



# **METROPOLITAN BILBAO 2035.**

## **A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE**



| STRATEGIC REVIEW |



May 2016









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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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There are several reasons that explain why the Association Bilbao Metropoli-30 has now decided to launch its brief on a new stage in the future strategy of Bilbao's metropolitan area.

**In a study published in 2009 on Local Development Agencies, the OECD described Bilbao Metropoli-30 as visionary, collaborative, ambitious, agenda-setting, nimble, niche and focused.**

The following reasons make Bilbao Metropoli-30 the perfect instrument for developing the strategic rationale on the metropolitan area:

- Legitimacy
- Representativeness
- Long-term
- Social acceptance and integration
- Public-private partnership
- Metropolitan scope
- Work for leadership
- International contacts.  
Benchmarking
- Detailed knowledge of the metropolitan environment
- Furtherance of Civil Society



This document sets out to cover **the key aspects of a new review** designed to guide the steps to be taken by **Metropolitan Bilbao 2035** in order to face the challenges of the critical context in which we now find ourselves, within a time horizon extending over the next two decades. Our starting point is to consider that our infrastructures and values have been the milestones that have pegged out Metropolitan Bilbao's road map over the past twenty years.

Once more, public-private cooperation will be vitally important in the quest for joint solutions, involving specific projects that may contribute to their success.

It is imperative to again stress that the Association for the Revitalisation of Metropolitan Bilbao pursues long-term strategies and goals (both realistic and measurable), promotes and fosters equal opportunities at the outset and recognition at the conclusion and, finally, seeks to compare itself with countries and territories of a similar socio-economic size and nature.





## 2. BACKGROUND

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The origins of Bilbao and its metropolitan area are linked to its strategic location, the sea, and trade, as it gradually became the Basque Country's economic powerhouse and one of the foremost nationwide. Indeed, the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> were when Bilbao and its metropolitan area underwent their greatest economic development, due largely to the emergence of the iron and steel industry, ship-building, port operations and iron ore mining, recording levels that reinforced Bilbao's standing throughout Europe.

However, the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s provided the backdrop for industrial decline that plunged Bilbao and Bizkaia into a profound recession. Unemployment rose sharply, climbing as high as 35% in certain parts of the metropolitan area, and the crisis left behind a physical and environmental landscape that was deeply scarred by the industrial excesses of the past. Further consequences were emigration and stagnation amongst the

population, with the appearance of problems of social marginalisation. In the case of Metropolitan Bilbao, eight business groups with global operations abandoned the area: AHV, B&W, Down Unquinesa, Echevarría, Euskalduna, General Electric, Sefanitro and Westinghouse.

By 1991, and in view of the plight in which Metropolitan Bilbao found itself immersed, the crisis called for a reappraisal of the area's future development that would be capable of restoring the city to the former glory it had once enjoyed thanks to its pioneering position in industrial development. This meant building a post-industrial city in which services and new technologies would play a key role in its return to economic development, and in which the physical and urban environment would be a major variable to be considered in future planning processes, with the aim being to guarantee a high standard of living for the population and a high level of international competitiveness.



In short, there was a need to give serious thought to the far-reaching transformation of Bilbao's economic foundations, rolling out new strategies in terms of businesses, infrastructure and services to cater not just for a city, but for an entire metropolis.

## 1991-2000. Infrastructures phase

Based on the need to take the first steps towards a post-industrial city, the guidelines were drawn up for the urban development of the future by means of an ambitious process of renewal that was to encompass the entire area stretching from Bilbao itself to the mouth of the Nervión estuary, with

the aim being to convert it into a modern metropolis. To do so, the Association Bilbao Metropoli-30 drafted the **Strategic Plan for the Revitalisation of Metropolitan Bilbao**, with the aim being of establishing a series

of coherent short and long-term goals, fulfilling people's expectations, and coordinating the operations across different institutional levels.

Metropolitan Bilbao's Strategic Plan defined **eight key subjects in the revitalisation process**:

1. Human resources
2. Metropolis providing advances services in a modern industrial region
3. Mobility and accessibility
4. Environmental regeneration
5. Urban regeneration
6. Cultural centrality
7. Public-private cooperation
8. Social action

Over the past years, the process of breathing new life into Metropolitan Bilbao and the work of the Association Bilbao Metropoli-30 have become an international yardstick for all those cities affected by industrial decline that need to reinvent the sources of their prosperity through the definition and implementation of innovative strategies.

Renowned institutions, such as the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), the OECD and the World Bank have acknowledged the achievements made by this revitalisation process, which has been firmly rooted in a close partnership between the public administrations, businesses, higher education, etc.



## 2001-2015. Values phase

The outlook for Metropolitan Bilbao at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was very different to the crisis scenario it faced ten years earlier. With the resolute backing of its public administrations, broad social support and the commitment expressed in its Strategic Plan, the metropolis had undergone a vigorous process of reinvention in all aspects and areas.

Nevertheless, the success achieved in the revitalisation process was not in itself a guarantee, but instead required a thorough and reasoned, yet imaginative, analysis to be made of the conditioning factors imposed by the global socio-economic context, together with the historical, social and cultural characteristics of the metropolis itself, with the aim being to identify a leitmotiv, a common thread, capable of exploiting the inertia of the past and acting as a driving-force for vigorously projecting the area into the future.

Thus, a study of global developments, the rapid consolidation of the new knowledge society and an analysis of the city's strong points enabled a thousand delegates representing the members of Bilbao Metropoli-30, with the assistance of 200 internationally

recognised experts, to conduct a Strategic Review process. This involved a basic outlook for the future based on the year 2010, which if suitably nurtured and encouraged would enable the city to raise the standard of living for its entire population, advance in the quest for excellence and become a benchmark metropolis on the global stage.

The outcome was the formulation of a future vision, which would be the key for recording high levels of growth, the creation of wealth, greater wellbeing for all and global recognition for the metropolis. This involved seeking and identifying ideas of its own and/or of others, and purposefully and successfully turning them into tangible realities. In short, the remit was to recognise and exploit those opportunities that would undoubtedly arise in the global market.

The need was to work together to build a metropolis that made ideals possible, capable of identifying, comparing and materialising good ideas to the benefit of the entire community. In other words, a Metropolitan Bilbao that would usher in dreams and



become the city of choice for those who love new ideas and identify with them.

As a result of this prior Strategic Review, a series of **values** were singled out as being vital for Metropolitan Bilbao's competitive and sustainable development, providing the focal point for the International Forum on Values held in 2006, and being defined by the acronym **IPICO**:

- **INNOVATION:** Pre-empting changes, introducing new developments or new ways of doing things.
- **PROFESSIONALISM:** Doing things well, undertaking an activity with the right capacity and application.
- **IDENTITY:** Series of traits that define an individual or collective.
- **COMMUNITY:** A long-term project shared by a group of people with common interests.
- **OPENNESS:** Favourable and receptive attitude towards other ideas and cultures.

In May 2011, the Association presented the document "Metropolitan Bilbao 2035. It is time for Professionals", on the occasion of its XX Anniversary. Since that moment, the Association is working in a project called BasquePRO, related to the professionalism as a paradigmatic value for our future. BasquePRO emphasizes the importance of people and values, its ability to have ideas, to implement projects, to become enthusiastic (of illusions), to work with passion, sacrifice and risk as a strategic key to urban development.

All-in-all, the aim of this second stage was to pave the way for the changeover from infrastructures to values, to successfully culminate the process of revitalising Metropolitan Bilbao by consolidating its model of strategic development in the eyes of the world, with its mission being to make society at large and its leaders aware of the importance of values for the **long-term development of cities** and, in particular, Metropolitan Bilbao. The development of these values in society undoubtedly requires a forward-thinking strategy and their promotion necessarily requires certain ingredients, such as the leadership, example and credibility of those fostering them.



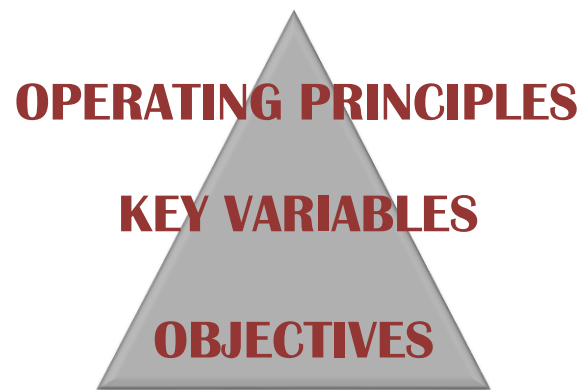
# 3. METROPOLITAN BILBAO 2015-2035. IN SEARCH OF A NEW PARADIGM

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**T**here is no question about the resounding success of the process of modernising Metropolitan Bilbao involving the infrastructure stage stretching from 1991 to 2000, with even the most optimistic expectations being exceeded. The metropolis underwent a physical transformation, which besides increasing the population's wealth and wellbeing entailed an international recognition that could never have been imagined at the start of the project.

In turn, and as regards the stage involving the launch of values, although it has yet to be fully completed, we may affirm that the concern for intangibles and the sensitivity of public administrations, businesses and civil society in general towards this issue have informed this change in paradigm.

THE NEW PARADIGM is based on **two triangles** that underpin the 2035 STRATEGIC REVIEW.





# 4. FIRST TRIANGLE

## VISION

**A** vision should be understood as the attainment of a long-term objective (20 years) that is measurable and doable.

What do we want?

**“We seek an integrating Basque society that creates the conditions whereby, as citizens, we are proud of belonging to our land because we fulfil our needs as human beings, with an excellent quality compatible with an acceptable cost. All this according to humanistic ethics based on honesty and solidarity”.**

What's our goals?

**“Within 20 years, we should be amongst the first five EU territories and/or countries of a similar size and socio-economic status, in terms of the following: Employment, GDP, Education (Primary, Secondary, Occupational and Higher), Health, and Care for the Elderly, among other key variables”.**

This objective calls for projects that adapt our traditional virtues -work well done, everyday endeavour, the assumption of risks, etc.- to today's realities.

We need to restore our concern for what really matters, for co-existence, for solidarity, and for the observance of the most basic ethical standards, within a high degree of social cohesion favoured by a fair distribution of wealth.





New projects should be exciting, generating expectations, promising and providing information and, above all, be marshalled by strong leaders with professional and personal credibility.

## MISSION

- Promote the identification and attraction of leaders committed to the project.
- Facilitate the expression of their ideas for their transformation into projects and their embodiment in innovative realities, providing the maximum wealth for Metropolitan Bilbao and Euskadi (Basque Country), in the social and economic fields.
- Launch a strategic review that will lead to an ongoing increase in the quality of life across the entire population, with respect for its values, history and idiosyncrasy.

**W**e have not outlined a positive culture as regards the medium and long terms. Strategies are designed on the basis of an all-or-nothing approach and, in

the best of cases, the decision is made to pursue the path of unquestioning continuity that typifies mediocre institutions and organisations of all kinds. **This is the time for professionals**, so we should steer clear of oversimplifications that just add confusion and negate the ability to solve complex problems among those who should and can do so.

## VALUES

- *Innovation*
- *Professionalism*
- *Identity*
- *Community*
- *Openness*

**W**e consider it vital to insist upon our values and teach people to embrace them, as they lie at the heart of the way our society behaves. Our values are essential, and should not be subject to circumstantial alterations, being therefore of strict application at all times in any decision-making.



# 5. SECOND TRIANGLE

## OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The proper implementation of Core Values should not be restricted to abstract spaces or virtual scenarios, but should instead extend to our everyday lives. Therein the need for establishing **Operating Principles** within the scope of society as a whole, both in those areas in which we are directly involved as individuals (Youth, Women, Job Seekers, the Elderly...), and in those in which we may be indirectly involved and which have an influence on us (Higher Education, Business, Government, Social Organizations...).

As an **example**, there are two groups of people whose involvement and inclusion in this new social and economic current is essential, namely, **young people and those in work**.

On the one hand, **young people** are the ones who will shape society in the future, being the ones who will enjoy the new achievements, so society should ask the following of them:

- To take responsibility for a good education and, if it is within their grasp, to achieve excellence.
- To demand equal opportunities in education and acknowledge those who excel.
- To acquire a sound grounding in basic knowledge. We do not know what sort of jobs there will in 10 years' time; only those with a good basic education will be able to undertake them successfully.
- To learn to behave decently, appreciating those around them for who they are and not for what they have.
- To show integrity (and thereby shy away from accepting the status quo), actively taking part in change, and assuming risks.

On the other hand, as regards **people in work**, those who have a job that enables them to fulfil their needs, the society of the future should also expect the following of them:



- To accept the responsibility and generosity of being professionals, mastering the disciplines required for performing their duties, showing support for those without work and actively taking part in all kinds of radical actions to combat unemployment.

- As regards those who hold a stable job or management positions, to support the risk-responsibility dichotomy rather than opt for security-uniformity.

- As regards those in public office, to help transform the administration to provide people with public services of the utmost quality.

In turn, the society of the future should foment a radical change in approach, moving away from the "support" for sundry interests, which are a major cause of the country's relative economic-industrial weakness, to backing people and groups possessing major technical-ethical competency, who are ready to take responsibility over the medium and long terms for the regeneration of the economic-industrial fabric.

## KEY VARIABLES

The definition and development of the key variables will provide the platform for setting the objectives used to design specific action plans.

This Strategic Review will seek to specify a series of key variables, providing a detail of a number of tenets that need to be shared with a view to developing them -in due course- in order to establish the objectives.

Key variables to be considered:

1. BUSINESS
2. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
3. URBAN DEVELOPMENT, LAND ZONING & INFRASTRUCTURES
4. EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT
5. POPULATION, EQUALITY & SOCIAL COHESION
6. PUBLIC SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION
7. HEALTH, QUALITY OF LIFE & CARE FOR THE ELDERLY



# BUSINESS

**T**he core mission of Business is to “create wealth” for:

1. Finance its development and adequately remunerate its shareholders.
2. Improve the quality of life of its employees, offering them the opportunity of optimizing the triangle remuneration-training-participation and making them feel useful to society through the company.
3. Meet the needs of customers by offering the best product in terms of quality/price.
4. Contribute to the development and growth of its suppliers.
5. Improve the quality of life of the social environment in which it operates.

The “creation of wealth” and its fair distribution is a long-term commitment whereby business earns the legitimacy to continue operating within a specific economic, social and political context. Thus, 21<sup>st</sup> century businesses turn **Ideas** into **Earnings**, as opposed to their 20<sup>th</sup> century counterparts, which turned **Resources**

into **Earnings**. The Knowledge Society, with the technological and scientific advances it entails, will be able to call upon a number of instruments that would have hitherto been considered unthinkable.

Accordingly, we need to define the New Business that will create the 21<sup>st</sup> century's economic model, replacing:



- ✓ Growth at all costs with balanced growth.
- ✓ Technology with the use of technology that is safe, eco-friendly and an assurance of social stability.
- ✓ Profit replaced by the creation of wealth for the stakeholders.
- ✓ Top-down management with engaged management.
- ✓ Financial efficiency with efficiency in the economy, in the human factor and in business culture.
- ✓ The supposed loyalty to the firm with a commitment to shared projects.

In short, the aim will involve **a profound reappraisal of "our business projects"**, leading, without delegating, **the definition of the vision, mission and values both individually and collectively**; acquiring, maintaining and improving knowledge on the core aspects of each business (key variables), which

may also be applied at household and personal level.

Within this context and if the mission of business is shared, as specified above, both employer and labour organisations should be expected to undertake an in-depth transformation of their roles.



Considering that the stakeholders involved in the creation of wealth and its fair distribution are the following: shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and society at large, a proper definition of their roles is an immediate and complex priority, as it requires them to conduct a shared analysis, which is no easy matter, based on each one's current circumstances.



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## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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**T**he challenge our society faces today due to the accelerated advance of global science & technology is both considerable and complex. The ability to respond effectively to this challenge implies society to be initially aware of it, of its demands, of the changes in organisation and focus it requires, and of the necessary actions, many of which are long-term. In short, it requires a scientific-technological culture that will permeate through society as a whole. Among the numerous actions that are deemed to be important, we should single out the need for quality scientific-technical information. In a democratic society, only a population that has been made aware of the problems, options and consequences it faces can ensure a steady broadening of its scientific-technological culture.

**Technology** should be addressed as a **shared key variable** within the

different spheres of life in society:

- Within **compulsory education**.
- Within **society**.
- Within the **public administrations**.
- Within **financial institutions**: There is a need for a financial current that embraces the goal of technology funding. This is reminiscent of the large Basque banks that operated under the auspices of last century's industrial development. No sustainable technological development will be possible without the support of the financial sector.
- Within **business**: Those firms of sufficient size are better positioned to invest in technology and development, so we need to ensure our companies are large enough to convey their needs in technology.





■ Within **higher education and technology centres**: Each one within their ambit, albeit with permeable boundaries between them, identifying the basic sectors of technological and business development, appealing to global talent and expertise and, above all, “connected” to the world’s most advanced hubs. Strategic agreements with globally renowned centres will provide the necessary leverage for ensuring this society will progress along this path.

■ Within the **media**: The media may also help to construct a metropolis and contribute to the growth of this technology kernel by reporting on relevant success stories, informing on technology and opening up to the world of knowledge.

This multi-layered development will bring **technological development to the fore as the cornerstone for the metropolitan area’s economic development and prosperity.**



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# URBAN DEVELOPMENT, LAND ZONING & INFRASTRUCTURES

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It seems reasonable to extend this territorial review on an especially specific basis to include our hinterland (approximately seven million people), taking it for granted that it should uphold a minimal coherence with the outside, which we shall consider a boundary condition. To do so, we need to overcome the specific restrictions of our devolved regional powers to enlarge our **consideration of territory, extending it to our entire area of influence**, to our hinterland.

Extending beyond the territorial and legislative framework of the Basque Autonomous Community is only possible by leveraging ourselves on relational notions such as leadership and alliances between regions (or better still, cities). We should be capable of generating a vision of our area of influence in its entirety that manages to identify all the parties involved and is based on a win-win strategy.

This all-encompassing vision implies **basic shared goals and a balanced distribution of roles**. Our

metropolis could adopt a position of leadership that would enable it to gain the utmost value from its specialisation, while at the same time promoting that very process throughout neighbouring areas, managing the territorial-functional model to the highest standards.

The aim is to maintain overall equilibrium and equity, as this is the smartest approach, because it maximises the overall performance of both our area of influence and our own.

If our remit is **“to turn Bilbao into a metropolis of advanced services within a modern industrial region”**, we should pursue this through the development of each and every one of the features in the three basic dimensions of any city:

1. Metropolis as a human and social environment.
2. Metropolis as a physical environment and medium.
3. Metropolis as an economic and professional setting.





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# EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

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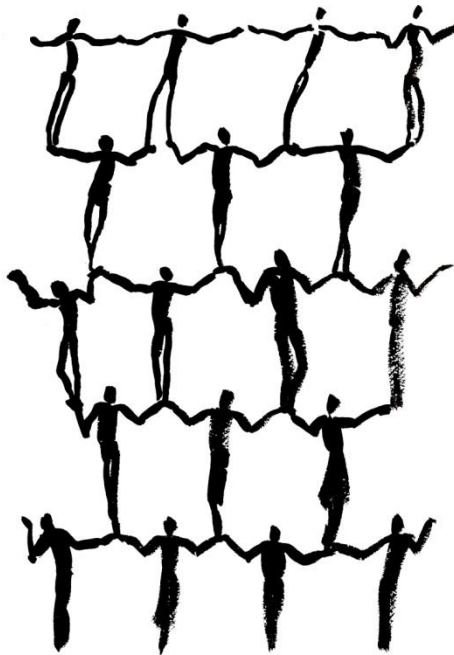
Lying at the heart of an educational system are society's values, which need to be articulated in each one of its subsystems for their implementation.

As opposed to outright specialisation, today probably more than ever there is a need for defining a basic common curriculum, flexibly adaptable to future changes. When everything is changing so quickly, one has to move forward at speed in order to keep up with the competition.

Therefore, an understanding of the basic principles, as well as the skills and mindset to adapt them creatively and constructively, is more useful than the mastery at any given moment of specialist subjects, however important

and pressing these may seem, or even are, at that moment.

The world of future opportunities and economic leadership will depend on people with a broad-based education, with an overall perspective, capable of understanding complex problems and always ready to learn new things.



The aim, therefore, is to help instruct “new knowledge workers” within a learning cycle that passes through several stages: basic skills and education in values, learning to learn, learning to create knowledge, and learning not to stop learning.

Regarding **employment**, this is a fundamental aspect that provides the backbone for social harmony and economic orchestration. **The generation and consolidation of**



**quality jobs** should be a **mainstream goal that impregnates and guides all the lines of action and deliberations** involving each and every one of the other key variables.

We should not forget that **quality jobs are created in and by high value added economic activities**. It is obvious that the professionals involved in such activities are the ones who need to maximise this value creation through the contribution of their capabilities, skills and engagement.

Over the short term, it is crucial to have a clear definition and analysis of our unemployed population (as well as of the employed population), with a view to thus understanding which are the most realistic options for their

employment, or the shortcomings to be resolved in order to improve their employability.

It seems reasonable to make way for **consolidated groups of professionals** themselves as the ones to design, supervise and marshal the necessary schemes for integrating these new professionals within the productive system.

There are **cultural parameters** with an unquestionable impact upon our professionals' ability to create value. We should not forget the following: **capacity for effort, commitment, engagement, ethics...** We need to focus our endeavours on instructing professionals in these kinds of values. Let us speak in terms of Professionalism.



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## POPULATION, EQUALITY & SOCIAL COHESION

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**W**e live in an area in which the population is decreasing sharply. We are going to be fewer and older.

This is a vital factor when defining the strategy for the society we aspire to be, as it forces us to accept the fact that **there will not be enough people in work to uphold and cater for the growing social needs of the elderly.**

**According to data from February 2015**, the ageing of the Basque population has reached a record high after years of steep growth in the number of elderly people compared to young ones. To be more specific, the Basque Country now has 140 people over the age of 64 for every 100 under-16-year-olds. This means an ageing rate of 140%. It should be stressed that this rate has risen fivefold over the past forty years. A revealing statistic: the ageing rate in 1975 stood at 28%; in other words, there were 28 people aged over 65 for every 100 under-16-year-olds. The tipping point was recorded in 1996, when the Basque Country passed from being a “young” society to an “ageing” one,

where the elderly have a greater weight. The advances in medicine that have managed to prolong life expectancy and the sharp drop in the birth rate are the factors that explain this trend.

Given that any changes that may occur in demographic trends will take time to have an impact, the attraction of a migrant population may be the factor that will help to remedy the situation. **Are we socially and economically ready to attract a sufficient number of migrants to cater for our present and future needs with the same assurances of equal opportunities as for everyone else?**

In order to guarantee equal opportunities in Metropolitan Bilbao, and due to its future repercussions, it is especially important to reduce the rate of child poverty, which rose from 7.3% to 11.2% over the 2008-2014 period.

The support for minors at risk of exclusion has to be maintained over subsequent stages to ensure their success in early childhood, primary and secondary education.



All these schemes for favouring equal opportunities in childhood have a decisive role to play in avoiding situations of poverty and the reliance among certain sectors of the population on the public system of social benefits.

The **full use of the human capital available** in Metropolitan Bilbao also requires swifter progress to be made in the incorporation, under equal terms,

of women into the labour market. In spite of the steady equalisation of the educational backgrounds of men and women, the rate of female employment is lower than among the male population. This lower rate of employment is informed not only by high rates of unemployment, but also by cultural factors and the unequal distribution of household tasks and child and dependent care.





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# PUBLIC SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION

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**T**he Public Administration, in the broadest sense of the term, is an ever-present feature of people's lives, through the impact of its decisions and actions, and in economic terms it accounts for over 10% of GDP. In view of its importance, those people working in the Public Administration are a "vital asset" in our society for reinforcing the "spirit of professionalism", best practices, sacrifice, a job well done, and risk".

Consideration should be given to the following lines of action:

**1. Fine-tune the political and administrative decision-making system**, guaranteeing that it is based on the best data and knowledge available at any given moment on a global level.

**2. Transform the public administrations, reinforcing their management and provider capabilities** at the expense of their traditional role involving regulations and benefits.

**3. Favour organisational diversity in the public sector by fomenting new hybrid public-private partnerships**, as an assurance of flexibility, efficiency and accountability.

**4. Strengthen the autonomy of the different agencies that make up the public sector.**

**5. Update the training of public sector workers**, prioritising their commitment to the mission and values of public organisations and the development of management competencies.

**6. Introduce a results-based budget** for all the public institutions in Metropolitan Bilbao.

**7. Instil a culture of assessment** in the different programmes and projects instigated by the public administrations, with a view to analysing their impact on improving the population's standard of living and the creation of public assets.





8. Drive the **population's involvement in the design and joint provision of public services.**

9. The public administrations need to acknowledge that they have to tackle **increasingly complex challenges** within an environment characterised by uncertainty. This

complexity calls for the **integration of different visions and experiences**, both within the public sector and in partnership with business and civil society. This renders it essential to seek closer cooperation between the various administrative departments, public organisations and government levels.



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# HEALTH, QUALITY OF LIFE & CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

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**T**he Basque Country has furnished itself with a very advanced healthcare system, in which pride of place is taken by the public health service (Osakidetza), which guarantees **universal and “free” care, with medical cover extending** to over two million people. This health system requires a major collective effort. Suffice to say that Osakidetza is the largest employer in the Basque Country, with over 33,000 personnel and an annual budget of 2.55 billion euros (25% of the Basque Government's budget). To complement this health service, there is a range of care services provided by Provincial Councils and Local Authorities.

**Certain considerations about the system:**

■ **Regarding health as a healthcare investment cost. The following would be expedient:**

- Continue to **improve the internal efficiency** of processes and resources.

- **Coordinated management of the public and private sectors.**

- **Research:** Extend the way health is seen to non-clinical or non-pathological disciplines that arise from or are closely linked to clinical and pathological practice.

■ **“Exploiting” our investment in health**

There is a need to leverage the research process to gain returns for our health system that will help it to advance and contribute to its financial sustainability. **Furthermore, we should provide the framework for a thriving health sector** within our economic activities, **as a way of creating jobs.**

■ **Care for the elderly**

One of the more salient aspects of modern Basque society, and one that is likely to gain in importance over the coming years, is the **problem of ageing** and, in particular, the issues revolving



around the care for the elderly when they become significantly disabled.

The segment of elderly people, whose wealth and experience enable them to enjoy life to the full, is a resource of unquestionable value for society, but one that is not always appreciated. Hence the reason that Metropolitan Bilbao should consider the needs and limitations of the elderly by making Bilbao a city and environment that is truly prepared to provide a home, respect and care for them. The successes stemming from advances in medicine and healthcare technologies have managed to “add years to life”; nevertheless, **the challenge is how to enjoy them**, bearing in mind that health is synonymous with personal fulfilment and wellbeing.

The rate of ageing in the Basque Country continues its upward trend. Faced with this problem, there is a need to incentivise policies that adjust to current circumstances, with the aim being to guarantee the system's sustainability.



*Intergenerational* coexistence should be one of the future's main priorities. This means exploiting the talent available among those aged over 65, while not discriminating against young people without experience, as our pension system relies on their inclusion in the job market.



# 6. INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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**H**ereinafter there are testimonies about the document forwarded by some of the more than one hundred international experts, who have collaborated with the Association over the last 25 years:

## **Igor Calzada**

**Oxford University, United Kingdom**

*"I thank you very much for the information about the interesting process "Metropolitan Bilbao 2035". Certainly, it is a priority for the future of Metropolitan Bilbao in particular, and for Euskadi in general."*

## **Bernd Fessel**

**ECCE-European Centre for Creative Economy, Germany**

*"We are honoured by your invitation to contribute to the Bilbao Strategy 2035."*

*I want to take this opportunity to deepen our cooperation, especially in the Network for Innovations in Culture and Creativity. ECCE would be happy to contribute in a substantial way to your anniversary."*

## **Sho Hagio**

**Nagoya Institute of Technology  
NITech, Japan**

*"It is my honour and pleasure to be informed of your Strategy for Metropolitan Bilbao for 2035. I have looked through your draft document, just to find it considerably elaborated as well as challenging."*

*I feel that you are attempting to preserve a socio-economic balance between efficiency and fairness."*

## **Charles Landry**

**Comedia, United Kingdom**

*"The document is clear and concise. Clearly I appreciate your focus on values and the elements within those."*





### **Luis Raúl Matos**

**George Washington University, USA**

*"I consider it is an excellent initiative and gladly contribute to the Project."*

### **Klaus North**

**Wiesbaden University, Germany**

*"The 'Metropolitan Bilbao 2035' strategy is a very deep document covering a universe of topics.*

*The document reflects much a thought of engineers designing a new society and entrepreneurs who implement it.*

*Concerning the change, I suggest integrating the thoughts of the Nobel Prize for Economics, Daniel Kahneman, brilliantly described in his book 'Thinking, Fast and Slow'.*

*I hope it will result a good document that will help guide the people from Bilbao to find viable paths to a happy future."*

### **Juana María Orozco**

**Strategic Plan of Cdad. Juárez, Mexico**

*"I've been and I'm still a "fan" of Bilbao Metropoli-30 and whenever it is appropriate, I mention it as an example of civic revitalization and public-private cooperation. Thanks for taking me into account.*

*I have carefully read the document and I have shared it with some actors of this community interested and engaged in the progress of the city and they were all amazed and envious (in a good sense of the word). We all agree that the realities of Bilbao and Cd. Juarez cannot be more dissimilar. You have a consolidated, compact, progressive city, with strong institutions and credibility.*

*Greetings and congratulations on the success achieved."*



## **Michel Sudarskis**

**INTA-International Urban  
Development Association, The Hague,  
The Netherlands**

*"I reply with some comments to your excellent document on the Future of Bilbao.*

*Tensions, inequalities and conflicts of interests should be recognized as permanent elements creating complexity and uncertainty in urban development.*

*The key variables are those under the control or influence of Bilbao. Other sets of variable are outside this control: global transformation of modes of living, moving around and working through the impact of socio-demographic changes and the digital economy; climate change; capacity to fund the development without debt while maintaining a stable tax system over a long period not mentioning the changing role of the State and Regional Authorities.*

*Another key question is how to take into account the increase autonomy of communities wanting to manage by themselves their living environment.*

*I hope they remain constructive."*

## **Leo van den Berg**

**EURICUR-European Institute for  
Comparative Urban Research,  
Rotterdam, The Netherlands**

*"The document shows that the passion and vision within Bilbao Metropoli-30 is still there after almost 25 years!*

*As you know, I had the pleasure to visit your organization several times, and I was impressed by the way you have succeeded to organize the Bilbao metropolitan region in a very innovative and sophisticated way. That is why we presented Metropoli-30 as a best practice on modern metropolitan governance in our book "Metropolitan Organizing Capacity" (...)*

*Looking at your new strategy, again I can say that in my opinion you are very state of the art. It is in harmony with the findings of our most recent international comparative research on desired urban management (...)."*



# **METROPOLITAN BILBAO 2035.**

## **A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE**

| STRATEGIC REVIEW |







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