

Urban agricultural areas

FC Cascais



NBS 3 – Community based farms and gardens

Project indicative: C3.2
Project type: complex project
Project starting point: 5-10 y
Project ending point: 10-15 y
Linkages: C3.1 Multiuse green areas
Estimated costs: n.d. (can vary from 200K to 600K)

Type of nature-based solution

NBS3: Abandoned agricultural land is converted into new productive areas. This is initiated by project C6.2 "Pedestrian trail along the river", which describes the requirements for important pedestrian connection in the URA that will ensure access to the currently privately owned plots that are planned for conversion into: community gardens, orchards, vineyards or even cattle pastures (flock of sheep is often seen in the area). The specific typology and distribution of functions will be determined in implementation, together with the future users.

Description of planned NBS intervention

The basis to realise the NBS is raising awareness about "Terras de Cascais" initiative and the local land bank policy as an important initial step of efficiently communicating the "Terras de Cascais" concept. Landowners must accept changes and participate, rent, or sell land. The existing gardens have to be modernized and equipped with improved water supply from the local wells. An allotment or a community garden may be created and supported by training from Terras de Cascais. The abandoned farm (north of the highway) may be used as a central facility for social activities, incl. reconstructing the old barn.

Vision



Brejos community garden. Source: Cascais Ambiente



Brejos community garden. Source: Cascais Ambiente



Community garden in Cascais

Scenarios

Do-it-all (best-case)

Municipality is leveraging the Cascais Land Bank policy, and landowners are being rightfully compensated/renumerated for the conversion of their land into agricultural areas. Existing old farm facilities are rebuilt and used for supporting agricultural activities. An agreement may be established with the shepherd or sheep owner for grazing, with the potential objective of establishing local cheese production. The area maintenance considers circular economy systems, e.g., composting.

Do something meaningful

The areas are cleaned and secured, accessible by the newly constructed pedestrian corridor and open to all (through cooperation with private landowners).



Photo current state. Source Cascais Ambiente

Local planning frameworks

Cascais Master Plan foresees a green area with permeable soil for river flood protection and leisure or food production.

River regeneration and margins stabilization is foreseen in the Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan.

National law allows public entities to expropriate river margins to ensure river maintenance and accessibility.

The agricultural potential can be enhanced by the Terras de Cascais program and the local Land Bank where owners can rent plots to people interested in farming.



Study area

The area is divided by the highway and river (stream) that runs underneath. The heterogeneous built environment was developed without urban planning, resulting in several plots of abandoned sites and former agricultural areas.

At present, there are several illegal buildings and rubble deposits. The blue infrastructure – local stream is partially inaccessible (underlining the relevance of the C6.2 project).

The area features very few green urban leisure spaces. Key drivers for regenerating the local landscape are making the river accessible and unlocking the adjacent plots.

Area north is 17520sqm; south is 16775sqm.

Challenges of the site

Most of the area consists of private abandoned land or illegal buildings, some abandoned.

Vegetable gardens are used by residents in a disorderly way. Invasive vegetation occupies the river margins, hiding rubble deposits.

There is no entrepreneurship or NGO determined to profit from agricultural potential of soils for urban agricultural purposes.



Photo current state. Source: Cascais Ambiente

Key considerations

Illegal agriculture occurs in some areas, complicating contact with unknown landowners. Riverside pedestrian trail (C6.2) could help initiate contact with private landowners and simplify the process, aided by Cascais Land Bank.

This NBS can be simpler if all landowners agree to creating a joint large vegetable garden. Otherwise, the implementation level of complexity will be increased from procedural, juridical and acquisition point of view. If the process is not being deployed in an integrated manner, it is possible that new agricultural areas will be realized in different disconnected areas. There is also the scenario in which negotiations with private owners are not fruitful, and the planned agricultural areas will not be realized on these sites.

Operational objectives

Agricultural soil protection key aim!

- Restoring the natural quality of the terrain: debris removal and high-quality soil layer.
- Integrating the site into the local landscape with a good level of connectivity.
- Equipping the site with all needed infrastructure (proper water supply being a priority)
- Future users of the urban agricultural plots are trained in organic farming.

Targets:

- 34.000 sqm of total land regenerated for Urban Agriculture
- Min. 5 users/persons received training in organic farming.
- South site: 3 access points are recommended: 1. from R. Zambuja street
2. from R. Cidade de Viana do Castelo.
North site: 3 access points from R. Fénix Lopes Street.

Actions

- Agreements with private owners, promoting Cascais Land Bank as a useful tool.
- Establish business models with users of the vegetable gardens and interested citizens in UA, preferably creating an association.
- Implementation of collective infrastructures (may include reconstructing an abandoned farm barn and well water use depending on the area).

Partners

Beneficiaries:

Municipality,
Landowners

Additional Investors / Shareholders:

Municipality, and future users

Users: Residents interested in farming

Design requirements

Accessibility: Secure and inclusive pedestrian access and easy access for equipment and emergency vehicles.

Landscaping: Use native vegetation for hedges and maintain valuable vegetation.

Safety: Ensure protection of the water wells. Ensure protection of the crops from traffic (through dense "vegetation curtains")

Aesthetics: Urban agricultural areas must be well integrated in the local landscape, contributing to improving the urban image of the area.

Urban furniture and equipment: Communal tool shed, outdoor furniture made of wood / ecologic materials.



Horto Comunitária Bairro de Santo António



Horto Comunitária do Pinhal dos Navegadores