

ISAD OF THE BISCAY ADMINISTRATION SECTION OF THE PROVINCIAL HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF BISCAY

Identification area

Reference code	ES 48020 AHFB/BFHA DFB/BFA ADM
Title	Sección de Administración de Bizkaia
Date(s)	– 1332 - 1999
Level of description	Grouping of fonds
Extent and medium of the unit of description	– Linear metres: 4.975 l/m – Number of case files catalogued: 352.325 A significant part of the documentation is still pending cataloguing, although the inventory has been computerised to make the documentation accessible and locatable. – The number of documents inventoried is: 104.124 Paper.

Context area

Name of creator	Provincial Council of Biscay
Institutional history	Biscay ['Bizkaia' in the Basque language] appears in the documentation of the 8th Century to refer to a small area with blurred boundaries located in the east of the Cantabria region, where the monarchs of the Kingdom of Asturias met with valid interlocutors to negotiate their political project, as they had in Sopuerta and Karrantza. From the 10th Century onwards, the monarchies arising in the north of the Iberian Peninsula had concurrent interests in this territory, which must have helped to reinforce its identity. In the second half of the 11th Century, as a result of the monarchy of Pamplona, Biscay became a county with boundaries defined by the peaks of Mount Oiz, the Bay of Biscay and the Rivers Nervión and Deba, with the monarchs placing a member of the local nobility in charge of this area. At the same time, they created the County of Durango, which, save for some rare exceptions, was presided over by the ruler of Biscay.



Institutional history	The position was still not hereditary in the 12th Century, and was dependent on the monarch's decision and the strength of the county family to impose conditions, which resulted in control of the county switching between the Haro and Ladrón families, in line with political changes. Although for much of the century the Haro lineage did not rule the county, they consolidated their power in Biscay and Duranguesado, extending towards the west through matrimonial alliances, donations and pressure exerted on smaller landowners, to take control of the various valleys making up the Encartaciones region. In the early 13th Century, the county became a Feudal Domain in terms of jurisdiction, patrimony and inheritance, comprising several adjacent territories: Biscay itself, the Lands of Durango and the valleys of the Encartaciones, which retained their idiosyncrasies and developed their own institutions within the context of the Feudal Domain ['Señorío']. Shortly after the lords of the Feudal Domain assumed control, they promoted the process of founding settlements with the aim of restricting the power of other landowners, and above all drawing on the revenues derived from new economic activities related to commerce and industry. These settlements were issued with their own Town Charters, which differed from the practices and customs governing the flatlands, leading to a complex legal meshwork. There were three separate phases in the process of establishing urban settlements within the Feudal Domain overseen by the local lords shortly after the Haro family acquired hereditary and perpetual authority: the first, between 1200 and 1287, was intended to facilitate certain settlements so as to guarantee the flow of goods from the Spanish Plateau to the coast, such as Balmaseda, Urduña, Otxandio and Bermeo. In the second, between 1299 and 1338, the lords aimed to strengthen the main transport routes, granting town charters to the settlements located at strategic crossroads within the Feudal Domain and along the coast (Durango, Ermua, Plentzia, Bilbao, Portugalete, Lekeitio and Ondarroa). Lastly, in the third phase, covering the period from 1355 to 1376, without overlooking the economic reasons involved, it may clearly be seen that the lords aimed to undermine the power of other hereditary lords, supporting minor landowners and wealthy peasants by fulfilling their demands for legal provisions to protect them against feudal aggression (Markina, Miraballes, Guernica, Gerrickaitz, Larrabetzu, Mungia and Rigoitia). By the 14th Century, the territorial composition of the Feudal Domain had been established, comprising four institutional entities: Biscay, the Encartaciones, the Lands of Durango and the towns.
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Institutional history	In the late 14th Century, control over the Feudal Domain was transferred to the Monarchs of Castile, giving rise to a twofold process in which they aimed to underpin their authority, and the "people of Biscay" to maintain their rights, as seen first of all in the text of the 'Fuero Viejo' agreement applicable to the flatlands, reinforcing the role of the councils known as the 'Juntas', and furthermore the issuance of the Book of Ordinances drawn up by Chinchilla, favouring the towns in the support of royal authority. The Juntas existed in the 13th Century, but do not clearly appear in the documentation until the 14th. The oldest explicit reference dates back to 1308, when they gathered in Aretxabaleta and recognised the authority of Lady María Díaz de Haro. The Juntas were called by the feudal lord, although he could be represented by his lieutenant, as occurred in 1454, and more typically the magistrate, as in 1394, and at all the assemblies held in the second half of the 14th Century. Meanwhile, Encartaciones and Duranguesado held their own Juntas, or Councils, in Abellaneda and Gerediaga, respectively, with the local councils and parish churches being represented. The Juntas Generales enjoyed an extensive range of different powers: political (receiving magistrates to take their oath), legislative (issuance of ordinances), economic and fiscal (donation of tax revenues), military (organisation of conscription), etc. However, the need to effectively administer certain issues during the time between each assembly gave rise to the emergence, or at least the consolidation, of other complementary bodies. The creation of the first magistracy of Biscay, known as the General Deputy, was a long and complex process, dating back to the Early Middle Ages. Although the origins remain uncertain, according to Gregorio Monreal the Deputies were created in connection with the judicial activity recognised in the text of the Fuero Viejo of 1452 with regard to appeals. Their emergence predates not only the Provincial Council ['Diputación'], but also the body which preceded it, the General Municipal Council ['Regimiento General']. Straddling the Mediaeval and Modern eras, the Deputies were in the service of the dominant families in Biscay, who divided up the position, although not always voluntarily. Despite originally playing a discreet, if not secondary role, the Deputies gradually became more important over time, ultimately becoming the most sought-after appointment among the elite of the Feudal Domain.
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Institutional history	In 1499, the General Council decided to establish a more complex delegated body than those which had previously been in place: the Regimiento General, or General Municipal Council. It was attributed all the powers of the General Councils, except for political and legislative matters. The creation of the Provincial Council in 1645 should be seen in terms of both institutional functionality and the desire to restrict decision-making. Over the course of the period considered here, the modern institutions of the Feudal Domain developed slowly and progressively, in accordance with changing needs. A very basic institutional framework may be discerned, arising from the new parameters derived from the end of the era of warring factions, with many of the entrusted tasks yet to be defined. The key milestones in institutional terms between 1452 and 1630 were: – 1452 Fuero Viejo – 1500 Ordinance to create the Regimiento General – 1505 Ordinance of Vázquez de Acuña – 1526 Fuero Nuevo – 1549 Royal Pronouncement on electoral procedure – Circa 1572 start of the <i>Regimientos Particulares</i>, or Individual Municipal Councils – 1590/95 Worsening of the conflict between the flatlands and towns – 1609 Failed proposal for an agreement between the flatlands and towns – 1611 General and Universal Government, mentioned for the first time – 1630 Peace Accord, ratified by all the towns The 17th Century was an important period in the territorial, political and social evolution of the Feudal Domain of Biscay. Throughout these years, the institutions of Biscay extended their territorial representation through the inclusion of towns following the 1630 Peace Accord, and the union with the Merindad de Durango and the lands of the Encartaciones. From a territorial perspective, Biscay adopted the form that it retains to this day. The General Council maintained its political authority during this period, but the Provincial Council, which had emerged as a delegated institution in the previous century, took root and became fully established over these years. The Deputies took on functions they had not previously held.
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Institutional history	The General Deputy became a political office lending prestige and authority to the holder. There was a clear interest on the part of a particular group to become members of the Provincial Council. Some individuals were chosen as Deputies four, five or as many as nine times. The repeated presence of certain surnames on the Provincial Council was enabled by the webs of power woven by these individuals, and the instruments they used to control the factors ultimately leading to appointment as General Deputy, namely the elector and good fortune. Family ties likewise provided a powerful tool in influencing the elector's decision. Marriages of convenience thus became a fundamental tool in extending the reach of power. Following the Peace Accord, a number of individuals clearly linked to the economy of Bilbao joined the elite group of General Deputies. Notable families who frequently held positions at the House of Contracts and Town Hall became regular fixtures on the Provincial Council in the second half of the 17th Century. The first half of what was known as the "Century of Enlightenment" brought with it a political and institutional dynamic with more shadowy consequences than the name would seem to suggest. Some of this shadow was cast by the various conflicts which took shape during the era. The ways in which the Provincial Council of Biscay addressed the political challenges arising during the period, the experience built up in such dealings, internal political and social weaknesses within the Feudal Domain, and the desire to promote specific sectors of the economy provided the backdrop to the actions and thinking of those who held the role of General Deputy of Biscay. The most significant such shadows or conflicts during the first two decades of the Century, the War of the Spanish Succession and the Uprising of 1718, brought about a previously unprecedented dynamic of negotiation between the Provincial Council of Biscay and the Madrid Government. The increased intensity of contact served as a conduit providing a better insight into the work of the Provincial Council and its representatives in the process of defending the legal, fiscal and economic idiosyncrasies of the Feudal Domain, as well as aspects related to its presence at the heart of Spanish political decision-making.
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Institutional history	The Monarchy of what was known as the Enlightened Despotism had not undermined the devolved institutions. Although in the dialectic between enlightened reform and devolved privileges major tensions and substantial differences had arisen with regard to customs duties, public finance and the scope of devolution in general, the Crown and the Feudal Domain had tended to negotiate and seek compromise solutions, through agencies, deputies at the national parliament, and influential patrons. The Monarchy, realising the stubborn resistance of the Feudal Domain to accept authority from outside the devolved system, had entrusted the application of certain reforms to the Provincial Council itself, which had helped to strengthen its position. And the Provincial Council had become a necessary instrument in the application of royal orders, fiscal demands and a number of monarchical reforms in Biscay. Meanwhile, the reluctance of the Provincial Council to accept monarchical measures that ran counter to the territorial constitution, had allowed it to take on the role of custodian of devolution, thereby strengthening its authority and legitimacy within the community. Internally, the Provincial Council had during the second half of the 18th Century established a pre-eminent position ahead of the other institutions and corporations that made up the provincial bodies, although it had in the process encountered serious tensions and resistance. As a result, the Provincial Council had considerably extended its powers. There had first of all been a huge increase in its tangible activity and attributions. It had become the Supreme Court of Biscay and the holder of "gubernatorial jurisdiction" in common matters throughout the territory. Meanwhile, it had extended its authority to other local territories, such as the Encartaciones and the Orozko Valley, where it had played a very limited role up until the late 18th Century.
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Institutional history	Despite the significant strengthening of the devolved institutions during the 18th Century, in 1808 the Provincial Council found itself in a serious crisis, for several reasons. First of all, the strengthening of provincial authority and that of the Provincial Council itself had aroused stern resistance from the city of Bilbao, the most powerful local corporation in the whole of Biscay. In order to overcome this, the provincial elites proposed reforms to the devolved system by way of centralisation, through the Peace Port plan, among other initiatives. The plan failed, and the dispute between the city and the Feudal Domain led to a severe internal crisis in the devolved structure in the early 19th Century. Meanwhile, at the same time the Monarchy, under the guidance of Godoy, questioned the devolved culture, revised the 'fuero' agreements and proposed far-reaching changes to the relationship between the Basque provinces and the Crown. If this did not take place, it was only because both the Absolute Monarchy and the devolved structure at the time faced the challenge of liberal constitutionalism, whether courtesy of Napoleon in 1808, or the Cadiz Parliament of 1812. The liberal revolution of the 19th Century was a Europe-wide phenomenon. In the case of Biscay, this covered a period of at least three decades, until 1839 when the liberal institutionalisation of the Spanish Monarchy became fully consolidated. The political leaders of the first third of the 19th Century found themselves forced to respond to the challenges of the liberal revolution, and for the first time in 1810, the devolved institutions of Biscay derived from the "Biscay Constitution" were abolished. From that date up until 1877, there was a succession of different forms of Provincial Council, although the prevailing system was what politicians and jurists of the early 19th Century referred to as the "Country Constitution" or "Biscay Constitution". From 1810 onwards, this Biscay Constitution and its institutions were abolished over successive periods, for other brief durations: between 1810-1812, 1813-1814, 1820-1823, 1837-1839 and 1841-1843.
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Institutional history	During the periods of suspension of devolution, the 'Consejo Provincial' or 'Diputación Provincial' was established as the authority for Biscay. In 1837, the Liberals of the 'Diputación General' began to refer to that body as 'Foral', to distinguish it as a devolved body, rather than a provincial entity based on the Spanish Constitution, so as to identify the nature of political self-government it enjoyed, rather than being merely a provincial authority. The Devolved or Biscay Constitution and its institutions thus remained in force, while immersed in a process of constant and permanent alteration, adaptation and friction in terms of their interpretation, both during the restored Absolute Monarchy, which was wary of the representative assemblies of Biscay, and during the stage of liberal constitutionalism which established one single legislative chamber for the new Spanish nation. It was specifically during these periods of crisis, though, that the Diputación reinvented itself and emerged as a public institution of Universal Government in Biscay, as opposed to the Consulate of Commerce, the City Council of Bilbao, and other local authorities. This period, from 1808 to 1877, was furthermore characterised by uninterrupted warfare (the War of the Convention, the Napoleonic Invasion, the Carlist Wars), and political and economic revolution. Ultimately, the devolved institutions and their legal basis were repealed in 1877 by the Central Government in application of the Spanish Parliament Act of 21 July 1876, at an exceptional stage in history, with the constitutional guarantees being suspended and the army garrisoned in the various capitals following the victory of the Liberal army against the Carlists. A new era in the history of the Biscay institution thus began on 5 May 1877. The council was referred to as "provincial", rather than "devolved", although beyond this, what really matters is that the functions of the two institutions remained the same. As a result of the approval of the Economic Agreement of 28 February 1878, the position regarding the powers of the Provincial Council remained somewhat blurred, while nonetheless gradually being consolidated in relation to the powers recognised under the agreement.
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Institutional history	At the same time, from 1876 onwards the economy of Biscay underwent intense growth based first of all on the opportunity represented by the expansion of global demand for iron, above all from Britain, for the new Bessemer converters to produce steel directly. Activity was not, though, confined to iron production and exports, with some being used to transform new factories set up on the banks of the estuary, as well as some long-standing facilities such as the Altos Hornos de Bilbao plant, built on the site of the El Carmen factory founded in Barakaldo in 1856, and La Vizcaya in Sestao, both founded in 1882. The two of them, together with La Iberia, founded Altos Hornos de Vizcaya in 1902. These two sectors served as the driver for others, since although the aim in the early 1880s was to produce commercial iron for export, the protectionist trend in the 1890s led to the founding of another group of processing enterprises: Aurrerá, Tubos Forjados, Talleres de Zorroza, etc. Mining and steelmaking combined with other new activities, as well as more traditional sectors which were now renewed, such as banking (Banco de Bilbao dates back to 1857), shipyards, chemicals, etc. All these sectors had one thing in common: a dynamic business group. This economic modernisation meant at the same time a social and political modernisation. In short, such businesspeople gradually took control of political life, pushing aside, or in many cases intermingling with, the old rural and commercial oligarchy. At the same time, the rapid influx of new workers who faced dreadful living and working conditions likewise led to reactions seen in the emergence from 1885 onwards of socialism in Biscay, as well as a reaction against outside influences in terms of culture and religion, giving rise to Basque nationalism. The old rivalry between Liberals and Carlists was replaced with the new tension between different political sects (Liberals and Conservatives), nationalists and socialists. And so, a province that had a small population and little influence on the economy and politics of the State in 1877, had by 1936 established a developed economy which included some of the leading manufacturing establishments in the country, with a dynamic and extensive banking and insurance sector.
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Institutional history	In the political sphere, there was significant nationalism, the most prominent anywhere in Spain, alongside the Catalan movement, as well as socialism with influence not only in the province itself but also within the Spanish socialist movement, above all through the figure of Indalecio Prieto, and a dynastic right wing which evolved into modern right-wing formations, with the aim of becoming a political mass movement, far removed from the days of being the party of the elite. And amid this intense change, there was the Provincial Council, as both an agent and a reflection. Ultimately, an institution which exerted growing involvement in the province, as it also had increased resources to do so, during decades when the public sector was being called on to play a more active role. It thus acted in partnership with the Provincial Councils of Álava, Gipuzkoa and Navarra, with which it was in close contact by means of conferences, determined to maintain its autonomy and investment in public goods, at a time when the chronic shortage of resources on the part of the State meant it was investing little, a factor which specifically underpinned the role of the Provincial Council itself. Many events occurred in Biscay over these 60 years, and also within the walls of the Provincial Council itself, which first occupied the building on Plaza Nueva, before moving to the large Palacio de la Gran Vía (Luis Aladrén). 1936 marked a turning point in the life of Biscay and of Spain. The Spanish Civil War broke out. The Basque Country positioned itself loyally alongside the Government of the Spanish Republic, and was invaded by the troops of Franco's uprising. On 19 June 1937, Bilbao fell. On 23 June the same year, Franco signed a decree which would fundamentally shape the existence of the Provincial Council for the next four decades. This Decree of 23 June 1937 abolished the Economic Agreement in the "traitorous" provinces of Biscay and Gipuzkoa. The effects of this measure for the organisation and administration of the Provincial Council were devastating: aside from the loss of revenues and powers, the most serious element was that it lost all traces of autonomous administration. In other words, the Provincial Council was in this regard, not only in its composition but also its administration, subject to the instructions and largesse of the Government. This was justified in the preamble to the Decree-Law of Repeal. The abolition of the Agreement directly resulted not only in the transfer of tax-raising powers to the State, but also the elimination of services provided by the Provincial Councils, such as highways, education, health, etc.
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Institutional history	The first action taken by the new Provincial Council, appointed by the military authority, was to organise a religious ceremony in Begoña offering reparations and thanks for the liberation of Bilbao, while also sending a telegram to Franco of gratitude and unflinching loyalty. On the 21st itself, all the employees of the Provincial Council were sacked, and a clear-out process began. After the Franco dictatorship, the first free democratic elections were held on 15 June 1977, the Spanish constitution was approved in 1978 and democracy was restored, with the first free municipal elections being held on 3 April 1979, at the same time as the elections for the General Provincial Parliaments. It was no easy task to arrive at this juncture, however. In the negotiations between Central Government and the Basque parliamentarians elected to the Spanish Parliament on 15 June 1977 for the constitution of what was referred to as the pre-autonomous Basque regime (which would subsequently give rise to the Basque General Council), one of the key issues was the immediate creation of the General Provincial Parliaments of Biscay, Gipuzkoa and Araba. The negotiations proved difficult, and it was ultimately agreed that the restoration of these institutions would be postponed until the municipal elections were held. The Royal Decree of 26 January 1979 once again regulated the organisation and functioning of the General Provincial Parliaments, with no corporate representation, but instead delegates elected together with the councillors, but in a separate ballot box, by universal, direct, secret ballot. Following the elections to the General Provincial Parliament of Biscay held on 3 April 1979, this assembly was once again able to meet on 28 April 1979 at the Guernica Council House, 102 years after it had last met, on 26 April 1877, following the repeal of the 'Fueros'. And so, more than a Century later, the General Parliament of the Domain of Biscay was restored. On 3 May 1979, a new Devolved Provincial Council of Biscay was established, headed up by José María Makua Zarandona as General Deputy. Following the approval of the Guernica Statute of Autonomy of 1979, the Basque Government played a direct role in restoring one of our most prized historical rights, the Economic Agreement, with a particularly prominent place in the negotiations, with unceasing efforts up until the restoration of the system in 1981.
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Archival history	The documentation of the Provincial Council of Biscay has throughout its history been held in its archive. The archive has proved a fundamental institution in providing access to the documentation that has in various ways been generated by the institution both internally and in its relations with other institutions and the populace. The wide-ranging powers attributed to the institution, first under the devolved regime, and subsequently the economic agreement, have given rise to a vast quantity of documents in the archive. The documentation generated by the Provincial Council was held at the La Antigua Archive in Guernica, the General Archive of the Feudal Domain of Biscay, and the Archive of the Guernica Council House. Meanwhile, what was referred to as the manual archive in the 18th and 19th Centuries was housed at the Church of San Nicolás in Bilbao, before being transferred to the Bilbao Provincial Council Building, when it was built in the late 19th Century. Between 1929 and 1958, the Provincial Council studied, facilitated and undertook the organisation and functioning of the Archive and Library service. It established itself at the new facilities built near to its headquarters in Bilbao. The Provincial Council facilitated a new restructuring of the Archive at the end of the 1980s. This led to the physical separation of the Library and the Archive. A building on Calle María Díaz de Haro in Bilbao was converted for this purpose, with all the historical documentation generated by the various institutions that had made up the Feudal Domain of Biscay being transferred there. Transfer of the documentation to the new facilities began towards the end of the same decade. This documentation was housed at the General Archive of the Feudal Domain of Biscay, or the Guernica Council House Archive. The documents held there are those that the general institutions of the Feudal Domain of Biscay had generated from the Middle Ages up until the abolition of devolution, as well as the documentation generated subsequently by the different offices of the Provincial Council, since they had insufficient storage space.
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Archival history	This body of documents had a structure divided into three clear blocks, depending on the original site. One was the "safety deposit box", holding the 'fueros' and the royal copies, as well as a number of special documents. There was also the "upper archive", which had an alphabetic ordering system. And lastly, the so-called "lower archive", which was unordered prior to the transfer to the new Provincial Archive. As part of the documentation preservation policy implemented by the Provincial Council of Biscay, the decision was taken in the 1980s to install a new archive in the refurbished building converted for this purpose on the previous site of the Town Hall of Lumo. The Genealogical Archive of Biscay was transferred here. This served to create the Administration Section of the Historical Provincial Archive of Biscay, comprising the general documentation of the various governmental institutions that have existed over the course of history in Biscay. These fonds were supplemented by the documentation from the former Provincial Library archive, generated from the mid-19th Century down to the present day, along with other scattered fonds, such as those derived from the Abellaneda Archive, the former Secretariat Archive, etc. The importance of conserving the documents becomes quite clear when one analyses those that have already been catalogued and made accessible to the public in relation to the Archive. They include a first register book of entries recording movements of documents from the Archive of the Feudal Domain from 1596 to 1613. Inventories of the different types of document held for the years 1623 – 1632, 1694, 1736, 1750, 1764, 1830, 1830 – 1860, 1850, 1872 – 1876. Over the course of the 20th Century, with the establishment of a more professional role for archivists, essentially performed by historians, categorised organisation of the documentation began. In the closing decades of the Century, the Provincial Council embarked on a new plan for the description of its administration fonds, with the development of new technologies playing a fundamental role in this. The computerisation of the cataloguing process would thus in the future allow the archive to be opened up to the world via the Internet, as has been seen in practice in the first two decades of the 21st Century. All without overlooking the major efforts made to restore documentation in poor condition.
Archival history	The process of cataloguing the documentation of the Administration section, which is still ongoing because of the huge volume of documents, goes hand-in-hand with the process of digitisation begun in 2013.



Source of acquisition	By transfer from 1987 onwards of the documentation generated up until 1878 by the Feudal Domain ['Señorío'] of Biscay previously held at the Guernica Council House Archive, and documentation generated subsequently by the Provincial Council of Biscay held at the Provincial Library based in Bilbao. In addition to documentation received through the transfer of responsibilities from other organisations: Spanish State and Autonomous Government of the Basque Country.
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Content area and structure

Scope and content	Historical archive documentation generated by the institutions of the Feudal Domain of Biscay and Provincial Council, and documentation received.
Appraisal, scheduling and destruction	Permanently stored documentation.
Accruals	Accruals may occur because of transfers.
Organisation	The organisation of documentation has been grouped in accordance with the previously adopted distribution by subject matter. This was supplemented on the basis of the classification table of the Archivist Working Party of the provincial councils, with extensions and modifications of theories as required because of the greater number of responsibilities corresponding to the Provincial Council of Biscay, compared with those covered by the standard regime. The Administration Section includes the following groupings of fonds: – Primary Sector, Industry and Commerce, with a total of 4,882 documents catalogue (1595 - 1981) and some 4,925 inventoried (1601 - 1999), with the following distribution of catalogued documents: – Primary Sector: 3197 documents (1631 - 1975) – Industry and Commerce: 1685 documents (1595 - 1981)



Organisation	– Public Finance y Statistics, with a total of 8,165 documents catalogue (1495 – 1968) and some 15,969 inventoried (1565 – 1999), with the following distribution of catalogued documents: – Public Finance: 6,042 documents (1632 – 1984) – Statistics: 2,123 (1685 – 1968) – Works, Transport y Communications, with a total of 12,646 documents catalogue (1643 – 1999) and some 28,153 inventoried 28153 (1639 – 1990), with the following distribution: – Works: 9,342 documents (1654 – 1999) – Transport: 112 documents (1767 – 1976) – Communications: 3,192 (1800 – 1966) – Municipal Regime y Urban Development, with a total of 81,641 documents catalogue (1633 – 1999): – Municipal Regime: 60,081 documents (1633 – 1998) – Urban Development: 12,560 documents (1791 – 1999) – Government, Ecclesiastical Affairs y Elections, with a total of 65,999 documents catalogue (1332 – 1987): – Government: 48,663 documents (1332 – 1987) – Ecclesiastical Affairs: 4,567 documents (1454 – 1972) – Elections: 12,769 (1820 – 1976) – Public Security, Wars y Military Service, with a total of 175,152 documents catalogue (1600 – 1979) and some 2,818 inventoried (1684 – 1967), with the following distribution of catalogued documents: – Public Security: 64,700 documents (1619 – 1979) – Wars: 77,246 documents (1600 – 1970) – Military Service: 33,206 documents (1638 – 1972) – Culture y Education, with a total of 307 documents catalogue (1596 – 1982) and some 10,810 inventoried (1592 – 1999), with the following distribution of catalogued documents: – Culture: 176 documents (1596 – 1982) – Education: 131 documents (1790 – 1977) – Health, Social Care y Environment: – Health: 69 documents (1598 – 1977) – Social Care: 3,193 documents (1779 – 1981) – Environment: 271 documents (1759 – 1986)
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	All the documentation is ordered in boxes held at the building which houses the Provincial Historical Archive of Biscay.
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Conditions of access and use area

Conditions governing access	Unrestricted access. For exceptions, see the ISAD of the Provincial Historical Archive of Biscay.
Conditions governing reproduction	Unrestricted reproduction. For exceptions, see the ISAD of the Provincial Historical Archive of Biscay.
Language/script of the documents	Spanish.
Physical characteristics and technical requirements	The state of upkeep is good in general.
Description instruments	he Administration Fonds of the Provincial Historical Archive of Biscay use: – Classification table. – ARWE database for the administration of information about the archive, including numerous points of access and onomastic, toponymic and subject matter indexes. – ARIT database for external consultation, with the same information and same access points as above. Both the part of the documentation that is catalogued and the part that is inventoried are publicly accessible, except for the legally established exceptions.

Associated documentation area

Existence and location of originals	All the documentation is original.
Existence and location of copies	The Provincial Historical Archive of Biscay is itself conducting digitisation of part of the documentation, which is accessible online via the ARIT database. There are digitised copies of part of the documentation, although the digitisation process is ongoing, and the details we provide here will therefore be added to. A total of 62,675 documents have been digitised, between 1565 and 1999. The distribution of digitised documentation by fond grouping is as follows: – Primary Sector, Industry and Commerce: 485 documents (1595 – 1928), with the following distribution: – Primary Sector: 91 documents (1631 – 1888) – Industry and Commerce: 394 documents (1595 – 1928)



Existence and location of copies	- Public Finance and Statistics: 3,043 documents (1495 - 1984), with the following distribution: - Public Finance: 2,649 documents (1495 - 1985) - Statistics: 394 (1685 - 1968) - Works, Transport y Communications: 28153 documents (1639 - 1990), with the following distribution: - Works: 800 documents (1643 - 1999) - Transport: 88 documents (1767 - 1872) - Communications: 5 (1800 - 1873) - Municipal Regime and Urban Development: 5,808 documents (1633 - 1957), with the following distribution: - Municipal Regime: 5,807 documents (1633 - 1957) - Urban Development: 1 document (1791) - Government, Ecclesiastical Affairs y Elections: 30,224 documents (1332 - 1978), with the following distribution: - Government: 28,663 documents (1332 - 1978) - Ecclesiastical Affairs: 1281 documents (1454 - 1972) - Elections: 14 (1820 - 1900) - Public Security, Wars y Military Service: 1,641 documents (1619 - 1929), with the following distribution: - Public Security: 421 documents (1619 - 1929) - Wars: 683 documents (1629 - 1896) - Military Service: 537 documents (1638 - 1879) - Culture y Education: 88 documents (1596 - 1890), with the following distribution: - Culture: 50 documents (1596 - 1888) - Education: 38 documents (1790 - 1890) - Health, Social Care y Environment: 302 documents (1726 - 1906), with the following distribution: - Health: 45 documents (1726 - 1884) - Social Care: 254 documents (1779 - 1906) - Environment: 3 documents (1759 - 1775)
Related units of description	The Administration section has sources of documentation in the other sections of the Provincial Archive, in particular the Municipal and Judicial sections.



Publication note	– Provincial Council of Biscay (1997). Ten years managing the historical heritage of Biscay. Department of Culture. Historical Heritage Service. – Cifuentes Pazos, José Manuel (2002). “El Archivo Histórico Administrativo de la Diputación Foral de Bizkaia”. In Proceedings of the 3rd Document Heritage Management Conference. Provincial Administration Archives: Provincial Councils, Civil Government Offices, Delegations, Courts and Historical Bodies. Cordoba, 28 to 30 October 2002. (pp. 329 – 338) – Agirreazkuenaga Zigorraga, Joseba. Dir. (2014). Historia de la Diputación Foral de Bizkaia. 1500 – 2014. Bizkaiaiko Foru Aldundia/Diputación Foral de Bizkaia. 2014.
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Notes area

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Control area

Archivist's Note	Description produced by the company Actuaciones Culturales Estratégicas 4, S.L. for the Biscay Administration Section of the Biscay Historical Archive, under its technical instruction.
Rules or Conventions	General International Standard Archival Description, Second Edition, ISAD (G). Approved by the Description Conventions Committee of the International Council on Archives held in Stockholm, Sweden, on 19-22 September 1999. Madrid. 2000.
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