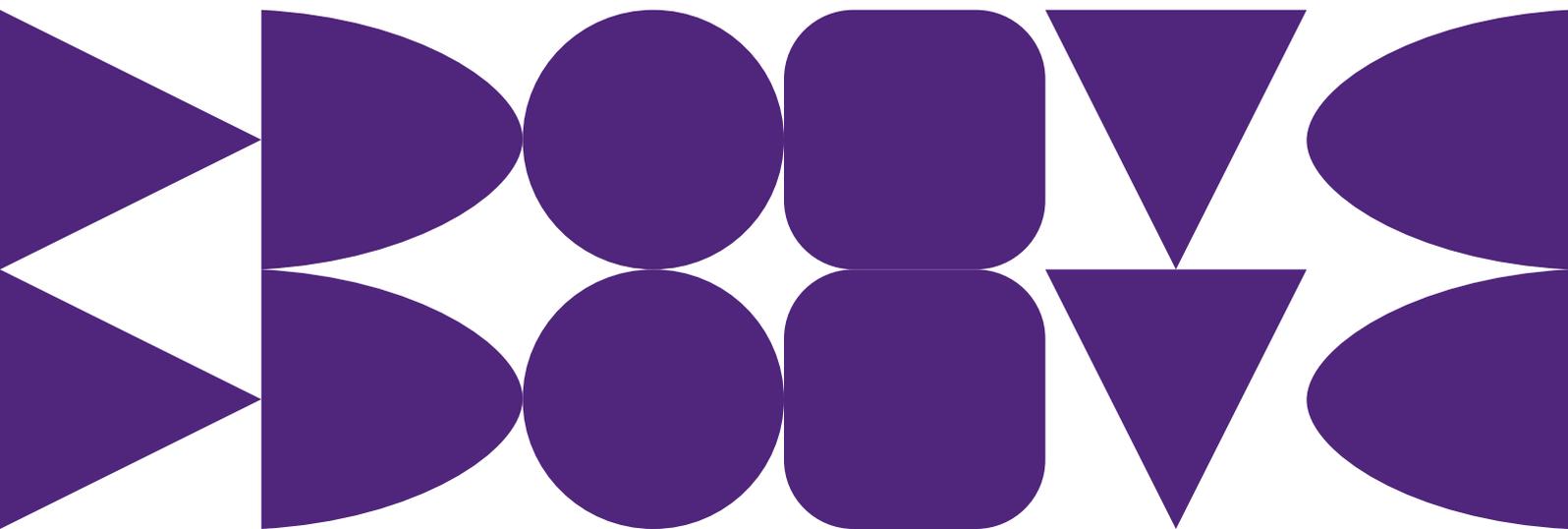




# T U R N S

TAMPERE URBAN RESEARCH NETWORK FOR SUSTAINABILITY

## **TURN S Strategy**





# Strategy

Tampere Urban Research Network of Sustainability (TURN) is a multidisciplinary research platform that catalyzes innovative and transdisciplinary action for urban sustainability. The platform brings together diverse research fields across different faculties of Tampere University.

*This strategy is a vehicle for the TURN - Tampere Urban Research Network for Sustainability to reflect on ideas and guide actions, ensuring that we can collectively realise our scientific and societal potential in the best possible way.*

*Approved by the TURN Management Group on 3 March 2026.*

## Content

Mission	.....	3
Vision	.....	3
Key values	.....	3
The story of TURN	.....	4
The strategy of TURN	.....	5
Strategic goals	.....	6
TURN in a nutshell	.....	8

## Vision

**Tampere University is the leading site for transdisciplinary urban research within the Nordics.**

Tampere University's urban research community has an internationally visible role in radically rethinking urban sustainability, pursuing a transformative societal agenda, and advancing scientific knowledge to realise that agenda.

## Mission

**TURN facilitates the transdisciplinary actions of Tampere University's urban research community, working in collaboration with scientific and societal actors and stakeholders.**

TURN aims to create conditions for ambitious and impactful scientific work by bringing together academics, topics, and methods from critical urban studies, transition studies, and sustainability research. TURN connects experts and provides funding to support new research initiatives and international mobility. Questions related to small and medium-sized cities and post-growth contexts are high on TURN's agenda.

## Key values

Reflecting Tampere University's values, TURN aims to keep its work **courageous**, **critical**, and **open-minded**, seeking creative approaches and leadership in selected themes within the field of urban sustainability. This strengthens the transformative impact of TURN and opens unprecedented research areas.

# The story of TURNS

TURNS was established in 2019 as an informal network of researchers, and since then it has engaged thousands of attendees in its seminars, meetings, and other activities in Tampere region and beyond. TURNS got its early orientation from informal academic collaboration, which led to a successful research platform application in 2023. In 2024, TURNS became one of the official research platforms of Tampere University.



In its early phase as a strategic research platform, the story of TURNS has been to **discover** opportunities, actors, models, and collaborations. The next step is to shift into a more reflective mode, to identify good practices from the platform's first years and from relevant examples elsewhere, and to strengthen the exchange of ideas and international collaboration.

This strategy provides guidance on how to move from discovery to **defining** the research platform's next objectives and modes of operation. The next phase is to **develop** new or next institutional form(s) that will support the longterm development, scientific quality, and societal impact of Tampere's urban research community.

Throughout its story, TURNS **delivers** impactful research and transdisciplinary collaboration in the field of urban sustainability.

TURNS research platform involves six faculties of Tampere University:

- BEN** = Built Environment
- EDU** = Education & Culture
- ITC** = Information Technology & Communication Sciences
- MAB** = Management & Business
- MET** = Medicine & Health Technology
- SOC** = Social Sciences

# The strategy of TURNS

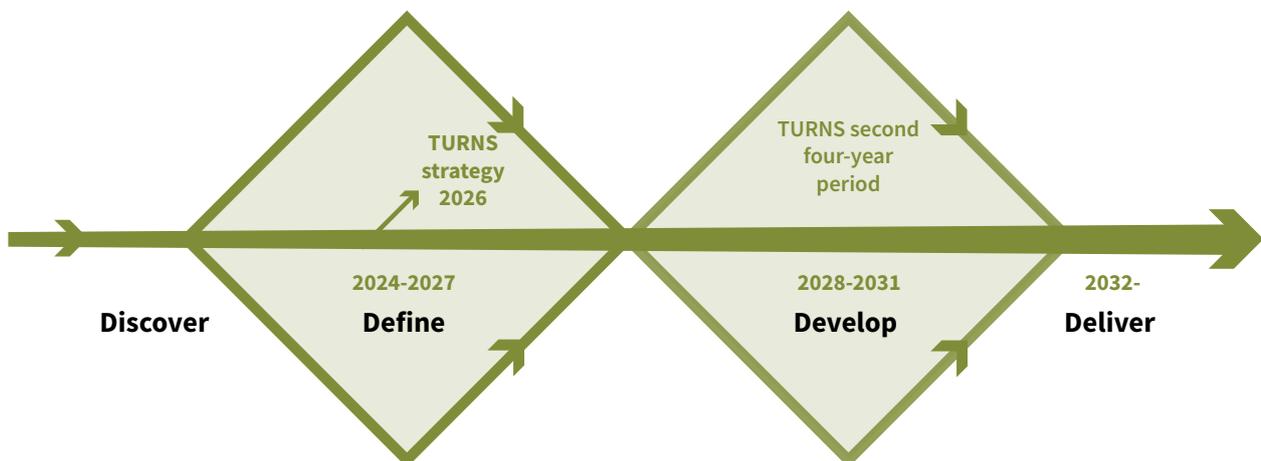
The TURNS strategy is designed, first, for the currently agreed funding period of four years with a possible additional four years, and second, for a medium-term perspective beyond the research platform funding.

Accordingly, the strategy has three phases:

**2024-2027:** Improve the core TURNS funding instruments (seed, mobility & research enrichment funding); support active urban research teams and communities organically; broaden the network with national and international conferences, visits, and publications; prepare visible projects; and expand stakeholder engagement e.g. by establishing a TURNS Societal Advisory Pool.

**2028-2031:** Strengthen international partnerships through EU projects, visits, and a TURNS Visiting Scholars programme; develop further PhD educational initiatives; and expand funding sources e.g. by preparing a well-organised Centre of Excellence (CoE) application and planning a national urban studies programme.

**2032-2035:** Evaluate impact; scale successful initiatives; realise the CoE; solidify Tampere University as a Nordic leader in urban sustainability research (Tampere Urban Institute) and host a related Knowledge and Policy Hub known for its annual Tampere Urban Sustainability Report.



**Figure.** The development process of TURNS (adapted from the UK Design Council's Double Diamond model).

# Strategic goals

## 1. Enhancing networking in sustainable urban development

Tampere University's strategy recognises *sustainable urban development* as one of the university's four overarching strong themes in research and education. As one of Tampere University's strategic research platforms, TURNS serves as a collaborative arena that supports innovative initiatives across faculty borders and in cooperation with stakeholders from different sectors.

TURNS promotes networking in the field of sustainable urban development by developing novel and inviting concepts for engagement and collaboration. Current concepts include, for example, TURNS Thursdays, Seed Events, International PhD Workshops, and TURNS Visits. TURNS also has a visible set of communications: a rich website, an active LinkedIn profile, a mailing list and newsletter, and the Tampere Urban Research Perspectives blog.

## 2. Solving urban sustainability challenges

TURNS works as an activator and catalyst for the Tampere urban research community, enabling transformative, future-oriented research and policy agendas to tackle urban sustainability challenges. In particular, three systemic and interrelated topics have been addressed: biodiversity loss in urban areas, socioeconomic barriers to urban sustainability, and unhealthy practices in building and using cities.oriented research and policy agendas to economic barriers to urban sustainability, and unhealthy practices in building and using cities.

To respond to these challenges, TURNS supports research on multidisciplinary solutions that aim, for example, at promoting sustainable and just socio-economic transitions, preventing biodiversity loss through rewilding urban areas, enhancing human-technology interaction and learning, and fostering healthier cities and urban life. Eventually, these solutions enable, among other things, better health among citizens, the creation of new types of urban environments, and the development of novel urban policies and planning practices.

Furthermore, the focus on *small and medium-sized cities* serves as TURNS' epistemological complement to the mainstream research interest in large metropolitan regions. The core idea of TURNS is that cities, as well as urban people, places, and processes, bring these themes together and make them actionable.

### **3. Strengthening the national impact of urban sustainability research**

The idea of TURNS Advisory Pool is to strengthen the links between the Tampere urban research community and stakeholders primarily in Finland and potentially later also abroad. The Advisory Pool invites experts who are dedicated to making change, not just representing something.

Enhancing the national impact of sustainable urban research is enabled by the TURNS Advisory Pool. The Advisory Pool's working model includes thinking and discussion retreats, larger events such as a potential national urban policy roundtable, and other specific tasks. A significant part of the Advisory Pool's work will be distributed based on mutual agreement and need. The Advisory Pool may take part in background discussions, advising on strategy and projects, contributing to applications, and supporting the platform's development processes and evaluations.

### **4. Finding the future potential in international connections**

Tampere University's International Strategy states that "[o]ur research has a global impact and we collaborate with leading research groups worldwide. [...] We recognise the value of international expert roles and incorporate mobility into academic work. We enhance the quality of our research and expand our networks by inviting international visitors to Tampere University."

TURNS is working in many ways to make this a reality. TURNS Visits are organized to relevant research organisations in Europe to create new networks; TURNS Mobility Funding enables Tampere University's urban researchers to work in universities abroad for short periods of time, and in the future, TURNS Visiting Scholars programme will bring leading urban research expertise to Tampere and Finland.

# TURN S in a nutshell

