

LAHTI

European Green Capital 2021

FINAL REPORT

LAHTI



Strong legacy of the European Green Capital year in Lahti

The City of Lahti with its 120,000 inhabitants is the smallest and northernmost European Green Capital ever – and the first in Finland. Lahti has been working on ambitious environmental goals for decades and is continuously developing a sustainable urban future.

In 2021, we as a city showed our ability to inspire other cities. We gained many inspiring experiences, made new connections and our environmental solutions attracted international attention. A number of international and local environmental events were held in Lahti and many ambitious collaboration projects were implemented. International visibility was greater than we ever expected. I want to thank the citizens of Lahti, partners from the business community, organisations, universities and other educational institutions. We all worked together, and everyone played a key role in developing the Green Capital year.

The European Green Capital year 2021 has left a strong legacy. We are now moving forward.

Lahti is working towards the ambitious target of becoming a carbon-neutral city by 2025. We launched various new projects, for example, a Development Centre for Carbon Neutral Construction Industry and a Green Electrification of Mobility Cluster.

We also strongly believe that you cannot have healthy people on a sick planet. This is why we have initiated a programme that explores the health benefits of nature and environmental actions. Our City Strategy and future actions are led by enduring change.

Lahti is a true example of a successful green transition. If we can, all cities can.

Pekka Timonen
Mayor of Lahti



How do you implement the most optimal European Green Capital Year?

So now we have won – what's next? I remember the advice from our kick-off meeting with the EU commission; "when you were applying for the title, it was all about collecting technical data about your achievements as a forward-thinking city. Now that you've won, it's all about communication, communication, communication".

To achieve anything important or significant, you need to involve multiple stakeholders and partners. This was one of the goals I wanted to set for the implementation of our year as the European Green Capital; to invite others to join us. Nothing gets done in a bubble and while bursting the bubble, I made sure we not only invited like-minded partners to collaborate with us, but also those partners who challenged us to do better.

Modern leadership is about leading your own organisation, and also about persuading other actors to buy your ideas and vision and

start incorporating them in their own operations. During our year, it was important to me to find a common thread, which our partners could agree on and share with us. We created a shared vision of what it means to be a forerunner as a city, a company, a university, an NGO and, most importantly, a citizen.

I am very proud that we managed to get everyone in Lahti to share their achievements and gave everyone a good reason to show and tell, to be proud of their own work as sustainable actors – not only in their own boardrooms or weekly meetings, but to the general public. Now it's time to make sure our message stays strong and united in the future as well.

Milla Bruneau
Executive Director
Lahti – European Green Capital 2021



Highlights



I.C.E. page 37



Viita workstations,
page 36

10 facts about the Lahti Green Capital year

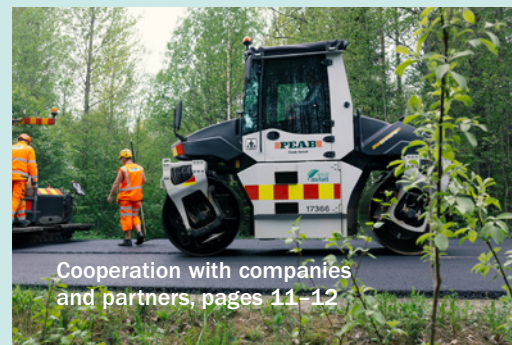
1. Up to 300 cooperation partners
2. 30 corporate partners
3. 50,000 visitors during the opening weekend
4. 260,000 participants in partner events
5. Participants in events from more than 40 countries, news coverage in 56 countries
6. 4.5 billion people potentially reached through news coverage
7. 17 new electric buses in 2021, with a similar number in 2022, after which two-thirds of the fleet will run on alternative fuels
8. Over 3,000 virtual meetings in 2021
9. 72% of citizens thought that the project was significant or very significant
10. 55% of Lahti's citizens and people living in Finland think that the Green Capital year has positively changed the city's image

Lahti – Leading environmental city, pages 45–50

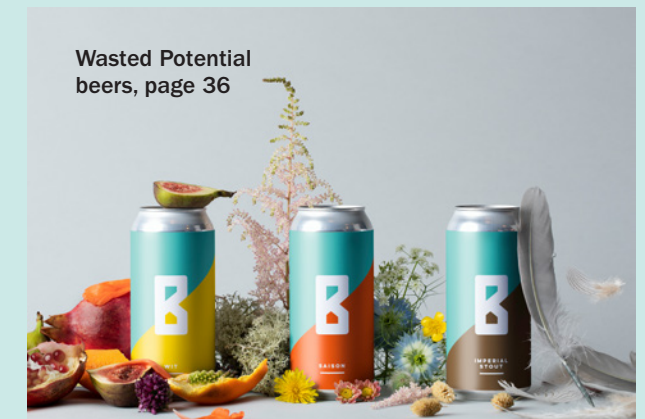
External impact assessment using the sustainable development goals, page 57



Green Capital
projects, page 17



Cooperation with companies
and partners, pages 11–12



Wasted Potential
beers, page 36

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A high-angle photograph of a city street intersection. The scene is dominated by large, leafy green trees that cast shadows on the paved ground. In the foreground, several people are riding bicycles across the intersection. A woman in a green shirt is riding a green bike, and a man in a blue shirt is riding a white bike. To the right, a man with a backpack is riding a black bike. In the background, a white and blue bus is visible, along with other pedestrians and buildings. The word "Introduction" is overlaid in large white text in the center of the image.

Introduction

How Lahti became the European Green Capital

Lahti, with its population of 120,000 inhabitants and located in Southern Finland, is the smallest and northernmost European Green Capital ever. Lahti has worked on environmental issues for decades and is continuously developing as a city with a sustainable future. We are a pioneer of smart, sustainable solutions and a city in which bold environmental choices are made every day with universities, companies and citizens.

European Green Capital Award applicant cities are measured using 12 indicators and the title is awarded to one city per year for merits in pioneering environmental actions, setting an example for other cities and developing innovative solutions to environmental challenges. Before Lahti, 11 European cities had been awarded this title.

Why was Lahti awarded the title?

Lahti has a powerful story to tell as a green ambassador. Lahti has evolved from a traditional industrial past to the modern green city of today. The foundations of its environmental work were already laid over 30 years ago when the city began restoring Lake Vesijärvi. We are particularly strong in the fields of air quality, waste, green growth and eco-innovation, as well as governance, and Lahti was top rated in these indicator areas.

Lahti is currently working towards the ambitious target of becoming a carbon-neutral city by 2025, which is 25 years ahead of the EU target. We have already experienced an energy revolution and have abandoned coal. Also, Lahti is the first city in the world to test a personal carbon trading app for its citizens.

Our presentation to the EGCA jury highlighted how Lahti's sustainability innovations can be replicated by other cities across Europe and globally. Lahti showed its ability to inspire other cities and was proclaimed winner of the 2021 competition by a unanimous decision from the judges.

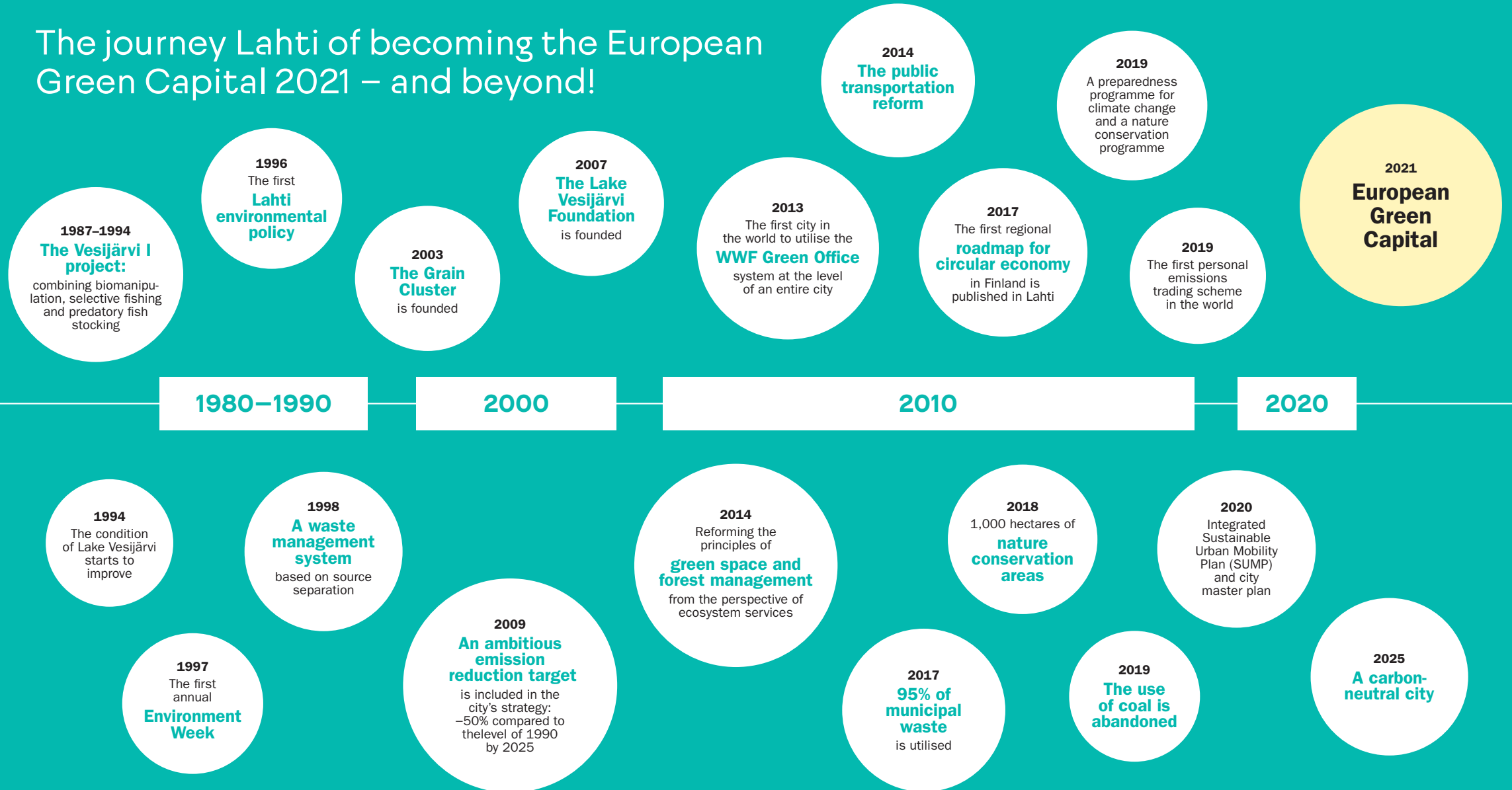
Ranking of Lahti in the European Green Capital Award 2021

Indicator	Ranking
6. Air Quality	1
8. Waste	1
10. Green Growth and Eco-innovation	1
12. Governance	1
5. Nature and Biodiversity	2
7. Noise	2
9. Water	2
1. Climate Change: Mitigation	3
2. Climate Change: Adaptation	3
3. Sustainable Urban Mobility	3
11. Energy Performance	3
4. Sustainable Land Use	6

How did we do in comparison with the finalist cities of Strasbourg and Lille?



The journey Lahti of becoming the European Green Capital 2021 – and beyond!



The goals of Lahti's Green Capital year

The European Green Capital year is a multi-dimensional project: sustainable development will be promoted through practical environmental solutions that impact the citizens' daily lives, at the level of strategic urban development and also at an international level, particularly as far as publicity and city marketing are concerned. Thus, we built a programme comprising three main objectives:

1. Developing and producing significant environmental solutions, experiments, campaigns and an operating model to **enable a smooth everyday life** that contributes to the well-being of citizens
2. Showcasing the **best sustainability practices of Finnish cities**
3. Reinforcing the **international visibility** and importance of the European Green Capital.

We chose four themes of the year: **carbon-neutral life, citizen participation, circular economy** and **nature and water**. The largest sustainability challenges for humanity on a global level derive from these themes: climate change, reduction of natural resources, the disappearance of species in nature, and societal segregation. However, our starting point for these major challenges was very solution oriented: during our Green Capital year, we tried to identify new and practical solutions on a local level to meet urban challenges.



**Green Capital
objectives
in short**

**1.
Smooth everyday
life contributing
to wellbeing**

**2.
Functioning and
sustainable cities**

**3.
Visibility of the
Green Capital**

Organising the theme year

Being awarded the title and preparing for the theme year takes a lot of preparation and planning in a very short time frame.

The City of Lahti decided to form a separate project organisation to plan and execute the theme year for the city. The Sustainable Lahti foundation was established to enable a smooth and flexible way to manage the project. The foundation model made it more feasible to form partnerships with the private sector.

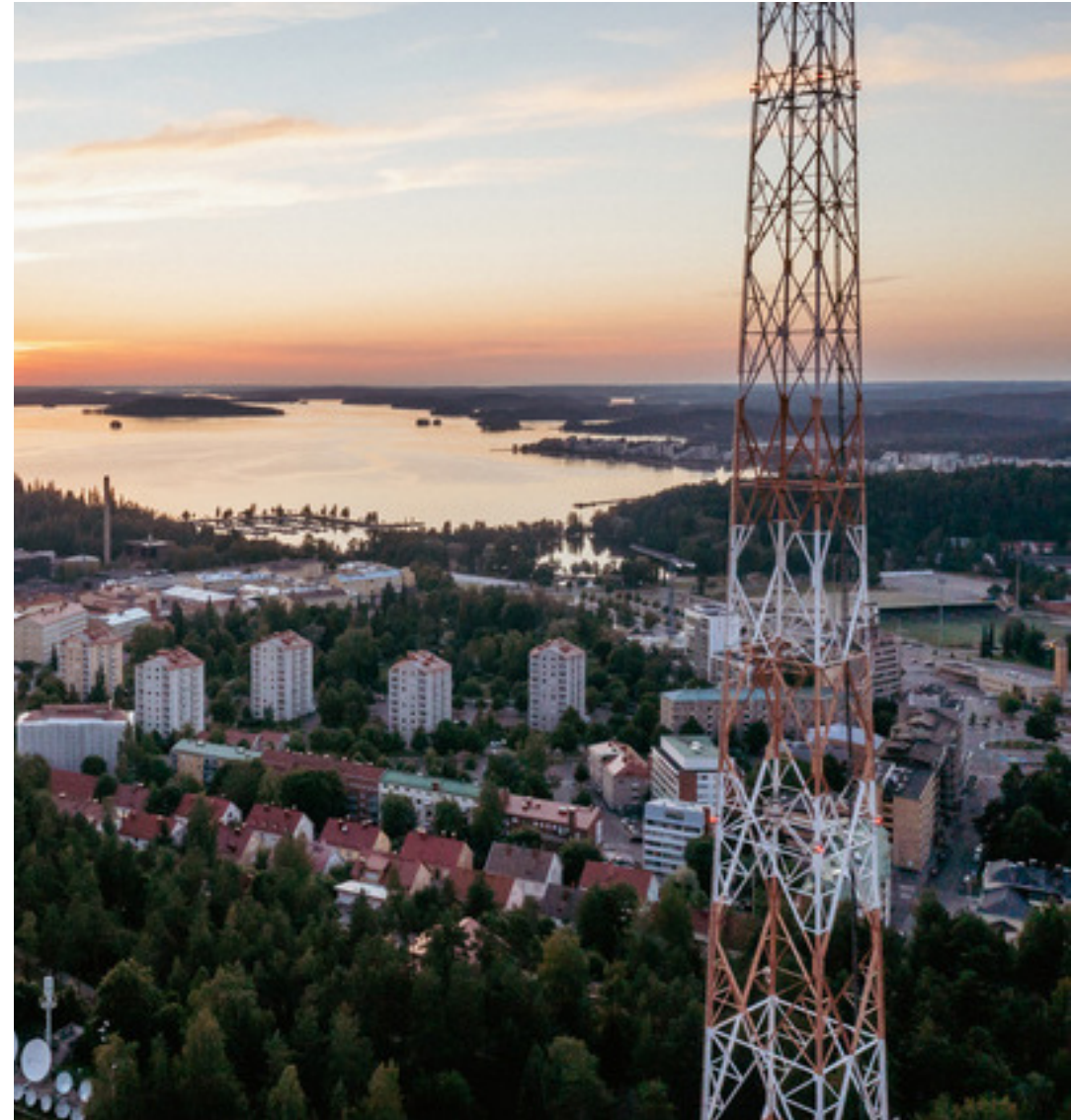
The Sustainable Lahti foundation succeeded in inviting highly influential and relevant people and organisations to participate in implementing the theme year. Chairman of the Board, Mr Erkki Liikanen is, for example, a former governor of the Bank of Finland and a former EU Commissioner. Other actors that could be mentioned include the Finnish Government/Ministry of the Environment, the municipalities of Asikkala, Heinola, Hollola and Orimattila, the Häme Chamber of Commerce, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, the Association of Finnish Municipalities and the Regional Council of Päijät-Häme.

If winning the title took the City of Lahti around 45 years of pioneering environmental and sustainable urban development work, the implementation of the theme year took around 2.5 years. The task of a winning city is to share its story and encourage other European cities to learn from it. To achieve such a goal, it is necessary to develop an interesting and relevant programme and communicate it in a compelling and innovative way. In today's world, it is important to find new ways of catching people's attention and inviting others to share your story.

In Lahti, the organisation was formed and funded as follows: programming: 40%; communications: 30%; administration: 30%.

"The European Green Capital programme also increased the visibility of our environmental efforts here in the municipality of Asikkala and made us more aware of the importance of taking the environment into account in every decision we make."

Rinna Ikola-Norrbacka,
Mayor of Asikkala



Partners of the Lahti Green Capital year

Lahti's strategy aims for a sustainable future in which nature, citizens and companies thrive. Today, cities can only achieve their ambitious sustainability objectives through partnerships.

We created the Green Capital year through extensive cooperation across municipal and regional borders, utilising new partnerships with the public and private sector, educational institutions and businesses, and by helping different volunteers find each other. We created opportunities for cooperation between different stakeholders through our project and event funding scheme.

A total of 135 private sector companies (of which 14 were official partners), three universities, four schools, 134 NGOs and 37 other cities were our partners in developing the year.

"The city's winning the European Green Capital Award inspired local businesses and universities to pool their resources and seek growth and international recognition together through shared operating models, solutions, services and product development. Lahti is a trailblazer with the courage to think big."

Juha-Matti Saksa,
Rector, LUT University

Turo Kilpeläinen, Rector,
LAB University of Applied Sciences



Public-private partnerships

We developed commercial partnerships with 14 private sector companies and entered into agreements with 16 smaller local companies.

All partnerships were based on either projects or communication campaigns. We also didn't hesitate to include unconventional partners, such as construction companies or suppliers of packaging solutions as our partners. It is important that cities with sectors that carry a heavy environmental burden in order to identify more suitable ways of producing these necessary services and products. We were also happy to include companies that had a broad customer reach.




“Responsibility and environmental friendliness are no longer isolated themes for companies but integral to their business. Businesses also like to exchange views on these themes, and the European Green Capital programme created plenty of opportunities for sharing thoughts. This debate and development cooperation live on in various forums.”

Valtteri Simola,
Executive director,
Lahti Industrial Association

Partner companies and our cooperation in Lahti – European Green Capital 2021 project.

Partners companies (private sector)	Cooperation
CGI Finland (IT and business consultancy)	ESG data project
Fujitsu Finland (information and communications technology)	Innovation workshops on the theme of waste management
Hartwall (brewery)	Video project
Kempower (EV charging manufacturer)	EV charging station in Lahti market square
Lassila & Tikanoja (waste management)	Health care waste management project (with Wipak)
LähiTapiola Vellamo (insurance company)	Secure bicycle parking (with Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa)
Niemi Services (logistics)	Event logistics, communication campaigns
Osuuskauppa Hämeenmaa (grocery store chain)	Secure bicycle parking + responsible and healthy food campaign
OP Pääjt-Häme (banking)	Green Growth Forum 2021 event
Peab Asphalt (asphalt and construction)	Blue-smoke handling unit, communication
Peikko (steel and construction)	Construction goes circular conference 2022
Sitowise (smart city company)	Innovation project, Design sprint, Events
Vaisala (innovative measurement solutions, air quality measurement unit)	Air quality monitoring sensors
Wipak (global supplier of packaging solutions)	Health care waste management project (with Lassila & Tikanoja)



Our Green Capital programme

Our Green Capital programme

The European Green Capital programme focused on the city's ambitious environmental goals, partnerships, funded projects, themed events, awareness raising and visibility, and the everyday actions of ordinary citizens.

We prepared the programme for the theme year by meeting hundreds of citizens, associations, and companies from Lahti and the Päijät-Häme region. The Green Capital's project funding programme already opened in the spring of 2020 so that local ideas could become a reality as

quickly as possible. Thus, 2020 focused on the preparation of the upcoming Green Capital year. We used this preparation period to engage private partners and other organisations.

The official programme was published at a press event in October 2020. The programme was based on the four themes for the year.

We looked for new and practical solutions on a local level that could be used to meet these challenges in cities. This meant solutions that Lahti and the Päijät-Häme region and its citizens and companies could offer to other cities around the world while also sharing the story of growth and change in Lahti.

A smooth everyday life, well-being, faith in the future of the city's citizens, and their opportunity to feel included in the city's changes, were the most important factors for the creators of the event year.

“The programme was designed and implemented in cooperation not just with Lahti-based businesses, organisations and schools but also neighbouring local authorities, which shows that there is a strong common will and trust in the region.”

José Valanta, Member of the Board of the Sustainable Lahti Foundation and Director of Customer Relations at the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities



Local actions

The Green Capital year was developed in collaboration with the citizens of the various municipalities. Participation was one of the main themes: it was important to raise awareness of the Green Capital year in the region and ensure that citizens actively participated in the making of the year.

The Green Capital year was not just Lahti's opportunity to shine; it was important for us to support cooperation between the other municipalities and their citizens.

During the Green Capital year, the municipalities of the Päijät-Häme region developed nature tourism opportunities and hiking routes in their areas, implemented workshops and events with citizens, and identified new business cooperation opportunities and innovation activities related to themes such as well-being, wooden construction and the circular economy.

Citizens were offered the opportunity to participate in the year and:

- Take part in discussions and follow the theme year on social media
- Take part in Green Capital events and organise their own events
- Implement environmental projects
- Become a Green Capital ambassador
- Join the Green Capital Youth Group
- Take environmental actions in their everyday lives



Highlight: Opening of the Green Capital year

HIGHLIGHTS: Projects, events and campaigns aimed at citizens

- Opening of the Green Capital year

1 Wooden Lahti letters by Lake Vesijärvi

- Children's book "Helga and Helmeri"
- Municipal election tour in the region
- #zeropollutionhour campaign

2 Lahti urban ski-sharing programme

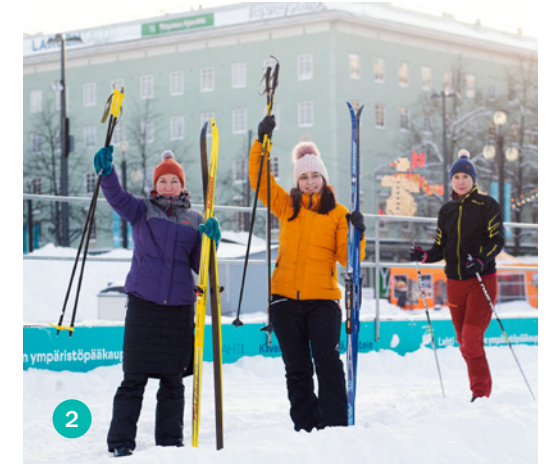
- Luontopiste – local nature tourism info booth

3 Environmental workshop for schools

- Lahti Sustainability Map
- "Monttu auki" dialogue event

4 Environmental art gifts

- Green Capital Closing Ceremony



Projects

The projects put the partnerships and cooperation of the Green Capital into practice. The goal of project funding was to find new and bold green solutions that could be jointly tested and developed by various parties during the Green Capital year.

The project funding application process served as a platform for engagement and co-development: through the funding applications, we looked for suitable cooperation opportunities for both our largest partner companies and for smaller actors.

We funded projects throughout the Päijät-Häme region. It was important that the projects nurtured the citizens' environmental innovations and ideas, but also that the innovations and entrepreneurship continued beyond the Green Capital year.

Project applications were continually assessed based on feasibility, novelty value and effectiveness. An external group of experts rated the projects based on these assessment criteria.

Applications

362

Funded projects

86

24%

Of projects funded

"A wide range of ideas were turned into actions across the region, and every one of them has made a positive contribution to the comfort and standard of living in and around Lahti."

Juha Rostedt, Chairman of Lahti City Council

Supported projects increased local cooperation

Event support met the desire of local residents to have more events available

Enabled numerous projects and events

Project highlights

Blue Wings Composting

The Blue Wing Composting project conducted research into green industry opportunities by combining insect economy and recycling. The project aimed to recycle low-grade food bio-waste by utilising 10,000 black soldier fly larvae. The larvae were fed mixed food waste that was left over from a local school kitchen.



Lahti Leads the Way

Lahden Autovuokraus Oy wants to be a forerunner in promoting carbon-neutral urban mobility by providing an electric car-sharing scheme to city dwellers, businesses and tourists. The aim is to ensure the smoothness and customer orientation of the car-sharing scheme, utilising the principles of the circular economy.



A communal wilderness cabin on Aurinkovuori in Asikkala

A communal wilderness cabin has been built on Aurinkovuori in Asikkala by local young people and their instructors. Increasing sociability and reinforcing the connection with nature are at the heart of this communal project by the municipality of Asikkala. All local citizens can enjoy the wilderness cabin and the surrounding nature.



HIUKKA- Hair and hair fibre as a carbon sink

The HIUKKA project investigates different ways of utilising hair fibres and using them to replace plastic-based products. The pilot projects include stormwater purification and soil improvement.

Children and young people

We wanted to participate in discussions with young people and, for our part, offer as many practical opportunities as possible to children and young people to participate in creating the theme year.

Children and youth were the main target group of the Green Capital. Young people must have their say in protecting the environment and have their voices heard in conversations about our future.

Lahti youth services – environmental team

Lahti youth service units and offices took environmental issues into account in their work with young people. An environmental team, comprising youth counsellors, was created to coordinate and develop activities related to environmental issues.



Green Capital youth group

The Green Capital youth group explored nature, deeply reflected on environmental issues and increased the group's opportunities to influence other young people and form new friendships. Group members were recruited through an open search of schools.

“How others are also thinking about how great it is to be part of Lahti and to hold on to the fact that Lahti received the honour of being the European Green Capital of the Year 2021. I can impact many things myself, even though I'm still young.”

Local participant commenting on “what was great about the youth group”.

Children and young people

Projects aimed at children and young people

The Green Capital project and event support implemented multiple projects for children and young people. Funding was granted for several projects that supported the relationship of children, young people and families with nature, as well as projects addressing environmental education. **26 out of 86** projects funded by Lahti Green Capital were aimed at children and young people.



“Helga and Helmeri” children's book

The Green Capital project, in collaboration with the Lahti-based Merkityskirjat, published the children's books Helga and Helmeri in Lahti as climate agents. Children also contributed to creating the book. The book was distributed as a gift to all first-year pupils in Lahti. Teachers have reported that the book has served as an inspiration for addressing environmental issues in the classroom.

Green Capital mascot – Siippo The Supercat

The adventurous supercat Siippo was the mascot for the theme year. Siippo was a popular guest at many of the events. The mascot has its origins in a children's drawing competition.



Youth and Environment Europe

Youth and Environment YEE, one of the largest independent European networks of youth organisations, conducted an international two-day virtual environmental workshop that was open to young Europeans. The workshop hosted 20 young people, aged 16–19, from nine countries.

Theme year in schools

Educational institutions were visible as creators in the programme throughout the theme year through their projects, the work of our trainees, and various events.

Lahti's schools participated in the Green Capital year in various ways. They worked on environmental themes, for example, monthly environmental challenges, participating in Kids Dialogue, workshops in local nature, the learning theme week in October 2021 and through the activities of the schools' own sustainable development teams.

During the theme year, Salpaus Further Education participated in cooperation and development related to sustainable food products and local travel services.

Kids Dialogue

Lahti is a pioneer in promoting dialogue. During the Green Capital year, Timeout - a conversation and dialogue method, was further developed in Lahti's basic education. The aim was for the city to have the opportunity to learn from young people and develop an ongoing dialogue. Kids Dialogue, based

on Timeout, can be used to increase the dialogue between children and city officials when measures involving children are being planned.

Timeout is a new way of generating and engaging in constructive discussions. The method can be used whenever a deeper understanding of a topic or an equal encounter is required – for instance, as a part of preparations, decisionmaking or bringing different people together.

Workshops in local nature

We conducted environmental workshops for Lahti's primary schools in collaboration with the Tuomikko Theatre. The workshops were held in a local forest and addressed environmental themes in a fun and memorable way.

The workshops were mainly aimed at years 1–4 and were attended by nine schools and two kindergartens. The workshops involved around 800 children.

“Teacher, this was so good! Can we ask them to visit us again immediately?”

Local kindergartener

Multidisciplinary Learning Week

The educational week's theme was Lahti's Green Capital year. Students and pupils from multiple years deeply immersed themselves in the issue of environmental protection in many inspiring ways. The Green Capital organisation also offered environmental education adventures to local nature areas.

The institutions for basic education in Lahti, in cooperation with the Finnish National Agency for Education, organised an international seminar on the role of the school as an educator in climate responsibility and climate engagement during the week.



Theme year in schools

Green Capital year in Lahti's schools

- Monthly environmental themes
- Kids Dialogue
- Multidisciplinary learning week
- Workshops in local nature
- Environmental projects
- Children's books with environmental themes

Green Capital year in Lahti's kindergartens

- 23 new environmental educators
- Ruoriniemi environmental kindergarten
- Development team for environmental education
- City's own Instagram account #lastenympäristöpääkaupunki, children's Green Capital
- Environmental theme days and projects

Projects in cooperation with Lahti's educational institutions:

- Viita workstations
- Luontopiste – local nature tourism info booth
- Green Capital safety vests
- Virtual studio
- Green Capital mascot – Siippo the Supercat
- Green Capital coffee table book

Green Capital Ambassadors

Green Capital ambassadors played a special role as active citizens and implementers of the Green Capital year.

The ambassadors recounted the story of Lahti in their own words. It was the citizens who came up with the idea of having volunteer ambassadors: they wanted to have some specific involvement in creating the Green Capital!

Citizen ambassadors as messengers

The citizen ambassadors comprised volunteers of every age from all over the Lahti region. They all communicated the message to their own networks, neighbourhoods and social media in a way that suited them best. The Green Capital year offered them a unique way of playing a part in influencing the activities of the city and also participating in various events and campaigns.

City of Lahti ambassadors

75 City of Lahti employees became ambassadors to make the Green Capital year visible throughout the whole city organisation. The ambassadors promoted the work that is being conducted across the city organisation for a sustainable future.



Valtteri Bottas – Green Capital Ambassador

One of the most recognisable Green Lahti ambassadors was the world famous F1 driver Valtteri Bottas. Bottas, who is a Nastola native from the eastern Lahti area, proudly told the story of his hometown. He is known as an avid nature enthusiast, for whom cooperation with the Green Capital Project was a source of pride.



Green Capital community ambassadors

Community ambassadors particularly addressed sustainability and environmental themes in their activities throughout the year. Community ambassadors included:

- Theatrum Olga
- SUPER teatteri
- Taika Design and Art School

Events and international programme

We created a diverse programme for the Green Capital Year, which included events ranging from international conferences to neighbourhood events and cooperation projects. The theme year was also visible elsewhere in Finland and Europe.

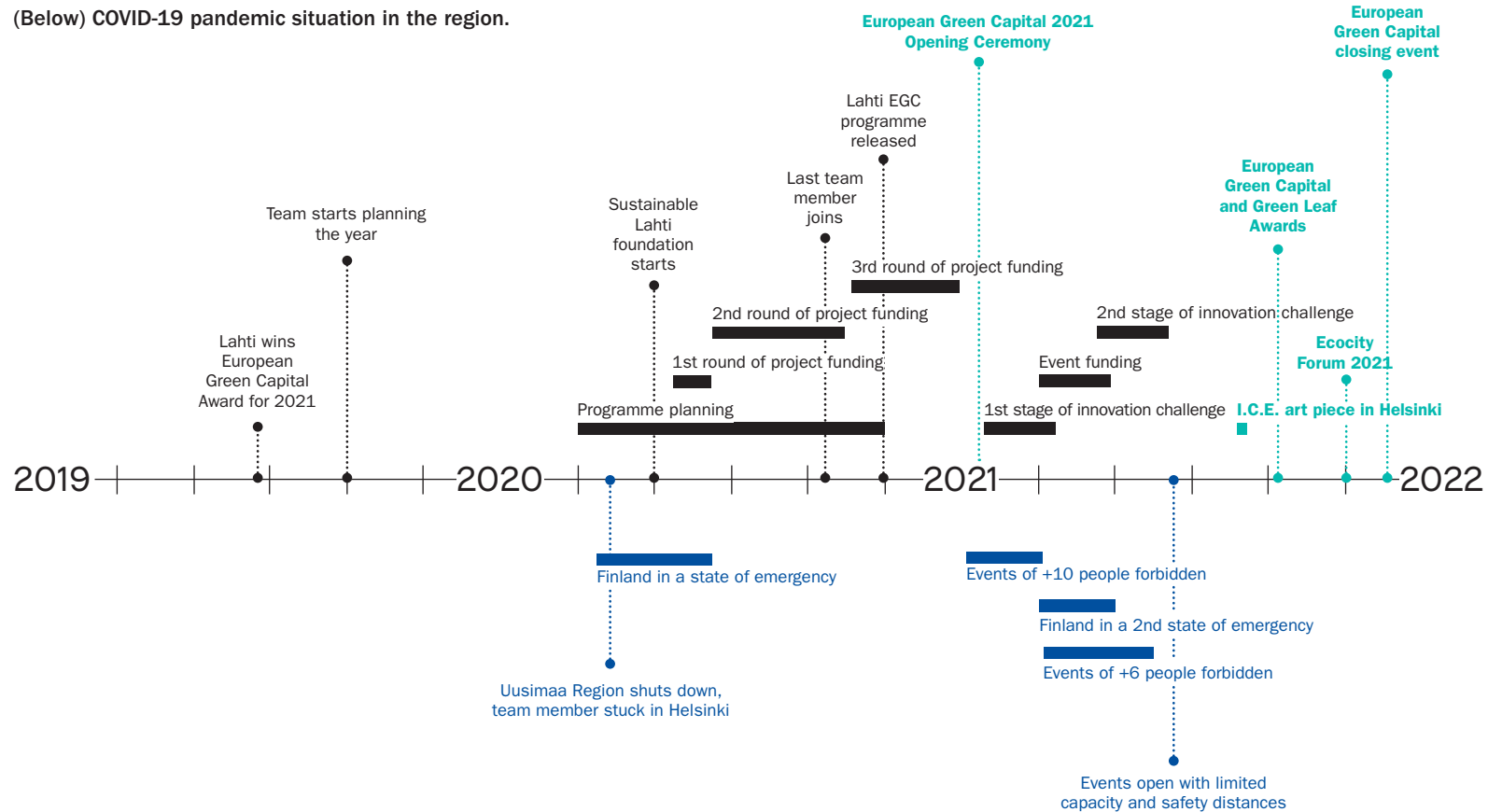
Lahti's environmental work was introduced at numerous live, virtual and hybrid events.

During the planning process, we took into account the potential impact of the pandemic on the events. The pandemic affected our activities in two ways: it increased the significance of local events, particularly during the summer of 2021, and it challenged us to find new ways of bringing the content to audiences.

We needed a new way to produce events safely and also reach audiences when it was not possible to attend physical events. This resulted in us building our virtual production studio in collaboration with a local business accelerator, StartHub, and the LAB University of Applied Sciences.

(Above) Programme development and main events.

(Below) COVID-19 pandemic situation in the region.



Official events

Live participants

55,958

Virtual participants

8,360

Total participants

64,318

Participants from countries

40



Opening of the Green Capital Year 15–24 January 2021

The citizens of Lahti and Päijät-Häme celebrated the opening of the Green Capital year for ten days. A colourful and mystical experiences enthralled visitors in the Pikku-Vesijärvi Park – full of light, music and surprises.

European Dialogue For Sustainable Cities 2021

Lahti invited European cities to engage in dialogue on environmental solutions. The European Dialogue for Sustainable Cities was a series of panel discussions that provided a platform for debate on solutions for European cities during an ecological crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The panel discussions were held once a month and discussed topics such as environmental solutions, innovation and cooperation models available for European cities – and featured urban experts, researchers, businesses and NGOs. Each discussion introduced previous European Green Capitals from 2010 to 2020. The European Dialogue for Sustainable Cities featured 38 experts from 13 countries.



Official events

The European Green Capital Awards 2021 9 September 2021

Lahti hosted the European Green Capital and Green Leaf Awards to announce the winners of the prestigious 2023 European Green Capital and 2022 European Green Leaf Awards. The ceremony culminated in the selection of Tallinn as the Green Capital 2023. The European Green Leaf 2022 awards were granted to Valongo from Portugal and Winterswijk from the Netherlands.



Green Growth Forum Sibelius Hall, Lahti 14–15 September 2021

The Green Growth Forum brought together investors, researchers and other leaders in the finance sector to discuss new sustainable investment and financing trends. The event highlighted successful investments and how sustainable financing meets the circular economy, nature and biodiversity.

Monttu Auki – Dialogue Event 29 September 2021

The “Monttu auki” event was a dialogue conversation comprising around 300 participants. The event inspired Lahti citizens to gather and discuss the legacy and future of Lahti’s Green Capital year. The dialogue conversation discussed issues such as what Lahti is like now and which direction the city should take. The event was free and open to all citizens. Input from the event was also used during the Lahti city strategy process in 2022.



Green Lahti Closing Ceremony 4–5 December 2021

A sustainable city is created in cooperation with citizens, businesses, universities and other partners. This is why the City of Lahti invited everyone to celebrate the end of the European Green Capital year in the spirit of sports, art and music. We held musical performances in Lahti Square and offered a hockey match as a thank you to local citizens for their joint work for a sustainable future. The Future Green Capitals of Grenoble and Tallinn also participated in the closing ceremony.

Ecocity Forum 2 November 2021

The Ecocity Forum offered insight into the latest ideas in sustainable urban development. Business representatives, decision makers, researchers and developers of digital tools and solutions met in an inspiring environment. Ecocity Forum Lahti was organised by Lahti – European Green Capital 2021, Ecocity Builders and Lahti Events.

Partner events

Lakeland Finland – Sustainable Destination

18 January 2021

Lakeland Finland – Sustainable Destination Congress brought together participants to share recent discoveries in the development of responsible services and destinations in a changing world.

Smash Lahti 2021 *22 January 2021*

The second edition of SMASH Lahti brought sports tech and environmental issues together to celebrate Lahti European Green Capital 2021.

CitiCap – Final Conference

24 March 2021

Lahti became the first city in the world to implement a system for personal carbon trading on mobility. The final conference focused on what we have learned in the CitiCAP project and the pathways ahead.

Lahti Lakes 2021 *7–9 June 2021*

Lahti Lakes 2021 took place as an online symposium. It continued the lively debate on future challenges in the field of lake restoration that began during the 2018 symposium, including discussing the impacts of environmental change and economic development on lake systems.

Nastola Summer Exhibition 2021

13 June–29 August 2021

Nastola Summer Exhibition 2021, Luontoretki – Nature Trip was a wide-ranging exhibition featuring contemporary art with environmental themes. It was one of the most diverse environmental art events of summer 2021. The exhibition included around 30 artists from different spheres of art. In addition to paintings, the exhibition showcased video, photographic, environmental and spatial art, as well as sculptures and installations.

Kaarisilta Biennale 2021 Goes Green

2 July–1 August 2021

The Kaarisilta Biennale 2021 Goes Green art exhibition focused on sustainable development, climate change and strengthening people's relationship with nature through art. In spring 2021, nature workshops were organised in connection with the art exhibition in collaboration with the citizens of the area, schoolchildren, local companies and Kaarisilta staff.

Valtteri Bottas Duathlon *22 August 2021*

The Valtteri Bottas Duathlon was held in picturesque Pajulahti nature. The event imposed a one-minute time penalty on people who threw waste into nature.



Zero Emissions Day – EU Climate Pact event

21 September 2021

The goal of Zero Emissions Day was to engage people in more climate-friendly choices in their everyday lives. The Climate Leadership Coalition organised the EU Climate Pact event online in collaboration with Lahti – European Green Capital.

VeloFinland 2021 *1 and 2 October 2021*

VeloFinland was a conference for bicycle traffic and city planning that brought together decision makers, city planners, civil engineers, students and stakeholders. VeloFinland brought the latest news and innovations in bicycle traffic and city planning, research and innovative ideas.

Environmental Crime Seminar

7 and 8 October 2021

The Police University College and its partners held a seminar in Lahti, targeted various authorities and focused on topical environmental crime issues. The seminar discussed current environmental criminality from the perspective of cooperation between the various authorities and addressed waste, cross-border waste flows and waste-related (organised) crime.

People and Planet *8–10 November 2021*

Science and practice for human and planetary health met in the People and Planet online conference. The conference focused on how human health and the health of the planet are closely connected, and what can be done to protect and enhance both.

Theme weeks

Lahti Design Week 3–9 May 2021

The Lahti Green Design Week showcased how sustainable design, product development and people-oriented sustainable lifestyle solutions are implemented in the Päijät-Häme region. The event profiled the region as a forerunner in sustainable solutions, sustainable design and the circular economy.

EU Green Week 2021 Opening Event

31 May 2021

Lahti organised the opening event of the EU Green Week 2021. The virtual event highlighted the state of European waters, soil and air quality. The event also discussed the importance of citizen science.

Lahti Cycling Week

28 August–5 September 2021

Lahti Cycling Week offered a wide range of cycling-themed events. Lahti citizens explored the city on bikes, the upcoming bike park and were able to take part in a night bike ride.

Lahti Region Environmental Week

20–26 September 2021

The regional environment week has been held since 1997 and it encourages companies and city citizens to take green actions together. The theme of the 25th environmental week was “dialogue” and the week hosted dozens of events in Lahti and the neighbouring municipalities.

European Week of Regions and Cities

11–14 October 2021

The 19th edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities took place as a fully digital event that featured over 300 sessions and online networking activities. Lahti took part in the workshop *How can green cities lead the way to European recovery?* and showed its solutions for reducing the carbon footprint of construction in both new and old buildings.

Three other cities presented their own specific case examples: the European Green Capital 2022, Grenoble, and European Green Leaf 2021, Lappeenranta, as well as 2018 Växjö.



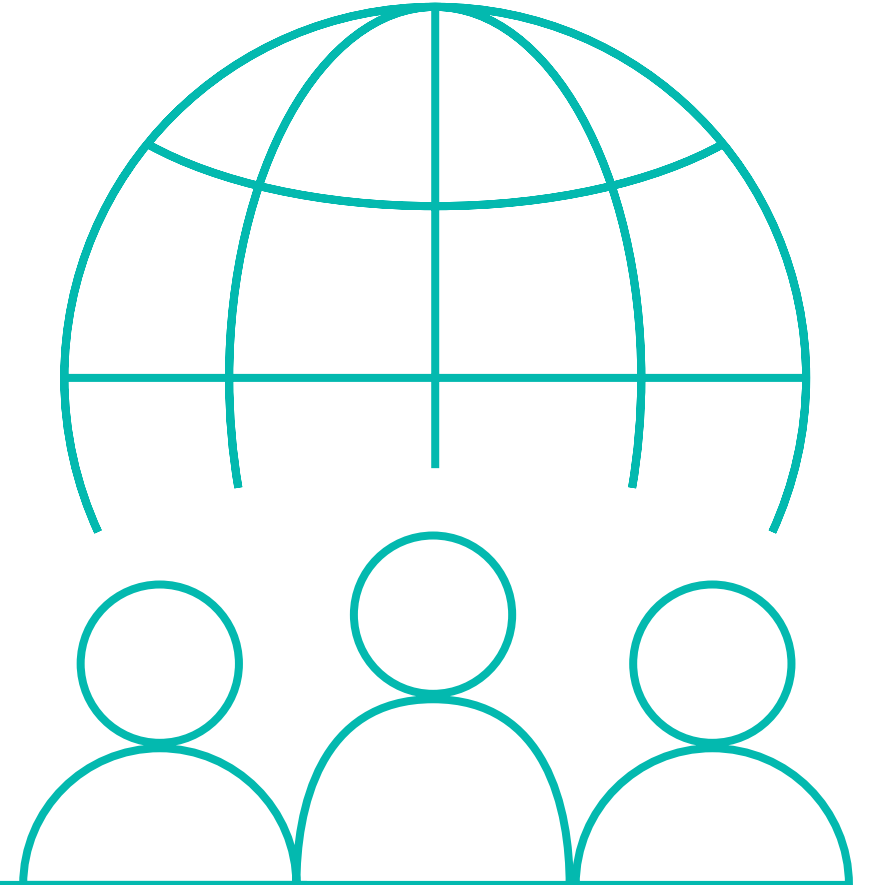
International networks

Lahti is a member of several city and business cooperation networks, including:

- Eurocities
- Covenant of Mayors
- Union of Baltic Cities (UBC)
- European Green Capital Network (EGCN)
- ICLEI Local governments for sustainability
- CLC (Climate Leadership Coalition)
- WALCC (World Alliance for Low Carbon Cities)

The international networks offer many opportunities for visibility and developing actions together. The Green Capital year saw featured events, expert speakers and continued cooperation between these networks.

The European Green Capital Network and the previous Green Capital and Green Leaf winning cities met several times online but also at the Green Capital Awards ceremony hosted in the Sibelius Hall in Lahti. This network continues to be an essential channel for exchanging information about sustainable practices in cities.



ECO
CITY
FORUM
2021

Lahti – EU Green Capital

Visibility of the Lahti Green Capital

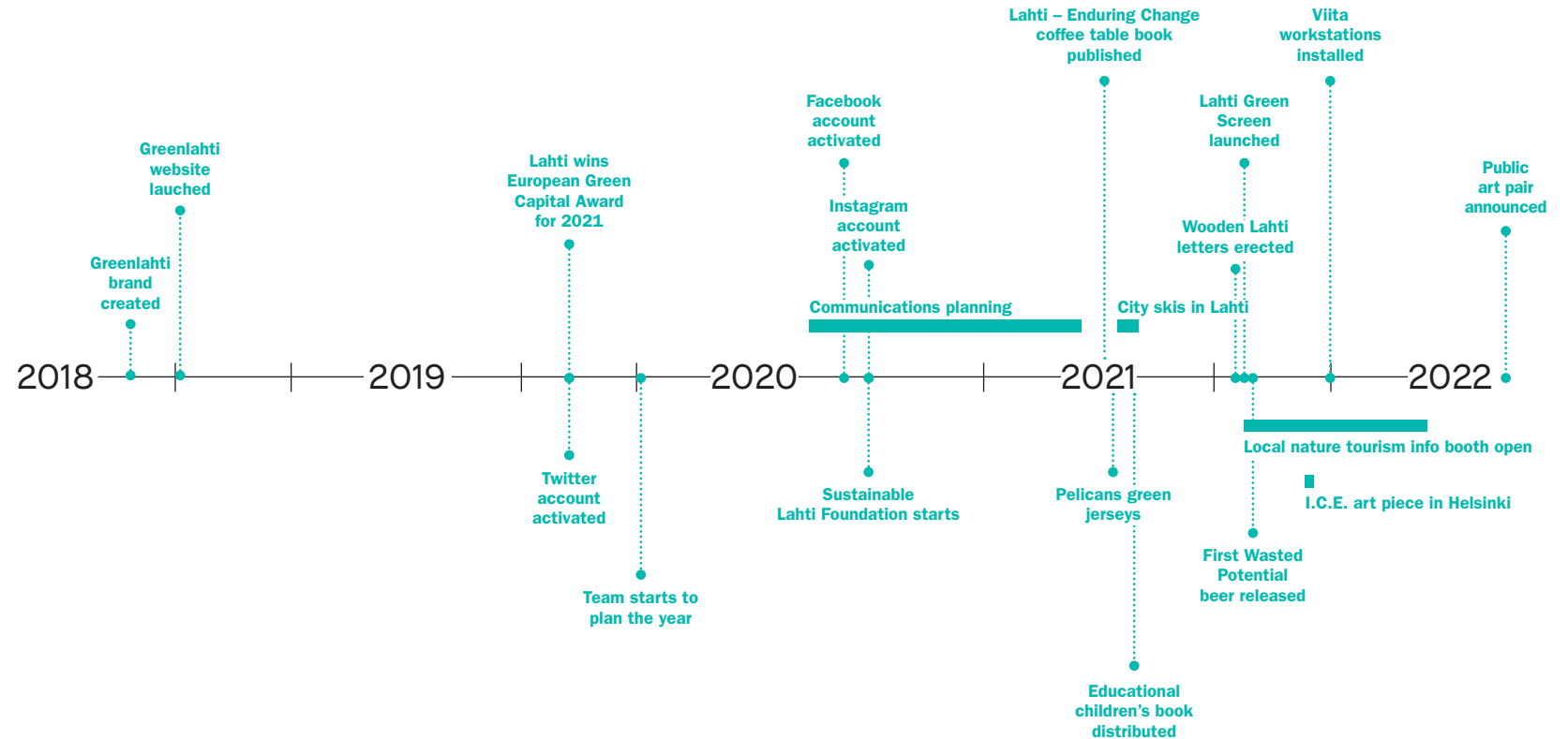


Visibility of the Lahti Green Capital

We wanted to ensure that communication and marketing throughout the European Green Capital project were positive, inclusive and innovative.

Our aim was that as European Green Capital 2021, Lahti would boost the profile of the EGCA locally, nationally and internationally and showcase sustainable urban development as a shared and inspiring activity to its citizens. We also wanted to strengthen Lahti's profile as an environmental pioneer, improve the reputation of the city nationally and make Lahti citizens feel proud of their city.

Main actions of Green Capital communications



Enduring change concept and Green Lahti brand

Many stories can be told about Lahti, but the most important story is about those people who make things happen, even in difficult times.

We highlighted this by creating the Enduring change concept, which was used in our communications throughout the Green Capital year. It tells the story of Lahti's transformation in a nutshell. The Lahti – Enduring Change slogan is also used in the new Lahti city strategy for 2030.

Change is an endurance sport.
It takes time and resolve to see it through.

Change is scary. It's easy to cling to the past and seek security in the current ways of doing things.

It takes guts to ask for more. A new approach, higher goals and a brighter future. Each crisis is a test that shows our capacity to endure change. Forward-looking leaders are the first to identify and take on future challenges.

No one knows this better than a city that has faced tough challenges by making decisions that promote a more sustainable tomorrow and lead the way for sustainable living with an enduring attitude.

Lahti – Enduring Change

The Green Lahti brand had already been created before our Green Capital year to support environmental work and ensure coherent communication and marketing during the Green Capital application process. Our strong visual identity and communication proved successful during these years, and for the Green Capital year, we further developed visual elements of the brand and our tone of voice. We highlighted Lahti's example in a playful way through several successful PR campaigns that brought the theme year to life and also increased the credibility and concreteness of our communication.



Media coverage

Global media attention was one of the most significant successes of our Green Capital project. The project gained visibility in a total of 56 countries, of which 23 were European countries.

We achieved visibility on almost every continent, particularly in the USA, with 147 news hits. The EGC year significantly increased Lahti's news coverage in connection with environmental issues, and news coverage more than doubled from 2020 to 2021.

Out of all news stories 703 were published in the Finnish media. National news coverage was not as good compared to the international and local level and some of the most visi-

ble news stories were only published in early 2022. In Finland, Lahti's local newspaper Etelä-Suomen Sanomat published the most articles about the Green Capital project – a total of 277 articles. The Finnish Broadcasting company Yle also followed Lahti's year closely and published 37 articles. The combined potential reach of Yle's news coverage was the third highest after The Independent in the UK and Forbes in the USA.

"Following Lahti's year as the European Green Capital, it now ranks in the top 20 of European destinations in nature and sustainable tourism and in the top 22 of CNN's best tourism destinations in the world in 2022."

Raija Forsman,
Managing Director,
Lahti Region

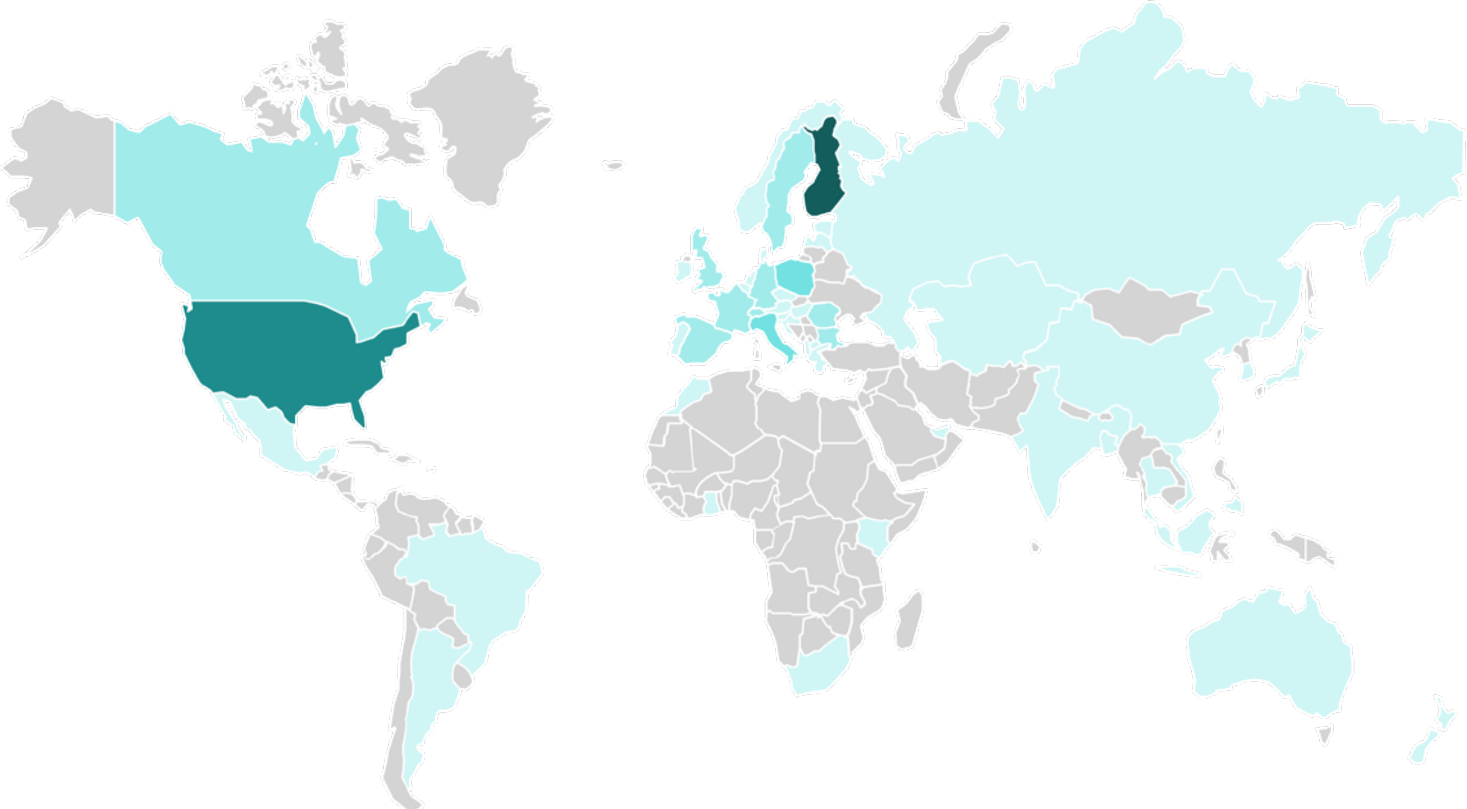
2237
news articles

4.5 billion
potential
reach globally

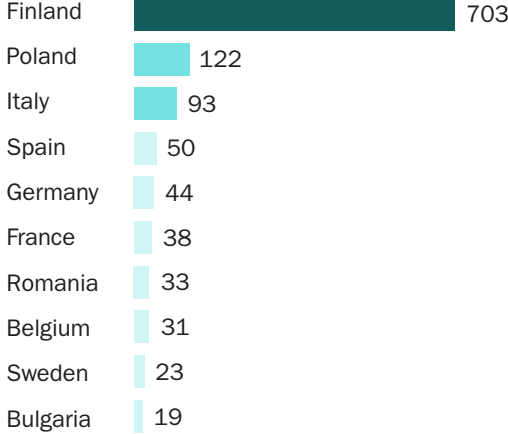
42 million €
calculated
AD value

Media coverage

The project gained global media visibility, in total of 56 countries.



TOP 10 EU countries in media visibility



The most prominent PR campaigns

A large part of the visibility of our EGC year particularly came from PR campaigns.

The interest generated at the beginning of the EGC year has been also reflected in the success of subsequent campaigns. They not only resulted in earned media and social media visibility but also generated interest in other subjects and were followed by feature stories in many media outlets.

"The secret to our success was seamless cooperation and trust between the parties involved. This allowed us to very quickly turn interesting ideas into actions and then quickly share the news with the world."

Markus Nieminen,
Creative Director & Content Director,
TBWA/Helsinki



City skis

Lahti kicked off its year as the European Green Capital by launching the world's first urban ski-sharing scheme in January 2021. Skis and ski poles for people of all ages were made available throughout the city for citizens to borrow free of charge, in the same way that bicycles are made available in many places during the summer. The campaign was designed to bring cheer, draw attention to the urgency of climate change action and raise awareness of the city's European Green Capital programme.

Media hits	Potential reach	Calculated AD value (EUR)	Social media hits
146	1.6 billion	15.2 million	460

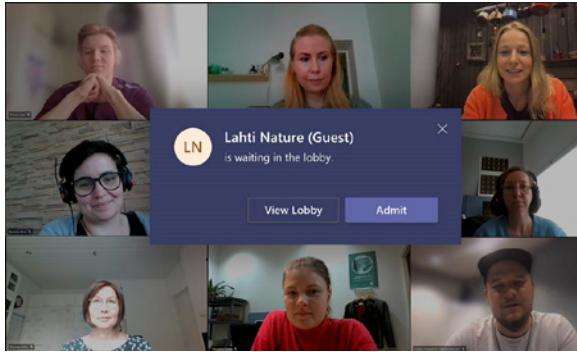


Pelicans green jerseys

The Lahti Pelicans, which is the world's first carbon-neutral ice hockey team, played two of their matches at the beginning of 2021 wearing special jerseys in which the regular player numbers had been replaced by numeral facts about Lahti's environmental achievements. The unique jerseys were designed to honour the beginning of Lahti's year as the European Green Capital. The jerseys were subsequently auctioned and the proceeds donated to the Pelicans' youth programme. The aim of the campaign was to draw attention to the Pelicans' positive contribution to the climate change agenda, Lahti winning the European Green Capital Award, as well as appeal to male audiences.

Media hits	Potential reach	Calculated AD value (EUR)	Social media hits
54	672 million	6.2 million	363

The most prominent PR campaigns



Giving nature a seat at the table

A service called *Lahti Green Screen* was launched in June 2021. It gave the City of Lahti's employees an opportunity to invite nature to participate in their Microsoft Teams meetings via a webcam placed in local forest. The idea was to give people working from home a virtual connection to nature that could reinvigorate them and reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. The service was unfortunately prone to technical problems, which damaged the visibility of the campaign.

Media hits	Potential reach	Calculated AD value (EUR)	Social media hits
4	6820	6400	5



Wasted Potential beers

We launched a range of beers called Wasted Potential in June 2021 in collaboration with a local microbrewery called Ant Brew. The collaboration celebrated Lahti winning the 2021 European Green Capital Award, and its aim was to raise awareness of the importance of the circular economy. The special beers were brewed with ingredients such as wild herbs, local food waste and even goose droppings, and each beer can featured a fact about Lahti's pioneering circular economy measures. The unique set of eight beers is a great example of the city's cooperation with a small local business.

Media hits	Potential reach	Calculated AD value (EUR)	Social media hits
157	236 million	2.2 million	222



Viita workstations

We set up five so-called Viita workstations in parks and forests around the city at the end of August 2021 in response to the work-from-home recommendation that had been issued due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim was to encourage people to enjoy the calming effect of nature while working. We also gave Lahti citizens the opportunity to vote on social media about where one of the workstations would be located. The design of the workstations has been published on an open-source basis, which makes Viita a scalable green innovation. The European Green Capital 2023 finalist Winterswijk and the European Green Leaf 2022 winner Helsingborg are preparing Viita workstations for their citizens.

Media hits	Potential reach	Calculated AD value (EUR)	Social media hits
76	160 million	1.5 million	174

Street visibility in Lahti and Helsinki

We wanted to ensure that the Green Capital was highly visible in the cityscape of Lahti throughout the year.

In honour of the Opening Ceremony, Lahti's most important landmarks were illuminated in green. The electric city bikes launched during the year were also given a Green Capital identity.

We installed three pylons, several large banners, pennants and flags in Lahti city centre to catch the public eye and we used numerous digital screens to promote our campaigns. Local companies and restaurants received posters for the theme year to display in their shop windows. Besides Lahti, we conducted outdoor marketing campaigns in Helsinki train stations and the Kansalaistori Square. Most of all, we wanted to promote city visibility through art and design and engaging activities.

I.C.E. – Indisputable Case of Emergency

The artwork called *I.C.E.* was created to remind people how water levels are rising as a result of climate change. The multifaceted artwork was erected in Kansalaistori Square, Helsinki between 6 and 15 August 2021. The melting ice poles, infographics and pavilion provide an opportunity to learn important facts about climate change. The wooden pavilion was transferred to Lahti and now serves as a beautiful waiting area and offers rain protection at one of the train stops in the eastern part of Lahti.

Composer Cecilia Damström's musical piece called ICE was played as a background to the artwork, performed by the world's first carbon neutral Lahti Symphony Orchestra. This unique orchestral piece was composed for the Green Capital year and was dedicated to first cities to be threatened by rising sea. We also created a special website for the piece through which the music could be only heard by people living in the 100 most endangered cities in the world, based on their browser's IP address.



Media hits	Potential reach	Calculated AD value (EUR)	Social media hits
42	56 million	519,000	174

Luontopiste – Local nature tourism info booth

An info booth was opened at Lahti Central Market Square in the summer of 2021 to provide information about where to enjoy nature in the Lahti region. Its purpose was to inspire both city dwellers and tourists to visit and use the region's diverse nature tourism destinations and services.



Public art pair

We are currently preparing a large public artwork that will serve as a memory of the Green Capital year. The work will comprise two separate sculptures: a smaller sculpture close to the Lahti Travel Centre and a larger sculpture near the motorway junction area, when entering Lahti from Helsinki. The sculptor Villu Jaanisoo will create the two pieces, which depict an endangered ostrich and its egg. Jaanisoo has an unprejudiced way of using recycled materials, such as car tyres, which will also be used in the ostrich sculpture. This artwork will be installed in spring 2023.

Lahti letters by Lake Vesijärvi

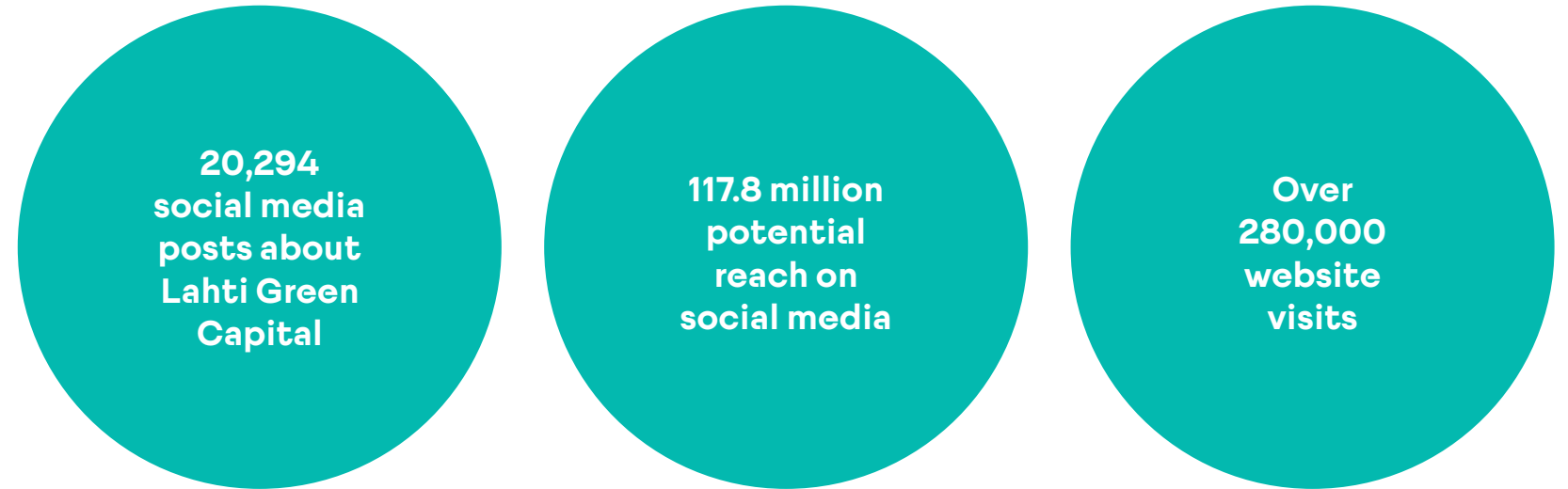
Lahti citizens received their very own city landmark letters to honour the Green Capital year. The 2.5-metre-high wooden Lahti letters were erected at Lahti Harbour by Lake Vesijärvi. The letters will serve as a meeting place and photographic backdrop for decades in the location where Lahti's environmental work first started.

Social media, newsletter and website

Lahti Green Capital was mentioned in over 20,000 social media posts, with a reach of 118 million. These posts received a total of 91,869 reactions.

Twitter was by far the most popular channel also in terms earned visibility, representing 85% of all social media visibility. On Twitter, 6796 different accounts posted at least one tweet mentioning the Lahti Green Capital.

January 2021 was the highest peak in social media visibility and reactions. For example, China Daily posted a short video on Twitter about Lahti, potentially reaching more than 4.3 million followers. Our campaigns and main events, including the Opening Ceremony, the Opening of the EU Green Week and the Green Capital Awards, significantly increased social media visibility, particularly on Twitter.



Social media, newsletter and website

Prior to the Green Capital year, we created concept plans and defined target groups for each social media channel. Our Facebook page was particularly aimed at Lahti citizens, Twitter at experts, decision makers and international communication, and Instagram at a younger target group. We also used the City of Lahti's YouTube channel for videos and for live streaming our events.

Our social media content production was guided by the themes, events and campaigns of the year. We created a total of 2,152 social media posts from our @greenlahti2021 Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. We created most of the posts on Twitter but had the highest number of followers and reactions on Facebook.

Green Capital newsletter and partner letter

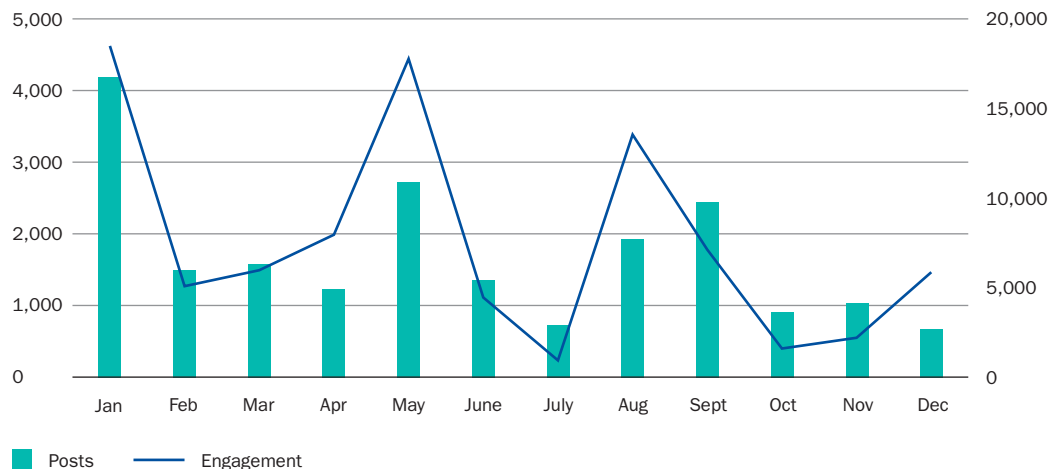
We created a monthly bilingual newsletter for the Green Capital. The first newsletter was issued in April 2020. The newsletter had 1129 subscribers in Finnish and 470 in English, and our partner letter was sent to 265 recipients. The opening rate of the newsletters was exceptionally high. During 2021, we issued 19 newsletters in Finnish and eight in English, as well as six partner letters.

Greenlahti website

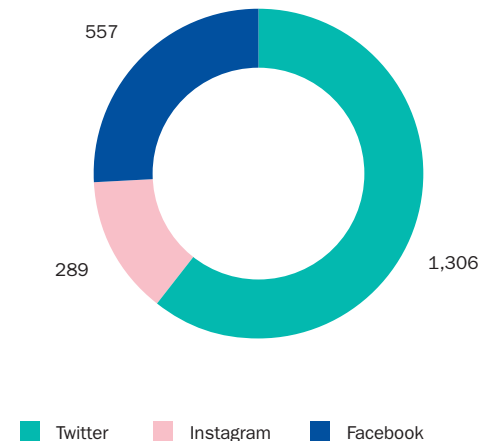
We launched the Greenlahti website prior to the Green Capital year in 2018 to showcase Lahti's environmental knowhow. The most significant developments on the website took place in 2020, including a constantly updated online calendar of events and separate pages for funded projects and corporate partners. Each project funded by the Green Capital was also presented on the website. We also created several customised pages for the main events and campaigns.

In early 2021, the Green Capital blog was also launched in Finnish, inviting stakeholders to write about their own environmental work and to present the City of Lahti's work on the 12 indicators of the Green Capital competition. During the year, 35 blog posts and 85 online articles were published in Finnish, and 32 news items in English. The website received over 280,000 visits during the Green Capital year.

Lahti Green Capital social media hits and engagement



Our @GreenLahti2021 social media posts



Our communication and marketing actions also included:

- The creation of 3 major video productions used in our marketing and events, as well as over 20 other videos
- Producing a coffee table book for the Green Capital year
- Planning a wide range of event marketing activities for local and international events in collaboration with partners
- Launching the Green Capital year with our marketing campaign highly visible on the front pages of four leading newspapers in Finland
- Starting a LinkedIn campaign for the City of Lahti's employees
- Creating bags from old banners and pennants to serve as distribution goods and prizes
- Marketing cooperation with several local sports teams, including the ice hockey team, Lahti Pelicans, the basketball team, Lahti Basketball and the football team, FC Lahti
- Producing marketing materials and campaigns for our corporate partners



FC Lahti promoting vegetarian food

The local football club, FC Lahti, promoted vegetarian food via a social media campaign throughout the Green Capital year. The players shared their own vegetarian recipes on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and encouraged fans and citizens to try them. The key message of the campaign was to highlight the health benefits of vegetarian food and show that even professional athletes benefit from a plant-based diet.



Enduring Change coffee table book

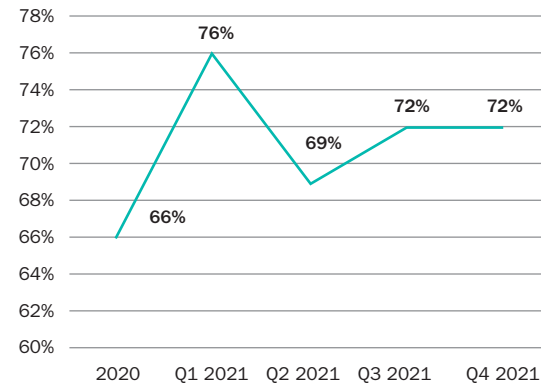
We wanted to compile Lahti's story into one book. Our Enduring Change coffee table book presents the best local solutions, the City of Lahti, and many of our incredible future makers. The book was shared with visitors and guests during the Green Capital year and distributed to all upper secondary school graduates. We also published the articles on our website to maximise the book's visibility.

Survey feedback and attention

The EGC project assessed the awareness of the Green Capital and the attitudes and expectations of Lahti's citizens for the EGC via the Municipal Pulse survey. The survey was conducted five times: first in September 2020 and finally in December 2021.

Based on these surveys, Lahti citizens gave the project an overall score of 3.5 out of 5. Citizens thought the EGC project was significant or very significant for Lahti. The highest percentage in these responses was in early 2021, but significant or very significant responses had stabilised at 72% by the end of the project.

The development evolution of Lahti citizens' significant or very significant responses.



72% of Lahti citizens thought the EGC project was significant or very significant

55% of Lahti citizens believed that the EGC year had given Lahti a more positive reputation

97% of Lahti citizens were aware of the Green Capital year

Survey feedback and attention

Some of the survey responses expressed resentment about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organisation of events and wanted communication to take place more elsewhere than via digital channels. The respondents also expressed a lot of hope and thoughts about Lahti's future environmental work.

In January 2022, we also conducted a reputation survey for Lahti citizens and people living in Finland, as well as a stakeholder survey on EGC communication. According to the reputation survey, 97% of Lahti citizens and 30% of people living outside of Lahti knew that the city was the European Green Capital in 2021. Most Lahti citizens (70%) had heard about the EGC year from the media, 36% from the communication channels of the City of Lahti or project communication channels, and 28% from street advertising. According to the reputation survey, more than half of Lahti citizens and people living in Finland who were aware of the EGC year. Most of the

EGC stakeholders felt that the reputation of Lahti and the surrounding areas had become more positive because of EGC communication. More than half of the stakeholders also believed that Lahti's city brand had strengthened because of the EGC year. 3.6 out of 5 corporate partners stated that they had benefited from the EGC year in terms of visibility, conspicuousness or communication.

International attention towards the European Green Capital of the Year was purely positive, and Lahti was included on several major tourism lists for the first time. The attention was mainly positive both nationally and locally, but the I.C.E. artwork caused a significant stir. The cost of the work and bringing ice to Kansalaistori Square were criticised in both traditional and social media. Locally, the criticism was mainly directed at the cost of the project, but it remained minor and was mainly restricted to social media.



Environmental site and media visits

International delegations and visitors were invited to visit companies pioneering in environmental work and cleantech businesses in Lahti.

Site visits provided more information about Lahti's pioneering environmental actions and the city's journey to becoming a leader in sustainability in an interesting and interactive way. Experienced tour guides led groups to the official visit locations – to Salpakierto (circular economy), Lahti Energia (energy), Lahti Aqua (water) and Lahden Talot (carbon-neutral construction). Other site visits included trips to Lahti Geopark and local cleantech companies and clusters.

Delegation and media visits to Lahti were considerably impacted by travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel to Finland became easier in the autumn of 2021 and international visitors to our events could also join the site visits during their free time and between meetings. We had the pleasure of presenting our city to numerous media delegations

from different countries, despite the pandemic. TV and radio groups were particularly active during the year, but many interviews and news stories were also conducted both online and remotely.

"Finland's expertise in environmental and climate technology is among the key strengths that we want to communicate to the global community. Lahti's being the European Green Capital in 2021 gave a good platform for us at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as well as our diplomatic missions in other countries to showcase Finland's green innovations, circular economy know-how and urban design solutions to the world."

Laura Kamras,
Director for Public Diplomacy

Eevamari Laaksonen,
Director of Global Communications,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Number of visitors, groups and media delegations.

664

Visitors

38

Groups

22

Media delegations

A silhouette of a person wearing a heavy winter jacket and hat, sitting on a folding chair on a frozen lake. The person is holding a fishing rod. To the right, an auger is stuck into the ice. The background shows a sunset over a forested horizon. The text "Lasting impact" is overlaid in white.

Lasting impact

Lahti – Leading environmental city

As the leading green city, Lahti has promised to make bold environmental choices every day in collaboration with universities, companies and our citizens.

The Green Capital year has been used to further support the city's environmental and climate work.

Climate change mitigation

Lahti aims to be a carbon-neutral city as early as 2025, which requires the city to reduce CO2 emissions by 80% compared to 1990 levels with the remainder offset. In 2019, Lahti's production-related emissions were 487 kilotons of CO2e. The emissions target is achievable. Net carbon sinks were approximately 20 kt CO2e according to a regional survey completed in the spring of 2021. In 2019 and 2020, the City of Lahti offset the emissions from its employees' work-related air travel and car use. The plan is to continue the offsetting scheme.

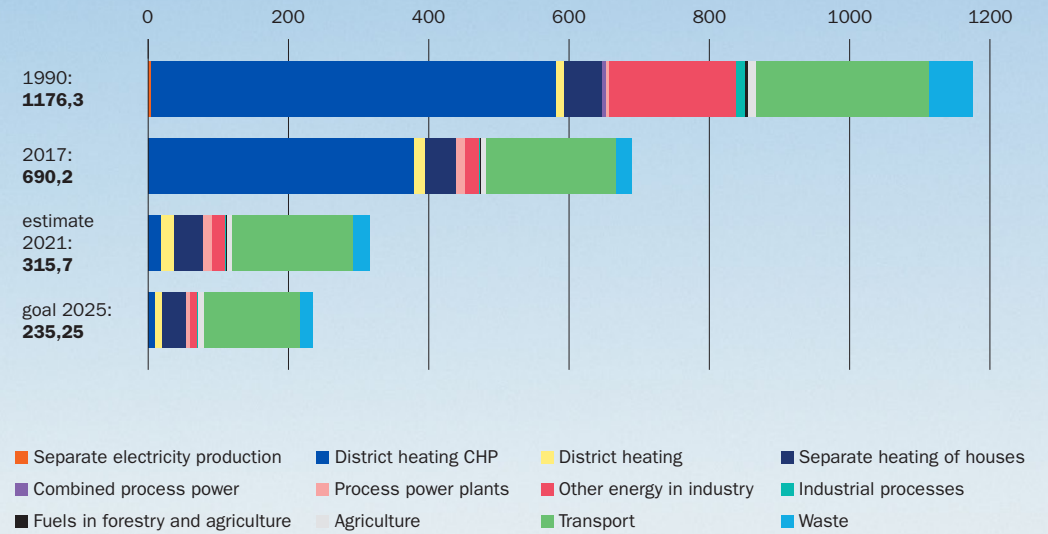
A Development Centre for Carbon Neutral Construction Industry has been established and the centre has begun its work. Several development projects are under way. Among the projects that have already been completed is a carbon-neutral construction guide for people building their own homes.

The City of Lahti has previously involved businesses and organisations in climate partnerships. The climate partnership scheme has now been extended across the entire region of Päijät-Häme (under the coordination of the Regional Council of Päijät-Häme).

Lahti has attracted a number of significant business investments, such as a solar photovoltaic power plant at ISKU's furniture factory, a joint research project between ANDRITZ Oy and LUT University, a biogas plant at Hartwall and Lahti Energia, a deodorisation system for malodorous gases at Peab's asphalt mixing plant, and Wipak's investments in low-emission printing and laminating machinery.

Several carbon sink projects have also been launched: a carbon sink campaign for private landowners, a regional survey of carbon stocks and sinks, and a thesis on the carbon sink potential of wasteland.

CO2-e emissions of Lahti (kt)





Climate change adaptation

The city's goal is to be climate resilient by 2030, which means preparing for extreme weather phenomena and adapting to long-term change.

The City of Lahti's in-house urban runoff team convened twice during Lahti's year as the European Green Capital. Tangible measures re-

lated to the urban runoff programme included the production of an urban runoff guide for people building their own homes in the spring of 2021, and a decision to draw up comprehensive guidelines for urban runoff control at construction sites in the autumn of 2021. In September 2021, Lahti also co-hosted a national urban runoff seminar with the Water Association of Finland's Urban Stormwater Division as part of the European Green Capital programme.

Sustainable Urban Mobility

The City of Lahti aims to promote all forms of sustainable urban mobility (walking, cycling and public transport). Several measures were taken during the Lahti Green Capital year. A two-month experiment with electric city bikes nicknamed 'Wringers' was conducted in Lahti. Bike users were asked to give feedback and whether they would like to see the scheme return next summer. The feedback on the bikes was overwhelmingly positive. 'Wringers' will appear on Lahti's streets again on 1 April 2022.

Lahti Region Transport started running 17 electric buses in the summer of 2021. A total of 14 more buses will be added in 2022, giving Lahti 31 electric buses in 2022, as well as 37 buses running on renewable biodiesel. Approximately two-thirds of Lahti's public transport runs on alternative propulsion systems.

A land use, housing and transport agreement (MAL agreement) was signed with the Ministry of the Environment on 14 September 2021. The implementation of the agreement and progress monitoring have begun, including progress in respect of sustainable urban mobility.



Sustainable Land Use and Soil

Lahti aims for compact city planning and sustainable land use. A zoning plan setting out areas for commuter parking, residential development and services in the vicinity of Lahti railway station has been drawn up and its implementation has begun. The Pippo-Kujala business complex is being developed and the area around Villähde railway station is being zoned.

98% of the residential areas of the zoning plan are served by public transport. The finalised plans cater for the development of 28,290 m² of residential space and the proposed plans provide for a further 43,875 m². Areas within the current infrastructure are being repurposed and better conditions are being created for infill construction and new techniques. Functional zoning is being used to facilitate more compact expansion of the city. A draft version of the functional zoning plan was presented towards the end of the year.



Nature and Biodiversity

Our strategic goal is to have 8% of the land owned by the City of Lahti subject to protection orders by 2030. A nature conservation programme is being drawn up and is due to be completed in 2022.

A wide range of stakeholders were involved in the planning of biodiversity measures in 2021, and the planned measures will be incorporated into the Green City Accord programme and the Urban Greening Plan promoted by the EU.

Lahti is the first city in Finland to experiment with the concept of ecological compensation. The pilot project involves compensating for ecological losses resulting from the construction of the Kytölä II housing estate by preserving forestland along the shore of Lake Alvojärvi.

The City of Lahti is contributing to the planning and implementation of the Lahti Regional Health and Environment Programme 2022–2032, better known as ‘Nature Step to Health’. The implementation phase of the programme has begun. The city designed a nature trail in the vicinity of the Päijät Häme Regional Hospital. This Kintterö Health Forest nature trail is due to be built in the spring of 2022.



Air Quality

The aim is to increase the air quality in the city centre and in residential areas. New air quality sensors were installed in 2021 in Lahti city centre as a partner project with Vaisala.

Education in the correct use of domestic fireplaces and modernisation of old fireplaces is a specific air quality issue in Lahti. Benzo(a)pyrene emissions resulting from the use of domestic wood-burning fireplaces were measured in 2020 and 2021 in order to study the air quality in the region. An awareness-raising campaign was launched to educate citizens in the correct use of domestic fireplaces. The campaign is still running.

Noise

The city aims to lower noise levels in residential areas and to implement at least 40% of the noise control action plan by 2021. The investigation into funding models did not proceed. Better noise control is being actively pursued.

In 2021, the city surveyed the city's noisy and quiet areas. A new study will be carried out using the traffic volumes from 2021 and will be completed by June 2022. The previous noise study was conducted in 2017 and the survey of quiet areas in 2018.

Waste and the Circular Economy

Lahti's aim is for 90% of waste to be recycled by 2030. Currently, the recycling rate is 46%. The City of Lahti established a new position for an expert in the circular economy. The city's circular economy efforts received a boost towards the end of 2020. A circular economy roadmap is also being drawn up, which involves inviting stakeholders to take part in several workshops.

The City of Lahti is contributing to the work of

Water

The city is aiming for a good chemical and quantitative status of groundwater and a good chemical and ecological status of surface waters. Several measures were taken during the Green Capital year. Groundwater conservation was updated in respect of climate change adaptation.

Watercourse restoration also took place. The Kumiankoski dam was demolished and water levels in Lake Kukkasjärvi are no longer regulated. A few smaller streams were restored and the waters stocked with brown trout.

The Salpausselkä Geopark was notified about its admission to the UNESCO Global Geoparks network. Official confirmation is expected in the spring of 2022.

the Competence Centre for Sustainable and Innovative Public Procurement (KEINO) by designing a civil engineering procurement model that focuses more on environmental criteria.

Due to its status as a university city, the current Government Programme has identified Lahti as an independent contracting party in the context of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment's ecosystem agreements. An agreement between the City of Lahti and the Government was signed in 2021. The priorities of Lahti's agreement include a carbon-neutral urban circular economy and international sports business.



Green Growth and Eco-innovation

The City of Lahti has joint targets with the Finnish Sustainable Communities initiative to be achieved by 2050: zero waste, zero emissions, zero overconsumption. The project funding scheme of the Lahti Green Capital aimed to increase the number of jobs in the environmental sector and to enhance regional business collab-

oration. **A total of 489 jobs were created providing 36.5 persons-years of work.**

The LUT University is launching a professorship in electromobility in Lahti. The aim is to make the latest research data available to businesses. The professorship is being sponsored by the City of Lahti and other parties. Along with the professorship, the LUT University is also launching a new master's degree programme in electrical engineering in Lahti in the autumn of 2022.

Energy Performance

The City of Lahti has an energy efficiency agreement from 2017 to 2025: the target is a 7% energy saving by 2025.

A few energy-efficiency investments were made in rental properties of Lahden Talot as part of the CANEMURE (Towards Carbon Neutral Municipalities and Regions) programme, such as heating control systems, ventilation upgrades, wastewater heat recovery and water saving solutions.

In 2021, the City of Lahti established a Development Centre for Carbon Neutral Construction Industry to coordinate different kinds of construction projects. The centre focuses on global megatrends: renewable energy production, minimisation of energy consumption, recycling of demolition materials and the use of organic materials in buildings as carbon sinks.



Environmental Governance

The city is aiming to better manage the whole Lahti City Corporate Group's strategic environmental objectives.

Climate governance training was completed and a peer review was conducted in 2021. The competent governing bodies are due to review the peer review report in 2022. Climate governance was promoted in the context of, for example, financial management, comparative analysis of investments and resident communications.

One of the most important objectives of the European Green Capital programme was to raise public awareness of the efforts of the city organisation as a whole to build a more sustainable

future. A network of ambassadors was set up for this purpose and was open to any employee with a relevant job in the city organisation. The network currently comprises approximately 70 ambassadors.

Environmental education in the region's schools and kindergartens was increased. UNESCO's evaluation of the Salpausselkä Geopark in the autumn of 2021 identified highly successful environmental education as the best outcome of the programme.

The City of Lahti has introduced participatory budgeting, which gives local residents an opportunity to submit ideas based on various themes to be implemented by the city organisation. The themes in 2021/2022 are communality, the environment, well-being, and children and young people. Several ideas relating to the environment were proposed.

Accelerating local low-carbon innovations and the economy

When developing our programme, we particularly focused on legacy: what should be changed because of the Green Capital year and what kind of cooperation can continue?

It is quite amazing the extent to which a special project and year attract different kinds of talent! We were contacted by hundreds of interested organisations and persons. They wanted to share their latest ideas for the future in collaboration with others. We therefore decided to think about **continuity and legacy** from the beginning when planning the year. Cooperation with universities was one of the key pathways to developing this long-term perspective. We involved local universities (LAB, LUT, UH) in the Green Capital year from the very start. Here are some practical examples of the cooperation:

Introductory course at the Environmental Academy

The University of Helsinki, LAB University of Applied Sciences, and LUT University incorporated Lahti's higher education expertise in the field of the environment and sustainable development into a dedicated study module during the Green Capital year. The open course examined environmental and sustainable development issues and research in the field from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Nature Step to Health – Lahti Regional Health and Environment Programme 2022–2032

The health benefits of nature are diverse but measuring the benefits at the city level has not been sufficiently researched. "Nature Step to Health" aims to highlight the research-based idea that nature can positively impact our physical and mental well-being. As such, it promotes strengthening our connection with nature, opting for more sustainable nutrition, and increasing our mobility.

The 10-year research project by the University of Helsinki, the Finnish Environment Institute and other national science societies, is one of the legacy projects of Lahti's Green Capital year.

"Lahti is doing what none of the previous winners of the European Green Capital Award had the nous to do: investing in the health benefits of nature. This approach both improves public health and promotes environmental sustainability."

Tari Haahtela,
Professor (emeritus) at Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa



Accelerating local low-carbon innovations and the economy

Aalto University CAPSTONE course

The joint Capstone course for the School of Business' master's programmes in management and international business, entrepreneurship and business law proposed solutions to reduce emissions from mobility in the Lahti region and measure the impact of the City of Lahti's work regarding private sector actors in the region. The course provided an opportunity to put master's studies into practice in real-life projects for companies and organisations. The course ran in the spring and autumn of 2021.

Perspectives on corporate responsibility communication – University of Helsinki

Lahti is profiled as the home of the circular economy and green technology companies. The circular economy and green technology already account for 8% of Lahti's jobs.

The research project by Helsinki University examined the expertise in corporate responsibility communication and found ways to develop it in the Lahti region. The project was funded by the Green Capital funding scheme.

Virtual event studio

We already knew in 2020 that we had to think of new ways to produce content and engage audiences safely and responsibly. We wanted to have a space in which we could broadcast our own events but also allow various partners to highlight their content as there was no guarantee that physical events could be held during the year.

We partnered with the LAB University of Applied Sciences and StartHub, a local business accelerator based in the Mikkula campus area. A studio was built to host Green Capital events, but also for the university to use the space to experiment with virtual event production. The studio hosted 19 virtual events by eight different organisations. Events such as the European Dialogue for Sustainable Cities, EU Green Week Opening Ceremony and Zero Emissions Day were produced at the studio. The technical crew also packed up their cameras and produced recordings of press events for us throughout the year.

We were glad that students could also participate in the virtual studio project. The studio and its operations were like a TV production, and the experience was cherished by many. A separate technician, a recently graduated student, was hired to run the daily operations of the studio. A

group of environmental students from the university successfully hosted an online seminar about energy efficiency in the studio. Students from the Lahti Institute of Design also created a complete 3D virtual environment based on the studio as part of their studies in game engines. None of the students had used the tools before and the project worked as a sandbox for experimenting with innovative technologies.



Accelerating local low-carbon innovations and the economy

LUT UNIVERSITY – Finland’s first electric transportation professorship in Lahti

LUT established a professorship in electric transportation systems and a related new master's programme in Lahti. The aim was to ensure that Finland would have enough electric mobility expertise based on research and education. Along with the professorship, a new master's programme entitled Electric Transportation Systems will start in Lahti in autumn 2022.

LAB Institute of Design and Fine Arts – Design for the Environment

We refurbished a wooden pavilion in Lahti city centre together with students from the LAB Institute of Design and Fine Arts. It was a circular project as the pavilion had been used at the Kouvola Housing Fair in 2019.

“The European Green Capital programme has created new business opportunities and encouraged businesses to get involved in green initiatives. We are especially interested in exporting our environmental know-how to other countries. Setting up shop in Lahti gives businesses a head start on hitting environmental targets and lowering their carbon footprint.”

Jussi Eerikäinen,
Member of the Board of the Sustainable Lahti Foundation and Managing Director of Häme Chamber of Commerce

Legacy projects were designed with continuity in mind

Our legacy projects were designed to maintain and support the vitality of the Lahti region. We also looked at business ecosystems that offered special potential for new and sustainable jobs. Should you be interested in cooperation, please contact us!

Our legacy projects	In brief	Contact persons
Development Centre for Carbon Neutral Construction Industry	The development centre focuses on global megatrends: renewable energy production, minimisation of energy consumption, recycling of demolition materials and the use of organic materials in buildings as carbon sinks. The city's upcoming land-use zoning and construction projects will serve as pilot projects for different solutions.	City of Lahti, Department of Business Development
Nature Step to Health – Environmental and Health Programme for the Lahti Region 2022–2032	A ten-year regional programme with the aim of reducing endemic diseases, preventing nature loss and curbing greenhouse gas emissions.	Päijät-Häme Joint Authority for Health and Well-Being (Päijät-Hämeen hyvinvointiyhtymä)
Lahti GEM – Green Electrification of Mobility Cluster	Lahti GEM is a platform for companies, research and educational institutions, as well as cities. The platform has been established to generate and maintain cooperation for developing and commercialising technologies and solutions for a cleaner future for mobility.	Lahti Region Development - LADEC
Kestävää osallisuutta Lahdessa -hanke / Sustainable participation in Lahti - project	Participatory planning tools and methods (e.g. Kids Dialogue) developed during the Lahti Green Capital year 2021 will be further tested in this project.	City of Lahti, Department of Education

Net impact assessment of local business ecosystems

In autumn 2021 we commissioned a net impact assessment analysis from the Upright Project. It is a top-down big data model that allocates all positive and negative impacts/values caused by the private sector globally to real companies.

We wanted to further assess the different impacts of local, environmentally-oriented business ecosystems to further support their development. Approximately 30 companies from business ecosystems of the circular economy, low carbon construction and green electrification were included in this analysis.

It was found that companies from these local ecosystems performed better in most of the impact categories than the largest listed or unlisted companies in Finland (see Fig. 1). Interestingly, environmentally-oriented companies made the greatest impact on society i.e. jobs, taxes, societal infrastructure (see Fig. 2).

Figure 1.

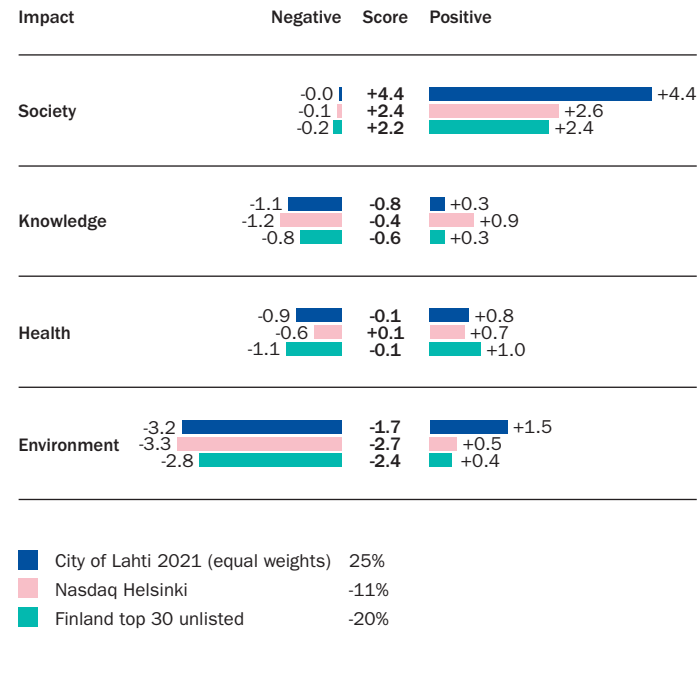
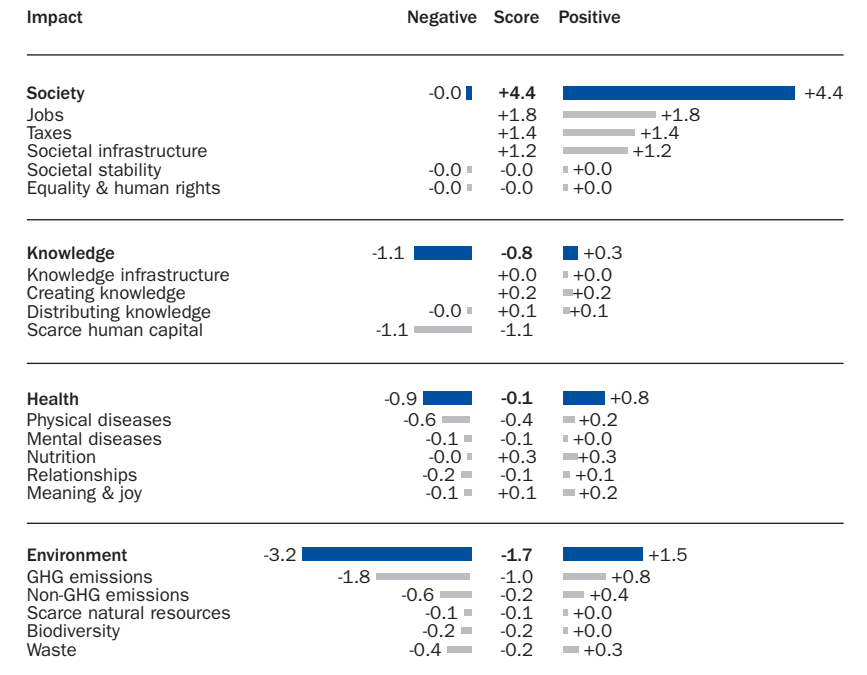


Figure 2.



Lahti – European Green Capital 2021 indicators

We continuously monitored the effectiveness of the theme year using a wide range of goals and indicators that were set in October 2020 in our Green Capital Programme launch.

Several indicators also describe the development of the Lahti region in a broader and long-term context, e.g. its success in the preparation of future funding programmes or the development of the city's reputation.

“We have assessed the results and the indicators for the goals of Lahti Green Capital year as part of the impact assessment of the Lahti Green Capital Year 2021.”

Rea Oikkonen, senior consultant, AFRY Finland Oy
25.2.2022

The goals of Lahti's Green Capital year	Detailed goal	Indicators	Result	External evaluation of results Good / OK / Unsatisfactory
Smooth green life contributing to well-being	The awareness of citizens of the Green Capital (GC) year increases	% of local citizens aware of the year	Over 90% of local citizens were aware in December 2020. After the Green Capital year, 97% of local citizens were aware.	● Good
		Citizen's rating of overall performance, Q1–Q4/2021, using a scale of 1–5.	Q1 (3.6), Q2 (3.3), Q3 (3.3), Q4 (3.5).	● OK
	Citizens actively participate in the events of the year	Participants at our own events	Total participants 64,300, on site 56,000, virtual audience 8300	● Good
		Global coverage of our own events	40 countries	● Good
		Participants at partner events	260,000	● Good
		Guest speakers at our own events	75	● Good
		Number of presentations given by Lahti project personnel in 2021	Over 100	● Good
		Events organised with other cities	35	● Good
	Local communities are interested in project funding	Project applications, funded projects, funding %	Applications 362, funded projects 86, 24% of projects funded.	● OK
	Project funding increases activity and jobs in Päijät-Häme	Jobs and activities created through funding schemes (paid person-years, volunteer work person-years)	Paid work, 36.5 person-years; volunteer work, 15.7 person-years	● OK

The goals of Lahti's Green Capital year	Detailed goal	Indicators	Result	External evaluation of results Good / OK / Unsatisfactory
Best environmental solutions for sustainable cities	The Green Capital year promotes business cooperation in preparation for the EU Green Deal and EU recovery package funding	Number of main partners, partners and actors	30	● OK
		Partner's rating of overall performance	3,7	● OK
		Number of private sector companies committed to supporting local EU Green Deal targets and activities	137	● Good
		Projects prepared in collaboration with private partners	41	● Good
	The best environmental solutions in the Lahti region can be easily found in such a way that other cities and companies can benefit from them	Productization of local environmental solutions	5	● Unsatisfactory
	Ecological and social sustainability are taken into account in public procurement more often than before	Environmental and social criteria in the public procurements of the city of Lahti (% or pieces)	A peer review between the City of Lahti, Tampere and Turku was made during 2021: new commitments to sustainable public procurements to be set	● Cannot be assessed
	The Green Capital year involves an impressive cooperation network of cities	Number of cities involved in different activities (events, projects, communication)	37	● Good
The Green Capital year increases the joint visibility of Finnish cities in environmental issues	Number of events organised in collaboration with other cities	35	● Good	
The European Green Capital visibility	All sustainable development perspectives are taken into account in assessing the effectiveness of the theme year	The whole GC year is assessed by an external expert, utilising the UN's sustainable development indicators	Done	● Good
	The Lahti theme year interests experts	Number of visitors and groups	664 visitors, 38 groups	● OK
	The theme year attracts national and international attention by the media	National and international media hits, reach, calculated AD value	Media hits 2237, potential reach 4.45 billion, calculated AD value EUR 42 million	● Good
		Geographical reach	Over 50% outside Finland, 53 countries	● Good
		Social media followers, posts, reach	Followers: 2996 on Twitter, 2671 on Instagram, 5294 on Facebook, over 20,000 posts about Green Capital Lahti with a reach of 117.8 million	● Good
		www visitors	280,000	● Good
		Newsletter subscribers, Opening rate -%	1129 (Fi), 470 (Eng), opening rate 47%	● Good / OK
	The reputation of Lahti develops positively during the GC year	City reputation survey 2022	55% of people who were aware of the Lahti EGC2021 year think it has positively changed the city's image	● Good / OK

External impact assessment using The Sustainable Development Goals

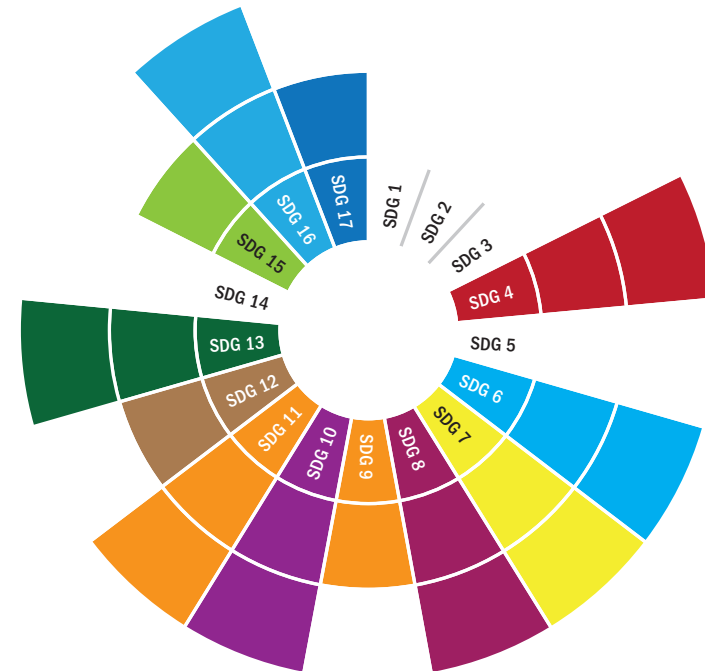
Assessed by
AFRY Finland Oy

The impact assessment of the EGC 2021 project was implemented based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The assessment was a combination of the project's own indicators and SDG indicators. Project communication was evaluated using a semi-quantitative assessment method. The impact assessment considered different stakeholders in the project including citizens, the City of Lahti and surrounding municipalities and businesses. Its focus was on a local, national and international level.

The project succeeded in contributing to many of the SDGs and achieved many of its own targets. The graph shows the evaluated SDGs with colours. The blocks of colours indicate whether the project fully succeeded in fulfilling the specific indicators fully (three blocks) or partially (two blocks). SDG 5 was assessed, along with SDG 10.

The project has created increased employment opportunities and growth prospects in Lahti and cooperation has increased across the region. This is likely to have a positive impact on business in the future. The project has raised awareness of the impacts of climate change. The project's target for the best environmental solutions for sustainable cities was ambitious regarding the available project time. However, some initiatives were started. There was fairly active stakeholder involvement in various projects during the EGC year. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected how familiar local citizens were with the project. The new initiatives may have a positive impact in the future if they are continued after the EGC year.

Many means of communication were utilised by the EGC project. It attracted both local and international attention, although nationally it could have had greater visibility. The communication efforts succeeded in bringing Lahti to prominence as a pioneer in environmental issues.



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Tampere, Finland, featuring a large lake in the foreground, a dense forest on the left, and a mix of residential and commercial buildings in the background. Two tall communication towers are visible on the horizon. The word "Finance" is overlaid in white text on the lake.

Finance

Finance

Going through the application process of the European Green Capital competition three times, we understood that it was very important to highlight the kind of resources that would be available for the actual implementation of the theme year.

We believe that our clear vision for our plans for the theme year and how we were going to fund it helped us convince the jury that we were committed to fulfilling the commission's expectations for the year.

We funded the planning, implementation and reporting of the theme year for 32 months.

- Planning 9/2019–10/2020
- Implementation 11/2020–12/2021
- Reporting and the legacy plan 1/2022–4/2022

The costs of implementation were allocated for four years (to match city budgeting, etc.).

2019: 3% of the total budget

2020: 29% of the total budget

2021: 60% of the total budget

2022: 8% of the total budget

Our corporate partners (private sector companies) participated in the funding of the theme year by channelling funding to their own environmental innovations and building new partnerships in the process. They formed a network around our city to develop their sustainable business models together in collaboration with universities and citizens. In return, the companies were allowed to use the European Green Capital identity in their own communications and participated in our virtual and physical events, etc.

The budget of the project comprised funding from the City of Lahti, the Finnish Government/Ministry of Environment, EU commission (award money and event costs) and private sector companies.

Funding		
City of Lahti	2,966,000 €	43%
Government; Ministry of the Environment	3,000,000 €	43%
EU commission	402,000 €	6%
Private sector companies (net)	540,000 €	8%
Sum	6,908,000 €	100%

The costs for the theme year consisted of planning and implementing the programme, communications, visibility and developing a Green Capital legacy plan for the future.

Project costs from Sept/2019–April/2022		
Personnel, administration, expert costs, legacy plan, etc.	2,241,000 €	33%
Programme	2,497,000 €	36%
* Project funding EUR 1,593,000 (23%)		
* Events EUR 904,000 (13%)		
Communications, visibility in the city, delegation visits, etc.	2,170,000 €	31%
Total cost	6,908,000 €	100%

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black hoodie and a black bag, stands on a paved area and gestures with her hands as if speaking to a group of people. In the foreground, several bright yellow bicycles are parked, with the word "Mankeli" visible on the frame of one. The background shows a street scene with trees, a building, and a blue sign. The text "Lessons learnt" is overlaid in white on the image.

Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt

Our Green Capital year was rewarding and fulfilling, but also challenging. The following chapter is based on our self-assessment and the feedback we received throughout the project.

The Green Capital year left us with several key outcomes and benefits. The most frequent question we were asked was: “What was in it for the ordinary people of Lahti?”

The European Green Capital year created opportunities in the midst of the pandemic by funding projects and implementing campaigns through effective communication. These ac-

tivities were particularly meaningful for event organisers, helped create jobs for the locals, and also gave a glimmer of hope for the future.

The Green Capital project was very active in organising events and actions during these exceptionally difficult times. There may even have been psychological consequences stemming from this in the region. In Lahti, we have the courage and skills to operate in extraordinary circumstances. Local and international media attention enabled several organisations to come forward and share their work on sustainability, thereby gaining visibility for their actions. Many of our partners are still featured, for example, in the local newspaper (ESS) and national media attention has particularly taken off during the first months of 2022.

The year created a positive shift in the city's image – increasing its ability to attract newcomers, students and businesses to the area. Businesses and employers have taken environmental issues to heart, creating a competitive edge and, in the future, new research and innovation opportunities and new jobs.

One very positive aspect is the increased collaboration between companies and universities, such as in electric mobility and carbon-neutral construction. These collaborations will help create even more jobs in the future.

Increased international media attention – Well-planned communication activities and their successful implementation will serve as a basis for a narrative that can be further developed by municipalities, businesses and institutes of higher education in the area.

The European Green Capital 2021 was the epitome of Lahti's long-lasting environmental actions but also the beginning of something much bigger. Most of the benefits from the year will only materialise as time passes.



Lessons learnt

Resilience and motivation in COVID times

Lahti was the first city to intentionally design and celebrate its Green Capital year during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lisbon, the Green Capital for 2020, was totally surprised by the disease, whereas we had some time to prepare for these new circumstances. Ever-changing restrictions affected all parts of our programme and we had to continuously change our plans during the year. The restrictions were most stringent at the beginning of the year when no more than 10 people could meet, whereas during the summer, it was possible to hold some larger events. However, business or leisure travel abroad was virtually unavailable throughout the year. The resilience of the project planning and people became ever more important in these changing circumstances.

On a psychological level, this kind of year with special attention, special circumstances and pressure is demanding for the staff – although it can also be exceptionally rewarding when people are successful. What did we learn about teamwork and project planning during our year?

We increased the adaptation and resilience of the project planning and our team through:

- Establishing an organisation (Sustainable Lahti Foundation) that allowed us to make quick decisions
- Ensuring high-level political support from the start
- Recruiting young, motivated and talented people with multiple skills (environment, communication, digitalisation)
- Planning realistically for COVID times – and revising these plans many times!
- Learning quickly “the new norm”, i.e. remote work procedures and teamwork tools
- Providing the team enough space and time for cooperation, no matter whether it was virtual or physical

“Lahti’s performance as the 2021 European Green Capital was remarkable considering the highly unusual circumstances. By putting the lessons learned into practice we can build a greener way forward for the city. It is important that we not take our eye off the ball now.”

Erkki Liikanen,
Chairman of the Board of the Sustainable Lahti Foundation



Lessons learnt

A separate and dedicated organisation helps to build private-public partnerships

We saw the real benefits of running a massive theme year with a small organisation that worked in collaboration with city officials while also retaining its independent status. As a small independent team, we were bold and daring in contacting stakeholders, planning future actions, and having the courage to experiment with new and agile ways of working. Most of our projects successfully started out of necessity and completely from scratch.

Events and their many forms in a new age

We already knew in 2020 that we would have to combine live, virtual and hybrid events in our event calendar. As new COVID-19 restrictions came into effect, many live events and conferences had to be recreated in just a matter of days. We truly navigated our way through the storm and learned a lot of lessons along the way.

Virtual events certainly had the benefit of reaching new audiences. Anyone could attend the events and even tune in to watch the recordings afterwards. These events were also deployed more quickly than live events; they reduced emissions as the speakers didn't have to travel to the venue, and there was practically zero waste and zero catering involved. However, it also meant that we were competing for people's attention together with hundreds of other organisations.

Many live conferences became hybrid events during the year. Our opinion about hybrid events is that they are hard to plan effectively – and make them really work for everybody. Hybrid events meant that we could invite a small number of stakeholders to engage face to face, but also invite anyone to participate online. We now know that transforming a one or two-day conference into a 3–4-hour hybrid event is not an optimal solution. Retaining people's attention for extended periods of time online is challenging. It is also hard to put an online and live audience on the same level and offer a great experience for both of them. We experimented by engaging online viewers with expo booths and meeting rooms but soon found that they didn't attract enough visitors.

We built a separate studio to produce our virtual events. This gave us the opportunity to create content but also invite our partners to present

their work on Lahti's YouTube channel. Something that started out of necessity was the European Dialogue for Sustainable Cities. The goal of the panel discussions was to engage previous Green Capital cities, city experts and other actors to showcase the best environmental practices in cities. The nine one-hour episodes were well received and based on audience retention; they were by far the most successful virtual events. Our findings are that when it comes to virtual and hybrid events – the shorter, the better.

Many organisations cancelled live events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We decided to stick to our plans and produce events, one way or another. Postponing events to 2022 was not

an option as 2021 was our year in the spotlight. Producing and directing events from our studio was also a positive experience and several team members described the production days as one of the highlights and the best learning experience of the year.

The great effort to make events happen in 2021 paid off. The year was a record-breaking year for Lahti in terms of scientific conferences. In the national congress statistics, Lahti is second only to Helsinki with almost 7000 international congress participants. Lahti will continue in its efforts to attract more scientific conferences in the future in collaboration with the universities and other partners in the area.



Lessons learnt

Innovative PR campaigns to gain media attention

Lahti is not the capital of Finland, and it is the smallest city ever to be awarded the EGC title. From this perspective, prior to the EGC year, Lahti was a fairly unknown city globally. On top of this, we had to fight for media attention with the COVID-19 pandemic dominating the news in 2021.

Our solution for generating broad international attention was to conduct innovative PR campaigns. Our campaigns created a communication platform that combined our year's themes with local culture through concrete actions, such as the city skis. The campaigns worked in two ways: by involving citizens and local stakeholders, we made the EGC year everybody's business. On the other hand, their local enthusiasm and distinctiveness appealed to a global audience. This allowed us to share our message about the EGC and Lahti's solutions with the public from all over the world. The communication efforts succeeded in bringing Lahti to prominence as a pioneer in environmental issues and sustainable urban development.

Guidance for the implementation of the European Green Capital year

The European Green Capital Award is a precious honour given to a city that has shown its ability to lead the way in environmentally-friendly urban living. Our city fought to get there – we were finalists for the Green Capital Award three times. When Lahti won the title, the city had to start thinking differently: the focus shifted from an internal development to sharing experiences and knowledge. New kinds of skills and expertise are required in this communication work, which is hugely important for a successful year as a Green Capital.

The short period of time between winning the title and the Opening Ceremony of the year is detrimental to a city: all major plans and most of the partnerships are created during that preparatory period. We would strongly recommend putting more effort into standardising some basic approaches to the implementation of the Green Capital, as it would save the little time available for planning. For example, Green Capital win-

ning cities would benefit immensely from a constantly evolving guidebook detailing some best practices on how to run the year. The European Commission could also offer more guidance on, for example, the Opening Ceremony and the events production for the Green Capital Award Ceremony. A clear and concise standardised plan would also be useful during the period when the project is handed over to a new secretariat.

Once a Green Capital – always a Green Capital

Having had some time to deliberate on our performance of our year as the European Green Capital, it is very clear that the work we did in collaboration with all our partners was only the beginning – not the end. The mutual desire to continue as talented future makers can be seen in different organisations. As a city, we and our partners not only focus on being an exemplary city but also on being sustainable business leaders, solution-seeking and problem-solving universities and responsible citizens.

While solving complex problems together, we are also building a better city for everybody – to live, to study, to work, to run a business, to live your everyday life and simply to enjoy. Sustainable cities are truly better and happier cities for everybody. We are ready to share all of our best practices with the world in the future as well.

We've just started!

List of all partners

Aalto University	Dooroom Lahti Oy	Infranode	Lahden seudun oppaat ry	Monttu Kino / Lahden Kaleva ry	Päijät-Hämeen hyvinvointiyhtymä,	Sustainalytics
Afry Finland Oy	Duo Saras	Insinööri-toimisto Lepistö Oy	Lahden seurakuntayhtymä	Moprim Oy	Lahtiset toimintayksikkö	Svenska kulturfonden
Aku	Ebonia design	Inspiroiva Creative Oy	Lahden Seutu - Lahti Region Oy	Municipality of Asikkala	Päijät-Hämeen Laitoshuoltopalvelut Oy	Taide- ja muotoilukoulu Taika
Alaska Markkinointi Oy / Half full Oy	Ecocity Builders	Inspis Lahti ry	Lahden Talot	Municipality of Hartola	Päijät-Hämeen mielenterveystyön	Taidekasvattaja Jonna Piiipponen-Karkulowski
Angle Event Technology	Energiateollisuus ry	Irene Suosalo	Lahden Teollisuusseura ry	Municipality of Hollola	tuki Miete ry	Taina de Carvalho ja nuorten ryhmä
Ankkurilahden asukasyhdistys ry	Entop Oy	Isku-Yhtymä Oy	Lahden valokuvataide ry	Municipality of Iitti	Päijät-Hämeen Pelastuslaitos	TBWA\Helsinki
Ant Brew	Esmes Digital Oy	Jalo Toivio Design	Lahen tori	Municipality of Kärkölä	Päijät-Hämeen taidemuseoyhdistys ry	The Finnish Climate Change Panel
Anttilanmäen Asukasyhdistys	Etelä-Hämeen luonnonsuojelupiiri ry	Johan Lundberg Oy	Lahti Aqua Oy	Municipality of Sysmä	+ kumppanit	The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra
AOR Architects	Eurocities	Jouni Ainali	Lahti Basketball Juniorit Ry	MuniFin	Päijät-Hämeen Vesijärvisäätiö sr	The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)
Arttu Lindeman	Eurokangas Oy	Juho Jormakka	Lahti Basketball ry	MyXLine Oy	Päijät-Hämeen yrittäjät	The Finnish Motorcycle Museum
Asikkala Guides, registered association	European Citizen Science Association	Kaarisilta ry	Lahti City Museums	Nastola-seura ry	Päijät-Sote - Päijät-Häme Joint	The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)
Asikkalan Taiteilijaseura ry	European Commission	Kannaksen lukio	Lahti City ry - Lahti City Association	Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)	Authority for Health and Wellbeing	The Regional Council of Päijät-Häme
Association of Finnish Municipalities	European Green Capital Network	Kaskas Media	Lahti Energia	Nature Escape Oy	RaivioBumann Oy	The Upright Project
Aste	Europol	Kaupungin Äänet	Lahti Events	Niemi Palvelut Oy	Ramboll Finland Oy	Theatrum Olga
ATK-Apu Pitkät Pihat	Eventina	Kempower Corp	Lahti Glass Technology Oy	Rantalainen Oy	RARE Media Oy	Tiina ja Antti Herlinin säätiö
Baltic Sea Action Group	Eventhits Oy	Kiinteistö Oy Lahden Tiedepuisto	Lahti Museum of Visual Arts Malva	Restel	Roboride Oy	Tmi Marianne Kämi
Bank of Finland	FBI	Kirjapaino Markprint Oy	Lahti University Campus	Salpausselkä Geopark	Rodinia Oy	Toriklubi Oy
BEHM	FC Lahti Oy	Kitom	Lassila & Tikanoja Oyj	Salpausselän kisat	RPS Group	Torkkelin Paperi Oy
Benviroc Oy	FC Reipas ry	Kivimaan koulu	Lasten ja Nuorten Säätiö sr	Save Pond Hockey ry	Salpakierto	Total Sec Oy
Berliner Wasserbetriebe	Finlandia-hiihto	KOKO Lahti	Lions Club Hollola ry	Securitas Oy	Salpausselkä Geopark	Tribe of Light-show
BlackRock	Finnish Air pollution prevention society	Kollin säätiö	Liveto Group Oy	Semantix	Salpausselän kisat	Tuuba ja kimalainen Oy
Bonacube Oy	Finnish Association of Purchasing and Logistics (LOGY)	Konsta Hietanen	Lohimesta Oy	Sibelius Hall	Save Pond Hockey ry	Työterveys Wellamo
British Embassy in Finland	Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)	Kontti second-hand, Lahti	Luhtikiylän Nuorela ry	Sinfonia Lahti	Securitas Oy	University of Helsinki Centre for Continuing Education HY+
Brädi	Fishcock Films Company Oy	Koski-seura ry	LUT University	Sinuhe Oy	Semantix	University of Helsinki, Faculty of Social Sciences
Catapult International Oy	Flowers of Life	Koulutuskeskus Salpaus - kuntayhtymä	LähiTapiola Vellamo	Sitowise Group Oyj	Semantix	Unna Lehtipuu
CDP Cities	Francesco Tokkola	KU Leuven	Keskinäinen Vakuutusyhtiö	Smart & Lean Hub Oy	Semantix	Upwood Design Oy
Cecilia Damström	Fujitsu Finland Oy	Kuntoleidit SNV (Salpausselän naisvoimistelijoiden senioritanssiryhmä)	Lääkärin sosiaalinen vastuu LSV ry	Smash Mill Oy	Semantix	Urban Future
Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment	Gaia Consulting Oy	Kuusakoski Recycling	M	Snow Solutions Oy	Semantix	US Embassy in Finland
CGI Suomi Oy	Globe Hope Ltd	Kuutio Galleria Oy	Makron Oy	Snowhow Oy Ltd	Semantix	Useless Company Oy
CHABADE	Grano Oy	Laatu Invest Oy	Malski	Sokos Hotel Lahden Seurahuone	Semantix	Vaisala Oyj
City of Grenoble	Green Tyre Recycling Finland Oy	LAB University of Applied Sciences	Marakon Oy	Someco Oy	Semantix	Vallilan Vaara Oy
City of Heinola	GreenStar Hotel, Lahti	Lahden 4H-yhdistys	Marianne Kämi	Spatium Toimitilat	Semantix	Valtteri Bottas
City of Helsinki	GRI	Lahden Aluetaksi	Martta Valkeus	StartHub	Semantix	Varkka Oy
City of Lahti	Hannes Paananen	Lahden Autovuokraus Oy	Mediatalo ESA Oy	Stefan Hyttfors	Semantix	Vernerin Suhonen
City of Lappeenranta	Helsinki EU Office	Lahden Diakoniasäätiö sr	Meltwater	Stora Enso Oyj	Semantix	Villähteen Nuorisoseura ry
City of Lisbon	Hot Club Productions	Lahden Hiihtoseura	Merkityskirjat Oy	Sunnari & Vuoksenmaa	Semantix	WALCC
City of Orimattila	Hukka AI Oy	Lahden Lähimmäispalvelu ry	Mestarien Kiita	Suomen Golfkentät ry	Semantix	Water Association Finland
City of Oslo	Häme Chamber of Commerce	Lahden NNKY ry	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland	Suomen Valopalkki Oy	Semantix	Wipak Oy
City of Tallinn	Hämeen ja Pirkanmaan Geokätköilijät ry	Lahden Nuorkauppakamari ry	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland	SUPER teatteri	Semantix	WWF Finland
Citycon Finland Oy	ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability	Lahden Pelicans Oy	Ministry of the Environment	Susanna Pesonen	Semantix	Yleisradio Oy
CLC	Ideaali & Jay Who?	Lahden Pohjola-Norden ry	Ministry of the Interior		Semantix	Yläviire
Daniel Stolle	IGDA Finland	Lahden Pysäköinti	Ministry of Transport and Communications		Semantix	Youth and Environment Europe
Data Competence Center for Cities and Regions (DKSR)	Iitin Matkailu ry	Lahden Seudun Kehitys LADEC Oy	MLL Lahden yhdistys ry		Semantix	
Demos Helsinki	Ilo ja Vimma Oy	Lahden seudun liikenne (LSL)			Semantix	

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