



# A CHANGING SEA

**Recommendations for the sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment**



Generalitat de Catalunya  
Government of Catalonia  
**Advisory Council for  
Sustainable Development**





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Advisory Council for Sustainable Development  
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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this report issued by the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development (CADS) is to build on actions taken by the Government of Catalonia with a view to ensuring their contribution to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 of the 2030 Agenda (on the marine environment) and their medium- to long-term transformative potential, in accordance with the magnitude of the challenges and, especially, the opportunities related to the so-called “blue economy”. It also aims to develop the Government of Catalonia’s leadership in the promotion of the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) in Catalonia and contribute to compliance with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), which has set 2020 as the deadline to achieve Good Environmental Status of EU marine waters. The recommendations included in this report are geared towards making progress in the sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment, making the conservation of the marine environment compatible with the socio-economic activity that takes place in it or directly affects it, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

## 1.1 Context

Catalonia has more than 600 kilometres of coastline with a **highly diverse coastal morphology**, ranging from the steep, rocky coves of the Costa Brava to the north, the coarse sand beaches of the central coast of Barcelona and El Maresme, which is fragmented by ports and breakwaters, to the low-lying, sandy shoreline of the Ebro Delta, the Costa Daurada and El Garraf to the south. In addition to being home to the majority of the population –permanent and seasonal– the coast also plays host to some of the country’s most emblematic sites and forms a unique ecosystem that is at once dynamic and fragile, owing to the fact that more than half of it has been developed and therefore marked by human activity.

This diverse and densely populated environment receives much of Catalonia’s **tourist activity**, is home to a number of commercial ports (including the Port of Barcelona, one of the busiest in Europe) and is affected by a wide variety of impacts.

The **state of conservation** of the Catalan coastal and marine environment has worsened in recent decades due to the intensification of the pressures to which it is subject. The global effects of climate change (on temperature, acidification, rising sea levels, and the increase in torrential rain), other global change factors like marine pollution (much of which originates from inland areas), and human activities like tourism, fishing and aquaculture, maritime transport, resource exploitation (mining, gas, oil) and maritime recreational activities are examples of the variety and scale of these threats. The main impact is biodiversity loss, that is to say, the disappearance and alteration of habitats and species.

The ability to control these impacts is closely related to the **distribution of coastal and maritime competences**. In inland waters, territorial waters and maritime-terrestrial public domain—the marine areas on which this report focuses—the powers are distributed between various territorial scales (State, Catalan and local administrations) and also in accordance with the activities they regulate (fishing, recreational and tourism uses, urban development transformations, facility concessions, port activity, etc.).

The Spanish Constitution (art. 132) indicates that the offshore zone, the beaches, the inland waters, the territorial sea and the natural resources of the economic zone, and the continental shelf belong to the public state domain. For its part, the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia establishes the powers of the Government of Catalonia with respect to these areas, specifically with regard to maritime activities and planning of the fishing sector, and in relation to the organisation of the coastline (in articles 119 and 149, among others).

In recent years there have been major changes to the **strategic and regulatory framework** that affects the marine and coastal environment:

- at the international level, SDG 14 of the United Nations **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** clearly states that a balance must be struck between the protection of the marine and coastal ecosystems and the use of the natural resources of the sea and the coast;
- the European Union is requiring Member States to **develop marine strategies**, representing a qualitative leap forward in terms of the protection of the marine environment. The Spanish State has approved Law 41/2010, on the protection of the marine environment, and various royal decrees to develop it, and has established five marine subdivisions for which it has approved the corresponding marine strategies through Royal Decree 1365/2018, of 2 November. With regard to Catalonia, its sea has been included in the Levantine-Balearic marine subdivision (known by its Spanish acronym LEBA), and
- in Catalonia, in 2018 a Government of Catalonia agreement approved the **Maritime Strategy of Catalonia**, which sets the management priorities in relation to the uses and activities that take place in the marine environment with the aim of guaranteeing its conservation and sustainable use, and a law on the organisation of the coastline is currently under parliamentary procedure.

In accordance with the analysis of the **impacts and pressures** to which the marine and coastal environment is subject in Catalonia, compliance with SDG 14—and, therefore, bal-

ancing conservation and development of the blue economy— will depend to a great extent on measures taken to deal with:

- the effects of **climate change**, improving the information available to assess its scope (acidification, rising temperature and sea level, etc.); reducing greenhouse gas emissions (especially in maritime transport);
- the increase in **marine pollution** through the contribution of the pollutant load from rivers and underwater outfalls, discharges, accidental spills, emissions (associated with the maritime transport of people and goods, and with sailing), the presence of waste (especially plastics and microplastics, that is, fragments smaller than 5 mm in length, mainly from the land), and also nonpoint source (NPS) pollution and noise pollution. The most affected areas are those that have been subject to the most urban development;
- **biodiversity loss**, due to the direct and indirect alteration of the natural habitats and populations of certain species, often caused or amplified by climate change. Almost 30% of Catalonia's marine habitats are threatened, and communities like red coral colonies and seagrass meadows are especially suffering from contamination and human pressure;
- the arrival of **exotic and invasive species**, favoured by climate change (due to the change in water temperature and migration currents), but also due to the effect of maritime transport (in which control of the dispersal of ballast water is a key factor in terms of prevention);
- **overfishing**, which has led to the reduction of stocks of commercial species, like hake, and non-commercial species in the Balearic Sea, and has altered the composition of populations. The regulation of fishing through co-management, a pioneering initiative in Europe, is achieving good results, although the majority of the fish consumed in Catalonia is from abroad (estimated to be about 75%);
- the **intensification of tourist and recreational activities** (sailing, fishing, beachgoing, etc.) which have very diverse effects on the ecosystems and processes of the marine environment, especially the coastal environment;
- **accidental spills** associated with the exploitation of underwater oil fields, such as the one that occurred off the coast of Tarragona, and
- **maritime transport** of goods and passengers (especially cruises) and associated infrastructure (ports and logistics areas), which may contribute to the emission of gases, noise pollution and the risk of spills.

## 1.2 Opportunities

In the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Commission identifies five areas that may contribute to sustainable growth within the framework of the blue economy: ocean energy, coastal tourism, aquaculture, marine biotechnology and seabed mining. The 2019 EU Blue Economy Report considers six sectors: marine living resources, marine non-living resources, maritime transport, port activities, shipbuilding and repair, and coastal tourism. These six sectors are divided, in turn, into sub-sectors, as shown in the table below (European Commission, 2019).

Sector	Sub-sector
<b>Coastal tourism</b>	Accommodation Transport Other expenditures
<b>Marine living resources</b> Extraction and commercialisation of marine living resources	Capture fisheries Aquaculture sector Processing and distribution
<b>Marine non-living resources</b> Marine extraction of minerals, oil and gas	Extraction of crude petroleum Extraction of natural gas Extraction of marine aggregates Support activities for petroleum and natural gas extraction Support activities for other mining
<b>Port activities</b> Ports, warehousing and construction of water projects	Warehousing and storage Cargo handling Construction of water projects Service activities incidental to water transportation
<b>Shipbuilding and repair</b>	Building of ships and floating structures Building of pleasure and sporting boats Marine machinery Marine equipment Repair and maintenance of ships and boats
<b>Maritime transport</b>	Sea and coastal passenger water transport Sea and coastal freight water transport Inland passenger water transport Inland freight water transport Renting and leasing of water transport equipment

In Catalonia, these opportunities for blue growth are framed within a context defined by a complex distribution of competences and by the confluence of the numerous pressures and impacts that affect the coastal and marine environment.

The most relevant opportunities, considered key issues, are:

- **Aquaculture**, in a global context of overfishing, is a strategic element in the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and a pillar of blue growth. Globally, it accounts for almost 50% of total fish production; in Catalonia it is less than 25% (not including imports) and it is stagnant at around 6,000 tonnes per annum (of which 4,000 tonnes are bivalve molluscs). The aspects that most question the sustainability of this practice include climate change, which could render it impracticable, and also the use of pelagic fish as

feed inputs for stocks, farm fish diseases, and the generation of residual nutrients —a problem that integrated multi-trophic aquaculture may contribute to solving. In Catalonia, the Reference Network for Research and Development and Innovation in Aquaculture (XRAq) was created to export scientific and technical excellence to the world, and the Aquaculture Cluster of Catalonia (Aqüicat) was formed to group Catalonia's leading companies in this sector. A maritime network called BlueNetCat is currently being created as an offshoot of the XRAq with the shared aim of grouping all research in the marine environment within a single structure in order to transfer results, create innovation and promote the potential of the blue economy in Catalonia. BlueNetCat would bring together more than 400 scientists from over all disciplines (including aquaculture).

- The **generation of renewable energy** in the maritime area has, in general terms, great potential to contribute to meeting the challenge of energy transition. In Catalonia the most viable technology is considered to be offshore wind power, but it will require a number of significant technical and jurisdictional hurdles to be overcome: it would be viable in deep water with innovative technological solutions based on floating structures (it should be taken into account that the ZEFIR floating wind turbine experimental project was not successful). Although it is a source of clean and alternative energy, it is necessary to take into account its technological constraints and maintenance costs (mainly due to corrosion), in addition to the potential impact of its associated infrastructure (energy generation and transport), which may affect the coastal and underwater ecosystems, as well as possible public outcry.
- The **exploitation of the seabed (mining, gas and oil)**, depending on how it is calculated, could amount to 10% of global oil extraction, but it is not estimated to be significant in the Mediterranean, and neither is the extraction of minerals or gas. Oil exploration is carried out in deep water, more than 100 miles from the coast and therefore beyond the territorial sea, and often also beyond the areas under state jurisdiction. Moreover, it should be taken into account that in 2018 the cetacean migratory corridor between the Iberian peninsula and the Balearic Islands along the Catalan coast was declared a Marine Protected Area; in this strip, which has an average width of 85 km, acoustic probes and other underground geographic exploration systems are prohibited<sup>1</sup>.
- **Maritime transport**, especially cruises, has grown significantly in recent decades, with more than four million passengers in the Port of the Barcelona in 2017 alone. The control of emissions and the reorientation of the entire sector towards a more sustainable model are perceived to be an opportunity.
- **Tourism** accounts for 12% of Catalonia's GDP, and the main tourist destinations are on the coast. The tourist activities with the most impact are beachgoing (due to overuse, denaturalisation of natural dune and beach systems, and above all due to urban development changes and the occupation of the coast associated with this type of tourism)

<sup>1</sup> The declaration was made through Royal Decree 699/2018, of 29 June, declaring the Mediterranean cetacean migratory corridor a Marine Protected Area, approving a preventive protection system and proposing inclusion on the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI List) within the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

and pleasure sailing (there are more than 50,000 moorings). The coastal organisation bill promotes urban development moratoriums on the coast and the establishment of levies on concessions in the public state domain to invest in the conservation of the coast, and the 2016–2020 Strategic Tourism Plan and the 2020 Tourism Directives (Government of Catalonia, 2012) commit to improving the quality of tourism.

- **Recreational activities in the maritime area** are closely related to tourism, but they are treated separately because in Catalonia they are practised mainly by the local population and are carried out throughout practically the entire year, which means their specific weight in economic and environmental impact terms is considerable. Above all they include recreational fishing and recreational sailing. More than 140,000 pleasure sailing licences have been issued, and sport or recreational fishing is a growing phenomenon that is barely regulated, with some 74,000 practitioners and more than 3,000 underwater fishing licences. The Maritime Strategy of Catalonia aims to foster a new green recreational fishing model and help recreational and sporting activities in the maritime area stimulate the economy and reduce their environmental impact.
- **Blue biotechnology**, as an emerging sector in the framework of the blue economy, is expected to be significant on a European scale, but its presence in Catalonia is still incipient. Technological developments have been applied to aquaculture and marine stocks, research has been conducted in the field of habitat restoration and a number of marine biomedicine studies have been carried out, but the potential of the sector is still far from being tapped.
- **Health** aspects related to the marine area (blue health) are also a pioneering aspect. In Catalonia, the University of Girona Oceans and Human Health Chair, created in 2017, carries out studies on relationships between marine ecosystems and people's health and promotes research into the bioactive potential of the marine environment. It is an aspect on which other institutions like the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (IS-Global)<sup>2</sup> are also working. The Maritime Strategy, for its part, includes plans to assess Catalonia's potential in this field.
- **Shipbuilding** is not one of the main pillars of the blue economy, but it has a specific weight in Catalonia, especially in relation to small yards that build, maintain, repair and refurbish pleasure and fishing vessels. There is great potential for this historically significant activity with regard to the blue economy, especially in terms of adapting the fleet to the new energy paradigm (electric propulsion, new energy-saving and energy-efficiency technologies, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> Barcelona Institute for Global Health: <https://www.isglobal.org/en>

## 1.3 Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the current context and opportunities we propose 26 recommendations related to opportunities and 37 recommendations related to organisational and cross-cutting aspects, of which sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 show a selection. There are, however, three fundamental recommendations, which are general in nature and frame all the others (see below):

### 1.3.1 General recommendations

- ❖ Foster, implement and develop the **Maritime Strategy of Catalonia**, ensuring its full execution and securing its future legal and regulatory status. Given the level of commitment that this represents, it is necessary to guarantee careful monitoring of the provisions that the Strategy establishes in relation to research, tourism and recreational activities in the maritime sphere, sustainable fishing and aquaculture, energy use, blue biotechnology, the sailing industry, the fight against climate change, governance based on maritime co-management, marine waste, the conservation of biodiversity and the strengthening of maritime culture.
- ❖ Improve the **governance** of the marine and coastal sphere, first by lending coherence and consistency to the multiple sectoral powers exercised by the Government of Catalonia, and second by strengthening administrative relations with all the public entities and administrations involved (local, State, Europe and international) with the ultimate aim of effectively influencing decisions that affect these areas.
- ❖ Promote and disseminate **knowledge** about the marine and coastal environment as well as the sustainable development opportunities of the blue economy. Up-to-date information of good quality is necessary to be able to make decisions concerning the balance of conservation and the sustainable use of the sea and the marine resources.

### 1.3.2 Recommendations in relation to opportunities

The recommendations regarding blue economy development opportunities issued by the European Union—in relation to fishing and aquaculture, sea energy, sustainable tourism and blue biotechnology—and regarding other economic activities of local importance, like shipbuilding, are presented under the banner of five different challenges:

- Manage fishing and aquaculture resources in a sustainable manner
- Use the sea as an energy resource
- Foster sustainable coastal and maritime tourism
- Establish Catalonia as a benchmark in terms of research and biotechnology in the marine and coastal sphere
- Promote sustainable industries linked to the marine area

To **manage fishing and aquaculture resources in a sustainable manner**, in addition to fully supporting the measures of the Maritime Strategy of Catalonia, especially the co-management ones, the recommendations include the following:

1. Improve the quality of fishing data (total catch, species caught, fishing effort, waste, fishing areas, illegal fishing, etc.) to scientifically evaluate the quality and trends of fishing stocks and marine ecosystems based on objective scientific data, supporting the Catalan Institute for Ocean Governance Research (ICATMAR).
2. Favour fishing selectivity (with the regulation of gear, the establishment of closed seasons for species, etc., especially with regard to trawling) to prevent catching fish with no commercial interest and minimise waste and accidental catching of species of interest to conservation.
3. Promote sustainable fishing certification programmes, like the international system Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), and local systems –with the “Peix de Llotja” (Fish from the Local Fish Market) and co-management logos— and encourage consumption of these fishes rather than non-certified fish.
4. Specifically regulate the recreational fishing of the most sensitive species, taking into account the lists published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and scientific knowledge, and regulate the recreational fishing of threatened or declining species like the grouper (*Epinephelus* spp.).
5. Increase scientific information and knowledge about the impacts associated with aquaculture and the adaptation of aquaculture practices to climate change, especially with regard to the farming of bivalves and other herbivorous or detritivorous species, non-intensive aquaculture and integrated multi-trophic aquaculture.
6. Make the cultivation of exotic species conditional on available scientific knowledge in order to avoid future impacts on marine species and ecosystems.

To **use the sea as an energy resource** it is advisable to conduct extensive research and improve knowledge on the generation of offshore wind power in relation to the following:

7. Promote research applied to offshore wind power based on floating structures.
8. In accordance with Royal Decree 699/2018, of 29 June, incentivise and collaborate on the preventive protection of the cetacean migratory corridor in the Mediterranean Sea, and ensure the careful and effective monitoring of licences for hydrocarbon research, exploration and exploitation in the sea off Catalonia. The development of these activities may endanger one of the country’s key economic sectors (tourism) and impact on the marine ecosystem.

The generic challenge of **fostering sustainable coastal and maritime tourism** includes tourist and recreational activities. Tourism is a key sector of the Catalan economy, and some of the impacts it generates are shared with those of recreational activities, which are more associated with the local population and practised throughout the year. In this sense, it is advisable to:

9. Increase knowledge about the coastal economy and analyse the carrying capacity of the coast (especially the beaches) and the marine environment in order to implement adaptive planning and management.

10. Raise awareness and integrate the tourism sector into the sustainable management of the coast and incentivise local participation in tourism planning and management, increasing the coordination of public and private actors and civil society.
11. Emphasise and support the natural, historic and cultural heritage of the sea (emulating actions taken in relation to rural tourism), ensuring its sustainability, and prioritising quality services and tourism.
12. Ensure the sustainability of the cruise industry, fostering the effective application of international regulations on emissions (more severe standards will be imposed by the IMO in 2020), promoting the implementation of standards for sulphur and general emissions (SECAs and NECAs) in the Mediterranean, fostering the reduction of the consumption of fuel containing sulphur and also contributing to the adoption of market measures that internalise the costs of emissions in the sector.

To **make Catalonia a benchmark in research and biotechnology in the marine and coastal sphere**, which is a key aspect that has been subject to unequal development (it is more advanced in aquaculture and ecosystem knowledge, but still incipient in aspects related to health), it is advisable to:

13. Strengthen research in the marine and coastal sphere, establishing a public research agenda that coordinates the various research centres and the various scientific disciplines that converge in the marine and coastal environment (biotechnology, biology, physics, chemistry, oceanography, the economy and the social sciences, etc.).
14. Within the framework of supporting the ICATMAR, recover the oceanographic data collection system and introduce new data sampling, analysis and interpretation systems.
15. Disseminate the marine and coastal knowledge generated in Catalonia to other research centres in the Mediterranean Basin and generate synergies to coordinate research.

To promote sustainable industries linked to the marine area it is advisable to:

16. Analyse the shipbuilding and repair sector in Catalonia, based on an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, and prepare a sectoral strategy to strengthen it and guide it towards sustainability.
17. Analyse the viability of local economic activities with a low environmental impact related to the marine and coastal environment.

### 1.3.3 Recommendations in relation to cross-cutting and organisational aspects

There are issues that need to be tackled from various perspectives and with various policies, or that require organisational changes, given the distribution of powers, responsibilities and interests shared by the different administrations and ministries. With respect to these cross-cutting and organisational challenges the aim is to:

- Reduce marine pollution
- Conserve biodiversity and increase the resilience of the marine and coastal system
- Contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Improve the governance of the sea and the coast
- Foster marine culture and understanding of the marine environment among the population

To **reduce marine pollution** the recommendations include:

18. Prevent microplastics reaching the sea and the increase of marine litter. Minimise the use of plastic and polystyrene utensils. Bring forward the transposition of Directive (EU) 2019/904, of 5 June 2019, on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment. Decisively implement its mandates, mainly in the tourism sector and aspects that can affect beaches, as well as fishing gear containing plastic.
19. Foster research and the collection of data on the main mechanisms that enable contaminating waste products (including nonpoint source pollution and pollution associated with goods transport) to enter the marine environment in order to control their sources and act efficiently in the event of spills. Based on the research, develop a specific marine waste management policy aimed at circularity.
20. Continue to promote education and awareness campaigns on the effects of waste on the marine and coastal environment for both the general public and the specific sectors responsible for producing it, in line with the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment signed by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The challenge of **conserving biodiversity and increasing the resilience of the marine and coastal system** is a key issue that is impacted by the majority of the other challenges and recommendations. To halt biodiversity loss and conserve the marine and coastal ecosystems the recommendations include the following:

21. Assess the ecological status of the coastal systems and their provision of environmental services to generate useful information for decision-making (especially in planning and management).
22. Increase the detection and control of exotic and invasive species in the coastal and marine environment.

23. Reduce the impact on the seabed, fostering suitable control and regulation of any dredging carried out, in addition to the mooring of vessels along the coast, and promoting low-impact anchoring systems (especially during the busiest months).
24. Increase the contribution made by the closed-season and restricted-fishing areas in place to achieve Aichi Target 11<sup>3</sup> as areas with other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).<sup>4</sup>

To **contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation** the recommendations are related to the maritime transport of goods and passengers, and also to the adaptation of port facilities to reduce pollutant emissions:

25. Lobby for the declaration of and effective compliance with an Emission Control Area (ECA) in the Mediterranean to limit the contamination generated by vessels, to which institutional support has been lent.
26. Promote laboratory testing on the effects of swells (and the rise in the average sea level) on areas close to the coast in order to prepare precise vulnerability maps.
27. Increase the resilience of the fishing and aquaculture sector to the warming and acidification of the marine environment with new technologies that can protect fish farms and mollusc stocks.
28. Promote the implementation of renewable energies in the fishing sector and at port facilities.
29. Promote research into the capacity of the marine and coastal ecosystems to capture and retain carbon, and also to mitigate the effects of storms and rising sea levels.

The Maritime Strategy of Catalonia promotes the co-management model to **improve the governance of the sea and the coast**. The CADS recommendations incorporate the strategic objectives of the Strategy in this sense, and include the need to:

30. Assess Catalonia's global impact on the conservation of the marine environment, species and fish stocks in order to take specific measures to reduce it and propose sustainability criteria for importations.
31. Start to readapt the internal administrative organisation of the Government of Catalonia to strengthen its commitment to the Maritime Strategy of Catalonia, effectively associating it with all sectoral policies relevant to the conservation

<sup>3</sup> The Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity (which includes the Aichi Targets) constitutes a framework of action until 2020 to be applied by all countries and stakeholders to save biological diversity and improve its benefits for people. Target 11: By 2020 at least 17% of terrestrial and inland waters and 10% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.

<sup>4</sup> They are the areas that are established within the framework of the 1992 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Source: INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN). "OECM". [Consultation: November 2019].

and use of marine and coastal resources. The establishment of a specific umbrella body or entity to cover all the functions currently carried out in the purview of the Government of Catalonia is advisable.

32. Review subsidies and aid to prevent perverse subsidies contrary to the conservation and sustainable development of marine and coastal ecosystems.

The biggest social challenge is to **strengthen marine culture and the understanding of the marine environment among the population**, and the recommendations call for social involvement in many dimensions (citizen science, awareness on the local and global scales, recovery of traditional knowledge, etc.):

33. Inform society of the impacts and challenges facing the marine and coastal environment, and the value of the ecosystem services of these environments in terms of well-being, with dissemination campaigns to publicise the importance of conserving them, emphasising the ecological, economic and social impacts on the international scale.
34. Promote citizen science programmes to strengthen the role of society as a scientific observer.
35. Strengthen the network of marine environment interpretation centres and museums related to the sea.
36. Recover the tradition of Catalan seafood cuisine and the gastronomic culture of fish.
37. Use the marine environment to raise awareness of the negative aspects of globalisation on all spheres (social, economic and environmental).

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The Advisory Council for Sustainable Development of Catalonia (CADS) is a body that advises the Government of Catalonia on issues relating to sustainability. Created in 1998, it is currently under the Ministry for Foreign Action, Institutional Relations and Transparency. According to Decree 41/2014 of 1 April, on the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development of Catalonia, the Council's functions are the following:

- a) Advising the Government of Catalonia on issues affecting sustainable development, especially on building the principles of sustainability into policy, regional and sectoral planning instruments, draft legislation and regulations, and in the strategic projects and initiatives led by the Government.
- b) Assessing the strategic policies for sustainable development put forward by the Government of Catalonia, especially those related to energy, water, food security, climate change and the green economy, and formulating proposals in these areas.
- c) Encouraging the transfer of knowledge between the Government, the academic world and civil society in the field of sustainable development.
- d) Advising the Government on the design and implementation of measures to raise awareness about sustainability.
- e) Encouraging the involvement of economic and social sectors in the development process in Catalonia.

