

Bilbao's digital transformation strategy

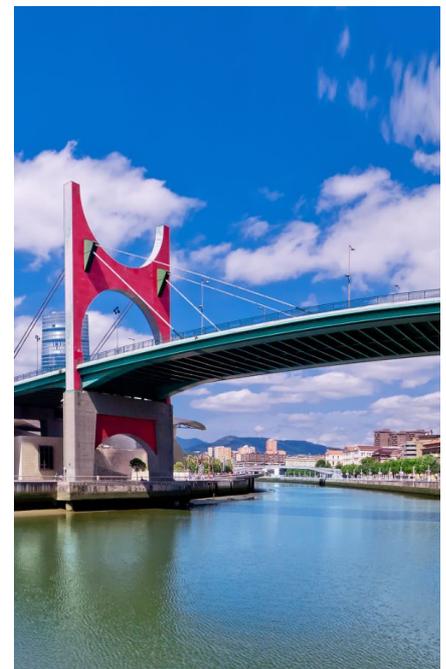
As technology increasingly transforms the way citizens of Bilbao live, work and move, the local government has decided to create a people-centric digital strategy mobilising all the local stakeholders towards the digital transformation of the city. Following the approach set forth in this blueprint, Bilbao's digital strategy relies on the adaptation of relevant international best practices to the economic, social and cultural particularities of the city. A long-term digital approach which has now started to bear fruit.

When visiting the modern and avant-garde city of Bilbao, it is hard to imagine that not so long ago the city experienced the collapse of its industrial model and major floods in 1983 causing severe damage in the city. Bilbao's collaborative model was one of the key factors that enabled the city to successfully recover from the last crisis. This time, Bilbao opted for a model of collaboration focusing on smart investments to adapt its industry and services to the digital world.

Featuring a strong technological component, steel plants have given way to the automotive and aerospace industries and logistics services were replaced by engineering companies.

In line with the critical attributes of the blueprint, Bilbao Tech strategy focuses on 4 driving axes to support the digital transformation of the city:

1. Smart governance;
2. Talent and technological entrepreneurship;
3. Access to technology and information, and;
4. Digital infrastructures.



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Key initiatives

“Collaboration is the key to any sustainable model taking into account the interests of all stakeholders while placing the citizens at its center”

Local officials in Bilbao believe that public institutions must take an active role in becoming catalysts for change. Municipalities - as the closest public bodies to local stakeholders - must take an increasingly relevant role in connecting businesses, academia, entrepreneurs and citizens to create new digital solutions for economic growth.

“Talent and tech entrepreneurs are the backbone of the digital transformation process”

Talent can unlock the doors to unprecedented technological advancements. Bilbao is already home to a particularly rich pool of digital talents but as the global war for digital talents goes on, the city is stepping up its efforts to attract even more skilled digital workers. Bilbao has developed a plan for smart sectoral specialization focusing on the development of economic activities in 7 sectors of high growth potential such as ICT or KIBs. These sectors are key for the economy and rely on the availability of digital talents as reflected by the rapid developments that are occurring in the

automotive cluster ACICAE and the aerospace cluster HEGAN. The city of Bilbao is therefore developing projects to foster entrepreneurship such as the innovation factory Bilbao Berrikuntza Faktoria (Bilbao innovation factory) or the Advanced Incubator for Digital Economy “Kbi Digital” located in the municipal Auzofactory of Matiko-Irazabal.

“The starting point of any model of cooperation must be the digital sharing of data”

Through the development of the Bilbao Open Data initiative, the city of Bilbao is proving that it has what it takes to be an open and transparent city. Bilbao Open Data initiative opens up new opportunities for businesses and citizens to get access to all kinds of information about the city and the city council. The portal and its numerous applications such as GeoBilbao, iBilbobus or infoBilbao provide data about the council itself, its relations with the public and other interest groups; economic, financial and patrimonial data, and other data such as contracts, agreements and grants; planning; evaluation and controls, etc. The city of Bilbao has understood

that being a digital city is not about technology. It is about putting people together by giving them the means to create, exchange, collaborate and use data to transform their city, local businesses and the lives of citizens.

“Cities should ensure that all agents have the necessary digital infrastructures to address both physical and virtual digital transformation”

With a network of **112 hotspots** covering all the neighborhoods of the city, Bilbao is one of Europe's pioneers in free urban Wi-Fi. The city of Bilbao did not only limit itself to the installation of free municipal Wi-Fi. To stay ahead of the digital curve, Bilbao launched its flagship initiative: **Big Bilbao**. The intelligence system of the city leverages on Big Data to develop new business opportunities, to provide citizens with more efficient services and to allow municipal teams to make smart decisions. By striving to address urban challenges such as public safety, mobility and sustainability, the virtual infrastructure allows to take the digital transformation of the city to the next level.