

GOVERNANCE ON REFERENCE REGION VITORIA-GASTEIZ

Responsible of the compilation:

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Reference Region: Vitoria- Gasteiz

Location: Region of Alava, Basque Country, Spain

[Basic data on the reference region fact sheet. Annex 1]

1. Types of policies and governance structures that can be found in Vitoria-Gasteiz

Bottom-up structures:

- *Traditional farming practices: associations and unions of farmers:*
 - Euskal Herriko Nekazarien Elkartasuna [EHNE] (Solidaridad de Campesinos de Euskal Herria- Solidarity of Farmers from Basque Country)
 - Unión Agroganadera de Álava-Arabako Nekazarien Elkartea (Farming and Livestock Union of Alava): integrated in EHNE, in CPE (Coordination Paysanne Européenne) and in Via Campesina
- *Ecological farming practices:* There is a strong network of civil associations related with eco-agriculture, all of them arising from and fed by the traditional rural culture of the region, considered historically the cropland of Basque Country.
 - *Zadorra Foundation*, a civil society initiative aimed at promoting sustainable practices in farming sector in Vitoria-Gasteiz and its surroundings
 - *ENEK -Consejo de Agricultura y Alimentación Ecológica de Euskadi* (Basque Council for the Ecological Farming and Food) is formed by all the people and businesses registered as ecological farming operators in Basque Country.
 - *Bionekazaritza -Asociación Alavesa de Agricultura y Ganadería Ecológica-* (Association of Ecological Farming and Livestock of Alava), created in 1993 by a group of small farmers
 - *Natuaraba -Asociación para el desarrollo del cultivo agrícola y ganadero ecológico en extensivo* (Association for the Development of Ecological Extensive Farming and Livestock) Created in 2003
 - *Convivium Slow Food Araba-Álava*, a community-based organization integrated in the international network Slow Food. Created in 2005

Top-down structures and policies:

- Central Government policies: Sustainable Rural Development Act 2009

- Regional Government policies: Basque Country Ecological Farming and Food Act 2007
- Alava Provincial Council (Diputación Foral de Álava). Is a body acting on an intermediate scale between regional and municipal government. There is such a kind of body only in some of the autonomous regions of Spain (Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia, Andalucía), but in others it has disappeared, considered redundant. In the case of Basque Country it has a relevant role on agricultural sector.
- Municipal policies: It has a leading role on a local level through the Center for Environmental Studies of Vitoria-Gasteiz
- NEIKER Tecnalia – Instituto Vasco de Investigación y Desarrollo Agrario (Campus Agroalimentario de Arkaute): Basque Institute of Farming Research and Development (Agro food Campus of Arkaute) is a non-profit public company depending on the Department of Environment, Territorial Planning, Agriculture and Fishing of the Basque Country Government.
- HAZI - Corporación del Gobierno Vasco para el Desarrollo del Medio Rural y Marino (Basque Government Corporation for the Development of Rural and Marine Environment) it is a tool of the Basque Government for the definition and the implementation of its policies and actions related with rural and marine environment

2. Key governance actors in this reference region.

Key institutional actors (the institutional ‘eldsjel’)

- Municipality of Vitoria-Gasteiz One of the key institutional actors for the enhancement of urban agriculture in Vitoria-Gasteiz in the region is the Centre for Environmental Studies, dependent on the Municipality of Vitoria-Gasteiz, where it acts as a Local Department of Environment. This body was the main driving force behind the Vitoria-Gasteiz Greenbelt

Key social actors (the social ‘eldsjel’)

- Among the many eco-farmers associations in Alava, the Zadorra Foundation is especially important and active and has a leading role in all the eco-agriculture initiatives.

3. Good examples of governance which link ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up’ approaches

Municipal Periurban Ecological Allotments of Olarizu and Urarte and other initiatives

[Basic data on the reference region fact sheet. Annex 1]

Through its policies, the CEA has tried to preserve the existing bottom-up initiatives towards urban and periurban agriculture, specially the spontaneous allotments created along time in the riverside of *Zadorra river*. (“The Municipal Allotments of Urarte were conceived as a regulated alternative for the illegal and uncontrolled allotments growing by the River along the time, with a serious ecological impact”)

For the time being, urban agriculture is mainly related with leisure, training and environmental education not with productive activities.

Basaldea Project: a Nursery for Farming Initiatives

Nowadays a new and ambitious project driven by the Municipality with other institutional and non-institutional bodies is ongoing under the name Basaldea, trying to overcome the leisure and educative model towards the productive model.

The project is based on a former one driven by the Zadorra Foundation.

Partners:

- *Municipality of Vitoria-Gasteiz*
- *Provincial Council of Álava*
- *HAZI*
- *ENEK*
- *Wholesalers Food Market (Plaza de Abastos)*

Objective of the project (as stated in the project web)

“The overall objective of Basaldea project on a midterm is generating employment and businesses related with the sector of ecological production and distribution of farming products from Alava Region through the following initiatives:

- *Development of Farming Production Units managed by new entrepreneurs in the region answering adequately to the existing local demand of this kind of product.*
- *The implementation of a channel of distribution and marketing of ecological products through the creation of a consolidation centre of these products and the generation of routes and services for the supply and delivery to customer*
- *The maintenance as a common heritage of the local landscape, specially the rural landscape and the biodiversity of Vitoria-Gasteiz”*

The phases of the program

- Training
 - Framing training
 - Entrepreneurial training
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Farming enterprise consolidation
 - Gaztenek: (Plan for Young Farmers developed by Basque Government and the Provincial Councils of Alava, Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa)
 - Aldalur: (reservoir of landlots managed by the Diputación Foral of Álava)

More information

Links

Vitoria-Gasteiz.org / Basaldea Project http://www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/we001/was/we001Action.do?aplicacion=wb021&tabla=contenido&idioma=en&uid=u1549ba7_137a153d318_7fd8

FoodlinksCommunity.net / Project Events: <http://www.foodlinkscommunity.net/1124.html>

Zabalortu Project: creation of an ecological self-managed allotment in the new neighbourhood of Zabalzana in Vitoria-Gasteiz

It is a purely bottom-up initiative driven by the Neighbourhood Association of Zabalzana. The objective is the transformation of unused public land in community allotments for the

neighbours. Although the Municipality is supporting the initiative as a part of the strategy of re-densification and mix of uses within the neighbourhood, there is not yet agreement among the authorities and the neighbours about the actual lot where to bring the initiative about.

ANNEX 1



Reference region: Vitoria-Gasteiz

Country: Spain, Basque Country

Area: 276,80 Km²

Inhabitants / density: 864 / per Km²

Urban identity and context:

Vitoria-Gasteiz is the administrative capital of the Autonomous Community of Basque Country and the capital city of Alava Region. It is a middle-sized city with 235.445 inhabitants.

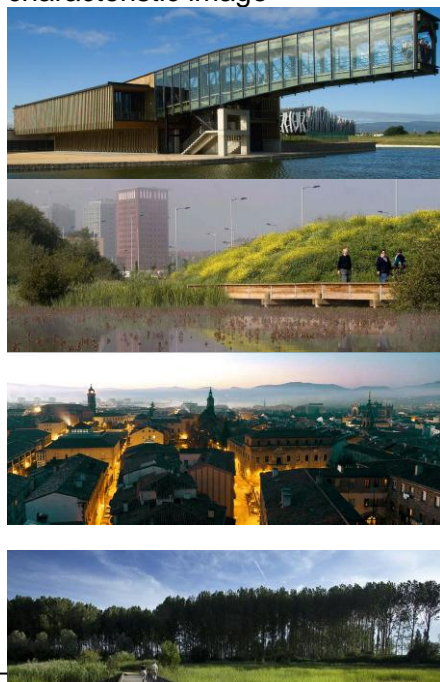
It suffered a strong population growth in the sixties due mainly to the development of a motor and metalwork industry. Nevertheless, the impact of this process on its natural and rural environment was controlled through careful urban planning.

Vitoria-Gasteiz was designated European Green Capital in November 2010. The European Commission acknowledges with this designation both the efforts of the City in solving environmental problems and improving the quality of life, and its challenging plans related with a wide scope of areas, such as the fight against Climate Change, the creation of a network of Gardens and Parks and a Green Belt, the control of water consumption, and the sound municipal policy of Waste Management, Energy

Efficiency and Sustainable Urbanism and Mobility

Agricultural identity and context:

characteristic image



The City is located in a transition zone between Oceanic and Mediterranean Climate, with dominating Atlantic features. Maximal and minimal heights are respectively Palogán Mount (1029 m) in the Southeast border of Vitoria Mountain Range, and Zadorra River Basin in its westernmost downstream point within the limits of the City (495 m).

The municipal area is formed by the City of Vitoria-Gasteiz, an urban core concentrating most of the population, the industry and the services of the so-called Historical Territory of Álava, surrounded by an extensive agricultural area of some 11.000 ha, within which 64 small villages are integrated, with less than 100 inhabitants each, forming the rural domain of the area.

The transition zone between the urban and the rural areas is bordered by a Green Belt, consisting in a series of periurban parks with a high environmental and landscaping value, interconnected through ecological corridors. This is the output of an ambitious project initiated in the beginning of the 1990s with the main goal of restoring and recuperating the periphery of Vitoria-Gasteiz, both in environmental and social terms, creating an extensive leisure green area around the city.

The Green Belt is itself surrounded by a periurban area of farming land, mainly grain crops. Livestock farming, although a declining activity, prevails in the intermediate areas, creating there some complex and diverse silvo-pastoral ecosystems with a high environmental and landscaping value.

Finally there is a third forestry belt in the Southern border of the municipal area, formed mainly by the Mounts of Vitoria, actually in process of being declared a Natural Park. An outstanding feature is the survival and growth of the common lands: public owned lands covering now 9.966 ha, managed and exploited in a communal way.

Urban Agriculture Identity:

Best practices

- **Periurban Ecological Allotments of Olarizu and Urarte**

Olarizu allotments were conditioned in 1998 within an area of farming lands, degraded pastures and waste disposal areas.



An ecological farming program for elderly persons (older than 55) is developed here, consisting in a theory-practice course in ecological food gardening followed by the temporary cession of the lots for the participants to cultivate them. .



The Allotments of Urarte were conceived as a regulated alternative for the illegal and uncontrolled allotments growing by the River along the time, with a serious ecological impact

The objective is to offer the citizens a space where they can use their leisure time learning and enjoying ecological farming in the best social and environmental conditions

- **Ecological Allotments in the Civic Centers:**

This a project developed within the framework of the Green Capital program. Its objective is getting back the Nature to the City, giving these buildings a new environmental and productive value. The idea is offering demonstrative areas with novel leisure time activities.

It is an opportunity for the children to learn how food is produced and a challenge for the adults to recover their childhood forgotten knowledge, favoring participation and volunteer work.



There are two lines:

- **Cultivation tables in the roofs of various civic centers.** An innovative activity is offered with this new system, aiming to get some profits out of these spaces.
- **Allotments as a way of recuperating green urban areas**

Problems to solve:

- Actual mainstream farming is agro-business-oriented. Most of the rainfed crops (85,6% of the total crop) are cereals (70%) against 14,4% of the traditional irrigated croplands, such as potato and sugarbeet. This means a low diversification of the sector, as a result of the application of the Common Agricultural Policy and the lack of responsible consumption habits by the public. On the other hand, the cropland has been reduced at an average rate of 175 ha per year: 3% for rainfed crops and 2% for irrigated crops
- The Alavese crop-livestock sector has been suffering a reconversion process leading to the closing of a great number of farms and the concentration of the productive means (croplands) in bigger farms units. Livestock farming is declining severely. There has been a high decrease in the number of farms due mainly to the regulation requirements and to the very demanding conditions of rural way of life.

Possible cooperation with stakeholders:

Possible COST events:

4h Urban Landscape Forum:

- **Technical seminar "Periurban agriculture, permaculture and healthy food"** ("Agricultura periurbana, permacultura y alimentación saludable")