



Crowdfunding Tampere

PARTICIPATORY FUNDING OF COMMUNITY-LED PROJECTS

Summary

Crowdfunding is an established form of financing projects, where people gather to support an initiative that will respond to an issue relevant to them. To do so, they contribute small amounts of money so that the project can get started.

In the **Crowdfunding Tampere** model (inspired by the London Crowdfund programme), the local government participates as one of the donors of the community-led projects. In addition to financial support, the City offers visibility for the crowdfunding campaigns and advice on the planning and implementation of the projects. The main goal of the experience is to enable projects that revitalize the city and strengthen its social bonds, by encouraging residents and communities to become active in developing their living environment.

The model stands out as a way to support the activities of a new kind of urban activism that is self-organized and based on voluntary cooperation among citizens. This kind of proactive activism usually takes place outside associations and organizational activities, and is hence typically excluded from traditional types of grant systems.

Therefore, the **Crowdfunding Tampere** project is conceived as an addition to the City's current aid system, and provides residents and communities with a new way of applying for public funding, offering more possibilities for different groups and organizations to get involved in the creation of a better city for all.

Some initiatives that have been funded so far include: a community sauna, the rehabilitation of an old cattle building to serve as a community centre, an urban garden in a pedestrian street, etc.

City:

Tampere

Country:

Finland

Inhabitants:

241 884

Topics:

Citizen participation, Living together, Governance, Community development

The city of Tampere has been involved in the Educating Cities movement since 1990 and is a member of the Executive Committee

Goals

- ▶ To enable and support the implementation of community-led initiatives that will have a positive impact on the city by providing them with an innovative modality of public funding.
- ▶ To foster an active role for citizens and communities in identifying and proposing projects to improve quality of life in their local communities.
- ▶ To reinforce self-organized activism and voluntary cooperation among citizens that may take place in non-formal ways, outside of the associative network of the city.



Context

Tampere is the third largest city in Finland and the largest inland centre in the Nordic countries. It is currently home to 241,884 inhabitants (year 2021), and close to half a million inhabitants in the Tampere Region, which comprises Tampere and its neighbouring municipalities.

Tampere is located in one of the three most rapidly developing regions in Finland, and it is a centre of cutting-edge technology, research, education, culture, sports and business.

Tampere and its Region are jointly applying to become European Capital of Culture in 2026.



Methodology

The City of Tampere launches the call for crowdfunding campaigns once a year. To be eligible to participate, initiatives must comply with an established set of criteria, including: preferably being a one-off event or project; aiming to bring joy, comfort and a sense of community; and being implemented by an association, community or working group whose regular activities take place in the city of Tampere. The campaign leaders must also ensure that they have the required licenses to run the project, should this be necessary.

The **Crowdfunding Tampere** project offers support to the initiatives right from the outset. Even before the launching of the call, the City organizes events to share information about crowdfunding and to invite citizens to think about initiatives that could be carried out within this framework. During the application phase, applicants can ask for a pre-evaluation of their proposal, so that they can get feedback on their project idea and see if it could be eligible for funding from the City. In addition, the city organizes meetings for the campaigners, where they can meet with each other, ask questions about the programme and discuss relevant issues about their campaigns. They can also participate in specific training sessions about marketing for social mobilization, during which good practices on campaigning and outreach are shared and analyzed.

Once the call for applications is closed, all the proposals received are assessed by a working group of city officials from different units in order to determine whether they fulfil all the eligibility criteria. If they do, the campaigns are published on a specific website specialized in crowdfunding services (<http://www.mesenaatti.me/mun-tampere>).

Then, each crowdfunding initiative begins its outreach campaign in order to raise funds from other citizens or private sponsors, such as organizations or companies. The campaigns include activities in public spaces in order to foster awareness about the initiative, door-to-door communication, online mobilization, writing articles, etc. The City of Tampere also contributes to the dissemination of the initiatives through their own communication platforms (website, social networks, etc.).

The funds have to be donated through the aforementioned website in a process that allows for full transparency. All the initiatives have a pre-determined period of time to raise up to 60% of their minimum target. If they do, they will obtain the funding from the City, which represents the remaining 40%, or a maximum of 5,000 euros. If they do not reach the minimum target, the donated funds are automatically returned to all the sponsors.

To ensure accountability, the projects that get funding from the City must adequately report on the use of the funds through specific forms and instructions in a timely manner.

The **Crowdfunding Tampere** project is led by the participation team of the Strategy and Development Unit, in coordination with other City departments, such as Culture, Sustainable Development, Finance, Urban Environment and Infrastructure.



★ Evaluation

The first edition of the **Crowdfunding Tampere** project was carried out in 2019, and it was the first time that crowdfunding was used in Finland as a tool for a city to aid and support citizen and community-based activities. It resulted in 14 applications that finally led to 11 crowdfunding campaigns, of which 10 received funding from the City in order to develop their projects during 2019.

The experience continued in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during the second edition, some adjustments had to be made, especially regarding the informative meetings and trainings, which had to take place online. Luckily this was not an obstacle, and up to five informative webinars were organized. They allowed the project to be disseminated and encouraged further participation.

So far, as a result of the **Crowdfunding Tampere** programme, 17 citizen and community-led crowdfunding campaigns have succeeded to raise a total of 80,000 euros. In addition to the City's funding, the campaigns have raised money from 433 private and organizational donors. It is also important to highlight that involvement in the campaigns it is not limited to economic contributions. In fact, when this is not possible, people can participate in other forms, such as: helping spread the word, preparing communication materials, offering voluntary work once the project is funded, etc. To do so, they can reach out to the campaign organizers through the crowdfunding platform.

Besides raising funds for initiatives aimed at increasing the well-being of City residents, the project fosters citizens' active involvement and promotes social bonds and peaceful coexistence. For instance, it allowed for the creation of an urban garden in a pedestrian street where residents could stop by, socialize and also get involved in keeping up the garden. This initiative raised a total of 2,645



euros, of which €600 was funded by the City. Another example is the creation of a communal space in Tampere where international residents and locals could meet each other, share their ideas and experiences and enjoy each other's company. This project raised a total of 12,020 euros, of which €4,800 was funded by the City.

The project also encourages co-responsibility and engagement in the improvement and governance of public life, and helps to identify social needs that might not have been detected by the public institutions. Some examples would be the rehabilitation of a 100-year cattle building owned by a local association to serve as a diverse hobby, culture and exercise facility for the local community (which raised 13,900 euros from 49 sponsors and an additional 4,000 euros from the City).

Some difficulties encountered comprise the lack of understanding of the crowdfunding model, which is still relatively innovative as a way of financing public initiatives. To remedy this, it is foreseen to intensify the information and communication campaigns about the project.



Future proposals

Looking to the future, the project is working on developing specific communication strategies to reach new audiences in order to catalyze social activism. The project also aims to intensify the information and support provided by the City, in order to help campaigners to undertake the required procedures and obtain the necessary licenses to effectively implement their projects.

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Bank**



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