

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NEW UNITED NATIONS  
URBAN AGENDA.**

Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda

GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN

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## PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NEW UNITED NATIONS URBAN AGENDA.

The outline of this report largely follows the guidelines developed in response to Resolution (RES/71/256. New Urban Agenda) adopted by the General Assembly on 23 December 2016, which endorses the New Urban Agenda adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to facilitate the preparation of National Progress Reports on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which was adopted by Member States in October 2016.

In the New Urban Agenda document, Member States are called upon to:

... Undertake regular monitoring and review of the New Urban Agenda, ensuring coherence at national, regional and global levels, in order to track progress, assess impact and ensure effective and timely implementation of the Agenda, accountability to our citizens and transparency, in an inclusive manner (paragraph 161).

... Encourage voluntary, country-led, open, inclusive, multi-level, participatory and transparent monitoring and review of the New Urban Agenda. The process should take into account contributions from national, sub-national and local levels of government and be complemented by contributions from the UN system, regional and sub-regional organisations, major groups and relevant stakeholders, on a continuous basis, aimed at building and strengthening partnerships among all relevant stakeholders and fostering exchanges of urban solutions and mutual learning (paragraph 162).

... The General Assembly are to request the Secretary-General, with voluntary contributions from countries and relevant regional and international organisations, to report on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda every four years, with the first report to be submitted during the 72nd session of the General Assembly (paragraph 166).

... The report will provide a qualitative and quantitative analysis of progress made in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the internationally agreed goals and targets relevant to sustainable urbanisation and human settlements. The analysis will be based on the activities of national, sub-national and local governments (paragraph 167).

## 1.- General and preliminary considerations

This report has been led by the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, the focal point of the Government of Spain in the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda and promoter of the Spanish Urban Agenda which, as a National Urban Policy, is the key instrument in the process of implementing the UN's New Urban Agenda in the country.

As an essential general consideration, it is clear that this report responds more to the outline and tools that the NUA itself foresees for its implementation than to the outline deduced from the guidelines sent to prepare and present the corresponding report. In this way, it is understood that real progress consists (according to the NUA) in the elaboration and approval of a National Urban Policy that promotes a novel way of looking at cities from an integrated, integral and holistic perspective, in which the main tools are structured in actions of a regulatory, planning, financing, governance improvement and knowledge exchange and dissemination nature. On the contrary, the outline proposed by the guidelines is based – especially in the first section – on an approach that, in the case of Spain, responds more to the cross-cutting and multi-sectoral vision of the 2030 Agenda Progress Report. Indeed, this is clear from the instructions received in relation to the 'Methodology of the report', which expressly state that to the greatest extent possible the indicators requested are 'common or aligned' with those existing in the SDGs.

Bearing in mind that the 2030 Agenda will have its own progress report, the one that is now being drafted contains the actions carried out to reconsider the way in which cities are organised and developed towards a more sustainable model, 'contextualising' the global challenges and objectives in the reality of urban and rural policies and stressing the relevance that, in a country as decentralised as Spain (in fact one of the most decentralised in the world in relation to the matters affected by the NUA), the elaboration and subsequent implementation of the Spanish Urban Agenda as a National Urban Policy in other different territorial, social and academic spheres.

## 2.- Reporting schedule

The Spanish Government's Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda identifies the SUA as one of its nine Lever Policies for its 'capacity to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, drive coherent sustainable development and achieve a more rapid and sustained impact on key aspects of progress across the whole 2030

Agenda' (sic). In fact, the SUA goals are perfectly aligned with those of the SDGs and so are their respective indicators<sup>1</sup>.

The Spanish Urban Agenda translates the global objectives that have urban relevance (derived from any urban environment, large, medium and small) and is proposed as an instrument to facilitate their achievement by grounding them in a specific territory with a pragmatic, strategic and systematic approach. The SUA allows for the 'localisation' of the global goals at municipal and sub-regional level and is aligned with the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda. According to the comparison, meeting the objectives of the Spanish Urban Agenda responds to 92 of the 169 global targets.

This approach therefore reinforces the UN's vision of the relevance of cities, both in the origin of major social, economic and environmental problems, as well as in the solutions. For this reason, the SUA is the national policy that translates and allows those global objectives to be brought closer to a specific territorial, urban, social, environmental and economic reality, making it possible for them, through the methodology it proposes and the improved governance it provides, to draw up integrated and comprehensive strategic planning.

### 3.- Reporting methodology

The follow-up of the implementation of the United Nations' New Urban Agenda directly depends on the implementation of the Spanish Urban Agenda approved by the Government of Spain in February 2019. In this process, the state acts as a large territorial observatory that obtains information about its effective implementation at the other territorial levels (sub-national and local).

Based on this premise and the context of political-institutional decentralisation in the country, this report is guided by the following perspectives:

- A) State: progress report on the implementation of the SUA Action Plan for the General State Administration and progress reports on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in the aspects related to the SUA.
- B) Autonomous Communities: identification of Regional Urban Agendas.
- C) Local administration: identification of Local Agendas and Action Plans for the implementation of the SUA.

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<sup>1</sup>Spanish Government Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda  
[http://www.exteriores.gob.es/portal/es/saladeprensa/multimedia/publicaciones/documents/plan\\_de\\_accion\\_para\\_la\\_implementation\\_de\\_la\\_agenda\\_2030.pdf](http://www.exteriores.gob.es/portal/es/saladeprensa/multimedia/publicaciones/documents/plan_de_accion_para_la_implementation_de_la_agenda_2030.pdf)

D) Other agents with the capacity to influence sustainable urban and rural development: identification of initiatives by Universities, Professional Associations, etc.

## 4.- Executive Summary

Spain approved its own Urban Agenda in February 2019 as a true National Urban Policy of a strategic and non-regulatory nature. It is the roadmap for guiding public policies with an urban and territorial component in an integrated manner, taking into account social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects to ensure the coherence and transversality of policies at all levels of government. The SUA was spearheaded by the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda (MITMA), but its development was the result of a broad participatory process involving representatives from all levels of government:

1st – Other Ministries with related Strategies, Plans and Programmes.

2nd – Autonomous Communities

3rd – Local entities, through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) and

4th – The professional sector, the private sector, the third sector and civil society.

MITMA is responsible for its implementation and, in order to ensure coherence between the two, it is also the focal point within the Government of Spain for the 2030 Agenda, which goes well beyond SDG 11. The coordination of this Ministry with the rest of the lever policies related to the 2030 Agenda is fundamental since one of the objectives is specifically to improve governance both horizontally and vertically, as well as public-private collaboration.

The cross-cutting and holistic nature of the SUA allows it to interact with and reinforce the development of the other lever policies prioritised in the Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with which it is perfectly aligned. In this way, it not only facilitates the achievement of SDG 11, which aims to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, but also all the targets of the other SDGs that have an urban component. In total, this is more than 90 of the 169 goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The Urban Agenda is also conceived as a constantly evolving process, i.e. as a working method for all stakeholders to pursue the greatest possible sustainability in their

respective fields of action. To this end, it proposes a common methodology consisting of the following elements:

1st – Preparation of a diagnosis of the situation (social, economic and environmental).

2nd – Implementation of a broad participatory process to identify the most serious problems and propose possible solutions, in a consensual manner.

3rd – Identification of the objectives that are considered a priority. To this end, the SUA proposes 10 strategic objectives which in turn include 30 specific objectives and propose 291 lines of action as a menu of options for the municipal actors concerned to choose those that are within their reach and form part of their own strategies.

4th – Selection of specific actions to be implemented according to a timetable (short, medium and long term).

5th – Identification of indicators and implementation of the periodic evaluation of the action plan and its monitoring.

That said, the development and implementation of the Spanish Urban Agenda is carried out in four different areas:

**1.-The specific Action Plan of the General State Administration**, which includes measures organised in five areas: regulatory, strategic planning, financing, governance and knowledge exchange and training.

**2.-Sub-national Urban Agendas**, which involve the implementation of the SUA (and through it the international Urban Agendas) at the regional scale, incorporating their own measures.

**3.- Specific Action Plans** of Local Authorities.

**4.- Action Plans of the rest of the agents** and the implementation of the actions they propose.

All in all, it can already be understood that the SUA is a cross-cutting instrument to facilitate the generation of synergies, thus connecting different actors, sectors and policies in a common and integrated vision. Its scope transcends strictly environmental objectives and instead defines a framework for achieving urban environments capable of balancing the systemic interrelationships that occur in the three dimensions of sustainable development. Therefore, making progress on the specific objectives and targets of the SUA has effects beyond the contribution of urban environments to driving

the ecological transition. The aim is also to contribute to the reduction of social gaps, as well as to the advancement of a significant number of Sustainable Development Goals, given the significant volume of population and economic activity concentrated in urban and peri-urban areas. Furthermore, it contributes to improving the competitiveness of the territory as a whole, including small population centres, thus making it possible to revitalise areas at demographic risk.

With regard to the processes adopted in the drafting of this report, it should be noted that the coordination between the different levels of government, the participatory and inclusive methods used, the decentralised meetings and the composition of the team that drafted the report are based on those that shaped the gestation of the SUA itself, without a specific process for the drafting of the report having been set in motion at this time. After all, those mechanisms are the same ones that today allow for the monitoring of its effective implementation.

## 5.- Participation

The broad participation process (bottom up) that gave rise to the SUA and that today forms the platform through which its effective implementation is being carried out included representatives from all levels of the Administration: the other Ministries with related Strategies, Plans and Programmes, the Autonomous Communities, the FEMP and also the professional sector, the private sector, the third sector and civil society. This gives a voice to the various public and private stakeholders. The working groups were, and still are today, as follows:

**1.- Inter-ministerial working group.** At least five Ministries are currently working in a coordinated and continuous manner with MITMA for this purpose: Ministry of Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism; Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030.

**2.- Working group with the Autonomous Communities.** In addition to working through the relevant Sectoral Conference, the first Multilateral Commission of Directors General foreseen in the SUA Action Plan has already been convened and held to share the process.

**3.- Working Group with Local Authorities (FEMP).** Within the framework of a Collaboration Agreement signed with the FEMP, there is permanent and continuous collaboration with all of them, in addition to dozens of bilateral meetings with specific Local Authorities.

The second meeting of this working group was held on 6 June and the third on 17 October 2018. It has been the most active group and input has been received from all members of the working group both on the diagnosis and the strategic framework, as well as on the indicators and the future action plan.

**4.- Working group with the Third Sector, Academia and Civil Society.** This group works with a wide range of representatives, bilaterally, for the time being.

## PART 1: TRANSFORMATIVE COMMITMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

### Transformative Commitment 1.1. Sustainable Urban Development for Social Inclusion and Ending Poverty.

To meet the three objectives of this transformative commitment, the State Action Plan of the Spanish Urban Agenda foresees the implementation of different types of actions, depending on the challenges posed. Some are of a normative nature; others of a strategic planning nature; others of a funding or governance improvement nature; and still others of an exchange and dissemination of knowledge and good practices. However, the need to include in this report a different systematisation that should include a brief diagnosis in relation to each of the proposed sections, the challenges detected and the solutions, in a vision that is much more sectoral than transversal, which is what the Spanish Urban Agenda pursues, in accordance with the NUA itself, is once again emphasised.

In relation to sustainable urban development, social inclusion and the end of poverty, there are at least three major Strategic Objectives in the SUA: Strategic Objective 2, relating to the city model, which contains an explicit reference to the role of the regeneration of vulnerable neighbourhoods and public space as an essential and inherent element of social cohesion in Spanish cities; Strategic Objective 6, which seeks to promote cohesion, reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion in disadvantaged urban environments and seek equal opportunities from a gender, age and disability perspective; and Strategic Objective 8, aimed at guaranteeing access to housing, especially for the most vulnerable groups and promoting the existence of an adequate housing stock at an affordable price.

#### A) Social inclusion and poverty eradication

Before the COVID-19 health crisis, Spain was experiencing a process of recovery in terms of GDP growth and job creation, which made possible a significant improvement in the poverty and inequality indicators generated by the economic and financial crisis that began in 2008 and lasted until well into 2013. Progress since the end of the crisis had been significant. According to the National Reform Programme, 2017 closed with growth of 3.1%, well above that of the euro area – 2.4% – despite the fact that there were still major social and economic challenges that required further progress in convergence in income, wages, equality and productivity. The challenge was expected to be long and complex over time, as the following years proved.

According to the information contained in the 2030 Agenda Progress Report and the most recent available statistical data (specifically identified therein), the most important challenges are as follows:

1.- A total of 11.8 million people (in 2019), i.e. 25.3% of the population, at **risk of poverty and social exclusion**, with 4.7% – 2.2 million people – affected by severe material deprivation, i.e. unable to afford basic expenses.

2.- Significant **territorial, age and gender inequality** in the distribution of poverty. Thus, while in cities the risk of poverty reaches 18% of households, in rural areas this percentage rises to 24.8%, and in intermediate areas it is 21.3%. By region, the Autonomous Communities of Andalusia and Extremadura are most affected (37.7%), followed by the Canary Islands (35%) and the Region of Murcia (31.9%). This is particularly true in the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, where 45.9% and 38.9% of the population, respectively, live in poverty. At the other extreme are mainly the Balearic Islands, Navarre and the Basque Country, all of which have figures below the national average.

The risk of poverty and exclusion is also biased by gender, age, nationality, ethnic origin or disability and has a particular impact on women (26% compared to 24.6% of men), people with disabilities (32.5%), people born outside Spain and EU territory (54.2%) and, above all, the Roma population (80%). Having children is also associated with a higher risk of poverty, especially in the case of single-parent households, 81% of which are headed by women, with a rate that rises to 46.8%. This also raises the child poverty rate, which is quite high compared to the European environment. 1 in 3 children under 18 are at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion – 30.3% – a percentage that rises to 31.7% in the case of 16 to 29-year-olds. Young people deserve particular attention, as more than a third of them are at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion. Their unemployment rate was 40.5% in the 16-24 age group, which also makes it difficult for them to access social protection, given the eminently contributory nature of social protection.

3.- In 2019 **the risk of poverty or social exclusion, as measured by the AROPE rate**, was 25.3% in the general population. However, it was 15.7% for people aged 65 and over, with the lowest rates in this population group. The redistributive effect of pensions is one of the highest among public policies.

4.- **If we focus on the Gini index**, inequality in 2018 was slightly lower than the average of the last three decades and very similar to that of 1992, 1999 and 2008, just before the great economic-financial crisis and, of course, before the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to all this data, one of the most important lessons learned is that breaking the cycle of poverty, exclusion and inequality necessarily involves generating equal opportunities, both at the territorial and social level, and within the latter, taking into account issues of gender, age, nationality, ethnic origin or disability as some of the most important. It is also necessary to adopt effective legal, economic and social protection measures for the most vulnerable population groups, measures that can be regulatory, but also planning and financing measures that cover the complexity of factors that affect the aforementioned situations.

On 2 March 2019, the Council of Ministers **approved the National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2019-2023**<sup>2</sup>, a document that is essential to understanding all the actions needed to meet the country's challenges in this area, as well as the commitments undertaken. This Strategy, in line with the 2030 Agenda, the international Urban Agendas and the Spanish Urban Agenda itself, contains a Diagnosis of the situation, the definition of Strategic Objectives (in this case four), which specify the objectives for each of them and which are accompanied by the fundamental lines of action. It contains, in turn, specific plans and programmes aimed at specific areas of intervention or specific groups which, due to their particular situation or characteristics, are more vulnerable. These plans or programmes, all post-2016, which are ongoing in addition to other measures that will also be listed below, are:

- the Employment Activation Strategy 2017-2020;
- the State Housing Plan 2018-2021, which has been amended by Order TMA/336/2020 of 9 April, to address additional urgent situations arising from COVID-19;
- the Spanish Disability Strategy 2014-2020;
- the National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of the Roma Population 2012-2020;
- the Second National Human Rights Plan (2019-2023);
- the Comprehensive National Strategy for the Homeless 2015-2020;
- the National Strategy against Energy Poverty (2019-2024) and others that are already in the process of revision and new formulation such as the Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities, the National Strategic Plan for Children and Adolescents.

Other measures adopted more recently that should be highlighted include:

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<sup>2</sup> National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2019-2023 [https://eapn.es/ARCHIVO/documentos/noticias/1553262965\\_estrategia\\_prev\\_y\\_lucha\\_pobreza\\_2019-23.pdf](https://eapn.es/ARCHIVO/documentos/noticias/1553262965_estrategia_prev_y_lucha_pobreza_2019-23.pdf)

a) The approval, in May 2020, of the **Minimum Vital Income (IMV)**, configured as a subjective right of citizens regardless of the territory in which they reside. This benefit is also compatible with other income, including income from work, which makes it possible to extend the benefit coverage to people living in in-work poverty. It is currently under review in order to integrate different non-contributory benefits into a single instrument.

b) **Progress in a personalised and focused model of social inclusion**, developed with accompaniment itineraries deployed in different areas: social, employment, education and health, which allows for a combination of actions in one or more of these areas.

c) **The harmonisation of the efforts made** by all public administrations (State, Autonomous Regions and Local Councils) with an improvement in governance that reinforces cooperation between them and the active participation of the beneficiaries.

d) The commitment to maintain, improve and adapt **the public social security system** and, especially, the pension system, all based on intergenerational solidarity, on the sufficiency of benefits, on equity and on the fair distribution of burdens. Some of the specific measures linked to this commitment are: guaranteeing the purchasing power of pensions by updating them in line with the CPI; raising minimum and non-contributory pensions to reinforce the effectiveness of the fight against poverty; reducing the gender gap; and compensating for contribution gaps in situations of irregular working careers. In this regard, Royal Decree-Law 3/2021 of 2 February replaced the maternity allowance with an economic supplement that contributes to the reduction of the gender gap. This reform makes it possible to increase the number of beneficiaries.

e) The use of social security contributions to finance, exclusively, contributory benefits, with **additional contributions from the State** to cover the rest, in its capacity as guarantor of the system. In this respect, a recent agreement has been signed to transfer improper Social Security expenditure to the General State Administration in order to guarantee the principles of sufficiency and sustainability of the public pension system.

One of the indicators which, according to the guidelines for drawing up the report, should identify one of the areas of progress, has been left until the end. This indicator is '**Ensuring access to public spaces, including streets, pavements and bicycle lanes**'. In Spain, this guarantee exists from the moment that planning expressly requires the reservation of important land reserves for green areas, open spaces, streets with pavements and squares and all types of cultural, educational, health and sports facilities for community use and enjoyment, without any type of discrimination. In fact, the Land

and Urban Renewal Act, of 30 October 2015<sup>3</sup>, already enshrines, within the principle of sustainable territorial and urban development, the guarantee of universal access for all citizens to the infrastructures, facilities, equipment, transport and services provided by urban environments, this being an obligation that must be ensured by the Administrations with powers in urban planning. In practice, this right is a reality.

With specific regard to bicycle lanes and similar measures, it is noted that many Spanish cities are making efforts to remove roads previously dedicated to road traffic in order to offer these spaces to pedestrians or to considerably increase the number of kilometres of bicycle lanes. A successful example that can be offered is that of the city of Barcelona, not only with the implementation of the so-called 'superblocks'<sup>4</sup>, but also with the increase of many kilometres dedicated to cycling. The same or similar steps are also being taken in many other Spanish cities. In fact, according to the Bicycle Barometer 2019 (the largest nationwide study on this means of transport, which is carried out every two years) the use of bicycles has grown 2 points compared to 2017; with an increase of 8.6% for daily journeys to go to school and 2.2% to go to work. The largest increase in cycling has been among women (43% of women are cyclists, six points more than in 2017). The study also reveals that the bicycle has replaced the car or motorbike in more than 40% of cases in daily commuting and has also increased the visibility and use of public bicycle rental systems (more than three million users today).

## B) Access to adequate housing

Housing is one of the main social problems facing Spain, a factor that is also a generator of inequality and a key element in the analysis of the population's risk of poverty and, therefore, in tackling it.

The most serious problems are to be found in the following factors:

a) **Overspending on housing.** In 2019, 8.5% of the population had to spend at least 40% of their total disposable income on housing (overspending by international standards). This percentage rises to 52.3% in population groups with very low income. By type of household, the situation particularly affects people living alone and single-parent households with dependent children, mostly headed by women, who show overspending on housing in 24.1% of cases. Nationality is also a factor that increases the risk of such overspending. In 2019, 32.1% of non-EU-born foreign nationals were in this situation.

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<sup>3</sup> Land and Urban Renewal Act, of 30 October 2015: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2015-11723>

<sup>4</sup> *Supermanzanas* (superblocks) (Barcelona) <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/superilles/es/>.

b) **The gradual and steady rise in rental prices.** Renting is experiencing significant growth, especially in certain locations where it must compete with tourist rentals, or in large cities and metropolitan areas. Although renting is gaining weight in Spain and may represent more than 740,000 more homes for rent in this period. In fact, it has gone from representing 20.3% of the population's housing tenure in 2011, to 23.8% in 2019, according to the latest Eurostat data<sup>[1][1]</sup>, an increase of 17.2%. As for the average monthly price, according to the supply data at the end of 2020, it showed an annual increase of 4.6%, in a general trend, however, towards moderation. It is important to stress, however, that all this data may not adequately reflect the reality of a market that has been subject to great paralysis in the context of the pandemic and which, moreover, varies greatly between Autonomous Regions.

c) **The virtual absence of social housing stock.** This is mainly due to two factors: the high percentage of dwellings built with some form of public protection that were intended for sale to families (36.8% - more than 6 million dwellings - of those built between 1951 and 2015) and the high percentage of the population that, until a few years ago, lived in a home of their own (almost 87%). In any case, according to data from the Housing and Land Observatory<sup>5</sup>, Spain has a social housing stock (publicly owned rental housing) of around 290,000 dwellings (180,000 owned by the autonomous communities and dependent bodies and 110,000 owned by local councils and dependent bodies). With this stock of 290,000 social housing units, 1.6% of the 18.6 million households are covered, although, in a broad sense, including all the public and private housing stock rented at reduced prices, the percentage could be as high as 2.5%. According to data provided by Eurostat and the Housing Europe Observatory, this social housing stock is more than 6 percentage points below the average for EU countries (in average terms, around 9%).

d) This upward trend in **rental prices** in recent years has also led to excessive and unbalanced expenditure on housing. Between 2015 and 2019, the percentage of monthly salary spent on rent has grown by 11.5 points on average, reaching 40% in 2019. In that year only 15.4% of the Spanish population was renting at market prices, rising to 20.3% in the case of single-parent households with dependent children, and up to 75% in the case of foreigners born outside the EU.

e) The existence of many **homeless people** who are entirely dependent on social services (estimated at around 33,000 people, although there are no recent statistics).

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<sup>[1]</sup> According to Eurostat methodology, includes rent at market price, rent at below-market price and free transfer.

<sup>5</sup> Mitma Housing and Land Observatory:

<https://apps.fomento.gob.es/CVP/handlers/pdfhandler.ashx?idpub=BAW072>

f) **The existence of neighbourhoods with high levels of vulnerability** where there is an urgency to act through comprehensive urban regeneration operations. According to data from the 'Urban Vulnerability Observatory', in cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, there are 918 vulnerable neighbourhoods or areas where it is a priority to act with criteria that also prevent gentrification. In addition, an increase in the number of cities in which these neighbourhoods exist has been detected, with a significant increase in the number of people living in them. Immigration is the indicator that puts the greatest distance between cities.

Most of these factors have been exacerbated by the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting significant government action. These include those included in Royal Decree-Law 11/2020 of 31 March, adopting additional urgent social and economic measures to address COVID-19. Among those that respond to households in situations of social vulnerability in the field of housing and renting, the following stand out:

- An extraordinary period of suspension of eviction procedures and evictions, when they affect vulnerable households without housing alternatives.
- An extraordinary extension of housing rental contracts that end during this period, under the same terms and conditions as the current contract.
- In situations of vulnerability, where the landlord is a public entity or a large landlord, a 50% rent reduction or a moratorium of up to four months on rent payments.
- A line of transitory financing aid, based on a line of State-guaranteed guarantees through the Official Credit Institute (ICO), which will cover the payment of up to six monthly rent instalments, free of charges and interest.
- An increase in the allocation of the current State Housing Plan 2018-2021, incorporating a new aid programme and making the management of the Plan more flexible in order to provide support to vulnerable tenants.

### C) Access to basic services

The Spanish population's access to drinking water, sanitation and solid waste disposal is practically 100%, both in urban and rural areas, not only since the NUA was approved in 2016, but for many years. The building planning legislation, which guarantees the basic conditions of any building in terms of functionality and habitability, dates back to 1999. In fact, according to INE data, the percentage of households (main dwellings) with a water supply system is 99.84% and with a sewage disposal system is 96.76%, with only

0.17% of dwellings actually not having one, as the remaining 3.07% correspond to dwellings for which there is actually no data.

However, given that the content of the right to adequate housing cannot be separated from access to certain services that are indispensable for the development of life in conditions of dignity, such as water or electricity, if these services cannot be paid for, the situation becomes precarious. In 2019, 7.7% of the population could not keep their homes at an adequate temperature. This is why reforms have been introduced in the last two years in the electricity market, to progressively incorporate an energy system of renewable energies and technologies with variable or near-zero costs, which is not only environmentally more sustainable, but also contributes to lowering the price of electricity. At the same time, existing benefit mechanisms have been strengthened and optimised, and other structural measures have been taken to reduce energy poverty in the long term. As **committed to in the National Strategy against Energy Poverty**, progress is being made towards an automatic model for granting the social bonus, without the need to deal with the current costly bureaucratic procedures that are a barrier to access, which also contemplates the universality of supply sources. It also provides for the minimum vital supply and the precautionary principle, to protect vulnerable consumers from supply cuts.

In terms of access to a safe and efficient public transport system, according to SUA data, cities have a significant provision of urban and metropolitan transport infrastructure<sup>6</sup>. The road network has more than 128,180 km of municipal urban roads and public transport infrastructures enable between 2.8 and 3 billion passengers to travel annually. A total of 12 urban areas are served by local rail services, 7 cities have a metro system and many have a tram or light rail system. The urban bus networks deserve special mention, with renewed fleets that account for 60% of public transport mobility and which are becoming true vectors of technological innovation, improving the supply and quality of the service with operating assistance systems, fleet management, smart ticketing, etc. The average age of the urban fleet in capital cities is 9.1 years, with a high percentage using the cleanest engine technology and an increasingly widespread use of alternative fuels. Only in Madrid and Barcelona is there a network of bus lanes that exceeds 100 km. Public bicycle rental systems are also increasingly prominent in all cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, as well as the implementation of bicycle lanes in many smaller cities, while collaborative mobility platforms such as car sharing, bike sharing and parking sharing are being implemented with force, especially in large cities.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.observatoriomovilidad.es/>

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reduced the use of public transport, so that, according to INE data, the number of users fell by 51.1% in January compared to the same month in 2020 and urban transport fell by 51.9% year-on-year and interurban transport by 54.2%.

Another important aspect is that mobility has entered fully into planning practice. Almost all municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants have their own Mobility Plan, which usually includes measures to promote public transport (improvements in fare systems, guaranteeing universal accessibility - not only technically speaking, but also cognitive and communication accessibility, quality...), promotion of non-motorised means (in particular cycling), measures to regulate parking and the introduction of reserved lanes for public transport.

Among the most negative factors, it is estimated that 74% of the urban population is affected by traffic noise and 23% is subjected to unhealthy levels. For this reason, measures aimed at reducing emissions in the transport sector have been implemented, such as those to promote modal shift in passengers and freight (Spanish Sustainable Mobility Strategy, Infrastructure, Transport and Housing Plan 2012-2024); the promotion of alternative fuels in transport (Strategy to promote vehicles with alternative technologies, the PIVE, MOVELE and MOVALT plans); and energy efficiency actions in transport (PIMA Aire Plans for the renewal of light commercial vehicles and the PIMA Transport Plan, which finances the scrapping of heavy vehicles over 7 years old).

One of the most positive aspects is that the Spanish population uses public transport intensively. In the 22 areas included in the Metropolitan Mobility Observatory Report (2016), 3,497 million journeys were made, of which 1,729 million were by bus and 1,768 million by rail.

## Transformative commitment 1.2: Sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunity for all

This transformative commitment is included in the Spanish Urban Agenda in a cross-cutting manner, but especially in Strategic Objective 6, which pursues social cohesion and equal opportunities, as well as reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion in disadvantaged urban environments and the achievement of equal opportunities from a gender, age and disability perspective. Strategic Objective 7, which seeks local productivity, employment generation and the dynamisation and diversification of economic activity and the promotion of smart, sustainable and quality tourism, as well as the rest of the key sectors of the local economy, and Strategic Objective 9, aimed at

promoting the knowledge society and moving towards the development of smart cities and promoting e-administration and reducing the digital divide, also contribute to its achievement.

## A) Inclusive Urban Economy

The health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the economy and has highlighted the need to transform the production model, which is highly concentrated in a few sectors and not very diversified. The reorientation of the economic model focuses on **the creation of decent work, investment in innovation and lifelong learning, support for the development of small businesses, the incorporation of new technologies and territorial revitalisation**. The pandemic has shown not only that with a different economic and productive system, which respects and cares for biodiversity, the risk of such phenomena would be reduced, but also that it is necessary to correct the high dependence on the outside world and to promote productive sectors in which the country's own capacities must be guaranteed.

Since 2020, the Spanish government, the autonomous communities and Local Authorities have deployed a set of measures aimed at cushioning the impact of the crisis on society and the economy, including the self-employed and businesses, although it is necessary to go further and address the modernisation of the production model in order to lead and accompany its evolution towards a system based on sustainability and social justice as the main elements.

**The Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan prepared by the Spanish government (April 2021)** to access Next Generation EU funds emphasises the transformation and modernisation of production and consumption models, employment and quality education, the fight against climate change based on ecological transition and decarbonisation, the digital revolution and innovation, as well as health and social welfare. These priorities are in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda and will need to be further pursued to achieve and consolidate inclusive, fair and sustainable growth in the long term. They also coincide with the Objectives of the Spanish Urban Agenda which, specifically in its Strategic Objective 7, is committed to seeking local productivity, the generation of employment and the revitalisation and diversification of economic activity and the promotion of smart, sustainable and quality tourism and the key sectors of the local economy.

**The business sector** identifies itself as a key driver of sustainable development, through a redefinition of its relationship with key actors and its environment, as well as the primacy of ethical values in its management. The need for this new business approach

is reflected in the growing interest in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It is a priority for the business community to raise its ambition in terms of sustainability and increase its contribution to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. For this reason, the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy is working on updating the **National Strategy for Corporate Social Responsibility**, with the participation of the different interest groups represented in the corresponding State Council (CERSE). It is also expected that companies will soon become more obliged to report on environmental, social, labour, governance and human rights issues, in line with the duties established by Law 11/2018 on Non-Financial Information and Diversity and following the guidelines of the European Commission.

**Tourism** is a key sector for the Spanish economy, due to its important contribution to the generation of wealth in the country and constitutes the main economic activity and source of employment in some regions. In 2019, it represented on average 12.4% of GDP in Spain and generated 2.72 million jobs, representing 12.9% of total employment in the economy. These indicators have maintained an upward trajectory since 2015 and are even higher in autonomous communities with a strong tourism profile (for example, the Canary Islands, where tourism activity generates around 40% of employment and around 35% of GDP).

The Spanish tourism model faces a major challenge linked to sustainability in its triple aspect: environmental (protection of the environment and natural resources), socio-economic (equitable distribution of the benefits of the sector between employers and workers and improvement of working conditions) and territorial (diversification, deconcentration and deseasonalisation). A transformation and modernisation of the sector is needed to combine the attractiveness of the country (its coasts, but also its hinterland and rural environment) with the protection of its natural emblems; while achieving a leading sector in decent work and in the generation of positive externalities for others linked to it. Spain has an important historical, cultural and natural heritage, being the European leader in terms of protected natural areas that are members of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and the second country in the world in terms of UNESCO-protected historical and cultural heritage (much of which is made up, precisely, of cities), which is a very important asset. Spain's commitment now focuses much more on quality than on quantity, as well as on the search for an environmentally, socio-economically and territorially sustainable model.

This progress in sustainability has already started with the **General Guidelines of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2030**, which should be further deepened. This implies correcting the imbalances suffered through support in several fundamental areas

already mentioned, such as quality, but also in others such as improving employment and territorial balance.

It is also committed to **digitalisation and innovation in tourism**. The Smart Destinations Network now has more than 250 members. Thanks to this programme, Spain is a benchmark in the implementation of a methodology for the transformation of destinations towards a new model based on governance, sustainability, accessibility, innovation and technology as the backbone.

## B) Sustainable prosperity for all

Addressing the three most important categories outlined above in a common and interrelated manner, the country's first and perhaps most important challenge lies in the necessary transition to a new, more diversified, sustainable and resilient economic model.

**1st – From the point of view of the actors, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the self-employed** play an essential role. SMEs make up the bulk of the economic fabric, with rates comparatively higher than in the EU as a whole. According to 2020 data, there were 2,876,246 companies in Spain, of which only 0.17% are large companies and only 1.01% have more than 50 employees. Therefore, practically the entire Spanish business fabric (99.83%) is made up of SMEs (with fewer than 250 employees). They also have a contribution to employment and business gross value added 5 percentage points higher than the European average, despite their smaller size (average workforce of 4.4 employees compared to an average of 5.9 in other EU countries). In addition, there is an important segment of self-employed workers, who represent 17.85% of business employment and share many of the characteristics of microenterprises. The weight of these micro-SMEs and the self-employed is particularly important in the hotel and catering sector, as well as in commerce, where they represent 99.91% of companies.

This poses specific challenges and a need for a concrete approach to address its challenges and opportunities. This would include issues such as financing for entrepreneurship, growth and innovation, as well as for the better use of economies of scale and their internationalisation. SMEs and micro-SMEs are also more vulnerable to external shocks such as that caused by the global pandemic. These challenges must be addressed in order to boost their competitiveness, tackle the ecological transition and make it possible to generate quality employment through specific support instruments adapted to their characteristics.

But in addition to the above, another of the key players in this **change of model are the social economy organisations**, whose business model fully shares the vision of the 2030

Agenda by being based on the primacy of the person, on the equitable distribution of profits or their reinvestment in the social purpose of the company. The link between the Social Economy and sustainable development is recognised in Law 5/2011 on the Social Economy, which mandates public administrations to promote and develop it as a task of general interest.

According to data from March 2020, there were 42,140 social economy organisations in Spain, generating 2,177,256 direct and indirect jobs. Among them, there are more than 25,722 cooperatives and worker-owned companies registered in the Social Security System, directly employing 357,927 people. Recent experience shows how this type of business organisation has a greater capacity to create and protect employment in times of economic recession, with lower rates of temporary employment and greater job stability; it also has a greater incorporation of women in management positions, a generation of employment opportunities for groups with specific employment difficulties such as the over 55s, people with disabilities, migrants, members of ethnic groups, people at risk of social exclusion, etc., and more equitable pay.

Within this framework, it is important to generate innovative mechanisms for the participation of the social economy in strategic sectors linked to the development of the circular economy and the new care economy, among others, as well as to intensify public support for this model in order to enable the creation and viability of new socio-economic projects based on collective social innovation. An accompaniment that can be articulated within the framework of the **Spanish Strategy for the Promotion of the Social Economy 2021-2027**, currently in the process of being defined.

This transformation necessarily implies reinforcing the frameworks for collaboration between all the actors involved: public administrations, the scientific community, the private sector and social groups, in order to take advantage of this development, but also to accompany those sectors of the population and regions that are affected by this transformation, which will also have digitalisation as one of its tools. Active support from the different public administrations and social actors to ensure that this process is developed with criteria of social inclusion and solidarity will guarantee a fair and inclusive transition for all people, with stable and quality employment.

**2nd – The circular economy.** This is one of the key elements in the necessary transformation of the production and consumption model, insofar as it allows the value of products, materials and resources to be maintained in the economy for as long as possible and the generation of waste is reduced to a minimum and the waste generated is put to good use. The necessary measures include a commitment to eco-design (reducing waste generation and allowing the increasing use of toxic-free products and

materials); reinforcing the labelling system to inform about possible critical components and guarantees in their use and reuse; the inclusion of a reparability index to encourage sustainable consumption and, above all, continuous improvement in waste management to reduce waste generation and increase the rate of circularity.

**3rd – Agriculture, livestock and fishing.** These are an important economic engine and are included in this report on the implementation of the SUA for two reasons: first, because of their capacity to provide the backbone of the territory and second, because of their key role as food suppliers to the urban population. The Gross Value Added of the primary sector (agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing) decreased in 2019 by 1.8% compared to 2018. This amounted to 2.7% of total GDP. In contrast, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, the sector accounted for 11.9% of total emissions in 2018, 0.6% less than in 2017. **The agri-food sector** has been key to securing food supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic, playing an essential role through all its operators and with the indispensable work of workers along the chain. Improving its competitiveness is essential to preserve the environment, protect biodiversity and maintain population, employment and economic activity in rural areas, thus ensuring social and territorial cohesion in this part of the territory, which must go hand in hand with sustainable practices that respect environmental limits and protect traditional rural ways of life and practices. Consumers can also contribute to this if they are provided with clear, simple and reliable information about the sustainability of the food they buy, complemented by the promotion of a healthier diet and limiting its ecological impact.

In this framework, the **Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy post 2020** (PESPAC), currently under preparation, will respond to economic, environmental and social needs, with instruments that will move towards an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable agricultural sector. Alongside this, there will be support and encouragement for local and proximity consumption, strengthening it through the strengthening of local and territorial networks and a territorial and sectoral extension plan with the support of digital tools, which will also have a special impact on rural women's entrepreneurship, differentiated quality production and organic production. A sustainable irrigation policy is also envisaged, through modernisation, to enable more efficient management of water resources and energy consumption, as well as the protection of lifestyles and the best traditional practices of the rural world, and together with this, progress will be made in supporting innovation and the digitalisation of the agri-food sector logistics chain through the action plans of the current **Agri-food Sector Digitalisation Strategy**, promoting quality, sustainability and the circular economy and generating value and jobs, especially in rural areas, as a mechanism to halt depopulation.

Another important aspect is the reduction of food waste at retail and consumer level (the aim is to reduce food waste by more than half) and also to reduce losses in the production and supply chains. To this end, awareness-raising actions and the promotion of good practices in primary production, industry, distribution, catering and hospitality, as well as with consumers, favouring the donation and redistribution of food for social solidarity purposes, will contribute to a more efficient management of resources.

**4th – Industry.** The Spanish economy has undergone a very significant process of tertiarisation in recent years, which has reduced the weight of industry in the overall economic structure. Thus, its contribution to GDP is around 16.1%<sup>95</sup> and it employs 10.4% of the workforce, which is lower than in other European countries. This comparatively lower weight has repercussions in terms of job quality, as it is the most innovative productive sector, accounting for 48% of total innovation expenditure, which results in higher-skilled employment, more stable in times of recession and with higher wages than in other economic sectors. In short, a more developed industrial sector revitalises economic activity and can be an important social and territorial backbone, while reducing dependence on external sources for the production of strategic goods. Therefore, the main challenge lies in the need to increase the weight of industry in the national economy and to boost investment in R&D and innovative activity, in order to bring it closer to the EU average and to the most competitive economies in the region, as well as to take advantage of all the positive externalities it has.

The need for this active industrial policy is framed in the **New Industrial Policy Guidelines 2030 approved in 2019**, which guides the transformation of the production model through three challenges. The first concerns the development and strengthening of the various industrial sectors in order to increase their share of GDP. The second is the need to promote the transformation of the industrial fabric, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, to adapt it to the new context marked by the rapid evolution of digital technologies and growing international competition. Finally, it addresses the need to accompany the sector's adaptation to the double digital and ecological transition, in order to maximise the use of opportunities, particularly by opting for a more circular and interconnected model, with a more intensive use of new technologies, the deployment of renewable technologies and greater energy efficiency in industrial processes. An accompaniment that should also anticipate and mitigate the impacts in the form of job destruction that both transitions may cause, thus ensuring a just transition. In this regard, it is also worth highlighting the specific support for industrial transformation and support for SMEs, some of which is included in the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan and others that will have to be deployed beyond the time horizon of the Plan, with the aim of supporting industrial sectors in their transformation and improvement of competitiveness. In turn, the energy transition is

an opportunity in itself to consolidate the industrial value chain associated with renewable technologies, sustainable mobility, energy storage and the development of energy carriers such as renewable hydrogen.

**5th – Demand for products and services.** The promotion of more socially and ecologically sustainable consumption patterns is of enormous relevance for the achievement of an economic and productive model aligned with the principles of the 2030 Agenda. This requires empowering consumers in their consumer relations, improving their knowledge of the social and environmental impact of their decisions, as well as eliminating situations of subordination, defencelessness or lack of protection that may arise in these relations. The new economic and social model to be achieved is based on the fundamental contribution of the knowledge economy, in which research and innovation play a key role. The multidimensional crisis caused by COVID-19 is a good example of the interactions between social, economic and environmental phenomena, as well as the importance of applied knowledge in the search for solutions. The key measure to achieve this is support for research and science under the leadership of the public sector and the strong involvement and commitment of the private sector. This implies strengthening public-private partnership mechanisms, which must be characterised by the search for the general interest and for positive benefits and impacts for the population as a whole. The constitution of **a new Science, Technology and Innovation System** with the presence of unprecedented public support is the guarantee to be able to advance in all the challenges for a proportional mobilising impulse on the private sector in a broad framework of public-private collaboration and co-involvement.

**6th – Finally, mention should also be made of the importance that the cultural sector will play in this new model,** given its enormous social value, its capacity to generate critical thought and its power to emancipate, empower and give freedom and autonomy to citizens. Culture, in addition to being a right, is an essential tool in the fight against inequalities and social exclusion. Sport is also a basis for people's development, decisively supporting not only the promotion of healthy lives but also consolidating itself as a mechanism for social cohesion.

Spain is committed to a new model of a fair economy and to social transition, both of which recognise the undeniable value of culture and its necessary defence and promotion as an obligation for public authorities. Among the most significant actions to be implemented are the promotion of access and consumption, cultural revitalisation and the strengthening of cultural industries (highlighting within the latter the entire fabric of small and medium-sized enterprises and freelancers that sustain the country's cultural sector). Finally, the potential of the cultural and sports sector is also expressed in its capacity for territorial structuring. Culture and sport are a potential economic

driver for many regions; but in addition to their important economic potential, they are in themselves a way of connecting and expressing territorial diversity, languages, regional characteristics and cultural expressions.

## Transformative Commitment 1.3 Environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development.

As noted above, the Spanish Urban Agenda provides a cross-cutting vision that links all the objectives together in a coherent and integrated manner. However, in relation to this specific transformative commitment they are of particular relevance:

- Strategic Objective 1, which aims to develop land in a way that is compatible with its territorial environment, to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage, to protect the landscape and to improve green and blue infrastructures and link them to the natural context
- Strategic Objective 2, which seeks to define an urban model that promotes compactness, urban balance and the provision of basic services, with functional complexity and diversity of uses, as well as guaranteeing the quality and universal accessibility of public spaces, improving the urban environment and reducing pollution, promoting urban regeneration and improving the quality and sustainability of buildings.
- Strategic Objective 3, which aims to adapt the territorial and urban model to the effects of climate change and to make progress in preventing it and reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Strategic Objective 4, which promotes the sustainable management of resources and the circular economy, being more energy efficient and saving energy, optimising and reducing water consumption, promoting the materials cycle and reducing waste and promoting recycling.
- Strategic Objective 5, which aims to favour the city of proximity and promote sustainable modes of transport.

### A) Resilience, Mitigation and Adaptation of Cities and Human Settlements

Climate change, environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity continue to be the main threat to the survival of humanity, the associated risks of which will particularly affect countries located in the Mediterranean arc, including Spain. The United Nations, together with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has estimated the need to achieve a global decarbonisation rate of more than 7.6% per year in the decade from 2020 to 2030 in order to keep the global temperature increase to 1.5°C. This

responsibility must be articulated in a cross-cutting manner, both in the current recovery plans and in the measures to be carried out in the future, guaranteeing in all of them the fulfilment of the objectives and the protection and accompaniment of the people and communities especially affected by these processes.

Spain is a country that is highly vulnerable to climate change. The warning about the rise in average temperature of between 5° and 7°C in summer and between 3 and 4°C in winter, for the last third of the 21st century, is already evident and the effects of climate change are being felt in the form of periods of drought; global rainfall values below the historical average (this was the case in the last 4 hydrological years); insufficient water storage in reservoirs (at the end of the 2016/17 hydrological year it reached 33.9% of total capacity, below the average values of the last 10 years, which was 50.1%); flood damage exceeding 800 million euros per year and an increase in the forest area affected by fires (in 2016 it reached almost 66.000 ha, although it is estimated that 95% of these fires are of human origin).

Spain is also a country with more than 10,000 km of coastline, so that effects such as global warming, the pressure exerted by urbanisation and the construction of infrastructures on the coast, as well as the decrease in the solid flow of rivers, constitute a real threat to the coast, as well as modifying the coastline.

The fight against climate change must be approached both from the point of view of mitigation (reduction of GHG emissions) and, above all, from the point of view of adaptation to climate change. And cities are key to both objectives, which is why planning must play a fundamental role in their design and in the development of the infrastructure axes that provide the backbone of the territory. Land use, land management and distribution, transport choices, housing and social attitudes are closely interrelated and shaped by infrastructure and urban form. Hence, spatial and urban planning, mixed land-use zoning, sustainable transport-oriented development and increased building density, among many other aspects, can contribute to joint mitigation in all sectors. Heat waves and their impacts on cities are increased by the so-called 'urban heat island' effect and the intensity of this phenomenon depends on several characteristics such as the spatial shape of the city, its morphology (urban roughness, urban canyon, sky visibility, etc.), the presence of vegetation, or the albedo of the materials of the urbanised surfaces. Therefore, appropriate planning that takes into account regional and local climate influences can achieve emission reductions by minimising travel needs or reducing journeys, choosing non-motorised modes of transport and reducing land use and energy consumption through more efficient supply infrastructure. Compact development, infilling urban gaps and spaces, along with smart densification, can preserve space for agriculture, bioenergy and carbon sinks. Urban

climate mapping, analysing the heat absorption and heat transfer capacity of urban materials (overheating map) and the heat removal capacity (urban ventilation map) can also be very useful.

In relation to **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions**, they reached 313.5 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-eq in 2019, despite falling annual emissions between 2018 and 2019, with a 6.2% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>-eq, mainly due to the strong increase in wind and solar photovoltaic energy production, as well as a reduction in energy production from coal. In fact, in 2020, renewables accounted for 43.6% of electricity generation, the highest share of the generation mix since records began.

The analysis of GHG emissions for 2019 also showed a reduction in emissions in all sectors except transport and waste, with the former being the largest contributor to the overall total, accounting for 29% of the total. The waste sector increased its emissions by 0.7%, due to an increase in the amount of solid waste deposited in landfills and treated wastewater, as well as the other sectors covered – industry, power generation, RCI sector and agriculture – showed decreases ranging from 28.7% for power generation to 1.4% for agriculture. In the case of industry, emissions were reduced both in terms of fuel consumption and emissions generated by the industrial processes themselves. Finally, CO<sub>2</sub>-eq removals associated with the land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector decreased by 1.6% compared to 2018.

The **Emergency Declaration of Climate and Environmental adopted in January 2020** by the Council of Ministers responds to the urgency of climate and environmental action. In this context, Spain has a **Strategic Energy and Climate Framework** that is seen as an opportunity for the modernisation of the Spanish economy, the generation of employment, Spain's leading position in the renewable energies and technologies that will dominate the next decade, the development of the rural environment and the improvement of people's health, the environment and social justice. The Declaration commits to 30 priority lines of action to combat climate change with cross-cutting policies, as well as to harness the social and economic benefits of the ecological transition.

**The Climate Change and Energy Transition Bill** – currently in parliamentary procedure – sets a national GHG emissions reduction target of at least 20% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, as a prelude to climate neutrality by 2050. For the activation of this commitment, the Law relies on different planning tools aimed at articulating the implementation of measures, as well as the definition of climate and energy governance. These tools have, to a large extent, already been defined and are outlined below:

**1st – The National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 (PNIEC).** This is the roadmap for the next decade to achieve energy and climate commitments and the medium-term energy planning tool for reducing GHG emissions. Its specific targets for 2030 are a 23% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990, a 42% share of renewables in final energy use, a 39.5% improvement in energy efficiency and a 74% share of renewable energy in electricity generation. Insofar as three out of every four tonnes of GHG emissions originate in the energy system, its decarbonisation is the central axis of this Plan on which the energy transition will be developed, which must be carried out with criteria of support for the affected sectors and social justice, in line with the Just Transition Strategy.

**2nd – The Long Term Decarbonisation Strategy 2050** approved in November 2020. This sets the path for such a process by articulating a coherent and integrated response to the climate crisis that seizes opportunities for the modernisation and competitiveness of the economy and is socially just and inclusive. The reduction of GHG emissions in 2050 is projected to be 90% compared to 1990, while the remaining 10% will be absorbed by sinks.

**3rd – The Just Transition Strategy.** This provides the framework for action to ensure that the shift to a greener economic model is socially beneficial, with opportunities to generate new quality jobs for both women and men. The Strategy also recognises that, while the transition will generate many positive opportunities, adaptation may also lead to temporary negative impacts, which can be anticipated and mitigated. It therefore aims to establish public support and accompaniment measures to minimise these impacts in the regions and districts potentially most affected, based on the key principles of inclusiveness, participation and social justice, which are key cross-cutting principles in the 2030 Agenda.

**4th – The Long-term Strategy for Energy Rehabilitation in the Spanish Building Sector (ERESEE) 2020.** This fulfils the commitment established in Article 2a of Directive 2010/31/EU of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings, as amended by Directive (EU) 2018/844, aiming to promote a profound transformation of the building sector in Spain to align it with the general energy and climate objectives established in the medium and long term, taking the years 2030 and 2050 as the respective horizons.

The Directive requires each Member State to develop a long-term strategy to support the renovation of its national building stock of residential and non-residential buildings, both public and private, by transforming them into energy-efficient and decarbonised building stock by 2050, facilitating the cost-effective transformation of existing buildings into nearly zero-energy buildings. The ERESEE 2020, in accordance and in coordination

with the objectives established by the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) to 2030 and the Long-Term Strategy for a Modern, Competitive and Climate Neutral Spanish Economy in 2050 (ELP 2050), proposes a reduction in energy consumption in the building sector of 15.7% in 2030 compared to 2020, and 37.3% in 2050. In terms of emissions, in line with the Directive and the ELP 2050, a near total decarbonisation of the building sector is proposed by 2050.

Through a diagnosis of the Spanish residential stock and energy consumption in dwellings and a modelling of the residential stock and energy consumption, it proposes various approaches to refurbishment ranging from the envelope to heating and DHW installations, calculating the associated economic costs and the energy and emissions savings obtained. In particular, it includes a target to retrofit the envelope of 1.2 million dwellings by 2030 and 7.1 million dwellings by 2050. It also proposes actions to renovate boilers and change heating and DHW equipment, improving their energy efficiency, replacing certain fossil fuels (diesel, LPG, etc.) and promoting electrification (heat pump) and renewable energies (in particular, solar energy and self-consumption). Various global scenarios are also presented, quantifying the investments required for their development and their main results from an environmental (energy and emissions savings), micro and macroeconomic point of view. Finally, a series of measures are set out in various areas (regulatory, financing, communication, etc.) to develop the proposed objectives in practice.

#### **5th – The National Air Pollution Control Programme (PNCCCA).**

Transport accounted for 41.6% of total emissions of nitrogen oxides and 30% of heavy metals in 2019. It is also responsible for 12.3% of total soot emissions, 11.8% of sulphur oxides, 11% of carbon monoxide and 8.9% of total particulate matter. The challenge is therefore to reduce the volume of road traffic in cities while promoting non-motorised modes of transport and the penetration of electric mobility and modal shifts. This is in addition to measures for the improvement, electrification and use of the public transport network or to achieve the objectives committed to in the PNIEC linked to the renovation of thermal installations in the building sector, among other actions that should contribute to improving the air quality of our urban environments.

The measures proposed in this PNCCA will make it possible to achieve the reduction targets for all pollutants by 2020 and, by 2030, to meet the targets for four of the pollutants (SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>), with reductions of 92% for sulphur dioxide, 66% for nitrogen oxides, 21% for ammonia and 50% for fine particulate matter.

Meanwhile, attention and planning for more interconnected and sustainable mobility within and outside urban environments has already begun to take steps. To this end, the

**Safe, Sustainable and Connected Mobility Strategy 2020** has been defined, which aims to respond to the current challenges in terms of mobility and transport, marked by changes in the global context, the irruption - often disruptive - of new technologies, the increasing concentration of population in large cities and the need to decarbonise the economy in order to tackle climate change. It is complemented at the legal level by the **Sustainable Mobility and Transport Financing Act**, which is currently being drafted.

## B) Sustainable management and use of natural resources

Cities are the great driving force of the economy and are the main focus of natural resource consumption (75%) and waste generation (50% of global production), while at the same time they generate between 60% and 80% of greenhouse gas emissions, as stated by the United Nations in its report 'Resource Efficiency as a Key Issue in the New Urban Agenda'. Cities are part of and are co-responsible for the environmental impacts and high consumption of natural resources generated by the linear economic model and therefore have an essential role to play in the transition to a circular economic model that ensures quality of life in cities and makes them an attractive place to live.

Efficiency is related to the urban metabolism itself, i.e. to the flows of materials, water and energy, which constitute its very support. The use and management of natural resources must achieve maximum efficiency, while ensuring minimum disturbance to ecosystems. Spatial planning, urban planning, mobility, building, water flows, materials used and waste generated, together with certain lifestyles, are all implicated in the creation of energy-saving or energy-wasting scenarios.

In terms of biodiversity and natural wealth, Spain is one of the most fortunate countries in the European Union. It is located in one of the world's 25 biodiversity hotspots, with more than 90,000 species. This valuable natural capital must form a fundamental basis for sustainable development, because well-preserved and resilient ecosystems provide services of innumerable value to society, such as supply (food, medicines, raw materials, etc.), pollution regulation, prevention of land erosion processes and ecosystem disruption, along with the mitigation of climate risks. Ecosystems in a good state of conservation also generate cultural and recreational services and opportunities, which offer great potential not only economically but also socially for respectful interaction with our environment. The conservation, restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems is therefore a crucial challenge for the country, not only in a reactive way to avoid biodiversity loss and the negative effects that this implies for human development and well-being, but also as a fundamental basis for making the most of the exceptional potential of our natural capital, which serves as a foundation on which to promote a green recovery.

In 2018, the protected land area in Spain reached 32.82% of the total area, almost 13% in the case of marine areas above the 10% target set for 2020 by the so-called Aichi Targets. However, the latest Spanish Natural Heritage and Biodiversity report warns of the effects on conservation of factors such as fires and forest stress, soil erosion and the advance of desertification, invasive alien species or practices such as hunting and illegal fishing, as well as the aggravation of many of these factors as a result of climate change.

In this context, biodiversity protection efforts, building on the commitments set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, focus on restoring degraded ecosystems and reducing pressure on biodiversity. This Strategy contains binding targets for all Member States, which must submit their ecosystem restoration proposals to the Commission by 2021. It also commits to connectivity objectives linked to ecological restoration. Spain is linked to this European trend, having exceeded the threshold of infrastructure density considered critical, and therefore wishes to reverse this ongoing process of ecosystem fragmentation. To this end, one of the measures implemented is the approval, in October 2020, of **the National Strategy for Green Infrastructure, Connectivity and Ecological Restoration**, which seeks to consolidate this approach to reduce the fragmentation of habitats and ecosystems and improve the ecological connectivity of the territory. On the other hand, the adoption of the next **Strategic Plan for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity**, which is currently being drafted, will be the main element of biodiversity planning in Spain and will contain the objectives and lines of action for the next decade.

Sustainable forest management is also essential for biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as for the proper and efficient provision of ecosystem services and renewable raw materials. Within this framework, the updating of the **Spanish Forestry Strategy and the Forestry Plan** seek to respond to current needs and demands, to which will be added the adoption of the Common Basic Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management, as an instrumental framework that will provide the competent bodies and agents in the forestry sector with clear and rigorous criteria that will allow the promotion of forestry planning and its integration into land-use planning.

Adaptation to climate change comprises a broad set of strategies aimed at avoiding or reducing the potential impacts of climate change. Adaptation actions reduce the exposure and vulnerability of social, economic and environmental systems and can also enhance their capacity to recover and restore after a climate-related shock. Adaptation not only prevents or minimises damage, it also brings economic and social stability and can create new economic activities and employment opportunities, while preventing economic losses. Moreover, solutions based on ecosystem enhancement and alternatives based on natural regulation processes perform better than infrastructure

and artificialisation of space. These are the premises that articulate the second **National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (PNACC) 2021-2030**, thus fulfilling one of the commitments set out in the **Government's Declaration on Climate and Environmental Emergency**, whose main objective is to build a country that is less vulnerable, safer and more resilient to the impacts and risks of climate change, in order to anticipate, respond and adapt to a changing climate context. Furthermore, this Plan is configured as a basic planning instrument to promote coordinated and coherent action from a cross-cutting (from different sectors), multilateral (from different actors) and multilevel (from different territorial scales) perspective, in the face of the risks and threats posed by climate change.

Despite the positive evolution of some indicators in recent years, Spain's environmental impact remains well above its biocapacity. According to the latest available data, the ecological footprint amounts to 4.0 global hectares (gha), which means that the ecological deficit is above 2.8 global hectares. In other words, it would take 2.8 times the area of the country to meet its consumption of natural resources, making it dependent on other countries to meet the needs of its economic system. This external dependence is particularly evident in the field of energy, with a share of around 71% in 2020, linked in particular to fossil fuels. It is therefore a priority to incorporate circular solutions that promote a sustainable, decarbonised, competitive and resource-efficient economy, as well as the deployment of renewable technologies that allow for greater energy independence, taking advantage of all existing renewable resources. The approval in 2020 of the **Spanish Circular Economy Strategy** has laid the foundations for a new model of production and consumption that will also be reinforced by a new Law on Waste and Contaminated Land that will enable an ambitious framework to guarantee sustainable waste management and establish the basis for this circular economy.

In terms of water, Spain has and will continue to have problems in the coming years as a result of climate change. According to the European Semester Report on Spain 2020, the demand for this natural resource in several areas of the country exceeds the available water resources, which are not only overexploited, but are also affected by inappropriate use in the form of contamination of water resources. According to the 2019 data, 59% of surface water bodies and 55% of groundwater bodies were in a good state, while the rest were impacted mainly by water abstraction for different uses, morphological alterations in watercourses and pollution due to point source discharges. To correct these problems, hydrological planning and risk management mechanisms are being implemented in coordination with other planning or strategies that contribute to the protection of water resources (purification and sanitation, circular economy, conservation of ecosystems, etc.). Despite this, the assessment of the effects of climate change makes it possible to project a future scenario of rising temperatures, coupled

with extreme variations in rainfall and droughts, which will critically affect water availability, which will therefore have major implications for sectors such as agriculture, livestock, forestry and tourism. Although the hydrological plans incorporate the results of projected climate change impacts in the medium term, it is necessary to strengthen coordination mechanisms, adapt regulatory frameworks and promote a hydrological transition that will enable us to face the challenges of climate change in a context of water security and environmental sustainability.

The key action measures are: systems for water retention, storage, efficiency in water use and reuse, all of them in an integrated management, both at local and river basin scale, aiming at maximum water self-sufficiency by combining abstraction measures with saving and efficiency measures. It is therefore essential to link urban development with the water cycle in its local expression (rainwater harvesting, reuse of reclaimed water) and to avoid anything that could lead to its pollution.

Another element to be considered as a priority is waste. A waste management model based on sustainability criteria will seek to apply the waste hierarchy, especially prevention and reduction and reuse and recycling, which will allow progress towards a resource-efficient society that in turn reduces the polluting impact and improves the availability of raw materials. The objectives pursued by European policy for this sector and included in the Circular Economy Package (CEC) are a good guide to orientate the choice of actions, their prioritisation and their effective implementation. These objectives are as follows:

- Achieve reuse and recycling readiness rates for municipal waste of 55% by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035.
- Achieve mandatory recycling rates for all packaging of 70% by 2030, to be distributed as follows: 55% for plastic packaging, 30% for wood, 80% for ferrous metals, 60% for aluminium, 75% for glass and 85% for paper and cardboard.
- Ban landfill of recyclable waste by 2030.
- Require all plastic packaging to be recyclable by 2030

Last but not least, it is necessary to refer to proximity agriculture, i.e. that which is related to the capacity for self-sufficiency, the reduction of the agri-food footprint and so-called food sovereignty. Consumer societies are not aware of the global implications of the geographical origin of food, the widespread absence of local products, the cost of imports, the energy consumed to transport them and also, of course, the quality of the products consumed by the population. This has a lot to do with the need to achieve a circular economy, i.e. a closed-loop model.

## PART 2: EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

### General considerations.

As mentioned above, the effective implementation of the United Nations' New Urban Agenda is carried out in Spain through the approval and subsequent implementation of the Spanish Urban Agenda as a National Urban Policy. This is a strategic, non-regulatory and therefore non-binding framework that seeks to become the roadmap for public and private decisions related to urban policies (both in towns and cities) to be adopted from an integrated vision that takes into account the social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects that affect them, particularly ensuring policy coherence at all levels of administration. The voluntary nature of its application reinforces the commitment of all actors to improve sustainability in their respective areas of responsibility and competence.

The contents of the SUA respond to the requirements of the NUA and include an initial diagnosis of the country's situation; as a result of a complete and consensual participatory process, the strategic objectives that make up the fundamental content of the Agenda are defined, also in accordance with the contributions of all the actors, the actions are identified (to be implemented in the short, medium and long term) and the system of evaluation and monitoring indicators is defined exhaustively.

The 10 strategic objectives of the SUA are as follows:

- 1 Ordenar el territorio y hacer un uso racional del suelo, conservarlo y protegerlo 
- 2 Evitar la dispersión urbana y revitalizar la ciudad existente 
- 3 Prevenir y reducir los impactos del cambio climático y mejorar la resiliencia 
- 4 Hacer una gestión sostenible de los recursos y favorecer la economía circular 
- 5 Favorecer la proximidad y la movilidad sostenible 
- 6 Fomentar la cohesión social y buscar la equidad 
- 7 Impulsar y favorecer la Economía Urbana 
- 8 Garantizar el acceso a la Vivienda 
- 9 Liderar y fomentar la innovación digital 
- 10 Mejorar los instrumentos de intervención y la gobernanza 

Figure 1.- The Ten Strategic Objectives of the Spanish Urban Agenda. Source: [www.aue.gob.es](http://www.aue.gob.es)

These 10 strategic objective include a total of 30 more specific objectives and a long list of possible lines of action, which can function as an 'à la carte menu' for each of the actors who wish to commit to the Agenda to choose the ones that most interest them, or for which they have the capacity, powers, financing and effective means of implementation.

1. Land management and rational land use, conservation and protection of land
  - Land management in a way that is compatible with its spatial environment
  - Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage and protect the landscape
  - Improving green and blue infrastructures and linking them to the natural context
2. Avoiding urban sprawl and revitalising the existing city
  - Define an urban model that promotes compactness, urban balance and the provision of basic services
  - Ensuring functional complexity and diversity of uses
  - Ensuring the quality and universal accessibility of public spaces
  - Improving the urban environment and reducing pollution
  - Boosting urban regeneration
  - Improving the quality and sustainability of buildings
3. Preventing and reducing climate change impacts and improving resilience
  - Adapt the territorial and urban model to the effects of climate change and to make progress in its prevention.
  - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
  - Improving resilience to climate change
4. Sustainable resource management and the circular economy
  - Become more energy efficient and save energy
  - Optimise and reduce water consumption
  - Promoting the materials cycle
  - Reducing waste and promoting recycling
5. Fostering proximity and sustainable mobility
  - Promoting the city of proximity
  - Promoting sustainable modes of transport
6. Promoting social cohesion and seeking equity
  - Reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion in deprived urban settings
  - Seek equal opportunities from a gender, age and disability perspective

**7. Promoting and fostering the urban economy**

- Seeking local productivity, employment generation and the revitalisation and diversification of economic activity
- Promoting smart, sustainable and quality tourism and key sectors of the local economy

**8. Ensuring access to housing**

- Promoting adequate affordable housing stock
- Guaranteeing access to housing, especially for the most vulnerable groups

**9. Leading and fostering digital innovation**

- Fostering the knowledge society and moving towards the development of Smart Cities
- Promoting e-Government and bridging the digital divide

**10. Improving intervention instruments and governance**

- Achieve an updated, flexible and simplified planning and regulatory framework that also improves management
- Ensuring citizen participation, transparency and fostering multi-level governance
- Boosting local capacity building and improving funding
- Designing and implementing training and awareness-raising campaigns on urban issues, as well as information exchange and dissemination

All of this is accompanied, as mentioned above, by a set of evaluation and monitoring indicators that make it possible to assess the fulfilment of the actions set in motion through their implementation.

The application and effective achievement of these objectives requires their implementation through the preparation of the corresponding Action Plans by all the agents involved (Public Administrations at all levels, private sector, academia, civil society, etc.) and they must be integrated and coherent in order to respond to all the objectives, reinforcing the idea that sustainability is territorial and environmental, social and economic, with the participation of and consensus with the citizens.

This type of strategic planning is key to helping the country locate and target European funds for sustainable and integrated urban development, both those of a short-term nature (Next Generation Funds to cushion the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic) and, above all, those of a multi-annual and structural nature. Projects will benefit from a strategic logic and the necessary vision of a more sustainable future. All of this is based

on maximum collaboration and a commitment to the transition and digital innovation that 21st century society demands.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to work in a more coordinated way, in a way that is already known as good multilevel governance, both horizontally, between the different departments of the same organisation or administration, and vertically, with the latter among themselves. Such governance is expressly referred to in the SUA.

## 2.1 Building the urban governance structure: establishing a supportive framework

Spain is a much decentralised country<sup>7</sup>. In its political system, all levels of government enjoy broad autonomy for the management of their respective interests, both at the institutional level and in terms of financial sufficiency, although they distribute their powers on the basis of a complex system expressly set out in articles 140, 148 and 149 of the Constitution, the Statutes of Autonomy of the Autonomous Communities and the basic legislation on local government. Despite the logical existence of certain dysfunctions (duplicities or inefficiencies), this system makes it possible to bring decisions closer to the citizens, to share or integrate planning processes, to have shared information systems for the management of public policies, etc.

In this context, the Urban Agenda is a strategic instrument, not an urban planning instrument, which is exempt from the criteria of attribution of powers, so the governance dimension plays a fundamental role and is one of the key aspects for its implementation, both at the level of the GSA's Action Plan and the rest of the agents involved. In addition to the institutional collaboration that corresponds to the existing bodies of political-administrative cooperation between the Government, the Autonomous Communities and the Cities of Ceuta and Melilla (the Conference of Presidents, the Sectoral Conferences, the Multilateral Commissions, etc.), the main objective of the actions included in its Action Plan is to strengthen the relationship with Local Authorities. To this end, it proposes formulas for working and coordinating with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, which is the federation that brings together the largest number of Local Authorities in Spain. For this, several Collaboration Agreements have been signed, through which continuity has been given to the technical and permanent working group of the Spanish Urban Agenda, whose objective is to guarantee mutual collaboration at a technical level between the State and Local Authorities, monitoring the implementation of the Urban Agenda itself, as well as

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<sup>7</sup> The State is made up of 17 Autonomous Communities, 2 Autonomous Cities and a total of 8,127 Municipalities.

promoting the exchange of experiences and projects and the coordination of actions. From a more institutional and political point of view, the Local Urban Agenda Forum has been created to promote this collaboration at the highest level, highlighting the need to implement the Urban Agenda and the strategic, integrated and cross-cutting planning that it proposes.

It is also part of the Ministry's governance actions to provide technical support to local governments throughout the process of dissemination and implementation of the Urban Agenda. At present, this support reaches a total of 52 Local Authorities, covering the entire geography of the country (with inland and coastal areas, with small or large populations, with metropolitan or specific problems, etc.)

Also in the internal sphere of the General State Administration, work is being done at a horizontal level to promote collaboration between Departments and, most importantly, the linking and alignment of the SUA with all the global and cross-cutting Strategies that they are implementing. Only through policy coherence at the state level and by fostering the cross-cutting vision that is demanded of the other administrations can a new working methodology be promoted that goes beyond strict compliance with regulations to achieve structural, strategic and coherent planning. In this sense, the Ministry is working to align the Urban Agenda with the rest of the Government's Strategies: with the 2030 Agenda and with the Spanish Sustainability Strategy currently under preparation; with the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change; with the National Strategy for Green Infrastructure and Ecological Connectivity and Restoration, with the Strategy for Safe, Sustainable and Connected Mobility and the Bicycle Strategy (in process); with the National Health Plan; with the Strategy for the Demographic Challenge; with the National Plan for Smart Territories; with Spain's 3rd Action Plan of the Open Government Partnership, with the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) 2021-2030, etc.

A fundamental aspect of governance **is to promote the transparency** of public administrations and citizen participation based on prior knowledge, education and information. In this sense, the Open Government Plan already opens up mechanisms for participation and dialogue with civil society and incorporates formulas for transparency and direct communication with citizens. However, citizen participation will not be real and effective as long as there is no real awareness that generates commitments in relation to the general interests that shape and converge in cities and urban environments. To this end, as will be seen in the Capacity Development section of this Report, training and dissemination of the objectives of the Urban Agenda are key. This action is therefore directly related to actions on knowledge exchange and dissemination.

## 2.2 Urban spatial development planning and management

Spain has a comprehensive regulatory and planning system, strongly consolidated over many years, which allows for the implementation of integrated and balanced territorial development policies in which housing (in accordance with the expected needs of the population) is part of urban development plans. It has a system of urban planning which, of course, takes culture into account as a priority component, especially in a country with an extraordinary cultural, historical and artistic wealth. It implements urban extensions and infill on the basis of prior planning, and implements urban renewal and regeneration of urban areas through very active public-private financing policies. 82% of Spanish municipalities have a general planning instrument, an important achievement considering that almost 90% of them have a population of less than 5,000 inhabitants.

Skills for adequate urban planning and design are achieved through specific training plans and a model of continuous education and training, at all levels of government. Spain has extensive and adequate sustainable multimodal public transport systems, which ensure intensive use by all citizens (an aspect that has already been highlighted with data in this report), and in recent years significant efforts are being made to include non-motorised options (bicycle lanes, pedestrian spaces, etc.) All of this strengthens the role of small and medium-sized cities and towns.

Virtually all of these features predate the adoption of the NUA. The regulations, planning instruments, public funding for the achievement of these objectives, the governance system, with the division of competences by levels of administration and a long etc. were widely implemented in Spain before 2016, so measuring the challenges and progress in this area is somewhat complicated.

Perhaps the most significant challenges include those related to housing, in the context of the health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Royal Decree-Law 11/2020, of 31 March, has been approved, adopting urgent complementary measures in the social and economic sphere to address COVID-19, which respond to households in situations of social vulnerability in the field of housing and renting, among which the following can be highlighted:

- An extraordinary period of suspension of eviction procedures and evictions, when they affect vulnerable households without housing alternatives.
- An extraordinary extension of housing rental contracts that end during this period, under the same terms and conditions as the current contract.

- In situations of vulnerability, where the landlord is a public entity or a large landlord, a 50% rent reduction or a moratorium of up to four months on rent payments.
- A line of transitory financing aid, based on a line of guarantees provided by the State through the Official Credit Institute (ICO), which will cover the payment of up to six months' rent, free of charges and interest.
- An increase in the allocation of the current State Housing Plan 2018-2021, incorporating a new aid programme and making the management of the Plan more flexible in order to provide support to vulnerable tenants.

On a structural rather than cyclical basis, the SUA Action Plan's main policy challenges in this area are as follows:

- Innovate the state legislative framework to regulate, through a **housing law, the constitutional right to decent and adequate housing**. Its aim is to guarantee access to housing for the most vulnerable groups.
- Innovate the state legislative framework to **ensure legal certainty and stability of spatial and urban planning instruments**. This action seeks a regulatory framework to ensure up-to-date, flexible and simplified planning that also improves management. Alongside this, it is also planned to review the state sectoral legislative framework that affects spatial and urban planning in order to make proposals for improvement (avoiding duplication, confusion regarding deadlines, unjustified delays, etc.)
- Innovate the state legislative framework to guarantee the **quality of Architecture and the built environment** through the approval of a Law that recognises both as assets of general interest that values their contribution to the creation of cities, to culture, to competitiveness and to economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- To make progress in guaranteeing **universal accessibility to public spaces and buildings**. The regulation will be adopted in the second half of this year.

Also, in the field of strategic planning, the Ministry's commitment to plans and strategies that are linked to the objectives of the Urban Agenda stands out: **the State Strategy for Green Infrastructure and Ecological Connectivity and Restoration** which, in compliance with the provisions of Law 33/2015, of 21 September, amending Law 42/2007, of 13 December, on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, seeks to 'set the guidelines [...] so that the territorial and sectoral planning carried out by the public administrations allows and ensures the ecological connectivity and functionality of ecosystems, the mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change, the defragmentation of strategic areas for

connectivity and the restoration of degraded ecosystems'; or the Sustainable, Safe and Connected Mobility Strategy, which also depends on this Ministry and which is closely related to Strategic Objective 5 of the SUA, which seeks to 'Favour proximity and sustainable mobility', the Ministry of Public Works will promote intermodality in transport and its coordination with urban transport and mobility in the infrastructure plans under its jurisdiction, as well as the efficient use of public transport and the promotion of non-motorised and/or healthy modes.

Special mention should be made of **the Long-term Strategy for Energy Rehabilitation in the Spanish Building Sector (ERESEE)**<sup>8</sup>, which was presented to the European Commission in July 2020, which has been the most highly rated of all those presented with a rating of outstanding, and is expected to be implemented in the coming months through a National Action Plan for Urban Rehabilitation and Regeneration.

These Plans will also pursue the following objectives:

- The reduction of territorial inequalities, in particular for medium-sized cities and island territories, where their connectivity depends, in addition to infrastructure, on the transport services offered and the conditions under which these services are accessible to the population as a whole.
- The segregation, on roads under state jurisdiction, of through and long-distance traffic from daily traffic and access to cities, by means of the adaptation and construction of the infrastructures deemed necessary.
- Encouraging actions to promote public transport on access roads to large cities, planning the creation of platforms or lanes reserved for these services.
- The promotion of the railways in accesses to large cities and metropolitan areas, serving daily incoming and outgoing flows by means of commuter services, as a more efficient and sustainable solution than roads.
- Providing major long-distance intercity terminals with appropriate connections to urban and metropolitan transport services to guarantee last-mile access to citizens.

The development of these plans will always be referenced to the framework of the strategic planning in force at any given time, as well as to the provisions of the sectoral

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<sup>8</sup> Long-term Strategy for Energy Rehabilitation in the Spanish Building Sector (ERESEE) <https://www.aue.gob.es/noticias/mitma-presentacion-de-la-actualizacion-de-la-estrategia-para-rehabilitacion-energetica-en>

regulations, insofar as these regulate the development of planning in each mode of transport.

### 2.3 Means of implementation

The methodology used by the SUA for its implementation are the so-called 'Action Plans' of each of the agents involved. There is a great diversity among these actors: General State Administration, Local Authorities, Autonomous Communities, private sector, professional associations, third sector, etc. The need for coordination and collaboration between all the actors involved and between all the available instruments is also considered essential and contributes to achieving good governance, transparency and participation.

Nevertheless, the most important actors are the Local Authorities, because they are responsible for the design and configuration of the municipal territory and it is to them that the message of a new type of strategic planning that pursues sustainability in its triple vision: economic, social and environmental, is addressed.

In this sense, it is proposed that, using the set of descriptive data identified in the strategic framework of the SUA as a basis, each municipality should draw up a diagnosis that allows them to know their initial situation in all the objectives set out, highlight the measures they have already adopted, identify the weakest aspects and those in which it is necessary to intervene and establish an order of priorities and a calendar that identifies the lines of action in which it is necessary to act, using which instruments, with which actors it is necessary to count on, etc. In order to help and guide decision-making within the strategic framework, a series of lines of action are proposed that have been assigned a set of indicators that will allow them to know how the measures implemented are working and to evaluate their compliance and development. Their application is instrumented by means of a specific, simple and flexible methodology that facilitates their application for all municipalities, regardless of their population.

All actions launched and some of those already completed under the GSA Action Plan are listed in detail on the NSA website [www.aue.gob.es](http://www.aue.gob.es)

It provides access to policy, planning, funding, governance, knowledge sharing and dissemination actions.

#### - **Regional or Sub-national Urban Agendas**

With regard to the Regional Urban Agendas, the Autonomous Communities and the Cities of Ceuta and Melilla have played a very active role in the process of drawing up

the Agenda, through the convening of two Sectoral Conferences and two Multilateral Commissions, in addition to collaboration and cooperation at the technical level.

Several Autonomous Communities have already approved their own Urban Agendas (aligned with the SUA), such as the Basque Country, Andalusia and Extremadura, which identify their Sustainable Development Law as such, while others, such as Catalonia and the Valencian Community, are already in the process of doing so.

- **Urban Agenda for the Basque Country BULTZATU 2050<sup>9</sup>**

The Urban Agenda for the Basque Country. Bultzatu 2050 responds to an effort of systematisation, strategic orientation and coherence of public policies aimed at improving the potential of the territory of the Basque Country to offer opportunities for economic growth, sustainability and social cohesion, committing to its own model of city, sustainable, coexistence, based on high quality urban planning, and determines a framework of coherence of the policies of the different departments of the Basque Government in relation to the urban impact that these actions have on the territory.

Its preparation process has been based on an exercise of analysis, foresight and consultation, of an inspirational and strategic nature, which has guided the Basque Government's long-term reflection on the urban reality of the territory, in permanent dialogue with the relevant actors and interested parties. Bultzatu 2050 has been drawn up on the basis of previous planning exercises and approaches them from the point of view of the challenges and potential of the urban territory in the Basque Country, offering a reference framework for urban and local policies for the territory as a whole, at the levels of the Basque Government, Provincial Councils and Municipalities.

- **Urban Agenda for Andalusia<sup>10</sup>**

The Urban Agenda for Andalusia 2030 is a tool that has two main missions: to make effective use of the possibilities that cities offer to the progress and well-being of society, as well as to prepare municipalities to manage with solvency in a context conditioned by the complexity of certain challenges: climate change, mobility, social and territorial inequality, access to housing, economic and financial crises, disaffection, pressure on natural resources, etc.

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<sup>9</sup> -Urban Agenda for the Basque Country. BULTZATU 2050:

<https://www.euskadi.eus/informacion/bultzatu-2050-basque-urban-agenda/web01-a2lurral/es/>

<sup>10</sup> -Urban Agenda for Andalusia:

<https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/organismos/fomentoinfraestructurasyordenaciondelterritorio/areas/urbanismo/sostenibilidad/paginas/agenda-urbana-pagina.html>

In order to generate synergies with the objectives and proposals of the urban agendas of these higher levels, an important alignment work has been carried out for the implementation of the lines of action of the Spanish Urban Agenda, with the aim of facilitating and helping Local Corporations to fit their action plans with the reference frameworks of Andalusia and the State.

- **Urban Agenda for Catalonia<sup>11</sup>**

Catalonia is in the process of drafting its Agenda, which it plans to develop through three concatenated documents, drawn up by specific bodies, defining the actions to overcome the vulnerabilities and challenges of the 12 objectives that make up the Agenda. The resulting proposal will be validated by the public prior to final approval.

On 5 November 2018, the Urban Assembly of Catalonia ratified the Declaration for an Urban Agenda for Catalonia, a commitment to the future implementation of the actions contained in the Agenda, understood as a tool to enhance the opportunities and meet the challenges posed by increasing urbanisation.

- **Urban Agenda of the Generalitat Valenciana<sup>12</sup>.**

The Generalitat has approached the drafting of the Valencian Urban Agenda on the basis of a broad process of collaboration and alignment with the Global Goals and the Spanish Urban Agenda, setting itself up as an example of multilevel governance in relation to strategic planning. For the Generalitat, moreover, the way in which the contents of the Valencian Urban Agenda are drawn up cannot be separated from the active involvement of the different sectoral, territorial and administrative agents, which is why the process of participation and sharing with citizens is one of its fundamental priorities.

- **Urban Agenda for Extremadura<sup>13</sup>**

The Law on Sustainable Land and Urban Planning of Extremadura (LOTUS) is the first Urban Agenda of an Autonomous Community with a normative and binding character. Perfectly aligned with the Strategic Objectives of the Spanish Urban Agenda and its content, it is an innovative and courageous formula for bringing global objectives to the territorial and urban sphere through urban planning regulations.

- **Local Action Plans of the Spanish Urban Agenda or Local Urban Agendas**

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<sup>11</sup> -Urban Agenda for Catalonia: <http://agendaurbanacatalunya.cat/>

<sup>12</sup> -Urban Agenda of the Generalitat Valenciana: <http://politicaterritorial.gva.es/es/web/planificacion-territorial-e-infraestructura-verde/agenda-urbana-valenciana>

<sup>13</sup> -Urban Agenda for Extremadura: <http://sitex.gobex.es/SITEX/pages/agendaurbana>

In relation to Local Authorities (of all sizes and populations, including functional areas with common objectives and homogeneous characteristics) there are currently **more than 50 Pilot Projects of action plans** that, due to their particularities, could be replicated or transferred to other Local Authorities with similar characteristics. They cover the entire national territory and all types of municipalities in a proportionate manner and are true cross-cutting, integrated and participatory city strategies, while the Ministry, with the aim of promoting and encouraging this recognition and accompanying the process, is signing protocols of adhesion to the SUA and of action with all of them. They also ensure the alignment of these Local Action Plans to the 2030 Agenda, the NUA and the Urban Agenda for the European Union.

Of particular note are the action plans being carried out by the Provincial Councils, Island Councils and Island Councils which, due to their territorial context, can reach many more municipalities. This is the case, for example, of the Provincial Council of Granada, which is working on the action plans of more than 80 municipalities in the province; the Island Council of Menorca, whose action plan includes the 8 municipalities of the island; or the Provincial Council of Barcelona, which, from a much more transversal perspective, reaches both small municipalities and intermediate cities in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. Also noteworthy for its approach is the proposal of the Provincial Council of Cadiz's Action Plan, which is committed to an approach linked to functional areas.

All of them present differentiating and relevant aspects that make them examples for the rest of the Local Authorities that are also working on their own action plans.



Figure 2: Location map of the Local Action Plan Pilot Projects identified as of March 2021. Source: MITMA

All the Local Authorities identified as pilot projects in turn generate a work and collaboration network that allows them to work together and with the Ministry, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, experiences and the sharing of projects and proposals.

To this end, the Ministry has also made available to all of them and to the general public a website ([www.aue.gob.es](http://www.aue.gob.es)) which acts as a platform for exchange, collaboration and coordination

Finally, another of the fundamental agents for the implementation of the Urban Agenda are the Universities, from a triple perspective:

- As a fundamental pillar in the training of the country's new professionals and generators of knowledge.
- As an agent in the articulation of governance and collaboration with Public Administrations, contributing its research and work for the development and implementation of public policies and
- From the perspective of physical space, linked to the relationship between the campuses and the city or the territorial environment in which they are located.

Taking into account the three aspects, and in response to the concerns raised, the Ministry has drawn up, in a similar way to what it does with the Local Authorities, an action protocol to be signed with the Universities, which proposes the following possibilities for joint work, among others:

- The incorporation of the Spanish Urban Agenda into the contents of their syllabus in the Bachelor's and Master's degree subjects they consider appropriate in accordance with the academic structure or, in general, through specific conferences or seminars on the subject.
- The use of the methodology proposed by the Spanish Urban Agenda, for the elaboration of practical workshops, research projects, etc.
- Collaboration, within the framework of the Spanish Urban Agenda, through formulas that propose internship programmes aimed at students acquiring a better knowledge of the tool and putting it into practice through specific projects of the SUA Action Plans.
- The elaboration of concrete Action Plans, which in accordance with the 10 strategic objectives of the SUA, apply the proposed integrated vision on one or several campuses of the University, in such a way as to provide a real pilot project of the University's action plan that could be useful for other Universities with similar characteristics, as a model

or example, to elaborate, implement, monitor and evaluate a local action plan of the Spanish Urban Agenda.

All of this within the strategic framework of the Spanish Urban Agenda and in application of the instruments that it offers for its elaboration (methodology, system of indicators, etc.) and which are aligned with the rest of the International Agreements referred to above.

At present, the Urban Agenda has already been incorporated into the curricula of the School of Architecture of the University of Navarra, the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Madrid, the University of Granada, which is working on a Bridge Programme in collaboration with the Provincial Council and the University of Castilla-La Mancha through its provincial campuses.

## 2.4 Mobilisation of financial resources

The SUA does not incorporate specific economic planning and programming (as could be the case for housing), and therefore recommends the search for funding to enable not only the generation of integrated strategies for action in towns and cities (with social, territorial, economic and environmental aspects), but also and above all, their implementation. Such a search, according to the Action Plan, draws upon the following elements:

1st – **Work on an international and internal level** to ensure that European funds from the new multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 are aligned with Spanish national urban policy (SUA). Six per cent of the total ERDF funds for this period will go to these sustainable urban development policies and in the previous period they accounted for some €1.5 billion for Spanish municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants.

2nd – The **identification of all the sources of financing** that, on a domestic and international level, and within the framework of state competences, could have an impact on cities. Such funding is extensive, but often unknown: State Housing and Restoration Plan; 1.5% Cultural; Aid for the development of sustainable urban mobility plans; Aid for energy efficiency, etc.

In fact, the State Housing Plan 2018-2021 has made possible urgent aid related to the response to the social and economic emergency caused by COVID-19. The 1.5% cultural aid for the preservation and protection of cultural heritage has also been announced. Indeed, the preservation of cultural heritage is one of the central elements in the concept of the New Urban Agenda, which also has positive effects on the reinforcement of the sustainable tourism model. Furthermore, the effort to digitise cultural heritage,

which is being developed through different programmes covering its different expressions, contributes to the reduction of travel - and with it, GHG emissions - while facilitating access to culture for citizens inside and outside cities.

3rd –The **promotion and encouragement of areas of collaboration with the private sector** to encourage its involvement in the financing of projects. The real estate sector, professional associations, cooperatives and financial institutions would be involved in the implementation of specific projects that could be publicly initiated and linked to these city strategies.

In the field of urban rehabilitation and regeneration, for example, it has been proven that every 1 million euros of public money moves an additional 2 million euros of private money, which could become an important driving force for the economic activity that is so important for the country at the moment.

4th – The **Spanish Government's Plan for Recovery, Transformation and Resilience** includes a specific Urban and Rural Agenda among its ten policy levers, and within this, Component 2 is called 'Implementation of the Spanish Urban Agenda: Plan for Urban Regeneration and Rehabilitation' and includes investment and renovation programmes that offer a framework of support at different scales: from the territory itself to buildings, public and private, and housing, with a preference for social housing, covering urban and metropolitan areas of all sizes, including rural areas. All of this is supported by concerted action and inter-administrative collaboration, to achieve actions that are based on the three main axes of transformation of the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan: ecological transition, digitalisation and social and territorial cohesion. These programmes will mobilise close to 6 billion euros.

## 2.5 Capacity building

For the Spanish Urban Agenda, training and the exchange of knowledge play a fundamental role in its implementation, considering that without education about the city and its knowledge, there will be no real participation and, without it, it will not be possible to guarantee good governance.

For this reason, among the actions included in the GSA's Action Plan, it is expressly included in strategic objective 10.4, which proposes 'Designing and implementing training and awareness-raising campaigns on urban issues, as well as information exchange and dissemination'. They are also connected to Strategic Objective 10.2, which states the need to 'Ensure citizen participation, transparency and foster multilevel governance'.

Among the actions carried out for this purpose are the following:

- Creation of a logo for the Spanish Urban Agenda that gives clear, effective and appropriate visibility to the SUA and can be used both nationally and internationally.



Figure 3: Logo of the Spanish Urban Agenda. Source: MITMA

- Creation of a Spanish Urban Agenda website<sup>14</sup> that not only allows access to all the available information, duly updated, which shows that it is not just a document, but a real process that is fed by the contributions of all its actors: action plans, good practices, transferable or transferred experiences, etc.
- Preparation of material to disseminate the Agenda: publication of the document, brochures and posters, banners that can be sent by email, making it available to Public Administrations wishing to organise events related to the Agenda.
- Elaboration of a video summary of the content of the Spanish Urban Agenda<sup>15</sup>.
- Publication of a monographic issue of the scientific journal *Ciudad y Territorio*<sup>16</sup>: *Estudios Territoriales* (CyTET), published by the Ministry of Public Works, aimed at promoting knowledge of the Urban Agenda: its formation, contents, objectives, expectations, etc., as well as collaboration with other specialised journals in order to achieve the widest possible dissemination of the Agenda.
- Preparation, in collaboration with the FEMP, of an informative guide on the contents of the Urban Agenda<sup>17</sup> for Local Authorities.

<sup>14</sup> Spanish Urban Agenda website: [www.aue.gob.es](http://www.aue.gob.es)

<sup>15</sup> Video summary of the content of the Spanish Urban Agenda: [https://cdn.mitma.gob.es/portal-web-drupal/AUE/videos/video\\_aue.mp4](https://cdn.mitma.gob.es/portal-web-drupal/AUE/videos/video_aue.mp4)

<sup>16</sup> CyTET Monograph on the Urban Agenda: <https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/CyTET/issue/view/3774>

<sup>17</sup> SUA Information Guide for Local Authorities: <https://www.aue.gob.es/noticias/femp-guia-divulgativa-sobre-los-contenidos-de-la-agenda-urbana-espanola>

- Organisation of dissemination and training days especially focused on the municipalities, both for their technicians and for politicians. Many of them have been organised jointly with the FEMP, which has used its territorial networks to reach the whole territory<sup>18</sup>.

A fundamental role within this objective is the implementation of the Spanish Urban Forum as a governance tool and a forum for the exchange of knowledge between all actors (national and international) related to urban issues. A collaboration agreement with UN Habitat is in place for this purpose. The circumstances of the pandemic have made it necessary to postpone the event until autumn 2021. In the meantime, many preparatory actions are being developed, such as: meetings with civil society, the FEMP, informal meetings with the Autonomous Regions; a Meeting on National Urban Policies with Latin America and the Caribbean (held on 11 January 2021)<sup>19</sup> and another on Strategies to deal with COVID in the European context, organised by the EUKN (13 January 2021).

This area of knowledge also includes collaboration with international knowledge exchange networks, such as the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)<sup>20</sup> or the implementation of a specific training plan that, in addition to universities (as mentioned above), reaches technicians from all administrations, professional associations and citizens in general.

To this end, in addition to participation in numerous courses, seminars and workshops on Urban Agenda training, the Ministry has signed an Action Protocol with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training that aims to include pedagogical projects in educational and training centres, including at an early age, that contribute to raising awareness about cities, citizen coexistence, social inclusion and, in general, sustainability, etc.

Within the framework of this collaboration, the General Secretariat for the Urban Agenda and Housing of the Mitma has produced the 'Teaching Guide to the Spanish Urban Agenda for primary education'<sup>21</sup>, which has been published in a co-publication with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, and is intended as a tool especially for teachers that seeks to encourage children to feel that they are protagonists of the environment in which they live, so that they understand, enjoy and

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<sup>18</sup> Some of the SUA's exchange and dissemination days: <https://www.aue.gob.es/plan-de-accion-de-la-age/intercambio-y-difusion-del-conocimiento>

<sup>19</sup> Link to the video of the meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Csh4t6y1H98>

<sup>20</sup> European Urban Knowledge Network EUKN: <https://www.eukn.eu/>

<sup>21</sup> Spanish Urban Agenda teaching guide for primary education <https://www.aue.gob.es/noticias/plan-de-accion-de-la-age-guia-didactica-de-la-agenda-urbana-espanola-mitma-y-mefp>

respect it, almost as if it were a continuation of their own home. This is a translation of the objectives of the Spanish Urban Agenda into easy and accessible language for the children's community which, in a didactic and educational way, aims to contribute to creating the necessary citizen awareness that will allow us to achieve in the near future the participatory culture that will allow all our voices, including those of the youngest, to be heard and taken into account. A special video has also been produced for dissemination among children<sup>22</sup>.

Meanwhile, work is also being carried out with the EsenRED Schools Network (a network of schools coordinated by the Regional Ministries of Education of the Autonomous Communities) to implement the School Urban Agendas. A pilot project is currently being carried out in La Rioja, with the municipality of Alfaro, and it is foreseeable that it will soon be joined by Navarra with the city of Pamplona and the Balearic Islands with the Island Council of Menorca.

## 2.6 Information technology and innovation

The Spanish Urban Agenda faces a major challenge in relation to information, data collection and analysis. The use of new technologies is essential to reduce uncertainties and to increase the capacity to anticipate the future. The Digital Age is defining a different world in which people, information and things are connected as never before, with an intensity and speed to which we must necessarily adapt.

The SUA Action Plan proposes the improvement of information and access to statistical data as a fundamental element for carrying out diagnoses of the situation, for the evaluation and monitoring of actions and for the adoption of urban public policies.

As far as the General State Administration is concerned, it has a specific organisation that ensures the availability of statistical data and their permanent updating. Special mention should be made of the National Institute of Statistics<sup>23</sup>, which is playing a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as all the SDGs and their targets<sup>24</sup>. Other important information systems in relation to urban policies, which drive quality, competitiveness, innovation and technological development are:

- the Cadastre<sup>25</sup>, which contains the analytical census of real estate property for the purpose of locating, describing and recording the physical characteristics of each real estate in order to detect its intrinsic particularities, both materially and especially.

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<sup>22</sup> Urban Agenda video for children: <https://www.aue.gob.es/noticias/video-divulgativo-para-acercar-la-agenda-urbana-espanola-los-mas-pequenos>

<sup>23</sup> National Statistics Institute (INE) <https://www.ine.es/>

<sup>24</sup> Indicators for monitoring the 2030 Agenda in Spain. INE: <https://www.ine.es/dyngs/ODS/es/index.htm>

<sup>25</sup> General Directorate of Cadastre: <http://www.catastro.meh.es/>

- the National Geographic Institute<sup>26</sup>, which supports the development and use of national cartography and provides specialised assistance and cartographic infrastructure to both the public and private sectors.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the existence of databases with a great deal of up-to-date information, such as the Urban Information System<sup>27</sup>, the Atlas of Urban Areas<sup>28</sup>, the Urban Vulnerability Observatory<sup>29</sup>, the Housing and Land Observatory<sup>30</sup>, etc., all of which are accessible from the Urban Agenda website<sup>31</sup>, to which reference has already been made, and from the Ministry's website<sup>32</sup>.

Through these, relevant information is made available to all public administrations and citizens for the adoption of actions in their respective areas of interest and competence.

The system of indicators proposed by the Spanish Urban Agenda is based on the need to develop a single language for urban indicators that produce valid and homogeneous information to analyse the performance of the different actions and verify compliance with the strategic objectives proposed in each Action Plan. This comprehensive indicator system is also aligned with the indicator systems of the Global Agendas, thus facilitating monitoring and reporting. The Agenda also makes available to all municipalities with more than 5,000 inhabitants<sup>33</sup> a set of descriptive data that allows a diagnosis of the situation in relation to all its strategic objectives as a preliminary step for the preparation of local action plans (population and housing density, artificial land, green areas and open spaces, population dynamics, economic data, etc.). All this information is available and accessible on the website of the Spanish Urban Agenda.

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<sup>26</sup> National Geographic Institute: <https://www.ign.es/web/ign/portal>

<sup>27</sup> Urban Information System: <https://www.mitma.gob.es/portal-del-suelo-y-politicas-urbanas/sistema-de-informacion-urbana/sistema-de-informacion-urbana-siu>

<sup>28</sup> Atlas of Urban Areas: <https://www.mitma.gob.es/portal-del-suelo-y-politicas-urbanas/atlas-estadistico-de-las-areas-urbanas>

<sup>29</sup> Urban Vulnerability Observatory: <https://www.mitma.es/arquitectura-vivienda-y-suelo/urbanismo-y-politica-de-suelo/observatorio-de-la-vulnerabilidad-urbana>

<sup>30</sup> Housing and Land Observatory: <https://www.mitma.gob.es/arquitectura-vivienda-y-suelo/urbanismo-y-politica-de-suelo/estudios-y-publicaciones/observatorio-de-vivienda-y-suelo>

<sup>31</sup> Spanish Urban Agenda website: [www.aue.gob.es](http://www.aue.gob.es)

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda website: <https://www.mitma.gob.es/>

<sup>33</sup> Available at [https://www.aue.gob.es/recursos\\_aue/2019-02-01\\_anexo\\_datos\\_descriptivos.pdf](https://www.aue.gob.es/recursos_aue/2019-02-01_anexo_datos_descriptivos.pdf)

**ESQUEMA RELACIÓN DATOS DESCRIPTIVOS Y OBJETIVOS ESTRATÉGICOS DE LA AGENDA URBANA ESPAÑOLA.**

DATOS DESCRIPTIVOS	OBJETIVOS ESTRATÉGICOS									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
D.01. VARIACIÓN DE LA POBLACIÓN 2006-2016 (%)	✓									
D.02. TERRITORIO Y DIVERSIDAD DE HABITATS	✓									
D.03. SUPERFICIE DE EXPLOTACIONES AGRARIAS Y FORESTALES	✓									
D.04. SUPERFICIE DE SUELO NO URBANIZABLE (%)	✓									✓
D.05. SUPERFICIE VERDE (ha cada 1.000 hab.)	✓									
D.06. DENSIDAD DE POBLACIÓN EN SUELO URBANO (hab./ha)	✓	✓								
D.07. SUELO URBANO DISCONTINUO (%)	✓									
D.08. DENSIDAD DE VIVIENDA (viv./ha)	✓	✓								
D.09. COMPACTIDAD URBANA (m <sup>2</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> )	✓	✓								
D.10. COMPACTIDAD RESIDENCIAL	✓	✓								
D.11. COMPLEJIDAD URBANA	✓	✓								
D.12. PARQUES Y EQUIPAMENTOS DE ZONAS VERDES	✓	✓								
D.13. ESPACIO PÚBLICO	✓	✓								
D.17. SUPERFICIE DE INFRAESTRUCTURAS DE TRANSPORTE Y MOVILIDAD	✓									
D.18. ÍNDICE DE MOTORIZACIÓN	✓									
D.19. DENSIDAD DE LÍNEAS DE AUTOBÚS Y MODOS FERROVIARIOS	✓									
D.20. ACCESIBILIDAD A LOS SERVICIOS DE TRANSPORTE PÚBLICO	✓									
D.21. DOTACIÓN DE VÍAS CICLISTAS	✓									
D.22. ENVEJECIMIENTO DE LA POBLACIÓN	✓									
D.23. POBLACIÓN EXTRANJERA (%)	✓									
D.24. ÍNDICE DE DEPENDENCIA	✓									
D.25. PORCENTAJE DE PERSONAS CON ACCESO A LOS SERVICIOS SOCIALES	✓									
D.26. NÚMERO DE TRABAJADORES/AS	✓									
D.27. NÚMERO DE ESTABLECIMIENTOS	✓									
D.28. TASA DE PARO	✓									
D.29. PARQUE DE VIVIENDA (viv/1000 hab.)	✓									
D.30. TIPOLOGÍA DE VIVIENDA	✓									
D.31. VIVIENDA PROTEGIDA	✓									
D.32. VARIACIÓN DEL NÚMERO DE HOGARES 2001-2011 (%)	✓									

Figure 4.- Schematic table of the 39 descriptive data and their alignment with the 10 SUA Strategic Objectives. Source: [www.aue.gob.es](http://www.aue.gob.es)

### PART 3: MONITORING AND REVIEW

Without prejudice to the above, in relation to the specific area of monitoring and evaluation indicators, the Urban Agenda has a set of indicators that are adapted to the initial situation and the context of each of the cities and urban areas, as they must be based, fundamentally, on an evaluation process at the local level that serves to establish the degree of improvement that the programmed measures and actions are intended to achieve.

Maximum compatibility and coordination has been sought with the indicators used in the different urban strategies, planning instruments and ongoing projects, in each of the thematic areas linked to the different specific objectives. In particular, a particular synergy and complementarity has been sought with the indicators established in the framework of the Sustainable Urban Development Strategies (DUSI Strategies for the implementation of ERDF funds for sustainable and integrated urban development of the EU for the period 2014-2020), but also with the various commitments made by Local Authorities in the framework of other initiatives, such as, for example, in low carbon economy (Covenant of Mayors), in sustainable mobility, or in social and equal opportunities. They are also adapted and linked to the set of indicators established by the United Nations to assess compliance with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'. The code of the indicator to which it is linked is made explicit in order to facilitate the analysis and reporting of the data.

Each indicator is accompanied by the basic methodology that should guide the corresponding quantification and thus, the sources of information and the main operations that can be used to determine it are indicated. Although the 'competent administration' is usually identified as the actor to which the corresponding methodologies refer, this does not imply that the other actors addressed by the Urban Agenda, all of them within their respective competences and spheres of action, are not also concerned in many of them. There is no doubt that it will be mainly the latter, and above all the local commitments, that will be the real drivers of the whole process, for which guidelines are offered that can be *very* useful to them.

OBJETIVOS ESTRATÉGICOS AJE	TOTAL Nº INDICADORES	Nº INDICADORES CUALITATIVOS	Nº INDICADORES CUANTITATIVOS	VINCULACIÓN ODS 11
1 ORDENAR EL TERRITORIO Y HACER UN USO RACIONAL DEL SUELO, CONSERVARLO Y PROTEGERLO	8	3	5	✓
2 EVITAR LA DISPERSIÓN URBANA Y REVITALIZAR LA CIUDAD EXISTENTE	17	6	11	✓
3 PREVENIR Y REDUCIR LOS IMPACTOS DEL CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO Y MEJORAR LA RESILIENCIA	6	3	3	✓
4 HACER UNA GESTIÓN SOSTENIBLE DE LOS RECURSOS Y FAVORECER LA ECONOMÍA CIRCULAR	8	4	4	✓
5 FAVORECER LA PROXIMIDAD Y LA MOVILIDAD SOSTENIBLE	6	2	4	✓
6 FOMENTAR LA COHESIÓN SOCIAL Y BUSCAR LA EQUIDAD	5	3	2	✓
7 IMPULSAR Y FAVORECER LA ECONOMÍA URBANA	4	2	2	✓
8 GARANTIZAR EL ACCESO A LA VIVIENDA	5	2	3	✓
9 LIDERAR Y FOMENTAR LA INNOVACIÓN DIGITAL	4	2	2	✓
10 MEJORAR LOS INSTRUMENTOS DE INTERVENCIÓN Y GOBERNANZA	9	8	1	✓
<b>AGENDA URBANA ESPAÑOLA</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>✓</b>

Figure 5.- Schematic table of monitoring and evaluation indicators and their alignment with the 10 SUA Strategic Objectives. Source: [www.aue.gob.es](http://www.aue.gob.es)

Two types of indicators are distinguished: qualitative indicators, which are formulated in the form of a question and make it possible to identify the measures and actions that have been carried out or are planned for the coming years, and quantitative indicators, which are objective data (surface area, budget, etc.), calculated or estimated on the basis of a predefined methodology.

Finally, it should be noted that it constitutes a set of comparable and aggregable indicators, which will therefore serve as a basis for responding to the information requirements of the international Agendas on the part of Spain and will enable analysis and evaluation at supra-municipal level. It will also make it possible to clearly define the results to be achieved with the implementation of the Spanish Urban Agenda in terms of improving the quality of life and urban sustainability, and preparing cities to face the challenges of the future.

RELACIÓN DE LOS OBJETIVOS ESTRATÉGICOS DE LA AUE CON LOS ODS Y LAS METAS DE LA AGENDA 2030 Y CON OTROS PROYECTOS INTERNACIONALES

1 | TERRITORIO, PAISAJE Y BIODIVERSIDAD

ORDENAR EL TERRITORIO Y HACER UN USO RACIONAL DEL SUELO. CONSERVARLO Y PROTEGERLO

AGENDA URBANA ESPAÑOLA	17 ODS; METAS	NUÉVA AGENDA URBANA INTERNACIONAL	AGENDA URBANA EUROPEA (PARTENARIADOS)	EDUSI OBJETIVOS ESPECÍFICOS PERIODO 14-20
1.1. Ordenar el suelo de manera compatible con su entorno territorial	 2.4 Prácticas agrícolas sostenibles y resilientes  11.a Vínculos zonas urbanas, periurbanas y rurales	26; 49; 50; 51; 52; 65; 69; 70; 72; 95; 96	Uso sostenible del suelo y soluciones basadas en la naturaleza	
	 6.4. Proteger y restablecer los ecosistemas relacionados con el agua  11.4 Patrimonio cultural y natural			
1.2. Conservar y mejorar el patrimonio natural y cultural y proteger el paisaje	 14.1 Contaminación marina  14.2 Gestión de ecosistemas marinos y costeros  14.5 Conservación zonas costeras y marinas	38; 124; 125	Patrimonio Cultural	OE. 6.3.4 promover la protección, fomento y desarrollo del patrimonio cultural y natural de las áreas urbanas.
	 15.1 Conservar y usos sostenibles ecosistemas  15.2 Gestión sostenible bosques  15.3 Luchas contra la desertificación  15.4 Conservación ecosistemas montañosos  15.a Recursos financieros  15.b Recursos para gestión forestal			O.E.6.5.2. Acciones integradas de revitalización de ciudades, de mejora del entorno urbano, su medio ambiente
1.3 Mejorar las infraestructuras verdes y azules y vincularlas con el contexto natural	 15.5 Degradación y pérdida de biodiversidad  15.9 Planes sensibles a medio ambiente	67; 77	Uso sostenible del suelo y soluciones basadas en la naturaleza	

Figure 6.- Example table of the alignment of SUA goals with the urban component targets of the SDGs and with the rest of the goals of international documents, including the NUA.

## Conclusion

The approval of the Spanish Urban Agenda is having an important impact on the development of urban policies in the country, to the extent that its approval has brought with it a change in the name and even in the traditional competences of the Ministry, which are fundamentally investment in infrastructures. It has also been identified as one of the Lever Policies of the Spanish Government's Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda, due to its capacity to accelerate the cross-cutting and joint fulfilment of several SDGs and as one of the structuring axes of the European recovery aid plan in the face of COVID-19 (EU Next Generation Funds).

In itself, the Urban Agenda and the strategic planning it proclaims represent a structural reform that, through its implementation, seeks to change the way in which the challenges presented by human settlements (urban areas of all sizes and dimensions) are resolved, which, transcending strictly jurisdictional and sectoral aspects, proposes a cross-cutting, holistic, integrated and long-term vision. All of this is based on a participatory process based on multilevel governance, on the evaluation and monitoring of results and on the correction of any imbalances and deviations that may arise. Strategic planning and prioritisation of actions, together with the broadest possible consensus, are the basis for making towns and cities more resilient to global challenges of all kinds: environmental, social, economic, health, those inherent to new technologies, etc.

The Agenda is a working methodology, *i.e.* a living and constantly changing process that allows it to be adapted and adapted to the needs of each moment. Therefore, within the framework of the 10 strategic objectives, the Ministry continues to work to complete the specific objectives (highlighting the role of metropolitan areas; recognising and promoting architecture and the value of culture as tools that make cities; the design of a healthier urban model adapted to the needs of an increasingly ageing population; fostering and articulating the urban-rural link with territorial cohesion and the demographic challenge, etc.); adapting its indicators and extending the actions of its own Action Plan. Only in this way and through its implementation by all the actors involved can a real progress report and follow-up of the NUA be drawn up.

In short, the work carried out during the four years that have elapsed since the approval of the New Urban Agenda has focused on the design and drafting of the National Urban Policy that the Spanish Urban Agenda represents. Its approval on 22 February 2019 was the starting point for its implementation both at the level of the GSA itself and the other agents involved. Since then, despite the pandemic, the follow-up of the actions implemented has been very satisfactory in relation to the objectives that *were* initially set.

From now on, and especially from its implementation by the actors involved, it will be possible to maintain a more coordinated and updated follow-up of all the actors involved in the implementation of the NUA.

Among the proposed objectives, as more action plans are generated, are the identification of those actions that, mainly, Local Authorities have highlighted as priorities in their respective action plans and that will be key for the design of public policies at state and European level. It should not be forgotten that Europe allocates significant funds to sustainable and integrated urban planning. All of this will make it possible to provide coherence to policies, respect local autonomy and, as far as possible, propose common objectives and commitments that involve the coordination and collaboration of all administrations, with full respect for their areas of competence, but from an integrated and cross-cutting perspective that takes into account the three pillars of sustainability<sup>34</sup>.

Madrid, April 2021.

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<sup>34</sup> *Relevant information*- Data from official sources and from the Spanish Urban Agenda document itself have been taken into account for the preparation of this report

## Complementary documentation

**Annex 1.** – Attached is the document on the alignment between the Strategic Objectives of the Spanish Urban Agenda with the urban targets of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, with the objectives of the New Urban Agenda and with the objectives of the Urban Agenda for the European Union.

**Annex 2.** – The complete list of descriptive data of the Spanish Urban Agenda is attached. Its methodology is available at: [https://www.aue.gob.es/recursos\\_aue/2019-02-01\\_anexo\\_datos\\_descriptivos.pdf](https://www.aue.gob.es/recursos_aue/2019-02-01_anexo_datos_descriptivos.pdf)

**Annex 3.** – Attached is the list of monitoring and evaluation indicators for each of the 10 Strategic Objectives of the Agenda. Its methodology is available at: [https://cdn.mitma.gob.es/portal-web-drupal/AUE/04 doc. indicadores de seguimiento y evaluacion 0.pdf](https://cdn.mitma.gob.es/portal-web-drupal/AUE/04_doc_indicadores_de_seguimiento_y_evaluacion_0.pdf)