



# *Orexa local development strategy 'bidea hemen hasten da'*

**Blandine Camus, Communication and Policy Officer**

Rural Pact policy lab - Taking action to tackle rural depopulation

29 June 2023 | Brussels



EUROMONTANA



# 1. About Orexa

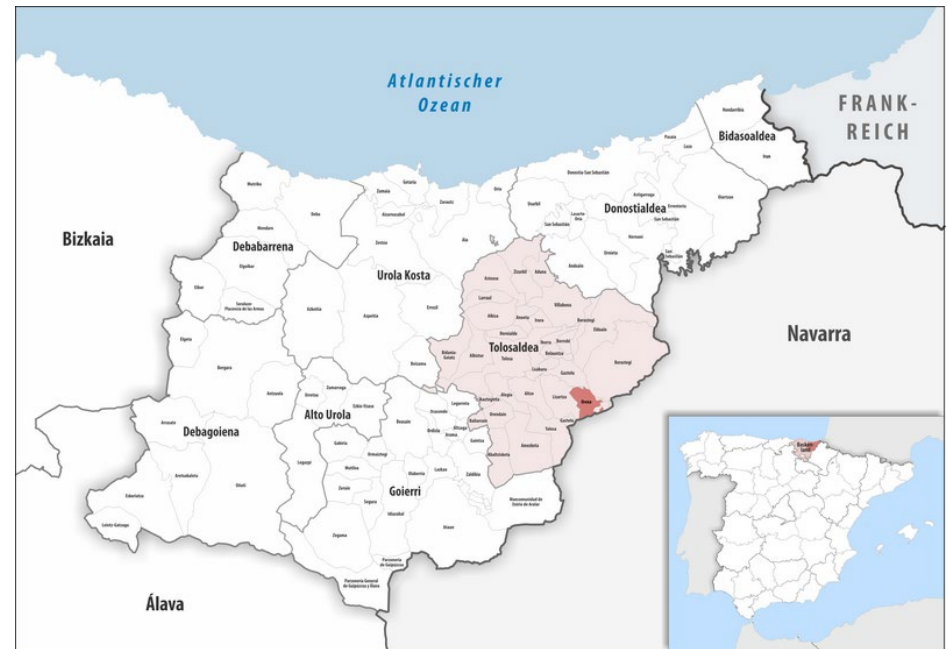


# 1. About Orexa

- ▶ Smallest municipality of the Basque country
- ▶ 104 inhabitants
- ▶ 2 businesses
- ▶ Local strategy 2013

*“Orexa, bidea hemen hasten da”*

*“Orexa, the journey starts here”*





# 1. About Orexa

- ▶ Retaining the population and attracting young people, avoiding medium-term solutions like vouchers  
*'A vibrant and sustainable community'*
- ▶ Changing the narrative and image of the village
- ▶ Improving the quality of life

Eneko Maioz, mayor 2011-2022



## 2. Services



## 2. Services



- ▶ Creation of a bar 'Orexa ostatua'



## 2. Services



- ▶ Creation of a bar 'Orexa ostatua'
- ▶ Creation of a local shop

## 2. Services



- ▶ Creation of a bar 'Orexa ostatua'
- ▶ Creation of a local shop
- ▶ Organisation of socio-cultural events



## 2. Services



- ▶ Creation of a bar 'Orexa ostatua'
- ▶ Creation of a local shop
- ▶ Organisation of socio-cultural events
- ▶ 14 on demand bus / day on the line to Tolosa



### 3. Orexa's energy community





### 3. Orexa's energy community

- ▶ Launched in 2021 - installation of solar panels on public buildings (fronton and town hall)
- ▶ Initial investment in 2021: 5.000€ (total budget 23.000€, 80% public support)



### 3. Orexa's energy community

- ▶ Mainly used for the 2 businesses (30% bill reduction)
- ▶ Priority is given to low-income households (savings from 15 to 60€ / month)
- ▶ Managed by local community within a cooperative





### 3. Orexa's energy community

- ▶ Orexa produces 70% of its energy
- ▶ Objective: energy sovereignty and additional attractiveness factor
- ▶ Next step: biomass boiler



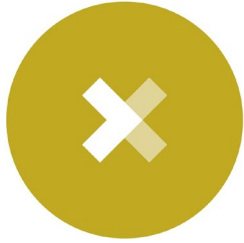


## 4. Orexa's territorial marketing





## 4. Orexa's territorial marketing



**orexa**

Bidea hemen hasten da

- ▶ Communication on their vision & results

### El camino comienza aquí

Orexa, un pueblo vivo.

Un pueblo que con nada, lo tiene todo.

Conoce la personalidad de Orexa.

— Qué hacer

## 4. Orexa's territorial marketing



► Communication on their vision & results

► Promotion of local products

‘The village of cheese’

Among the main cheeses available in the region



## 4. Orexa's territorial marketing



- ▶ Communication on their vision & results
- ▶ Promotion of local products
- ▶ Promotion of their natural environment

## 5. Governance





## 5. Governance



▶ 2 cooperatives

(agriculture & energy)

▶ Meetings with all residents

(25% turnout, around 1 person per household)

▶ Coordination group + working groups

## 5. Governance



- ▶ Local budget 200.000€ per year
- ▶ Investments 20.000€ per year
- ▶ Use public funds to double the budget  
“If you have ideas you will get money”  
Smart RURAL project with LAG MENDINET



## 6. Enabling factors



## 6. Enabling factors

In their view

- ▶ Creation of a local strategy with objectives
- ▶ Social cohesion and a willingness to act on the part of the community
- ▶ Support from regional policies & use of public funds (and engineering to apply)



## 6. Enabling factors

### Strengths

2 businesses  
30% of the population <25 years old  
Social cohesion

### Weaknesses

No school  
Remoteness of services  
No empty houses  
No jobs beyond agriculture

### Opportunities

Rural-urban linkages with Tolosa  
Energy production  
Natural environment

### Threats

Uncontrolled urban expansion

## 6. Enabling factors

### ► Policies Against Depopulation In Mountain Areas - 2010-2012

### ► Building an integrated approach of depopulation by addressing the quality of life challenges of different age groups

- education and training
- territorial marketing
- economic diversification

### ► Guidelines to help municipalities make a depopulation diagnosis, help you ask the right questions to find solutions adapted to the situation in your region





A man in a dark blue jacket and black pants is hiking on a grassy mountain trail. He is carrying a young child on his back in a grey and red backpack. The child is wearing a black beanie and a red jacket. They are looking out over a vast mountain range under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The foreground is filled with tall, dry grass.

# Thank you !

[www.euromontana.org](http://www.euromontana.org)

[info@euromontana.org](mailto:info@euromontana.org)

+32 (0)2 280 42 83

Euromontana  
Place du Champ de Mars, 2  
1050 Brussels

*Let's keep in touch*

