



## THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Itsas Gela is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and respect of the marine and natural environment in Pasaia, Guipúzcoa, located in the Basque Country, Spain. Founded in 2001 by Izaskun Suberbiola, a young woman passionate about environmental conservation, Itsas Gela restored the last large Basque wooden bonitera, now known as MATER, transforming it into an eco-active museum ship. The goal was to engage society in environmental care and protection while fostering a deeper connection to the sea and its resources. Itsas Gela's initiatives and activities offer leisure, training, and research opportunities related to the sea, promoting respect, protection, study, and enjoyment of the marine environment.



## THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Itsas Gela's impact extends beyond conservation efforts; it serves as a platform for families, schools, volunteers, and local stakeholders to actively

participate in safeguarding the sea and embracing a virtuous change. Through various activities like visits to the Museum Ship, educational workshops, guided tours, and boat trips, Itsas Gela facilitates hands-on learning and direct engagement with the marine ecosystem. Additionally, the organisation promotes ecological practices such as sewage recovery and collects data on intertidal fauna and flora, contributing valuable information for research purposes.

Recognised for their dedication, Itsas Gela received the first-place Excellence in Innovation for Rural Women Award in 2023, specifically for their promotion of fishery patrimony and ecological activities aboard the museum ship. As the European Union's 2030 Agenda prioritises marine environment safeguarding, Itsas Gela's role becomes even more critical. By raising awareness, fostering community engagement, promoting responsible tourism, and advocating for policy changes, Itsas Gela contributes significantly to marine conservation efforts and the pursuit of a sustainable future.

## USEFUL LINKS

<https://mater.eus/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/matermuseum/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/matermuseum/>