



Figure 4.
Local Sustainability
Observatory of the
Basque Country

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Local Sustainability Observatory of the Basque Country

Context & Rationale

Udalsarea 21 - **Basque Network of Municipalities for Sustainability** - the observatory was setup in 2002, the objective is a cooperation and coordination forum which will give momentum to the Local Agenda 21 of Basque municipalities and also to drive the implementation of their Action Plans. It was setup in 2002, today it gathers 203 Basque municipalities, involving more than 98% of Basque's population, together with the regional [Ministry of Environment and Land Use Planning](#), [the regional Ministry of Health of the Basque Government](#), [the Public Society of Environment Management Ihobe](#), and the Basque Water Agency [URA](#). In 2016 new members joined the network, including the Provincial Councils and the [Ente Vasco de la Energía EVE](#).

The mission of Udalsarea 21 is to promote the effective establishment of the Action Plans of the Local Agenda 21 and to integrate sustainability principles in all the municipal management areas related to the compromises included in the [Aalborg Commitments](#). Hence, promoting the role of the municipalities in the Basque sustainable development policies and in the participation of the Basque society.

The Local Action Plans must entail effective management instruments for municipalities. With this aim, a common deployment model is setup from Udalsarea 21, which includes the following tasks constituting a yearly cycle of management of Local Action Plans: Planning of proceedings, Performance of proceedings, Assessment of the Implementation of the Local Action Plans, and Calculation of Sustainable Indicators.

Description

Ihobe is in charge of the Basque Network of Municipalities for Sustainability, Udalsarea 21's Technical Secretariat. Ihobe supports the assessment of the Action Plans and the

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calculation of indicators that the municipalities manage each year, and whose information converges in the Basque Local Sustainability Observatory.

The information provided by the Action Plans and sustainability indicators is managed by a computer application called MUGI 21, developed by Udalsarea 21, which is available to all its member municipalities. This application enables an integrated management of the Local Agenda 21 process, while at the same time exporting data to the MUGI 21 environment of the Udalsarea 21 Technical Secretariat, which coordinates the Basque Country Local Sustainability Observatory. It is therefore a global platform for integrating, monitoring and interpreting the results of the indicator calculations and Local Action Plan assessments carried out by each municipality.

It also enables users to extract indicators from the network as a whole, in order to gain a global overview of the progress of the various processes. Based on this vast and valuable database, the network compiles and publishes a biennial Local Sustainability Report for the Basque Country, which outlines and interprets the results obtained. This report also serves as feedback for the local processes themselves, since it provides mean values to which those responsible for managing Local Agenda 21 initiatives can use as a reference.

Main Results

- 80% of Basque municipalities with Local Agenda 21.
- 81 municipalities annually assessing their Action Plan and/or calculating local sustainability indicators (40.5% in 2014).
- 6.103 actions assessed.
- 812 municipal agents involved in Local Agenda 21. 4.601 sustainability indicators calculated.
- 62 municipalities calculate their greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories.

Lessons Learned & Success Factors

Homogeneous and shared methodologies: it is necessary to have a homogeneous structure of the PALs and a common system of local sustainability indicators. Also to have a common methodology of tracking them (to assess the degree of implementation and calculation of indicators).

Itobe centralizes the request of local information that comes from supra sources (public agencies and private providers).

Tool for policy evaluation: in addition to being a tool for gathering information, this enables the evaluation of local sustainability policies.

Implementing structure & partners – Governance

The Observatory has been developed under the framework of Udalsarea 21. The network is a platform of collaboration of different public institutions of the Basque Country.

Financing and Costs / Time Frame

Annual technical support for monitoring PALs: in the early years is needed to have greater support, but as municipalities organise monitoring, the support required is more regular and hence, issues can be resolved to a higher quality.

The service is very efficient: an initial investment for design and development of computer application is necessary, after that the cost required by town is very low (same cost for one municipality to perform for 100).

Contacts & Links



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Observatory website: www.udalsarea21.net

Ihobe website: www.ihobe.eus

Member of ENERGeE Watch: <http://www.energee-watch.eu/>