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The Urban Lab of Europe !

The BRICK-BEACH project Journal N° 5

Project led by the City of Vélez-Málaga



**CIRCULAR
ECONOMY**



The BRICK-BEACH project

The **BRICK-BEACH** project seeks to use construction and demolition waste to regenerate a disappeared beach in Velez-Malaga through the development of a circular economy model. The project will create a debris treatment plant and will design an innovative process that will allow the output materials to have the granulometry and softness needed to regenerate damaged sandy beaches such as the Mezquitilla beach. Debris from local illegal dumps will be treated and used for the integral beach regeneration and its surroundings, as well for experimenting together with local businesses other innovative circular economy products. An integrated set of socio-economic and environmental restoration programmes will be implemented to complete the beach regeneration. The newly created urban space next to the regenerated beach will also be used as an opportunity to generate new tourism-related as well as environmental leisure services and activities.

Partnership:

- City of Velez-Malaga
- Spanish Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries, Food and Environment
- Andalusian Agency for water and environment
- University of Malaga - 1 higher education and research institute
- Aula del Mar de Málaga - NGO
- Andalusian Association of Business of Construction and Demolition Waste recovery (AGRECA)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This fifth Journal of BRICK-BEACH project, reports on the advancement of the project from April till end of October 2020, and focuses on the activities realised in different areas, main challenges and findings.

The most relevant news of the reporting period is the approval of the environmental authorization, by the regional administration, relative to the recycling plant for construction waste materials. The immediate consequence is the unblocking of the tender for the work and supply of the plant, which, in a positive scenario, could be in operation in a period of between 8 and 10 months. After long months of efforts by the project partners promoting the file and answering the requirements and doubts of the different departments involved, the authorization has also represented an important stimulus for the achievement of the project objectives. The problems pointed out in previous Journals in relation to the lack of common criteria within the city council of Vélez-Málaga on the location of the recycling plant, seem to have disappeared.

The reality, however, is that there is still a long way to go as other environmental authorizations are pending that affect the submerged dikes on the coast, the Mezquitilla beach itself and its adjacent area or northern zone. According to the most recent information, these authorizations will be definitively approved very soon, which will also allow the launch of the pertinent tenders. One of the most advanced actions is the construction of the facility in the northern

zone that will host business initiatives related to agricultural, fishing, tourism, environmental activities, etc., and whose bases and criteria are practically designed and approved.

Despite the restrictions as a result of covid-19, dissemination and communication activities have continued apace. BRICK-BEACH partners have had the opportunity to learn about other recycling plants in the province of Malaga (Coín and Mijas), as well as their problems, management model, etc. It is also in the final phase of the contest organized for primary school students aimed at designing a mascot for the BRICK-BEACH project. Knowledge of the project has grown significantly throughout the region, as well as the expectations created around, fundamentally, the recovery of the Mezquitilla beach. There have also been some critical manifestations on the part of some neighbourhood association regarding the project execution rate.

The challenges of the project are the same as those indicated in previous Journals. The lack of material time to carry out the project actions due to the accumulated delays, basically, in the approval of environmental authorizations. These delays are also attributable to the impact of covid-19, which, at the time of writing this Journal, is in its second wave throughout Europe with the consequent risk of accumulating delays again that affects the implementation of BRICK-BEACH. In this sense, it is worth asking the possibility of an extension of the project that takes into account this circumstance.

2. BRICK-BEACH: A NEW IMPETUS FOR THE PROJECT, BUT WILL BE IT ENOUGH?

Since the beginning of the project, the tension in relation to the implementation time of the essential elements of the project has been constant. Along with the problems of an administrative nature -approval of environmental and other authorizations- and political -definition of the location of the recycling plant-, we must add in recent months those caused by the covid-19. All this, contributing to a delay in the implementation of the main elements of the project: construction of the recycling plant, regeneration of the Mezquitilla beach and the economic revitalization of the area adjacent to the beach.

Despite all of the above, the technical team has shown a remarkable enthusiasm and creativeness trying to find all possible solutions to these setbacks. In this sense, a new impulse in the dynamics of the project is verifiable. It remains to be seen whether this will be sufficient to achieve the objectives in the remaining time of the project. It is evident that, as already mentioned in previous Journals, complex projects such as BRICK-BEACH with a significant number of work tenders, need more time and better planning for proper implementation, taking into consideration the number of institutions involved at local, regional and national level. If to all this we add the economic and health crisis caused by covid-19 and its impact on the slowdown in environmental authorizations, prior to the launch of the relevant tenders, the situation becomes increasingly pressing.

At this stage of the project, with less than a year from its completion, and despite the significant progress that has been made in the last few months in BRICK-BEACH (which will be pointed out later) there are a number of questions and doubts such as, for example, what will happen if we do not achieve the project indicators?; how can it affect its sustainability?; will this affect the co-financing of the project?. Doubts and questions that should be answered as soon as possible.

In any case, this Journal presents more positives results than in previous one, especially with regard to environmental authorizations that, it is to be expected, will be issued favourably in the coming weeks without further delay and, therefore, the tender procedures for works could finally begin for the recycling plant, the beach integrated regeneration and the use of the north zone of the beach. One of the recent good news is the final approval of the unified environmental authorisation by the regional authorities concerning the recycling plant project (October 2020), which represent a crucial step forward the implementation of BRICK-BEACH. However, it is regrettable that two years of processing have been necessary to obtain said authorisation.

Another positive aspect that is shown in this Journal are the communication activities that have followed its dynamic of sharing relevant information with the civil society organisations and citizens interested in the project. In this sense,

Aula del Mar has continued with its work, focus only in this period, because the covid-19 restrictions, in primary education centres. It is also worth to mention the incorporation to the technical team of BRICK-BEACH of a communication expert who will be the main person in charge of the communication activities and will coordinate the activities with the communication managers of the project partners.

In summary, although administrative procedures have progressed substantially from Journal number 4, it still represents a relevant challenge for the implementation of BRICK-BEACH project in the established timeframe. In this context, the effective implementation of the works of BRICK-BEACH project is still waiting, despite the effort made by the technical team and the project partners. To all this, it must be added the impact that covid-19 has had and continues to have on the environmental procedures, which, among other aspects, has created a significant delay in those authorisations affecting BRICK-BEACH.

The problems mentioned in previous Journals about the leadership of the municipality of Vélez-Málaga, and more precisely about the lack of common criteria in the government team of the city council regarding the location of the recycling plant, seems to be overcome, at least during the period analysed. In general, public opinion about BRICK-BEACH can be considered positive, although with some criticisms from some association in the area and certain environmental groups.

In summary, the current situation of the BRICK-BEACH project is that it continues to be subject to a problem in the execution times of the programmed activities, mainly due to the lack of environmental authorizations - prior to tenders. With the continuous effort of the project partners and their technical team, it is expected that, definitely, in the coming weeks, these environmental authorizations will be a reality.

3. PROJECT UPDATE

The previous Journal number 4 covered the period from November 2019 till the end of March 2020, while the present one (Journal 5) covers the period from April till the end of October 2020. In this Journal, the focus is put on

the status and activities carried out in relation to the recycling plant project, the situation of procedures related to the Mezquitilla beach and the new communication activities with civil society as a whole.

3.1 The status of the treatment plant of construction and demolition waste

As mentioned above, the regional relevant authorities have finally issued a favourable environmental authorisation related to the recycling plant, which is a prior condition for the tender of the plant construction. In recent months, the technical team received several requests for additional information from the regional authorities that were duly addressed. Those responsible for the project continue to take steps to speed up the processes right now and after the environmental authorisation focused on the tender for the recycling plant construction. In this sense, the covid-19 has caused an accumulation of files of prior project authorisations, which, logically, has caused and accumulated delay in these processes. It is also important to mention that the authorisation is for the recycling plant to be located in the “Taramillas” plot near the current location of the wastewater treatment plant and that it was the cause of political opposition mentioned in previous Journals. It is expected that with this decision of the regional authorities, the obstacles to the location of the plant have definitely disappeared.

There are also other elements to take into account regarding the start-up of the recycling plant, the operation of which is essential to start the recovery process of the Mezquitilla beach.

It refers to the tender for the plant work, its management and the supply of machinery for the plant. As concern the construction of the plant and the supply of machinery, although it was considered the option of tendering the machinery independently from the work, the final decision is to merge both and start the procedure in a matter of a few weeks and, in any case, as soon as possible once the environmental authorisation has been approved.

The second aspect to be examined is the management model of the plant. In fact, in Journal number 4, it was explained that the model will be based, first of all, in the use of the plant by companies producing construction and demolition waste (CDW) materials in the area and paying the fees determined by the Municipality of Vélez-Málaga. Secondly, the management model will be realised by a private company that will be in charge of the plant after a long-term contractual arrangement following a public procurement process. This public procurement must be launched also in time to be functional once the recycling plant ready.

The need for adequate programming to coordinate all these processes is evident in order to avoid unnecessary delays as much as possible. In this sense, the BRICK-BEACH technical team

together with the partners responsible for the different aspects of the project are making a commendable effort to complete these tenders in a timely manner. Notwithstanding all of the above, it is also clear that times play against the project taking into account that, once the environmental authorization approved, a minimum of four months is required to complete the process of launching, analysing and selecting the company in charge of carrying out the construction work of the plant, as well as about four-six months for the plant is operational for the

beginning of the first phase of the regeneration of the beach of Mezquitilla.

Finally, criticism and political opposition about the location of the recycling plant seem to have disappeared or, at least, are not evident. The apparent neighbourhood protests regarding contamination, odours, dusts, etc. they have also disappeared in recent months, which undoubtedly contributes to a peaceful implementation of the project.

3.2 The future and highly desired beach of “La Mezquitilla”

The part of the project with the greatest visual and emotional impact on the public is, without a doubt, the recovery of the Mezquitilla beach, which completely disappeared as a result of the construction of the “Caleta de Vélez” fishing port in the late 1970s. The recovery of the beach involves different elements. Among them, the most important are the construction of submerged dikes at a certain distance to the coast and the dumping of sand and gravel - coming from construction material waste and conveniently treated at the recycling plant - on the beach of La Mezquitilla.

All these works are logically also subject to a previous unified environmental authorization that, at the date of preparation of this Journal, has not yet been issued. The relevant authorities, as it was the case of the recycling plant, have submitted various questions to the Main Urban Authority that have been adequately answered. Likewise, once the presentation of the project has been made public through its official publication

in order to collect possible allegations, it seems that an ecological non-governmental association has presented allegations, arguing that generating a beach in a sector of very strong erosion, as in the area of Mezquitilla, will not last more than one season and will have to be regenerated year after year, as it is the case of a nearby beach. The BRICK-BEACH technical team is absolutely convinced that these allegations are not founded and that they will ultimately not be taken into consideration. However, they will have an impact on the time required to properly analyse them and issue the relevant authorisation within the expected deadlines, adding more delays to those already accumulated.

Once the environmental authorization has been issued, as in the case of the recycling plant, the corresponding works must be tendered. Logically, all of this entails more delays than those already caused by covid-19 and its impact in the delivering of the environmental authorisations.

3.3 Plans for the north zone of the beach

In the northern area of the beach, as explained in previous Journals, the installation of different elements related to cultural activities, leisure sports, tourism services, etc. is planned. The works to be carried out in this area are also subject to an authorization since it affects an area of coastal protection easement zone (ZSPC). The project is still waiting the authorisation for this zone of the beach although it seems that it is in its last phase and it will be finalised in a very short period of time. Logically, once the environmental authorisation has been issued, the relevant tender procedure must be launched.

One of the actions planned in this area of the beach is the construction of a modular building that will host different business initiatives related to tourism, fishing, sports, etc., for which different meetings have been held with possible interested parties or potential business initiatives. The tender for the construction of the

building will be launched in the coming weeks by the local authorities, since the plot in which it will be located is owned by the municipality and is not subject to any prior authorisation.

To date, only a small number of entrepreneurs have expressed a clear interest in the economic revitalization of the Mezquitilla area and whose projects have a limited capacity to generate employment. One of the activities that is intended to be promoted in this area is related to shore carpentry (Carpintería Ribera) as a distinctive claim to the beach. “Carpintería Ribera” is a trade that deals with the artisanal construction of wooden boats. Today in Europe it is considered disused, however there are still many examples of riverside carpentry on several continents and that still persists on the Malaga coast. BRICK-BEACH will support as well the participation of cooperatives on reusing and recycling of plastics used in the agricultural sector and





fishing activities. The creation of a cooperative society would be scored positively and whose beneficiaries of the open call for proposals will enjoy the training and mentoring programme, accommodation in municipal facilities or the

purchase of technological devices. At present, the BRICK-BEACH technical team is preparing the bases for the bidding of potential companies interested in locating in the building.

3.4 Network awareness and dissemination

During the reporting period, and due to the social restrictions imposed by the authorities due to covid-19, the awareness and dissemination activities of the BRICK-BEACH project have suffered a considerable slowdown. In the last three months, the fundamental activity has been focused on social networks, sharing relevant information from the BRICK-BEACH project. Likewise, Aula del Mar, the partner of the project in charge of this activity, forced by the covid-19 stopped all activities except the related with the BRICK-BEACH mascot.

In the educational centres in primary and secondary education - where a special work has been carried out to disseminate the project focused on environmental aspects - the BRICK-

BEACH mascot contest is expected to be resumed in the coming weeks. Primary school students have submitted two proposals as BRICK-BEACH mascot that will be debated and the winner selected in the near future. On the other hand, it is proposed to continue working on the socio-economic revitalization of the project to reach citizens, either in person or online.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, and in order to learn about successful experiences in relation to the management and operation of recycling plants in the region, various visits were made by BRICK-BEACH partners to said plants. More specifically, the visits were realised to the following recycling plants:



- **RECICLA ANDALUCIA, located in the municipality of Coín (Málaga)**

The visit took place on July 2020. RECICLA ANDALUCIA is a Malaga family business with an age of eight years becoming a benchmark in recycling in the province of Malaga due to its extension (more than 300,000 square meters, in the centre of the Guadalhorce Valley) and its diversity of recycling. The plant works with different types of waste such as construction, vehicles, and plastics, and soon with hazardous waste. There is also a renewable energy project within the plant, taking advantage of the wood biomass that comes from pruning.

During the visit, two challenges that an installation of this type has to face today were discussed: (1) the environmental authorizations. The process for granting these is delayed in time due to the slow processes of the public administration. If a plant wants to be competitive and adapt to the needs and demands of the current market, these procedures should be streamlined (2), the awareness and sensitization to separate materials at source. Only by making a correct classification of the different materials by users can an efficient recycling process be carried out.





A collateral activity of the plant is the organic garden where a wide variety of fruits and vegetables such as onions, watermelons and tomatoes are grown. The result is top quality local produce. It is about optimizing the use of both water resources and raw materials from the land, adapting them to each season of the year, taking advantage of the privileged enclave of the Guadalhorde Valley. The cultivation techniques

used are based on ecological principles and respect for nature and the environment.

- **RECICLADO MIJAS, located in the municipality of Mijas (Málaga)**

RECICLADOS MIJAS SL, was born as a private company in 1997 of local businessmen dedicated to transport, faced with the incipient need to manage debris and plant waste from the





landscaped areas of the Costa del Sol, which in full swing of construction in the 90s it lacked a solution for an authorized management of said waste. The main activity of the plant is the processing and recycling of the different waste for which it is authorized: - Plant residues;

-Construction and demolition waste (RCD's);
 - Biodegradable waste; - Wood, furniture and fixtures. There is also a collection service, which is made up of crane trucks specialised in the collection of plant waste from urbanizations, golf courses and garden areas.

3.5 BRICK-BEACH management

Project management continues at a sustained pace and with monthly technical meetings where progress, problems and possible solutions for the implementation of the project are discussed. Without a doubt, it is the engine of the project and an essential element of it. With the appearance of covid-19, the encounters became virtual and this continues to the date of this magazine. One of its greatest virtues is the ability to analyse the problems faced by BRICK-BEACH and the adoption of the appropriate or corrective measures. From this point of view, there is nothing to reproach this technical committee in relation to the administrative delays of the aforementioned environmental authorizations. Quite the opposite. Without the constant commitment of the project partners and the wise direction of

their senior managers, the implementation of the BRICK-BEACH actions could have been seriously compromised for several months.

All that said, the next few months are going to be crucial for BRICK-BEACH. It will be time to launch all pending bids for the work, both for the recycling plant and for those to be undertaken on the beach and its surroundings, which will put management and coordination skills to the test. Fortunately, the technical team has had the opportunity, during the waiting period for environmental authorizations, to make substantial progress in the preparation of the technical documentation of the different works to be carried out, which should lead to the official launch of the pending tenders imminently.

4. CHALLENGES AND TIME CONSTRAINT

The BRICK-BEACH project continues to face different challenges as mentioned in the previous Journal. Despite the efforts of those most directly responsible for its management and implementation, there are still a series of obstacles that significantly hinder its correct implementation and which are described below.

Overall, taking into account the complex nature of this circular economy project, the time required by the different public administrations related to environmental authorisations, together with the covid-19 impact, it is more than wise to consider the possibility of an extension to properly accomplish the objectives of BRICK-BEACH.

4.1 Big step forward for a final recycling plant solution

The biggest and most significant advance in relation to the recycling plant has been the obtaining of the environmental authorization in October 2020. This authorization allows launching the tender for the construction works of the recycling plant which, in a positive scenario, would allow start the works on the ground within 5 to 6 months. This would place us in spring-summer 2021 as the plant's operational start date. It goes without saying that, if there is no extension of the project, it is extremely difficult to imagine that the project will meet all its objectives with a recycling plant that has just started, at that moment, its production of material for the recovery of the Mezquitilla beach.

In relation to the political problems mentioned in previous issues, everything seems to indicate

that there is a consensus within the government team of the Vélez-Málaga city council, as well as in the opposition, not to pose major problems regarding the location of the recycling plant. Undoubtedly, the definitive approval of the environmental authorization of the plant in the proposed location since the beginning of the project, has played a significant role in this new situation. Hopefully, no new problems will arise in relation to the plant's concession and management model, which must be approved by the City council in plenary session.

In conclusion, once again, the main problem of the BRICK-BEACH project has to do with the lack of time for its implementation.

4.2 What will be the future for the Mezquitilla beach?

At the point where the project implementation is, the most reasonable thing to do is to assume, with respect to Mezquitilla beach, that a full recovery of the beach is not expected as of the current project completion date (June 2021). It must be taken into account, as already mentioned, that

the environmental authorization for this activity is not yet available and that the works related to the marine dikes will be a complex activity to carry out. At the same time, the recycling plant will, at best, have barely started treating the waste and there won't be enough sand available

to recover the beach as planned, except if there is an extension of the project in which case it is possible that exist enough material for the first phase of the beach recovery.

Regarding the actions to be carried out in the adjacent area of the beach, the situation is significantly better since, everything seems to indicate, that the authorization will be available

in the coming weeks, so that the tender could be launched immediately. As well, the project for the construction of the building for entrepreneurial initiatives is in a good track and will be launch very soon. Given the potential negative impact of the lack of visual recovery of the beach itself in the near future, it will be important for the sake of citizens' support, to speed up the actions in the north part of the beach.

4.3 Communicating with target beneficiaries

Communication with business, neighbourhood, cultural, educational associations, etc., is, without a doubt, one of the areas in which more actions have been carried out with a wide range of events and meetings in which the objectives of BRICK-BEACH have been made known. In addition, an important official communication effort have been made through the website of the Vélez-Málaga city council on the progress and activities of BRICK-BEACH. All of this has resulted in a significantly high degree of awareness by the general public and final beneficiaries about the project.

The fundamental problem at this point has already been highlighted in previous Journals. Namely, the expectations created in the citizenship regarding the recovery of the Mezquitilla beach. At this point, it would be advisable to establish a communication strategy aimed at modulating these expectations in order to bring it closer to the reality of the project, especially in terms of the expected results upon the official completion of BRICK-BEACH.

4.4 BRICK-BEACH and the EU financial support

Since its inception, the BRICK-BEACH project has had a relevant impact on the rest of the Spanish coastline since it is a common problem in many coastal areas, in addition to the lack of recycling plants for construction waste in an area where tourists pressure, and therefore construction, has exerted and continues to exert significant pressure. There have been several municipalities

that have requested information on the project and much interest has been spread regarding its results. In this sense, one of the challenges that BRICK-BEACH must face is its ability to integrate similar circular economy projects or priorities into the European Union Structural Funds for the period 2021-2027.

MAPPING BRICK-BEACH AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED UIA CHALLENGES

Challenge	Level	Observations
1. Leadership for implementation	Medium	Leadership capacity has improved substantially since the last Journal, which has resulted in a clear improvement in the political climate and their support for the BRICK-BEACH project. However, in the coming weeks, this leadership will be put to the test, as important measures will have to be adopted related to the execution of different actions and the approval of the concession for the recycling plant.
2. Public procurement	High	Although a very important step has been taken to unblock the pending tenders with the approval of the environmental authorization for the construction of the recycling plant, other authorizations are pending that put the execution of the works on the beach and its adjacent area at risk. Undoubtedly, this element is today, the one with the highest risk for the correct implementation of the project.
3. Integrated cross-departmental working	Low	The integration of the different departments, in the first instance of the Vélez-Málaga city council, as well as the different partners of the project, does not represent a significant challenge. To date, the communication and interaction of these departments has been positive. However, with the tenders to be launched in the near future, such coordination and integration should work even better given the different departments at stake.
4. Adopting a participative approach	Low	The level of participation and commitment of the different partners can be described as excellent. The monthly meeting system, as well as the established electronic documentation exchange, works properly, which representing an aspect to be highlighted.
5. Monitoring and evaluation	High	The monitoring and evaluation of the project is logically linked to the degree of implementation of the project and its indicators both at the level of the results and specific and general objectives of BRICK-BEACH. The degree of uncertainty of the times and expected results at the end of the project make this challenge one of those that should be considered at high risk.
6. Communicating with target beneficiaries	Low	Communication with ultimate beneficiaries does not represent a risk as such. Many and varied communication actions have been carried out that have achieved their objectives. The only element to take into account is the need to establish effective communication in relation to the Mezquitilla beach and the expected results in the coming months.

Challenge	Level	Observations
7. Up scaling	Medium	BRICK-BEACH has all the elements to become an example to follow when designing circular economy projects, including within the framework of future European structural funds. This is demonstrated by the interest aroused in its implementation by other coastal municipalities. It is also relevant to mention that, on many occasions, the best lessons learned come from mistakes rather than successes. BRICK-BEACH can also be an example to prevent certain design mistakes from being repeated.

5. LESSONS LEARNT

The lessons learned in the last six months are, to some extent, a confirmation of what has already been expressed in previous Journals.

First of all, the absolute need for realistic planning must be emphasized for projects with a significant number of tenders, whether for works, tenders or services. In any case, it is clear that when different levels of administration intervene -local, regional, national- such as BRICK-BEACH, the administrative times necessary for the approval of the corresponding files must be taken into account with greater precision.

Second, these projects require a high degree of coordination not only with the direct partners of the project, but also among all the administrations involved. There are different options that can mitigate this situation, such as signing a memorandum of understanding. Logically, all this also has to do with aspects related to the maturity of ideas and possible projects. Starting a project from scratch is not realistic. A certain degree of maturity is needed for certain actions so that a complex project like BRICK-BEACH can be executed in the established period of time.

Communication must be at the service of the project's objectives and for the benefit of the citizens as a whole. BRICK-BEACH communication has seen substantial improvement in recent months. To the professional work of those responsible for it, we must add the effort made in social networks to publicize the reality of the project. An element that must be taken into account for the remainder of the project is the one related to the Mezquitilla beach in order not to create false expectations regarding the final result of the project.

Last but not least, these projects require a high degree of political commitment that cannot be left to the risk of possible changes in the composition of the governing body of the corresponding administration, or of momentary political or electoral interests. In such circumstances, an explicit and documented public political commitment could also serve as a mitigating element for the aforementioned risk.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions for this Journal 5 can be summarised as follows:

- A crucial step was taken by the project with the definitive obtaining of the environmental impact authorization related to the project of the recycling plant for construction waste. With this authorization, the BRICK-BEACH tender for work and supply is unlocked and can lead to a more positive and concrete dynamic in the execution of the project. It is expected that in a period of 8-10 months the first gravels destined for the recovery of the Mezquitilla beach will be available.
- The BRICK-BEACH project continues to be in a critical situation. Other environmental authorizations are still pending for the submerged dikes, beach and adjacent area. To which must be added the tenders and works that must be carried out. It is more than evident that without an extension of the project, the project cannot be fully implemented in June 2021.
- There are very important advances in terms of business infrastructures planned in the north of the beach. In the coming weeks, the building tender is expected to be a reality. Likewise, the criteria, potential business initiatives and building management are very advanced and with a high degree of maturity for immediate implementation.
- Both the political problems regarding the location of the plant, as well as some neighbourhood protests regarding the execution delays, seem to have dissipated and public opinion in the area is waiting for the start of the works. The good technical management of the project has undoubtedly contributed to all this, which has managed to solve the problems of environmental authorization in the framework of covid-19, and the fact of the environmental authorization itself.
- Communication and dissemination activities, due to the covid-19 restrictions, have continued at a slower pace by Aula del Mar, with significant support from the BRICK-BEACH communication area and all its collaborators. At the local level, there is extensive knowledge of the project and expectations remain high from an environmental point of view -with the construction of the recycling plant- economic -the impact will be very positive with business opportunities and job creation-, and quality of life -recovery of a beach lost in the 70s-. Expectations are also high and, in this sense, managing them represents a challenge for the project as a whole.

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.

UIA projects will produce a wealth of knowledge stemming from the implementation of the innovative solutions for sustainable urban development that are of interest for city practitioners and stakeholders across the EU. This journal is a paper written by a UIA Expert that captures and disseminates the lessons learnt from the project implementation and the good practices identified. The journals will be structured around the main challenges of implementation identified and faced at local level by UIA projects. They will be published on a regular basis on the UIA website.



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