

Greening of the haurreskola Txagorritxu school playground in Vitoria-Gasteiz

The naturalisation of the Txagorritxu school playground is the pilot project to expand the naturalisation strategy across school playgrounds in Vitoria-Gasteiz. The school's own educational community were the driving force behind this project which aims to improve the quality and environmental comfort of the space, increase the permeability of the soil, and increase biodiversity and the set of associated ecosystem services.

It forms part of the shared *construction of urban green infrastructure* programme and also aims to involve citizens and social agents in the greening of public and private spaces. Furthermore, it provides ecological reinforcement that adds new spaces to the Vitoria-Gasteiz Urban Green Infrastructure System.



General view of the playground after the work was completed.

Type of NBS implemented in the intervention

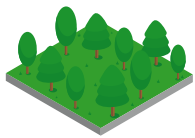


Removing school playground paving

The permeable green surface area was increased from the initial 30 m² to 275m², an increase of 245 m².



Initial condition of the playground and works to remove the paving.

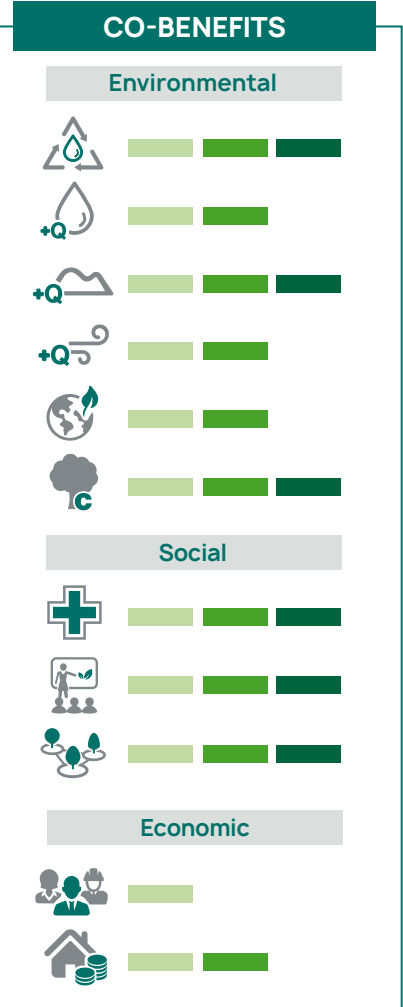
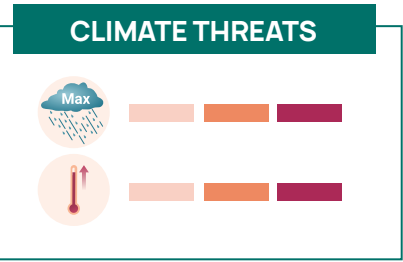


Planting and sowing

A total of **20 trees**, **57 shrubs** and **38 aromatic plants** of different species were planted, all adapted to the environment. Previously there were only 6 trees, 2 medium and 4 small ones.



Final condition of the playground and appearance of the newly planted vegetation.





Street furniture

Installation of play containers with natural elements. Three containers were provided with water, soil, stones and wood, to encourage children's contact with nature.



Details of the wooden games and soil containers.



The playground as a new learning space.



Girls in the naturalised playground.

“ This project has meant the beginning of the School Playground Naturalisation Strategy in the city in response to the demands of the educational community. ”

Technician of the Environmental Studies Centre at Vitoria-Gasteiz.



Agents involved

- **Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council:**
 - Environmental Studies Centre
 - Public Space and Natural Environment Service (Landscape Unit)
 - Maintenance Dept.
 - Education Service (Infant Schools).
- **Educational community:** haurreskola Txagorritxu directors, parents' association, team of educators, caretaker, Haurreskolak committee.



Economic data

Approximate cost of the intervention:
€ 27,000

Funding:
€ 25,000
(Ihobe ecoinnovation projects, 2020)



Barriers encountered

- Initial reluctance by cleaning staff to shrubs being planted, as they assumed an increased workload.
- Initial reluctance by parents as they assumed that the children would get muddy when playing on a renaturalised surface.



Lessons learnt

- There were several heat waves in the first summer following the project that dried out some of the vegetation. In anticipation of increasingly hot summers, it is important that high temperature resistant species are planted and that efficient irrigation systems are provided for later summer months.
- It is important that risk aspects are considered: choosing bushes without thorns, containers without corners to avoid accidents, allergenic species, etc.



Success factors

Pioneer project of the Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council **school playground naturalisation strategy** ([web page](#))

All agents involved were identified and involved in the project from the outset by raising awareness of the benefits of the intervention.

Low implementation and maintenance costs.