



## City Innovation Snapshot HELSINKI, Finland

### Overview

- **Mayor:** Jan Vapaavuori
- **Term:** 2017–2021
- **Innovation Lead:** Santtu von Bruun; Mikko Rusama
- **Population size:** 653 867 (2019)
- **Innovation / open data website:** [https://hri.fi/en\\_gb/](https://hri.fi/en_gb/)

### What is the organisational structure?

Situated at the Mayor's Office, the Economic Development team has **25 staff** while the Digital Innovation team has **20 staff**. Almost all divisions have their own innovation team.

Staff skills and profiles include:

- Project Manager
- Data Scientist
- Strategic Communications
- Engineer
- Designer
- Community Engagement
- Economic Development



### Spotlight | Maria 01

Helsinki's pilot project Maria 01, located in an old hospital campus and originally started as a community house for ambitious tech start-ups, has grown into one of the biggest innovation culture hubs in Northern Europe. The campus serves as a supercluster of collaboration and knowledge sharing for key players in the ecosystem such as start-ups, venture capital firms, and corporations. Maria 01 is a prime example of doing things differently: cutting through red tape and adopting a design and prototype mentality. Following its success, Maria 01 is expanding to a future campus of 70,000m<sup>2</sup> by 2026.

### What is the city's innovation vision?

Like 50% of cities surveyed, Helsinki has a **formal innovation strategy**.

The city most closely associates innovation capacity with:

- **Experimentation, pilots and prototyping**
- **Innovation & entrepreneurial ecosystem development**

### What is the city's innovation approach?

Similar to more than half of cities surveyed, Helsinki approaches innovation capacity **both from a holistic / macro level and in specific areas**.

The top two priority policy areas for the city's innovation work are:

Climate Change

Digital Services

### What innovation partnerships exist?

Helsinki has developed partnerships to **promote innovation capacity** with other public agencies, private firms, not-for-profit organisations, city residents/resident associations and with other cities (e.g. Horizon2020).

To **improve data use**, the city has also developed data partnerships with the private sector, regional institutions (e.g. hospitals, waste and water management, public transport agency), academia and think tanks, to collect and analyse data, as well as with other cities.



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### What funding is available?

Like 81% of cities surveyed, Helsinki has dedicated funding to support innovation capacity, which comes from the following sources:

- **International/multilateral institution budget**
- **Higher levels of government**
- **Municipal budget** (city council approved funds / operating budget / special funding process / participatory budgeting)
- **Innovative financing tools**
- **Non-financial: other in-kind contributions**

Helsinki's funding for innovation capacity is generally directed towards **training staff and building capacity, investing in digital systems and physical infrastructure, as well as investing in R&D labs, piloting platforms, start-up (pre-)incubation, tech community and cluster organisation.**



### How is innovation helping the city?

- ✓ **Helping develop a vibrant economy**
- ✓ **Anticipating and managing future challenges**
- ✓ **Improving internal government operations**

The most critical success factors in supporting the city's innovation work are **dedicated funding, a talented and dedicated innovation team, a culture of innovation within the municipal administration, support from the broader community and leadership from the Mayor.**



### How is data used?

Helsinki currently uses data to evaluate its budgeting process and support strategy implementation. One of the challenges preventing the use of data to support innovation goals is the **limited data compatibility across policy areas.**

Helsinki **maintains a comprehensive data inventory** to make data more accessible, **publishes open data online**, and **provides clear how-to guidance** for residents to assess and use city data.



### How are outcomes measured?

Policy areas **with sufficient data** or **without sufficient data** to support innovation capacity in the city.

Transport / Mobility	Economic Development	Housing	Policing and Law Enforcement	Health
Government Finance	Waste and Sewage	Labour Market and Skills	Environment and Climate Change	Education
Culture	Social Inclusion, Equity	Public Works	Tourism	Digital Governance