

A nighttime photograph of a public swimming pool in Helsinki. The pool is illuminated with warm yellow lights, and several people are seen swimming and standing on the pool deck. In the background, the city skyline is visible, featuring the illuminated dome of the Helsinki Cathedral and other historic buildings. The water reflects the city lights.

Helsinki

**Helsinki – the world's
most sustainable travel
destination**

Fact.

In 2024, Helsinki was ranked number one for the first time in the GDS-Index, which evaluates travel destinations' sustainability performance. Helsinki sustained the first place in the ranking in 2025.

In 2025, Helsinki was also the first big city in the world to be granted the Green Destinations GSTC certificate. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council sets the world's strictest set of criteria for assessing the sustainability performance of travel destinations.



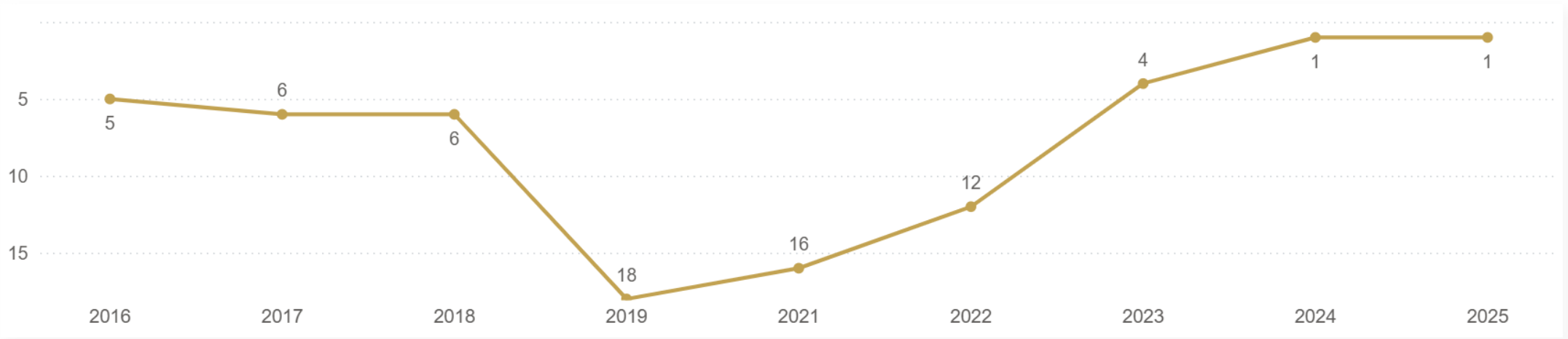
The GDS-Index is one of the most reliable tools for assessing the sustainability of travel destinations

The Global Destination Sustainability Index evaluates the sustainability of 100 destinations around the world using 77 indicators across four key areas:

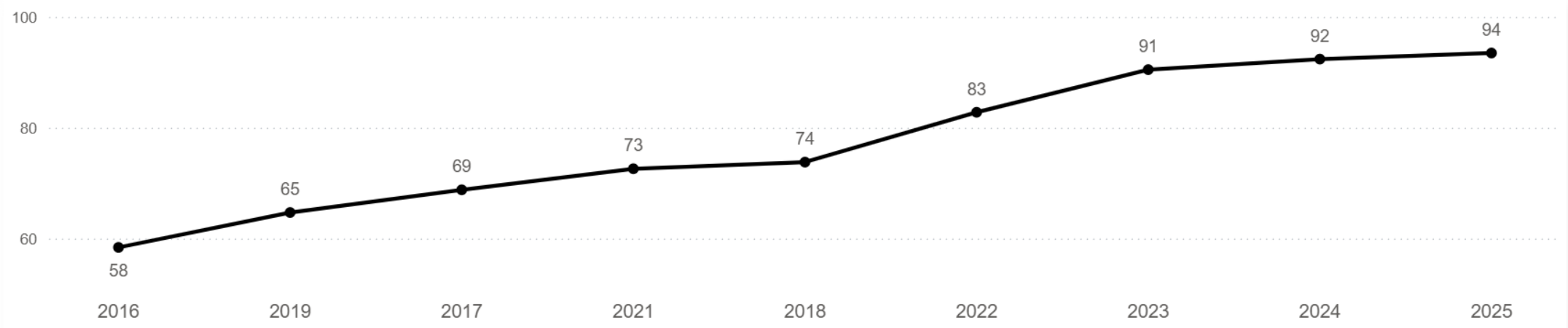
- Environmental performance
- Social performance
- Supplier performance
- Destination management and strategy

Ranking in the index

Glogbal Destination Sustainability Ranking



Glogbal Destination Sustainability Overall Index Score

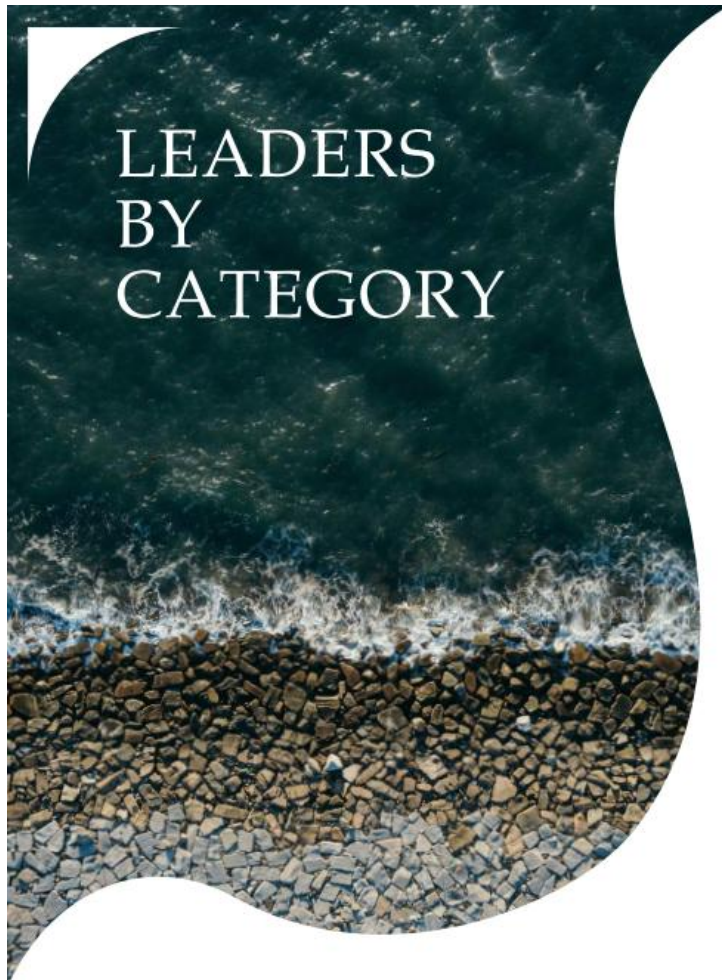


Top-40 destinations of the 2025 GDS-Index vs the 2024 GDS-Index

| | 2025 | 2024 | | 2025 | 2024 | | 2025 | 2024 | | 2025 | 2024 |
|---------------|-------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|
| Helsinki* 1 | 93.52 | 92.43 | Melbourne 11 | 83.03 | 76.61 | Bilbao 21 | 79.82 | 80.27 | Luzern 31 | 75.69 | 72.82 |
| Gothenburg 2 | 91.51 | 90.83 | Kerry 12 | 82.80 | 77.65 | Basel 22 | 79.59 | 71.40 | Marseille 32 | 75.00 | |
| Copenhagen* 3 | 88.76 | 88.19 | Singapore* 13 | 82.34 | 83.37 | Quebec 23 | 79.13 | 73.74 | Kumamoto 33 | 74.54 | 63.42 |
| Aalborg 4 | 87.06 | 82.98 | Barcelona 14 | 81.88 | 75.57 | Stockholm* 24 | 79.13 | 75.57 | Milan 34 | 74.31 | 70.18 |
| Glasgow 5 | 86.00 | 81.88 | Goyang 15 | 81.65 | 78.90 | Sydney 25 | 78.56 | 83.13 | Manchester 35 | 73.79 | 63.27 |
| Tampere 6 | 85.76 | 76.96 | Brisbane 16 | 81.19 | 75.23 | Clare 26 | 77.24 | 75.77 | Ostersund 36 | 72.71 | 65.71 |
| Aarhus 7 | 85.15 | 85.68 | Berlin* 17 | 80.50 | 75.92 | Victoria 27 | 77.06 | 77.17 | Strasbourg 37 | 71.79 | 66.97 |
| Lyon 8 | 84.40 | 80.16 | Cork 18 | 80.08 | 77.18 | Songkhla 28 | 76.84 | 74.89 | Limerick 38 | 71.34 | 73.51 |
| Belfast 9 | 84.40 | 83.14 | Dublin* 19 | 80.05 | 75.69 | Galway 29 | 76.84 | 76.06 | Ljubljana* 39 | 70.76 | 64.16 |
| Reykjavik* 10 | 83.72 | 78.28 | Montreal 20 | 79.82 | 74.77 | Faroe Islands 30 | 75.92 | 74.88 | Amsterdam* 40 | 69.72 | 61.81 |

*Capital Cities

Top sustainable cities 2025



LEADERS
BY
CATEGORY



Environmental

| | | |
|---|------------|-------|
| 1 | Helsinki | 91.04 |
| 2 | Tampere | 88.06 |
| 3 | Göteborg | 87.31 |
| 3 | Copenhagen | 87.31 |
| 4 | Stockholm | 85.82 |



Supplier

| | | |
|---|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Helsinki | 94.87 |
| 2 | Göteborg | 92.31 |
| 3 | Tampere | 91.03 |
| 3 | Glasgow | 91.03 |
| 4 | Reykjavik | 88.46 |



Social

| | | |
|---|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Helsinki | 92.11 |
| 1 | Göteborg | 92.11 |
| 1 | Reykjavik | 92.11 |
| 1 | Singapore | 92.11 |



Destination Management

| | | |
|---|------------|-------|
| 1 | Copenhagen | 95.95 |
| 2 | Helsinki | 95.77 |
| 3 | Göteborg | 94.59 |
| 3 | Basel | 94.59 |
| 4 | Goyang | 93.24 |

Helsinki was also the first big city in the world to earn the Green Destinations GSTC certificate.

The GSTC sets the world's strictest set of criteria for assessing the sustainability of travel destinations, and certification requires full compliance with the criteria. It can therefore be concluded that Helsinki is a trendsetter in sustainable tourism.

Helsinki



What is GSTC?

[The Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#) standard is a tool created in 2007 to measure and develop sustainability performance in the tourism industry. It was created by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Foundation, UN Tourism, the Rainforest Alliance and other partners.

The GSTC standard is the world's strictest and most comprehensive set of criteria for measuring the sustainability of travel destinations and include more than 280 questions that examine operations from environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability perspectives as well as sustainable governance.

There are three GSTC-accredited certification bodies in the world: **Green Destinations**, EarthCheck and Vireo Srl.



Green Destinations

- Helps travel destinations and tourism businesses develop more sustainable practices
- Provides certifications, assessments and training programmes to help destinations make improvements in terms of quality and sustainability
- Promotes sustainable tourism by sharing good practices and supporting tourism businesses around the world



Tangible sustainability

Helsinki invests in transparent sustainability, which is why a high ranking in the GDS-Index and the GSTC certification are important. In Helsinki, sustainability is not only a green claim used for marketing purposes but part of the structure and everyday life of the city.

Tightening EU legislation will ensure that environmental claims made to consumers are based on reliable and verified data. This objective is also supported by the proposed Green Claims Directive, which aims to prevent misleading environmental claims and greenwashing by companies.

Helsinki



Helsinki's goal to be the world's most sustainable travel destination has now been achieved.

Achieving the sustainability goals set out in the Helsinki City Strategy in 2021 has required **determined cooperation between various stakeholders in the city, as well as a strong commitment to the wellbeing of the environment, people and local businesses.**

Helsinki



Thank you!