

Una manera de hacer Europa



BUENAS PRÁCTICAS

Actuaciones Cofinanciadas

Rehabilitation of the Botanical Park in Huerta Otea and establishment of a centre for environmental research. EDUSI TORMES+

Salamanca City Council

**Programa Operativo
Plurirregional de España**

Año 2022

Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional

The action plan entitled “Rehabilitation of the Botanical Park in Huerta Otea and establishment of a centre for environmental research” undertaken in the year 2023 listed as an example of Good Practice.

The action plan entitled the Huerta Otea Botanical Park is an integrated intervention of the EDUSI TORMES+ as it has the following characteristics:

- Functional interrelation between the Green Deal’s main paradigms as an initiative linking the city’s botanical biodiversity with the development of renewable energies. Thus, Salamanca is decidedly adding its voice to the energy transition processes through the development of a project that connects the creation of an Integrated Environmental Centre for renewable energies with the reconversion and improvement of the Huerta Otea Botanical Park.
- Alongside this dual functionality, the initiative involves the development of a benchmark in terms of research, training, disclosure, and enhancement of renewable energies, meaning that citizens can discover and experience energy efficiency and saving habits, thereby contributing to a more sustainable Salamanca.
- Likewise, the project integrates residents’ requests to modernise the Huerta Otea Botanical Park, continuing the reform undertaken in the children’s play area, showing a strong involvement and high level of citizen participation.
- Finally, the project will be expected to outlast the implementation of EDUSI TORMES+, with a clear vocation for future survival and spatial projection conceived from the local nature of the Trastormes neighbourhood, as its sphere of influence is felt on a city-wide level.

This engagement forms part of a series of operations linked to the development and fostering of natural heritage in the urban areas falling within the scope of the EDUSI TORMES+ project. This Botanical Park, covering almost nine hectares running along a kilometre of riverbank, is one of the city’s most biodiverse spaces in terms of flora and fauna. Following its creation in 2000 as a riverside space for public use, an overhaul was required by integrating sustainable and energy-efficient solutions, while also recovering the educational and training setting in which it was conceived.



Thus, the existing building has been fitted out as an environmental classroom for renewable energies and their applications. Specifically, a biomass boiler room has been equipped with educational and explanatory panels detailing its impact on the environment. A graphic display has also been created with several explanatory panels that introduce visitors to renewable energies, their use, and the benefits they bring to the environment. Likewise, common elements have been recreated in all the homes, where visitors can view firsthand the actual consumption of electrical appliances and water consumption while being able to carry out different practical exercises that make visitors reflect on the use of energy and the reality of domestic consumption.

The building has a photovoltaic solar energy contribution for the electricity supply of the park and an example of thermal solar energy with the installation of a parabolic solar convector and a second flat one featuring a drainage system.

In turn, the improvement of the Huerta Otea Botanical Park includes several biodiversity actions, favouring the introduction of new plant and animal species. To this end, small insect hotels have been created, nesting boxes for birds have been installed, a sandy slope has been created for sappers, and pergolas and gabion fences and ponds with aquatic vegetation have been installed, among other actions.

The total cost of the operation amounts to 1,145,124.49€ (1,137,624.49€ + 7,500.00€ communication actions), with the invested **eligible cost** standing at **1,087,500.00€**, with an ERDF grant of 50% (543,750.00€)



Situation pre and post reforms

1. CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION AS GOOD PRACTICES

1.1. DISCLOSURE OF THE ERDF'S INVOLVEMENT

The role played by the ERDF in the action plan has been properly disclosed amongst the actual and potential beneficiaries, as well as the general public through diverse publicity elements. Thus, compliance with the obligations in terms of disclosure set forth in the Regulations have been met through citizens being informed via billboards, plates, and informative videos.

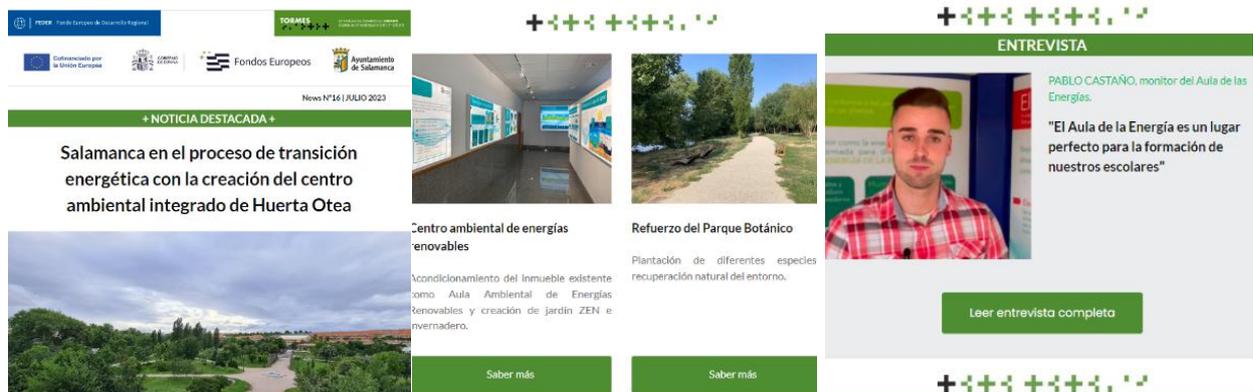


Furthermore, information has been published both on the Council’s website (www.aytosalamanca.es), as well as on that of EDUSI (www.mastormessalamanca.es) and also on the Salamanca Green Infrastructure Strategy Web (www.saviasalamanca.com).



With regard to communication, the Integrated Environmental Centre in Huerta Otea has been welcomed enthusiastically by residents thanks to the different communications action plans performed. In this way, the project has been properly announced amongst the actual and potential beneficiaries, as well as the general public through newsletters, interviews, mailings, informative brochures, live and online events, exhibitions, posting of content on social networking sites with a local and regional outreach in both the written and online press.

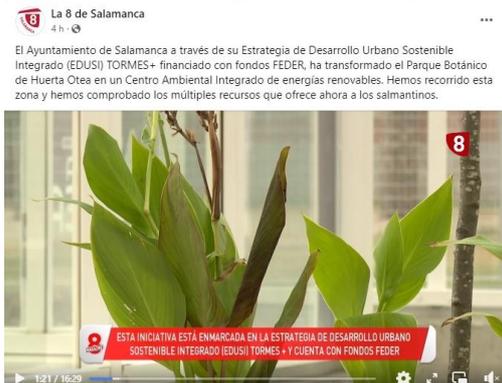
- NEWSLETTERS AND INTERVIEWS posted on digital media and available on the web.



- BROCHURE AND VIDEOS_ [Microvideo](#) posted on social networking sites and mass mailing of the informative brochure.



- TELEVISION. Programme [8 of CyLTV](#), broadcast on 20 October 2023.



- MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES_ News Item in the daily “La Gaceta” 15/10/2023 as well as other initiatives contained in the Communication Plan.





- **ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS WITH THE CITIZENS_** On 9 June an event was held, attended by more than 500 people, with the aim of publicising the operation and characteristics of the new Integrated Centre; as well as to raise awareness and sensitise citizens about their involvement in the fight against climate change and environmental protection.



Alongside the foregoing, to publicise the project, explain its scope and EU community participation through the ERDF funds, diverse workshops were held such as the Citizens' Participation Committee (direct and potential beneficiaries), and EDUSI TORMES+ exhibitions held in the street, touring different neighbourhoods of the city (beneficiaries and general public).



2. INTEGRATION OF GROUND-BREAKING ELEMENTS

The innovative nature of the actions undertaken is framed within the following elements:

1. The Huerta Otea Botanical Park and the Integrated Environmental Centre for Renewable Energies entail **unique urban-environmental piece**, integrating in the same space a large green area featuring more than sixty tree species, some of these very rare, with a training and educational centre for schools and citizens on renewable energies and the promotion of good domestic practices aimed at efficiency and energy saving.
2. The Botanical Park constitutes a **large green infrastructure as an urban strategy for adapting to climate change**, given its potential for absorbing greenhouse gases, as it is one of the largest 'green lungs' of the city with 90,000 m². Conversely, the design criteria defined for this project are also innovative, based on indigenous, sustainable, low-maintenance and environmentally friendly solutions, with the use of photovoltaic solar energy to supply electricity to the park and thermal solar energy with the installation of a parabolic solar convector and a flat solar convector including a drainage system.
3. The **botanical-energy complex** is located on the north bank of the great Tormes River area, acting as a linking node between the Salas Bajas Urban Gardens and the Tormes Green Corridors in Huerta Otea and El Marín. These three large green infrastructure operations give way to a fluvial continuum of more than forty hectares on both banks of the river, with the aim of building a large urban forest in the future.



4. The Tormes River, as it passes through Huerta Otea, consists of **highly natural region**, with a stroll along a clay walkway that fits in perfectly with the aesthetics of the place. It is worthwhile stressing the importance of this botanical garden in the city, as it is an enclave that links the eastern part of the riverbank with El Marín park. The whole river is thus formed in a **continuous corridor** spanning more than thirteen kilometres in length, from the pedestrian footbridge that links the city with the municipality of Santa Marta de Tormes to the Puente de la Salud, as far as the municipality of Villamayor de Armuña. The Huerta Otea Botanical Park is also the starting point or axis of environmental, scenic, and cultural itineraries for walking or cycling, which highlight the recovery carried out throughout the EDUSI TORMES+ action area and whose development is also part of the projects financed with ERDF funds.
5. To summarise, the intervention is a first-rate example of the application, on the urban scale of a medium-sized city, of the principles of the **Green Deal**, with a functional integration of the paradigms of the Energy Transition with those that develop the Green, sustainable and resilient Transition of this river space.

3. SUITABILITY OF RESULTS WITH THE AIMS SET FORTH

This intervention's main aim is grounded on the promotion and enhancement of the natural heritage of the banks of the Tormes River in the urban area of the city of Salamanca. In this regard, the development of the

Huerta Otea Botanical Park and the Integrated Environmental Centre for Renewable Energies is one of the main actions in this area within the scope of the EDUSI TORMES+, placing the onus on the natural heritage at the service of the neighbourhoods of the Tormes as a sustainable tool for urban transformation, while at the same time providing a renewed leisure programme in the municipality.

The development of this action, aside from the symbiosis between biodiversity/alternative energies, guarantees the permeability of the city towards the river, through green paths and recreational spaces interconnecting the Orchards operation, the Huerta Otea Park, and the Green Corridors operation.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO SOLVING ISSUES OR WEAKNESSES DETECTED IN THE TERRITORIAL SCOPE OF IMPLEMENTATION

The action plan carried out redefines the principles of urban sustainability of the physical space in which the Botanical Park and the Integrated Renewable Energy Centre are located (integration of biodiversity/energy efficiency, improved permeability between the natural heritage, the river and the city, etc.), rearranging and transforming the space into a tool geared towards fostering social and economic improvement for the Trastormes neighbourhoods through the generation of new leisure-recreational training/publication flows that will foreseeably encourage new associated economic dynamics.

The operation contributes to include the promotion of the natural river space by integrating it into the municipal strategy to combat climate change (resource for adaptation) and sustainability (integration of energy saving and efficiency principles), forming part of the network that comprises the city's Green Infrastructure.

5. DEGREE OF COVERAGE

The degree of coverage of this action is high, given its strategic nature, as it reaches all the residents of the neighbourhoods of Salamanca included in the EDUSI TORMES+ action area, in terms of the indirect effects pursued with the operation and, on the other hand, the citizens of Salamanca (143,954 according to data from the Municipal Register on 1 January 2023) who will be able to enjoy this great green lung, as well as the associated educational and informative activities.



6. CONSIDERATION OF THE HORIZONTAL CRITERIA OF EQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS NON-DISCRIMINATION, ALONG WITH SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Horizontal principles have been included among the SELECTION CRITERIA for OPERATIONS in all the Strategic Aims set forth in the EDUSI TORMES+ project, the latter being a **mandatory factor** for the selected operations.

In the operation of Huerta Otea, these criteria have been guaranteed, on the one hand, through the possibility of using and enjoying the facilities and spaces regardless of gender or social condition and, on the other hand, through the design of the spaces and facilities of the Environmental Centre, which guarantee universal accessibility to them. In this way, equality and non-discrimination is guaranteed in the use and access, for reasons of sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or convictions, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

With regard to sustainability, the operation has been developed from the strategic perspective of promoting sustainability not only within the scope of the EDUSI but also in the municipality of Salamanca as a whole.

7. SYNERGIES WITH OTHER POLICIES OR PUBLIC INTERVENTION INSTRUMENTS

The Huerta Otea Integrated Environmental Centre operation is linked to the Plan for the Protection of Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity (PEPIVB) and the Municipal Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (EMACCSA); both instruments drafted within the framework of the European INTERREG Project for Cross-Border Cooperation Green Cities CENCYL for the period 2014- 2020.

Likewise, the development of ecological botanical biodiversity and the dissemination processes of energy saving and efficiency in the city of Salamanca are wholly aligned with ACTION PLAN OF THE SALAMANCA URBAN AGENDA (2030 Horizon), recently approved by the City Council as a pilot project within the PRTR RECOVERY, TRANSFORMATION and RESILIENCE PLAN implementing NEXT GENERATION EU funds.

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