



HUERTAS LIFE KM0 - Environmental recovery of peri-urban areas through the intervention in the ecosystem and ecological farming.

Huertas LIFE Km0

LIFE12 ENV/ES/000919



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Project description:

Background

The city of Zaragoza in north-east Spain has historically been surrounded by fertile alluvial soils providing high productivity for the growing of fruits and vegetables. These peri-urban ‘Gardens of Zaragoza’ (Huerta de Zaragoza) were able to meet local demand for these natural products. As recently as 2003, Zaragoza had 2 600 ha dedicated to such agriculture.

However, in the past decade it is estimated that 90% of this productive area has been lost. It has suffered from the abandonment of traditional farming in the face of competition from cheap imports – from other areas of Spain and abroad. Areas have been abandoned, turned over to intensive agriculture or lost to relatively disorderly processes of urban expansion. There are currently only four farmers with organic certification in the area.

The disappearance of the Gardens of Zaragoza represents a loss of local green spaces and biodiversity as well as a loss of local food products. Imported foods have higher environmental costs in terms of energy consumption and are often considered to be of lower quality – for both health and taste – because of processing factors that may include early picking, long-distance transportation and freezing.

Objectives

The HUERTAS LIFE KM0 project aims to recover the natural peri-urban Gardens of Zaragoza through the promotion of a 'zero kilometre' (km0) concept of local agricultural production. It expects to demonstrate a successful approach for implementing the European Territorial Strategy (ETS), delivering economic, social, health and environmental benefits.

The project will undertake the following principal actions:

- Provide training and technical assistance to entrepreneurs who want to develop a business in local non-intensive farming;
- Support the creation of urban allotments in which individuals can grow their own fruit and vegetables;
- Promote locally-produced organic products amongst consumers and retail outlets in Zaragoza;
- Monitor and improve ecological corridors; and
- Create a management body to support the ongoing development of local organic farming, including representatives of the City Council, farmers, research institutions and consumers.

The project thus hopes to create a positive cycle of increased supply and demand of local, organic products. By demonstrating the economic incentives for environmentally-friendly local production, it hopes to create a sustainable model of local productivity that will:

- Increase non-intensive cultivation of plots of land in the Gardens of Zaragoza;
- Halt the environmental degradation of this area; remediate and improve soil fertility; regenerate the natural environmental system; and protect local biodiversity;
- Deliver an increase in quality, autochthonous and traditional varieties of fruit and vegetables for sale locally; and
- Promote a km0 concept of agricultural production, reducing the ecological footprint of food consumption of the city.

Expected results: The project expects to achieve the following:

- Creation of new farms in the Gardens of Zaragoza with plots from 1 to 5 ha;
- Increase in the number of certified organic farmers in Zaragoza from four to 25;
- Increased production of autochthonous and traditional varieties of fruits and vegetables for sale locally;
- Creation of a point for direct sales of these products in at least one municipal market, 10 greengrocers and five restaurants;
- Involvement of at least 30 restaurants in an awareness and information campaign;
- Reduction of CO2 emissions by some 32% through the transition to organic farming;
- Avoidance of some 30 tonnes of CO2 from reduced transport of fruit and vegetables;
- Creation of at least 25 jobs in local agriculture; and
- Monitoring and improvement of 500 m of ecologic corridors.

Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Industry-Production - Agriculture - Forestry

Keywords

organic farming, agricultural method, environmental impact of agriculture, periurban space, food production, horticulture

Natura 2000 sites

Not applicable

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	AYUNTAMIENTO DE ZARAGOZA
Type of organisation	Local authority
Description	Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza is the local authority for the city of Zaragoza, Spain.
Partners	None

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE12 ENV/ES/000919
Duration	02-SEP-2013 to 30-DEC -2016
Total budget	1,759,098.00 €
EU contribution	729,955.00 €
Project location	Galicia(España) Asturias(España) Cantabria(España) País Vasco(España) Navarra(España) Rioja(España) Aragón(España) Madrid(España) Castilla-León(España) Castilla-La Mancha(España) Extremadura(España) Cataluña(España) Comunidad Valenciana(España) Balears(España) Andalucía(España)

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Project web site
Slides Presentation

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