

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# bultzatu 2050



# Presentation of the Bultzatu 2050 Urban Agenda

The Basque Country is one of the most heavily urbanised European regions. According to EUSTAT figures, only 2% of the Basque population lives in municipalities with less than 2,000 inhabitants, which could be classified as rural.

We have the second highest population density in Spain, after the Community of Madrid. The three main metropolitan areas of the Basque Country are home to 1.55 million people, meaning that 71,56% of the Basque population is concentrated in these three areas. Therefore, the Basque Country is an eminently urban region, but with an uneven distribution of land, providing the backbone for rural and urban areas that complement one another.

The Bultzatu 2050 Urban Agenda for the Basque Country is an effort to systematise and provide strategic direction and consistency in public policies aimed at improving the potential of the Basque region, to offer opportunities for economic growth, sustainability and social cohesion.

It has been prepared through an exercise of analysis, forward planning and consultation, culminating in the approval of this living document. It forms an inspirational and strategic plan, capable of guiding the

long-term thinking of the Basque Government regarding the region's urban situation, maintaining continuous dialogue with the relevant actors and stakeholders in its sustainable development.

The Bultzatu 2050 Urban Agenda for the Basque Country is not just yet another plan. It designs and maps out the preliminary land use and sector planning that is outlined in the new Land Use Planning Guidelines (DOTs) and it is framed within the international and European context and the framework for implementing the Basque Country 2030 Agenda.

Our country, its institutions and all of its citizens still have a long way to go before we reach the end of that thirty-year time frame that we have set. A period of time during which a new economic framework will undoubtedly emerge, along with new approaches to overcome the future challenges that are now in our present. Against this backdrop, mobility will play a vital role in the structuring of more user-friendly, resilient and high-tech cities, to overcome urban challenges.

The housing model will also be determined by demographic and cultural changes. It will become increasingly common for health technologies to be incorporated into housing and we will move towards shared living models. Therefore, the traditional housing model will have to be made more flexible and we will need to promote the redevelopment of existing housing within a context of comprehensive urban regeneration.

On that date we will have adopted measures to mitigate and adapt to the risks posed by climate change, moving towards the decarbonisation of the economy and, during that transition, preventing the risk of energy exclusion, among other undesirable social effects.

To reach that not-to-distant future will require a huge collective effort. We need clear policy commitments, investment, public/private partnerships and to combine freedom of action with public administration. This is all outlined in the Bultzatu 2050 Urban Agenda for the Basque Country that we are presenting here today.



**Iñaki Arriola**  
Minister for the Environment,  
Land Use Planning and  
Housing

# What is Bultzatu 2050?

For the first time in history, humans are more urban than rural. Since the start of this century, over half of the world's population has lived in cities, representing a significant shift in how we view our relationship with our planet. This landmark, which marks the start of what is known as the urban age, was reached in the European Union in the 20th century, with this being the most heavily urbanised continent.

Against this backdrop, the Bultzatu 2050 Urban Agenda for the Basque Country is an effort to systematise and provide strategic direction and consistency in public policies aimed at improving the potential of the Basque Country's area, to offer opportunities for economic growth, sustainability and social cohesion.

It has been prepared on the basis of an inspirational and strategic exercise of analysis, forward planning and consultation that has guided the long-term thinking of the Basque Government regarding the region's urban situation, maintaining continuous dialogue with the relevant actors and stakeholders.

Bultzatu 2050 is not just yet another plan. It designs and maps out the preliminary planning exercises and centres them on the challenges and potential of the urban area in the Basque Country, offering a reference framework for the urban and local policies of the region as a whole, at Basque Government, Provincial Council and Municipality levels.

Aligned with the objectives set by UN-Habitat and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 11, Bultzatu 2050 has committed to a specific city model that is sustainable, socially cohesive, based on high-quality urban planning. It also establishes a framework for policy consistency between the various departments of the Basque Government, in terms of the urban impact that those measures have on the region.



## Advisory Board Meetings

Academy  
Private actors  
Administration



## Social Engagement Workshop

Citizens' organisations  
Experts



## Government Workshops

Municipalities  
Provincial Councils  
Basque Parliament

**bultzatu**  
2050



# Bultzatu 2050 built on foundations

The development of Bultzatu 2050 is not starting from square one in the Basque Country: the Basque Government has developed its own framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda and a long-term regional planning procedure, and these are part of the regulatory and policy basis upon which the Urban Agenda is being developed. The aim of the Urban Agenda is to coordinate the promotion of the Basque Country with international efforts, thus helping to fulfil the SDGs.

Thus, the Bultzatu 2050-Urban Agenda for the Basque Country is aligned with the Basque Government's strategies and, above all, with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Basque Country 2030 Agenda, so the targets and management indicators established help to ensure the complementarity and future approach that the Basque Country wants to establish for 2030.



## Broad reference framework

- 2030 Agenda
- New Urban Agenda
- Urban Agenda for the EU
- Urban Agenda for Spain
- Other instruments:
  - Covenant of Mayors
  - Chefchaouen Declaration

## Basque reference framework

- Land Use Planning Guidelines
- Basque Country 2030 Agenda
- Basque Declaration
- Udalsarea 2030
- Klima 2050

## Framework for policy consistency

- Economy and innovation:
  - 10 plans and strategies
- Social inclusion and resilience:
  - 16 plans and strategies
- Environmental sustainability:
  - 11 plans and strategies
- Governance:
  - 2 initiatives

# An urban context with specific characteristics

The Basque Country is an eminently urban region and one of the most densely populated in the whole country. Over 75% of the population of the Basque Country lives in the three large urban areas and more than 78% of the population lives in municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

The Basque territory takes the form of a **polycentric urban region**, where three metropolitan areas exist alongside a network of intermediate towns and cities with **strong links to the rural and natural environment**, which retain their own structures and identities and whose interrelations are one of the hallmarks of the Basque Country. To understand the urban Basque Country it is necessary to understand its link with rural areas, with the natural capital that surrounds it and intersects with the urban framework, its network of natural areas and the presence of infrastructures that connect these diverse environments.

This polycentric urban region, which culturally forms the Euskal Hiria (Basque City), establishes a reference framework with a strong shared identity in social, business and civic matters, with multi-level governance that hinges on a framework of cooperation and coordination that is based on consensus between the different administrative levels, made possible through dynamic municipalities, provincial councils and the Basque government.

Due to its specific nature as an urban-rural-natural continuum, the Basque Country has highly developed green territory and infrastructures. Similarly, although it may appear that the Basque Country is the region in southern Europe where climate change will have the smallest impact and the consumption of water and other resources is not applying excessive pressure on its basin water supplies despite the importance of industry to its economy, it should be noted that the impact of climate change is imbalanced, with significant vulnerability in coastal areas, where 70% of the population lives.

Furthermore, the energy mix continues to be overdependent on non-renewable energies and, due to its orography and land distribution, private cars are still being used extensively, with over 50% of commutes being completed using this mode of transport.



# Facing the strategic challenges up to 2050



The future of the planet is urban: since 2008, over half of the population has lived in towns and cities and the economic and social effects of this are felt by humankind as a whole. The aim of the Bultzatu 2050 Urban Agenda for the Basque Country is not only to improve the Basque Country's city model, but also to help fulfil the goals established in the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations through the provision of global public goods. For this purpose, it is necessary to meet the major challenges that cities will have to face in the future.

Environmentally, the cities are facing a number of challenges: cities generate over 70% of all greenhouse gases, so their transition to carbon-neutral economies by 2050, as defined in the European Union's strategy, has become one of the key factors in their redesign and management. But it is not the only one: the management of natural resources and the processing and elimination of waste are a new priority for the protection of urban ecosystems. Therefore, it is essential to consider the urban city model that is being proposed and the public policies that will make it possible.

In addition to the environmental challenges, significant social challenges are to be faced: demographic changes, the growing tendency towards inequality and the risk of spatial segregation in cities call into question the ability of cities to offer the necessary resources to live a civic life with an abundance of rights, in particular with regard to access to housing.

The growing trend of international mobility among people will also affect cities, which will have to offer an environment of diversity and acceptance in a world where competition for talent and skilled workers will become one of the most pronounced trends in the future.

As places where much of the economic power is concentrated, cities are also facing significant challenges in this regard. The threat of periods of economic growth without job creation, the reconfiguration of the global value chains and the need to be inserted into those value chains, the contradiction between economies of scale that tend to concentrate economic activity in specific places and the need to maintain an economic system based on proximity are some of the main challenges that cities will have to face.

Finally, the emergence of new technologies, the data economy boom, the automation of jobs and the creation of new business models present important opportunities to maintain and promote innovative, creative and technologically advanced cities in which the citizens are not left behind.

Despite its specific characteristics, the Basque Country will not be immune to the major transformations that are unfolding, which will lead to a number of stresses which, in the context of the Basque Country's cities and urban areas, will pose a set of strategic challenges, such as translating these macro trends to the context of cities and urban areas in the Basque Country:

- Challenges related to **social cohesion**: how to ensure diversity and combat inequality.
- Challenges in **relations of production** and consumption: how to build a resilient and dynamic economic framework that is open to new economic realities.
- Challenges related to the **urban planning model**: how to ensure that the different networks that make up our city are compatible and improve their interrelationship with the rural and natural environment through a new configuration and use of public spaces and a new form of mobility.
- Challenges in the **governance of cities**, enhancing our strong institutional and social framework, taking advantage of the data revolution and proposing new indicators to measure our socioeconomic progress.

# Strategic priorities for the right to the city

Based on these challenges, the main aim of the Bultzatu 2050 Urban Agenda for the Basque Country is to **ensure that the conditions are in place to exercise the right to the city within a context of economic, social, environmental and technological transition.**

**The right to the city**, such as the right to decent housing, to a healthy neighbourhood equipped with basic services and socially valued, to being linked to the city as a whole and to mobility within it, to access to business opportunities, employment and training and to social inclusion, participation and political and legal equality for all inhabitants.

Exercising this *right to the city* means adapting, redesigning and launching new urban policies to overcome the challenges generated by that transition, with a high level of sustainability and reclaiming cities as spaces for communal living and economic, social, cultural and political exchange.

To further consolidate this **Basque city model**, to overcome the global challenges and their impact on the Basque Country, we propose an agenda that addresses 8 strategic priorities, centred on 31 action areas and 105 lines of action. There are 5 cross-cutting aspects of these priorities, related to multi-level governance of the agenda, gender mainstreaming, the comprehensiveness of the actions, the land use focus and the commitment to monitoring and assessment.



**Anticipating the challenges**  
Future challenges



**Setting the goals**  
Strategic priorities  
Cross-cutting aspects



**Specifying the actions**  
Action areas  
Lines of action



Promoting the right to housing and basic facilities

Cities on the move: for a new type of mobility

A new sustainable model of urban planning

Innovative and wise cities

Dynamic and competitive cities

Sustainable and resilient cities

Quality of life-focused cities

Diversity and inclusion as our hallmark



# Promoting the right to housing and basic facilities

Provision for social cohesion



**Facilitating the exercise of the right to decent, affordable and accessible housing for each moment of every person's life cycle.**

## ACCESS TO HOUSING

## REGENERATION AND REHABILITATION OF BUILDINGS AND HOMES

## BASIC FACILITIES

## ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACES

- Focused on **urban regeneration and the densification of urban centres** rather than the development of new buildings.
- **Adaptation and diversification of the existing housing stock** to meet the population and social needs of the citizens, promoting a mixed use of the same territorial area.
- Committed to the **rental market and new ways** of using, accessing and managing housing: co-housing, reverse mortgages, etc.
- Establishing **programmes to guarantee the right to access housing** for the most **vulnerable** people and families, thus avoiding spatial segregation.
- Establishing **minimum basic services and facilities** for the region.
- In line with the Davos Declaration 2018, **promoting a high-quality built environment**, with particular focus on the architectural quality of the built environment, both from a cultural perspective and in terms of habitability.

# Cities on the move: for a new type of mobility

Intermodal public transport



**Redesign the urban and interurban transport system to achieve low-emission mobility, promoting flexible, sustainable and safe methods.**

## SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

## INTERURBAN MOBILITY

## INTRAURBAN MOBILITY

## MULTIMODAL MOBILITY

- Commitment to **reduce the use of private vehicles** and improve the integrated range of sustainable mobility services, making them suitable for the personal requirements of citizens.
- Adapting urban and interurban transport infrastructures for **new forms of mobility**: electric and shared vehicles, bicycles, etc.
- Promoting **universal** urban and interurban **accessibility**, especially for people with reduced mobility.
- Increasing the **joint responsibility and role of citizens** in the management of safe, sustainable and efficient mobility.
- Integrating **urban and land use planning** as a guiding factor in sustainable mobility.
- Ensuring that the **smallest municipalities** are also included in the sustainable mobility challenges that must be met.
- Establishing policies aimed at **reducing the need for mobility**.

# A new sustainable model of urban planning

## Compact cities



**In line with the Land Use Planning Guidelines, establish an urban planning framework that prioritises the redensification and regeneration of urban centres, the creation of high-quality public spaces and communal areas and accessibility for all.**

### PROTECTING HERITAGE

### RESILIENCE OF THE LAND AND NATURAL HERITAGE

### SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

### SPATIAL EQUITY

### RESILIENCE OF THE LAND

- **Commitment to ensure a compact city**, with densified and regenerated centres, with spaces for communal living, with diversified land use, incorporating urban innovation and sustainability as planning criteria, promoting the use of existing buildings.
- Commitment to **close social and economic relations**, avoiding segregation and social inequalities in the region.
- **Improving the management, flexibility and use of urban planning tools**, incorporating new implementation, management and result assessment mechanisms.
- Protecting and promoting the use and appreciation of **cultural heritage**.
- Promoting the use of urban planning tools based on **current land use, with a bottom-up approach**.

# Innovative and wise cities

## Innovation from, with and for people



**Promoting the innovative use of land in the Basque Country as a recognisable ecosystem for creativity and cultural, economic and environmental vigour.**

### RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

### CONNECTIVITY

### NON-TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

### SMART CITIES

- Promoting the **construction of inter-connected hubs of innovative activity** in the Basque cities, with the necessary infrastructures and policies to generate new opportunities.
- Promotion of **creative cities**, based on talent and learning, as the main vehicle for social and economic innovation, with people being the central focus and key objective.
- Promoting **multi-actor participation**, public-private-social partnerships and innovation based on the implementation of innovation initiatives and urban creativity.
- Promoting the **translation of innovation policies** to the various local conditions.
- Commitment to **incorporate urban technology as a means, and not an end in itself**, with the participation and involvement of the various stakeholders. Progressing from Smart Cities to Wise Cities.

# Dynamic and competitive cities

Urban centres with economic activity



**Consolidate the Basque urban network as the hub of one of the most dynamic industrial economies in southern Europe, capable of creating jobs and well-being for citizens.**

**SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION**

**HIGH-QUALITY EMPLOYMENT**

**RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMY**

**CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

- Pursuing a Basque Country where the main driver of the economy is a **competitive, sustainable and innovative industry**.
- Promoting an **economic and business model that is environmentally and socially responsible**, centred on people's needs and protecting the environment.
- Promoting the policies and infrastructures necessary to launch **new urban entrepreneurial projects** that create jobs and opportunities.
- Supporting the creation of local **public-private partnerships**, particularly in job creation programmes.
- Approaching urban economic development from the perspective of **diversified land uses for economic activity**, creating local economic areas and preventing their segregation as a result of being used for a single purpose - commercial, industrial, residential, tertiary.
- Commitment to the **creation of stable and high-quality employment** and to training workers as the main driver of the Basque economy's competitiveness.

# Sustainable and resilient cities

Cities against climate change



**Make Basque cities leaders at the cutting edge of the transition towards sustainability, neutral emissions and zero waste.**

**POLLUTION CONTROL AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

**CLIMATE ACTION**

**MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & WASTE**

**BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS**

- Focusing activities in the urban environment with a **holistic approach to sustainability**, reducing their environmental impact at all levels and adapting them to meet the current environmental challenges.
- Within the urban environment, meeting the objectives set as part of the **Klima 2050 Strategy**.
- Setting the scope of the **environmental policy to serve as an economic driver** and generator of new job opportunities, well-being and health in cities.
- Promoting the **joint responsibility, cooperation and engagement** of all stakeholders: public, private and social sectors and citizens.



# Quality of life-focused cities

Improve the quality of life



**Promote healthy cities that meet the safety, social and personal welfare needs of citizens against the backdrop of a changing population.**

**UNIVERSAL HEALTH SYSTEM COVERAGE & ACCESSIBILITY**

**EQUITABLE AND HIGH-QUALITY HEALTHCARE**

**HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND LEISURE**

**HEALTH INNOVATION AND RESEARCH**

- Promoting a **comprehensive concept of personal and social well-being**, to support citizens throughout their life cycles.
- **Enabling citizens** to jointly create healthy lifestyles for everyone.
- Promoting the implementation of city plans that are compatible with care and user-friendly for vulnerable individuals, consolidating the Basque cities' reputation of having a **high quality of life**.
- Making **strategic interventions in the home environment** a key element of the healthcare system. Prioritising local health services and public facilities.

# Diversity and inclusion as our hallmark

People and community-focused



**Consolidate diverse and socially cohesive towns and cities.**

**SOCIAL COHESION**

**INTERGENERATIONAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

**EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**CULTURE AND LEISURE FOR EVERYONE**

- Viewing **social inclusion as a multidimensional phenomenon** that is people-centred, with an impact on the region, quality of life, income and the ability to exercise citizens' rights.
- Commitment to **diverse neighbourhoods and cities**, combatting spatial segregation due to economic or social reasons or based on origin.
- Transforming cities so that they meet the needs of the **most vulnerable groups** in particular.
- Promoting and improving **social engagement**.
- Opting for a **cross-cutting approach to equal opportunities**, diversity management and social inclusion.
- Promoting **cities and communities that provide care**, as a means of shaping civic life.
- **Promoting a culture of habitable living**, incorporating architectural quality and habitability as vehicle for a high quality of life and social and cultural cohesion.

## How will we implement it?



## Multi-level governance of the Urban Agenda

**Governance is a key tenet that is interrelated with other key tenets of the Urban Agenda.** Each of the Basque government's core areas of action in the urban sphere has its own governance system, thus facilitating cooperation between the different departments of the government, provincial councils and city councils.

The participatory governance of the Bultzatu 2050 Urban Agenda for the Basque Country's implementation process must be appropriate for the specific characteristics of each municipality and each urban context. Bearing this in mind, it is necessary to address this situation with an overall reference framework through which the Agenda's governance should be coordinated, structured around the following key tenets:

- Bultzatu 2050 Forum: a forum for monitoring and promoting the Urban Agenda.
- Land Use Planning Commission of the Basque Country: a multi-level space for dialogue to implement land use planning.
- Open Government Partnership: a framework for cooperation and collaboration for the development of an open government in the Basque Country.
- Udalsarea: a network of municipalities that are committed to sustainability.

## Gender mainstreaming

Urban development policies should take advantage of their capacity to transform in order to advance equality between men and women as a matter of priority. Incorporating this approach into programmes and strategies involves highlighting the differences between the various social groups present where they are implemented, along with their different needs, problems and expectations. The Urban Agenda is a strong foundation on which to build to make a quantitative and qualitative leap that will pave the way for a new generation of policies to achieve true gender equality in urban development.

## Land use focus

The basis and defining element of Bultzatu 2050 is the land use focus of the actions entailed, underpinned by the Land Use Planning Guidelines as the bedrock for its implementation. Therefore, their goals will be taken into account, aiming to ensure maximum consistency and complementarity, with the DOTs being the foundation upon which all actions are based.

## Comprehensiveness

With the people who live in and use the cities as their central focus, urban public policies or policies with an urban element are centred on effectively meeting the conditions necessary for people to exercise their right to the city, avoiding any contradictions, overlapping or conflicts of responsibilities.

## Monitoring and assessment

Bultzatu 2050 will incorporate a mechanism for monitoring and assessment, both quantitative and qualitative, through a system of indicators and their accountability mechanisms:

- **Drafting of regular reports**
- **Minor interim assessment**

Bultzatu 2050 should be seen as a **flexible tool that can be adapted to the urban situation** and the shifting challenges and events. Therefore, its governance provides for the possibility of changing and adapting it to new situations.



Agenda Euskadi  
Basque Country

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SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

