



Aerial photo of Vila Viçosa with strategic and project site limits

CATEGORY urban/architectural

TEAM REPRESENTATIVE Must be either an architect, a landscaper or an urban planner

LOCATION VILA VIÇOSA

POPULATION Town 4 000 inhab.

Conurbation (Municipality) 8 300 inhab.

STRATEGIC SITE 80ha **SITE OF PROJECT** 6ha

SITE PROPOSED BY Vila Viçosa Municipality

OWNER(S) (strategic and project areas): with private and public parts

COMMISSION AFTER COMPETITION Urban Project.

HOW CAN VILA VIÇOSA CONTRIBUTE TO THE ADAPTABLE CITY?

Vila Viçosa is situated in Alentejo, near Spain, in a scarcely inhabited region. The town seeks to manage its territory by trying to preserve an important architectural and urban heritage in the context of a reactivating process of urban life and resources:

- Ensuring forms of production and management of new collective space: shared governance among public and private partners.
- Evaluating various spatial and time scenarios (from perennial to ephemeral and episodic), where multi-use places can be active in different times and ways.
- Recycling built stocks and empty spaces avoiding excessive space consumption to ensure "hospitality" to new uses (tourism, agriculture, sports, religion...).
- Incorporating the time dimension in urban policy: image, activity expansion and diversification, cohesion and focus, intensity and continuity in time (24 hours a day).

For urban spaces to adapt to changes in the context of an uncertain future, it is necessary to optimize their uses with new economic and social and cultural meaning, without losing the sense of inherited identities.

CITY STRATEGY

There's an ongoing DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN REGENERATION STRATEGIC PLAN aimed at rehabilitation, recovery and integration of the urban landscape values, in a process with effective public participation and shared responsibility of local partners in their cultural inheritance with a financial supporting implementation program. The motivations of this plan are:

1. To activate the strategic potential of Vila Viçosa, as urban reference and national identity, in historical, social, landscape, urban and architectural domains;
2. To give the necessary response to existing architectural, urban and landscape cluttering, enhanced at economic and social level by marble processing industry.

The opportunity of an integrated management of urban heritage with new features and mechanisms allowing to expand their national and international potential justifies the choice of this European 12 competition location.



SITE DEFINITION (strategic elements)

Europan site is located at the southern entrance of the village, previously polarized by the Railway and the location of presently in-crisis industries related to marble. It addresses the following issues of regeneration:

- a) In the project area – Ancient industrial units for processing marble (which are today obsolete) and an adjacent roundabout and highway variant, are potentially to be integrated in the new city entrance and activity centre with a new image;
- b) In the strategic area – The abandoned old railway line, station and warehouses potentially adaptable for new structures supporting leisure, religious and culture activities around an greenway, adjacent to contiguous church, dormitory and gardens, public schools, municipal library and sports facilities; and also reviving peri-urban' spaces in the olive grove area, adjacent to the new circular infrastructure (highway variant) with recreational potential for large-scale public multi-use spaces.

ADAPTABILITY : MAIN CHALLENGES TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

To ensure continuity of the valuable historical urban design, in the context of the Strategic Plan, it is necessary to introduce new urban concepts. The need to find alternatives that substitute the old large-scale public spaces (carrascais), for new type of events, aiming at a new and strong attractiveness and captivating markets on local, regional, national and international scales:

- a) in the project area:** Setting up a new 'entrance' of the town - with the regeneration of surrounding disused areas, and an effect of highly visibility and positive image;
- Providing a new exhibition and social area, attractive for the installation of new uses and functions (technology, research and exhibitions center), to support aspects of the marbles manufacturing (technology, design, marketing, commerce);

b) in the strategic area: The promotion of a new tourist destination (business, religious, eco-cultural), combining themes of culture and nature with new types of hotel infrastructures;

- Combining transition/integration spaces with the rural universe in a cultural landscape adaptable to new activities and lifestyles;
- Mobility, demonstrating the viability resulting from a stimulus to alternatives to car use within the village (a return asset from investment in new urbanity practices).

Vila Viçosa - Portugal - european 12



Aerial view of strategic and project site



Obsolete marble processing industrial units



Old railway line



Stone quarry

Aerial view, focus on southern entrance



New entrance, roundabout and road connection