



Helsinki-Uusimaa
Regional Council

Well Ahead

HELSINKI-UUSIMAA REGIONAL
PROGRAMME 2022–2025



Well Ahead

— HELSINKI-UUSIMAA REGIONAL
PROGRAMME 2022–2025 —→

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Summary

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2022–2025 sets out the region's vision for 2030 and outlines the development priorities, objectives and measures for 2022–2025. The Programme has been worked out in several workshops with the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council's key partners, including the Uusimaa Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, municipalities, educational and research institutes and civil society organisations. The parties have considered the key development guidelines and strategies from the global level to the municipal level. As the Programme facilitates the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Helsinki-Uusimaa, it also covers the related strategies and objectives of the region's municipalities.

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2022–2025 provides a description of the key forces of change and the concise statistical review that form the basis of the development priorities and objectives.

The Programme's vision for 2030 is "Well Ahead". This means that in 2030 Helsinki-Uusimaa will be Well Ahead in:

- climate change mitigation. Our objective is to be a carbon neutral region by 2030.
- economic competitiveness. Our objective is to increase Helsinki-Uusimaa's research and development expenditure to 5 per cent of the region's gross domestic product.
- wellbeing. Our objective is to achieve an employment rate of 80 per cent in Helsinki-Uusimaa by the end of 2030.

The Programme has three priorities: Environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa, Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa and Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa. Each priority has three objectives with detailed measures.

The Programme will be implemented by the parties engaged in Helsinki-Uusimaa's development, above all through projects. To support implementation, the compatibility of the various financial instruments with the programme objectives and measures has been examined. Programme implementation will be monitored by indicators measuring the progress of each priority. The Programme also contains a summary of the Smart Specialisation Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation.

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme's environmental impact has been assessed in the Environmental Report, the summary of which is attached to the Programme.

Keywords

region, regional programme, Helsinki-Uusimaa, regional development, vision, strategy

Notes

A pdf version of the publication can be found on our website: www.uudenmaanliitto.fi/julkaisut.

Foreword

The aim of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme is to sustainably develop the vitality and wellbeing of our region. This Programme has been made for the people of Helsinki-Uusimaa, with partnership as its keyword. The regional parties that have drawn up the Programme with the Regional Council include municipalities, universities, upper secondary schools, civil society organisations and many other development bodies.

The task of the Regional Council is to bring different views together and deepen cooperation to ensure that the programme objectives are achieved. Our Programme seeks to send, both within the region and outside it, a unified message about our vision. There will be an even greater need for such a message when the health, social services and regional government reform divides Helsinki-Uusimaa into five counties that become responsible for organising publicly funded healthcare and social welfare.

Crosscutting cooperation across sectoral and administrative boundaries plays a key role in the implementation of the Programme. Joint development can meet complex challenges and create new ideas, but we also need a strong commitment to achieve our common objectives. This Programme intends to give the region the confidence boost it needs for successful cooperation. Together, we will set out to create the future of Helsinki-Uusimaa.

Markku Markkula, Chair of the Regional Board

Ossi Savolainen, Regional Mayor



Markku Markkula




Ossi Savolainen

Helsinki-Uusimaa's vision: Well Ahead


Although our region covers only three per cent of Finland's land area, it has the largest population concentration and the most active employment and economic area in the country. It also generates a fifth of Finland's climate emissions. Helsinki-Uusimaa is the most international region in Finland in terms of the number of immigrants and the volume of international business. Because of our outward-looking position, cooperation and networks are very important to us, especially within the EU and with other metropolises in the Baltic Sea Region. Helsinki-Uusimaa is the driver of Finland's international competitiveness and employment development.

Our vision is for Helsinki-Uusimaa to be Well Ahead by 2030. This means that we are not only a leading region in Finland, but also a bold forerunner playing a proactive role on the international scene. Our aim is to get Well Ahead in the following areas:

 **Climate change mitigation.** Our objective is to be a carbon neutral region by 2030. We will advance this ambitious and responsible objective by supporting the cooperation, networking and research of a

wide range of partners, as well as research, development and innovation activities. By developing new solutions for climate change mitigation, we will become a globally influential pathfinder, and a builder of opportunities on a global scale.

 **Economic competitiveness.** Our objective is to become the most innovative region in the EU and to increase Helsinki-Uusimaa's research and development expenditure to 5 per cent of the region's GDP by 2030. According to international comparisons, Helsinki-Uusimaa already has the best environment for foreign investment. Our competitiveness is based on our skills, networks and international partnerships, high technology and solutions that support green growth, wellbeing services, and both natural and urban environments that are second to none by global standards. Helsinki-Uusimaa has fostered many skills and jobs that, due to the region's characteristics, could not be located anywhere else in Finland.

 **Wellbeing.** Helsinki-Uusimaa offers its residents the best opportunities for a

good and safe living. During the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, we will strengthen the inclusion and equality of all Helsinki-Uusimaa residents by supporting the structures of the welfare society, investing in education and training and preventing social problems. Our objective is to achieve an employment rate of 80 per cent in Helsinki-Uusimaa by the end of 2030.

Helsinki-Uusimaa ensures the wellbeing of its residents without overloading the carrying capacity of the region's natural environment. By improving wellbeing in an ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable way, we are also contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Well Ahead means that we aim to develop Helsinki-Uusimaa for the good of Finland as a whole, and we intend to leverage our success by improving wellbeing both in our own country and internationally. In this area, we truly are a globally influential region. Solving complex problems, such as climate change mitigation and coping with the Covid-19 crisis, requires looking beyond one's own region and field of action.

Changes that become enablers

Global developments, such as climate change and the ecological sustainability crisis, the ageing of the population in the western countries, digital transformation and the Covid-19 pandemic, are forces of change that will inevitably be reflected in the structures of Finnish society and in the everyday lives of Helsinki-Uusimaa residents. We have explored the forces of change in a project that provides background for this Programme and envisions what Helsinki-Uusimaa could look like in 2050 with three scenarios. The region's future in the long term is also discussed in the future book *Focusing Futures – Helsinki-Uusimaa Region 2050* (available in Finnish), compiled by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council.

With the Programme, we aim to respond to changes caused by the following megatrends and phenomena:

» The Covid-19 pandemic continues to shake up societies and economies as never before. As a result of the crisis, resilience, i.e. the ability to resist, adapt and regenerate, has taken on new importance both at a social and individual level. In Finland, the effects of the pandemic have been felt by far the most in Helsinki-Uusimaa. It is therefore natural that surviving the pandemic, rebuilding society and encouraging new growth provide a key starting point for the Programme.

Safeguarding the welfare society and economic renewal are particularly important when the premise is as challenging as the one we are facing now.

» For climate change mitigation and the ecological sustainability crisis, the most important solutions and changes in direction must be carried out in the 2020s in order for global warming to be effectively curbed. This requires a shift to more sustainable practices and a transformation in the generation and consumption of energy. Adaptation to climate change must also be promoted at local level. As Helsinki-Uusimaa residents, we recognise our region's responsibility to create new solutions for us and for the rest of the world.

» The significant decrease in the birth rate and the increase in life expectancy are dramatically changing the demographic. In Finland, the number of working-age people and children is decreasing while the number of older people is increasing. In Helsinki-Uusimaa, population growth will be increasingly based on immigration rather than on natural increase. The massive change in the population age structure will challenge the vitality of several municipalities and the economically sustainable provision of services.

» Technological development and digital transformation are reforming the ways in which work is performed and, more broadly, what the structures of society will be. New ideas, innovations and investments will improve productivity and serve as the main sources of economic growth. As the old occupations disappear, completely new industries and ways of working will emerge. The transformation of work will highlight the need for continuous learning and reskilling. Automation and artificial intelligence are addressing labour shortages and replacing increasingly complex jobs, but they do not offer a substitute for creativity, innovation and problem solving. Smart transport, new mobility services and an increase in remote working have already made a significant impact on our mobility choices and traffic flows. The growth of e-commerce will create new kinds of logistics needs and supply chain challenges.

In Finland, Helsinki-Uusimaa plays a key role in how we will adapt and respond to the challenges posed by global forces of change. Crises also create new opportunities for the economy and society. Digitalisation, for example, has taken huge steps with the Covid-19 pandemic. These opportunities must be seized in order for us ensure future prosperity.



Helsinki-Uusimaa in a nutshell

A third of Finland's population, more than 1.7 million people, live in Helsinki-Uusimaa. Helsinki and its surroundings are currently one of the fastest growing urban areas in Europe and form the only metropolitan area in Finland. As in the rest of Finland, the population in Helsinki-Uusimaa has aged in recent years. Currently, one in five Helsinki-Uusimaa residents are over 65 years of age. The aging of the population and the deteriorating dependency ratio are curbed by rising immigration. More than half of Finland's foreign-language speakers live in Helsinki-Uusimaa, most of them in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

However, there are major differences between Helsinki-Uusimaa's municipalities and areas in terms of population growth and age structure. In the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, the challenge of demographic development is to manage growth sustainably, while elsewhere in the region it is often related to maintaining economic viability. Although Helsinki-Uusimaa is home to Finland's healthiest and longest-living people, wellbeing disparities have also arisen here. Especially in the bigger towns, residents' socioeconomic status and wellbeing may vary considerably.

Helsinki-Uusimaa has a service-intensive business structure. Around one in three Finnish jobs are in Helsinki-Uusimaa. The economy of Helsinki-Uusimaa is characterised by strong international links and export focus. The region's economic vitality is strengthened by the younger-than-average stock of enterprises and the large number of start-ups and growth companies. The large share of knowledge-intensive services and high-tech jobs of the economic structure is also a strength. Helsinki-Uusimaa is Finland's transport and logistics hub, and home to the country's most important international airport and several major ports. Excellent road and rail connections link Helsinki-Uusimaa with the other Finnish regions.

Helsinki-Uusimaa has the highest concentration of graduates in Finland. The population's high level of education is driven both by the region's diverse educational opportunities and by the labour market, which draws talent with academic and professional degrees. Such high levels of education and skills ensure excellent opportunities for research and development and the emergence of new innovations. Helsinki-Uusimaa's R&D expenditure accounts for half of Finland's R&D expenditure and 3.5 per cent of the region's GDP.

Helsinki-Uusimaa scores high in many European and global comparisons measuring wellbeing, competitiveness, skills potential and innovation. In the European Social Progress Index (SPI), maintained by the European Commission, Helsinki-Uusimaa ranked second among European regions in 2020. According to the SPI, Helsinki-Uusimaa's strengths include residents' trust in their personal rights and tolerance towards other people. Helsinki-Uusimaa is also ranked second among European regions in the Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2021 measuring regional innovation capability and the performance of the regional innovation systems.

The EU Regional Competitiveness Index (RCI) puts Helsinki-Uusimaa tenth among regions. According to the RCI, our greatest strengths are the highly educated population and the prerequisites for continuous learning.

Outside urban areas, smaller settlements are dotted across the landscape made up of forests and arable land. Helsinki-Uusimaa is characterised by river valleys, lakes and a large coastal area with archipelagos. The core natural areas account for 13 per cent of the land area, forests providing the region's most significant carbon sink potential. Helsinki-Uusimaa accounts for 20 per cent of Finland's climate emissions. During 2005–2020, the region's greenhouse gas emissions per capita have decreased by 38 per cent and total emissions by 27 per cent.

Key figures for Helsinki-Uusimaa



1.7 million people

31 % of the Finnish population



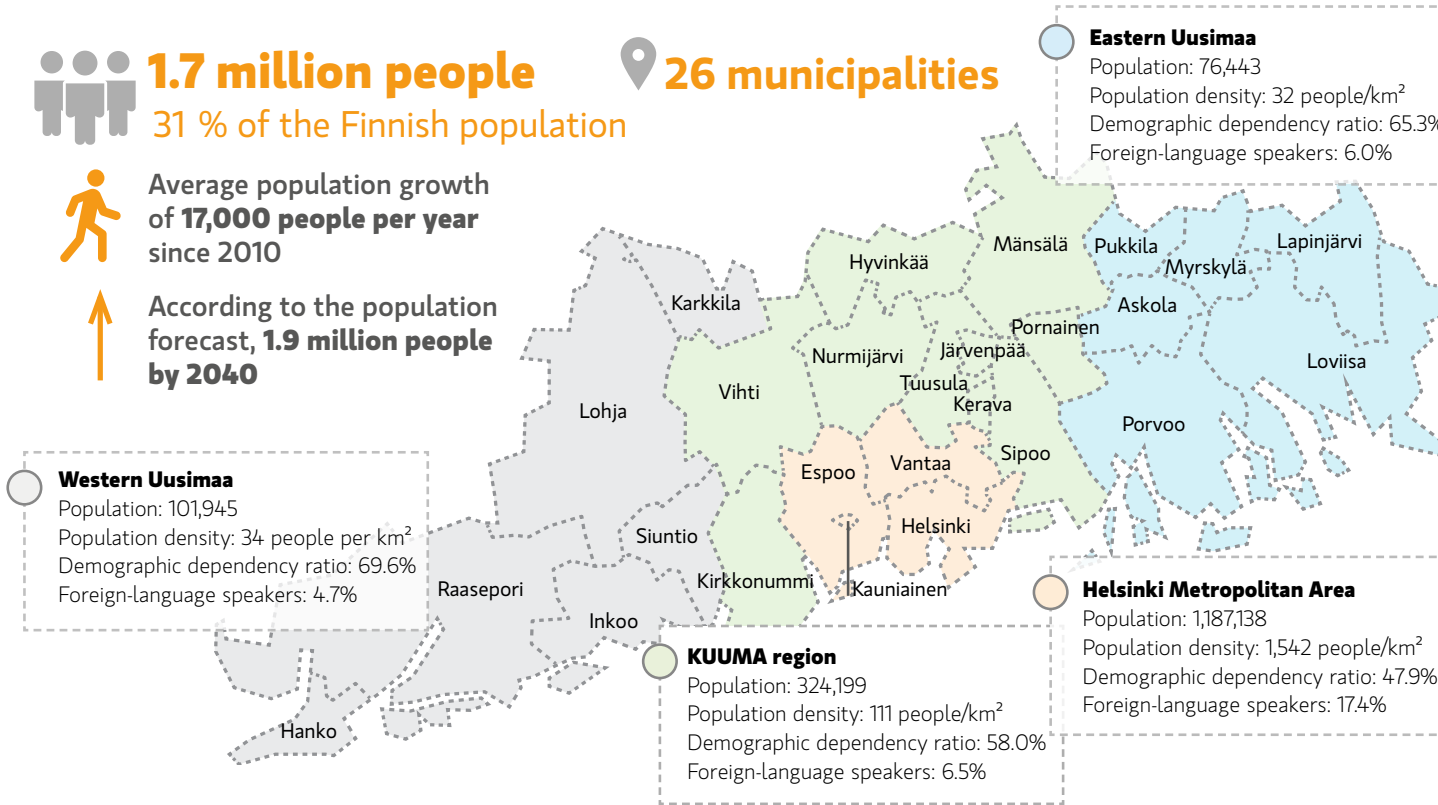
Average population growth of **17,000 people per year** since 2010



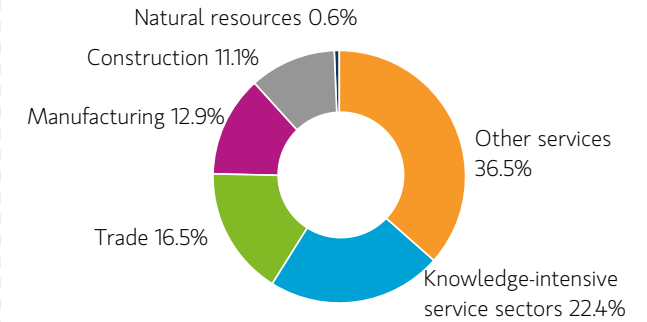
According to the population forecast, **1.9 million people** by 2040



26 municipalities



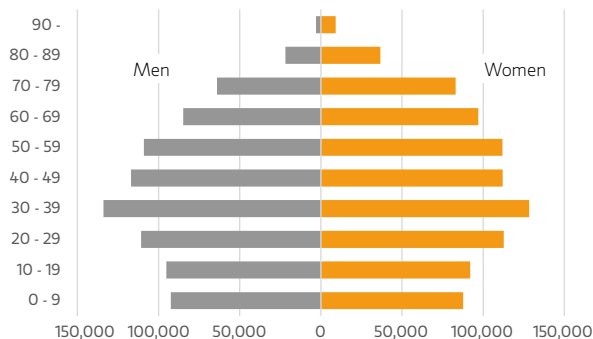
Helsinki-Uusimaa industry profile



42% of Finnish growth companies choose Helsinki-Uusimaa as their location

10 % of the employees of Helsinki-Uusimaa businesses work in growth companies

Population of Helsinki-Uusimaa by age group 2020

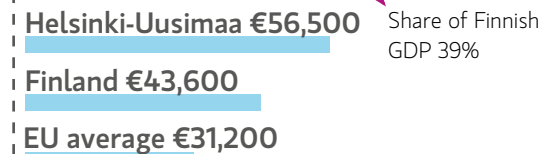


Of the population

14.7% speak some other language
7.7% speak Swedish
77.6% speak Finnish

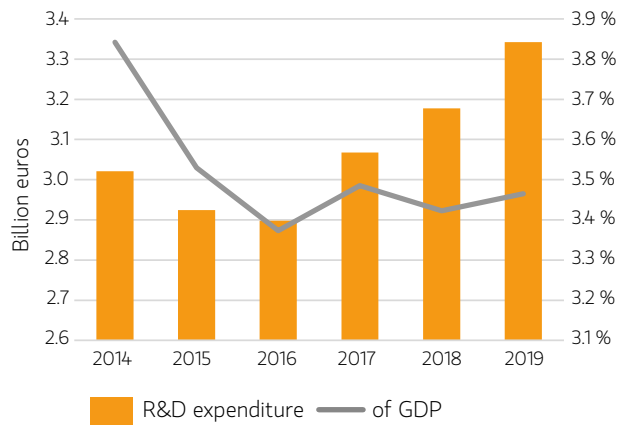
Of all foreign-language speakers in Finland
58 % live in Helsinki-Uusimaa

GDP per capita:



Of new foreign companies, **more than 60%** choose Helsinki-Uusimaa as their location

Helsinki-Uusimaa research and development expenditure



Helsinki-Uusimaa's share of Finland's R&D expenditure **50 %**



2nd most innovative region in the EU

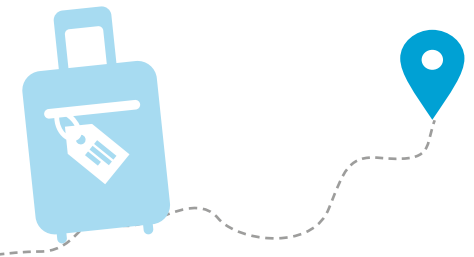
(EU regional innovation scoreboard 2021)

Helsinki-Uusimaa residents have the highest level of education in Finland



One in three residents have a university degree

Transport and accessibility



Of Finland's international tourists, **more than 50%** visit Helsinki-Uusimaa



10th most competitive region in the EU

(Regional competitiveness index 2019)

Strengths:

highly educated population, innovation capacity, technologically advanced



Ranked 2nd in wellbeing in the EU

(Regional social progress index 2020)

Strengths:

trust in personal rights, tolerance towards others, attractive environment, right conditions for learning and higher education

Emissions per resident in 2020

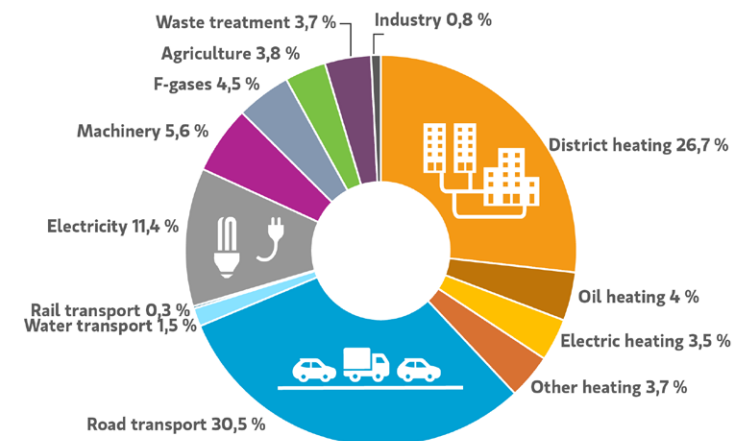
Helsinki-Uusimaa **3.9 tonnes CO₂e/person**
Finland average **5.9 tonnes CO₂e/person**

Change in total emissions in Helsinki-Uusimaa since 2005

-27%



Distribution of greenhouse gas emissions of Helsinki-Uusimaa region in 2020



Priorities and objectives

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme has three priorities: Environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa, Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa and Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa. These priorities and objectives support the implementation of Helsinki-Uusimaa's Well Ahead vision. The implementation measures are presented under each objective.

Table 1. Programme priorities, objectives and measures

Priority 1: Environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa
Objective 1.1. Carbon-neutral communities
1. Drawing up and launching a climate change adaptation plan
2. Promoting new sustainable energy solutions
3. Minimising urban sprawl and mitigating the impacts of construction on climate
4. Promoting sustainable mobility
5. Improving carbon sinks
Objective 1.2 Thriving nature
6. Increasing biodiversity and strengthening the ecological networks
7. Developing the environmental impact assessments and integrating them in decision-making
8. Providing nature-based and sustainable solutions for the multipurpose use of forests
9. Improving the state of the Baltic Sea and watercourses, and leveraging the potential of the sea
Objective 1.3 Resource-smart solutions
10. Enhancing the role of Helsinki-Uusimaa in leading the transition to the sustainable circular economy with skills and innovation
11. Developing the circular economy of the food system and reducing food waste throughout the food supply chain
12. Providing environmental education, and offering encouragement and guidance for environmentally responsible consumption

Priority 2: Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa
Objective 2.1. Promoting investment and innovation
13. Developing the region's shared brand and increasing visibility to attract investment
14. Facilitating innovation and strengthening networks and international cooperation
15. Improving the international accessibility of Helsinki-Uusimaa
Objective 2.2. Growth based on technology and services
16. Facilitating green growth and sustainable innovation
17. Improving the digital skills of businesses and public sector organisations, and utilising digitalisation
18. Bolstering the establishment, networking, renewal and internationalisation of businesses through the development of business services and operating models
19. Supporting the renewal of Helsinki-Uusimaa's cultural and tourism sectors
Objective 2.3. New skills and talent
20. Promoting opportunities for continuous learning and education, especially for underrepresented groups
21. Raising the level of education by increasing the number of higher education graduates
22. Improving skills matching and anticipation in cooperation with education providers and employers
23. Increasing immigration and boosting the employment of immigrants
24. Attracting international talent and enhancing the marketing of the region
Priority 3: Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa
Objective 3.1 Cultural diversity and inclusion
25. Facilitating inclusion and combatting discrimination in public services, schools and workplaces
26. Advocating two-way integration in cooperation with the public and third sectors
27. Strengthening the activities of networks and civil society organisations supporting inclusion and participation
28. Developing digital equality by upgrading digital skills and the usability of digital services
Objective 3.2 Supporting knowledge, education and work
29. Ensuring a good level of general knowledge through the high quality and equality of education
30. Developing the provision of guidance and information services for young people
31. Advancing cross-sectoral cooperation between the family support and child welfare services
32. Improving employment and increasing equality in working life
Objective 3.3 Easy daily life
33. Reducing spatial segregation and increasing the interaction between rural and urban areas
34. Ensuring the availability of high-speed broadband across the region
35. Developing cultural and leisure activities as part of the promotion of wellbeing and health
36. Improving the services and accessibility of attractive cultural and natural environments and recreation areas



Environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa

Helsinki-Uusimaa seeks to become the most environmentally smart region in Europe. This objective will be achieved by developing the regional and urban structure sustainably and by safeguarding biodiversity. We have a key role to play in achieving Finland's carbon neutrality target. We create fair and resource-smart solutions to local and global climate change challenges, while increasing wellbeing. Our environmentally smart actions will help Helsinki-Uusimaa to remain a clean and attractive region with a diverse natural environment.

Main objective:

Helsinki-Uusimaa will be carbon neutral in 2030.



Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa:

Helsinki-Uusimaa seeks to become the most innovative region in Europe, where cross-sectoral networks work together to produce world-class innovation and successful business. Our businesses and universities are at the highest international level and our region is known for its inventive piloting and innovation environments. Helsinki-Uusimaa is an attractive location for international talent, companies and investments. Our region is a hub for international transport that secures not only the accessibility of Helsinki-Uusimaa, but also the accessibility and international competitiveness of the whole of Finland.

Main objective:

Helsinki-Uusimaa R&D expenditure will have increased to 5 per cent of the region's GDP by 2030.



Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa:

Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa seeks to offer its residents the best opportunities for a good life. Multicultural Helsinki-Uusimaa welcomes new people and offers them a safe place to live, providing the residents with affordable and high-quality homes that meet a wide range of needs. Equality and inclusion are ensured by investment in equal education and support to young people. Excellent recreational and leisure opportunities, cultural offerings and nature destinations are accessible to all Helsinki-Uusimaa residents.

Main objective:

Helsinki-Uusimaa's employment rate will have increased to 80 per cent by 2030.

UN Sustainable Development Goals:

Finland has been ranked first in the UN Sustainable Development Goals Index. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme plans to contribute to the achievement of these Goals. Through our actions, we aim to create an impact, both nationally and internationally. The Programme covers all Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, for each priority, we have mentioned the Goals whose implementation the Programme is particularly designed to influence. Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals is particularly important to us, as the Programme aims to strengthen networks both within Helsinki-Uusimaa and globally. Goal 17 is therefore a crosscutting objective for the Programme.



Figure 1. UN Sustainable Development Goals



**Environmentally
smart Helsinki-
Uusimaa** →



Priority 1: Environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa

Climate change mitigation requires urgent action. Climate change affects every Helsinki-Uusimaa resident, and its mitigation is not only necessary, but also in the interests of each resident. According to the latest data, global warming is progressing faster than we thought and, for our part, we must limit it by reducing emissions quickly. Helsinki-Uusimaa's greenhouse gas emissions account for approximately one fifth of the total emissions of Finnish municipalities (6.6 million tonnes of CO₂ in 2020). The impact of Helsinki-Uusimaa's efforts to mitigate climate change by reducing the region's emissions, along with the innovations and solutions of companies and other partners, make a difference across Finland. Our vision of being Well Ahead means that it is our duty to set an example in reducing emissions.

Carbon neutrality refers to an area which releases only as much CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere as it can absorb from the atmosphere. Helsinki-Uusimaa is increasing its carbon neutrality target by aiming for carbon neutrality by 2030. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Climate Roadmap, which aims for a carbon-neutral region by 2035, will be updated to meet the new target. The ambitious climate target seeks to ensure that Helsinki-Uusimaa residents can continue to enjoy a

comfortable and clean living environment, and to encourage the regional partners to lead the global climate change mitigation effort.

Along with climate change, biodiversity loss is one of the greatest challenges of our time. In Finland, diversity is most affected by forestry and agriculture, construction and pollution. In addition, climate change itself accelerates changes in nature. However, green areas act as carbon stores and sinks, maintain the functioning of natural processes, and help us both mitigate climate change and adapt to it. Change is possible, but to achieve it we must incorporate nature in our decision-making. Nature is an integral part of health, wellbeing and the economy.

Land use, buildings, transport and infrastructure are key to our efforts to shift towards a climate-neutral society. The value of clean water continues to increase. While improving the state of the Baltic Sea remains a challenge, the proximity of the sea offers Helsinki-Uusimaa a wealth of opportunities in terms of transport, services and recreation. A sustainable circular economy is a key solution to adjusting production and consumption. It takes into account the limits of the renewal capacity of natural resources and exploits the possibilities of reuse. In a functioning circular economy, value added is created without major environmental damage. When

properly implemented, the circular economy, the bioeconomy and the safeguarding of biodiversity support each other and create new business. Sustainable and responsible consumption and the sharing economy play an important role in an environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa. To develop and implement our climate action, we will need cooperation and partnerships between the public, private and third sectors.



Environmentally Smart Helsinki-Uusimaa priority focuses on these Sustainable Development Goals:

- 12:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Objective 1.1. Carbon-neutral communities

1. Drawing up and launching a climate change adaptation plan

The purpose of adapting to climate change is to anticipate the direct and indirect climate impacts on the wellbeing of the region’s residents, and to lay the foundations for adaptation measures at municipal level. In addition to the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, regional coordination of adaptation measures is needed. By drawing up a regional adjustment plan for Helsinki-Uusimaa, it will not only be possible to improve the region’s responsiveness to cross-municipal phenomena and processes, but also to support small and medium-sized municipalities that do not have the resources to take action alone. Increasing rainfall, prolonged periods of heat and drought, urban flooding caused by sudden heavy rainfall, coastal flooding caused by storms and other sudden incidents need to be better integrated into the planning of new areas and into the normal maintenance and renovation of old buildings and infrastructure.

2. Promoting new sustainable energy solutions

The focus of energy production is increasingly shifting towards renewable energy sources. At the same time, society is becoming more electronic, and as the digital transformation progresses, the need for energy grows. In the future, Helsinki-Uusimaa’s energy self-sufficiency is expected

to deteriorate relative to the rest of Finland. It is therefore important, for both social stability and competitiveness, to guarantee continuous, uninterrupted access to energy at a reasonable price. Due to their northern location, heating buildings alone increases the need for energy in Finland and Helsinki-Uusimaa.

Abandoning fossil fuels will significantly increase the demand for green electricity. New ways of generating, transferring and storing energy will also be needed. In addition to wind, water, biomass and the sun, renewable energy is obtained from environmental heat, such as geothermal heat and the sea. Electricity production can better match consumption when different forms of energy are combined. Geothermal energy, solar energy and bioenergy are the most promising renewable energy sources in Helsinki-Uusimaa. There are also opportunities for using municipal and industrial waste heat. Biogas produced from biomass can replace fossil energy in transport, industry and agriculture.

3. Minimising urban sprawl and mitigating the impacts of construction on climate

The climate impacts of land use and construction are mitigated by compact urban development and optimisation of the use of buildings and energy consumption. In particular, the ability to access urban centres and other service and workplace hubs by walking, cycling and public transport is important for an easy and sustainable

daily life. Accessibility has been improved by regional planning. In terms of emissions from new and renovation construction, the greatest impact is achieved through the careful planning of construction, the manufacture and reuse of building materials and the recycling of construction waste. Wood construction and the related expertise offer new business and export opportunities, which are boosted by projects.

Construction always produces some emissions, but where and how much is being built will make a difference. In some cases, infill construction encroaches on undeveloped green spaces. A more sustainable solution is to expand the built environment to areas where there is already functional public transport, rather than building in

green spaces where the conditions for sustainable mobility are poor. In built-up areas, biodiversity and attractiveness can be enhanced by controlled non-management of parks and recreation areas, plant choices for green construction, natural storm water management, the rewilding of flowing waters and the integration of vegetation into the built environment, for example through green roofs.

4. Promoting sustainable mobility

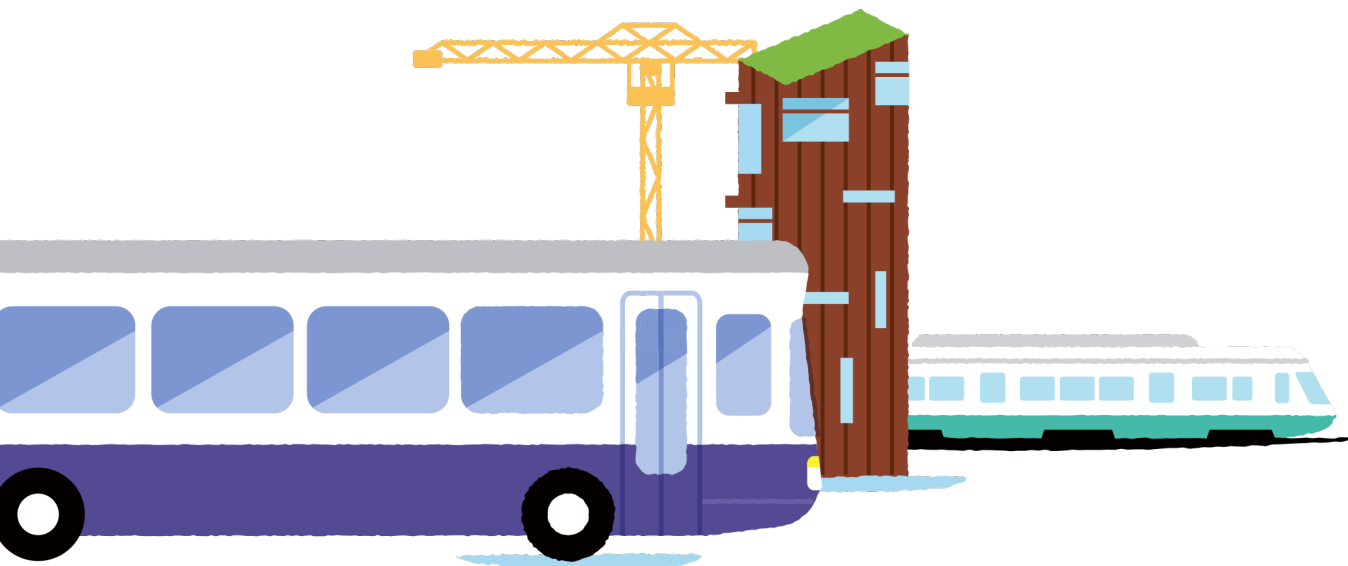
With transport climate solutions, it is important to take into account regional differences in mobility and to strive for a just transition, so that all residents of Helsinki-Uusimaa will have access to sustainable mobility choices. The transport system needs to be reformed, for example

through digitalisation, the development of public transport and the coordination of mobility and land use planning.

The promotion of cycling, walking and public transport, and the transition to low-emission cars, are key to reducing emissions. Better electric cars, battery technology and charging infrastructure will have the fastest impact on CO₂ emissions from cars and public transport. In logistics, efficient transport integration and optimisation of transport chains are important measures. In the longer term, emission reductions will be achieved by reducing the need for mobility, improving the accessibility of services through sustainable modes of transport, and improving the conditions for adopting sustainable modes of transport and efficient travel chains. These objectives and measures have been integrated into the regional and transport system plans drawn up for Helsinki-Uusimaa.

5. Improving carbon sinks

In Helsinki-Uusimaa, forests have significant carbon sink potential, but their preservation is affected by construction and forest management. The imputed carbon sink of Helsinki-Uusimaa forests is currently very low and therefore particular attention should be paid to the maintenance of forested areas and the sustainable use of forests. Efforts must be made to develop and scale technological carbon sequestration solutions. In agriculture, carbon sequestration



in soil varies according to soil characteristics and farming practices. Improving the soil's carbon balance is linked to other objectives that contribute to the sustainability of agriculture, such as organic and local food production and the promotion of seasonal products. In order to strengthen carbon sinks, cross-sectoral research and experimentation is needed to promote alternative values related to forests and soil.

Objective 1.2 Thriving nature

6. Increasing biodiversity and strengthening the ecological networks

Biodiversity loss is a global challenge that cannot be addressed without international cooperation. But diversity is also a local and regional matter. The depletion of species is concentrated in southern Finland, where nature has been exploited intensely and for a long time. In almost all groups of organisms, there are more species in the south than in the north. However, in southernmost Finland, nature reserves are mostly small and often isolated from each other, which is why in some protected areas the depletion of species continues. In order to increase diversity, research on the effectiveness of the various measures is needed, with encouraging examples of their application in a range habitats. We should also create new protected areas.

7. Developing the environmental impact assessments and integrating them in decision-making

Threats to habitats and species are largely related to land use. Wood production, drainage, field clearance, construction, eutrophication and the contamination of waters have caused deterioration of habitats. In urban areas, nature loss is caused especially by construction. It is essential to direct land use in such a way that the green spaces important for maintaining diversity are not fragmented and the ecological links between them are not weakened or broken. Environmental impact assessments and their importance in decision-making should be further strengthened, because nature and the benefits we derive from it are valuable.

8. Providing nature-based and sustainable solutions for the multipurpose use of forests

Increasing carbon sequestration and carbon stocks through vegetation and soil can aid biodiversity. Primary production plays a key role as more than 80 per cent of the land area in Helsinki-Uusimaa is forest or agricultural land. Forests and both cultivated and grazing areas provide habitats for many endangered and vulnerable species. The objective of the multipurpose use of forests is to reconcile forest-related needs with a limited forested area. The aim of multipurpose forest use is to integrate timber production, recreational use, tourism, protection of diversity and preservation or even increase of carbon sinks. We need more

research on the relationship between climate change and biodiversity.

9. Improving the state of the Baltic Sea and watercourses, and leveraging the potential of the sea

The proximity of the sea is one of Helsinki-Uusimaa's great opportunities for creating new jobs and prosperity while improving the state of the sea. New solutions to protect the diversity of the Baltic Sea and the marine environment are needed to reduce emissions, including wide-ranging cooperation across national borders. But the aim is also to achieve sustainable blue growth, encompassing sustainable exploitation of natural resources, the marine industry and marine logistics, fisheries and tourism.

There are many areas in the coastal waters of the Gulf of Finland that provide habitats for a large variety of plants and animals. However, although steps have been taken to rehabilitate the Baltic Sea, it remains heavily polluted and eutrophic. Rivers bring nutrients and wastewater emissions from industry, households and agriculture from an area four times larger than the Baltic Sea. Maritime transport, dredging and hydraulic engineering, alien species, fishing, littering and underwater noise also pose risks to aquatic ecosystems. Agricultural and forest management measures can, however, effectively reduce the amount of nutrients introduced into watercourses. As part of the projects targeting the sea basin,

businesses and other parties have a host of opportunities to improve the state of the Baltic Sea.

Objective 1.3 Resource-smart solutions

10. Enhancing the role of Helsinki-Uusimaa in leading the transition to the sustainable circular economy with skills and innovation

The circular economy is a way of thinking and operating in which materials are used efficiently and waste generation is minimised. Instead of ending up as waste, materials are reused as efficiently as possible, to enable both the materials and their value circulate for as long as possible. Efforts should also be made to reduce the consumption of virgin resources. The circular economy is a great opportunity for Helsinki-Uusimaa, both in terms of sustainable development and business, because most of



Finland's material flows are generated here. For example, industry and manufacturing generate a large amount of side and waste streams, the sustainable utilisation of which is central to the circular economy and minimises environmental damage.

The circular economy also includes the sharing economy and servitisation where customers pay for a service rather than a product. Services need to be developed based on sharing, renting and recycling. Businesses and other parties supporting the growth of the circular economy are brought together by cooperation and pilot platforms that develop new operating models, experiments and solutions. For example, the Helsinki-Uusimaa Circular Economy Valley is a large project that brings together many actors and serves as a meeting place and development platform for the circular economy sector.

11. Developing the circular economy of the food system and reducing food waste throughout the food supply chain

Food production and consumption have a significant impact on the environment. In the circular economy, the aim is to reduce food waste and utilise waste and side streams from food production efficiently. Helsinki-Uusimaa has a solid expertise in the food sector, such as innovations that utilise plant proteins. Both the food industry, including food production and packaging, and

households generate waste. The circular economy of food systems can be boosted by research and development, and food waste can also be reduced by influencing consumers' choices.

12. Providing environmental education, and offering encouragement and guidance for environmentally responsible consumption

People's choices about housing, mobility, food and leisure shape consumer culture and have a big impact on what kind of products and services are offered. Important ways to reduce the environmental burden include reducing consumption, minimising waste, paying for services instead of owning products, and integrating sustainability and repair into consumption choices. Responsible consumption should be made easy, affordable and attractive every time, regardless of the consumer's income level. In this context, co-creation with a wide range of stakeholders is key. Services need to be developed based on sharing, renting and recycling. Supporting children's and young people's relationship with nature, including environmental education, are also important in building a sustainable relationship with the environment and consumption. The arts and art education are good ways to strengthen the relationship with nature. Culture and the arts can help us visualise, verbalise and story-tell climate change, and reach out to different groups of people to stress the importance of consumption and individual choices.

Successful →
Helsinki-Uusimaa



Priority 2: Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa

A successful Helsinki-Uusimaa is based on economic sustainability: ensuring wellbeing through economic growth in an inclusive manner and within ecological limits. In line with the Helsinki-Uusimaa regional innovation strategy, the Smart Specialisation Strategy, we aim to accelerate the sustainable growth of the region and the discovery of new resource-smart solutions. This is the basis of our future competitiveness.

Cooperation and the ability to leverage international networks are key success factors in our region which plays a central role as a driver of Finnish innovation. Helsinki-Uusimaa already has experimental environments and innovation platforms for universities and cities which bring together people and where research, development and innovation are carried out. It is important to improve the conditions that allow these platforms to work, and to create new forums for dialogue and cooperation. This is also a key objective in the implementation of Helsinki-Uusimaa's Smart Specialisation Strategy.

A thriving business sector lays the foundations for prosperity and a successful economy. In Helsinki-Uusimaa, companies of all sizes and ages need to have the potential to succeed in both domestic and international markets. Business renewal,

growth and internationalisation will be boosted through versatile business services covering the entire life cycle of companies, from their establishment to growth and succession.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the transformation of work. The labour market requires higher levels of education and training at a time when many sectors are already facing labour shortages. In Helsinki-Uusimaa, the shortage of skilled labour constitutes a significant bottleneck in business growth, a fact that is also highlighted in international comparisons. The labour market situation will be improved in part by increasing immigration and facilitating the entry and employment of international talent. Raising the level of education is necessary for both workers and employers. We also need to improve the labour market matching by facilitating the dialogue on skills needs between the world of work and the education and training providers.

Remote working and working out of multiple locations have become more common within the region. As a result of fewer face-to-face contacts between people, the importance of e-commerce has increased and automation has advanced. This will have major implications not only for work, but also for society at large: education, business life, urban structure and mobility.



Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa priority focuses on these Sustainable Development Goals:

- 7:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- 9:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

Objective 2.1. Promoting investment and innovation

13. Developing the region's shared brand and increasing visibility to attract investment

Despite international investments having lagged in Finland behind the other Nordic countries, Helsinki-Uusimaa ranks in several comparisons as the best medium-sized investment environment in Europe. Helsinki-Uusimaa's pull factors include stability and security, along with high levels of education, technology and innovation.

The attractiveness of Helsinki-Uusimaa as an investment environment must be strengthened by creating the most encouraging and enabling operating environment for businesses, talents and other actors. This requires a strong common will, cooperation between the public and private sectors within the region, and national and international networking.

14. Facilitating innovation and strengthening networks and international cooperation

Research and development create innovation that serves as the main source of renewal and new growth. The Finnish Government has set itself the target of increasing Finland's research and development expenditure (RD) from 2.7 per cent to 4 per cent of GDP by 2030. In order to achieve this objective, RD expenditure in Helsinki-Uusimaa should increase to 5 per cent. For this, investment is required, both from the private and the public

sector. Timely and properly targeted public investment will increase the appetite for domestic and foreign private investment alike.

Helsinki-Uusimaa's universities and research institutes have networks and hubs focusing on research and innovation, with companies and cities as active partners. The existing networks should be improved and new networks built on the basis of smart specialisation, creating new kinds of innovation, knowledge and skills. Innovation based on globally competitive, diverse and agilely upgradable skill sets is created in a multidisciplinary, sustained and experimental innovation ecosystem. Networks can be used to respond to rapidly changing markets and systemic challenges that are difficult for individual actors to solve. Mixed and diverse urban and regional structures that encourage encounters between people also promote innovation and the functioning of the market.

In development projects, Helsinki-Uusimaa's towns and cities serve as piloting and development platforms for new solutions driven by businesses, residents and users. Strengthening these experimental environments is important because they can be used to both test innovations and foster citizens' inclusion. Pilot environments and innovative public procurement will be supported by an innovation ecosystem agreement between the central government and the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

15. Improving the international accessibility of Helsinki-Uusimaa

Improving the accessibility of Helsinki-Uusimaa is essential in order to boost the attractiveness of the whole of Finland in terms of international investment, knowledge and skills. Helsinki-Uusimaa is Europe's gateway to Asia: the fastest flight route from Europe to Asia passes through Finland. To strengthen these connections, we need to improve Helsinki-Uusimaa's internal and international transport links and encourage close cooperation across regional borders. The Northern Growth Zone and the Growth Corridor Finland are networks that promote the networking and sustainable accessibility of urban areas in southern Finland together with other regions and major cities. International accessibility is also promoted through the TEN-T core network corridors crossing Helsinki-Uusimaa. Data connections are critical for improving accessibility, and digital solutions will continue to play an ever greater role.

Objective 2.2. Growth based on technology and services

16. Facilitating green growth and sustainable innovation

Helsinki-Uusimaa's success depends heavily on the ability of our companies to rethink their mission and engage in the changes in their operating environment. Technological advances change the way people and businesses operate; when

old occupations disappear, completely new ways of working will emerge. In Helsinki-Uusimaa, the key business competences can be found in knowledge-intensive sectors such as high-tech industries and business services. Ecosystems that strengthen creative know-how and bring together different fields, such as technical and artistic skills, have significant potential for economic growth. The success of the region's businesses will be increasingly based on high value-added products and services. Companies of different sizes and ages are well placed to lead the way for our region in developing new innovations and technologies in these fields.

Helsinki-Uusimaa's key growth areas and priorities, which we are working to further develop, have been identified in the Smart Specialisation Strategy that focuses on research and innovation cooperation. These include sectors supporting the carbon neutrality target (the circular economy, new energy solutions, bioeconomy innovations and new materials), sectors supporting human-centred urban development, and sectors related to renewable industries and innovative services.

The transition to a carbon-neutral and green economy requires investment in clean technology. The aim is to replace non-renewable fossil materials with renewable natural materials, while developing novel, more ecological manufacturing and processing methods. The

green energy transition is also about reducing energy consumption, consuming services instead of commodities, and trying to reduce reliance on metals in energy production and storage. Electric transportation and the generation of renewable electricity will increase the demand for metals. The scarcity of certain metals can hamper climate change mitigation if their production increases short-term emissions or their rarity slows down battery production.



By investing in climate and energy goals, promoting new technologies and digitalisation, and solving global challenges, we enable our own success on the road to sustainable growth, and we can also offer solutions to the rest of the world. The green transition requires expertise, and we should take care to ensure that Helsinki-Uusimaa can provide sufficient environmental education and training at the upper secondary and higher education levels.

17. Improving the digital skills of businesses and public sector organisations, and utilising digitalisation

New technologies and the digital transformation are changing the world of work. At the same time, new technologies and manufacturing methods increase labour productivity and are the most important component of our region's international competitiveness. While Finland has been successful in digitalisation, we are lagging behind the other Nordic countries in e-commerce. The growth of e-commerce is expected to remain strong, and it will have significant impacts on traffic flows of both people and goods in Helsinki-Uusimaa. It is important to encourage the joint investment of the public sector, companies, universities and research institutes in the development of technologies, and to increase the use of artificial intelligence and big data.

18. Bolstering the establishment, networking, renewal and internationalisation of businesses through the development of business services and operating models

Innovation ecosystems between research and industry form a great platform for developing new solutions and business in Helsinki-Uusimaa. Our region's knowledge and technology networks help identify emerging growth sectors and spread business know-how more widely. Stronger networks are particularly important for the region's small and medium-sized enterprises, which rarely have access to large-scale research and development projects. For the future, it is important to create and build up a competitive environment for growth, a start-up ecosystem. Growth companies play an important role in creating new jobs, technologies and skills. Public business services and business accelerators also play an important role in the growth, renewal and networking of companies.

19. Supporting the renewal of Helsinki-Uusimaa's cultural and tourism sectors

Helsinki-Uusimaa can provide nationally and internationally significant skills, education and training in the cultural, creative and tourism sectors. Our region has a fantastic range of cultural offerings, the arts and events. Our strong creative skills and knowledge have a lot to contribute to the business innovation community.

For Helsinki-Uusimaa, tourism is an important

and labour-intensive sector. More than half of the international tourists coming to Finland visit Helsinki-Uusimaa. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused severe difficulties for the cultural and tourism sectors, forcing businesses to restructure and create new, often digital, business models. The digital transformation enables the expansion of services to new customer segments, independent of the location. Support given to such business renewal and development of expertise, especially in digital skills and service design, will help the recovery of the cultural and tourism sectors after the pandemic.

Objective 2.3. New skills and talent

20. Promoting opportunities for continuous learning and education, especially for underrepresented groups

Work is an essential part of a person's identity, wellbeing and inclusion. Due to the rapid changes affecting the world of work, such as the digital transformation, longer life expectancy and longer careers, people will need reskilling throughout their working lives. Continuous learning becomes a safeguard in the face of changes affecting working life and society. To foster skills and knowledge, we need both additional continuous education and adult education and training which enable people to find work in new fields. First and foremost, what the labour market needs is skills, as opposed to specific qualifications or degrees, and the education system must be

able to adapt flexibly to such new skills needs. Flexibility and cooperation are also required in the transitions between primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, and between upper secondary and higher education. The identification and recognition of prior learning should be made flexible. Competence must be built through educational paths tailored to the individual needs. Digital learning solutions should support learning and open new opportunities. The success of the reform of Finland's public employment and business services (TE Services) and the smooth transfer of employment services to municipalities play an important role in improving the availability of labour.



Continuing education is accumulating among people who may not benefit most from it because they already have a high level of education. Jobseeker services as well as training and advice should be targeting groups that remain underrepresented in continuing education, such as people with low skills or pay, unemployed people, older people, small business owners and immigrants. Continuous learning for older people is important for extending working lives. There is a growing need for advice and guidance as the choice of educational opportunities increases and careers become more fragmented. It will be important to support both employers' opportunities to provide continuous education and employees' opportunities for upskilling during their working lives. Training should be offered to career changers to enable them to move into new fields.

21. Raising the level of education by increasing the number of higher education graduates

Finding work now requires a higher level of education than before, an upper secondary qualification as a minimum. In international comparisons, Helsinki-Uusimaa lags behind in the percentage of highly educated people of the labour force. It is estimated that by 2035 more than half of new employees and more than 75 per cent of those in newly created jobs will need higher education. The recent extension of the compulsory school age will contribute to this objective, and the progress of the reform should

be closely monitored. Dropping out of education is a problem, especially in upper secondary vocational education and training. It can be mitigated by providing better study guidance and supporting flexible education paths.

22. Improving skills matching and anticipation in cooperation with education providers and employers

To address labour shortages and solve skills shortages, we need information on future skills. The skills matching between jobseekers and employers needs to be improved by increasing the dialogue on skills needs between upper secondary education providers, universities and employers. In order to enable the education and training provision to respond flexibly to the labour market needs, data is required on the skills needs. The impact of multi-location work and living should also be considered in the context of the availability of labour.

23. Increasing immigration and boosting the employment of immigrants

Education, training and skills are the cornerstone of our prosperity and a resource for global competition. For a long time, poor access to skilled labour, whether with university degrees or vocational education and training qualifications, has been one of the most significant barriers to growth. Helsinki-Uusimaa has the most educated population in Finland, but we are nevertheless lagging behind our Nordic peer regions in the

percentage of higher education graduates of the workforce. The ageing of the population and the fall in the birth rate are exacerbating this shortage of talent.

In order to strengthen our skills base, we need more immigrants. The entry and stay of foreign students and researchers should be facilitated. One of the ways in which immigrants can find employment is their own entrepreneurial activity, which also needs to be further supported.

24. Attracting international talent and enhancing the marketing of the region

Helsinki-Uusimaa lags behind its reference regions in terms of net migration and successful integration of immigrants. It is important to raise Helsinki-Uusimaa's profile and promote it to international talents, so that both the talents and employers see Helsinki-Uusimaa as a cohesive area that goes beyond municipal borders and that duplication of effort between various parties can be avoided. Cooperation is needed because currently there are several parties – towns, upper secondary schools and higher education institutions – working with international talent in Helsinki-Uusimaa, especially in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The public sector, towns and cities in particular, need to support international recruitment by businesses. However, in the next few years, restrictions on international mobility caused by the Covid-19 pandemic may pose a further challenge.



Priority 3: Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme aims to strengthen social and cultural sustainability. Above all, that means putting inclusion, education and knowledge at the heart of wellbeing. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected our wellbeing, but social sustainability in Helsinki-Uusimaa remains at a good level by international standards. Helsinki-Uusimaa is an open and inclusive region where everyone's participation is valued, regardless of their background. A cross-sectoral dialogue where everyone's voice gets heard promotes equality and supports partnerships between the parties.

Effective cooperation between sectors along with social trust are essential prerequisites for coping with the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the key objectives of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme is to increase the employment rate in Helsinki-Uusimaa. First and foremost, this requires measures to prevent unemployment through extensive cooperation sectoral boundaries. The success of the reform that will divide the region into counties responsible for organising publicly funded healthcare and social welfare, the reform of the employment and business services, and effortless cooperation between municipalities and the central government all play a crucial role in driving employment and prosperity in Helsinki-Uusimaa. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council can act as a forum for bringing together the relevant parties.

Young people's wellbeing and confidence in the future have been severely undermined by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to a rise in youth unemployment, remote learning, a suspension of many leisure activities and restrictions on social contacts. It is thought that the pandemic will become a generational experience, the effects of which will be felt for years to come. Forced isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic may have increased loneliness among all age groups, affected mental health and impaired the functional and physical ability of older people in particular. If we do not care of the most vulnerable as we recover from the crisis, we are at a turning point where exclusion, isolation and insecurity are in danger of increasing. It is therefore important to strengthen the aspects of Helsinki-Uusimaa residents' wellbeing and their trust and confidence in the future.

Remote working, which has become more common because of the pandemic, has increased location independence and the importance of local services. As more people have embraced multi-location work and the digital transformation has progressed, connectivity has become even more important. Culture and recreation play an important role in wellbeing and health. During the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, we should ensure the availability of cultural and leisure services and the accessibility and development of natural and recreation areas. Balanced development of residential areas also prevents spatial segregation.



Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa priority focuses on these Sustainable Development Goals:

- 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Objective 3.1 Cultural diversity and inclusion

25. Facilitating inclusion and combatting discrimination in public services, schools and workplaces

Helsinki-Uusimaa is the most international and multicultural region in Finland. Instead of a strong regional identity, Helsinki-Uusimaa is characterised by a diversity of cultures and languages. Multilingualism, which is a characteristic feature of Helsinki-Uusimaa, is becoming increasingly important due to the rise in immigration. It is therefore crucial for public services to guarantee the exercise of linguistic rights. Helsinki-Uusimaa is also an officially bilingual region with Swedish-speaking residents, making it imperative that the availability of Swedish-language services is ensured.

Cultural diversity does not just mean ethnicity, but includes different identities, genders, sexual orientation, physical characteristics, socio-economic background, political views, ideologies, values and lifestyles. These differences are valued and respected in Helsinki-Uusimaa's safe and positive climate. The arts and culture sectors play an important role in promoting diversity and inclusion. Increasing encounters between those who belong to minority communities and those who don't, both at work and in leisure activities, reduce prejudice and prevent confrontation between population groups.

Equality is ensured not only by legislation, but also by influencing attitudes, integrating diversity into recruitment and workplaces, and actively promoting a climate of tolerance. Such climate is fostered by supporting the acceptance of diversity in the workplace and the adaptation of employers. A culturally sensitive approach ensures that public services are also able to encounter immigrants. Victims of human trafficking are often immigrants. Eradicating trafficking in human beings requires multi-sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation, meaning that municipalities and the public sector will have an important role to play.

26. Advocating two-way integration in cooperation with the public and third sectors

Immigrants are adapting to society while society is changing as the population becomes more diverse. We promote two-way integration, i.e. interaction between immigrants and society, by supporting integration measures, direction, advice and education. Language learning, community integration, social contacts and participation in employment are key elements for the successful integration of immigrants. It is also important to consider the comprehensive wellbeing of immigrant families, including women and children.

27. Strengthening the activities of networks and civil society organisations supporting inclusion and participation

Inclusion means being involved in and becoming part of jointly built wellbeing, which prevents

social exclusion and increases equality. Participation enhances wellbeing and mutual trust, as well as stability and security in society. Democracy does not work without participation, which is why we need to increase residents' interest in influencing and participating in democratic decision-making by voting in elections. There are also major differences in voter turnout within cities; in prosperous areas, turnout is higher. Inclusion ensures that the disparities between areas in terms of voter turnout will not increase any further.

Trust is essential for cooperation, as without it we cannot create something new together, nor can we commit ourselves to shared objectives such as preventing exclusion or mitigating climate change. Participation and influence include active citizenship, along with participation in voluntary activities, civil society organisations and democratic decision-making, but also the freedom to express one's opinions and to be part of the community.

28. Developing digital equality by upgrading digital skills and the usability of digital services

Digitalisation is transforming public services, and remote working and learning have become more commonplace during the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the electrification of services, digital skills have turned into an essential civic skill. However, not everyone has sufficient expertise, equipment or network connections to access digital services

easily. To prevent digital exclusion, support must be made available for using digital services. Effective connectivity throughout the region will be essential for ensuring digital equality.

Objective 3.2 Supporting knowledge, education and work

29. Ensuring a good level of general knowledge through high-quality and equal education opportunities

Educated and well-informed people are the foundation of a developed society. A good level of general knowledge enables everyone's equal participation in society. It broadens the worldview, protects against prejudices towards diversity and makes it possible to assess the objectivity of information instead of absorbing misinformation.

As the amount of information and data available to us increases, media literacy plays an even greater role. For democracy, it is important that we combat hate speech about personal characteristics in public debate. At the same time, however, we must ensure that freedom of expression is preserved. We need to shape our minds through education to process and understand information and to spot

misinformation and scams that spread online. A good level of general knowledge also plays an important role in the changing world of work. Problem-solving skills are based on general knowledge, and it would be difficult to replace them with artificial intelligence and automation. Having a good level of general knowledge combats prejudice against immigrants and minorities that arises from being uninformed. Tackling such prejudice is necessary for preserving the social order.

30. Developing the provision of guidance and information services for young people

The path of education and learning should lead to equality. One in four comprehensive school pupils

in the Helsinki
Metropolitan
Area



in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area speak a language other than Finnish or Swedish as their mother tongue. In upper secondary vocational education and training, the number of first-generation and second-generation migrant students is increasing across Helsinki-Uusimaa. We must ensure that in Helsinki-Uusimaa no child or young person will face obstacles to schooling and education, regardless of their background. Boys' poorer learning outcomes and lower levels of education have emerged as a new kind of equality issue in education, putting boys at risk of exclusion. People with low levels of education and those speaking foreign languages are more clearly concentrated in certain residential areas within large cities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has eroded the wellbeing and employment of young people in particular, although the majority of young people are still doing well. Addressing the loss of learning suffered during the Covid-19 crisis is important for future skills and employment. The increase in gender and regional disparities in education must be halted, and education that offers equal opportunities for all must be maintained. It is important to tackle bullying at schools and ensure that learning environments are safe. We must address these challenges in both primary and secondary education.

31. Advancing cross-sectoral cooperation between the family support and child welfare services

Early intervention, providing services to support families, securing a good childhood and learning path, and improving young people's education and employment opportunities are key to preventing exclusion. In Helsinki-Uusimaa, there is a particular need to develop preventive work with families. Increasing child protection resources and improving multidisciplinary cooperation are important measures for reaching families, children and young people in need of support, addressing the backlog in healthcare and social care, repairing damage and preventing problems from escalating. We need to foster multicultural competence in both youth and family work in order to take account of linguistic and cultural differences. In the future it is important to use child impact assessment to explore the impact of the region's various development measures on children and young people.

32. Improving employment and increasing equality in working life

Work is an essential part of a person's identity, wellbeing and inclusion while, correspondingly, exclusion from working life increases the risk of social exclusion. By international comparison, Helsinki-Uusimaa has a low employment rate. Young people's transition to work may have been delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Finnish Government is aiming for a 75 per cent

employment rate. To make this happen, Helsinki-Uusimaa must increase its regional employment rate, for example by employing more older people and people with a partial ability to work, who find it difficult to get on the labour market. We also need more immigration.

Employment is supported by identifying the risks of long-term unemployment and eliminating the factors that lead to unemployment. We will help people find work by providing guidance and advice, and by supporting various forms of work, reskilling and upskilling, entrepreneurship and self-employment. Education and training are the best way to address unemployment among young people. The ongoing reform of the public employment and business services will make a decisive contribution to improving employment. To succeed, it will need effective cooperation between municipalities, the central government and other stakeholders, and adequately resourced municipal employment services. Cooperation between municipalities is also crucial in ensuring labour mobility, especially for small municipalities with small resources. In the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, resources should be prioritised for the services targeting unemployed people with a migrant background, who account for a large proportion of the unemployed.

The employment rate will rise only if people extend their working lives, not just from the beginning and from the end, but also from the

middle of their careers. As a person's level of education affects the length of their career, better education is a way to both increase employment and extend working lives. Measures to ensure wellbeing at work also extend working lives because they prevent disability and improve the coping of older people at work. Extending working lives from the middle means that we employ more people who are partially able to work. This requires both an attitude shift at workplaces and more information on the support and services available for recruiting people with low employability skills or a disability. The labour potential of those who have already retired but wish to keep working should also be taken into account.

International comparisons show that occupational gender segregation is much more common in Finland than in some other countries, both in education and training and in the labour market. Gender segregation prevents the flexible functioning of the labour market, reduces diversity and equality and blocks reform. In addition to occupational segregation, vertical segregation is a problem in Finland, as women remain significantly underrepresented in leadership. Segregation in the labour market has decreased only slightly in recent years. Elimination of segregation should begin at primary school, for example through discouraging gendered images of occupations.

Objective 3.3 Easy daily life

33. Reducing spatial segregation and increasing the interaction between rural and urban areas

Helsinki-Uusimaa's population growth and labour needs have led to a growing need for housing. The rising number of single households, smaller family sizes, population ageing and immigration are changing housing needs. Housing construction must contribute to the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the urban structure. Helsinki-Uusimaa has little spatial segregation by international standards. However, disadvantages, including low incomes, unemployment and low levels of education, have begun to accumulate in some parts of the region. Homelessness in Finland is concentrated in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. As homelessness is one of the key factors aggravating social exclusion, a proactive measure has been taken to eliminate it by first offering housing to the most vulnerable. With the "Housing First" model, Finland is the only country in Europe that has managed to reduce homelessness.

Housing supply should be developed equally across the region through social mixing, i.e. providing different forms of housing ownership. New and infill construction makes it possible to balance the demographic structure within the region and prevent spatial segregation. Spatial segregation can also be prevented by ensuring the quality, comfort and attractiveness of the living environment. Supporting local communities and

their attachment to the neighbourhood will also improve safety.

Location-independent living and working have become more common as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. While urban areas continue to grow, people are also moving to less densely populated areas, such as rural communities, or prefer to live in their holiday homes. Remote work makes it possible to spend more time in the residential area than at the workplace. In Helsinki-Uusimaa, this trend may increase the appreciation of small communities and suburbs, leading to a higher demand for local services and improved business opportunities. Interaction between cities and rural areas will be increased by encouraging municipalities, businesses, associations and residents to engage in local and regional development.

Location-independent work poses new challenges for sustainable mobility and land use planning. Well-functioning town centres support the ability of residents to manage their daily business in the nearest centre and use public transport when they need to travel to another centre for work or services. If conventional public transport is not feasible due to the small number of inhabitants, mobility opportunities can be diversified, for example, by demand-responsive public transport or service lines.

34. Ensuring the availability of high-speed broadband across the region

When residents have access to online services, the digital transformation brings a whole new element to accessibility, mobility and the ease of everyday life. Digital technology changes how we live, work and communicate. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transition and the need for broadband has expanded to homes and other locations where people work remotely. Not only are the coverage and speed of broadband critical to the functioning of an easy daily life, but also to the functioning of society. Broadband needs to be equally functional across Helsinki-Uusimaa.



35. Developing cultural and leisure activities as part of the promotion of wellbeing and health

Experiencing and engaging in culture, leisure activities and exercise have a major impact on wellbeing and health. Wellbeing services play an important role in the provision of health and social services. Residents' appreciation of neighbourhood sports facilities, outdoor and recreation areas and local nature has increased significantly. Leisure activities prevent exclusion, and it is therefore important to offer free recreational opportunities and to support everyone's opportunities to take up hobbies.



Young people's leisure activities in particular should be supported. Covid-19 restrictions have particularly affected the arts and culture, and the wellbeing effects of culture have not been realised. Recreation, the reopening of leisure activities and venues, exercise and the arts and culture will play a major role in the recovery from the crisis.

36. Improving the services and accessibility of attractive cultural and natural environments and recreation areas

Helsinki-Uusimaa is characterised by its proximity to nature, even in large cities. The region has extensive rural areas and several world-class recreational, heritage and nature tourism destinations, of which national parks, the old wooden towns along the coast and the archipelago are among the most attractive. Nature tourism is a growing source of income and employment for Helsinki-Uusimaa residents. In order to even out the pressures caused by consumption and use, sustainable accessibility of the sites needs to be improved throughout Helsinki-Uusimaa, especially close to large population centres. Attractive recreation areas, valuable landscapes and diverse built-up cultural environments must be accessible to anyone who does not own a car or boat. Accessibility, the different needs of recreational use and the impact of climate change on nature must be taken into account in the establishment and development of recreational sites.

Implementation and monitoring

Programme implementation

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme has ambitious objectives and measures. Some of them can be implemented with the resources available to the region, others require a wide range of joint action, especially with the municipalities and the central government.

The Programme is implemented largely through projects which are financed by various funding programmes, the most important of which are set out in Annex 3. Programme measures will be implemented in partnership with the EU, the central government, municipalities, universities and research institutes, businesses and other parties. In addition to the provision of financing for Helsinki-Uusimaa's regional development, the potential of other EU funding programmes will be explored. In order for us to increase the amount of EU funding for Helsinki-Uusimaa, we need, in addition to proactive public sector advocacy, project owners' strong expertise in applying for financing.

The Programme is also implemented through other regional council processes, such as regional plans and transport systems. It is complemented

by the Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Carbon Neutral Uusimaa Roadmap, which are used to further advance the regional development objectives. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council seeks to expand its networks and partnerships with the other operators in the region. The implementation strategy is expected to respond to the region's shared challenges together with the other operators on a phenomenon-driven basis.

The Regional Management Group, whose cooperating members represent local municipalities, the central government, universities, labour market and economic development organisations, plays a key role in monitoring the implementation of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme. The Group provides a forum for discussion on the region's all development issues. It creates a basis for Helsinki-Uusimaa's advocacy, directs municipal resources and defines the regional development projects and policies to be negotiated with central government.

The Smart Specialisation Strategy implements the Programme, especially the objectives of the Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa priority. The Strategy's steering group brings business

insight to the Strategy and its implementation. The steering group supports and monitors the progress of the Strategy. Its purpose is to help achieve the strategic objectives at regional level, to contribute to the dissemination of the Strategy to the actors in the region and to provide strategic direction. The steering group includes representatives from companies, research institutes, the public sector and universities.

Monitoring and indicators

Progress in the implementation of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme will be monitored in the annual regional development discussions between the region and the central government and through the situational picture of regional development. As a regional council, we will hold discussions with the region's other operators to convey the key development measures and a common message to the central government. Discussions with the regional partners will be held separately to work out the programme measures in more detail.

Each programme priority is monitored using selected statistical metrics that aim to describe the progress of the objectives by comparing Helsinki-Uusimaa with the rest of Finland and with international, mainly European, reference regions. The statistical indicators cannot be used to directly demonstrate the achievement of the objectives, but they can indirectly describe the direction of development. Due to the short time

horizon of the programme period, data that is available rapidly and updated approximately every year has been selected as metrics where possible. The metrics will be refined and updated throughout the programme period with the latest available data. More detailed indicators are presented on the website of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council. In addition to numerical indicators, qualitative monitoring data is also used to monitor progress towards the objectives. The indicators will be developed and, where necessary, supplemented during the programme period. They are also applied to the monitoring of the Smart Specialisation Strategy.

The metrics cover the following topics:



Environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa

- Greenhouse gas emissions by sector
- Circular economy business
- Nature reserves
- Population in sustainable mobility zones
- Electrification of transport
- Percentage of renewable energy
- Status of water bodies
- Development of carbon sinks



Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa:

- R&D expenditure
- Level of education and number of higher education graduates
- Number of foreign companies and degree students in Helsinki-Uusimaa
- Industry structure and its development (knowledge-intensive sectors)
- Accessibility (aviation, shipping and railways)
- Business dynamics (renewal of business structures)
- European Innovation Scoreboard



Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa:

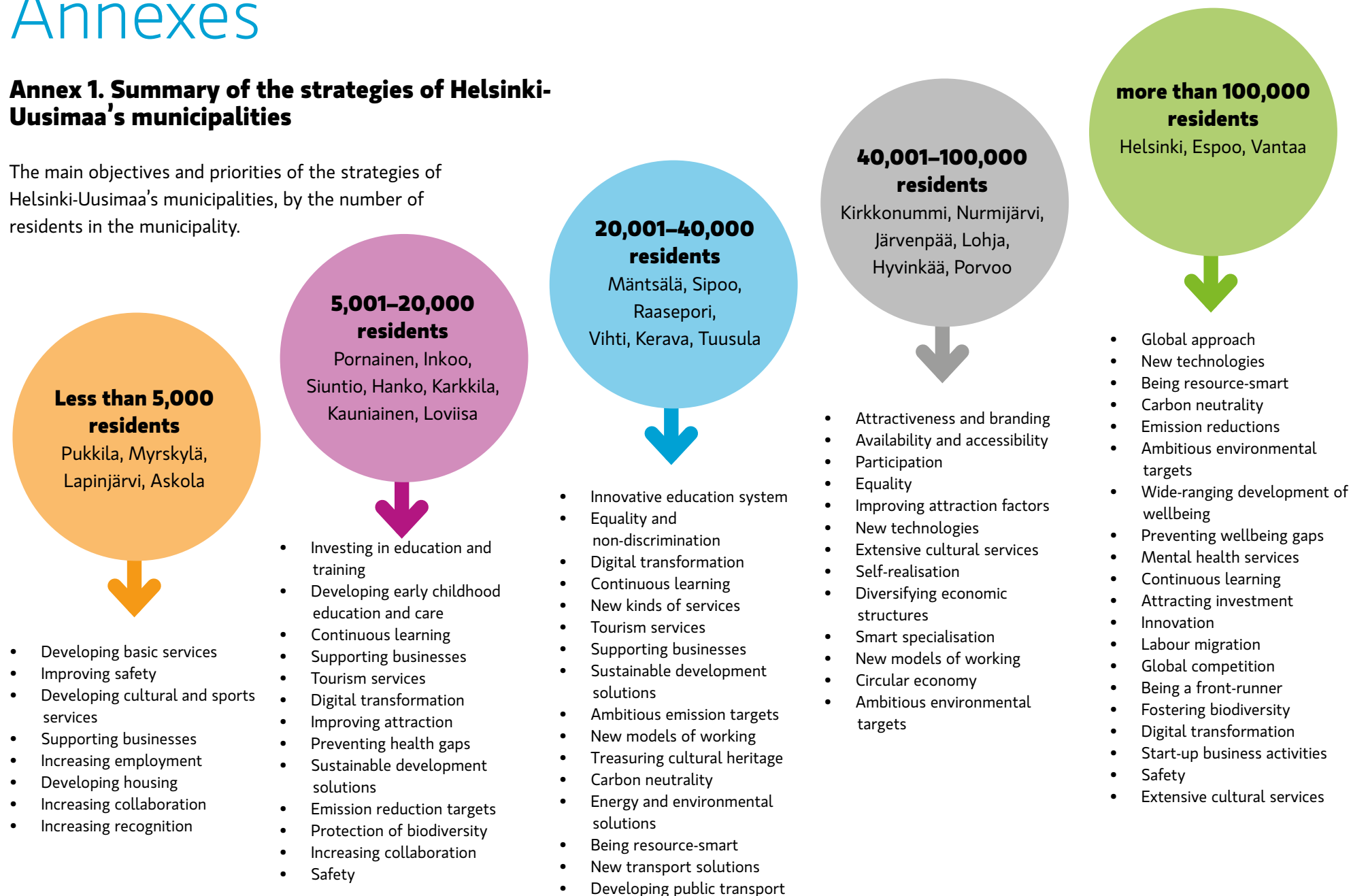
- Employment
- Youth participation (NEET)
- Perceived wellbeing of the population
- Percentage of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion
- Participation of immigrants (participation in the labour market)
- Accessibility of public transport and recreation areas
- Coverage and accessibility of data connections

In addition to the Programme's monitoring indicators, the region's development is monitored by indicators describing the state of the operating environment. The metrics cover the economy, the labour market, demographics, wellbeing, education, housing and the environment. The development of these indicators, as well as those specifically defined in the Programme, can be viewed at the website of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council at www.uudenmaanliitto.fi (In Finnish).

Annexes

Annex 1. Summary of the strategies of Helsinki-Uusimaa's municipalities

The main objectives and priorities of the strategies of Helsinki-Uusimaa's municipalities, by the number of residents in the municipality.



Annex 2. Preparation of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme

The Programme was drawn up using the data and recommendations of the 2020 peer review covering four regional programmes by the Regional Councils of Häme, Kymenlaakso, Helsinki-Uusimaa and Southwest Finland. According to the review, the current 2018–2021 Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2.0 was considered to have been extensive, sensitive to the international context and, in terms of style, people-centred and seeking a dialogue with the reader. As a development proposal, it was recommended that the Programme be made more concise and that a clearer link be established between the Programme and long-term foresight. In addition, the partners with whom the Programme is implemented should be more visible and the regional structure should also be discussed. Efforts have been made to respond to these development proposals in this Programme.

The key word in the preparation of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme has been partnership. The Council has prepared the Programme in cooperation with the regional partners: municipalities, universities, upper secondary schools, civil society organisations and other development bodies. To support the preparation, the Council held 15 workshops for stakeholders during the spring and autumn. The

Programme has been discussed by several expert groups of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council. It has also been possible to follow and comment on the programme preparation on the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council's website, where the progress and subsequent implementation of

the Programme is regularly discussed in news and blog posts. A steering group with members from the management of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment was set up for the actual programme work.

Table 2. Timetable for the preparation of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme

2020		
September–December		Peer review of the regional programmes
Drawing up scenarios		
January	Regional Board	Approval of the work programme and the inclusion and evaluation plan
February–April		Stakeholder workshops
May	Regional Assembly	Preparation progress report Stakeholder workshops
June–August		Stakeholder workshops
September	Regional Management Group, Regional Board	Introduction of the Programme Adoption of the draft programme for opinions and for viewing
October	Public New Regional Assembly	Period for opinions and viewing Introduction of the Programme for information
November	New Regional Board	Discussing and commenting on the Programme, summary of opinions for information
December	New Regional Assembly	Approval of the Programme

Annex 3. Financing sources for implementing the Programme

Table 3. Potential funding programmes to achieve the objectives of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme

	Objectives	Sources of financing	Appropriation for sustainable growth and vitality in regions (AKKE)	Innovation and Skills in Finland 2021–2027, regional and structural policy programme	Central Baltic Interreg	Baltic Sea Region Interreg	Interreg Europe	South East Finland–Russia CBC	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund	Horizon Europe	Digital Europe	LIFE+	Erasmus+	Creative Europe	European Urban Initiative	Health for Europe	Connecting Europe CEF	Invest EU	13	Global Europe	Business development funding –Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment and Business Finland	Sustainable Growth Programme for Finland
Environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa	Carbon-neutral communities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X					X	X	X	X		X
	Thriving nature			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X										X
	Resource-smart solutions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X						X	X	X	X	X
Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa	Promoting investment and innovation	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X	X	X		X	X
	Growth based on technology and services	X	X	X		X	X				X	X			X		X		X	X	X	X	X
	New skills and talent		X	X				X			X			X							X	X	X
Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa	Cultural diversity and inclusion	X	X	X							X										X		
	Supporting culture, education and work	X	X	X																			
	Easy daily life	X	X	X											X			X					X

Annex 4. Summary of the Smart Specialisation Strategy

Helsinki-Uusimaa Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS) – Resource-smart Uusimaa

Smart specialisation strategies are regional innovation and research strategies that focus on regional cooperation. All parties in the region implement the Strategy together. At the various stages of the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the Strategy, it is important that industry, research and education organisations, the public sector and civil society are equally involved. The Smart Specialisation Strategy was approved by the Regional Board in spring 2020. Recently, sustainability was added to smart specialisation, and the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) has become the Smart Specialisation Strategies for Sustainability (S4).

The overarching theme of resource wisdom covers three strategic priorities:

- **Climate neutrality** includes actions that support Helsinki-Uusimaa's carbon neutrality goal. Areas covered by the theme include circular economy solutions, new sources of energy, bioeconomy innovations and new materials.
- **Citizens' city** includes actions that support urban development, well-functioning

everyday life and the wellbeing of citizens. Areas covered by the theme include mobility solutions, housing, urban planning, and healthcare.

- **Industrial modernisation** includes actions that support transformation in various sectors. Areas covered by the theme include new industrial processes, health technologies, robotics and tourism.

Certain themes, such as construction, mobility, food industry and data management, are related to two or all three priorities. Reducing silos and strengthening the potential for action in multi-priority areas will facilitate action in industry transitions.

Helsinki-Uusimaa actors are engaged in major innovation activities in the areas of the strategic value chains defined by the EU. These include self-driving vehicles, intelligent health, low-carbon industry, hydrogen technologies, Internet of Things and cybersecurity.

Competence is the factor bringing together the strategic priorities. Helsinki-Uusimaa has a strong and versatile education sector. In order to meet the objectives of resource wisdom, competence needs to be put into use extensively and effectively in all priority areas. The demand for and supply of competence should be actively anticipated, supporting a wide range of

education and training opportunities. Harnessing the competence of highly educated immigrants poses a special opportunity and challenge in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region.

The key actions to implement the Strategy are financing projects and development facilities implementing the Strategy, supporting regional innovation ecosystems and networks, promoting cooperation across regional borders to build stronger entities for wider impact, participating and encouraging actors to participate in international networks and platforms, and strengthening the Helsinki Smart Region brand and improving its visibility abroad.

Annex 5. Summary of the environmental report

A regional programme is a plan that must be assessed in accordance with the Act on the Assessment of the Environmental Impacts of Official Plans and Programmes 200/2005. The authority responsible for the plan or programme examines and assesses whether the implementation of the plan, programme or options under review will have a significant impact on people, living conditions and comfort, natural conditions and resources, air and climate, biodiversity, as well as on the urban structure, landscape and built environment. The assessment aims to ensure compatibility between the programme objectives and the principles of sustainable development. Impact assessments have been carried out throughout the preparation of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme.

The aim of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme is to be Well Ahead in climate change mitigation, economic competitiveness and wellbeing. The programme priorities set out measures that support these objectives well. The Programme has a very positive impact on climate change mitigation, on the region's economic development and people, and on wellbeing.

The strategic objective of the Programme is to be a carbon-neutral region in 2030. This objective is supported by smart and resource-smart solutions

that promote renewable energies and the circular economy and boost green growth. The region's competitiveness is facilitated by actions that strengthen skills, education, new technologies, innovations and networks, in addition to the actions that attract investment and improve the conditions for employment and business. Strengthening the environment and the economy will also have a positive impact on people's living conditions and wellbeing, but the programme's employment, integration and equality and non-discrimination measures will also contribute to wellbeing. The impact on natural conditions and natural resources, the regional structure and the environment, as well as on mobility, is largely positive. Conflicting impacts relate to the more densely built community structure and multi-locality, the public/municipal economy, recreation areas and the potentially increased pressure to provide access to recreational activities. Conflicts have also been identified between economic growth and the use of natural resources. The Programme is not considered to have exclusively negative effects on any of the assessed aspects.

The Programme has been developed in broad interaction with stakeholders and it takes into account key development policies and strategies at a national, regional and municipal level. The Programme's effectiveness is enhanced by the fact that it has been drawn up interactively and that it encourages cooperation between municipalities,

educational institutions, businesses and the public and third sectors, urging them to work in step with the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council to achieve common goals.

Table 4. Estimated impacts of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme for 2022–2025

IMPACTS	ON PEOPLE							ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AND RESOURCES							ON CLIMATE CHANGE				ON REGIONAL STRUCTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT				ON MOBILITY			ON THE ECONOMY								
	Health and wellbeing	Living conditions and comfort	Education, training and competence	Employment	Equality and non-discrimination	Environmental awareness and education	Integration	Soil	State of the waters	Air quality	Biodiversity	Renewable resources	Non-renewable resources	Vegetation and organisms	Ecological network	Emission trends	Amount of renewable energy	Carbon sinks	Adapting to climate change	Compact urban development	Quality of the built environment	Landscape, cityscape and cultural heritage	Adequacy of local recreation areas	Public transport	Walking and cycling	Transport accessibility	Competitiveness of the region	Attractiveness of the region	Public / municipal finances	Opportunities for business development	Conditions for RDI activities	The circular economy		
Development measures and priorities																																		
Environmentally smart Helsinki-Uusimaa	Carbon-neutral communities	+++	++	+																														
	Thriving nature																																	
	Resource-smart solutions																																	
Successful Helsinki-Uusimaa	Promoting investment and innovation																																	
	Growth based on technology and services																																	
	New skills and talent																																	
Happy Helsinki-Uusimaa	Cultural diversity and inclusion																																	
	Supporting knowledge, education and work																																	
	Easy daily life																																	
OVERALL ASSESSMENT																																		

- +++ very positive impact
- ++ positive impact
- + somewhat positive impact
- no impact
- somewhat negative impact
- negative impact
- very negative impact
- +/- conflicting impacts

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