

Governance and Territory - Case of the Jaizkibel's Corridor: An Approach to a Proposal for Urban, Economic and Social Regeneration

Jose Ramon Izkeaga ¹

¹ University of the Basque Country, Onate plaza 2 Donostia 20018 Spain

joseramon.izkeaga@ehu.eus

Abstract. The Bay of Biscay is located in the heart of district known as Donostialdea (San Sebastian). Together with the towns of Donostia-San Sebastian, Lezo, Errenteria and Oiartzun, it makes up the so-called Oarsoaldea region, a supramunicipal area of common interest. A urban continuum peculiar to the region, than may be better understood as an area of shared territorially with several elements in common and as a community where individual interests intersect with common interests. The importance of the geographical location of this region is more than notable. It is on the Bay of Biscay right where Spain curves northward to meet France; it is the only natural point of passage on the west end of the Pyrenees Mountains, with La Junquera in Catalonia at the east end, thus communicating the Iberian Peninsula with the rest of Europe. This is the strategic point for each and every known means of transport. The rail system consists of three different types of track gauge; the road network includes major motorways and the national road system; the airports at Hondarribia and Biarritz and the natural port of Pasaia complements this transportation node. All of this takes place in a small space, a natural corridor at the foot of Mount Jaizkibel. What was once considered modern infrastructures sufficient to meet transportation needs is today absolutely insufficient, obsolete and in operative. A set of partial solutions lacking an overall vision cannot be considered an integrated system. Therein lies the origin of the problem. Here is the diagnosis: The Port of Pasaia is obsolete. Pressure is felt from urban growth in the surrounding cities and from the restrictions of the Hondarribia airport. The roads are completely saturated and traffic continues to increase. The railway service is inefficient owing to three different types of track gauge. And each of these infrastructures is subject to its own restrictions and management. This forces us to think about the current state of these services and to come up with a new way of organizing this "infrastructures complex" that can efficiently solve the problems of mobility, based on the different services complementing each other. The system must be understood as a "whole", a system made up of individual parts which are effective in their relationship with the rest of the parts, a single way of understanding and dealing with the problem. The complexity involved in managing this situation and in developing common interest's calls for the creation of a powerful and competent administrator and management entity. Governance is a fundamental 'factor' in achieving the objectives put forward by the community through its managers, as a goal for the transformation, improvement and development of the conditions in its territory and of its inhabitants. The 'social' character that any type of initiative means in this area takes on an unusual dimension due to the effect it reaches on this territorial scale. Hence, the importance of a territory-wide vision regarding local positions, and the need for an appropriate instrument.



1. Introduction

Pasaialdea is the most complex, problematic and yet most strategic regional environment for the future of the Historic Territory of Gipuzkoa. With a population of 42,500 inhabitants out of the 709,000 total for Gipuzkoa, for diverse reasons Pasaialdea constitutes an area that has the utmost potential to become a focus of attention and new driving force for Gipuzkoa. Its strategic location, its economic activity linked to the port and its natural surroundings, together with an institutional commitment and the critical mass made up by its citizens, can enable the Pasaia area to overcome a lengthy crisis that has been coupled with urban, environmental, economic and social decline.

Throughout the past half century, Pasaialdea and in particular its heart, the Bay of Pasajes, has been experiencing a major crisis in the fishing sector. This has in turn given rise to the almost total disappearance of other sectors linked to this activity and which had hitherto been considered driving forces in that area: iron and steel and construction, and the repair and maintenance of boats and ships. The economic crisis is what has also affected much of the commercial sector and led to a process involving urban and social decline of which major examples can be found in any of the four districts that make up the municipality of Pasaia (San Juan, San Pedro, Antxo-Renteria and Trintxerpe), as well as in the other municipalities around the bay (Figure 1).

All the above has led to prolonged and serious social problems in the Pasaialdea area, and in particular at its heart, the municipality of Pasaia. This has reached a level of decline that is extremely worrying and has for years now required major and urgent solutions.



Figure 1: Pasaia Bay

Tackling these problems constitutes a challenge not only for society in the immediate vicinity, but for Gipuzkoa society as a whole and for the set of public and private institutions that have the authority to intervene in this sphere of activity and a desire to move on in this geographic, economic, urban and social area.

There are reasons to suggest that Pasaia and Pasaialdea will be able to face the future not based on its history over the last 50 years, but rather, on the area's undeniable strengths.

2. The geographic-strategic location

Pasaialdea is strategically located at the centre of the Atlantic Axis, at the heart of a continuous urban, core fabric within the Historic Territory of Gipuzkoa (Figure 2). This is a region that is gaining

increasing weight and economic and social dynamism as an area within the Baiona-Donostia Basque Eurocity – and within it, that of Donostialdea. It is also unquestionable that being located on one of the natural major routes connecting the Iberian Peninsula with the rest of Europe gives it options from the transport and communications standpoint that are hard to beat.

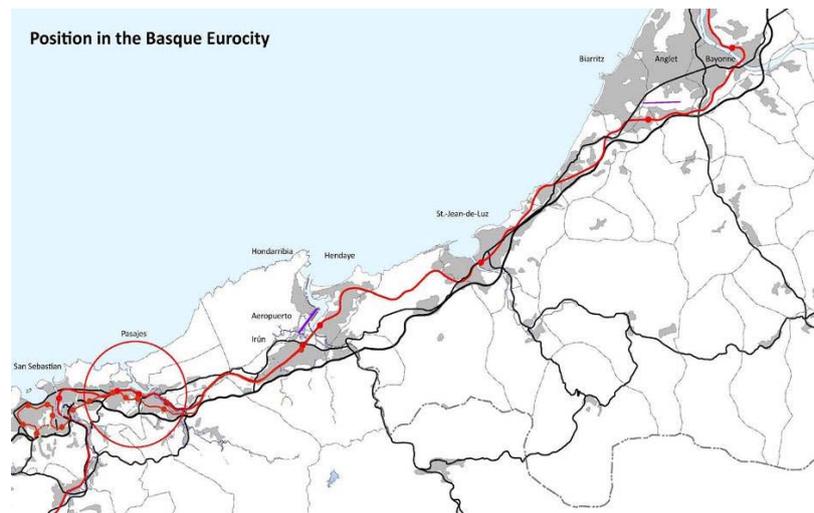


Figure 2: Donostialdea

2.1 The port

The past, present and future of Pasaialdea are linked to the commercial port of Pasaia – a port whose services have tended to stretch far beyond just the territory of Gipuzkoa. For the entire area around Pasaia and Pasaialdea, the fact of boasting a natural harbour with many years of history behind it constitutes an undeniable strength – one located to the west of the Pyrenees, and a major passing place between Spain and France on one of the most important communications axes in Europe, which in turn forms one of its most important strategic transport hubs. The port is also located in a logistic area of unquestionable potential and in which the development of intermodal transport is still to be exploited.

2.2 The natural milieu

Owing to the presence of Mt. Jaizkibel, a protected area that forms part of the Natura 2000 network, Pasaialdea is also a region of undeniable natural beauty and attractions. Its natural, environmental and landscape-related qualities and possibilities are fully comparable with any other area that is either in the vicinity or farther afield, and which we may consider as paradigm from this standpoint.

2.3 Institutional and social commitment.

The strengths referred to above are there for us to see in the area we are dealing with. However, to be able to take full advantage of all that potential, it has been necessary to pursue many years of work to come to a point of common ground, commitment, conviction and willingness on the part of public and private agents in order to effectively ensure that the time for Pasaialdea has come.

What basic conditions need to exist for all these strengths to be translated into the recovery of this whole area?

- It is necessary to set a global project in motion that takes into consideration courses of action in the economic and social sphere of activity and in transport and town planning, for which purpose an Executive Draft Plan for Territorial Development has been put together.
- It is necessary to ensure there is a governing body to coordinate and put into practice the many courses of action that will make up this project: Jaizkibia.

Ensuring that there is a future plan for Pasaialdea means that this project will need to take into account the area as a whole as its sphere of activity, albeit situating Pasaia, its bay and its immediate surroundings at the heart of it. Thus, in considering the bay to be the main nucleus of the Pasaialdea area, all those activities involving regeneration, transformation and/or development must in turn be considered as affecting the whole.

Thus, the angle from which the Pasaialdea area needs to be analyzed must involve being able to bring together all those agents and effects that have a bearing on the region's economic and social activity. Consequently, this means that there will need to be a project that encompasses the problems being faced by the area as a whole – in other words, one which will need to include measures and courses of action in different spheres of activity.

These are essentially four:

- The economic and developmental sphere of activity
- The transport-related sphere of activity
- The town planning sphere of activity
- The social sphere of activity.

Within this context and without any desire to pre-judge possible measures and courses of action, it should be stated that there is no realistic plan for the economic and social regeneration of Pasaialdea and Pasaia outside the Port of Pasaia. It is not that things have only or mainly been like that in the past. Rather, the fact is that the disappearance of the port, irrespective of the time periods during which this may occur, would mean losing something that without any doubt constitutes a key factor for development of great potential for the future of the area and for Gipuzkoa as a whole. Nonetheless, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the different studies carried out point to the fact that the Port of Pasaia in its current location has both weaknesses and threats which, if not addressed, will result in an uncertain future.

Among other things, the following should be highlighted:

- The physical limitations of port areas for commercial activities and port development.
 - Limitations owing to the physical geography, bathymetry and depth of the bay.
 - The proximity of the town centre and unacceptable increase in urban and environmental pressure.

Therefore, quite apart from any difficulties common to all port management can be added in the case of the Port of Pasaia factors which totally determine the future of the port and, as a result, its immediate surroundings and Gipuzkoa in general, as follows:

- On the one hand, the total impossibility for growth and development of the port in its current location.
- On the other, the scenario of apparent and steadily-growing conflict that is emerging between the port and its activity with the urban milieu, whose expansion is putting more and more pressure on it.

It is precisely from this standpoint that the need for the survival of a port in Pasaia arises, insofar as it should be considered as a basic economic and developmental driving force for the area and for Gipuzkoa. This has led to the hypothesis involving the creation of a new outer port in the area that has been duly raised and studied. Such a standpoint is completed and enriched by at the same time being aware of the fact that the migration of the current inner port outwards, the re-planning of the area of Pasaialdea and, in particular, of the Bay of Pasaia and its surroundings, paves the way for some truly splendid opportunities to regenerate the region on an economic, urban and social level. Linked to the existence of a future project for this area is the obligatory nature of relying on a government or management tool for the Plan that is in line with local conditions and requirements.

At present, there are numerous problems deriving from what could be interpreted as the inadequacy of current government tools that might efficiently and effectively develop a project with these features. The division of the municipality of Pasaia (the core area of the project we are referring to) into four nuclei, each with their own personality, is the leading example of this lack of suitability. On the other hand, the port, which constitutes the link between these four centres of population, is under specific administration whose interests can (and do) clash with municipal town planning-related standpoints and interests. This means that the always complex problem with coordinating all those administrative bodies that have the authority to intervene in this area is made especially difficult.

Furthermore, the re-planning of port areas in the bay and its surroundings depends to a large extent on a redefinition of the set of infrastructures which are drawn together around it and through the Mt. Jaizkibel corridor. The particular physical geography of the region and its status as a passing place or access point for the rest of the European continent make it a hub where all communications infrastructures come together: port, airport, road and railway (the latter with three different gauges). This translates into a large concentration of infrastructures among a widely-dispersed set of competences, as there are different administrative bodies that have decision-making capacity over each infrastructure. Taking into account this complex reality, those institutions with the authority to intervene in the future of Pasaialdea set up Jaizkibia S.A. at the end of 2006, the aim of which is to act as the body of governance for the regeneration project of the Bay of Pasaia and the Jaizkibel intermodal corridor.

3. The main lines of work that were established for Jaizkibia are as follows

Analyze, define and, where appropriate, make viable all those projects which – owing to their scope and importance - may be considered strategic for the Bay of Pasaia and its surrounding area. This needs to be dealt with specifically within an Executive Project for the whole area that takes into account courses of action on an economic level and also with regard to transport, urban, environmental and social regeneration.

- Establish a course of action in the area known as La Herrera as a priority and based on the premise that the regeneration of the bay by creating an outer port of Pasaia from the standpoint of the whole area is indeed an option. Jaizkibia, S.A. is the company put in charge of administering all the projects to be developed in that area once the port land included within it has fallen into disuse and been made available to Jaizkibia.
- Promote intense activity involving the coordination and streamlining of the main public investment to be developed in the areas already referred to (i.e. economic, transport and urban and environmental regeneration and on a social level) on the part of the different administrative bodies that have competence in these spheres of activity, in accordance with the courses of action and strategic projects being pursued.
- As has occurred in other depressed areas, there is no room for taking into consideration and setting in motion the effective recovery of the Bay of Pasaia outside the scope and behind the back of private initiative, for which purpose Jaizkibia will seek out the participation of such an initiative and call for it both when defining and analysing projects and making them possible.

4. The Jaizkibel Intermodal Corridor

The incessant increase in flows of international traffic and the urban transformations that have taken place over the last three decades in the Jaizkibel area have helped to consolidate a unique corridor. A natural passing place through the Pyrenees, activity in this territory is both fragmented and scattered; major road and railway infrastructures converge here that pass through both historic settlements and recently-occupied ones, between logistic areas and large commercial premises. As an urban corridor, we can observe a group of settlements in this area that have very different features on each side of the border: on one side, an urban system comprising the main cities of Gipuzkoa, established at the mouths of rivers amid mountainous terrain, over which recent fragmented and scattered growth has been superimposed. On the other is established the French urban system, with a low population density in a fairly gentle landscape. As a communications hub, the enclave comprising the Pasaia area occupies a

geographically strategic place among the communications network on the European continent. Thus, at this narrow passing point located at the extreme Western end of the Pyrenees – flanked by Mts. Jaizkibel and “Peñas de Aia” – converge the key European north-south and east-west axes. In addition, the Ebro Valley axis also converges here as the closest point to the Mediterranean market. Alongside this high concentration of networks of infrastructures there is participation in decision-making by many administrative bodies – each of them with competence in a specific sphere of activity.

Dispersion in terms of competence is absolute, as shown below:

- On the other hand, the proximity of major cities-capitals of other provinces, autonomous regions and states means that this concentration of services is significantly complemented by facilities existing in the cities themselves (read airports, railway stations, road connections and ports).
- Within this context, it can be ascertained that the situation regarding transport in the corridor reaches levels that are of great concern owing to the continuous saturation of its capacity and the consequences that this entails: the border at Irun sees more goods vehicles every day than the Trans-Alpine route between France and Italy, and bottlenecks have major financial consequences – costs deriving from traffic congestion accounted for 1% of the EU’s GDP in 2010. In view of the growing collapse of the main thoroughfares (A-8 motorway, N-1 trunk road, etc.), the powerful railway infrastructure is underused as a result of its being a different gauge to its French counterpart.
- All the above makes it clear that there is a need to design a new transport model, an urgent adaptation of existing infrastructures in Gipuzkoa and, above all, their articulation as an intermodal system. There is no doubt that the geographic location of the corridor can enable this area to become a modal exchange between road and railway and other means of transport. This will therefore help to decongest road traffic and create more sustainable goods haulage.
- Yet to bring this about, the transformation of the current port also needs to be linked to the articulation of a suitable road and railway infrastructure that will make the change in mode of transport between road and sea possible.

Table 1: Competences.

ADMINISTRATIVE BODY	COMPETENCE
State Administration	Airports
	Ports
	Railways
Basque Government	Haulage
	Railways
Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa	Roads
	Town and country planning
Town halls (7)	Urban planning on a local level

5. Basic infrastructures in Gipuzkoa - the system

As far as road infrastructures are concerned, Gipuzkoa has a first-rate network which has recently been extended by the creation of its high-capacity ring road which is connected to the rest of the current road network. The Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa has embarked on a major transformation of these infrastructures in recent years, and this has materialized in the form of the construction of the A-15 as a new connection with Navarra, the widening of the N-1 (4 lanes) and the A-8 (6 lanes) and the construction of the AP-1 as a link to the plain via the Deba Valley. Added to these courses of action are the creation of the Beasain-Durango transversal axis, the second San Sebastián bypass and the Urumea

corridor. Thus, a new road system has been shaped that provides a high-capacity connection between Gipuzkoa and its neighbouring territories.

From the point of view of railways, there are networks that use both the Iberian and the metric gauge with independent sections. In taking into account different services, these will be complemented in the near future by the construction of the high-speed network known as the Basque “Y”. This new infrastructure will link the three Basque provincial capitals with other nearby cities and the rest of Europe via Irun. There is a plan for the new network to also incorporate goods haulage, although above all it will enable the current network to be better used for this purpose. As for airports, we have that of Hondarribia and those close to Bilbao, Gasteiz (all within the Basque Autonomous Community) and Iruña-Pamplona (in the Autonomous Community of Navarra), as well as Biarritz (France). Lastly, the Port of Pasaia is a port of general interest within the Spanish State Port organisation that forms part of a larger set of ports, which also include the nearby ports of Bilbao and Santander and that of Bayonne in France – all close by and on the Bay of Biscay. Within the sphere of port activity, the existence of a coal-operated thermal power station inside the Bay of Pasaia should be highlighted, which accounts for 35% of the energy consumed in Gipuzkoa. The remaining energy needed is imported from production plants in France.

6. Scope of the proposal for town and country planning

The Executive Draft Plan for Town and Country Planning proposed for the Jaizkibel corridor focuses its attention on those issues that have a bearing on the use and type of physical space from a future standpoint about the corridor, between the Bays of Pasaia and Txingudi.

This is an area located to the east of the city centre of Donostia/San Sebastián in territories belonging to this last-mentioned city and several other municipalities – not strictly defined but mainly characterized by its singular nature as an area at the foot of Mt. Jaizkibel and noteworthy for its exceptional expectations regarding town and country planning for Gipuzkoa. Viewed as an urban corridor, the area is approximately ten kilometers in length by three kilometers in width, although the focus of the study will need to extend to certain influences that go beyond that area and also the Bajo Jaizkibel coastline, as the expansion of the Port of Pasaia is one of the unknown factors to be taken into account. This territory shares the common denominator of comprising a corridor of specific strategic interest both within Gipuzkoa and in the areas of Donostia/San Sebastián and Bajo Bidasoa, but also from a broader perspective by grouping together major transport expectations. Indeed, it is not only a common corridor for railways in acting as a link between the Iberian Peninsula and North and Central Europe, but also as one of the most important international road networks. And these infrastructures establish unique contact here with the ocean via an actively-operating commercial port while at the same time above all developing a key urban sprawl of this territory with its own qualities, resources and needs. Viewed as an urban event, the area is dominated by the significant history of the urban development phase that was developed over the last century and a half, with major industrialization taking place over a bay that was built and would become increasingly used as a commercial port until fulfilling its potential. One of the specific aims set out by the Draft Plan for Town and Country Planning is, as expressly defined in its content, to develop certain possibilities for urban regeneration around the Bay of Pasaia. This urban planning, deemed as being a draft plan for town and country planning, has been approached with the aim of addressing those issues that would appear to be of a dimension and with features that go beyond the municipal scheme of things, but also to explore any opportunities that may arise for the urban sprawl as a result of this inter-relation of all elements involved.

7. Current state of the approach: governance

The operation proposed for Pasaialdea and the Jaizkibel corridor goes far beyond the municipal scheme of things, as it constitutes a genuine challenge as far as town and country planning is concerned. For such purpose and in implementing the Law governing Town and Country Planning of the Basque

Autonomous Community, the Town and Country Planning Guidelines (D.O.T.) make up the urban development and planning jigsaw puzzle on the largest of scales on the level of the aforementioned Basque Autonomous Community. Approved in 1997, these grant approvals for the implementation of a series of Sectorial Territorial Plans (P.T.S.) and the division of the Basque Autonomous Community into 15 Functional Areas that need to be developed via the corresponding Partial Territorial Plans (P.T.P.). Insofar as this affects the Bay of Pasaia and the Jaizkibel corridor, they are included in what is referred to as the Partial Territorial Plan for Donostialdea and, consequently, this is affected by the decisions taken in the aforementioned Plan. Nonetheless and taking into account the fact that formulation of the P.T.P. for Donostialdea is still in an initial phase, we are currently in the position to be able to state that the Draft Plan for Town and Country Planning, which is being used as a decision-making tool, also serves as a source of information about and proposal for the P.T.P. model that is currently being drafted. This is because it incorporates the decisions taken in the Draft document and others which, over time, have been taken, even though they have not actually been included in any document. As a result of all the above, it is obvious that there is a need to find a suitable territorial planning tool and also a form of governance that can be deemed useful, effective and efficient, with the clear aim of bringing about the desired transformation by overcoming partial and/or sectorial issues in favour of a common objective. Yet once again, the reality of the situation at the present time has evidenced quite the opposite, i.e. that personal or local interests are put before general ones, and local or particular stances prevent objectives of general interest from being met. Right now, Pasaia is a clear example of this, of ineffectiveness and political servility, confirming a pathetic situation of confrontation that may lead to irreparable collective failure. (Figure 3).



Figure 3: MasterPlan

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