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# BUENAS PRÁCTICAS

## Actuaciones Cofinanciadas

Environmental restoration of the area Torre de la Vila and expansion of the Green Ring. ISUD STRATEGY CAPACI[U]TAT

Sant Boi de Llobregat City Council

**Programa Operativo  
Plurirregional de España**

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**Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional**

## **GOOD PRACTICE ISUD STRATEGY CAPACITAT CITY COUNCIL OF SANT BOI DE LLOBREGAT**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION OF THE TORRE DE LA VILA AREA AND EXPANSION OF THE GREEN RING**

The good practice has consisted of the **Environmental restoration of the area Torre de la Vila and expansion of the Green Ring**, with the creation of the Environmental Park and the expansion of the Ring. The project was part of the **operation BUFFER PARK**, of the Thematic Objective 6: Preserve and protect the environment and promote resource efficiency.

The city of Sant Boi de Llobregat is surrounded by a natural environment, of a forest, river and agricultural nature with different transition routes from the city. This system of relationship between the city and its environment, known as Anell Verd (Green Ring), develops the potential to do several uses, enhances the sustainable city strategy, as well as sustainable tourism. All of this has been described in the Specific Modification of the General Metropolitan Plan for the improvement of the network of public spaces in the Can Gavarrot mountain neighbourhoods, specifically and for this area of the action.

Completing the Green Ring has given coherence to the peri-urban area to unite the different forest, agricultural, river and urban systems, reinforcing the educational component of the natural path and attracting visitors.

The access point to the Sant Ramon mountain has been recovered, from the Can Gavarrot area, between the current sports facilities and Juventut street, demassifying the other accesses to the mountain. This green area had been, for years, a very degraded space in which uncontrolled discharges, improper and precarious uses occurred continuously.

This action has recovered a space disconnected from the city, with poor conservation and environmental damage; and also, it has guaranteed the access of the residents of this Camps Blancs-Casablanca sector to the natural environment, since until now there was no connectivity between the forest area and the urban area. With this access, the sustainable mobility of citizens in this sector has been favoured and it has been resolved as a biological corridor, through the creation of the Environmental Park of Torre de la Vila.

With this operation, 2.3 km of the Green Ring Natural Path have been marked: 1.77 km from the Hermitage of Sant Ramon to the newly created Environmental Park and 0.53 km between this Park and the urban area.

At the same time, the Masia de la Torre de la Vila, a building classified as being of cultural interest and which houses the Centre for Environmental Education and the Waste Study, has been

incorporated into the Environmental Park created and closes the route of the Green Ring, being now the starting point of its journey. This action encourages the attraction of visitors to enjoy a route through the natural heritage, which at the same time is well connected with the urban environment and its gastronomic and cultural offer.

The operation of the **Environmental restoration of the Torre de la Vila area and expansion of the Green Ring** (BUFFER PARK) has had a **cost of €2,000,000 and the ERDF co-financing aid has been of €1,000,000.**

It has great impact on the city of Sant Boi de Llobregat in general, and specifically in the Camps Blancs-Casablanca neighbourhood.

The criteria for the identification and selection of this Good Practice are the following:

## 1. THE ACTION HAS BEEN CONVENIENTLY DISSEMINATED AMONG THE BENEFICIARIES, POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Since its beginnings, there has been a wide dissemination of the BUFFER PARK operation, of which is a part the Environmental restoration of the Torre de la Vila area with the creation of the **Environmental Park of the Torre de la Vila area and expansion of the Green Ring**, in the Camps Blancs-Casablanca neighbourhood and throughout the city. Its execution has also been disseminated among the population.

Regarding the **regulatory communication**, the announcement of the contracting procedure and all the administrative documentation of the file have been published on the website of the Contractor's Profile of the Generalitat of Catalonia and on that of the DOGC (Official Bulletin of the Generalitat of Catalonia) in relation to the fact that the file is part of the Capaci[u]tat project and is 50% co-financed by the ERDF. During the intervention, the temporary sign of co-financing was placed.



The **Environmental Park signage** and green space with ERDF identification.

On the left, panels of 30 X 50 cm to describe specific areas, uses and activities to be done.



Welcome infographic at the entrance of the Environmental Park. General information about the Park, the Masia of Torre de la Vila, fauna and flora, benefits it provides. Measurement of 60 X 150 cm.

Signage of the Environmental Park. Location map and description of the areas of the Park, the different itineraries and uses. Measurement of 30 X 100 cm.

At the beginning of December the new App gamified Itineraries of the Environmental Park will start, forming part of the thematic itineraries that Sant Boi de Llobregat has in <https://inspira.santboi.cat/cat>.



Panel on the Environmental Park exhibited in the Fresh Tent of the 2022 edition of the Fira de la Puríssima, (Winter Festivity), which is held every year from December 7 to 9 in Sant Boi. The influx that this space received within the fairgrounds was 32,500 people. The theme was “A journey through Santboiana nature”. The last panel highlighted the

creation of the new Environmental Park co-financed with ERDF funds. View of all information panels.



General view from the entrance of the exhibition, and detail of the end of the tour.

In the next edition of 2023, the theme of the project exhibition part in the Fresh Tent will be entirely dedicated to the Environmental Park. This exhibition is currently in the preparation phase.



It has been communicated through the website EDUSI Sant Boi next to the emblem of the European Union and the motto “A way of making Europe” <https://edusi.santboi.cat/>.

It has also been disseminated in the **Viure Sant Boi municipal magazine**, published by the Sant Boi de Llobregat City Council, with a circulation of 34,000 copies, is distributed to all homes in the city and has its **electronic version** in the [City Hall website](#).

Specifically, reference is made to the action co-financed with ERDF in these **editions**:



[Viure Sant Boi in June 2017](#), pages 12 and 13, dedicated to the explanation of the strategy, exposing the actions of OT 6, and pointing them out on the map on page 12.



[Viure Sant Boi in June 2019](#), centre double page, describes the 2018-2022 projects co-financed with ERDF. In OT6, the Can Gavarrot Environmental Park (Torre de la Vila area) stands out.



[Viure Sant Boi in September 2019](#), centre double page, describes the 2018-2022 projects co-financed with ERDF. In OT6, the Can Gavarrot Environmental Park (Torre de la Vila area) stands out.



[Viure Sant Boi in September 2023](#), page 11, dedicated to the works made during the summer, the section Working for a more sustainable Sant Boi explains the works co-financed with ERDF, highlighting those of the Environmental Park.



[Press release](#), 12.22.22. Regarding the 2022 budget, it lists the large investments to be made, among them the Torre de la Vila Environmental Park.

In mid-December, the public presentation of the results of the action on the Torre de la Vila Environmental Park and the extension of the Green Ring to the Camps Blancs-Casablanca neighbourhood, and to the citizens of Sant Boi de Llobregat in general, will take place.

## 2. THE ACTION INCORPORATES INNOVATIVE ELEMENTS

The Environmental Park is developed on an area of 23,086 m<sup>2</sup>, on the border of Sant Boi de Llobregat with Viladecans, as an Urban and Transition Park to the forest environment, and to make it possible, 11,270.90 m<sup>2</sup> of land have been acquired. Thus, the action is in contact with the urban and industrial fabric, delimited by Joventut and Riera del Fonollar streets, and acts as a hinge between the urban environment and the gradually more naturalised area.

The innovative solutions applied are based on nature and can be replicated in the recovery of degraded, urban and transition environments, and in environmental education: recreational and educational itineraries on waste, water, energy and sustainable mobility, urban flora and fauna, the role of the natural environment and agriculture and the importance of a compact city model. These itineraries are interconnected with the Environmental Education Centre of the Masia de la Torre de la Vila integrated into the new Park.

As an innovative strategy, the reconstruction of a section of the Fonollar stream parallel to the historical layout with an educational purpose stands out; it has had a differentiated treatment due to its specific characteristics as a stream ecosystem. The environmental recovery of this stretch of stream has been made, both at a hydrological, ecological and landscape level. It comprises an area of 3,500 m<sup>2</sup> of a strip sloping parallel to the street, characterised by the presence of a double row of large tipuanas. The action accentuates the old route of the stream by planting 27 trees (*Populus alba*, *Platanus hispanica*, *Fraxinus angustifolia*, *Quercus ilex*) and more than 4,000 Mediterranean shrubs (*Crataegus monogyna*, *Ballota hispanica acutus*, *Salix purpurea*, *Dorycnium pentaphyllum*, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, etc.).

Much of this new planting is concentrated in five infiltration ponds (SUDS) excavated in the land, which promote sustainable drainage through nature-based solutions (NBS), increase the biodiversity of the Environmental Park, offer climate shelter spaces, and they provide a valuable educational element for visits by school groups. To achieve this recovery, it has been necessary to stabilise and protect the banks of the stream with hydroseeding and planting of appropriate riverside species, also eliminating non-native plant species.

To adapt to the connection of the urban plot with the Environmental Park, solutions based on nature have also been applied, especially in the context that Sant Boi is promoted as a green and resilient city. In this sense, the restoration of a very degraded ecosystem has been achieved by creating a green infrastructure at the street scale, increasing ecological and social connectivity for the city, transforming a road used for parking trucks and other vehicles, into a peaceful public space, which includes living areas, children's areas, bike lanes, etc. and a notable increase in urban vegetation in different strata (wooded, shrubby and herbaceous) that improves the provision of relevant ecosystem services such as microclimatic regulation or the mitigation of surface runoff using permeable pavements.

Within the Masia, 13 community urban gardening banks have been built, responding to a demand from citizenry, for their numerous benefits in terms of mental and physical health. They are also an opportunity for learning and environmental education.

Furthermore, since people are not only passive subjects in relation to the benefits of nature, but that we can also actively protect, manage and restore ecosystems to help address climate change, the projects that have been done for years at the Masia have been maintained. They are experimental environmental education proposals that improve biodiversity, such as: insect hotels, butterfly gardens, space for native butterflies, rain gardens and pollen stations.

### **3. THE RESULTS OBTAINED WITH IT ADAPT TO THE ESTABLISHED OBJECTIVES**

This action was designed to give coherence to the peri-urban area of the Camps Blancs - Casablanca sector, to be able to close the Green Ring of the city to unite the different systems, forestry, agricultural, river and urban, and reinforce the educational component of the natural path.

The main objective was the creation of an Environmental Park and green and leisure spaces with environmental themes focused on the preservation of green spaces as a strategy for adaptation to climate change.

This objective included integrating, into the Environmental Park, the Masia of Torre de la Vila, classified as being of cultural interest and fed by a native biomass boiler; make a new route of the Green Ring to the Hermitage of Sant Ramon, and the access connection from the urban area of Torre de la Vila.

The new Park has two differentiated parts in terms of its spatial formalisation and uses. The first includes the area of the Park with a more naturalised character. It extends from the Masia to the pine forest in the highest part of the plot, where the social and urban component has a reduced weight, giving way to the predominance of the environmental vector.

The second part includes the lower area of the plot and has a more urban definition and social use. It is home to the Masia de Torre de la Vila, which already housed the Environmental Education and Waste Study Centre of Sant Boi, where environmental education actions were done for schoolchildren in the municipality and the Metropolitan Area, and now centralises the didactic contents of the new Environmental Park. The school groups begin their visit to the Masia facilities and continue the educational experience by walking through the Environmental Park, in a circular route that ends again in the surroundings of the Masia.

The actions made in the section of the Green Ring have been signalling, following the signal model already used in previous sections, as well as adaptation of roads, clearing, and creating water outlets in slope areas.

Its educational component regarding respect for the natural and urban environment has also been expanded, with recreational-educational itineraries on water and energy management, with children's games to promote sustainability and respect for the environment. It is a reference space at the local and metropolitan level for sustainable management of green and forest spaces.

The Masia has become access control, a coordination space, and the engine of the Environmental Park, where reflection, educational, and dissemination activities promote sustainability, recycling and respect for the environment. Becoming part of the Green Ring route, it has reinforced its educational component and makes the entire route inevitably pass through the reference interpretation centres of each of these areas.

The action has achieved these results: new itineraries and activities have been formed in suburban areas of contact between densely populated areas and natural and forest areas of interest; a new direct access to the Sant Ramon mountain has been created from the Camps Blancs - Casablanca neighbourhood, for people and also fauna from the Masia area; and the metres of the Green Ring have been increased to close it.

A new metropolitan reference has been established in education and dissemination of environmental issues aimed at families with young children, which has led to an increase in the level of environmental awareness among citizens and improvement in the sustainable management of natural spaces for their adaptation to climate change.

#### **4. CONTRIBUTES TO THE RESOLUTION OF A REGIONAL PROBLEM OR WEAKNESS**

The green area object of this operation was a degraded space, affecting the environment, and was a "disconnected" end of the city with a poor image from a visual and landscape point of view. Until this action, there was no connectivity between the forest area and the urban area to be accessed by the residents of the area.

With the signalling of 2.3 km of the new Green Ring, of which 1.77 km from the Hermitage of Sant Ramon to the Park and 0.53 km between it and the urban area, the urban and natural spaces are connected, favouring sustainable mobility in this sector, both for people and for wildlife.

It also required restoration, with sustainability criteria, as a transition park between urban space and natural environment of the Green Zone in the Can Gavarrot sector, between the current sports equipment grounds and Juventut Street. This space has been converted, important to the city because it constitutes one of its limits, in a reference space at a local and metropolitan level, thanks to the Environmental Education Centre of the Masia de Torre de la Vila, which despite having quality spaces and materials with a large playful and pedagogical component, it was little known and underused as it was located on the periphery.

Now, with this Environmental Education Centre integrated into the new Park as part of the Green Ring route, it reinforces this educational component and allows the route to pass through all the reference interpretation centres in each area.

A delimitation has been established so that the Environmental Park has maximum functionality in the green infrastructure, both in the municipality and at the metropolitan level. And it has a double function, as a nearby park and as an urban park, so that it has created a transition from the more urban area, modifying the characteristics and vegetation as one advances in the Park itself, reaching the upper sections to be almost forest, due to its position in the territory, size and physical and environmental particularities.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the creation of a 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> recreational park where plant elements are incorporated into children's play to facilitate integrative leisure in a quality and safe space; and the section of the Fonollar stream parallel to the historic layout has been rebuilt for educational purposes, with an area of 3,500 m<sup>2</sup> of a strip sloping parallel to the street. And the action that has been taken on the perimeter elements of the Masia, to reinforce its heritage value and relevance as an architectural goal, enabling service access and landscaping.

## **5. IT HAS A HIGH DEGREE OF COVERAGE OF THE POPULATION TO WHICH IT IS AIMED**

This action has great coverage of the population of the Camps Blancs and Casablanca neighbourhood. With this new section of the Green Ring, the residents have access to the Sant Ramon mountain, through the Environmental Park, to the picnic area and sports facilities.

The Environmental Park and the new section of the Green Ring also benefit the rest of the citizens of Sant Boi de Llobregat, since it adds a new access to the mountain, which is usually very busy, and allows diversifying routes, decongesting the oldest ones.

Another beneficiary population is the school population, until now the Masia de Torre de la Vila received about 10,000 annual visits from the Sant Boi schools, now with the Environmental Park, these visits have increased and have a new circuit that did not exist.

Visitors to Sant Boi also benefit, especially those who did the Green Ring circuit, which they can complete. And with this new access from the Environmental Park, they access the Masia on their route and pass through the different systems: forestry, agricultural, river and urban, with their interpretation centres.

It has brought, to all sectors of the population, the benefits of improving the quality and connectivity of this space that forms one of the limits of the city and its fit with the nearby natural environment, the promotion of healthy and sustainable habits such as: mobility for movement through different neighbourhoods and in the forest environment, physical activity and leisure that respects nature, contemplation and enjoyment of the landscape, knowledge of the environment and environmental awareness.

A new space for sociability has been generated that encourages meetings to do activities and the development of community life between the people who live in the South District (Camps Blancs and Casablanca) and with the rest of the inhabitants of Sant Boi.

## **6. THE HORIZONTAL CRITERIA OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**

In this action, the general principle of equality between men and women has been taken into account and has been applied in all areas, above all in social life and in strengthening coexistence relationships. A gender perspective has been applied in the strategy process, with special attention to the existing gender gap. The communication strategy has also observed this principle, adopting a gender approach and using non-sexist language and images.

The principle of non-discrimination has continued to guarantee equal treatment among people. Although it has been an operation aimed at improving the entire population in general and especially in a neighbourhood, no individuals or groups have been discriminated against and accessibility criteria have been adopted in the action and in the facilities, as the new accesses to the Masia de la Torre de la Vila to

have routes accessible to people with reduced mobility, the design of the Park is subject to the ramp not exceeding 6%.

This operation essentially has sought sustainable development, through the implementation of transversal measures related to environmental protection, ecosystems and efficiency in the use of resources. It has contributed to greater efficiency in the consumption of natural resources, implementing nature-based solutions in mitigation and adaptation to climate change and promoting education and dissemination of environmental issues.

## **7. SYNERGIES WITH OTHER POLICIES OR PUBLIC INTERVENTION INSTRUMENTS**

The planning process of the action strategy itself has included technical and citizen participation. The Urban Green Master Plan, provisionally approved in 2019, has been followed, where studies are proposed to remodel the area.

This action is part of the City Strategy for Sant Boi 2030, approved by the municipal plenary session of April 2020, with 10 missions to be applied in 10 years, to become a “reference as a metropolitan, sustainable, healthy and cohesive and creator of new opportunities, especially for future generations.” The “Renaturalitzem Sant Boi” Strategy is currently being prepared, a green and blue infrastructure for the recovery of biodiversity and ecosystem services, of which it will be a part.

The BUFFER PARK operation is aligned with the [City Pact](#), which was approved in the Plenary Session on July 30, 2020, for a social and economic boost in Sant Boi. The Pacte de Ciutat has four Levers of Transformation as transversal axes in the policies of the coming years, the third being: the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the actions in the future.

It is also with the [Government plan 2019-2023 \(City Strategy 2030\)](#), in the area of City Transformation – being a unique and territorially cohesive city, integrated into the environment and with new infrastructures -, with these concrete actions: Advance in the integration, urbanisation and conditioning of urban sectors on the limits of the city, to consolidate a compact city model integrated with the environment. Finish defining and starting the construction of the Torre de la Vila Environmental Park through ERDF (EDUSI) funds, to transform the facade of the city and improve connectivity between the urban sectors that comprise it.

Finally, also follow the lines present in the [Urban Agenda Action Plan](#), a roadmap that will strategically guide municipal policies towards the SDGs. The document is linked to the Sant Boi 2030 City Strategy and aligned with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the urban agendas of Catalonia and Spain. It has three axes, the first: Territory and city model, with a Green and Integrated City, with the determined action: 02. Sant Boi breathes greener. Sant Boi integrated into the territory, and the specific actions: New connecting green spaces and ecological restoration of the urban green, expansion and improvement of urban trees; Urban gardens: therapeutic tool for mental health; Creation of the Torre de la Vila Environmental Park; Healthy and safe urban routes; Socio-environmental recovery of the local forest and river space.

In the same first axis, in Sustainable and resilient city, with the determined action 09. Resilient city, adaptation strategy to climate change, with this action: Deployment of SUDS (Sustainable urban drainage systems).

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