



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

# 1994 2016 SANTA COLOMA DE GRAMENET PERI URBAN RESTORATION PLAN ECOMETROPOLI ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE AND THE PERIURBAN PARK OF LA BASTIDA

Region	Europe and Central Asia
Award Scheme	Dubai International Award
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

## Summary

The 1994 2016 PeriUrban Restoration Plan based on the creation of environmental workshop schools keeps its original objectives the ecological recovery of the periurban spaces and their transformation into recreational areas for the local population or into areas of ecological transition the provision of employment in occupational areas in the environmental field the active participation of the civic entities in the neighbourhoods

## Background and Objective

**Establishment of Priorities:** The priorities are, as defined by Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Council together with the civic and educational bodies: ·The modification of the municipal strategy for urban management, to emphasise sustainable development, the re-greening of the city and an improvement in resilience. ·The need to take urgent and comprehensive action on the degradation of the peri-urban periphery, ensuring the active participation of the civic entities and the participation of young people through vocational training. ·Improving the employability of young people in Santa Coloma de Gramenet through the implementation of specialised training schemes. ·The creation of ECOMETROPOLI, the environmental education and interpretation centre of reference for the city, linked to the programmes of scientific dissemination and the recovery and protection of biodiversity. Formulation of Objectives And Strategies: The Peri-Urban Restoration Plan has been implemented over a 20-year period (1996-2016). Its objectives encompass the ecological recovery of the peri-urban spaces, the provision of employment in occupational areas in the environmental field and the participation of the city's civic bodies. The plan steps up the impact on the natural environment of Santa Coloma, improving the protection of biodiversity through the consolidation of peri-urban spaces and the transmission of scientific knowledge to the younger generations. Therefore, it brings about an improvement in the city's resilience and natural environment in adapting to climate change (Local Agenda strategy 21), enhancing biodiversity and raising awareness of the Serralada de Marina Park, improving the scores of Santa Coloma's sustainability indicators and ensuring the active participation of the resident population and the education sector. **Mobilisation of Resources:** The Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Council funded the projects within the Peri-Urban Restoration Plan out of its own resources, in partnership with the management board of Serralada de Marina Park Consortium, Barcelona Provincial Council through its Natural Areas Department, the Catalan Government Ministry of Employment and the Spanish Ministry of Regional Policy and Public Administration (Secretary of State of Regional Co-operation). In 2011 ECOMETROPOLI, the environmental education and interpretation centre was opened, funded by the Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Council, Serralada de Marina Park Consortium, Barcelona Provincial Council, the Spanish Ministry of Regional Policy and Public Administration (Secretary of State of Regional Co-operation) linked to the Funds for Investment in Local Bodies (FEIL) and the collaboration of local and education sector associations. In the final phase, 2010-2016, La Bastida Forest Park and the Schools' Woodland Observatory were developed, mobilising the resources of Barcelona Provincial Council, the Spanish Ministry of Regional Policy and Public Administration (Secretary of State of Territorial Co-operation) linked to the Fund for Investment in Local Bodies (FEIL) and the collaboration of local and environmental bodies.

## Actions and Implementation

The Santa Coloma de Gramenet Peri-Urban Restoration Plan has been implemented through a series of actions over 22 years. In the phase developed between 2010/11 and 2016 there were three initiatives of major strategic importance for the city which were completed with the plans for Workshop Schools and Apprentice Training for young people and Local employment schemes for the over-50s. The first is La Bastida Forest Park, opened in 2010, which was developed following a prolonged local protest against the construction of a macro housing development of 5,000 dwellings that would have had a high environmental impact. The mobilisation of the local population through local bodies and a new municipal government enabled an agreement to



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be reached and led to the development of a new project comprising a 85,000-m<sup>2</sup> peri-urban forest park and a transition to the natural area of Serralada de Marina Park. Secondly, and overcoming the initial resistance from a sector of the provincial government, in 2007 it was decided to create ECOMETROPOLI. This came as a response to a long-standing demand from the education sector for an environmental education centre of reference in the municipality. Following a strategy of inter-administrative coordination between Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Council, Barcelona Metropolitan Area, the Catalan government Department of Employment, the Barcelona Provincial Council's Natural Areas Department, Serralada de Marina Park Consortium, and the Spanish central government's Ministry of Economy and Finance together with representatives from the local education sector, two processes were implemented: In 2008 an agreement was signed by Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Council and the Barcelona Provincial Council to make the Montserrat Pavilion available, as well as create the Technical Committee for drafting the Master Plan for ECOMETROPOLI. In 2010 the content was developed for the activities programme and exhibition areas. In 2011, using funds granted by FEIL (Fund for Investment in Local Bodies) from the Spanish central government's Ministry of Regional Policy and Public Administration (Secretary of State for Territorial Cooperation), activity began at ECOMETROPOLI, the environmental education centre. We know from the continuous assessment system in place that in the period 2011-2016, 48,000 schoolchildren and 14,000 adults took part in over 350 annual workshops on environmental, scientific and sustainable mobility. Thirdly, and right on the periphery of the peri-urban area, the Schools' Woodland Observatory project was implemented. The education sector, neighbourhood bodies and local government took part in the design and implementation phase of this microproject. It is currently the focal point for the workshops held within the programme of activities which complement the school curriculum that are developed in the city with a local participation of more than 25,000 schoolchildren per school year. The system of identification, monitoring and reintroduction of species of diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey through hacking as well as the supervised reforestation of woodland, with the class groups has made it possible to restore the original biodiversity of this area of the peri-urban periphery.

## Outcomes and Impacts

The 2011-2016 phase of the Peri-Urban Restoration Plan has drawn the resident population's attention to the ecology of proximity, sustainable development, and the ability of local initiatives to improve biodiversity. It has also emphasised how it is necessary to cut down on corrective actions to reduce the environmental impact of human activity in the cities and in particular in the peri-urban areas by introducing a system for reducing the ecological footprint and indirectly recovering the environmental costs. The quality of life has improved for the roughly 116,950 people who have direct access to the newly-created leisure areas, the ECOMETROPOLI environmental education centre, to learn about the local and city biodiversity as well as new technologies for communicating environmental values. It has also enabled the impact on the forest area to be reduced, by channelling pressure from the local population towards the new leisure areas and eliminating litter pollution, and it has improved the biodiversity (fauna and flora) of the environment (Mediterranean forest). Within the framework of the development of the Local Agenda 21 strategies, a model of peri-urban park has been established that is environmentally-aware, uses natural materials which are treated to increase their resistance, and plants which are native to the area and use less water than city gardens. The involvement of the local population, organised on two levels of neighbourhood associations and informal groups, has enabled the work of maintaining the new facilities to be organised without imposing an unmanageable financial burden on the local authorities. Direct employment has been generated through the creation of environmental service companies. Young people, women and over-50s at risk of social exclusion have participated in the schemes of environmental education, forest gardening and forest observation undertaken by the municipality and the region. The involvement of the general population and the education sectors in particular has been encouraged in all the processes and initiatives in the peri-urban periphery of Santa Coloma de Gramenet.

## Gender and Social Inclusivity

1994-2016 Peri-Urban Restoration Plan (ECOMETROPOLI and La Bastida peri-urban Forest Park), with vehicles for action like the Workshop Schools and Apprentice Training for young people and the local employment schemes for the over-50s who are at risk of social exclusion, is in our view a model exportable to other towns and cities that have a high population density and are located near natural areas that require conservation. This has been communicated through the Network of Towns and Cities for Sustainability and the Spanish Network of Municipalities and Provinces of Spain, as well as in the Biennial Congress of the Environment (Conama). We believe that the employment training of young people and the long-term unemployed raises awareness of the importance of ecosystems, habitats, fauna and flora, creating permanent links between the resident population and natural spaces. It also promotes new values for quality of life among urban communities. These communities are both the subject of and participants in a public initiative, which is carried out in a local context but contributes to an integral vision of the relationship with the environment. The experience of La Bastida Forest Park is a good example of the correction of mistakes in the public management of urban planning. ECOMETROPOLI environmental education centre has proven to be a transferable experience as an educational tool for young people and families, and has been visited by specialists and teachers from the whole metropolitan area of Barcelona. Over 61,000 people have used the educational facility of ECOMETROPOLI (48,000 schoolchildren and 13,500 adults). In addition, the centre acts as a reference point for the Programme for the Recovery and Protection of Wildlife in Santa Coloma de Gramenet. This model has proved to be a worthwhile strategic educational tool, combining the parameters of biodiversity, protection of the forest and river ecosystems, knowledge of renewable energies and energy efficiency, safe and sustainable mobility and the re-greening of cities through urban horticulture and recovery of fauna. The experience of the Schools' Woodland Observatory has been replicated by other municipalities in the metropolitan area through



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micro-initiatives carried out by schoolchildren, teachers, educational groups of young people with adjustment difficulties and neighbourhood bodies.

## Innovative Initiative

1. Under the principle of mutual trust, lines of co-ordination and synergies must be established to develop projects that are initiated by the local authorities (who are closest to the population) and the financial and technical aspects which bring in other collaborating governmental bodies. 2. Local Agenda 21 is a good tool for sustainable development in the areas of the protection of the natural environment, the recovery of indigenous biodiversity and the environmental education of both the young and older generations. 3. Environmental assessment systems based on indicators for both the process and results are key elements in the cost-benefit analysis of environmental projects. 4. Local governments must learn to correct the mistakes arising from town planning and from unviable projects, particularly when they are brought to their attention by the general public. 5. Close collaboration with the community's civic and neighbourhood bodies prior to carrying out the initiatives, ensuring that proposals and suggestions are received, is key to the success of a project. 6. The viability of the projects can be ensured by undertaking low-cost initiatives, at the micro-urban and micro-environmental level, shaping the cumulative effect of actions at the local level within a global vision. 7. Unrealistic expectations should not be created among the community. The proposals, once they have been made and agreed, must be carried out. A consistent effort was made to avoid a feeling of frustration in the community and among the neighbourhood leaders, which can often be a cause of alienation between the authorities and the public. 8. Workshop Schools and Apprentice Training on environment and education for young people and, particularly women, as well as local employment schemes for the over-50s who are at risk of social exclusion are a good tool to improve the employability of those groups. 9. The commitments made by the organisation developing the project must be fulfilled in order to ensure mutual respect and pave the way for new actions based on that fulfilment. 10. We can restore natural spaces and biodiversity and re-green our cities through the cooperation and active participation of citizens in all age groups.

## Resources devoted to delivery

No. Title Source Author Publication Title Volume Number Date Page Number 1 PERI-URBAN AREAS PLAN habitat.aq.upm.es 2006 Edit 2 ECOMETROPOLI Environmental Education and Interpretation Centre <http://www.gramenet.cat/es/temas/territorio/ecometropoli/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ecometropoli> <https://twitter.com/ecometropoli?lang=es> Edit 3 PERI-URBAN FOREST PARK LA BASTIDA <http://www.gramenet.cat/scinfo/mes-info/article/dissabte-sinaugura-amb-una-festa-popular-el-parc-forestal-de-la-bastida-de-santa-coloma-de-gramen/> Edit 4 SCHOOLS' WOODLAND OBSERVATORY <http://www.gramenet.cat/scinfo/mes-info/article/el-mirador-del-bosquet-de-les-escoles-nou-espai-verd-a-la-serra-de-marina/>

## Conclusion

Santa Coloma de Gramenet subscribes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Of particular note is the commitment of the local authorities of Santa Coloma de Gramenet and the population as a whole to Sustainable Development Goal 15: To ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and curb the loss of biodiversity. Santa Coloma de Gramenet's Peri-Urban Restoration Plan is committed to the Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora or Habitats Directive, to the Spanish 2011-2017 Strategic Plan of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity and to the 2011-2020 Action Plan of Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biological Diversity applicable to the autonomous region of Catalonia, and is involved in strategies and guidelines at the international level. Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Council approved its Local Agenda 21 in 1999, setting out strategic lines for the conservation and recovery of biodiversity and environmental education in Santa Coloma de Gramenet. Of the 10 strategic objectives that have governed the environmental action plan since 1999, we can highlight a number that directly affect the conservation, preservation and recovery of the native biodiversity in general and of the fauna in particular. ·To preserve and enhance the municipality's natural spaces and its biodiversity. ·To establish strategies for the recovery of fauna that has disappeared and fight against invasive species. ·To improve environmental awareness, education and civic commitment. ·To develop and establish a facility of reference for the city, for environmental education, the recovery of biodiversity and the Llobregat river basin. Santa Coloma City Council is in the process of adopting the 2016 Climate Change Adaptation Plan and also the Green and Urban Biodiversity Plan (2016)