



## City Innovation Snapshot OULU, Finland

### Overview

- ▶ **Mayor:** Päivi Laajala
- ▶ **Term:** 2017–2023
- ▶ **Innovation Lead:** Juhani Heikka; Aarne Kultalahti
- ▶ **Population size:** 203 567 (2018)
- ▶ **Innovation / open data website:**  
[www.oulusmartcity.com](http://www.oulusmartcity.com)

### What is the organisational structure?

Oulu's innovation work is **sprinkled throughout the municipal administration**. Besides a limited number of staff dedicated to innovation work, there are experts in various departments contributing to the city's innovation efforts.

Staff skills and profiles include:

- Project Manager
- Data Scientist
- Strategic Communications / Marketing
- Engineer
- Designer



### Spotlight | OuluHealth Ecosystem

OuluHealth is one of the leading digital health innovation ecosystems in Europe. The principal objective of OuluHealth is to facilitate open collaboration, spur business growth, and accelerate innovation by bringing together key partners to cater to the needs of the healthcare sector. The ecosystem recently established a knowledge building and support system, DigiHealth Hub, which allows companies to share their best practices and connects them to emerging technologies for digital healthcare solutions. Through OuluHealth Labs, OuluHealth also provides an excellent environment for testing innovations and stimulating the integration of digital technologies in hospital environments.

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

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

The city most closely associates innovation capacity with:

- **Experimentation, pilots and prototyping**
- **Technological innovation**

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

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

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

Health

Built Environment

### What innovation partnerships exist?

Oulu has developed partnerships to **promote innovation capacity** with other public agencies, private firms and not-for-profit organisations. As part of innovation processes, the city also organises participatory planning session with **citizens and residents**.

To **improve data use**, Oulu has also developed data partnerships with 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, Oulu 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)
- **Non-financial: other in-kind contributions**

Oulu's funding for innovation capacity is generally directed towards **investing in digital systems and physical infrastructure**, and **paying for third-party services**.



### How is innovation helping the city?

- ✓ **Improving service delivery**
- ✓ **Improving internal government operations**
- ✓ **Simplifying administrative procedures for firms and residents**

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



### How is data used?

Data plays a **significant role** in the decision making and innovation efforts in Oulu. The city currently **uses data to align its budget process with its strategic priorities**.

Oulu **publishes open data to a central, public online location** and **provides clear how-to guidance** to help residents access 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