



HORT AL TERRAT

5 Employees and over 150 Participants

Overview

Hort al Terrat is an innovative urban gardening project launched in 2016 by the Municipal Institute for People with Disabilities (IMPD) in Barcelona. It focuses on fostering social inclusion and autonomy for individuals with physical, intellectual, or mental health disabilities through rooftop gardening on municipal buildings. The project repurposes unused rooftops to create hydroponic gardens, producing vegetables sustainably and donating surplus to social dining facilities and food banks. With 8 gardens across 4 districts and collaborations with schools, it engages over 150 participants, supported by 23 partner organizations, and harvested 1,727 kilos of vegetables in 2023.

History and Inspiration

Initiated in spring 2016, Hort al Terrat began as a pilot on the IMPD's office rooftop, expanding to 10 gardens by 2024 across districts like Les Corts, Gràcia, and Sants-Montjuïc. Inspired by the need to enhance quality of life for people with disabilities and promote sustainable urban agriculture, the project gained recognition, winning the 2019 European Public Sector Award (EPSA) and a 2024 New European Bauhaus Prize (€30,000) for its inclusive and sustainable approach. It aligns with Barcelona's urban greening strategies and was selected for the 2025 Osaka World Expo EU Pavilion, reflecting its global influence.

How It Operates

Hort al Terrat operates hydroponic rooftop gardens on municipal buildings and schools, managed by participants with disabilities through NGOs. Weekly sessions involve planting, maintenance, and harvesting, with excess produce donated to social canteens. The project uses lightweight substrates and automated drip systems, requiring skilled maintenance. It employs a sociocratic model, with IMPD coordinating NGOs and enterprises for setup and upkeep, while schools integrate gardening into education, sharing produce with students.

Costs

In addition to equipment like drip systems, rockwool substrates, and initial setup by subcontractors, costs include ongoing maintenance contracts with agronomic firms, estimated at €7,000–€9,000 annually per garden for nutrient supply, pest control, and technical support. Upgrades to automated irrigation systems to address drought conditions add costs, while safety enhancements like rooftop railings and accessibility ramps cost around €5,000 per garden. Training programs for participants and staff incur yearly, and energy costs for water pumps and lighting have risen by 15% in 2024 due to inflation.

Funding Sources

In addition to municipal department funds, Hort al Terrat receives EU funding through the New European Bauhaus Prize and support from Barcelona's urban greening budget. Private donations from disability advocacy groups and in-kind contributions, such as free rooftop access, bolster resources. The project is exploring grants from environmental foundations to expand the garden.

Revenue Generation

While primarily donation-driven, Hort al Terrat generates minor revenue through educational workshops for schools and community groups, charging a small fee. Partnerships with local businesses for surplus produce sales and crowdfunding campaigns for garden expansion provide additional income. The project reinvests proceeds into maintenance and participant support, aiming to sustain operations long-term.

Cost categories

Assets	Operational costs	Personnel costs	Administration and management
Roof of municipal building	Electricity and water	Employed personnel salaries	Advocacy for the garden
Equipment for gardening	Payment to subcontractor to setup the garden		
Growing substrate	Maintenance		