

# Resumen ejecutivo Zaragoza LIFE Natural

## English version

Zaragoza is a city located in a hydrographic knot surrounded by the immensity of a steppe that surrounds the fertile valley that arises from the confluence of three rivers that cross the city.

The urban expansion has removed the natural spaces of the city that has been disconnected from its environment, has reduced its biodiversity, the ability to create large and clean environments, and interrupts the ecological continuity of the alluvial floodplain generating risks of flooding and loss of ecosystems and biodiversity.

At the same time, the city is enclosed by the great communication infrastructures that constrain it, limiting the possibilities of introducing nature within it. Only the hydrographic network can cross the concrete belt.

But Zaragoza has powerful "green" elements inside. The network of city parks, together with the sidewalks and wetlands of the riverbanks and the large and diverse natural spaces around, generate a Green Matrix and a Blue Matrix that make up a diverse mosaic of landscapes (rivers, groves, steppes, ravines, forests ...) make up a Green Infrastructure of great richness and biodiversity.

In this context arises this LIFE project with which the City Council aims to establish the basis for Zaragoza to articulate in the short and long term and effectively, integrating and sustainable, urban growth and territorial development at the same time they preserve the environmental values of their natural heritage.

A very complex and ambitious project structured by a working argument line:

- Increased knowledge of the functions and ecosystem services of both matrices.
- Interventions to improve the ecological status of both blue and green matrices with actions in sensitive points and with demonstrative effect.
- Integration of the green infrastructure with the city, improving the connectivity of the natural spaces and their accessibility.

These actions have supported the elaboration of proposals for an effective and sustainable governance of this natural environment and the design of guidelines and programs that must influence the planning of the city and the management of the natural environment.

As the development of the project progressed, these proposals have turned into authentic public policy instruments and the extended calendar year has allowed them to become initiatives already approved by the Municipal Government.

- The *Special Plan for the steppe and undeveloped land in the southern part of the municipal area of Zaragoza*, with which it is intended to conserve the environmental values of these spaces through zoning and regulations for their protection.
- The *Special Plan for the protection of the Vedado de Peñaflores*, one of the few and best preserved natural forests in the municipality that is an excellent refuge for wildlife and hosts a special richness and unique flora.



- *The Forestry Orientation Plan of Monte de Torrero*, an extensive pine forest that has the function of protecting soil and increasing biodiversity and is a transitional space between the city and the steppe environments.
- *The Management Plan of the Barranco de Las Almunias*, an enclave within the steppe zone adjoining the city, which is strongly threatened by problems of surface runoff and erosion and by the sometimes-incorrect use of sports or leisure activities.

But undoubtedly, the most far-reaching public policy instrument that has been one of the results with the greatest impact of the project is the *Zaragoza Green Infrastructure Master Plan*, which has become a real public policy instrument in that it is a reference element to influence, even define, in a transversal manner in all the actions of planning and ordering of the municipal territory.

The dimension that this ZGIMP is having exceeds the limits of Zaragoza, is being received with great interest by other cities and has achieved international recognition being awarded at the 2nd European Urban Green Infrastructure Conference-EUGIC 2017 for its «innovative, interesting and more creative project of urban greening of Europe and the world».

The project has involved the public through dissemination, training and awareness activities. Activities have been carried out with schoolchildren, university students, elderly people, a training action has been programmed to promote entrepreneurship in the green economy sector and guided tours have been organized throughout the calendar to raise awareness and sensitize the population for a sustainable use of the city's green infrastructure. Likewise, this natural space has been promoted as a tourist resource in national and international fairs and exhibitions.

As a project final result, the Master Plan for the Green Infrastructure of Zaragoza is, once it has been approved by the municipal government, the nucleus of the environmental policy of the City of Zaragoza and its projection will be extended as an environmental management strategy for many coming years.





*Orthophoto of Zaragoza in which it can appreciate the different elements that make up the mosaic of environments present in the municipal territory.*

*Ortofoto de Zaragoza en la que se puede apreciar los diferentes elementos que configuran el mosaico de ambientes presentes en el término municipal.*