

11. Valencia's climate shelters as a tool to cope with heat

Valencia's heat adaptation strategy focuses on the creation of a network of climate shelters to protect public health during extreme heat events. The city has identified and geolocated over 1,000 potential shelters, including libraries, social services centers, and municipal facilities. This initiative, launched in May 2024, includes collaboration with regional and municipal health authorities to establish early warning systems and communication protocols.

Tags: Heat adaptation strategy, Cooling spaces, Urban Heat Island.

CHALLENGES ADDRESSED:

- **Public health protection:** vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, children, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions, are disproportionately affected by heat stress.
- **Equitable access to cooling infrastructure:** socio-economic inequalities can limit access to resources that mitigate heat exposure.
- **Early warning and preparedness:** lack of preparedness and timely information amplifies the impact of extreme heat.

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- **Ensure that vulnerable populations have access to cooling spaces,** reducing the impact of extreme heat on their health and well-being.
- **Mitigate high temperatures** in densely built-up areas.
- **Identify the neighbourhoods** with higher temperatures during heatwaves.
- **Collaborate with key stakeholders.**
- **Define actions** for preparation, awareness, communication, and training.

+ FACTS

Project type: Urban climate shelters project

Partners: Ajuntament de València, València Clima i Energia

Beneficiaries: Valencia Municipality

Date: 2023 - Ongoing

+ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Valencia City Council has decided to create a municipal Climate Shelter Network, which will respond to the impacts produced by the accumulation of heat waves, which are increasingly frequent, intense and long-lasting, on people's health.

Climate Shelters are public facilities that serve as shelters during episodes of high health risk due to high temperatures. They are spaces that meet the necessary characteristics to protect you from these periods of extreme heat.

Currently, the network has 10 municipal facilities, listed below. The Valencia City Council will continue to work, after the summer of 2024, to expand and improve the network. The shelters created to date contain the following facilities:

- Air-conditioned space at a comfortable temperature.
 - Drinking water fountain, filtered and refrigerated.
 - Waiting and rest area with chairs or armchairs.
 - Public and accessible toilets available to people who use the space.
 - Whenever possible, offer cultural activities for adults and children.
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+ IMPACTS AND RESULTS

Implementing a network of climate spaces in Valencia from the summer of 2024 will have immediate positive impacts on public health, urban biodiversity and environmental quality. In the medium and long term, it is expected to create a more resilient, equitable city, prepared to face heat waves and other effects of climate change.

The expected results are as follows:

- **Reduction of thermal stress:** reduction of heat strokes and improvement of public health, especially in vulnerable groups.
 - **Lowering urban temperatures:** creation of cool microclimates through vegetation, shade and cool pavements.
 - **Equitable coverage:** access to climate-friendly spaces in vulnerable neighbourhoods, reaching 80% of the population.
 - **Improvement of public space:** increase in the use of adapted parks and squares, promoting social cohesion and urban resilience.
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