

Una manera de hacer Europa



BUENAS PRÁCTICAS

Actuaciones Cofinanciadas

Recovery of degraded green areas in Paseo de las Acacias for subsequent use by citizens

Águilas City Council

**Programa Operativo
Plurirregional de España**

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Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional

GOOD PRACTICE REPORT, TOWN COUNCIL OF ÁGUILAS: RECOVERY OF DEGRADED GREEN AREAS IN PASEO DE LAS ACACIAS FOR SUBSEQUENT USE BY CITIZENS.

The Town Council of Águilas presents the following best practice entitled: "Recovery of degraded green areas in Paseo de las Acacias for subsequent use by the public".

The intervention consists in the development of a new green area comprising almost three hectares of a disused site next to Paseo de las Acacias. This site used to be the location of an old livestock farm, the ruins of which degraded the area and were dangerous. The creation of this large park serves as a transition zone between the urban and rural areas, as it is located on the semi-built-up edge of the city.

La intervención incluye, entre otros, recorridos peatonales (para andar o correr) y bicicleta, una pista polivalente de deportes, un escenario para eventos, pantalla de cine de verano, juegos infantiles, área de parkour, explanadas para mercadillos o prácticas de ejercicios colectivos bajo un bosque de moreras y un área de picnic bajo unos almendros. Asimismo, se han creado tres miradores desde el que se pueden ver lugares tan emblemáticos de la localidad como la Chimenea de la Loma, la Torre de las Palomas y el Castillo San Juan de las Águilas.

The project includes, among others, pedestrian routes (for walking or running) and bicycle paths, a multi-purpose sports track, a stage for events, a summer cinema screen, children's games, a parkour area, esplanades for street markets or group exercises under a mulberry tree forest and a picnic area under some almond trees. Three viewpoints have also been created from which you can see emblematic places of the town such as Chimenea de la Loma, Torre de las Palomas and Castillo San Juan de las Águilas.



Figure 1. Infographics of the Acacias Park

The space is treated as a wooded park with a predominance of trees, although it can be used for different purposes at the service of the public, compatible with its nature. The creation of pedestrian and cycle routes is an important request by the neighbourhood of the area. It also provides the population with a space for open-air events, which reinforces the unique identity of the area, as well as sports facilities, children's playgrounds, etc. An area of the park is compatible

with an eventual dissuasive car park to accommodate the influx of visitors' vehicles that usually occurs on the occasion of local festivals.

This operation is included within the thematic objective six (TO 6 Protect the environment and promote resource efficiency) in its action line five (AL 05 Sustainable environment).

It is being developed within the framework of the Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development Strategy (EDUSI in Spanish) Sustainable Águilas, through the Pluri-regional Operational Programme of Spain 2014 - 2020 with a total budget of 485,661.83 € and the **co-financing of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is 388,529.47 €.**

WHY THIS ACTION IS CONSIDERED A GOOD PRACTICE

1. The action has been adequately disseminated to beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and the general public.

The dissemination done for the intervention to create a green forest area next to the Acacias promenade has been extensive among the beneficiaries and has complied with the requirements of the approved communication study.

In relation to the **regulatory communication**, it has been published in the contracting profile of the Town Hall within the State Contracting Platform and in the list of co-financed contracts that are published periodically on the *EDUSI* website, that the actions are part of the EDUSI and are co-financed by the ERDF at 80% within the Multi-regional Operational Programme of Spain 2014-2020. Minor contracts have also been published in the corresponding section of the Águilas Town Council website.

Contracting platform: <https://acortar.link/IgqS8p>
EDUSI Web: <https://acortar.link/A38Gu1>
Town Council Web: <https://acortar.link/6JtMOU>

During the execution of the works, a **temporary sign** was installed in order to highlight the key role of the ERDF funds for the execution of the project. At the finalisation of the works, a **permanent plaque** was also placed at the beginning of the promenade.



Figure 2. Temporary construction site sign



Figure 1. Permanent plaque

Several publications have been made on the EDUSI website, as well as through social networks:

Eidusaguilas.es: <https://acortar.link/jZ2E17>
Facebook: <https://acortar.link/lmjbiz>
<https://acortar.link/46AD6a>
You tube: <https://acortar.link/ctMpS9>

Regarding **complementary communication**, the traditional and digital media have echoed the developments of the action, in the **press** that actions are related to the Strategy for Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development Águilas SOSTenible, highlighting the co-financing by the European Regional Development Fund ERDF at 80%.

La Verdad: <https://acortar.link/QJtqXR>
<https://acortar.link/YJ9o1Z>
La Opinión: <https://acortar.link/Rkte9q>
Murcia.com: <https://acortar.link/lApR7P>
<https://acortar.link/SMMnp6>
La actualidad: <https://acortar.link/WOcPkU>

Likewise, the Town Council's press office has sent out several advertising spots that have had a subsequent impact on the **radio**, specifically on the following radio station:

Águilas radio 91.4 FM: <https://acortar.link/COoRIp>

In addition to that, on 3rd March 2023, an **inauguration event** was held with the citizens, which was attended by more than half a thousand people, mostly families with children. Numerous activities were organised for the occasion: inflatable mats, face painting, bracelet and balloon workshop, popcorn and candyfloss. There was also a theatrical performance 'El regalo de la abuela' (Grandma's gift), performed by the company Imagine Teatro y Ocio, which managed to make both young and old laugh.



Figure 4. Event stage and stand



Figure 5. Participants at the event

In addition, **merchandising** was given away to the attendees. That was a kit with a backpack, a set of coloured pencils and a pin.



Figure 6. Merchandising distributed



Figure 7. Theatre performance

In short, an intense dissemination of the action has been carried out, reflecting the fact that it has been co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund ERDF at 80%, within the framework of the Spanish Multi-regional Operational Programme (POPE, in Spanish) 2014-2020.

2. The action incorporates innovative elements

Águilas is among the municipalities in the Region of Murcia that integrate green infrastructure into local urban planning. This project has been designed in line with this trend and will create a large green lung in the town, which is innovative for its forestry character, the use of natural materials for the furniture, its soft paving and the incorporation of xeriscaping criteria for a more sustainable maintenance.

The plot where this park is located was degraded: it had a half-ruined industrial building, deteriorated concrete paving, rubble and scrubland. The intervention has regenerated the area, making it possible to plant species and increase the amount of draining soils.

A botanical circuit has been created with different species native to Águilas and the Region of Murcia, such as mulberry trees, carob trees, fig trees, pine trees, mastic trees, etc. These species are listed in the Catalogue of Singular Trees and Groves of the Municipality of Águilas.



Figure 8. Photo of planted native species: Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*).

The Consistory's proposal implements a new model of urban tree management based on the principles of modern arboriculture, which reduces water and pruning costs, freeing up the rest of the budget for new plantations, maintenance, and to ensure plant health.

In addition, specialised technical staff have been recruited to design the parkour space.

3. Adequacy of the results obtained to the established objectives.

The main objective of this action is to increase the green coverage of the city, in order to reduce temperatures and, consequently, the impact of global¹ warming in the municipality. This will provide an infrastructure capable of improving Águilas' adaptation to climate change, as indicated in the objectives of its *Climate and Sustainable Energy Action Plan* (SECAP), which was approved by the Consistory in 2018.

In this respect, it is worth noting that the project studies the species of trees and chooses which ones are best adapted to the climate of Águilas, highlighting the biodiversity and richness of the native Mediterranean vegetation, which will undoubtedly buffer the effects of climate change.

Likewise, a neglected and undeveloped site will be recovered and a naturalised environment will be created, very close to the urbanised centre, for the enjoyment of the people of Águilas and its visitors. New recreational areas, pedestrian & cycle routes as well as sports areas will be created to enhance the recreational use of this venue. In addition, this intervention will make it possible to remove an old abandoned livestock facility and replace it with a natural infrastructure.

¹ The Sustainability Observatory and according to historical data recorded by meteorological stations, the average temperature in Spanish cities has risen gradually over the last thirty years, with increases of more than 2°C even being recorded over the last fifty years. www.observatoriosostenibilidad.com

Finally, this green lung not only contributes to the aesthetic improvement of the municipality, but also to the well-being and quality of life of the population, as it improves the physical and mental health of citizens, thus helping to create safer, less conflictive and more habitable cities.

4. Contribution to a problem solving or weakness detected in the territorial area of implementation.

The intervention meets a constant demand from the citizens of the municipality who have been asking for the creation of large green areas in the town centre. In recent years, they have been asking for a green area that could allow citizens to run, walk, cycle and rollerblade freely and enjoy large trees, gardens as well as children's play areas.

In addition, the City Town identified as one of the municipality's major weaknesses the scarcity of urban green areas and the low rate of plant biodiversity of urban trees.

Before the intervention, the municipality had a disused site covered with weeds and rubble, with no trees and little environmental, functional or landscape value.

After the intervention, this degraded space was recovered and the municipality was provided with more tree cover, planted with mulberry and almond trees, among others. These species also entail reduced management costs, as a drip irrigation system is being established, which is supplied with water from the municipal wastewater treatment plant.



Figure 9. Space before the intervention



Figure 10. Park after intervention

In addition to beautifying the municipality, another of the objectives of this project is to connect the expansion areas of Águilas with the urban centre.

5. High degree of coverage for the target population.

The benefits in terms of biodiversity are very significant for the general public, as this green area is located in an urban area.

On the one hand, the children's population is particularly benefited, as they have more urban recreation areas, with the increase in gardens, parks and trees. Likewise, people who enjoy outdoor sports now have new facilities at their disposal, such as a multi-purpose sports track, running and cycling routes and a parkour area.

People with respiratory illnesses also benefit, improving their quality of life and boosting their immune system. The benefits can also be quantified in terms of savings for public health.

In short, the action has a great impact for the entire population, as well as for its tourists, who have another point of interest to visit the municipality.

6. Consideration of the horizontal criteria of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as well as social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

This action has taken into account the horizontal criteria of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, generating green spaces that have an impact on the overall physical and mental health of all inhabitants.

In terms of social responsibility, the project incorporates a recreational area, which improves the quality of life of the citizens, as well as having an informative and pedagogical vision open to the public, which can be enjoyed by schools. It will be possible to organise educational activities that increase learning about the contribution of vegetation to the urban ecosystem and promote environmental awareness.

In addition, a stage for events, a summer cinema screen, picnic area and esplanades for markets will also be created, which will undoubtedly be a meeting point for the society of Águilas, contributing to its social cohesion.

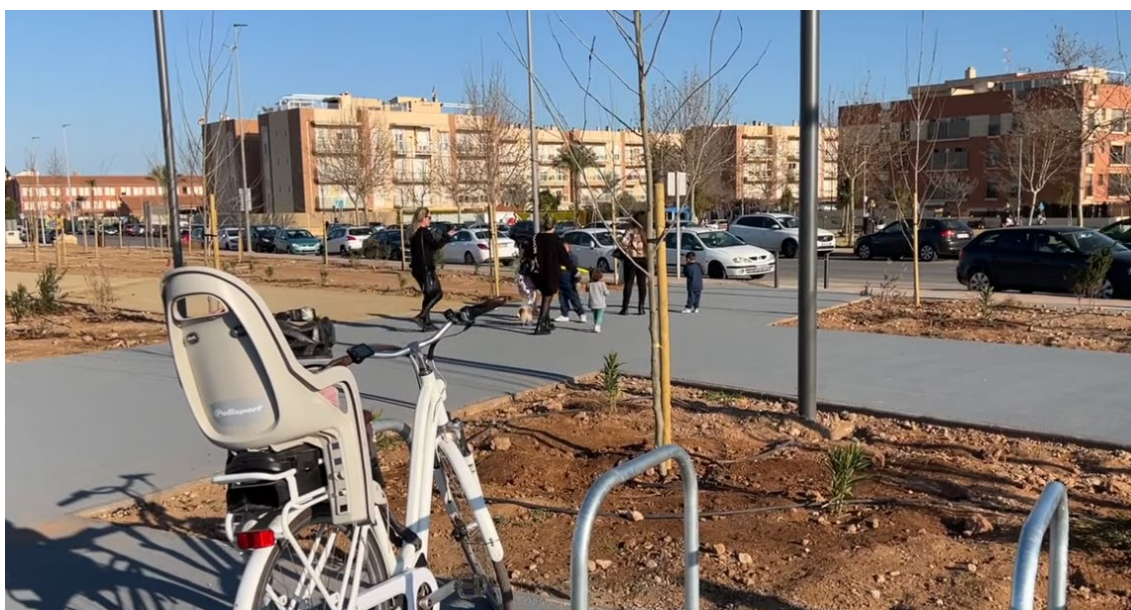


Figure 2. Entrance to the green area

Likewise, the quantity and quality of green areas within reach of the population reduces social and economic inequalities and minimises the spatial segregation of disadvantaged groups living in the most vulnerable areas of the municipality.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that environmental sustainability criteria have been considered by the municipality; by creating a green forest area, which is a great green lung in the town and by installing a drip irrigation system in the wooded area, which is fed by water from the municipal wastewater treatment plant.

7. Synergies with other public policies or instruments of public intervention.

This intervention is in line with the Spanish and European Urban Agendas, the Spanish Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

In addition, it establishes an integrated approach to naturalise the city and improve the urban ecosystem, which creates synergies with other interventions of the same thematic objective,

within the EDUSI Águilas SOSTenible, such as Moncada i Reixac square or Gutiérrez Mellado square.



Figure 12. Recreation of the intervention in Mocada i Reixac square

The intervention for the improvement of the square of Moncada i Reixac aims to increase the number of trees by planting native species, solve accessibility problems, eliminate non-draining paving and renovate the equipment to make it a meeting place for young people. It follows the philosophy of this good practice and expands it to the urban centre of Águilas.



Figure 13. Infographic of the Gutiérrez Mellado square remodelling project.

On the other hand, the remodelling of the Gutiérrez Mellado square aims to increase the area available to the public, eliminating fences and obstacles. It also adds more trees, generating shade, and more draining surface. Its aim is to become an area of high occupancy for families.

Both actions have been financed 80% by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), through the EDUSI Águilas SOSTenible.

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