

HELSINKI FINLAND

BUILDING THE VISITOR CENTRE OF SUOMENLINNA

GOVERNANCE AND RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC – TOURISM & ADAPTIVE REUSE OF A BUILDING

Adaptive reuse of the former Inventory Office of the military fort of Suomenlinna and creation of an information centre: restoration of the building, introduction of new facilities, addition of a modern wing.

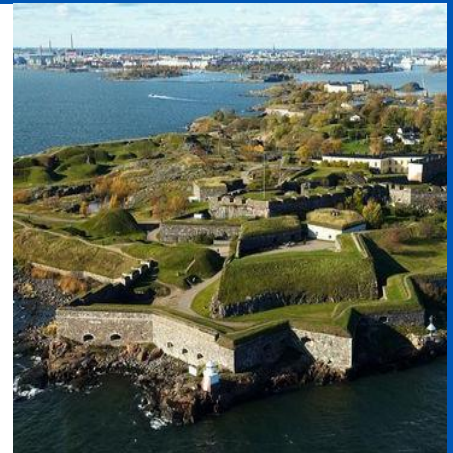
SIZE OF THE CITY:	600 000 inhabitants	71 500 ha
SIZE OF THE PROJECT:	850 inhabitants	80 ha

PRINCIPAL FUNCTION(S) OF THE CITY:

National capital, administrative and business centre

PRINCIPAL FUNCTION(S) OF THE PROJECT AREA:

Touristic and leisure activities, public space, cultural functions

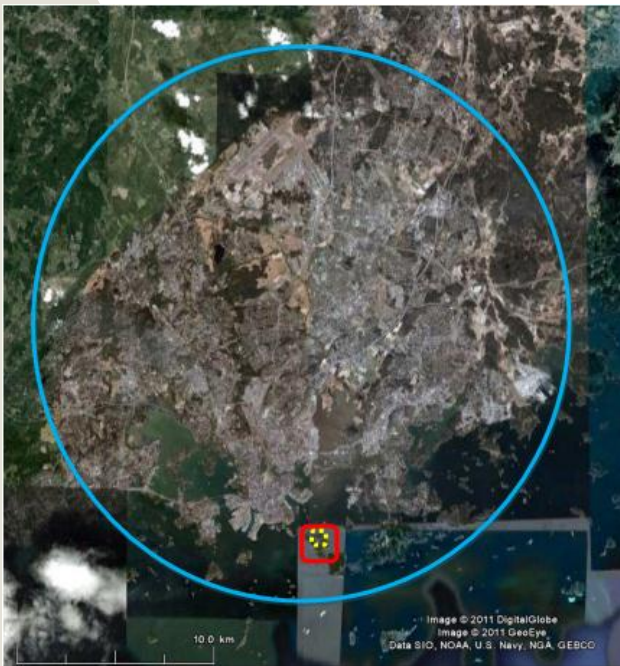


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The fortress of Suomenlinna

IDENTIFICATION

PROJECT SCALE



■ City

■ World Heritage Property

■ Project

WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

FORTRESS OF SUOMENLINNA

Inscription	1991	Built in the second half of the 18th century by Sweden on a group of islands located at the entrance of Helsinki's harbour, this fortress is an especially interesting example of military architecture of the time.
Criteria	(iv)	
Area	80 ha	

DIAGNOSIS/ STATUS	The need of a Visitor Centre became more and more obvious when the number of visitors to Suomenlinna increased in the 1990's.
PROBLEMS/ ISSUES	How to improve the visitors' experience of the site and respond to visitor increase? How to enhance the heritage, and offer new facilities? How to provide the site with an exhibition space in order to balance the use of the site all year round and offer more attraction for visitors in wintertime?
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Restoration of a former military building ➔ Improvement of the information and assistance services for the visitors of the site and the inhabitants ➔ Increase in the number of visitors ➔ Opening of the site 360 days a year ➔ Diversification and reinforcement of its tourism activities

PARTNERS / PROCESS

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

THE INITIATIVE

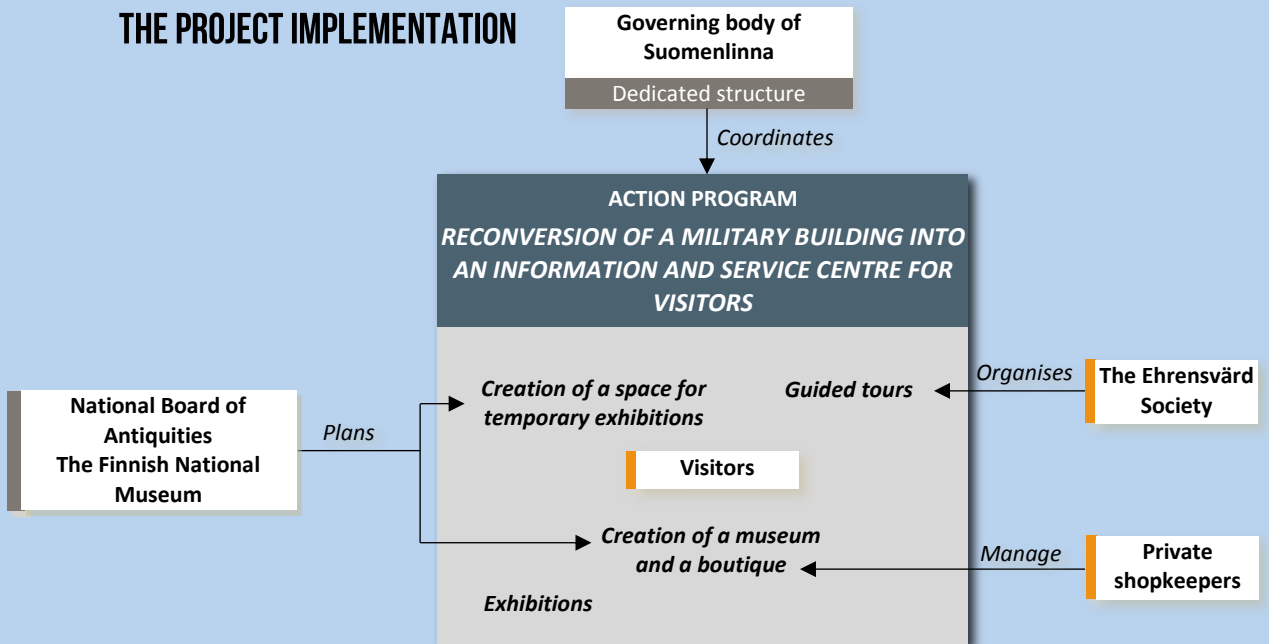
Governing body of Suomenlinna
Ministry of Education and Culture

THE PROJECT DRIVERS

Board of Suomenlinna
Stakeholders

Steering Committee
Ministry of Education of Culture
National Board of Antiquities
The Ehrensvärd Society

THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION



STAKEHOLDERS / ACTORS :

- Public local
- Public regional
- Public national
- Public international
- Private
- Mixed
- Institutions / NGOs
- Civil Society

SITE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

- Master plan of Helsinki (2002)
- Disposition Plan of Suomenlinna (1975)
- World Heritage Management Plan, is now underway, and will be in use in 2012

FUNDING

DETAILS ON PUBLIC FUNDING

Ministry of Education and Culture, Municipality of Helsinki, the Finnish National Museum

DETAILS ON PRIVATE FUNDING

The Ehrensivård Society, several sponsors

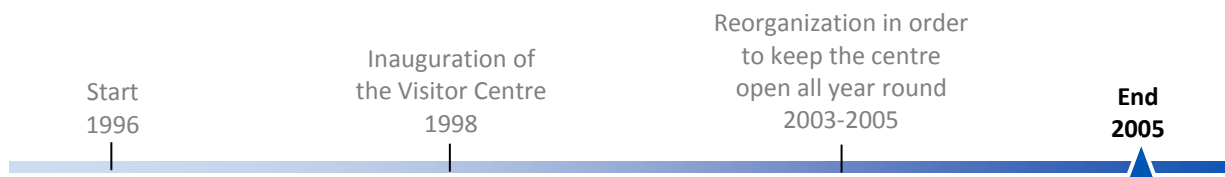
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT

2,2 million euro

Funding for the restoration project was provided by the budget of the Governing body of Suomenlinna.

The municipality, the Finnish National Museum, the Ehrensivård Society and some private companies have also provided funding for staff and exhibitions.

STATE OF PROGRESS



RELATION BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY

The creation of a visitor's centre meets the management needs of the World Heritage property and addresses the issue of the increase of cultural tourists visiting the site and Helsinki.

The World heritage status helped to get Government funding. Furthermore, the project is an example of adaptive reuse of a historical monument, an unused military building and creating new facilities and integrating contemporary design.

The reuse involved traditional restoration technique, but also the creation of a new wing. The design was carefully adapted to the context and heritage value of the older building and site.

The new vocation of the monument integrates the creation of tools for the interpretation of the site and an essential tourism flow management strategy compatible with the conservation of the authenticity of the site and the responsibility of receiving visitors.

The number of visitors in Suomenlinna has increased (from 400 000 up to 700 000 annually) since the Visitors Centre was open. The new facilities had a positive impact.

The visitor's centre project was launched in 1996 and opened in 1998 at the occasion of the 250-years anniversary of the Fortification. The number of foreign visitors has risen.

But it was only partly opened and was fully reorganized in 2003/2005 so as to keep the building opened all year round. There is a continuous customer feedback system in the Visitors 'Centre.



Guided tour



The Visitor Centre of Suomenlinna

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QUESTIONS

The property is owned by the State and managed by a Government agency. The city's role is restricted but nonetheless the city departments are represented within the "Suomenlinna working group": Planning, Transport, Energy, Stara construction services, Water, Environment, Sports, Port authority, Tourism and Congress bureau. The project was approved by the "Board of Suomenlinna", were stakeholders including inhabitants have their representatives.

One main issue is adapting the management of the site to the rapidly changing economic trends. What is the carrying capacity of the site? How far can change be managed and respect the values of a World Heritage site? In this case the main manager is clearly identified and there are structural funds for maintaining the property.

An other issue is securing funds for programming activities and exhibitions. So far external sponsors and donors have been involved (private sponsors, foreign embassies in Finland, UNESCO).

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