



**Food Production**

Action 4.1

Action 4.2

Action 4.3

Action 4.4

**FOOD POLICY**

**Soto del Grillo**

**Agroecological Park**

**KEY WORDS**

Agroecology, agrarian park,  
local production

**✓ OBJECTIVES**

- To facilitate the launch and consolidation of local agroecological production projects.
- To highlight the multi functionality of agroecological activities.
- To promote the Southeast Regional Park's landscape environment, which is a SPAB (Special Protection Area for Birds) and SIC (Site of Community Importance) of Natura 2000 network, and the cliffs of the River Manzanares and the River Jarama.
- To transform a unique area of Europe into an ecological and sustainable food production environment.
- To generate a sustainable food system facilitating the consumption of local agroecological food.
- To promote a governance system that allows the participation of producers in the decision-making process and that integrates citizen participation in the management of the park.

**📄 POLICY DESCRIPTION**

Part of Rivas Vaciamadrid municipality is located in the Southeast Regional Park. The City Council intended to generate a sustainable food system through the park, aiming at supplying the municipality with local quality products and creating a link between the land and the residents. Thus, a land bank with irrigated and dry land was set up. Initially, each producer had access to two hectares of land; but currently the surface is adapted to each producer's capacities and needs. Out of 43 hectares of land, 28 are allocated (of those 17 are irrigated and 11 rain-fed) and 15 are still unoccupied. Land allocation is awarded based on the results of a viability technical study of every request. If the project is already active, it receives a 10-year allocation; if it is starting, it joins an entrepreneurship nursery for one year, renewable for up to five years, with access to 1,000 - 5,000 square meters. The rent is subsidised by the City Council and is 200 € per year per hectare, including water consumption and access to the storehouse and the irrigation system. Supporting services are offered, such as counselling on agronomy, business, sales and company inter-cooperation.

A specific brand, "Fresh Products from the Park", has been created and is promoted in local shops and restaurants. The City Council also accompanies local consumption groups and offers product baskets from the park as a prize in other initiatives. In 2009, the City Council held an agroecological producers market, which has progressively disappeared as agroecological products become available elsewhere.

School visits to the park are also organised and three agroecology neighbour associations have free access to two hectares of land since 2009.

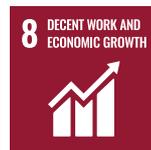
Towards the 2030 horizon, different actions are foreseen for the Agroecological Park:

- Agroecology training for residents, open days to get to know the place and the agricultural activity, environmental internships, and an agroecological fair to bring the park closer to the city.
- An interpretation centre of food sovereignty and agroecology.
- A sustainable compost platform.
- A project with beekeepers.

**🏠 DEPARTMENTS IN CHARGE**

Ecological Transition Councillorship  
Mayor's office  
Economic Development and Maintenance Councillorship

**CONTRIBUTION TO  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**



In 2008 the Agroecological Park started to be designed, with the transfer of municipal urban and rural land and the allocation of the first land plots. In 2012 it was established with its own regulations.





### KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Heliconia: outsourced company to ensure the coordination of the Agroecological Park.

### ASPIRATIONAL QUANTITATIVE OBJECTIVES

2,500 residents shifting to an organic diet.

800 residents eating regionally and locally produced food.

800 residents shifting to an organic and regionally/locally produced diet.

14 hectares converted into organic farming schemes.

Overall aspiration of the food policies committed to The Barcelona Challenge:

<https://toolkit.thebcnchallenge.org/challenges/report/359>

### BENEFICIARIES

In the Agroecological Park there are 8 organic horticulture projects (around 16 people directly involved) and a cattle breeding one (2 people).

3 neighbours' associations on agroecology: with a total of approximately 40 to 50 members.

### BUDGET

Initial investment: 200,000 €

Yearly budget of approximately 80,000 € (45,000 € for coordination and counselling and 35,000 € for maintenance, paths, irrigation, etc.)

### STRENGTHS AND SUCCESS POINTS

The Agroecological Park offers comprehensive support to producers: from access to land, to acquisition of the required technical and management skills. Another key aspect is the promotion of a sustainable food system and the practice of agroecology, through City Council led initiatives. This action allows to create networks in the municipality and favours the presence of local agroecological producers and short distribution channels, allowing local products to be more accessible for residents. The park itself represents a significant share of organically certified land plots within the region of Madrid.

The park contributes to the City Council's willingness for Rivas to become a living city, rather than just a dormitory town.

### CRITICAL POINTS

The lack of entrepreneurs in agriculture and the fact that the few there are lack the required skills, experience or capacity for investment.

### OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

One of the main obstacles is that the global subsidy system for agroecological producers is very demanding, rigid and complex, especially in the region of Madrid. Another challenge is to establish the commercialisation channels at the beginning of the activity. Therefore, the Agroecological Park technical team accompanies producers on these topics.

Product and equipment loss caused by theft or wild fauna are also an issue for producers.

Infrastructure's maintenance (paths and irrigation) represents a constant expense year after year. Thus, it is crucial to anticipate maintenance contracts between the City Council and service providers to ensure appropriate responses are provided when the need arises.



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### FURTHER INFORMATION

*Rivas Vaciamadrid website - Soto del Grillo Agroecological Park*