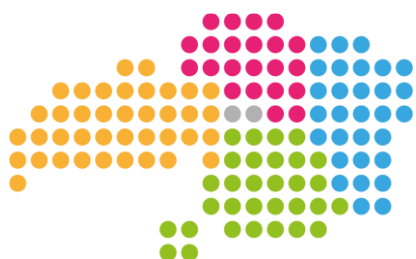


Integrating the territorial dimension for cohesive S3.

Credit: rawpixel1

Regional Action Plan for BIZKAIA (Biscay)

Bilbao (Bizkaia), January 2022



Bizkaia Oreakan

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Project	Interreg COHES3ION. Integrating the territorial dimension for cohesive S3
Partner Organisations concerned	BEAZ Bizkaia (Lead Partner) Azaro Fundazioa
Country	Spain
NUTS 2 Region	Basque Country
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2. POLICY CONTEXT

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- *Investment for Growth and Jobs programme*
- *European Territorial Cooperation programme*
- **OTHER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY INSTRUMENTS**

Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed: **COUNTY-LEVEL COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC PROMOTION OF BIZKAIA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL (BIZKAIA OREKAN - BISCAY AT BALANCE)**

2.1. Policy instrument:

As an introduction to this action plan it is necessary to underscore that the **policy instrument originally chosen** and contained in the application form for Bizkaia, **ERDF OP 2014-2020 of the Basque Country** and its successor OP 2021-2027 (currently being drafted) **are policies defined by the Basque Government's Economy and Planning Department (NUTS2)**, over which the Biscayne partners of the Interreg Cohes3ion project, **BEAZ (NUTS3) and Azaro (Sub NUTS3)**, have limited action and decision-making power.

As a result, and in order to **maximise the impact of the actions contained in this plan**, the decision has been made to guide it towards a **policy for which the partners from Bizkaia play a prominent role in its design and implementation** (Bizkaia Orekan -Biscay at balance)¹, where Beaz acts as a collaborating entity and Azaro participates as a stakeholder.

Initially selected Policy Instrument: **ERDF OP 2014-2020 OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY**

Policy Instrument to be address in the RAP: **COUNTY-LEVEL COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC PROMOTION OF BPC (BIZKAIA OREKAN)**

Thus, the Action Plan developed by Bizkaia has the aim to have an impact on the County-Level Competitiveness Strategy of the Department of Economic Promotion of Bizkaia Provincial Council (NUTS3), the main aim of which is to advance towards a competitive and territorially-balanced Bizkaia, based on a collaborative, multi-level governance model.

The County-Level Competitiveness Strategy of the Department of Economic Promotion of Bizkaia Provincial Council, A.K.A “Bizkaia Orekan” (Biscay at balance), aims to improve the competitiveness of SMEs in the territory of Bizkaia, by establishing collaborative work between provincial-level governments, Bizkaia Provincial Council (NUTS3), and county-level economic development agencies (a sub-NUTS3 level). In order to do so, Bizkaia Orekan aims at generating a new governance model between territorial actors, to include the territorial dimension in competitiveness and innovation policies funded by the regional ERDF OP in Bizkaia. Thus, it responds to a priority with a more horizontal character, not to specific sectoral/technological priorities.

Besides, Bizkaia Provincial Council has mainly transversal priorities regarding competitiveness, such as:

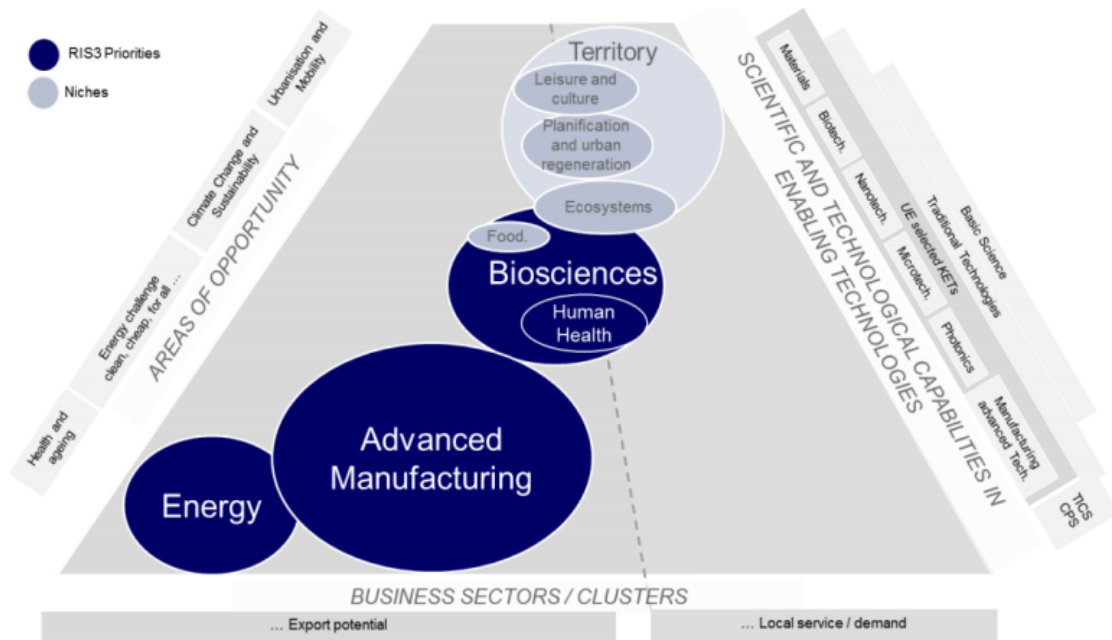
¹ For more details about the players participating in this policy and therefore in the drafting and implementation of the Regional Action Plan that seeks to have an impact on it, see point “2.2. Players involved in Bizkaia's RAP”

- Increasing advanced/innovative entrepreneurship
- Fostering SME innovation, internationalisation & advanced investments
- Foreign investment attraction
- Development of future talent & skills...

But it also has some sector-specific ones such as:

- Automotive & Aeronautics
- Metal-mechanics industry (supporting activities)
- Health & biosciences
- Fintech
- Design & creative industries
- Tourism

These priorities are perfectly well aligned with the regional S3 strategy of the Basque Country (NUTS2)²:



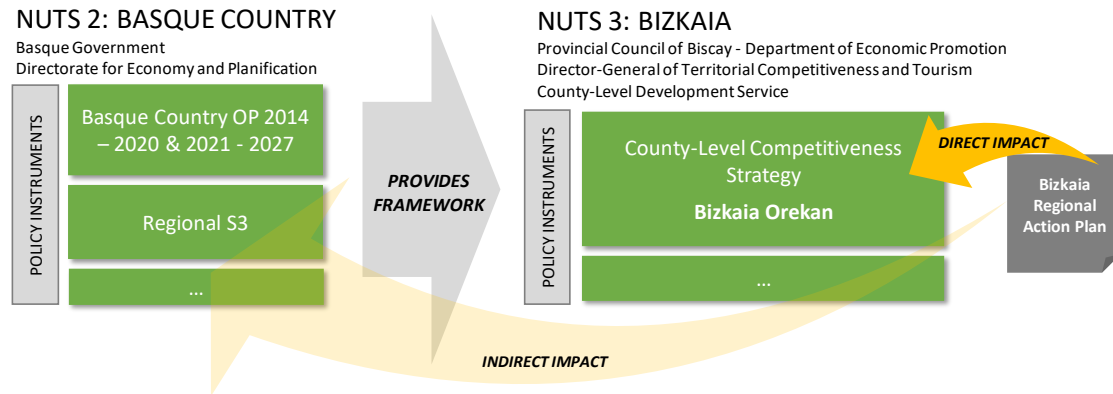
Source: SPRI / Basque Government

Therefore, although Bizkaia’s RAP will not be focused on the official regional S3 (NUTS2) nor the regional OP 2014-20, due to the lack of competences of the partners from Bizkaia in this matter, the actions included in this plan will focus on impacting multi-level governance in Bizkaia, which will definitively have an impact on Bizkaia’s County-Level Competitiveness Strategy and on the underlying governance model of the latter, which has established links with the regional S3, and will contribute to improve indirectly, thanks to the inclusion of the territorial dimension, the implementation of the regional S3 and the policy instruments funded by the ERDF OP 2014-2020 of the Basque Country and OP 2021 – 2027 (currently being drafted), which was the original policy instrument contained in the initial application form of Interreg Cohes3ion.

The following graph attempts to establish the “policy relevance” of this action plan, or how by means of Bizkaia’s RAP there is a direct impact on the policy instrument finally chosen (County-Level Competitiveness Strategy of the Department of Economic Promotion of Bizkaia Provincial

² <http://ris3euskadi.eus/>

Council – Bizkaia Orekan), and indirect impact on other policies defined at regional level such as S3 or the ERDF Operational Programme.



2.2. Players involved in Bizkaia's RAP

As stated in the previous point, Bizkaia’s RAP will focus on the County-Level Competitiveness Strategy of the Department of Economic Promotion of Bizkaia Provincial Council (Bizkaia Orekan), on which the lead partner, BEAZ, has the possibility of acting through the Department of Economic Promotion of Bizkaia Provincial Council (BPC).

In this sense, it is worth mentioning that the development and implementation of this action plan included working actively with the stakeholders from Bizkaia currently involved in Bizkaia Orekan, though their roles and contributions differ depending on their role in the initiative:

a) PROMOTERS OF THE POLICY

The County-Level Competitiveness Strategy of the Department of Economic Promotion of Bizkaia Provincial Council (more well-known as Bizkaia Orekan) is an initiative defined and promoted by the County-Level Development Service of the Directorate-General of Territorial Competitiveness and Tourism of the Department of Economic Promotion of Bizkaia Provincial Council, which is supported by its provincial public company Beaz (Lead partner of Interreg Cohes3ion) for its deployment.

At the management/coordination level, the work of both the team at the County-Level Development Service and at Beaz consists of defining and agreeing on priorities, establishing guidelines, proposing areas to work on within the framework of Bizkaia Orekan and monitoring the strategy and its development.

At operational level, the technical teams at BPC and Beaz are involved in daily operations (coordination of working groups, monitoring ongoing lines of work, etc.) and in the direct relationship with local and county development agencies.

Therefore, involvement of the team from the Directorate of County-Level Competitiveness Strategy of the Department of Economic Promotion of BPC in the development of this RAP and in its implementation is key, both in terms of design (definition of priority actions), and to the subsequent deployment of the action, given that the provision of the necessary financial resources necessary for the deployment of the activities and actions defined in this RAP must have the approval of said Directorate and of the County-Level Competitiveness Strategy.

b) RECIPIENTS/PLAYERS IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE POLICY:

Bizkaia Orekan aims to foster the competitiveness of Bizkaia's business fabric (particularly SMEs in the industry and related services sector) in a balanced way, paying attention to the realities and needs of the fabric in every corner of Bizkaia.

The necessary involvement local and county-level players as agents who actively participate in the deployment of economic promotion activities defined at a supra-county level (by BPC and at regional level by the Basque Government) was the foundation on which Bizkaia Orekan was defined, which has enabled:

- achieving a better inclusion of local and county-level realities in the design of BPC's policies (bottom-up vision);
- achieving better knowledge in counties about BPC's policies for competitiveness (top-down vision);
- training existing players for the consolidation of governance models and county-level competitiveness strategies in the medium-long term and focused on action in such a way that they become referential entities before the business fabric of their counties.

The Bizkaia Orekan network of agencies is currently formed by 24 agencies (one of them, Azaro Fundación, is a partner of the Cohes3ion consortium) that represent 111 municipalities in Bizkaia:

County	Municipalities covered	Agencies
Arratia	<i>Amorebieta-Etxano, Arantzazu, Areatza, Artea, Bedia, Dima, Galdakao, Igorre, Lemoa, Ubide and Zeanuri</i>	Errota Fundazioa
		Amorebieta-Etxano Municipal Council
		Galdakao Municipal Council
Busturialdea	<i>Ajangiz, Arratzu, Bermeo, Busturia, Ea, Iantxobe, Ereño, Errigoiti, Forua, Gaategiz de Arteaga, Gernika-Lumo, Ibarrangelu, Kortezubi, Mendata, Morga, Mundaka, Murueta, Muxika, Nabarniz and Sukarrieta</i>	Bermeoko Behargintza
		Lanbide Ekimenak Gernika
Durangaldea	<i>Abadiño, Atxondo, Berriz, Durango, Elorrio, Ermua, Garai, Iurreta, Izurtza, Mallabia, Mañaria, Otxandio and Zaldibar</i>	Ermua Municipal Council
		Durango Association of Municipalities
Enkarterri	<i>Alonsotegi, Artzentales, Balmaseda, Galdames, Gordexola, Gueñes, Karrantza, Lanestosa, Sopuerta, Trutzioz and Zalla</i>	Behargintza Enkartur
		Enkarterri Association of Municipalities
Eskuinaldea	<i>Erandio, Getxo and Leioa</i>	Behargintza Erandio
		Getxolan
		Leioako Behargintza
Ezkerraldea	<i>Barakaldo, Portugalete, Santurtzi and Sestao</i>	Behargintza Sestao
		Inguralde Barakaldo
Lea Artibai	<i>Amoroto, Aulesti, Berriatua, Etxebarria, Gizaburuaga, Ispazer, Lekeitio, Markina-Xemein, Mendexa, Munitibar-Arbatzegi Gerrikaitz, Ondarroa and Ziortza</i>	Azaro Fundación
Meatzaldea	<i>Abanto Zierbena, Muskiz, Ortuella, Trapagaran and Zierbena</i>	Meatzaldeko Behargintza
Mungialdea	<i>Arrieta, Bakio, Fruiz, Gamiz-Fika, Gatika, Laukiz, Maruri-Jatabe, Meñaka and Mungia</i>	Mungialdeko Behargintza
Nerbioi Ibaizabal	<i>Arakaldo, Arrankudiaga, Arrigorriaga, Basauri, Etxebarri, Orduña, Orozko, Ugao-Miraballes, Zaratamo and Zeberio</i>	Arrigorriaga Municipal Council
		BHG Basauri-Etxebarri
		BHG Orduña
		ADR Gorbeialde
Txorierri	<i>Derio, Larrabetzu, Lezama, Loiu, Sondika and Zamudio</i>	EGAz Behargintza Txorierri
Uribe Kosta	<i>Barrika, Berango, Gorniz, Lemoiz, Plentzia, Sopelana and Urduliz</i>	ADR Jata-Ondo LGE
		Uribe Kostako BHG

Given the central role of these agencies in the deployment of Bizkaia Orekan, their participation and involvement in the development of these RAP is of particular interest, as their role key in the deployment of the defined actions.

c) ADVISORY PARTNERS

Since Bizkaia Orekan was launched it has been supported by expert agents in different areas to reinforce the initiative. These include:

- **Orkestra - Basque Institute of Competitiveness:** Advisory partner in Cohes3ion, Orkestrais dedicated to the study of competitiveness and regional development through different lines of research, with three goals: to contribute to the improvement of the Basque Country's competitiveness, to promote the improvement of citizens' wellbeing and to create knowledge of regional competitiveness. Since its origins, Bizkaia Orekan has helped by their knowledge and contributions.
Their involvement in the definition of this RAP and in particular in the deployment of Action 2 is essential, given their know-how in the field of competitiveness.
- **Innobasque – Basque Innovation Agency:** promoting innovation in the Basque Country. Its aim is to be an instrument for the coordination and promotion of the Basque science, technology and innovation system. It was created at the request of the Basque Government and is part of the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Council, as the head body for participation, consultancy and leadership for scientific, technological, research and innovation policy within the sphere of the Basque Autonomous Community.
- **Cluster associations:** as representatives of the priority sectors in Bizkaia and aligned with RIS3 Euskadi, Bizkaia Orekan receives specific collaboration for the development of some initiatives with AIC/ACICAE, the Basque Automotive Cluster, as well as with the Basque Energy Cluster.

In addition, these agents provide a regional vision to Bizkaia Orekan, as their sphere of action is at the Basque Country level (NUTS2).

2.3. Learnings form the Smart Territorial Mapping (STM) process

The learning exchange process developed during phase 1 of Cohes3ion has made it possible to draw significant learnings on which the present RAP is based.

On the one hand, a diagnosis of the situation prepared by Smart Territorial Mapping and its assessment has enabled us to identify a series of areas for improvement, the most important of which are described as follows:

- a) **Renewal of political commitment and shared vision:** it is considered key to allow for collaboration at the technical level, as many of the technical teams working at municipal/county level depend on priorities established by politicians. In addition, it is necessary to have a shared and agreed vision of what Bizkaia Orekan is in order to guide efforts and not create false expectations.
- b) **Involvement of new players:** We should try to include also the regional governments' perspective in the work that has been done, to ensure the alignment of the 3 levels of governance (regional/Basque Country – province/Bizkaia – county/local), as well as other new players such as SMEs

- c) **New working perspective:** Until now, we have been working with a zonal perspective, based on the geographical proximity of the counties conforming them. However, maybe another perspective should be taken into account, based more on the local/county level business fabric capabilities or similar priorities defined by non-adjacent counties. In addition, work is being done at a very operational level on defined lines of work. It would be convenient to develop the governance model in such a way that collaborative spaces for reflection are encouraged more, as well as individual monitoring of what each agency does in order to accompany and support them in their role as agents of economic promotion.
- d) **Need for quality information and a balance scorecard** to review the impact of the activities developed under the Bizkaia Orekan framework, as an smart tool to foster strategic thinking at county level.
- e) **Financial support for county/local agents in their economic development role:** In order to achieve constant and continuous work with the local business fabric and further progress in the implementation of the projects, it would be interesting to have a fixed annual economic support package for the county/local agents involved in Bizkaia Orekan.

Bizkaia's regional action plan addresses point a) through Action 1, points b) and c) with Action 2 and point d) through Action 3.³

2.4. Learnings from Cohes3ion Partners Case Studies

When defining how to address the proposals for improvement drawn from the STM concerning the Bizkaia Orekan policy instrument, and in order to define the actions of this plan, inspiration has been drawn from the case studies presented during the field visits to the regions of the Cohes3ion partners. Below are the main cases that can be used as a learning to define this plan, although later each action talks about how it has been inspired by each one of the following cases.

- a) **INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL INVESTMENT - ITI (MAZOVIA).** The experience carried out in Warsaw, where 40 neighbouring communes cooperate in order to define a shared investment strategy that is executed through European funds, shows us **the importance of having a shared strategy of mutual understanding, contained in an official document, which guarantees/certifies political commitment** and the deployment of which is based on action-focused projects, in such a way that the stakeholders can see how the defined and agreed priorities are materialised. In the case of Warsaw, these projects are materialised in: public e-services, low emission transport & general and pre-school education. Likewise, it shows us the need for **having a specific budget** destined to the development of collaborative actions.
- b) **EMSCHER-LIPPE REGION (RUHR).** The "region within a region" initiative is similar to the case of Bizkaia, where the historical territory has much weight, competences and a population of more than 1 million inhabitants (Bizkaia would be the equivalent of the Emscher Lippe region) within a broader region that is the Basque Country (the equivalent of the Ruhr region). Politicians' involvement, a region within a region. Within this context, the WiN initiative is launched. *"Together with enterprises, municipalities and institutions, we develop sustainable projects that are viable for the future. Our goal is to provide successful examples for structural change in the Ruhr district. Through selected projects in the areas of technology,*

³ Despite being one of the main learnings of the STM, in order to solve point e) a programme was launched to promote county-level competitiveness in 2020, the beneficiaries of which are local and county-level agencies that are part of the Bizkaia Orekan governance model.

*infrastructure and education we want to promote a model region. Digitalization and sustainable economy are key aspects in the pursuit of this goal". 12 municipal councils participate as shareholders, as well as the private sector represented by key companies in the area (among them BP and E.on). Beyond the interest in the projects launched, which aim to respond to the region's challenges, building on its skills to contribute towards generating economic activity and a "region of knowledge" (Wirtschaftsregion), what interests us about this initiative for Bizkaia is the example of **public-private collaboration, and how key companies participate in the governance of this initiative, which through WiN coordinate the development of the project, the network of agents, and provides feedback to the political stakeholders.***

- c) **SOUTHERN REGIONAL SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY (RSES) AND CONSULTATION PROCESS (SOUTHERN REGION IRELAND).** The design of the strategy has included the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, covering the "quadruple helix" which includes: institutions and elected representatives from the municipalities involved (reinforcing the need to search for political compromise), representatives from the region's business industry-fabric, knowledge and civil society agents. We consider it is also interesting how they approach both sectoral and territorial perspectives in the RSES strategy, the sectoral perspective through the thematic working groups and the territorial perspective through the metropolitan area working groups. In Bizkaia Orekan we are currently considering the territorial perspective when creating the working groups since we have 4 zonal working groups, the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western ones. Applying the learnings from this case to Bizkaia leads us to **reassess the current governance model and the zonal working groups, to evolve towards a model that enables working more on spheres of shared interest instead of due to geographical proximity.**
- d) **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR STOCKHOLM COUNTY - RUF5 2050 (STOCKHOLM).** A good example of how to create a more polycentric development plan to ensure that the region is not only developed around Stockholm but includes 8 other regional hubs. Very interesting is how the local conditions were analysed and then taken into account in the plan; the development process of the plan, and how different actors (e.g. municipalities) have been involved. Also, the different activities included for different regional hubs and how the plan addresses this diversity in their actions. This experience tells us about the importance of **including the political sphere in negotiations**, in such a way that they receive the necessary approval to support the work at a technical level. In addition, it teaches us that **organising working groups by "topics" (or spheres of shared interest) instead of due to proximity makes much more sense if the objective is to launch specific action-based initiatives.**
- e) **STOCKHOLM BUSINESS ALLIANCE – SBA (STOCKHOLM).** A good example of **multi-level collaboration with participants from local (municipal) – regional (county/regional) and inter-regional (cross-county) levels.** Very useful is how the Alliance relates to the priorities of the region/municipalities, and how the priorities of the plan are established through a multi-level negotiation. Also interesting is how the collaboration was created and the value they provide for municipalities, which resembles the Bizkaia Orekan initiative.
- f) **ARLOESIADUR – INNOVATION MAPPING IN WALES (WALES).** Arloesiadur is a collaboration between Nesta and the Welsh Government to map innovation in Wales. **They have used new data to measure and visualise Wales' industry, research and tech networks with the goal of informing government policies that drive growth.** Economists and policymakers recognise that innovation is one of the main ways to address the big challenges

of our time, but to support innovation, we first need to understand it. In Arloesiadur (meaning 'Innovation Directory' in Welsh), Nesta has tried to create this data by using new data sources, data science methods and visualisations about industrial, tech networking and research activity in Wales. This initiative promoted by Wales endorses the idea that any strategy or policy (including the S3 and innovation strategies) must include a prior analysis and diagnosis that enables a comparison of the evolution over time of the indicators, as well as a comparison within the region itself.

The Bizkaia Orekan initiative was launched in 2016 after establishing, through an analysis of the territory of Bizkaia, the heterogeneity among its different counties, and the opportunity arose to **update and reinforce these analyses as a tool to define initiatives and encourage shared reflection with municipalities and counties, and to provide this information on a platform that makes it possible to carry out diagnoses (scenarios), information-sharing, and its systematic updating.**

3. DETAILED ACTIONS

Action 1: Development of a consensual strategy document that ensures political commitment within Bizkaia Orekan

a) Relevance to the project & Background

One of the main learnings of the current stage of Bizkaia Orekan has been the need to have a framework document that describes the Bizkaia Orekan County-Level Development Strategy and its priorities. Clearly setting out the objectives pursued with the initiative is key to be able to communicate them and share them with all those involved and the stakeholders, at both provincial government level (leader of the initiative) and at county/local level (main participants and executors of the actions). In addition, this document can be used so that the political establishments of both levels can ratify the commitment, such that the technical teams have the necessary backing to participate in the initiative. It is also considered important to have some kind of financial instrument linked to the strategy, whose beneficiaries are the local and county-level development agents. This instrument should support initiatives that serve to promote the strategic objectives defined by the framework document.

This action is inspired by the **Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) initiative by Mazovia**, a success case that endorses the need to have some kind of framework strategy, with shared objectives, to which the municipalities can adhere and which contains the political commitment to give guarantees to the technical teams that will later carry out the projects with full transparency. In this case, the need to provide a specific budget for the actions also arises, in order to promote their development in line with the strategic framework.

b) Description & nature

This action consists of the design and drafting of a strategic framework for Bizkaia Orekan (County Level Development Strategy) that contains the mission, vision and strategic objectives of the strategy and which provides an umbrella framework for the technical working groups in the deployment of specific actions and projects. In addition, it will be used as an "adhesion" document so that the political teams in municipalities and counties can ratify their commitment to Bizkaia Orekan.

Several sub-actions are contemplated in this respect:

1. Preparation of the draft strategic framework. In order to galvanise this process, the possibility of having external support will be assessed.
2. Contrasting and validation by the stakeholders (political representatives) for their "adhesion" and renewal of the commitment to Bizkaia Orekan.
3. Communication and dissemination of the strategy. Consideration is given to taking advantage of the celebration of the annual multitudinous institutional event for such purposes, in addition to institutionalising a series of political -technical visits/meetings for each county/municipality in order to establish agreements and achieve shared commitments.
4. Reflection on the redesign of the financial instrument (available since 2020) which encourages the development of initiatives aligned with the defined strategy and which contribute towards its implementation.

Besides the definition of this strategy, during the development of Cohes3ion and thanks to the learnings of the interregional knowledge exchange and the smart territorial mapping exercise, during 2020 the Department of Economic Promotion put in place a Program whose beneficiaries are the local and county level agents involved in the Bizkaia Orekan initiative. This Program funds

activities and projects developed by those agencies to enhance innovation and competitiveness of SMEs in their territorial scope.

Policy change due to action: having a consensual strategy document serves the policy instrument (Bizkaia Orekan) in terms of ensuring political commitment, which right now is unofficial (work at the technical level often suffers from this un-officiality). This factor is key to ensure that local and county-level agencies continue to be involved in Bizkaia Orekan’s multilevel governance model and continue to work together to develop projects and activities to promote SMEs competitiveness by promoting innovation. Besides, having the strategy expressed out in a document will help to align priorities among provincial and county level, and a more rapid & easy contextualization for attracting new possible members. Furthermore, the Program put in place in 2020 to support economically projects put in place by the agencies in Bizkaia Orekan, has already resulted in the development of over 47 new financed initiatives proposed by 24 entities, 12 of which have been in collaboration between two or more of those agencies. More than 150 SMEs and entrepreneurs are involved on those projects. This Program supports the work of the technical staffs of the agencies, but in order to reinforce the commitment of political teams responsible for those agencies, there’s need of some sort of consensual document. The development of Aciton 1 tackles this need.

c) Players involved

Preparation of the strategy:

- Bizkaia Provincial Council – Cabinet of the Deputy of Economic Promotion
- Bizkaia Provincial Council – Directorate-General of Territorial Competitiveness (political and technical team)
- Beaz Bizkaia
- Orkestra – Basque Competitiveness Institute
- External hiring

Contrasting and feedback on the strategy:

- Political representatives from the municipal and county entities

d) Timeframe

November 2021 – May 2022

ACTION 1	11/2021	12/2021	01/2022	02/2022	03/2022	04/2022	05/2022	06/2022	07/2022	08/2022	09/2022	10/2022	11/2022	12/2022
Preparation of the strategic framework	█	█	█	█										
Contrasting and validation					█	█	█							
Communication and dissemination					█	█	█							
Reflection on the financial instrument					█	█	█							

e) Costs

Approx. €36,000 for hiring the external provider that coordinates the preparation of the strategy. Tendered in 2021.

f) Funding sources

Beaz Bizkaia budget through the transfer made by the Department of Economic Promotion within the framework of the Bizkaia Orekan initiative.

Action 2: Review of the governance model of Bizkaia Orekan, in order to seek the involvement of other players

a) Relevance to the project & Background

After 5 years of intense work at Bizkaia Orekan, which have been useful to establish trusting relationships and stable communication channels between different levels and institutions, certain fatigue can be perceived in the current governance model, divided by areas of geographical proximity, as well as the need to take this step to evolve towards a different model that leads to a new stage in the Bizkaia Orekan County-Level Development Strategy. In addition to the strategic reflection resulting from action 1, it is highly probable that the current governance model must be revised, regarding its participants, the existing forums and the content/operation of each one of them.

Several success cases presented by the Cohes3ion partners encourage us to carry out this reflection. On the one hand, the example of cross county collaboration which is developed within the framework of the **Stockholm Business Alliance (SBA)**, helps us to continue with our commitment to the current multi-level collaboration model, in which the priorities are co-defined among the different administrative levels. On the other hand, the example of **Emsher-Lippe (Ruhr)** has helped us to see the importance of reinforcing political commitment, and to value the inclusion of representatives from the private sector and from key companies in order to evolve towards an inter-institutional and public-private governance model, with a project-based approach. Additionally, the experiences of **RSES Ireland and RUF5 202 in Stockholm** inspire us to evolve our current model in which geographical zoning is limiting, towards a distribution based on priorities and themes of shared interest on which to develop projects and initiatives in collaboration.

b) Description & nature

This action could be encompassed within the definition of the framework strategy as a result or sub-action of the same, but it is an entity in its own right due to the magnitude and importance involved in redefining the governance model of Bizkaia Orekan. In this respect, the action will consist of:

1. Redefinition of the governance model (participants, functions, forums and contents)
2. Contrasting and consensus with the rest of the stakeholders
3. Effective start-up of the new model

Policy change due to action: by this action we pretend to change how the governance model is organized currently. Not just breaking down the zonification of the working groups (based on geographical proximity), but also defining new forums that are lacking right now, such as forums for stablishing direction & coordination, forums for knowledge exchange (not just working groups), forums to include SMEs perspective...This supposes a core change in Bizkaia Orekan.

c) Players involved

Design of the new model:

- Bizkaia Provincial Council – Directorate-General of Territorial Competitiveness (political and technical team)
- Beaz Bizkaia

Contrasting and feedback:

- Political representatives from the municipal and county entities

d) Timeframe

April 2022 – December 2022

ACTION 3	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-16	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Redefinition of the governance model														
Contrasting and consensus														
Start-up														

e) Costs

The estimated costs of reflecting on the governance model for Bizkaia Orekan can be considered insignificant from the point of view of the Cohes3ion project costs, as the action will be implemented within the current activity of the team from Beaz Bizkaia and Bizkaia Provincial Council working on the Bizkaia Orekan initiative.

External costs included in the budget of Action 1.

f) Funding sources

The current action does not require additional funding and will be carried out within the current activity of the team from Beaz Bizkaia and Bizkaia Provincial Council.

Action 3: Development of an online competitiveness observatory, as a strategic smart tool

a) Relevance to the project & Background

Originally, the Bizkaia Orekan County-Level Competitiveness Strategy was based on a competitiveness diagnosis carried out by Orkestra - Basque Institute of Competitiveness, which analysed the strengths of the business fabric in each of Bizkaia's regions. This analysis led to a collaborative and inter-institutional governance model through which the aim was to launch actions to reinforce the competitiveness of the business fabric throughout Bizkaia, catering to the needs and local realities of companies, in such a way that Bizkaia as a whole could advance in a balanced way in terms of competitive performance. However, since 2016 no exercises of this type have been carried out again.

At this point it is considered essential to have an up-to-date competitiveness model that establishes and builds a set of indicators that enable us to compare the competitive performance 1) over time (whether the Bizkaia Orekan Strategy is truly helping to improve Bizkaia's competitiveness as a whole and in a balanced way) and 2) in the different regions (at municipal, county level).

Having this smart tool will enable promoters of the County-Level Development Strategy to make decisions based on quantitative information and objective indicators. In addition to sharing this information with the rest of the stakeholders, so that the county and local level policy makers can also define priorities based on objective diagnoses.

The **Arloesiadur initiative in Wales** is an example of how it is necessary to have up-to-date indicators on the performance of the innovation when designing policies and making decisions, and that facilitating the sharing of this information (diagnosis) in real time via a web platform is a high value smart tool when co-developing policies in collaboration with other stakeholders and policy makers. Additionally, the contributions made during the peer reviews by the partners from

NWR Romania and Stockholm corroborate the need for having quality data in order to develop scenarios, make comparisons and diagnoses... on which to base the strategic planning.

b) Description & nature

This action consists of the design of Bizkaia's own competitiveness framework (based on the one that already exists at Basque Country-level and developed by Orkestra - Basque Institute of Competitiveness), which contains a framework of indicators that enables us to measure the competitive performance of the territory of Bizkaia as a whole and also at county level, favouring reflection and the definition of policies collaboratively at inter-institutional level.

Several sub-actions are contemplated in this respect:

1. Definition of Bizkaia's competitiveness framework. Establishing the foundations of what requires measuring and consequently building the necessary panel of indicators (in close collaboration with Orkestra).
2. Preparation of the initial diagnosis for Bizkaia, and later at county level (including a comparative analysis of the 12 Counties included in the Bizkaia Orekan County-Level Development Strategy).
3. A preliminary project for the design of a web platform that makes it possible to share and have available in real time updated information, as a competitive smart tool that fosters shared reflection. *(This sub-action will probably supersede the time horizon planned for the implementation of the Cohes3ion Action Plan, meaning that only the preliminary project to design said website is included within the scope of this plan (preliminary study of the desired functionalities, technical requirements...) not the execution nor the actual start-up of the same).*

Policy change due to action: Right now, decisions are made based in generic statistics provided by Eustat (Basque institute of statistics). Developing a specific framework for Bizkaia will allow us to monitor the impact of Bizkaia Orekan initiative in real time in terms of competitiveness for our territory. Sharing it with local/ county level authorities will favour knowledge transfer and having a tool for diagnosis and follow up of the activities and projects developed by the stakeholders in Bizkaia Orekan. The main change will be that decisions within Bizkaia Orekan will be based on real evidence and will provide guidance and identification of new working areas to tackle.

c) Players involved

- Orkestra – Basque Competitiveness Insitute
- Bizkaia Provincial Council (BPC)) – Directorate-General of Territorial Competitiveness (political and technical team)
- Beaz Bizkaia

d) Timeframe

January 2022 – December 2022 *(does not include the development of the web platform, only the initial design of the observatory and the desired functionalities).*

ACTION 2	11/2021	12/2021	01/2022	02/2022	03/2022	04/2022	05/2022	06/2022	07/2022	08/2022	09/2022	10/2022	11/2022	12/2022
Definition of Bizkaia's competitiveness framework														
Preparation of initial diagnosis														
Web platform preliminary project														

e) Costs

The work contained within the 2022 horizon includes reflection on the set of indicators and the definition of the content that Bizkaia's Competitiveness framework must have. It is estimated that

the development of the web platform, which will have a significant cost, will go beyond this time horizon and is therefore not included in the implementation of this plan.

f) Funding sources

The dedication by the team from Beaz and BPC is included within the activities of Biscay Orekan. The dedication by Orkestra is included within the agreement signed by the Department of Economic Promotion with said entity, meaning that additional funds are not required.

4. SIGNATURE

The Department of Economic Development of Bizkaia Provincial Council, through its public entity Beaz, agrees to support and promote the implementation of the plan detailed above.

Date: 17 DECEMBER 2021

Name: Olatz Goitia Urkiaga

Position: General Manager at BEAZ Bizkaia

Signature:

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OLATZ GOITIA
(R: A48229058)

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