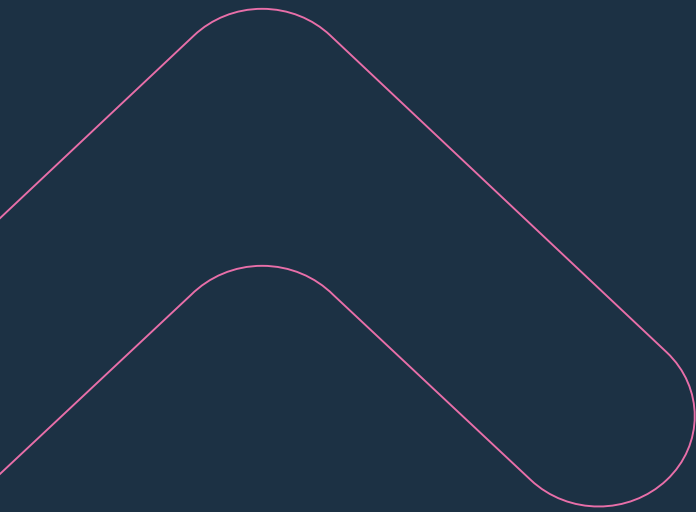
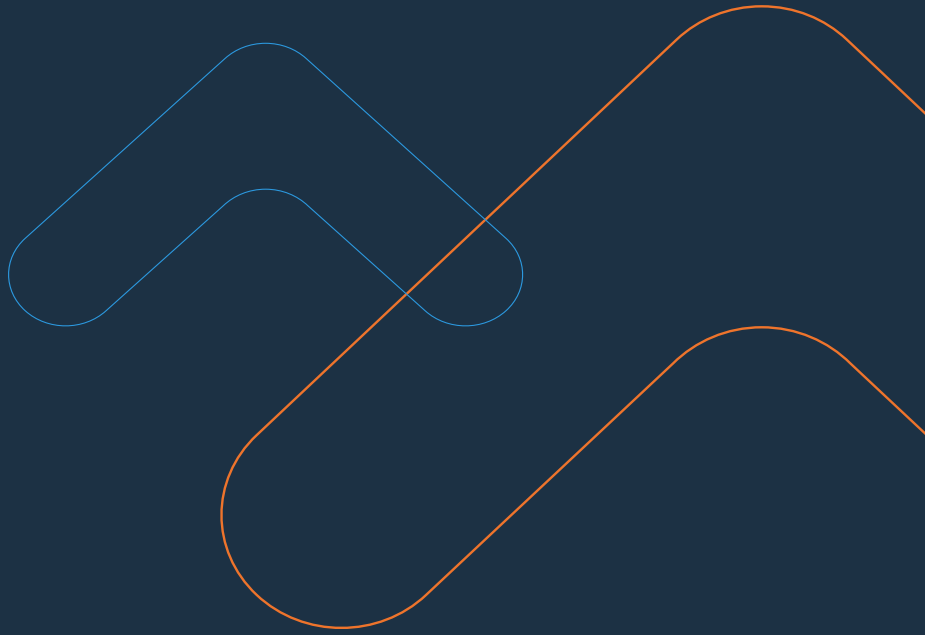




**European Capital
of Democracy**

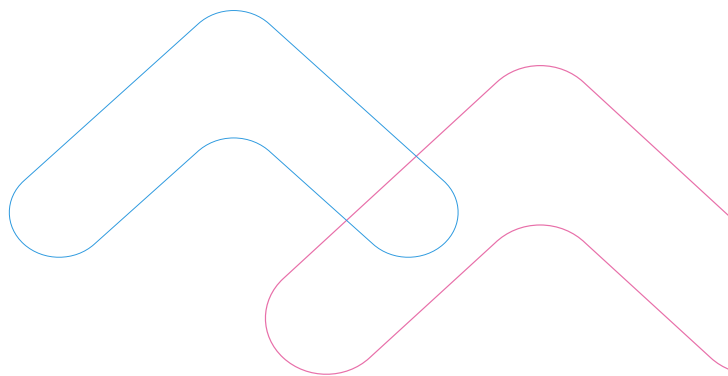


ECOD 2026 APPLICATION

Cascais

February 2025

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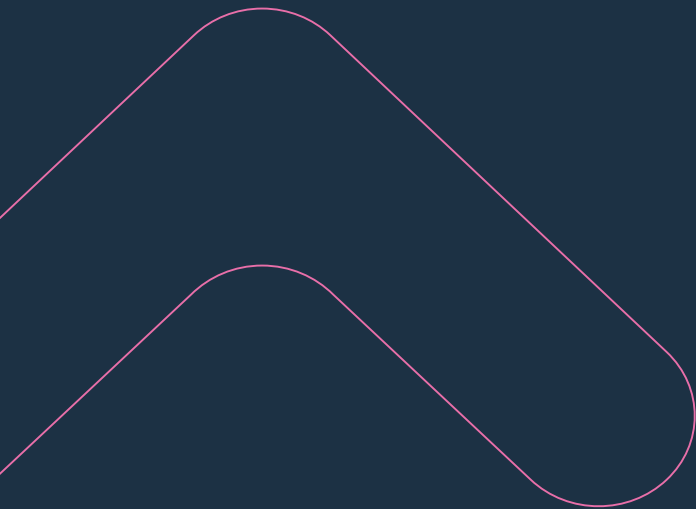
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ECOD 2026 APPLICATION - CASCAIS

Mission Statement



Mission Statement

Cascais: Building a Resilient Future Together

Teaser

Cascais empowers every citizen to shape a sustainable and inclusive future through innovative health and social systems, pioneering environmental efforts, and a participatory democracy that fosters resilience, accessibility, and community well-being. „Cascais, the best place to live for a day, a week, or a lifetime“.

Summary

Cascais is a city where democratic innovation and civic engagement come to life through the active participation of its residents. Guided by the principle that sustainable governance begins with its people, Cascais has developed unique, long-term initiatives that empower citizens to shape and care for their community, making democracy tangible in everyday life. A flagship example is the TUTORES DE CASCAIS, a civic network fostering social cohesion and environmental stewardship, uniquely successful in Portugal with a waiting list of citizens eager to contribute to their community's well-being. This inclusive program, which reflects Cascais' commitment to diversity, engages a wide demographic and incorporate insights from the Citizens' Council, established two years ago, to deepen community input. Contributions from Tutores de Cascais, spanning urban maintenance to waste management, have resolved thousands of requests, directly enhancing the quality of public spaces for over 175,700 residents. Terras de Cascais, a cornerstone of civic engagement, redefines urban agriculture by turning urban spaces into sustainable farms, proving such initiatives can thrive in a city of European standards. This project emphasizes the value of growing one's own food and fosters a culture of environmental stewardship and self-sufficiency. Inclusive by design, Terras de Cascais welcomes participants, from all walks of life, including families, students, and even inmates, who engage in workshops to cultivate the land and even sell their produce. It also offers residents with unused land the chance to connect with aspiring farmers or those wishing to cultivate their own food through the Land Bank initiative. With training and resources provided, Terras de Cascais cultivates intergenerational connections and a sense of pride in sustainable practices, strengthening community bonds and reinforcing the city's commitment to inclusivity. The Vida Cascais platform exemplifies Cascais' innovative approach to health and social solidarity, leveraging digital tools to expand access to essential services and uphold human rights. This multi-sectoral network consolidates key resources - including telemedicine, mental health support, housing, and community programs - into a single, accessible platform. Designed to grow organically, it adapts to urban development and the evolving needs of citizens, ensuring it remains a dynamic and responsive tool for the community. Cascais' commitment to sustainability, inclusivity, and intergenerational support demonstrates that a resilient democracy is one that listens, adapts, and values the contributions of each citizen.

Mission Statement

Democratic Ambitions

Cascais is dedicated to fostering a transformative approach to democracy, rooted in accessibility, inclusivity, and resilience to present and future challenges. We believe true democratic innovation lies in empowering citizens to shape their community actively. To this end, Cascais has implemented strategies that increase opportunities for civil society to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes, crafting a community that is adaptable, connected, and invested in its collective future.

Initiatives like Terras de Cascais and Tutores de Cascais enable residents to take a central role in co-managing public spaces, supporting environmental stewardship, and contributing directly to policy development. Through these programs, Cascais strengthens social cohesion across all generations and demographics, ensuring every resident has a stake in the city's growth. By integrating citizens from various backgrounds and age groups, we empower them to influence critical decisions in urban planning, sustainability, and social well-being. Building resilience to climate and social challenges is also a core ambition.

Cascais addresses pressing issues such as climate change, social inequality, and economic resilience through policies that foster sustainable practices and democratic resilience. A reflection of this commitment is the Municipal Roadmap for Carbon Neutrality 2050, a strategic plan aimed at achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. This initiative sets actionable goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting a culture of environmental accountability, and involving citizens, local organizations, and businesses in sustainability practices. The roadmap aligns immediate actions with long-term impact, ensuring future generations benefit from the foundations we build today. Furthermore, we aim to lead in digital transformation with inclusivity at its core. Recognizing that technology can bridge participation gaps, Cascais prioritizes digital accessibility and skill-building, especially among seniors, while actively encouraging youth involvement. By fostering intergenerational dialogue and promoting active participation through digital democracy platforms, we are building a city where digital tools enhance, rather than restrict, democratic engagement for all.

Cascais cultivates a democratic culture that continuously strengthens the synergy among public institutions, the private sector, and civil society, enhancing a model of local democracy that is resilient, forward-thinking, and adaptable. Our ambition is to refine and expand this model, creating a democracy that is not only representative but actively responsive to our community's evolving needs. Enriched by residents from over 120 nationalities, Cascais draws on its cultural diversity to shape a vibrant, inclusive city, where varied perspectives fuel innovation and strengthen our shared goals.



Mission Statement



Achieved Successes

Cascais is a city where participatory democracy thrives, inviting every citizen to shape a sustainable and inclusive future. This vision stems from a deep commitment to community well-being and respect for each voice in our multicultural mosaic, with residents from over 120 nationalities.

Here, governance isn't a distant practice; it's woven into everyday life through policies that prioritize accessibility and active participation. As the only city in Portugal with its own local health and social system, Cascais challenges the status quo. Vida Cascais, a cornerstone of this system, ensures that all residents have access to a family doctor and a wide social support network. This service not only addresses basic health and social needs but also promotes civic literacy, educating citizens about their rights and available resources to encourage their engagement. For Cascais, access to health and knowledge forms the foundation of a strong, united community where every voice is valued. Citizen participation is at the heart of Cascais. Its innovative and highly sought-after participatory system gives residents the chance to directly influence city development. With a continuously growing waiting list, Cascais's participatory model demonstrates that citizens are eager to contribute, taking an active role in managing public spaces, environmental issues, and urban planning decisions. This reflects a sense of belonging and community pride, where every person, regardless of age or background, finds a place to be heard.

Cascais is also widely recognized as a smart city, pioneering technological and environmental initiatives that strengthen its commitment to sustainability. The Municipal Roadmap for Carbon Neutrality 2050 exemplifies this commitment, setting clear goals to reduce carbon emissions and protect local ecosystems, ensuring they can be enjoyed by future generations. As a city, we understand the power of social cohesion. By investing in social economy programs that promote gender equality and tackle economic disparities, our city creates opportunities for vulnerable groups and promotes local employment, reinforcing the bonds of trust between citizens and the administration. We want to ensure that each resident can fulfill their purpose of life and that it is not dependent of fragile circumstances.

Everyone deserves the right to have access to opportunities. In Cascais, the success of democracy is measured by community well-being and the commitment of every citizen to building a prosperous future together.

Mission Statement

Future Challenges

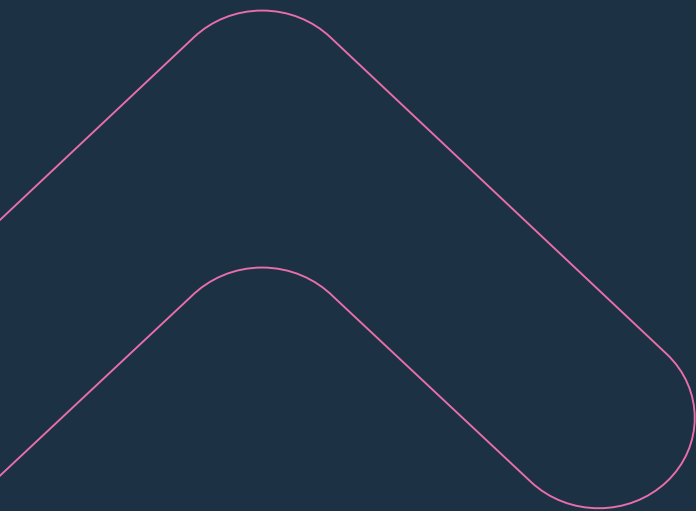
Cascais continues to advance democratic innovation and sustainability, facing evolving challenges that require adaptive solutions and a commitment to inclusivity. These challenges present opportunities for growth and call for a focus on building a resilient, accessible democracy.

Addressing climate change's impact on urban resilience is a key priority. Cascais is strengthening its climate adaptability, especially in managing vulnerable coastal areas and green spaces. The Cascais Carbon Roadmap 2050 outlines a collaborative pathway to carbon neutrality, uniting public institutions, citizens, and organizations in this mission. The Municipal Climate Action Council, comprised of civil society and academic representatives, ensures climate actions remain inclusive and data-informed. The roadmap and other initiatives foster community-led environmental responsibility, offering a long-term vision where residents are actively engaged in achieving sustainability targets. Reducing social and economic inequalities remains a core objective. While Cascais has promoted inclusivity, disparities continue to limit full democratic engagement. The city is committed to expanding support for vulnerable groups through targeted programs and fostering a more inclusive economy. Initiatives that lower participation barriers, such as affordable housing programs and social support services, help ensure this mission. Ensuring housing affordability is increasingly challenging. Rapid urban growth and rising property values make finding affordable housing difficult. Cascais has approved a Local Housing Strategy, planning to invest 330 million euros by 2028 to provide over three thousand housing solutions, including acquiring and rehabilitating properties. The municipality is currently acquiring 79 houses and rehabilitating 73 buildings to address this critical need. Sustaining intergenerational collaboration remains essential. Cascais benefits from demographic diversity, but fostering engagement across age groups requires ongoing effort. The city promotes intergenerational programs that unite younger and older residents, encouraging mutual support and knowledge-sharing. Digital literacy for seniors and youth-led environmental projects are central to maintaining a culture of shared responsibility. Maintaining social cohesion during rapid urban expansion is also vital. As Cascais grows, preserving community bonds and fostering belonging are increasingly important. The city prioritizes inclusive planning that creates vibrant spaces and integrates feedback from residents to align expansion with community values.

Meeting these challenges requires a collaborative framework where public institutions, the private sector, and civil society unite to achieve shared goals. Cascais believes that by addressing these issues with citizen-centered solutions, it can build a stronger, more resilient city and set an example of democratic adaptation for communities worldwide.

ECOD 2026 APPLICATION - CASCAIS

Projects



Cascais – Project 1

BEST PRACTICE | PERMANENT
[HTTPS://AMBIENTE.CASCAIS.PT/](https://ambiente.cascais.pt/)

Tutores de Cascais: Citizen Engagement in Urban Sustainability

Brief description

The Tutores de Cascais program engages local citizens as “tutors” of their neighborhoods, community gardens, and beaches, fostering community-led monitoring and stewardship of Cascais’ public spaces. This initiative was designed to empower residents in urban management and environmental care. With over 257 active tutors covering more than 90% of the municipality, the program enables residents to monitor issues related to urban cleanliness, waste collection, green spaces, and public safety. This proactive approach strengthens local democracy, environmental awareness, and community ties. Through a collaborative model, Tutores de Cascais ensures real-time feedback between the community and municipal services, achieving a remarkable 98% issue resolution rate. By promoting active, inclusive participation, the program strengthens civic responsibility and enhances the quality of life in Cascais.

Detailed description

Tutores de Cascais is an ongoing civic engagement initiative that empowers citizens to actively monitor and improve urban spaces throughout Cascais. Originally launched as the Neighbourhood Tutors program, it has since expanded to encompass Beach Tutors and Community Gardens and Orchards Tutors, covering a wide range of public areas. This model encourages citizens to participate in addressing urban and environmental challenges, demonstrating Cascais’ commitment to sustainable, resident-led urban governance. In this program, volunteers - referred to as “tutors” - are assigned specific areas within Cascais and regularly report on issues related to waste management, public safety, urban maintenance, and environmental stewardship. Tutors’ real-time reporting enables municipal teams to respond promptly, optimizing service efficiency and showcasing the value of local insights. Through these efforts, the network spans over 90% of the municipality, ensuring

comprehensive coverage and consistent community feedback. A unique aspect of Tutores de Cascais is its integration with the Citizen’s Council, which provides a structured platform for community input. This council supports the program’s democratic impact by aligning the management of public spaces with both individual and collective perspectives, fostering inclusivity across diverse demographics.

Cascais – Project 1

Tutors, through their consistent contributions, reinforce a culture of shared responsibility for high-quality public spaces, promoting social cohesion and strengthening environmental awareness. Cascais Ambiente, the municipal company responsible for the program, manages all aspects, including the recruitment, training, and support of tutors, as well as coordination with municipal service departments to address reported issues. The program collaborates with local NGOs, community associations, and educational institutions, which are instrumental in outreach efforts, organizing community workshops, and volunteer recruitment. These partnerships expand environmental awareness and public engagement, further integrating civic participation into the daily life of the municipality. The project is funded mostly by the Municipality of Cascais, with additional support from private sector partnerships, such as Vodafone, which provides mobile devices for efficient communication between tutors and Cascais Ambiente. The stable, annual funding from the municipality underscores Cascais' dedication to active citizenship and sustainable urban practices. The impact of Tutores de Cascais is multifaceted. Environmentally, it supports improved waste management, urban cleanliness, and public space conservation, aligning with Cascais' sustainability goals. Socially, it builds a sense of ownership and pride among participants of various ages and backgrounds, fostering intergenerational and diverse civic engagement. With a high issue resolution rate and growing community involvement, Tutores de Cascais has established itself as a model for scalable, resident-driven public space management. Looking ahead, Cascais aims to enhance the scope and scalability of Tutores de Cascais, further reinforcing the democratic connection between residents and local government. As a citizen-driven stewardship initiative, Tutores de Cascais exemplifies Cascais' commitment to a high quality of life, inclusivity, and sustainable urban practices.

Contribution

Tutores de Cascais aligns closely with Cascais' mission to foster a resilient and engaged community through active citizen participation. This project is unique for its scalable, co-management model, empowering citizens to actively monitor and care for public spaces in partnership with municipal services. During the ECoD Programme Year, Tutores de Cascais could be showcased as a best-practice model for civic engagement and sustainable urban management. It could include interactive workshops, hands-on field visits with current tutors, and panel discussions featuring project leaders and community partners. This would provide ECoD participants with practical insights into building community-driven co-management systems, offering a replicable approach to fostering citizen-led urban care across Europe.

Collaboration

Tutores de Cascais exemplifies inclusivity by engaging citizens from diverse backgrounds, including seniors, families, and young adults, who share a commitment to improving their local environment. The program partners with community associations to recruit and support tutors, ensuring a wide-reaching impact across all neighborhoods.

Cascais – Project 1

Collaboration

Training sessions and materials are provided to empower volunteers, and additional support is available for residents with limited access to technology. Regular communication channels - such as in-person meetings, phone support, and a mobile app - allow tutors to stay informed and connected, fostering an open dialogue between the community and the municipality. This inclusive approach strengthens social cohesion and civic pride, reinforcing Cascais' commitment to accessible, citizen-driven governance.

Target Group(s)

The program targets all residents of Cascais aged 18 and older, with a strong focus on fostering civic engagement among diverse demographics. Currently, the program engages over 257 active tutors, representing a wide range of ages and backgrounds. The initiative also indirectly benefits the entire municipality by enhancing the maintenance of public spaces, which supports community well-being. Due to its adaptable model, it has significant potential for replication in other regions.

Communication

Tutores de Cascais is promoted through the municipality's social media channels, website, community workshops, and local events, ensuring widespread visibility and engagement. Regular updates are shared via municipal newsletters and public platforms, while webinars and local media features highlight the program's impact and invite new participants. To monitor impact, quarterly meetings with volunteers, the City Council project leader, the Cascais Ambiente Director, and other municipal representatives provide a direct forum for constructive dialogue, enabling citizens to voice concerns and engage openly with local leaders. Intervention requests are also tracked, achieving a notable 98% resolution rate. Community feedback drives continuous improvements, while annual public reports ensure transparency and reinforce Cascais' democratic values.

Project Setup

The Tutores de Cascais program is primarily managed by Cascais Ambiente, the municipal environmental management entity of Cascais. A dedicated team within Cascais Ambiente oversees the project's daily operations, including a senior technician assigned full-time to the program and other staff members who contribute to its administrative, logistical, and environmental aspects. The coordination ensures timely response to reported issues and supports the Tutors through training and resources. Externally, the program collaborates closely with local community associations, and educational institutions to support volunteer recruitment, promote environmental education, and organize community workshops. These partnerships help expand public awareness and encourage civic participation across different demographic groups within Cascais. This structure ensures a strong, collaborative framework that enables Tutores de Cascais to maintain a high rate of service efficiency and community engagement.

Cascais – Project 1

Participation of Civil Society

Civil society organizations are actively involved in the Tutores de Cascais program through partnerships with local community associations, educational institutions, and environmental NGOs. These organizations help to recruit, support, and engage volunteers, which bolsters outreach and environmental education efforts. Through these collaborations, Tutores de Cascais effectively taps into a network of community stakeholders, ensuring that diverse voices are represented and engaged in maintaining and enhancing public spaces. This involvement reinforces a shared sense of community responsibility and fosters stronger relationships between the municipality and its residents, making the project an inclusive initiative rooted in community collaboration and shared goals.

Budget - Initial

Initial strategic planning and subsequent updates, including the expansion of the program to cover new areas like vegetable gardens and beaches. These costs cover assessment, coordination meetings, and any associated preparatory work required for expanding and adapting the program. **Planning costs: 4,999€**

Budget - Annual

Annual budget covering the full-time senior technician's salary, administrative support, training resources for tutors, and operational expenses, including transportation and equipment. This allocation also supports regular maintenance of program infrastructure and resources needed for daily operations. **Operating costs: 36,000€**

Yearly expenses for promoting the program through social media, website updates, community workshops, informational materials, and public outreach to engage citizens and expand participation. **Communication costs: 2,500€**

Budget - Total

Total Budget 43,499€

Funding

The Tutores de Cascais program is primarily funded by the municipality of Cascais as part of its ongoing commitment to fostering active citizenship and environmental sustainability. For the period 2022-2026, the budget allocated to this initiative is structured as follows: 2022 – €35,000; 2023 – €36,000; 2024 – €39,000; 2025 – €44,000; 2026 – €46,000. This funding ensures the program's continuity and supports the recruitment, training, and management of volunteer tutors, covering neighbourhood, community gardens, and beach areas. Additionally, partnerships with private sector entities, such as the provision of mobile devices by Vodafone, contribute resources to the project's operational needs. This combination of municipal funding and private sector support underscores Cascais' dedication to enhancing civic engagement and environmental stewardship across the municipality.



Cascais – Project 1



Programme Year Integration

During the ECoD Programme Year, Tutores de Cascais can be showcased as a best practice model for civic engagement and environmental responsibility. The program could feature interactive workshops where participants from other cities learn about the tutor system, co- management techniques, and strategies for community-based public space care. Guided field trips with current tutors can provide hands-on experience in citizen-led monitoring, demonstrating how local knowledge improves urban management. Additionally, a panel discussion with key stakeholders – Cascais Ambiente, local NGOs, and active tutors - can offer insights into scaling similar projects and fostering long-term resident involvement in urban governance.

Democracy Dimension

Participation

Cascais – Project 2

BEST PRACTICE | PERMANENT
[HTTPS://VIDA.CASCAIS.PT/](https://vida.cascais.pt/)

Vida Cascais Platform

Brief Description

Recognising the potential of digitalisation, Cascais invested significantly in technological infrastructure to become a more connected and sustainable city. Vida Cascais, an innovative quality-of-life platform, is built in values of proximity, solidarity and service quality for all residents. Vida Cascais embodies the municipality's Local Health and Social Solidarity System in partnership with various government, and civil society stakeholders, ensuring access to comprehensive health and social support services. The platform offers universal, free access to essential services to enhance well-being and quality of life across areas like health, social support, housing, education, sport, culture and leisure. Emphasizing personal development and family care, Vida Cascais brings vital services to residents' fingertips, setting a new standard of care and accessibility.

Detailed Description

The motto "It all starts with people" guides our approach to finding the best solutions for the community of Cascais. Innovation and technology are vital to our strategy, facilitating sustainable growth, enhance social cohesion, and an elevated quality of life through excellent services.

Responding to the ongoing needs of the community and promote well-being in a sustainable way, Vida Cascais was developed as a transformative platform that not only responds to immediate needs but also anticipate future demands. This platform is the result of a multi-level partnership with the four Parish Councils, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Cascais, the Portuguese Red Cross, the D. Luís I Foundation, and the Cascais Foundation. Together, these partners have been instrumental in identifying community needs and delivering integrated health and social services across Cascais. Vida Cascais' Integrated Care Centres, located in each parish, aim to prevent social exclusion and guarantee access to health and social protection services. Through these centers, residents and families receive support, guidance and accompaniment in areas such as Health, Social Solidarity, Housing, Legal, Education, Employment and Social Benefits. As part of our Health and Solidarity initiative, we partner with the Portuguese Blood Institute and other local associations to organize 50 annual blood drives, promoting citizenship and solidarity.

Cascais – Project 2

Detailed Description

Within Vida Cascais, the “Plan+ Health” space, operated with local associations, offers diverse monthly health initiatives such as dance classes, hiking, meditation, nutrition workshops, and mental health support, ensuring that citizens remain active and well-informed. Since mental health is an area often neglected, with few people having adequate access to treatment, the Unidade Saúde + programme, offers a free local response in mental health and specialised therapeutic support, aimed at residents in vulnerable economic and social situations. To further support residents, Cascais created in 2020 the Viver Cascais card which initially provided free access to municipal public transport. Cascais is the only municipality in Portugal where public transport is completely free for all residents, workers and students. Incorporated by Vida Cascais, the card also offers residential health benefits with the aim of reinforcing and complementing the National Health Service, relieving pressure on the municipality's health centres. It provides free general, family, and paediatric teleconsultations, 24 hours 365 days a year, and free home delivery of medication, if prescribed during consultations. This service is provided in partnership with the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Cascais which offers a Permanent Medical Service. The card's benefits have grown to include free veterinary consultations, discounts on property taxes, free museums entries, and reduce rates for cultural events. In its support of Ukrainian refugees, the Municipality extends the Viver Cascais card, to new arrivals, providing them access to the same benefits as residents to ease their integration. Viver Cascais reflects a commitment to quality of life, and a sustainable, resilient future. A notable example is its recent implementation of the “Social Prescribing”, an all-age, whole- population initiative that connects residents with community activities, groups, and services to address the social, emotional, and practical factors impacting their health and well-being. This project, led by the Public Health National School, is building the infrastructure for social prescribing at the municipal level. It supports the integration of social and community-based approaches into primary care, aligning with the National Health System to promote a more comprehensive, connected healthcare experience for all residents.

Contribution

The Vida Cascais platform contributes uniquely to the mission by harnessing digital technology to broaden access to health and social services, fostering social equity. Defined by its multi-sectoral approach, digital inclusion, and commitment to a resilient local welfare state, Vida Cascais meets community needs effectively. Acting as a central hub, it provides seamless access to resources, initiatives, and rights, empowering citizens with knowledge and services in one place. For the ECoD Programme Year, Vida Cascais could pioneer a “Cascais Open Democracy Lab,” a digital and physical space where residents actively engage in shaping cultural, social, and civic projects.

Cascais – Project 2

Collaboration

Through the Vida Cascais Platform, Cascais residents, regardless of their socio-economic background, have equal access to health and social services. To address the digital divide, we deploy outreach to vulnerable neighbourhoods offering information sessions and personal check-ins to ensure residents are aware of the full range of services available on the platform, such as free medical care and psychological support, among others. Additionally, physical “Vida Cascais Centres” are established across the municipality to support those less comfortable with digital tools. Lessons learned are shared with neighbouring municipalities, reinforcing inclusion and regional justice.

Target Group(s)

The Platform is designed for all Cascais residents, effectively addressing social and health needs across diverse community sectors, reaching over 214,000 people. Its adaptable model holds significant potential for national and international replication. Proof of this is seen in the informational sessions Cascais City Council has provided to other municipalities nationwide, supporting their efforts to establish a local health and social solidarity systems tailored to their contexts and resources

Communication

We have adopted a multi-channel communication strategy to reach as many people as possible. The Vida Cascais platform has its own website and Facebook page, as well as being available on the municipality's official website and other social media platforms. Regular community meetings, newsletters and information sessions are held to keep citizens up to date on the new services available. To reach a European audience, we have been actively presenting our initiative at conferences and workshops. Our published periodic reports and policy publications detail the methods and approaches used, allowing other municipalities to understand our strategies and replicate them if so desired. To monitor and evaluate the project, we have a comprehensive data dashboard that tracks key metrics related to health and social services.

Project Setup

The Vida Cascais is multidisciplinary, covering various departments such as Health, Social Development, Digital Transformation and Education. A specialised team of health experts, social workers, digital technology specialists and educators are involved in providing services on the platform. Our local Parish Councils are vital, offering timely insight into the needs of the community. The Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Cascais is a privileged partner in many areas covered by the platform, such as citizens' access to a family doctor. The Portuguese Red Cross contributes significantly to projects for active ageing. These partnerships ensure that the platform's agenda remains innovative in its health and social care strategies. Local hospitals, healthcare providers, community-based social organisations, educational institutions, technology companies and national bodies such as the Ministry of Health are among our external partners who provide essential services through the platform.

Cascais – Project 2

Budget

Participation of Civil Society

Without civil society, the Vida Cascais platform would not exist. The municipality's partnerships encompass formal institutions and networks of volunteer citizens who play essential roles in disseminating information, implementing strategies, and monitoring services. The D. Luís I Foundation promotes active aging by fostering universality, accessibility, and digital engagement in cultural initiatives for residents over 65. Additionally, local volunteer networks provide valuable on-the-ground support, identifying community needs and potential barriers. This broad involvement ensures the program's inclusivity, responsiveness, and sustainable impact.

Budget - Initial

Initially, the planning cost of the project included the acquisition of furniture, medical equipment, computers and digital technology. **Planning costs: 860,294€**

Budget - Annual

The annual operating costs include all the services provided by Vida Cascais such as teleconsultations of general, family and paediatric medicine. **Operating costs: 419,000€**. Annually communication costs covering all outdoor advertising in the municipality. **Communication costs: 6,884€**

Budget - Total

Total Budget: 1,286,178€

Funding

Vida Cascais gives shape to the municipality's Local Health and Social Solidarity System (SL3S). It was developed by the City Council with a total annual cost of around €1,845,829 which represents 0.6% of the municipality's annual budget. In this specific project, the Cascais City Council was able to count on the support of Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Cascais (SCMC), which played an important role as a partner, funding 36% of the project, while the municipality funds 64%. The planning, execution and communication budget categories were fully funded by Cascais, which accounted for 56% of the project. On the other hand, operating costs (44% of the total project budget) were shared between both Cascais and its partners, whereby Cascais financed 81% while SCMC financed the remaining 19% of this sector.

Programme Year integration

Presenting the Vida Cascais platform as an innovative, community-centred, and intelligent health policy model can be done in a variety of ways. It may be featured or integrated in interactive workshops to explain its design and implementation, through a virtual tour of the platform to demonstrate its usability and inclusiveness. A viable idea would be to hold panel discussions with representatives of our partners to share their experiences and insights into how the platform has helped our community. Also, by holding a 'Health & Tech' fair, we will be able to explore the crossroads between digital innovation and healthcare, highlighting the use of technology to promote health and social equity. Interactive booths will enable users to experiment with the platform. Such events will showcase the impact and potential of the Vida Cascais platform and its replication in other contexts, reinforcing ECoD's commitment to promoting innovative, sustainable, and inclusive cities.

Democracy Dimension

Community

Cascais – Project 3

BEST PRACTICE | PERMANENT

[HTTPS://AMBIENTE.CASCAIS.PT/PT/TERRASDECASCAIS/TERRAS-CASCAIS](https://ambiente.cascais.pt/pt/terrasdecascais/terras-cascais)

Terras de Cascais: Together by Our Roots

Brief Description

Terras de Cascais is a heartfelt initiative that reconnects people with nature, encouraging a return to one's roots of cultivating the land, eating well, and nurturing a sustainable way of life. From community gardens to vineyards, orchards, and educational plots in schools and day centers, it transforms idle urban spaces into thriving green havens. By promoting organic food production and showing it can be accessible to all, the initiative empowers over 700 families and individuals of all ages and backgrounds to grow their own food, embrace healthy habits, and learn about sustainability. It also brings neighbors together and promotes solidarity, as surplus produce is shared with institutions in need. Through free training and resources, Terras de Cascais inspires a deeper connection to the earth, fostering a sense of pride, purpose, and community. It's a model for how shared responsibility and collective action can create greener, healthier, and more united communities.

Detailed Description

Terras de Cascais is a community-driven initiative that transforms urban spaces into thriving green areas, promoting local food production, environmental awareness, and social bonds. From community gardens to orchards, vineyards, and educational plots in schools and day centers, the project empowers citizens to rediscover the value of cultivating land while embracing sustainable practices. It showcases how urban agriculture can thrive in harmony with the needs of a modern city. At the heart of the program is Cascais Land Bank, an innovative platform connecting landowners with idle plots to individuals or groups eager to cultivate them. This mechanism addresses land abandonment while fostering collaboration through flexible agreements tailored to leisure, self-consumption, or profit. By revitalizing unused spaces, the Land Bank supports local food production, encourages young entrepreneurs, and strengthens community ties. Terras de Cascais provides participants with free training and resources to promote organic, sustainable practices and environmental education. Initiatives such as School Gardens, enables schools to integrate gardening as a hands-on teaching tool, combining environmental awareness with academic subjects like science and mathematics.

Cascais – Project 3

Detailed Description

The program offers technical support, training sessions, and educational materials such as the „School Organic Garden Workbook“, which helps teachers and students independently explore activities in the garden. From observing the life cycle of plants in science lessons to calculating compost quantities in math, the gardens bring learning to life. The Nest Gardens help aspiring entrepreneurs start local food businesses, creating jobs and boosting the regional economy. Meanwhile, the Community Vineyards bring Cascais’s winemaking heritage back to life, with a portion of the proceeds from the wine sales supporting social solidarity initiatives. The program’s inclusive design welcomes participants from all walks of life, including inmates, who receive training in organic farming and cultivate produce that is later sold to support their reintegration and skill-building. This initiative promotes intergenerational exchanges and strengthens community bonds, transforming shared gardens into hubs of mutual care, knowledge-sharing, and collaborative decision-making. Additionally, surplus produce is often donated to local institutions, reinforcing a culture of solidarity and environmental responsibility. Digital tools further enhance the program, supporting collaboration between municipal staff and the Tutores de Cascais, who help monitor garden maintenance and ensure compliance with sustainable practices. This system facilitates direct communication with gardeners, maintaining high standards and smooth operations. If plots are not properly cared for, they are reassigned to new participants, fostering accountability and optimal use of resources.

Gardens are equipped with essential infrastructure, including composting stations, tool shelters, and shared water access, all provided free of charge to promote accessibility and a sense of ownership among participants.

Terras de Cascais has become a defining feature of Cascais’s identity in sustainability efforts, bridging the gap between environmental goals and community participation. It nurtures healthier, more connected neighborhoods while laying the groundwork for future innovations in local food systems. It is rooted on the idea that local, seasonal, and organic food should be accessible to all. Cascais aspires to expand this model, inspiring other cities to adopt similar approaches to urban agriculture and food security. By doing so, the initiative contributes to global sustainability and demonstrates how shared responsibility can create greener, more resilient societies.

Contribution

Terras de Cascais contributes to the mission by fostering civic engagement, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability through community-driven urban agriculture. The project is special for its holistic approach: transforming idle urban spaces into green hubs for local food production, environmental education, and social solidarity. Its innovation lies in integrating tools like the Banco de Terras de Cascais, which connects landowners and aspiring farmers, and engaging diverse participants, from schoolchildren to inmates.

Cascais – Project 3

Contribution

By promoting shared responsibility and empowering citizens with knowledge and resources, it builds stronger social bonds and environmental stewardship. As part of the ECoD Programme Year, Terras de Cascais could host interactive workshops, showcasing how urban agriculture promotes democracy and community resilience. Public garden tours, panel discussions with citizens and experts, and hands-on planting activities could inspire other cities to replicate this model.

Collaboration

It fosters inclusivity by engaging residents from diverse backgrounds - low-income families, youth, seniors, and vulnerable groups identified through partnerships with local NGOs, schools, and community organizations. The project offers free garden plots, subsidized resources, and 12 hours of mandatory training in organic horticulture, ensuring all participants, regardless of background, can benefit from sustainable agriculture. Additionally, inmates from the Tires Women's Prison are involved, receiving training and remuneration to manage urban gardens, which reinforces the project's commitment to social reintegration. Community forums, workshops, and the Citizen's Council ensure the program aligns with the diverse needs of participants, fostering a sense of shared ownership. The program's design emphasizes intergenerational exchange, solidarity, and collaboration, making the gardens hubs for mutual care and empowerment.

Target Group(s)

Terras de Cascais is open to all residents, engaging over 700 participants, including families, youth, and seniors, in sustainable agriculture and community gardening. Supported by the Tutores de Cascais, who monitor shared spaces, it fosters accountability and environmental stewardship. The program promotes local food production, awareness, and healthy living while inspiring interest from other municipalities, offering a replicable model for community-driven sustainability.

Communication

It is communicated through a multi-channel strategy involving social media, local media, community workshops, and dedicated project webpages to engage and inform the public. Cascais Ambiente, in partnership with the Communication Department, collaborates with schools, NGOs, and local associations to reach various demographic groups, fostering broad community engagement. Progress and milestones are regularly shared on the municipal website and social media, allowing residents to stay informed and participative. For project evaluation, it employs key metrics like participant engagement, community feedback, and environmental indicators (e.g., soil quality, biodiversity tracking). Collaboration with students and researchers adds depth, providing comprehensive analyses of the initiative's environmental, social, and economic impacts. Annual impact reports summarize findings, enabling ongoing refinement of the program to meet Cascais' sustainability and community goals effectively.

Cascais – Project 3

Project Setup

Terras de Cascais is a permanent unit itself, integrated in the Urban Green Spaces Department of Cascais Ambiente (the municipal environmental company). Nevertheless, Terras de Cascais counts with the help of many other departments and units inside the municipal universe – the Social Intervention Division, the city council Department of Communication, the city council Department of Green Urban Spaces and all the other main departments and divisions who work transversely. Externally, Terras de Cascais also works with the local food aid associations (since they provide vegetables to vulnerable people), with the prison establishments located inside the municipality (since they have two vegetable gardens and orchard located inside prison facilities), with several universities, enterprises and consultants. Nowadays, the unit counts with 15 employees.

Participation of Civil Society

The initiative has created a vibrant community where individuals from diverse backgrounds -spanning local NGOs, environmental groups, food aid associations, and educational institutions. These partners actively support participant recruitment, provide targeted training workshops, and create pathways for vulnerable groups, reinforcing the project's alignment with community needs. A prime example of this community solidarity is the Solidarity Greens initiative, where 700 community vegetable gardeners from Terras de Cascais donate 1.5 tons of fresh, organic produce each Christmas to ten social food support institutions. This contribution reaches 1,200 families across Cascais, addressing the critical need for fresh and nutritious food often missing in standard food aid, which relies heavily on preserved goods. Through such partnerships, Terras de Cascais strengthens community bonds, improves health outcomes, and serves as a model for urban agriculture and social resilience.

Budget - Initial

The initial planning budget included the acquisition of land to provide community gardens in various areas of Cascais as well as orchards and vineyards. **Planning costs: 377,917€**

Budget - Annual

The Terras of Cascais operating cost represents monitoring costs related to community gardens, orchards, vineyards and school gardens, as well as costs with staff and raw materials. **Operating costs: 159,791€**. The annual budget for communication covers all outdoor advertising in the municipality. **Communication costs: 5,338€**

Budget - Total

543,046€

Cascais – Project 3

Funding

Terras de Cascais is primarily funded by the municipality of Cascais, reflecting the city's commitment to sustainable urban agriculture and environmental resilience. Initial planning and land acquisition costs, including the development of community gardens, orchards, and vineyards, totaled €377,917, fully supported by the city. The annual operating budget is approximately €159,791, covering monitoring, personnel, and material costs. In addition to municipal funding, the project has secured significant external support, including regional, national, and EU grants, such as funding from the LIFE ResLand program by the European Union, which promotes climate-resilient landscapes in the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park. This diversified funding model supports training, infrastructure maintenance, and accessibility, aligning with Cascais's vision for inclusive and sustainable development.

Programme Year integration

Terras de Cascais could be a centerpiece of Cascais' Food Week and GreenFest, Portugal's largest sustainability event, showcasing its innovative approach to urban agriculture, sustainability, and community engagement. During Food Week, activities could include workshops on urban farming, pop-up gardens, and art inspired by food gardens. Live cooking demonstrations by local chefs could highlight seasonal produce from Terras de Cascais, celebrating the connection between sustainable agriculture and culinary culture. At GreenFest, guided tours of project sites and hands-on farming experiences could immerse participants in sustainable agriculture. Panel discussions with urban farmers, environmental advocates, and community leaders could explore the project's role in civic engagement, food security, and ecological resilience.

Democracy Dimension

Sustainability

Cascais – Project 4

BEST PRACTICE | ONE-OFF | 02.01.2021 - 31.12.2024

[HTTPS://AMBIENTE.CASCAIS.PT/PT/PAGE/FUNDO-ADAPTCASCAIS](https://ambiente.cascais.pt/pt/page/fundo-adaptcascais)

AdaptCascais Fund: Enhancing adaptive capacity through citizens' participation

Brief Description

The AdaptCascais Fund, part of Cascais' Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan, supports local projects that turn climate adaptation ideas into action. This pioneering initiative mobilizes civil society, encouraging their active role in addressing climate challenges by promoting awareness, expertise, and training across the community. The Fund prioritizes nature-based and structural solutions, empowering local entities with the resources to implement adaptation measures. Through project financing, beneficiaries are equipped to tackle specific environmental vulnerabilities, contributing to Cascais' resilience and preparing the Municipality for climate-related impacts. AdaptCascais not only fosters a proactive approach to climate resilience but also strengthens community ties by actively involving citizens and local organizations in creating a safer, sustainable future.

Detailed Description

The AdaptCascais Fund, part of Cascais' Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (PA3C), supports local projects aimed at transforming climate adaptation ideas into actionable projects. The Fund's primary goal is to mobilize civil society, encourage climate adaptation, and empower local entities to implement resilient, ecosystem-based measures. As an innovative municipal initiative, AdaptCascais aligns with national climate adaptation strategies while responding to local environmental challenges. Established in 2021, AdaptCascais' inaugural edition allocated €24,000, funding nine projects that addressed climate-related vulnerabilities. Supported initiatives included environmental restoration, water conservation education, community green spaces, and local campaigns to raise climate awareness. Each project received up to €3,000, ensuring a broad reach across communities, especially those at higher environmental risk. Following the program's success, the budget for the second edition in 2023 increased to €48,000. Similar criteria applied, with individual project funding capped at €3,000, and a continued focus on adaptation to Cascais' unique environmental needs. Managed by Cascais Ambiente, the municipal environmental agency, the Fund operates with clear guidelines to maximize project impact. Cascais Ambiente facilitates application assessments, distributes funds, and monitors project outcomes, ensuring that projects align with PA3C objectives.

Cascais – Project 4

Detailed Description

In 2021, the nine awarded projects included initiatives focused on coastal and green space restoration, reducing plastic pollution, and promoting sustainable water use. Projects such as “Caparide, Ribeira Viva” focused on river restoration and youth engagement, while “Zero Waste Talks” addressed food waste in relation to climate impacts. These grassroots initiatives fostered community involvement, transforming shared spaces into resilient areas that reflect the region’s commitment to sustainability. AdaptCascais operates on a structured project timeline: successful applicants must complete projects within 120 business days and report progress to qualify for final payments. Up to 60% of funds are disbursed upfront, with the remainder provided upon submission of a final impact report detailing outcomes, actions, and benefits to the community. This method ensures projects are completed efficiently while promoting accountability and transparency. In its second edition, projects expanded in scope, including initiatives like “Food4Climate”, which educated youth on sustainable food practices, and “Memorandum”, a reforestation project using the Miyawaki method to create dense, native forests for ecosystem restoration. By empowering diverse groups, including social and environmental organizations, AdaptCascais reinforces the value of community-led climate action, engaging a wide demographic in adapting to environmental challenges. The AdaptCascais Fund has seen tangible successes, with every selected project making a visible difference in Cascais’ community resilience and environmental adaptation efforts. Recognized internationally, the Fund exemplifies how mobilizing local communities can instil a sense of responsibility and foster active participation in climate action.

Contribution

Cascais fosters community-driven solutions to strengthen social cohesion, equal opportunities and eco-friendly practices for a resilient future. The AdaptCascais Fund goal mobilizes local participation, training and climate awareness, advancing adaptive, nature-based solutions that reduce vulnerabilities caused by climate change. This collaborative approach enhances environmental projects success, promotes social equity, and ensures that conservation benefits reach those directly impacted. In 2022, the Fund was recognized by the Green Destinations Story Awards, securing second place in the “Good Practice Stories” category. Its initial impact is significant: 6,000 kg of plastic removed from the ocean, 1,150 metres of green spaces preserved, 380 kg of waste eliminated, 91 trees planted and 2,075 citizens actively involved.

Collaboration

The AdaptCascais Fund promotes inclusivity by ensuring all local organizations, regardless of their size or experience, have equitable access to funding based on their project’s potential climate impact. Calls for proposals are publicly shared through City Hall and Cascais Ambiente, inviting broad participation. The selection process is transparent: results are announced online, followed by an open feedback period, and a final report is published detailing winning projects, descriptions, and allocated budgets. By involving civil society, local parish councils and citizens, the Fund fosters a collaborative, community-inclusive approach to climate resilience, empowering the community to shape and strengthen Cascais’ environmental adaptation strategies with locally driven ideas and initiatives.

Cascais – Project 4

Target Group(s)

Public entities in Cascais - including associations, NGOs, environmental and social organisations - are eligible to participate, allowing access for all of Cascais' 214,214 residents as well those who work or study in the area. Over 2,700 participants have already engaged. The AdaptCascais Fund model has strong potential for replication nationally and internationally, inspiring stakeholders and strengthening local sustainability and resilience across Europe.

Communication

The Fund's regulation and budget were developed by the City Hall, approved by the Municipal Assembly, and publicly accessible through the Portuguese Republic Official Journal and the municipal website. Calls for proposals are widely publicized by the municipal environmental entity, Cascais Ambiente, through online channels, local and national media, ensuring all eligible entities in Portugal are informed and encouraged to apply, provided their projects serve the Municipality of Cascais. Internationally, Cascais leverages its partnerships with 21 twinned cities across four continents and its involvement in European environmental cooperations networks to share AdaptCascais's achievements and encourage similar initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation are conducted through public reporting on projects results, with a structured review process to assess impact and foster ongoing improvements.

Project Setup

Each edition of the AdaptCascais Fund is overseen by an Evaluation Committee, comprising representatives appointed by the heads of the municipal units involved in the Cascais Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan. Key departments include Environmental and Sea, Education, Health and Social Solidarity, Social Development, Urbanism, and Ecological and Green Spaces Management. Committee decisions are publicly available on the municipal website. Cascais Ambiente, the municipal environmental agency, manages the AdaptCascais Fund. Responsibilities include publicizing calls, receiving applications, monitoring project implementation. External partners consist of selected project recipients, who, upon contract, receive support to carry out their adaptation projects. The Fund's initial 2021 was highly successful, drawing more applications than anticipated, exceeding the available budget, and marking a positive start.

Participation of the Civil Society

Civil society organizations - including local associations, NGOs, businesses, and environmental groups - are essential participants in the AdaptCascais Fund. These groups propose projects targeting specific climate adaptation needs in Cascais, ensuring alignment with the municipality's climate resilience goals. During the application process, they outline expected project impacts, key performance indicators, and vulnerabilities addressed, meeting the Fund's requirements for measurable contributions to local adaptation efforts. Once selected, these organizations lead the implementation, promoting broad public engagement and collaboration with Cascais Ambiente, which monitors progress and results, ensuring each project meets its objectives. This approach empowers civil society to shape local climate strategies, creating a model of community-driven adaptation that strengthens Cascais' resilience through innovation and collaboration.

Cascais – Project 4

Budget - Initial

Initial annual fund allocation for awarded projects and operational expenses managed by Cascais Ambiente in the 1st edition. **Operating costs: 24,000€**

Budget - Annual

Increased annual fund allocation for awarded projects and operational expenses managed by Cascais Ambiente in the 2nd edition. **Operating costs: 48,000€**

Budget - Total

72,000€

Funding

The AdaptCascais Fund is financed by the Cascais City Hall, with Cascais Ambiente responsible for its promotion, project evaluation and implementation. The Fund operates with minimal additional costs, as planning, operational, and communication expenses are integrated into Cascais City Hall's regular budget. In its first edition in 2021, the Fund had a budget allocation of €24,000, with each project limited to a maximum funding of €3,000. That year, 18 applications were received, of which 9 were selected and fully utilized the available budget of €24,000. For the Fund's second edition in 2023, the budget was increased to €48,000 maintaining the €3,000 limit per project. While 8 applications were submitted, the total allocated amount should be €24,000 allocated so far. The first edition's success underscored strong community engagement in climate resilience, attracting more applications than initially anticipated.

Programme Year integration

The AdaptCascais Fund can be showcased as a model of community-driven climate action during the ECoD Programme Year. As a key aspect of Cascais' climate strategy, the Fund empowers local organizations to implement adaptation projects, fostering a resilient and inclusive community. For the ECoD events, tours of successful projects can allow visitors to directly connect with project leaders and witness the tangible results of community-led climate initiatives. Interactive workshops may offer a behind-the-scenes view on how winning projects were designed and their real-world impact. Additionally, Cascais could organize panel discussions on the Fund's role in climate adaptation, highlighting challenges and successes, and produce a video to share Adapt-Cascais' impact nationally and internationally, inspiring other cities to adopt similar approaches.

Democracy Dimension

Sustainability

Cascais – Project 5

EVENT | PERMANENT

[HTTPS://WWW.ESTORILCONFERENCES.ORG/](https://www.estorilconferences.org/)

Estoril Conferences - Global Dialogue for Local Change

Brief Description

The Estoril Conferences, are a globally recognized platform for fostering dialogue on pressing global issues, bringing together high-profile leaders, Nobel laureates, policymakers, activists, and citizens. With a mission to empower individuals as active agents of change, the conferences stimulate new perspectives on shared global challenges, inspiring solutions grounded in local impact. Since 2023, the conferences have transitioned to an annual format, hosted by Nova SBE in partnership with Cascais, thereby maintaining Cascais' role as the symbolic home of this global event. By covering themes such as human rights, climate action, and economic resilience, Estoril Conferences position Cascais as a nexus for innovative thinking on democracy, societal resilience, and sustainable global development.

Detailed Description

The Estoril Conferences, established in 2009, have evolved into a globally recognized platform for dialogue on democratic governance, human rights, and global challenges. Hosted in Cascais and co-organized by Nova SBE since 2019, the Conferences bring together thought leaders from politics, business, academia, and civil society to address complex global issues. The primary objective is to inspire actionable solutions by facilitating discussions that transcend borders and engage diverse audiences, including heads of state, Nobel laureates, and influential activists. This format positions the Estoril Conferences as an educational and pedagogical initiative that encourages critical thinking and fosters active global citizenship. Each edition of the Estoril Conferences is organized around a central theme relevant to contemporary global issues. For instance, the 2024 theme, „Time to ReThink“, emphasizes the need to reassess our approaches to pressing challenges such as peace, policies, the planet, artificial intelligence and technology, and longevity. The event's structure includes a range of activities, such as keynote addresses, panel discussions, interactive sessions, and workshops, which aim to dissect specific sub-themes such as human security, global justice, and economic development.

Cascais – Project 5

Detailed Description

By focusing on both local implications and global perspectives, the Conferences encourage participants to contemplate “Global Challenges, Local Answers”. The implementation of the Estoril Conferences is a collaborative effort involving various partners and funding sources. Nova SBE plays a central role in logistical organization and program development, leveraging academic partnerships with institutions like Harvard University and the University of Cape Town. These partnerships facilitate the integration of cutting-edge research and diverse perspectives into the conference dialogues. Financial support is sourced from the Municipality of Cascais, Nova SBE, and multiple corporate sponsors, including partnerships across diamond, gold, silver, and bronze sponsorship tiers, ensuring financial sustainability and enriching the participant experience. The Eventex Awards in 2023 further validated the impact and excellence of the Estoril Conferences, awarding it the Bronze for „Best Conference“ and „Best Thought Leadership Event,“ a testament to its innovative approach and relevance. Since its transition in 2019 to an annual format hosted by Nova SBE, the Estoril Conferences have continued to foster global dialogue on pressing issues, leveraging Nova SBE’s reputation as a world-class educational institution. This new format allows for a concentrated, impactful event that brings together thought leaders, policymakers, and global citizens to address challenges related to democracy, human rights, and sustainability. The 2024 edition was the largest ever, gathering 6,851 participants (4,609 in person on the Nova SBE campus and 1,121 online) to hear 80 speakers from 27 countries share perspectives on addressing global crises and building a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. While earlier editions included initiatives like the Youth Summit, Estoril Junior, and the Estoril Global Review, the current model focuses on maximizing impact through the annual conference format, enriched by Nova SBE’s academic excellence and international reach. This streamlined approach enhances the Conferences’ ability to drive meaningful dialogue and actionable insights, reinforcing Cascais’ role as a key player in fostering democratic engagement on both a local and international scale.

Contribution

This project is uniquely distinguished by its inclusive platform, bringing together world leaders, youth, and civil society to address global challenges through local perspectives and actionable solutions. It contributes significantly to Cascais’ mission of fostering global awareness, democratic engagement, and civic responsibility by connecting citizens with critical discussions on human rights, democracy, and social justice. What makes it special is its ability to blend high-level discourse with community empowerment, inspiring attendees to become agents of change in their own lives and communities. In 2026, the Conferences can be presented as a flagship event, featuring thematic sessions on democratic innovation and citizen participation. Workshops, panel discussions, and interactive forums could allow participants to engage deeply with topics central to European democracy and global citizenship.

Cascais – Project 5

Collaboration

It ensures inclusivity and fairness by offering a platform that invites diverse voices from around the world, including underrepresented regions, youth leaders, and grassroots activists. Partnerships with educational institutions and NGOs, particularly those in Cascais and surrounding areas, extend participation to local students and citizens who may otherwise lack access to such global dialogues. Scholarships and subsidized tickets are provided to ensure that financial limitations do not prevent anyone from participating. To further involve the surrounding areas, the Conferences organize satellite events in neighboring communities, bringing key topics and speakers to a broader local audience. This commitment to inclusion fosters an open exchange of

Target Group(s)

The Estoril Conferences target a broad spectrum of participants, including students, educators, policymakers, activists, and global thought leaders, reaching over 13,000 attendees from 105 countries across editions. This initiative provides a scalable model for civic engagement, fostering dialogue and inspiring actionable change, which can be adapted by other cities and countries to address pressing local and global challenges.

Communication

Communication strategy includes a strong digital presence on social media platforms, the official Estoril Conferences website, and collaborations with media partners to maximize visibility and engagement. Locally, partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and local networks within Cascais further drive awareness and participation, while press releases and event partnerships engage European and global audiences, making the topics accessible and impactful across borders. Monitoring and evaluation are integral to the Conferences' impact assessment strategy. Feedback surveys are conducted with attendees, speakers, and partners, gathering qualitative and quantitative data on participant engagement, satisfaction, and key takeaways. Analytics from digital platforms also offer insights into online engagement and global reach, while post-event reports summarize outcomes, capturing lessons learned and informing future editions.

Project Setup

The Estoril Conferences are primarily organized by Nova SBE, which oversees program development, speaker coordination, and event logistics. Nova's dedicated team, including project managers, academic coordinators, and logistics specialists, ensures the seamless execution of this annual international event. The Municipality of Cascais remains a crucial partner, serving as the co-host and providing strategic support in promoting the event locally and facilitating logistical needs, such as venue arrangements and community engagement initiatives. Additionally, the conferences benefit from partnerships with various local and international organizations, NGOs, and corporate sponsors, which contribute to content development, outreach efforts, and financial support, further enhancing the event's impact and accessibility.

Cascais – Project 5

Participation of Civil Society

Civil society organizations play an integral role in the Estoril Conferences, contributing significantly to its mission of addressing global challenges through local perspectives. Representatives from civil society, including NGOs, advocacy groups, and thought leaders, actively shape the event's agenda, engaging as panellists, and leading workshops on topics such as human rights, social justice, and democratic governance. In the 2024, speakers included five current and former heads of state and prime ministers, the First Lady of Ukraine, four Nobel Laureates, four UN agency directors, and diverse leaders across business, arts, sports, and academia, including some of the world's foremost AI experts and medical specialists. These diverse voices bring on-the-ground insights and lived experiences, enriching discussions and connecting policy ideas to real world challenges in an inclusive, interdisciplinary environment.

Budget - Initial

An estimated €50,000 was allocated to planning and preparing the Estoril Conferences. This includes expenses related to early project management, initial partnerships, and content development like position papers. These costs lay the groundwork for the logistical and strategic aspects of the event. **Planning costs: 49,999€**

Budget - Annual

The yearly operating costs for running the Estoril Conferences are approximately €350,000. This includes speaker fees, travel, and accommodations, as well as catering, venue setup, security, and logistical arrangements essential for a high-profile international event. **Operating costs: 349,999€**

Communication expenses are estimated at €20,000 - €30,000 annually. This budget covers digital and social media campaigns, printed materials, and partnerships with media outlets to promote the conferences widely. **Communication costs: 24,999€**

Budget - Total

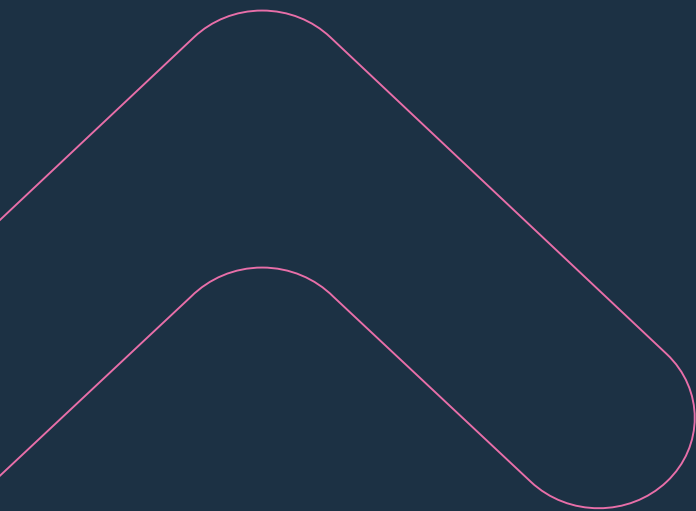
424,997€

Funding

The Estoril Conferences receive substantial funding primarily from the Municipality of Cascais and Nova SBE. Additional support comes from a tiered corporate sponsorship structure (Diamond, Gold, Silver, and Bronze levels), which includes contributions from local and international entities. This model ensures financial sustainability by diversifying funding sources. The Conferences also partner with key institutional supporters, further expanding the impact and reach of the event.

ECOD 2026 APPLICATION - CASCAIS

Project Ideas



Cascais - Project Idea 1

DEMOCRACY DIMENSION: COMMUNITY

Gerasol Program: Connecting Youth, Valuing Seniors

Challenge

In Cascais, many elderly citizens face the challenge of social isolation and loneliness, particularly those who choose to age at home. This issue is compounded by the decreasing family proximity, urbanization, and an aging population, resulting in many seniors feeling disconnected from their communities. While the challenge of elderly isolation is not unique to Cascais, it is particularly pressing due to the high percentage of senior residents who live independently without regular social interactions. The most significant challenge is the social isolation of elderly individuals, which affects their mental and physical well-being. Many seniors are left without regular companionship, lacking access to meaningful social engagements and support networks, leading to increased risks of depression, anxiety, and physical health decline. This challenge not only impacts the individuals themselves but also strains the community and social services. The program aligns with the democratic trend of community empowerment and intergenerational solidarity. By engaging young volunteers with elderly citizens, the project fosters a culture of co-responsibility, empathy, and shared knowledge between generations. It connects to participatory democracy by involving diverse age groups in addressing social issues collaboratively, reinforcing the idea that active citizenship can bridge generational divides and build a more inclusive community.

Solution

GeraSol initiative is unique in its intergenerational approach to combating elderly isolation, creating connections between young volunteers and senior citizens. By blending social support with cultural engagement, the program provides a platform where different generations can share knowledge, foster empathy, and create lasting bonds. This approach not only supports the elderly but also enriches the lives of young participants through meaningful community involvement.

Cascais - Project Idea 1

Solution

Through participation in GeraSol, elderly citizens gain regular companionship, access to cultural activities, and new digital skills, all of which contribute to a healthier, more engaged lifestyle. This program enables seniors to stay connected with their community, enhancing their well-being and reducing feelings of loneliness. For young volunteers, it provides an opportunity to learn from older generations, developing empathy, communication skills, and a sense of social responsibility. Choosing not to participate means seniors may miss out on regular social interaction, the mental and emotional benefits of companionship, and free access to cultural and social activities. Additionally, they would lose the chance to learn new skills, particularly in digital communication, which can connect them to distant family members. Young people who do not engage miss the opportunity to develop valuable life skills and contribute to their community in a meaningful way.

Impact

Citizens would engage with GeraSol primarily through its intergenerational volunteering program. Elderly residents in situations of „aging in place“ can join as beneficiaries, while young people aged 16-22 participate as volunteers. Weekly visits, cultural outings, and digital literacy sessions allow seniors to benefit from companionship and active engagement, while volunteers develop empathy and community awareness. In its pilot phase, GeraSol plans to engage 100 participants - 50 seniors and 50 young volunteers - within Cascais. With strong interest and successful outcomes, the program has potential for expansion, reaching hundreds more in subsequent phases. Considering Cascais' multicultural profile, the project aims to grow, adapting its model to diverse cultural backgrounds and engaging more neighborhoods. Data from Cascais show a rising number of elderly citizens choosing to age in place, often without family nearby, leading to increased risks of social isolation. Local studies and community feedback highlight loneliness and limited social interaction as prevalent issues among seniors. Additionally, existing municipal initiatives addressing elderly care have identified a growing demand for companionship programs, indicating the need for GeraSol's intergenerational approach as a sustainable solution for social inclusion and mental well-being.

Implementation

The GeraSol project will be promoted through a multi-channel approach that includes local community centers, social media, and partnerships with neighborhood associations and schools. Informational sessions will be held to recruit young volunteers, while senior centers and healthcare facilities will identify and refer elderly participants. A dedicated digital platform will facilitate the matching process and provide updates, making participation seamless and accessible. The initial pilot phase is budgeted at €128,500, covering digital platform development, project management, and event logistics. While partially funded by the municipality, GeraSol will seek additional sponsorships from local businesses and cultural organizations, as well as regional grants focused on social inclusion and community health.

Cascais - Project Idea 1

Implementation

This blended funding model allows for financial sustainability while expanding reach. The first key milestone is the launch of the pilot program, where 50 seniors will be matched with 50 young volunteers. This phase will set the foundation for long-term community engagement, with weekly activities and cultural events fostering strong intergenerational bonds. An exciting accomplishment will be the production of a documentary capturing these interactions, which will not only celebrate the success stories but also bring awareness to elderly isolation and inspire similar initiatives in other communities.

Support

To ensure successful implementation and sustainable impact, consulting support is needed in areas such as community health, social work, and digital engagement to optimize the volunteer-senior matching process and create effective outreach strategies. Expertise in documentary production is also essential to capture and showcase the program's intergenerational impact on a wider scale. Financing is partially covered by the municipality, but additional funding from regional and national grants, as well as sponsorships from local businesses, is needed to cover cultural event access, training sessions, and production costs for the documentary. This diversified funding model will ensure that GeraSol can scale and adapt to growing community needs. Partnerships with local associations, cultural institutions, and healthcare providers are key to expanding the program's reach. Collaborations with senior centers, schools, and neighborhood organizations will help identify participants and provide spaces for activities, while partnerships with cultural venues ensure enriching experiences for both seniors and volunteers. To ensure effective implementation, GeraSol includes feedback mechanisms with participants and partners to continually improve the program. The dedicated project team, which includes a project manager, social workers, and a psychologist, provides strong organizational support, ensuring that the project remains responsive, impactful, and sustainable over time.

Video Link

N/A

Images



Cascais - Project Idea 2

DEMOCRACY DIMENSION: SUSTAINABILITY

Cascais Carbon Roadmap 2050: A collaborative Pathway to Carbon Neutrality

Challenge

Cascais faces the urgent challenge of transitioning to a carbon-neutral municipality by 2050, addressing climate change through extensive emissions reductions across various sectors. This goal aligns with both national and international commitments, yet presents unique challenges due to Cascais' specific geographic, demographic, and economic contexts. The municipality must engage its citizens actively, fostering behaviour changes and sustainable practices across all social sectors, from energy use to waste management. The primary difficulty lies in mobilizing and sustaining citizen and private sector participation over a multi-decade period, ensuring that the targets are met not only through policy but through active community engagement. The single most significant challenge citizens face is adapting to and adopting new, sustainable lifestyles and consumption patterns. Achieving carbon neutrality requires a collective effort from all sectors of society, including changes in daily habits, increased energy efficiency, and participation in green initiatives. Citizens need both the motivation and resources to participate meaningfully in this long-term transformation. The roadmap will address these needs through transparent reporting, regular updates on progress, and opportunities for public consultation and involvement. This project aligns with the democratic trend of Empowerment and Participation, fostering co-responsibility among government, private entities, and residents

Solution

The Cascais Carbon Roadmap 2050 is unique in its approach by fostering a proactive role for citizens in the city's journey to carbon neutrality, setting it apart from typical top-down environmental policies. Its unique value lies in combining long-term sustainability goals with actionable community involvement, including regular public consultations, data transparency, and a feedback loop allowing residents to co-design solutions. This participatory approach transforms citizens from passive recipients into active contributors toward a carbon-neutral Cascais.

Cascais - Project Idea 2

Solution

Through participation in Carbon Roadmap, citizens benefit from initiatives such as subsidized access to energy-efficient home improvements, community educational events, and direct involvement in decision-making processes that influence local climate action. By participating, residents gain ownership over their city's sustainability goals and a better understanding of individual and collective roles in tackling climate change, leading to a healthier, more resilient community. Opting out means missing the chance to influence key environmental decisions and access resources to reduce energy costs and live more sustainably. Those who choose not to participate lose out on the collective benefits of cleaner air, reduced expenses, and the pride of contributing to a greener, carbon-neutral Cascais.

Impact

Residents will engage through interactive community workshops, public forums, and digital tools that allow them to track their carbon footprint and stay updated on emission reduction efforts. The roadmap aims to integrate citizens into the process actively, inviting participation during each milestone, from planning phases to annual progress reviews, where they can contribute insights and feedback. With Cascais' population of over 200.000 residents, the goal is to reach at least 25% of households directly involved in actions that support carbon neutrality by 2050. We expect significant engagement from schools, local business, and households across diverse demographic groups. Additionally, the project will reach a wider audience through digital resources and public events, ultimately aiming for comprehensive community awareness and incremental participation. Data from Cascais' ongoing environmental programs and the high level of participation in initiatives like participatory budgeting and Tutores de Cascais indicate strong public interest in sustainability. The roadmap builds on the city's existing commitment to environmental goals, as outlined in its Carbon Neutrality Roadmap, which includes targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in alignment with EU and national commitments. Community interest in sustainable practices, shown in previous surveys and local workshops, underlines the need and commitment for a structured approach to carbon neutrality.

Implementation

The Cascais Carbon Roadmap 2050 will reach citizens through an integrated communications plan that includes the Vida Cascais platform, social media, and neighbourhood-based public events. We will organize periodic workshops and community forums, providing updates and inviting citizen input. Cascais will use a dedicated online portal for real-time tracking, where residents can monitor municipal emissions data, receive energy-saving tips, and access resources for sustainable lifestyle choices. The project is designed to operate within Cascais' existing municipal budget, leveraging funds already earmarked for environmental and sustainability initiatives.

Cascais - Project Idea 2

Implementation

Partnerships with the private sector and local NGOs will support specific initiatives within the roadmap, such as workshops and community incentives for energy-efficient upgrades, ensuring scalability and long-term funding stability. The next major milestone will be the launch of the first annual Cascais Climate Forum in early 2026, which will serve as a participatory event where residents, businesses, and policymakers will set actionable emissions targets and outline individual responsibilities. This event marks the start of collaborative, citizen-driven climate initiative, setting cascais on a path to carbon neutrality and inspiring other municipalities in the process.

Support

The Cascais Carbon Roadmap 2050 requires strategic partnerships and consulting expertise in sustainable urban planning, renewable energy, and data management to ensure effective implementation. Collaborations with environmental NGOs, academic institutions, and private-sector companies specializing in green technology will provide valuable insights, support community education efforts, and contribute to project-specific initiatives like energy-efficient infrastructure and carbon footprint tracking. Financing is structured within the existing municipal budget, with funding allocated annually to cover community engagement activities, monitoring systems, and workshops. To enhance resource availability, the municipality will seek additional support through regional and EU sustainability grants.

Video Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywEY0RzZEqE>

Images

N/A

Cascais - Project Idea 3

DEMOCRACY DIMENSION: PARTICIPATION

Action!

Citizen Engagement for a Sustainable Future

Challenge

Cascais boasts one of the most advanced participatory systems in the country, with high levels of citizen interest and long waiting lists of residents eager to engage. Building on this solid foundation, the “Action for the SDGs” initiative aims to expand beyond an internal program into a fully inclusive platform, enabling all citizens to contribute directly to the city’s sustainability goals, aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The primary challenge is not generating interest, but rather transforming this enthusiasm into structured, accessible opportunities that empower citizens to actively drive SDG-related projects. This shift aims to create a collaborative environment where residents not only adopt sustainable practices but also co-create initiatives that benefit the entire community. Aligned with trends in civic engagement and participatory democracy, this project will leverage Cascais’ Municipal Participatory System to offer citizens more pathways to take meaningful action on both local and global issues. By expanding engagement opportunities, Cascais is setting a model for how cities can harness community interest to achieve impactful, sustainable development.

Solution

This project offers a one-of-a-kind, accessible platform for citizens to actively shape Cascais’ sustainability goals, transforming community members into drivers of local change. By participating, residents gain exclusive access to workshops, expert mentorship, and resources to design and implement SDG-aligned initiatives that directly impact their neighborhoods. This platform promotes a culture of shared responsibility and collaboration, empowering citizens to co-create projects that enhance both local quality of life and broader sustainability. For those who choose not to engage, this is a missed opportunity to influence how Cascais addresses critical issues like clean energy, waste management, and social equity - core aspects that directly affect community well-being.

Cascais - Project Idea 3

Solution

Opting out means forgoing the chance to contribute solutions that respond to these pressing needs, and missing out on the support network that brings residents and experts together. Beyond environmental impact, participants gain valuable skills in project planning, community engagement, and sustainable practice. These experiences build a knowledgeable and empowered citizenry, fostering a sense of unity and purpose. The project goes beyond dialogue, providing a path for direct action, enabling ideas to evolve into meaningful, community-driven solutions. By choosing not to participate, residents miss the chance to be part of a legacy of sustainability and innovation that will shape Cascais for generations.

Impact

The first open event is projected to attract around 500 citizens, setting a strong foundation for ongoing engagement. Quarterly sessions will invite community members to propose, debate, and prioritize projects focused on environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and community well-being. These sessions allow residents to share insights, voice concerns, and collaboratively shape initiatives that address Cascais' evolving needs. With a track record of enthusiastic civic participation and long waiting lists for other initiatives, we anticipate a significant public interest. This project could engage thousands of residents over time, with initial sessions potentially drawing around 500 participants and expanding as the project gains momentum through community networks, potentially impacting neighboring areas. Community surveys and feedback reveal a growing demand for citizen-led sustainable initiatives that impact daily life and local neighborhoods. Public interest in climate action, biodiversity, and waste reduction is particularly strong, highlighting the need for a structured platform where residents can turn their commitment to sustainability into concrete actions. The positive response to previous, smaller-scale municipal initiatives indicates an enthusiasm to engage in this expanded, community-driven model.

Implementation

The project will be introduced to citizens through a multi-channel approach that includes online platforms, social media, and public meetings. The Vida Cascais platform will host a dedicated webpage where residents can find project updates, event schedules, and resources. Information sessions in community centers and neighborhood associations will ensure accessibility for all demographics. Additionally, a targeted awareness campaign will highlight the project's goals and encourage participation across Cascais. The project is designed to be implemented within the municipality's existing budget framework. By leveraging partnerships with local organizations and using existing infrastructure for events and outreach, costs are minimized. This approach ensures that the project remains financially sustainable while scaling to reach more citizens. The first key milestone is the launch of a pilot event that invites residents to participate in SDG-aligned workshops and brainstorming sessions, aiming to develop actionable community projects.

Cascais - Project Idea 3

Implementation

This event will serve as an initial test of community engagement strategies and is projected to set the stage for wider rollout and increased involvement in the months that follow. Success at this stage would establish momentum and provide a foundation for scaling up citizen- driven initiatives across Cascais.

Support

The project benefits from Cascais' dedicated Citizenship and Participation team, which collaborates with a network of experts in civic engagement and sustainable development. Consulting support is crucial to enhance community engagement strategies, refine SDG-focused project development, and ensure the effective use of digital tools to broaden citizen participation. Working with local specialists in environmental sustainability and civic technology will help optimize the project's impact and alignment with Cascais' sustainability goals. Financing is partly covered by the municipal budget, but additional funding from regional and national grants would enable broader outreach and enhanced resources, such as workshops and community events. Partnerships with NGOs and local businesses focused on sustainability would provide complementary support, extending the program's reach and resources. Partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and environmental NGOs will be key to mobilizing resources, creating educational content, and delivering hands-on support for citizen-led projects. These collaborations ensure diverse perspectives, amplifying the project's inclusivity and relevance to a wide range of community needs. To ensure implementation, Cascais' Citizenship and Participation team will coordinate a phased rollout with clear milestones and regular progress evaluations.

Video Link

N/A

Images



Cascais - Project Idea 4

DEMOCRACY DIMENSION: PARTICIPATION

Green Support Fund for Families

Challenge

Rising energy costs have placed an increasing burden on families, impacting household budgets and quality of life. Cascais is proactively addressing this through initiatives that support energy efficiency, recognizing the link between economic stability, social development, and environmental sustainability. By creating the Green Support Fund for Families, the municipality aims to support residents in reducing energy costs, improving thermal comfort, and fostering sustainable living practices within the community. The most pressing challenge is the economic strain that high energy costs place on low- and middle-income families. Factors beyond local control, such as international conflicts and energy market volatility, have led to increased utility bills, reducing disposable income and creating barriers to maintaining a comfortable, energy-efficient home. The fund helps alleviate this burden, empowering citizens to make energy-saving upgrades without additional financial stress. This project aligns with the trend of community-led climate action and democratization of sustainable practices. By making energy-efficient resources and support accessible, Cascais is fostering a culture of participatory governance in climate action. The Green Support Fund enables direct community involvement in sustainability, transforming citizens from passive consumers to active contributors in the municipality's journey toward carbon neutrality and resilience.

Solution

This project uniquely addresses fuel poverty by directly financing energy upgrades in homes, without requiring upfront investment from beneficiaries until the 4th tax band. Unlike the Environmental Fund, which reimburses up to 85% after work completion, this municipal fund pays suppliers directly, enabling low-income families to access 100% co-financing (up to €10,000 per household) based on income tax brackets. The Fund supports a wide range of energy-efficiency improvements, including window replacements, high-efficiency kitchen appliances, and renewable energy installations.

Cascais - Project Idea 4

Solution

Having access to this Fund enables residents to benefit from lower energy bills, improved thermal comfort and reduced vulnerability to rising energy prices, thereby enhancing the quality of life for families across Cascais. Importantly, the Fund has a social component, prioritizing support for lower-income households, who often face the highest energy burdens, and includes unique coverage for items not supported by the national fund, like insulated doors and efficient appliances. Choosing not to participate means citizens would bear the full upfront costs for improvements, limiting access for many families. They would also miss out on higher financing rates, specific to Cascais' Fund, which is designed to maximize impact for vulnerable groups. In addition, they forego the inclusive support offered by the Fund, which promotes a collective move toward decarbonization, and enhanced resilience.

Impact

Citizens will access the Fund's services via a dedicated digital platform, launching when applications open. The platform will stay open until the budget of €3 million is fully allocated, allowing residents of Cascais to apply for support with energy efficiency upgrades to their homes at their convenience. The Fund specifically targets Cascais' 214,124 residents, covering existing single- and multi-family homes owned, rented, or leased in the municipality. This fund is projected to benefit several thousand applicants, with up to €10,000 available per household, addressing both energy efficiency and thermal comfort to reduce fuel poverty. Rising energy costs and the Portuguese government's commitment to the Covenant of Mayors and the Cascais Road Map for Carbon Neutrality 2050 underscore the urgency of this project. Climate assessments from 2015 identified a projected gap of 2486k tCO₂e by 2050, demonstrating the need for collective local action to reach decarbonization goals. Furthermore, past public consultations on environmental resilience initiatives have shown strong interest from the community in tackling fuel poverty. The Fund's focus on energy efficiency addresses residents' concerns over rising costs, providing real improvements in household comfort and environmental impact. Previous initiatives show residents are eager for solutions that enhance health, well-being, and their home's environmental footprint.

Implementation

The Fund was submitted for a 30-day online public consultation to collect feedback, complaints, or suggestions. Following this, the Fund's regulations were published in the Official Journal of the Portuguese Republic and on the Municipality's website. The application platform will be accessible to all residents, with social support organizations assisting those in need. A media campaign will promote the Fund's financial opportunities and application process. The Fund operates within a structured budget approved by the Municipal Assembly, ensuring resources are allocated efficiently to address fuel poverty and climate adaptation. This initiative addresses climate adaptation, efficient water use, and resource protection, aligning with national and EU decarbonization goals.

Cascais - Project Idea 4

Implementation

The immediate goal is to alleviate fuel poverty and improve residents' thermal comfort, enhancing health and well-being through better energy conditions. Energy efficiency measures contribute to physical and mental health by creating healthy indoor environments with balanced temperatures, humidity, noise reduction, and air quality. The World Health Organization highlights that air pollution is a major environmental health risk, and energy efficiency improvements can mitigate these impacts, enhancing well-being for all, especially those affected by fuel poverty.

Support

This project requires partnerships with private social solidarity institutions within the Cascais Social Network, which will oversee the receipt and monitoring of applications from citizens in the 1st to 4th income tax band. These institutions also manage direct payments to suppliers, removing the need for initial investment by low-income beneficiaries. Applications from other tax bands will be managed directly by municipal services. The Cascais Social Network is a local governance structure that coordinates and unites social agents within the municipality, working to combat poverty, reduce social exclusion, and foster social cohesion and development. This collaborative approach enhances the Fund's ability to reach vulnerable populations and ensures a long-term positive impact on the community. The municipality is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Fund's regulations. In cases of non-compliance, misuse of funds, or misallocation of resources, there are provisions for full repayment of funds received, alongside legally enforceable consequences. The municipality may also conduct audits, inspections, and compliance evaluations at any time, potentially involving other regulatory entities to ensure proper implementation. Finally, a comprehensive final report will be published, detailing funded amounts, the number of incentives granted by project type, and observed impacts. This public report promotes transparency and allows community to assess the Fund's success.

Video Link

N/A

Images

N/A

Cascais - Project Idea 5

DEMOCRACY DIMENSION: COMMUNITY

Grandparental Leave

Challenge

The increasingly aging population and the decline in the birth rate are reflected in the age composition of the municipal workforce. Given the increase in life expectancy combined with the corresponding rise in the retirement age, many people are becoming grandparents while still working. In Cascais, for example, the 2023 social balance sheet indicates a municipality that employs 2369 workers, of whom over 40% are aged 55 or over, and the difference between the youngest (19) and the oldest (74) employee in the municipality is 55 years. Furthermore 23% of the municipal population is over 65. Health and well-being are the foundations for a fulfilling long life, with the quality and dignity that we all want to guarantee. One of the pillars of Cascais City Council's municipal strategy focuses on this area, which is crucial for responding to a section of society that, given its older age, also requires more attention. This new reality has prompted the municipality to come up with an unprecedented measure called "Grandparental Leave". Its implementation aims to strengthen family cohesion by promoting greater shared responsibility between generations through active ageing and intergenerational relations. With this measure, the municipality is reinforcing the importance it attaches to balancing professional life with personal and family life, as well as to social and family harmony.

Solution

Cascais, which has already been honoured with the "Most Family Responsible Municipality Award", aims to lead the way in reconciling work and family life. The Grandparental Leave is an extension of traditional parental leave policies, reflecting the evolution of family dynamics and the growing role of grandparents in providing care. The proposal includes the creation of a new Ombudsman for Children and the Elderly, previously approved at an ordinary meeting, to contribute to a fairer society by addressing the needs of those who are the most vulnerable.

Cascais - Project Idea 5

Solution

The Grandparental Leave, similar to maternity and parental leave, gives grandparents a period of one month off when the first grandchild is born and can be spread over four periods and claimed up to the child's third birthday. Starting with the second grandchild, and for each one after, 15 days are granted. Grandparents can also enjoy a 25% reduction in their Municipal Property Tax rate for each grandchild born. This unprecedented measure, aims to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life, recognising the importance of grandparents in contemporary family dynamics. By pioneering initiatives like this, Cascais aspires to serve as a laboratory for impactful policies, influencing broader national adoption and setting a precedent for meaningful change. This leave offers grandparents a unique opportunity to engage more fully in their grandchildren's lives and foster intergenerational bonds

Impact

With the decline in the working-age population and a later transition from school to the labour market, workforce is older and more diverse in terms of age, which represents a challenge for the sustainability of our community. There was a time when grandparents were home and available to take care of the little ones. Grandparents of this generation continue to be a fundamental support in the upbringing of their grandchildren, but they now must reconcile their family role with their professional life. This need is also based on the changing family structure and the economic reality that retirement is taking place at a later age.

Firstly, Grandparental Leave will be adopted for all municipal employees (including those in municipal agencies). Considering 40% of the municipal workforce is over 55 and since the retirement age is 66 and 7 months, those who have or will come to have grandchildren may come to benefit from this. Businesses and social, associative, cultural and sporting organisations in the municipality will be invited to sign up for the programme, with employers benefiting from a 25% discount on their Municipal Property Tax (IMI). We intend to be at the forefront of good practices when it comes to reconciling work and family, promoting well-being, cohesion and family solidarity and emphasising that the main pillar of society is the family.

Implementation

Employees' and employers' perspectives will need to be considered while some obstacles such as balancing work, family and social structures will have to be addressed. To begin with, this specific measure will be available to all grandparents who are municipal employees or work within municipal agencies. Having passed with a unanimous vote in the City Council and the Municipal Assembly, the Human Resources Department will make this leave available to eligible employees in a timely manner. Soon, municipal employees who wish to take this leave may submit a request to the Human Resource Department. Grandparental Leave is intended to help working grandparents play a 'central role' within the family by having them participate directly in the upbringing of their grandchildren. By valuing grandfathers and grandmothers, the aim is to preserve and promote family cohesion and solidarity.

Cascais - Project Idea 5

Support

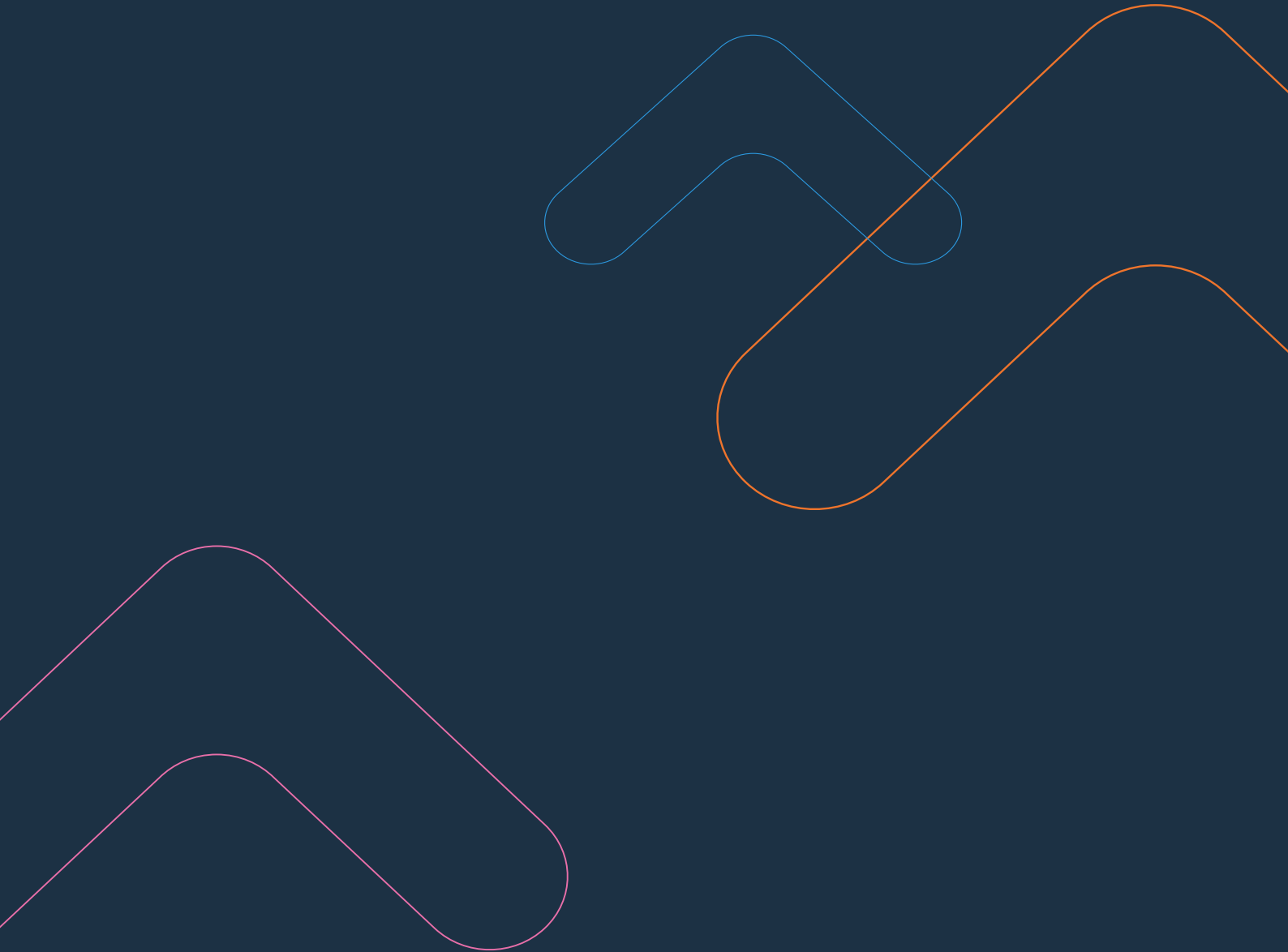
This initiative is one of the strategies to be adopted following the results of the “Study on Aging in the Municipality of Cascais” and the presentation of the “Strategy and Plan on Aging - Old Age and Social Policies of the Municipality”, in close collaboration with the University Institute of Lisbon - Iscte. The Grandparental Leave already has the approval and vote of the Cascais City Council, and the Municipal Assembly, along with its Labour Committee, which has given it a positive opinion, considering the new measure “a significant step forward in supporting the families of Cascais”.

Video Link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mu6wDUyeic

Images

N/A



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