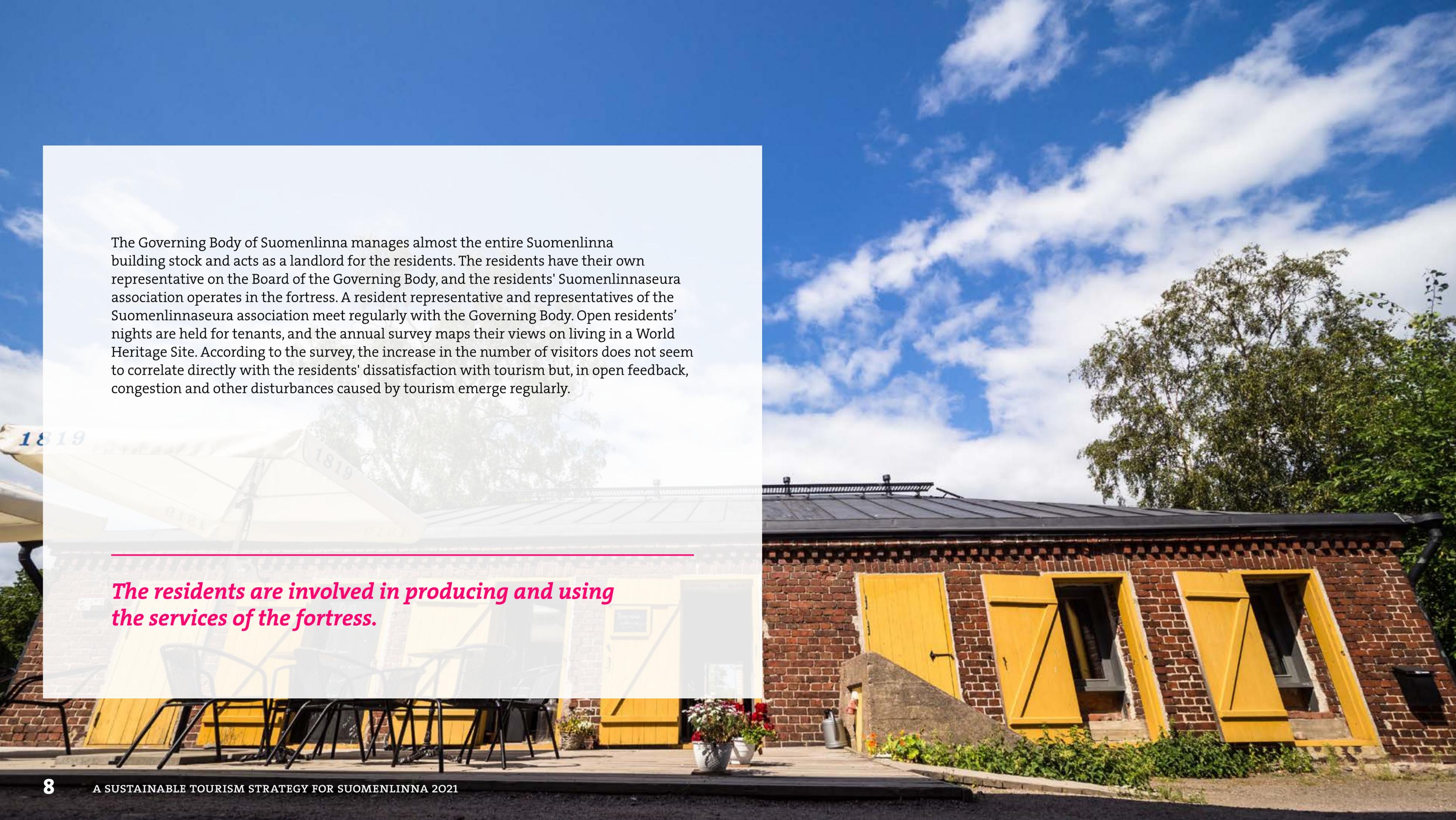
Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism business was seasonal, even though the number of visitors in the winter season has risen since foreign visitors in Helsinki found the wintry Suomenlinna. Summer is the busiest time for tourism. In the spring and autumn, business customers have employed the site's entrepreneurs. Due to the pandemic, business visitors and foreign tourists were almost completely nonexistent, which led to a large gap in visitor numbers and companies' turnover.

The Governing Body of Suomenlinna collects feedback from tourism service providers, which is used in the development of the site. Twice a year, the Governing Body organises a networking event for tourism service providers to discuss current topics, assess the past months and plan for the future. Every spring, the Governing Body organises seasonal information sessions for tourism service providers and their seasonal employees to

communicate basic information on Suomenlinna and its operations and to strengthen the community spirit. Approximately 60 people from several organisations participate in the info sessions each year. The Governing Body organises joint training sessions for service providers to increase their knowledge of the topics important to the site.

According to the survey conducted for the service providers of Suomenlinna, Suomenlinna was considered a unique and valuable operating environment also in the pandemic year 2020. Coping with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic was understandably the primary concern, but the situation was also seen as an opportunity to influence future visitors and the product range. A large increase in the total number of visitors was not seen as necessary. Instead, increasing the use of services and attracting nearby residents as regular customers was seen as particularly important. All respondents to the survey cooperate with other tourism service providers and members of the network. The service providers felt that the role of the Governing Body as an enabler and facilitator of networking activities supported the network well.

The residents of Suomenlinna are an important stakeholder in sustainable tourism. The fortress has about 800 residents living there all year round. The residents of Suomenlinna are proud to live in a World Heritage Site. They are involved in producing and using the services of the fortress. During the pandemic, residents have been the lifeline of many tourist services.



The Governing Body of Suomenlinna manages almost the entire Suomenlinna building stock and acts as a landlord for the residents. The residents have their own representative on the Board of the Governing Body, and the residents' Suomenlinnaseura association operates in the fortress. A resident representative and representatives of the Suomenlinnaseura association meet regularly with the Governing Body. Open residents' nights are held for tenants, and the annual survey maps their views on living in a World Heritage Site. According to the survey, the increase in the number of visitors does not seem to correlate directly with the residents' dissatisfaction with tourism but, in open feedback, congestion and other disturbances caused by tourism emerge regularly.

The residents are involved in producing and using the services of the fortress.

3. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna enables and coordinates

The importance of the overall experience is emphasised at a tourist destination that includes a large number of different stakeholders. In addition to the management plan, the sustainable tourism strategy constitutes the most important guideline in the development of tourism. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna creates and strengthens the structures on which tourism service providers can develop their products and services. With the exception of tourist information and the rental of conference and banquet facilities, the Governing Body itself is not a tourism service provider. Instead, it acts as an enabler, developer, coordinator, and inspiration for joint action. As a property management agency, the Governing Body influences tourism operations by renovating and renting premises for use in functions that are compatible with the spirit of the fortress. The Governing Body supports events that are compatible with World Heritage Site 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 Suomenlinna, tourism service providers can take advantage of the added value of the World Heritage Brand and the brand of a prestigious visitor destination. The Governing Body organises regular meetings, joint marketing and training opportunities and event coordination for tourism service providers, and tourist information services for visitors. Digital channels market local services, and the joint Extranet platform enables aggregated communications between service providers. Through its diverse networks, the Governing Body promotes local entrepreneurs and other stakeholders and their contribution to the overall experience of the destination.

The Governing Body maintains active dialogue with Helsinki Marketing, the Economic Development department responsible for the development of the maritime strategy, as well as Helsinki Partners, Visit Finland and other important stakeholders. Tourism service providers operating in a carefully protected UNESCO World Heritage Site accept that their operations are subject to certain restrictions. Limitations on outdoor advertising are one such example. A guidance and signage system that is coordinated by the World Heritage Site Manager and fits the landscape ensures that the site remains as authentic as possible.



In Suomenlinna, tourism service providers can take advantage of the added value of the World Heritage Brand and the brand of a prestigious visitor destination.

4. The Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2015–2020 was successfully implemented

The first sustainable tourism strategy was prepared for Suomenlinna in 2015. The strategy was developed as part of the development of the sustainable tourism programme of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The strategy and its action plan were implemented in cooperation with the site's network. During the strategy period, the objectives of the focus areas were specified in the joint workshops of the operator network. For example, UNESCO World Heritage Europe Today 2016 selected a strategy for good practices in day-to-day work for parties governing World Heritage Sites. For example, the Council of Europe's European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century selected a strategy, such as for good practice in 2017.

In the big picture, the first sustainable tourism strategy of Suomenlinna was successfully implemented. Admittedly, the focus areas selected include objectives that will continue to be pursued together, especially in the context of the changed environment of the coronavirus pandemic.

Sustainability monitoring has been developed since the completion of the sustainable tourism strategy. In 2019, indicators based on the principles of sustainable tourism were compiled together with Finland's World Heritage Sites and Metsähallitus nature services. The monitoring method used is the LAC method that is based on the limits of acceptable change. When the limit is reached, pre-determined measures to remedy the situation are applied. The method has been used in national parks for many years, and it was also extended to Finnish World Heritage Sites in 2020.

Based on the measurement results, the sustainability of tourism in Suomenlinna is at

a good or satisfactory level. According to monitoring, there is scope for improvement in the integration of responsibility measures and World Heritage themes into the communications of all service providers, in the wear and tear caused by visitors to the Kustaanmiekka ramparts, and in the number of visitors to the tourist information. The results have been considered in the strategy update for 2021. The indicators and monitoring of sustainable tourism in Suomenlinna can be found in an appendix to the strategy.

In addition to the measurement results, success was assessed at the operator meetings in Suomenlinna. Inspired by the joint discussions, improvements were found in the development of cooperation, investments in all-year-round activities, and communications. Among the themes related to the proactive planning and development of tourism, the consideration of the local community, congestion peaks, visitor management and the sustainability of infrastructure were important areas for development. The service providers want to invest in locality and responsibility in a range of services and products.

During the previous strategy period, Visit Finland's national Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) programme was launched. The programme encourages tourism service providers to take holistic sustainable tourism into account at destination and company level. In 2019, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna received the STF label as the coordinator of the site. From the Suomenlinna service providers, JT-Line Oy received the STF label in 2020, and a few operators are currently implementing the STF programme.



The service providers want to invest in locality and responsibility in a range of services and products also in the future.

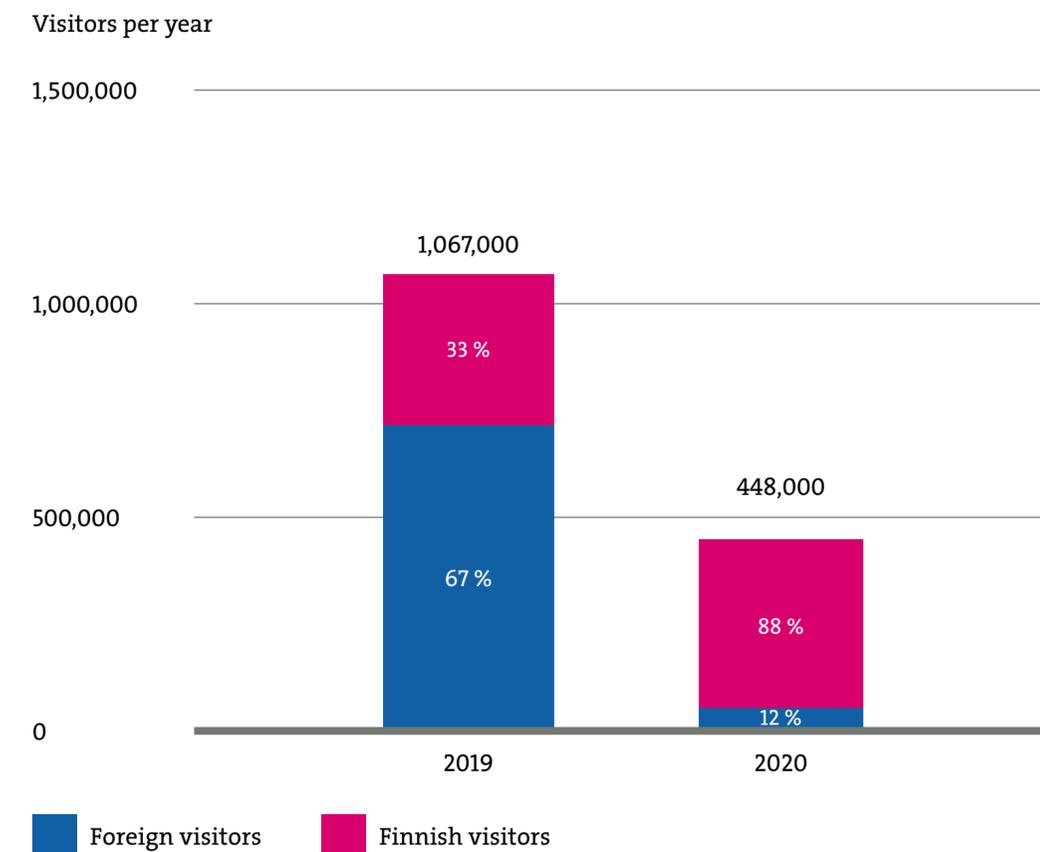
5. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the operating environment with one swift stroke

International tourism quickly came to a complete standstill due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Services that support tourism and are important to Suomenlinna, such as museums, guided tours, restaurants, events, accommodation, and meetings and celebrations, have long been subject to restrictions. The crisis resilience of cultural and tourism services has been tested more than in any other sector, and support measures for these sectors have been judged as insufficient. The return of service providers to pre-pandemic profitability levels requires adaptation to the changed world of tourism.

The future of international tourism is uncertain. It is difficult to predict how quickly and in which ways cross-border tourism will find a new course. The changes could have a major impact on Suomenlinna, where more than 65 per cent of visitors have been foreign visitors arriving in Helsinki. In certain months of the winter season, foreign visitors have accounted for as much as 80 per cent of the month's visitors. The fortress has previously been visited by many foreigners staying in Helsinki on business trips, but the increase in remote online meetings is likely to reduce business travel.

The most significant change caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Suomenlinna was the decrease in the total annual number of visitors from one million visitors to the number of the early 1990s, close to 450,000. In the absence of foreign visitors, the visitor profile focused on nearby residents and domestic tourists during the holidays. Although the number and profile of visitors reflected the situation in the 1990s, the range of services available today is clearly higher and more diverse. As the number of customers collapsed, service providers had difficulty maintaining profitable operations. Restrictions on assembly and movement forced the closure of services and layoffs of staff.

VISITORS IN YEAR 2019 AND 2020

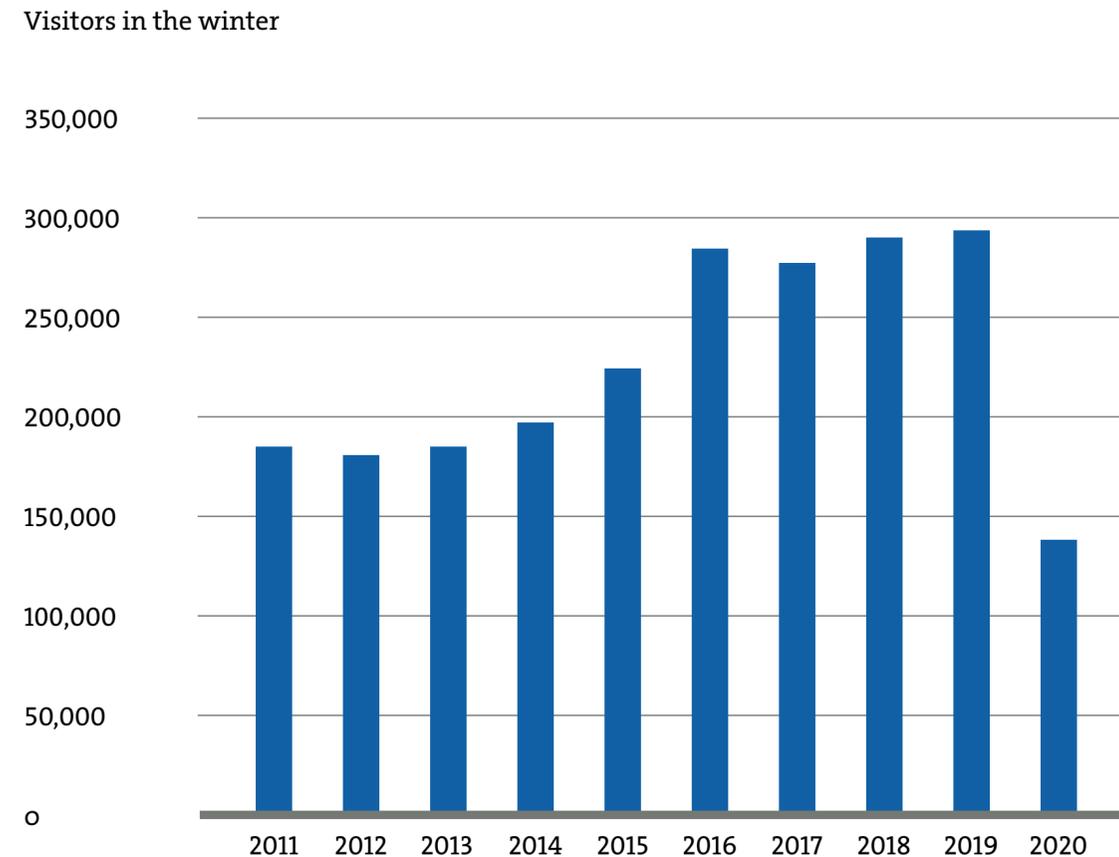


The biggest changes in Suomenlinna caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were the halving of the total number of visitors and the change in the target group due to the lack of foreign visitors.



The return of service providers to pre-pandemic profitability levels requires adaptation to the changed world of tourism.

VISITORS IN THE WINTER IN 2011–2020



In terms of its visitor profile, Suomenlinna became an increasingly popular destination for foreign tourists in the 2000s and 2010s. The growth of Helsinki as an international visitor's destination was visible in the visitors to the fortress, and more foreign tourists visited it throughout the year. Before the pandemic, the fortress was visited by about 300,000 people during the winter season in October–April. The growth of global tourism, the attractiveness of Helsinki as a tourist destination and Suomenlinna as a central part of it meant the continuous organic growth of potential visitors.

The know-how of the service providers of Suomenlinna developed with the internationalisation of the visitor profile. The services were productised both for an international clientele and for business groups visiting at the fortress in the spring and autumn. The high level of visitor satisfaction was evidence of good development. Due to the pandemic, the development of the visitor profile unexpectedly turned in a completely different direction, and Suomenlinna began to commercialise services primarily to nearby residents and Finnish visitors.

During the pandemic, Suomenlinna's customers have been employees, residents working remotely and visitors from the surrounding areas. There have been very few visitors, especially on weekdays. The quiet winter season and restrictions due to the pandemic caused a very difficult profitability problem for Suomenlinna's service providers. New attractiveness factors must be found for year-round and winter tourism.

LEFT: The number of visitors to Suomenlinna during the winter season (October–April) has increased due to the targeted work done at the destination level and the development of tourism in Helsinki.



At its best, tourism is an active preserver of cultural heritage, and sustainably produced tourism services are positive steps towards sustainable development.

6. National and local frameworks for sustainable tourism 2021–2023

The recovery of tourism from the pandemic will be gradual. This strategy update focuses on the first phase, which will take about two years. The rise in tourism begins with domestic tourism demand. In the summer seasons 2020 and 2021, domestic tourism received a strong boost from the interruption of foreign travel. Interest in domestic natural sites increased, and especially in the vicinity of large cities, nature sites have attracted visitors up to congestion. In the field of cultural heritage, the supply of museums has attracted a great deal of interest and even pent-up demand after the long restrictions. A variety of outdoor theme tours have been popular with visitors. The coronavirus situation in Helsinki and the attractiveness of other Finnish visitor destinations excluded Helsinki from the domestic tourism trend in summer 2020. However, the summer of 2021 brought improvements. However, the progress in vaccination will create trust in the success of the coming months and years. There are certainly combinations of the above-mentioned trends in domestic tourism, where the historical cultural environment of Suomenlinna and the attractiveness of the marine environment can be combined in an attractive way.

Sustainability has remained a key objective in the development of tourism. The Finnish tourism strategy for 2018–2025, 'Achieving more together – sustainable growth and renewal in Finnish tourism', was published by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy just before the COVID-19 epidemic escalated into a pandemic. The objectives and measures of the strategy were adapted but the priorities were maintained.

The strategy identifies four priorities that will facilitate the sustainable growth and renewal of the tourism sector:

- supporting sustainable development
- responding to the digital transformation
- improving accessibility, taking into account the needs of the tourism sector
- ensuring an operating environment that supports competitiveness.

In addition to these priorities, the cross-cutting theme of the national tourism strategy is cooperation, which is essential for achieving sustainable growth and renewal in tourism.

The City of Helsinki has raised sustainability to the forefront of tourism development. After the completion of the city's strategy in 2021, the City of Helsinki's Roadmap for Tourism will be updated, in which sustainability will play a central role. In addition to sustainable tourism, the themes of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Helsinki have been identified as digitalisation, health safety, information management, marketing, and events.



The historical cultural environment of Suomenlinna and the attractiveness of the marine environment can be combined in an attractive way.

7. The vision of Suomenlinna tourism and the focus areas in tourism development

In March 2021, an update of the short-term sustainable tourism strategy was worked on at the Suomenlinna's remote workshop for tourism service providers. The workshop decided to continue with the same vision that was formulated together with the previous strategy. Suomenlinna's tourism vision for 2023 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 all year round by providing high-quality services, where residents have a high quality of life, and where visitors enjoy participatory experiences that increase their wellbeing
- that is a model destination for sustainable tourism.

The workshop noted that the focus areas selected for the previous strategy have lasted well over time and address the operating environment changed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The common view was that the same five focus areas as in the previous strategy should continue to be the guiding principles for the coming years. The focus areas chosen were considered to be fundamental and further inspired. However, the detailed content of the focus areas will be adjusted due to the change in the operating environment.

The focus areas of the sustainable tourism strategy:

- Managing the impacts of tourism and harnessing 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 harnessing its benefits

UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 plays a central role in the management plan of Suomenlinna. From the Agenda 2030, sustainable tourism was chosen as a priority, alongside climate action and cooperation and partnerships.

Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy aims to highlight the positive effects of tourism and to minimise the negative effects. Tourism and the revenue stream it generates promote Suomenlinna's conservation and maintenance, and the euros spent by visitors at the destination will be better directed to local actors and Suomenlinna. At its best, tourism is an active preservative of cultural heritage, and sustainably produced tourism services are positive steps towards sustainable development.

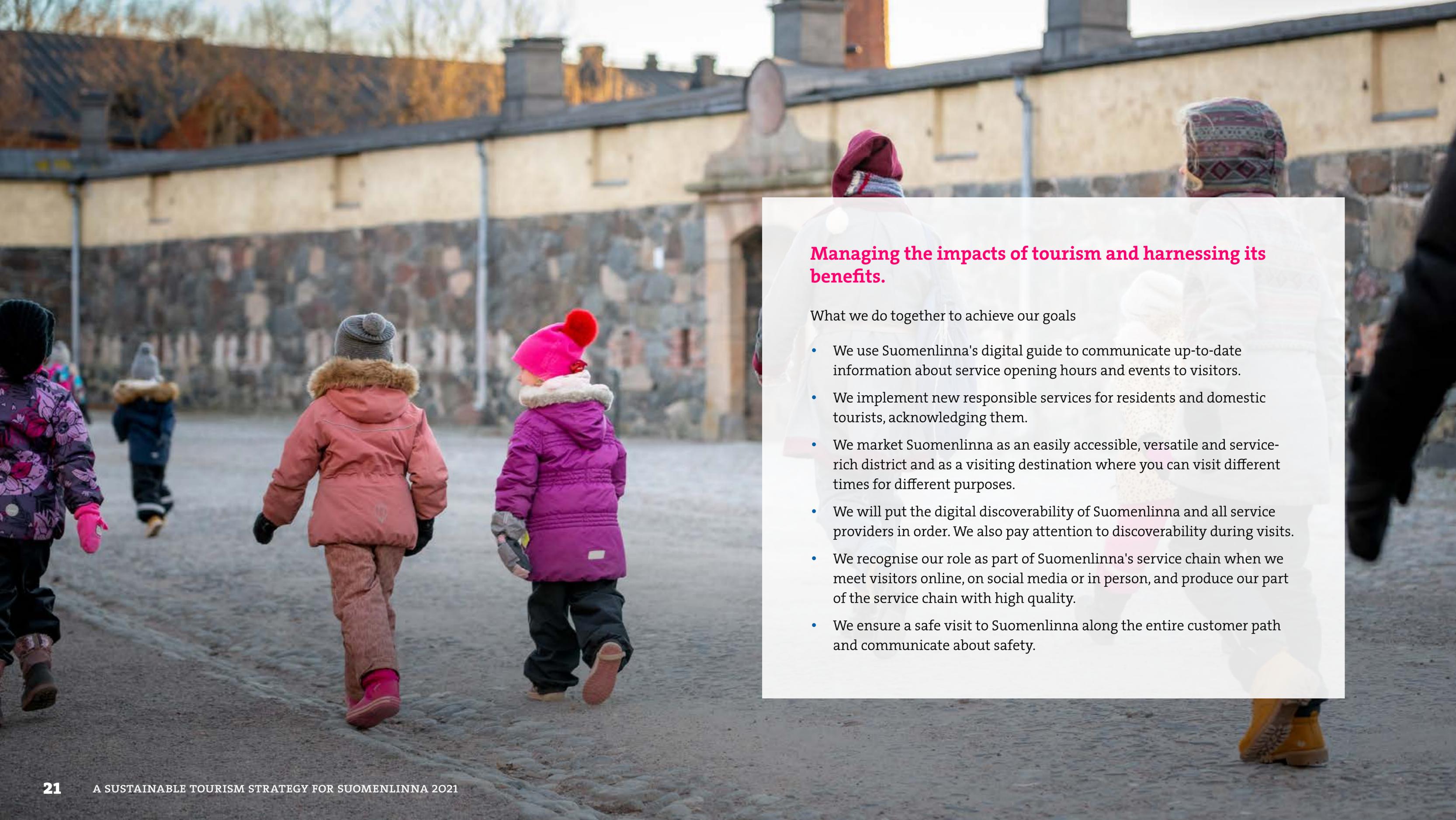
Further work is needed to improve the social sustainability of tourism. Suomenlinna is one of the districts of the City of Helsinki where the balance between a visitor destination and a living and working environment requires better management of visitor flows and communications aimed at visitors about the importance of residential areas in preserving the values of the whole site.

In the development of tourism destinations, it makes sense to combine resources. Suomenlinna wants to take an active part in the wider sustainable tourism measures coordinated by the City of Helsinki. In the coming years, these will include the general sustainable development of tourism and maritime affairs, the reduction of the carbon footprint, and the security and digital development of tourism.

Marketing communications and product and service development focus on local residents and domestic visitors. Achieving the interest of the domestic target group also prepares Suomenlinna for the return of foreign tourists. Central to the basic ideas of sustainable tourism is that destinations valued by locals are also of interest to foreign visitors. Now the residents of the surrounding area can rediscover Suomenlinna or experience it in a new way and find that an easily accessible destination deserves several visits a year.

Sustainability is crucial for more and more visitors when making purchasing decisions. The efforts to promote sustainability is communicated to visitors and stakeholders both at the destination level and by entrepreneurs. Commitment to and communication on sustainable tourism can be achieved through well-known, national, and regional sustainable tourism programmes. For example, Visit Finland's Sustainable Travel Finland label and Helsinki Marketing's Think Sustainably service are excellent tools for sustainability work, verification of work done and communications.

All measures aim to create synergies that support the profitability of Suomenlinna's tourism service providers in the changed situation. Commitment to the principles of sustainable tourism supports the long-term impact of tourism on the preservation of the destination, including when international tourism once again increases its share.



Managing the impacts of tourism and harnessing its benefits.

What we do together to achieve our goals

- We use Suomenlinna's digital guide to communicate up-to-date information about service opening hours and events to visitors.
- We implement new responsible services for residents and domestic tourists, acknowledging them.
- We market Suomenlinna as an easily accessible, versatile and service-rich district and as a visiting destination where you can visit different times for different purposes.
- We will put the digital discoverability of Suomenlinna and all service providers in order. We also pay attention to discoverability during visits.
- We recognise our role as part of Suomenlinna's service chain when we meet visitors online, on social media or in person, and produce our part of the service chain with high quality.
- We ensure a safe visit to Suomenlinna along the entire customer path and communicate about safety.

Maintaining a high-quality visitor experience

A visit to Suomenlinna is a unified, high-quality service experience, for the implementation of which all service providers feel responsible. Continuous development of quality is a fundamental precondition for profitable business. Product and service development is based on customer feedback and research. Encouraged by a high-quality visitor experience, visitors are ready to recommend Suomenlinna and its services to their friends. The recommendation of one visitor is the beginning of another visitor's dream of visiting Suomenlinna.

In the 2010s, the flow of foreign walk-in tourists visiting Suomenlinna once in their life grew steadily and rapidly. This correlates with the popularity of Helsinki as a visitor destination for foreign tourists. With this development interrupted, the customer potential is lower, so engaging local and domestic visitors to become Suomenlinna's regular customers is important.

Loyalty to Suomenlinna can be created by highlighting the diversity of the site and offering new reasons for a visit: events, offers, new insights or urban hiking. Existing offerings can be packaged more efficiently to meet the changed expectations and needs of visitors. A returning visitor can come to Suomenlinna in different roles at different times. As a theatre visitor, party guest, museum visitor, volunteer, with children, to enjoy food and drinks, to take part in a guided tour with a group of friends or a glass-blowing course, to boat or stay overnight – there are various roles and options, and the whole network must actively communicate about them.

The Governing Body will further develop ways in which the cultural heritage values of Suomenlinna and its World Heritage Site status offer added value to service providers

committed to the goals of sustainable tourism. In addition to the insightful combination of service offerings, a selection of jointly implemented events based on Suomenlinna's strengths is needed to attract local residents. A satisfied visitor communicates about the experience in their immediate circle and on social media and wants to reuse the services they find interesting. When the residents of Helsinki come to the event, the tourists will follow.

The digital discoverability of Suomenlinna and each of its services must be improved at all stages of the customer path: before, during and after the visit. In addition, the range of Suomenlinna's online store and expertise in online sales must be developed in order to ensure that Suomenlinna's services can be purchased on different platforms. In addition to digital discoverability, the physical discoverability of the services during the visit must be improved.

Particularly at the beginning of the strategy period, it is important to take into account a safe fortress visit. To prevent any hesitation of or during a visit, measures need to be taken that take into account across the entire customer service path. Each operator has an important role to play in setting an example for health safety in their premises and communications.

The coming years will be financially challenging. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna strives to ensure sufficient appropriations to ensure that the business premises of the tourist services can be maintained in a high-quality condition in accordance with the restoration principles.



Maintaining a high-quality visitor experience

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Emphasising the image of a year-round destination

Suomenlinna is open every day of the year. 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 profitability of business activity all year round creates continuity and commitment among service providers to engage in long-term operation at a World Heritage Site.

During the previous strategy period, it was noted at the operator events that long-term work has been done together for the development of year-round tourism. The results have been visible and measurable. This work is to be continued. The goal is now more challenging as foreign tourists, who have accounted for as much as 80 per cent of the month's visitors in many winter months, are almost completely absent. In the pandemic winters 2020 and 2021, the basic customer flow of Suomenlinna included residents and people working at the site.

Finnish visitors, including residents of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, prefer Suomenlinna to be a summer destination. The image of difficult accessibility is strong, although accessibility is a considerable strength for Suomenlinna compared to other island destinations in Helsinki. A ferry operated by the public transport service in the Helsinki region runs throughout the year, from early morning to the night. The journey takes only 15 minutes.

In the future, the destination communications will be more focused on the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, which is home to almost 1.5 million potential visitors to Suomenlinna. They are reached through the joint marketing communications of Suomenlinna by repeating expressions and images that tell about accessibility and interest all year round.

In the coming years, when foreign tourism is only recovering, the focus must be on extending the season on both before and after summer. The winter season must be enlivened by investing in a joint implementation of events and services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, service providers engaged in rapid product development, which proved to be of interest to a new target group. For example, during the autumn season, a restaurant dinner was combined with a boat trip to Suomenlinna by a traditional wooden boat.

With the expansion of accommodation services, Suomenlinna received a boost as a short-term holiday destination, as a place where people can stay overnight, dine and be outdoors in the dark, watching the starry sky free of city lights. A new kind of outdoor activity of watching the stars in the night sky was produced in cooperation in the fortress. Through testing and product development, we are sure to find new long-lived products and services.

A photograph of a park in autumn. The ground is covered in fallen yellow and orange leaves. In the foreground, there is a large, dark metal cannon mounted on a wooden carriage with large spoked wheels. The background features several trees with vibrant yellow autumn foliage. A blue directional signpost is visible on the right side of the image.

Emphasising the image of a year-round destination

What we do together to achieve our goals

- We carry out product and service development and bundling, especially during the non-summer season, as our target group is nearby residents and domestic visitors.
- Together we develop and implement events that look and feel like Suomenlinna and fit the fortress. We better integrate local services into the event offering.
- We participate in active marketing communications about the year-round destination and its offerings. In the network, we tailor common means of communicating about an all-year-round destination in different channels.
- Our products and service bundles include a wide range of independent outdoor activities as part of the other service offerings of the site.

Developing networked activities

Developing Suomenlinna as a World Heritage Site is reliant on several local, regional and international networks. Tourism service providers consider network cooperation to be the basis for the development of a tourist destination. Network cooperation must be further increased by increasing the number of participants in the site and their activity as part of the network.

Practical examples of joining forces are successful events, such as Viaporin Kekri and Suomenlinna Munchies. The events will be implemented together with new partners. Events are actively communicated and often receive quite good media visibility. When the restrictions on public gatherings are lifted, the events carried out in cooperation give the residents of the surrounding area good reasons to visit Suomenlinna several times. The service providers of Suomenlinna have increased cooperation in combining the service offerings and events.

According to visitor surveys, outdoor activities, attractions, history, and the maritime environment are Suomenlinna's main attractions. Combining these with the services on offer will continue to produce services that are typical of Suomenlinna. Attractiveness factors can also encourage collaboration in cross-marketing and cross-selling for the benefit of the entire site. Reciprocity in customer service work and social media helps the neighbouring company succeed.

The event and opening hours calendar of Suomenlinna, the online store and the digital guide have been developed to support cross-marketing and sales. The availability of up-to-date information on these channels will help people find more services than

they originally thought they needed. Through common channels, the entrepreneurs of Suomenlinna can recommend a partner company. Extranet has been developed to gather deeper knowledge of the partners' business and it acts as a communications channel and data bank.

The biannual meetings concretise the actions we take together. During the COVID-19 period, live meetings changed to remote meetings. In this way, a wider group of service providers was reached, but the quality of working together was not always as good as at live events. The return to joint local meetings will intensify network-like activities, which are in high demand based on stakeholder discussions. Now is also an excellent time to think about what kinds of new partners we want to have as part of our network.

Good cooperation will be continued and deepened with Helsinki Marketing as part of the Economic Development department of the City of Helsinki, Helsinki Partners, Visit Finland, Metsähallitus Nature Services, the Association of World Heritage Sites in Finland and educational institutions in the field. In the future, Suomenlinna will be actively involved in tourism development projects launched to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on sustainable tourism themes. In the changed situation, areas are identified in which the service providers need more expertise.

Suomenlinna has long been an active player in the development of sustainable tourism regionally and nationally. The work of sustainable tourism must be continued so that Suomenlinna can share good practices with others and apply the best practices learned from others for the benefit of the World Heritage Site.



Developing networked activities

What we do together to achieve our goals

- We enable bundling, pre-purchase and engage visitors to visit Suomenlinna through the joint online store of the fortress.
- We carry out active cross-marketing and cross-selling, especially in social media, customer service work and online store.
- We use the joint Extranet to access and share information.
- We form new kinds of partnerships between different activities in Suomenlinna.
- We implement new innovative models of networking across industry boundaries.
- We develop our expertise together.

Communicating World Heritage values

Communication of the history, stories and world heritage values of Suomenlinna will be increased and diversified. The communications for Suomenlinna's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) are being developed in a direction that is easy to understand and considers different target groups. To communicate about World Heritage Sites successfully, it is important that all stakeholders in the site want to use them consistently as part of their customer and stakeholder communications. Authorised guides play a particularly important role in communicating values to visitors.

When the grounds for the conservation of Suomenlinna are readily and widely available, visitors understand that the cultural heritage preserved in Suomenlinna is an enriching resource. This motivates them to commit to protecting the site and to act respectfully, attentively and in support of local services. Suomenlinna is, on a world-wide scale, recognised as a site that represents the world's common heritage and the people of Helsinki are proud of the World Heritage Site located in their city. The goal is that, when leaving Suomenlinna, visitors can give a one-sentence answer to the question: "What is Suomenlinna?"

The Outstanding Universal Values of world heritage sites are not only passively assimilated information, but the public must be offered opportunities to participate in the management of the World Heritage Site. Based on the feedback, many want to work actively for Suomenlinna. Those interested will be offered concrete opportunities to participate in the preservation of world heritage. This strengthens the personal importance of the sense of ownership and protection. Such committed visitors form an important group of regular customers who speak for Suomenlinna.

In support of the World Heritage education in schools, targeted materials are produced together with the Association of World Heritage Sites in Finland, the Association of Cultural Heritage Education in Finland, and the City of Helsinki. The strategy of the City of Helsinki's Education Division sees the entire city as a learning environment. As a World Heritage Site, Suomenlinna offers a diverse learning environment that can be utilised in many subjects and at many levels of class and education. Suomenlinna cooperates with educational institutions introducing the World Heritage Site to students and pupils in several fields and provides various opportunities for utilising the themes of Suomenlinna and sustainability in teaching.



Communicating World Heritage values

What we do together to achieve our goals

- We formulate Suomenlinna's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) to be easily communicated and tailor common means to facilitate the communication of the story.
- In addition to our own service, we communicate about Suomenlinna and the world heritage in our channels.
- We will renew the destination information boards about Suomenlinna's destinations, making them a product suitable for an independent visit to the fortress, including a service offering.
- We offer visitors partnerships that take advantage of various opportunities to participate in the preservation of world heritage.
- We actively participate in the development of world heritage education.
- We actively cooperate with educational institutions.

8. The attractiveness of Suomenlinna in 2021–2023 requires a joint effort

The goal of Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy is to continue long-term development of the destination as a model for sustainable tourism. In this model, entrepreneurs are successful all year round by providing high-quality services, where residents have a high quality of life and where visitors enjoy participatory experiences that increase their wellbeing. The short-term strategy update has focused on building a bridge to post-COVID-19 tourism in the World Heritage Site.

Using this sustainable tourism strategy as the guideline for the development of tourism in Suomenlinna will ensure a common direction and result in the following types of collective efforts by 2024.

Tourism is increasingly seen in Suomenlinna as a positive factor in the preservation of cultural heritage. Social sustainability and cooperation with the local community play a key role in minimising the negative impact of tourism. Recognised signs of sustainable tourism encourage service providers to engage in sustainable tourism activities and enable the verification of the efforts in a visible way. The profitability of tourism service providers will return to a sustainable level through reaching local and domestic visitors and the gradual return of foreign visitors. Suomenlinna is an active participant as a Helsinki Tourist Destination and participates in broader sustainable tourism support projects of the City of Helsinki and other partners.

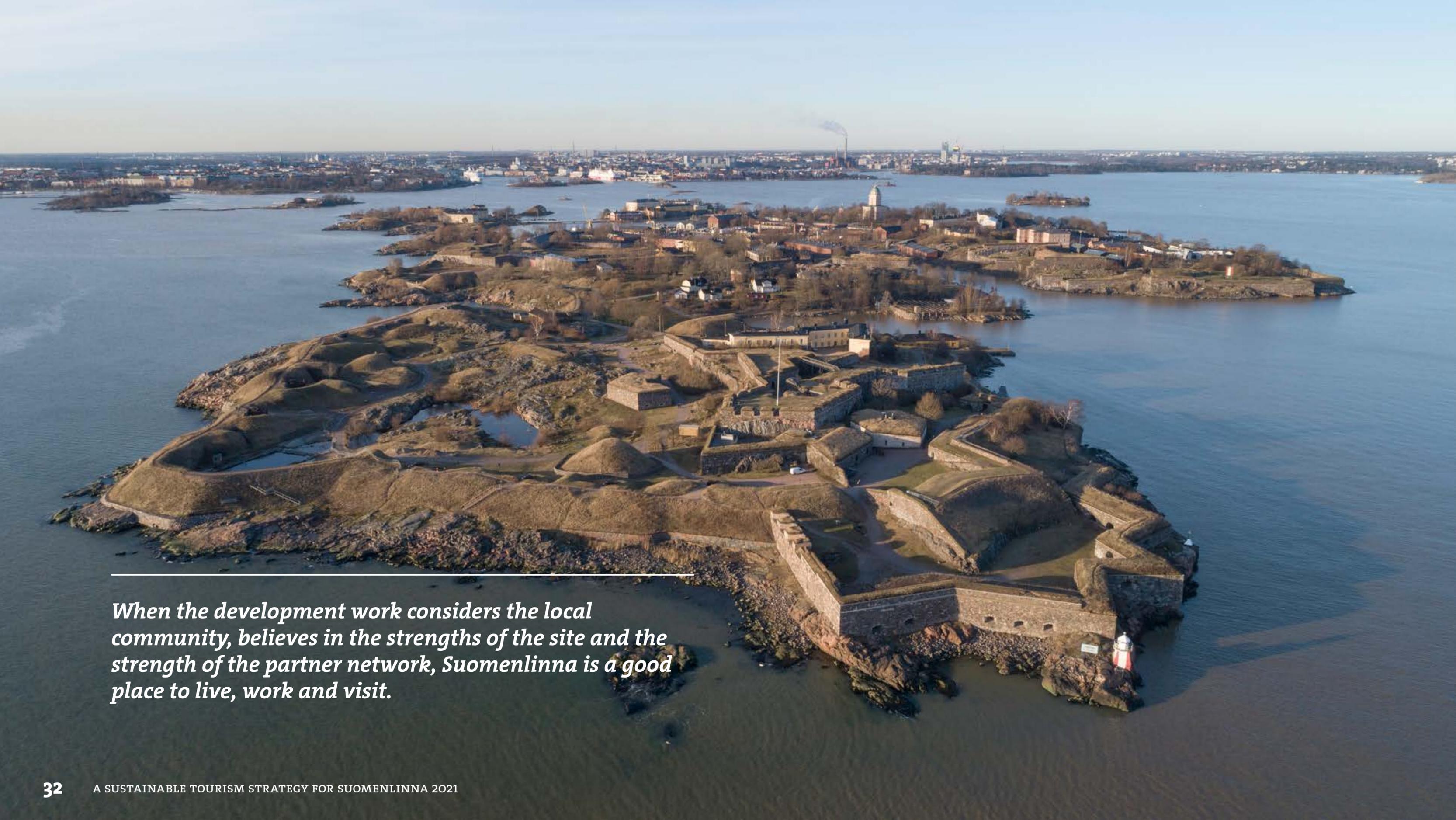
The varied event offerings and creative combination of services offer nearby residents and Finnish visitors' new perspectives on Suomenlinna. The high-quality and interesting service and event offerings bring loyal customers and reasons to visit Suomenlinna again and again. Since health and safety has been considered throughout the customer path, visitors have no reason to hesitate in going to Suomenlinna. The digital discoverability and purchasability of the site and services have improved and highlight the fortress's wide offer to potential visitors.

The communications power of the service providers has been able to change the image of Suomenlinna and Finnish visitors see it as a destination all year round. Unified and repetitive communications also take into account the actions of sustainable tourism and the world heritage values of the site and help potential visitors and new regular customers find Suomenlinna's diverse offering.

The service providers will work increasingly together and rely on the strength of Suomenlinna's network. The development of cross-marketing and cross-selling improves the visibility of Suomenlinna and its individual service providers. Joint online sales and events will continue to evolve and bring together new stakeholders.

The bridge to the post-pandemic period consists of jointly implemented measures that appeal to the domestic customer base. They combine the development of an individual service, the creative combination of service providers' products and the emergence of new partnerships and ideas. Successfully implemented, shifting the focus to domestic customer groups will also act as a measure towards the recovery of international tourism. When Suomenlinna attracts the residents of the surrounding area in a renewed way, popularity makes the fortress an interesting place to visit also for foreign tourists. When the development work considers the local community, believes in the strengths of the site and the strength of the partner network, Suomenlinna is a good place to live, work and visit.

The bridge to the post-pandemic period consists of jointly implemented measures.



When the development work considers the local community, believes in the strengths of the site and the strength of the partner network, Suomenlinna is a good place to live, work and visit.

9. Strategy follow-up

Next time, Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy will be updated more thoroughly and with a wider involvement of stakeholders. The update will take place at the end of 2023, when we have seen how the post-pandemic period leaves its mark on the tourism of Suomenlinna.

While waiting for a broader update of the strategy, we have already rolled up our sleeves. Over the next couple of years, progress is being sought in the five focus areas selected. Measures that each operator can promote themselves or together with the network will be actively highlighted at joint events. Every year, we look at what measures have been successful and what still needs to be done. Monitoring and cooperation ensure that all the stakeholders on the site are moving in the same direction.



Links

Business Finland website for more information about Visit Finland's Sustainable Travel Finland programme.

<https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/do-business-with-finland/visit-finland/sustainable-travel-finland-label>

Helsinki Marketing website for more information about the Think Sustainably service.

<https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/think-sustainably>

A Prosperous Suomenlinna for Future generations. Suomenlinna's management plan. 2020–2024.

https://frantic.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/suomenlinna/sites/2/2020/04/30081059/Management-Plan-Fortress-of-Suomenlinna-2020-2024_V2.pdf

Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism strategy 2015.

https://frantic.s3.amazonaws.com/suomenlinna/2015/06/Sustainable_Tourism_Strategy_062015_final_o.pdf

Suomenlinna Visitor Survey 2018.

https://frantic.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/suomenlinna/2015/06/Sustainable_Tourism_Strategy_062015_final_lowres_o.pdf

UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme.

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism/>

Achieving more together – sustainable growth and renewal in Finnish tourism: Finland's tourism strategy 2019–2028 and action plan 2019–2023.

<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/162136>

Our Common Heritage For a National World Heritage Strategy 2015–2025

<https://okm.fi/documents/1410845/4072878/Our+Common+Heritage,+For+a+National+World+Heritage+Strategy+2015-2025.pdf/e436f74c-da5d-4907-b3ca-7e7f8c6686ae>

Appendices

Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism indicators and monitoring

Suomenlinna's sustainable tourism indicators and monitoring

1. We support the conservation of the site values and promote their protection

Indicator	Measurement method	Status 2019	Status 2020	Objective	Minimum limit of acceptable change	Maximum limit of acceptable change	Sustainability 2019	Sustainability 2020
We inform visitors of the values of the site and their protection and encourage them to act responsibly. Tourism does not jeopardise the site's natural and cultural values, and we prevent negative impacts proactively.								
Number of Tourist Information customers	Customer counter in the Tourist Information	128,500	35,000	150,000	132,000	275,000	3	The result is not comparable due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Visitor information on why Suomenlinna is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (% Yes).	Visitor survey	44% (2018)	44% (2018)	55%	42%	100%	2	2
Wear and tear caused by visitors, which threatens the world heritage value of the fortification (walls) at the measuring point	The erosion of the path of the walls of Kustaanmiekka is monitored annually in the measuring areas in October–November with an on-site measurement	Renovated and access-controlled barrier path in the best fitness class in terms of width, depth change -4 cm. 2019 renovated path that has not been fenced has become wider after the repair +150 cm	Renovated and access-controlled barrier path in the best fitness class in terms of width, depth change -5 cm. 2019 renovated path that has not been fenced has become wider after the repair +190 cm	Visitors stay on the route, the wall path does not widen sideways and does not deepen from the last measurement	width 0 cm depth 0 cm	width 10 cm depth 3 cm	3	The result is not comparable due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. We minimise the load on the environment

Indicator	Measurement method	Status 2019	Status 2020	Objective	Minimum limit of acceptable change	Maximum limit of acceptable change	Sustainability 2019	Sustainability 2020
We set a good example in environmental matters.								
The Governing Body has an environmental management system in place	The environmental management system is certified and audited by an external body	WWF Green Office	WWF Green Office	Environmental management system in use	Environmental management system in use	Environmental management system in use	1	1
Reusing and recycling waste produced through visitor services (operators who responded to the survey)	Annual survey on Suomenlinna tourism service providers on waste sorting	94% of operators sort waste from their operations	91% of operators sort waste from their operations	Each operator sorts all waste from their operations	70% of operators sort waste from their operations	Each operator sorts all waste from their operations	1	1

3. We strengthen the local aspects

Indicator	Measurement method	Status 2019	Status 2020	Objective	Minimum limit of acceptable change	Maximum limit of acceptable change	Sustainability 2019	Sustainability 2020
We cooperate and provide both residents and visitors with opportunities to participate in the site care and development.								
Visitors and tourism support living in Suomenlinna	Governing Body Tenant survey	2.7	3.25	3.4	2.4	3.8	2	The result is not comparable due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Amount of voluntary work (person-days)	Compilation of voluntary work statistics of the Governing Body	309	13	275	250	300	1	The result is not comparable due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. We promote use of the sites to increase health and well-being

Indicator	Measurement method	Status 2019	Status 2020	Objective	Minimum limit of acceptable change	Maximum limit of acceptable change	Sustainability 2019	Sustainability 2020
We guarantee visitor safety at sites and in services We encourage visitors to diverse, self-directed and guided nature and culture experiences.								
Visitors and tourism support living in Suomenlinna	Visitor survey	4.1 (2018)	4.1 (2018)	4.3	3,9	5	1	1
Amount of voluntary work (person-days)	Visitor safety audits	Audits 2 times/year	Audits 2 times/year	Audits 2 times/year	Audits 1 time/year	Audits 2 times/year	2	2

5. We promote the growth of the local economy and the creation of jobs

Indicator	Measurement method	Status 2019	Status 2020	Objective	Minimum limit of acceptable change	Maximum limit of acceptable change		Sustainability 2020
We provide information about destinations and services in advance, easily and in an interesting form in different communications channels We encourage tourists to stay longer in the area.								
Minimum local economic impact of visitors	Visitor survey	EUR 23 M	EUR 10 M	EUR 25 M	EUR 22 M		2	The result is not comparable due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Winter season visitor numbers (winter season: January–April and October–December)	Visitor statistics	293,000	138,000	300,000	270,000	350,000	2	The result is not comparable due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. We communicate together the values and services of the site

Indicator	Measurement method	Status 2019	Status 2020	Objective	Minimum limit of acceptable change	Maximum limit of acceptable change	Sustainability 2019	SustainabiLITY 2020
We are committed to the values and basic messages of the site. We communicate in a consistent and responsible way to different target groups both in Finland and internationally. We encourage operators to commit to these principles of sustainable tourism. We collect feedback from stakeholders in order to improve customer satisfaction and operations. We organise training and cooperation events with operators in the region.								
Our communications are based on the principles of sustainability/responsibility and the world heritage status	Review of the website of the operators (31 operators involved, operators listed in the tab)	World Heritage themes: 8 operators - 23% and sustainability/responsibility: 7 operators - 25%	World heritage themes: 11 operators - 34% and sustainability/responsibility: 13 operators - 41%	All permanent operators communicate these matters on their website	75% of operators communicate these matters on their website	Permanent operators communicate these matters on their websites	4	3
Awareness of the site's values and services among tourism operators	Regular forums and the Extranet or another shared network platform	4 events (tourism morning and Suomenlinna info session) and Extranet	3 remote events, HKS event, orientation as an information package, Extranet	4 events and extranet, etc.	3 events and extranet, etc.	6 events and extranet, etc.	1	1

Sustainability rating:

1 = Fully implemented
2 = Implemented in general terms
3 = Implemented in part
4 = Implemented somewhat
5 = Not implemented at all



WWW.SUOMENLINNA.FI

WWW.MAAILMANPERINTO.FI