



# National Report on Regional Sustainable Development

## Spain



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**REGIONET – Thematic Network: Strategies for Regional Sustainable Development, An Integrated Approach beyond Best Practice, EU 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Program**

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# 1. National background on regional development

## 1.1 Political and administrative system and hierarchies

Spain is a parliamentary democracy with a population of some 40 million citizens. With 493,486 square kilometers, its population includes a large majority of Spanish/Castilian speakers and smaller groups of Catalan, Basque, and Galego speakers. Given such a cultural variety, Spain is best described as a multinational state.

Spanish nineteenth and twentieth centuries are featured with many changes of political regimes, oscillating between long periods of authoritarianism and ephemeral governments of [more] liberal forces. In 1939, following the victory of the “national” forces in the Civil War (1936-1939), Spain came under the rule of General Francisco Franco. The so-called *Caudillo* had led the military uprising of July 18<sup>th</sup> of 1936 that eventually overthrew the II Republic (1931-1939) and concentrated the posts of Head of State, Prime Minister, leader of the *Movimiento Nacional* and Head of the Military. Franco’s single party regime would last until his death in November 1975

General Franco’s death in November 1975 inaugurated the transition to democracy. The Spanish transition would soon become a paradigmatic model of peaceful democratization. The vast majority of Spaniards endorsed the political reforms of prime minister Adolfo Suárez and approved—except for the Basque provinces of Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa, with rates of abstention higher than fifty percent—the 1978 Constitution, which was the result of complex negotiations between political parties. At the same time, nevertheless, the unsolved national question emerged as one of the factors which would most influence the process of democratization. The 1978 Constitution set in motion an open framework that preserved the political unity of Spain and granted autonomy to nationalities and regions, a formula popularly known as “coffee for everybody”. Part VIII of the Constitution thus creates the so-called State of the Autonomous Communities [*Estado de las autonomías*], which is further developed by the Statutes of the Autonomous Communities and both national and autonomous legislation.

Nowadays, the Spanish political and administrative system is a hybrid combining the Napoleonic tradition—a centralized bureaucratic *corps*—and the German system of decentralized landers. This results in a “quasi-federal organization” that, in fact, consists of a never-ending, ongoing process of multilevel political negotiations involving a number of actors: legislatures and executives at the sub-national and national levels, central and autonomous administrations, etc. The agreements to transfer competencies to the Autonomous Communities were established since 1980 on a bipartite regional-national basis among Basques and Catalans on one side, and the central government, on the other.<sup>1</sup> These negotiations patterns grounded the basis for future negotiations of other autonomous

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<sup>1</sup> The 1978 Constitution made it possible for the three so-called “historic territories” of the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia to reach autonomy by a faster route than other regions. These three historic territories, besides Andalucía (under special constitutional provision) reached autonomy sooner than the other regions, which reached autonomy later and hold more limited powers.

communities that wished to achieve a similar degree of autonomy (Parrado, 2001; Agranoff, 1994). With regard to legislative capacities, there are three types of legislation: (i) exclusive legislation of central government; (ii) shared legislation with ACs (in this case, basic legislation is a central governmental function and development legislation falls in the domains of ACs); (iii) exclusive legislation of ACs.

Little surprise, therefore, if conflicts of competences between the Central State and the Autonomous Communities usually emerge. Wisely enough, the 1978 lawmakers entrusted the Constitutional Court as the final arbiter of those conflicts. The Constitution Court thus resolved an annual mean of 12 conflicts of competences during the period 1998-2002.

In Spain, the concept of “region” does not officially refer to any political entity, since “Autonomous Communities” [“Comunidades Autónomas”] have superseded ancient “regions” as both political and administrative sub-national unities. The basic sub-national entities are therefore the 17 Comunidades Autónomas (3 historical territories and 14 regions, plus the two African territories of Ceuta and Melilla). To a great extent, the administrative organization of the Autonomous Communities mimic the patterns of the central ministries and the national administration (Parrado, 2001). Below the regional level there are *provincias* (provinces) and *municipios* (municipalities). The following map and table provides an overview of the sub-national political entities in Spain:



Spain’s administrative structure therefore consists of four main levels: the central government (“estado central”) the autonomous communities (“comunidades autónomas”), the provinces (“provincias”) and the municipal level (“municipios”).

**Table 1.1.1 Administrative division of Spain at the sub-national level**

<b>Autonomous Communities</b>	<b>Area (square km)</b>	<b>Provinces</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>
Andalucía	87,268	8	770
Aragón	47,669	3	729
Asturias	10,565	1	78
Baleares	5,014	1	67
Canarias	7,447	2	87
Cantabria	5,289	1	102
Castilla-La Mancha	79,292	5	915
Castilla-León	94,187	9	2247
Catalunya	31,929	4	944
Comunidad de Madrid	7,995	1	179
Comunitat Valenciana	23,259	3	540
Extremadura	41,602	2	382
Galicia	29,434	4	314
La Rioja	5,034	1	174
Murcia	11,317	1	45
Navarra	1,421	1	273
País Vasco	7,261	3	250
Ceuta (in North Africa)	19	1	1
Melilla (in North Africa)	13,4	1	1
<b>Spain</b>	<b>504,800</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>8,098</b>

Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics)

As for the size and distribution of the Spanish civil service, the main trend of the last two decades consist of the transferring of personnel from the central administration to the autonomous administrations. The following figures show the size, distribution, and patterns of evolution.

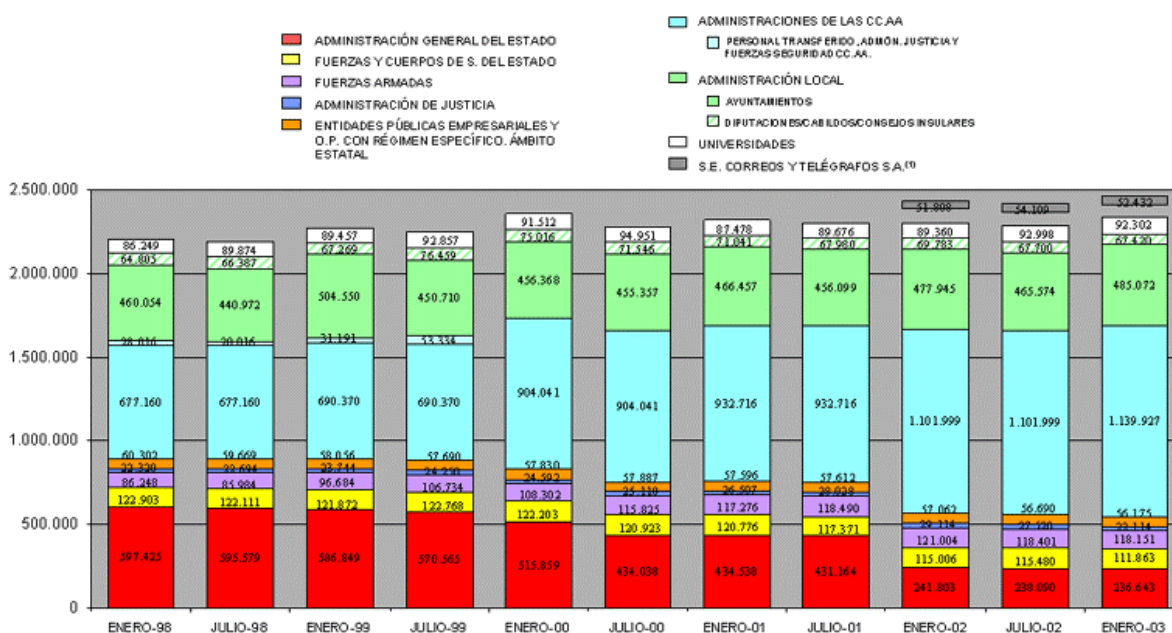
**Table 1.1.2 Size and distribution of national civil service**

<b>Territorial level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Central level	236,643	10,2
Security forces	111,863	4,8
Armed forces	118,151	5,1
Administration of Justice	22,114	0,9
Public corporations*	56,175	2,4
Autonomous level	1,139, 927	48,9
Local level	552,492	23,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,329,667</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Ministry of Public Administrations (2003)

\* 2,302 university staff (teaching and administrative) included

### Charter 1.1.3. Evolution of public service (1998-2003)



Source: Ministry of Public Administrations (2003)

## 1.2 History of Regional Development

Both the ongoing development of a decentralized state and the accession to the European Union in 1986 are significant steps towards an active participation of regions in the implementation of development policies. This is a rather contemporary trend, since no true regional development policies existed under Franco's rule. The so-called "technocrats" of the regime—a professional group well-connected to the Opus Dei—introduced in 1959 a stabilization plan that, inspired on the French planning model, aimed at correcting the protectionist policies of the regime and promoting the opening of the Spanish economy to market forces. The 1959 Stabilization Plan, endorsed by the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund and the OECD, would immediately benefit from the general international prosperity of the 1960s. Three subsequent Development Plans throughout the 1960s (1964–1967, 1968–1971 and 1972–1975) would follow it. The incidence of these plans over regional imbalances, nevertheless, would persist over the period. While industrial poles such as Catalonia and the Basque Country renewed their dynamism, other areas found in massive tourism a new source of income. But, as Ivars (2003: 657) puts it, "town- planning policy reached high levels of permissiveness and structural solutions were postponed, the only concern being the economic objectives of tourist development, resultant income and job generation without reference to a wider social, or indeed, economic context."

At present, the institutional framework regarding regional development is rather complex. Since the early 1980s, Autonomous Communities have set up their own development,

planning, and environmental departments. Furthermore, they all have set Regional Agencies of Development that take multiple legal forms (public institutes, private foundations, quangos, etc.).<sup>2</sup> In the 1990s these Agencies reached multimillionaire budgets and gained growing participation in the budgets of their respective Autonomous Communities.

The Spanish state intervenes mainly through public investment, resources transferred to the Autonomous Communities (together with transferred competencies), and the so called Inter-territorial Compensation Fund (*Fondo de Compensación Interterritorial* or FCI). The FCI was set by the 1978 Constitution to apply the “principle of solidarity” among ACs and level out territorial disparities (Rodríguez-Pose, 2000:101). As an instrument of regional development, the compensation fund targets the less favored Autonomous Communities that, in accordance to the EU development policies, are also classified as Objective 1 areas by the ERDF.

In 2001, the annual budget of the state reserved € 880 million to the FCI. Senate controls the distribution of the funds to the Autonomous Communities by means of the Court of Accounts, the organ charged of supervision and control of the distributive mechanisms. The table below indicates the fund allocations to the less favored ACs for the period 2000-2001.

**Table 1.2.1 Distribution of compensation funds to less favored ACs (200-2001)**

COMUNIDAD AUTÓNOMA	F.C.I. 2001	F.C.I. 2000	F.C.I. 2001/2000
GALICIA	139.714,37	148.778,12	0,939
ANDALUCÍA	371.444,16	351.972,73	1,055
ASTURIAS	32.486,39	28.067,01	1,157
CANTABRIA	9.610,26	7.898,90	1,217
MURCIA	37.295,93	30.974,90	1,204
VALENCIA	55.485,83	54.731,10	1,014
CASTILLA-LA MANCHA	61.678,33	61.754,23	0,999
CANARIAS	37.771,59	35.906,39	1,052
EXTREMADURA	74.926,59	64.364,52	1,164
CASTILLA Y LEÓN	60.453,93	65.809,95	0,919
TOTAL	880.867,38	850.257,85	1,036

Source: Ministry of Treasure

<sup>2</sup> E. g. SPRI in the Basque Country, SODENA in Navarra, CIDEM in Catalonia, IMPIVA in the AC of Valencia, IFA in Andalusia, IGAPE in Galicia, and IMADE in the Community of Madrid.

Since the early 1980s, spatial and urban planning basically fall under the competencies of Autonomous Communities, provinces, and municipalities. At present, most Autonomous Communities have gradually designed and passed their own legislation and administrative rule. Nevertheless, national legislation provides the general framework for urban planning. In this regard, the 6/1998 Act of April 1998 constitutes a radical departure from the previous framework, insofar it liberalizes land markets and introduces mechanisms of flexibility in planning by substituting the traditional positive assignment of land use by a negative one: any use not explicitly declared incompatible is valid (Rodríguez *et al.*, 1998). This general framework has been challenged by the Autonomous Communities who, as said earlier, have claimed urban and territorial planning as of their exclusive competence.

Similarly, the establishment of new regional environmental departments from the beginning of the 1980s has enlarged the institutional framework of environmental policies. Environmental departments are responsible for the implementation of the European legislation regarding environmental matters. However, one of the biggest problems of this multilevel framework remains that sub-national participation in the EU “has not been linked to an institutional framework designed to coordinate the increasing number of administrative units with policy responsibilities” (Aguilar Fernández, 2003: 681). This may also result in deficient coordination between national and sub-national agencies and departments. To the European Commission, both fragmentation of responsibilities and insufficient coordination are the main causes of Spain’s failure to meet the Union’s environmental policy targets (Aguilar Fernández, 2003: 682).

### **1.3 National Initiatives on Sustainable Development**

The central administration holds exclusive competences on basic environmental legislation, while the Autonomous Communities are responsible for developing legislation regarding management and protection of the environment. In addition, municipalities also have competencies in many environmental issues such as urbanism, spatial planning, waste management, conservation, and parks. They are also responsible for the establishment and regulation of industrial activities. The responsibilities are therefore shared but, just as in many other regulatory areas, implementation and monitoring of environmental policy-making and programs by either Autonomous Communities and central government are highly dependent on the willingness and capability of local politicians.

At the national level, environmental policies had been spread over 8 different ministries until 1996. In that year the Popular Party in power created the Ministry of Environment to coordinate and monitor environmental programs. But with the transfer of environmental policy-making to the ACs and municipalities, the Ministry of Environment was basically left with a handful of responsibilities: conservation of biodiversity, coastal and water management, the national parks network and intergovernmental coordination for the implementation of EU directives (Aguilar Fernández, 2003: 682). To apply the European policies of sustainable development, integrate the environment into the different sector-specific policies and coordinate the central government with the Autonomous Communities, a number of institutions have been created: general collegiate bodies such as

Environmental Advisory Council or the sector-specific Environmental Conference, sector-specific institutions such as the National Water Council, the National Climate Council, and the Environmental Authorities Network, etc., and supra-national organizations (EEA, UNEP, IUCN, WWF, etc.). The way of implementing EU directives and coordinating with the ACs is currently in transition from a close bureaucratic and hierarchical system to a more cooperative one (negotiations, agreements, consortiums, coordinated planning, etc.).

### **1.3.1 National Environmental Strategy (1999-2003)**

One of the first initiatives at the national level was the elaboration of the “Spanish Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity”. The Spanish strategy aims to be a bridge between the European Union strategy and those to be developed by the Autonomous Communities, and constitute a flexible framework for those strategies to be developed by the Communities. In this regard, Autonomous Communities are recognized as playing a major role in achieving the objectives proposed and given three years to prepare and approve their respective strategies.

The objectives which form the basis of the strategy are:

- The active co-operation of all parties, both public and private institutions and different social and economic groups, to gain a pledge for the whole of society for the conservation of biological diversity through its rational, and therefore sustainable, use.
- The inclusion of the principles of restoration, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in planning and execution processes of sectorial and inter-sectorial policies.
- The creation of the necessary mechanisms for management and conservation planning of natural resources in the medium and long term.
- The fomenting of research, knowledge and training in matters of biodiversity.
- The co-ordination of the necessary regulations and financial mechanisms, either through adapting existing ones or through the creation of new ones, should the need arise.
- The promoting of active international cooperation in this area through bilateral and multilateral programs, and active participation in all initiatives between states aimed at a better conservation of natural heritage.

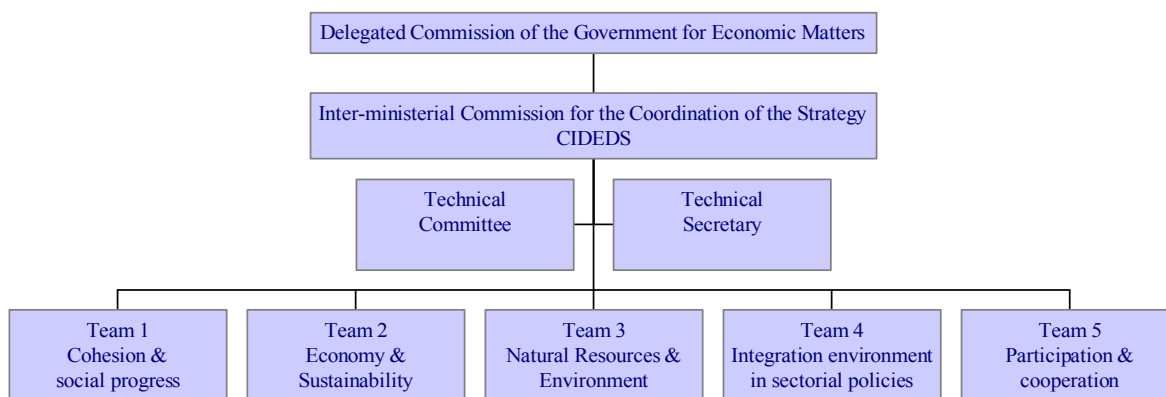
The diagnosis analyses the physical environment, the different components of biodiversity and their conservation status, the instruments of conservation and their current state, the processes affecting biodiversity by sector of activity and the necessary periodical updating of the diagnosis itself. The part devoted to plans and measures organizes them by sector of activity and includes institutional, legislative and socio-economic reforms considered necessary on a national scale.

Other important plans developed by the Ministry of the Environment during the same period are:

- ☑ Spanish Forestry Strategy (SFS, 1999)
- ☑ National Program Against Desertification (NPAD, 2000)
- ☑ National Urban Waste Plan (NUWP, 2000-2006)
- ☑ Strategic Plan for Wetlands (SPW, 2000)
- ☑ National Strategies for the Protection of Threatened Species (1999-2000)

Following the path of both national sectorial strategies such as the mentioned above and the European Strategy of SD set in Gothenburg (June 2001), the Spanish government decided to promote its own national strategy through three standardized steps: (i) preparation of a proposal; (ii) institutional consultation, and (iii) public consultation. The Delegated Commission of the Government for Economic Matters, responsible for the elaboration of the Spanish Strategy, constituted an Inter-ministerial Commission of Coordination of the Sustainable Strategy of Development (CICEDS) with the purpose to direct and monitor the project. The CICEDS coordinated the tasks developed by the 12 ministerial departments to achieve a first proposal. To do so, five working groups were organized to address the major challenges that sustainable development implied in five key areas. The institutional structure responsible for the Spanish strategy (EEDS) at this first period is shown below.

### 1.3.1.1 Spanish Strategy on Sustainable Development (EEDS). Phase I



In December 2001, the Minister for the Environment presented before the Parliament the “Consultation Document for the Spanish Strategy on Sustainable Development” elaborated by the CICEDS. The proposal consists of an introduction and five chapters. The introduction reviews the antecedents of the Spanish guidelines, which are the Rio Conference of 1992, the Rio + 5 Conference of 1997, the Amsterdam Treaty, the agreement of the OCDE of 1998, and the EU declarations of Helsinki (1999), Lisbon (2000), and Stockholm (2001).

After reviewing the main indicators of the social, economic, and environmental pillars of SD in Spain, the Spanish strategy proceeds by identifying seven key areas to promote and develop the paradigm of sustainability:

- Economic growth, employment, and competitiveness.
- Management of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity.
- Training, research, and technological innovation.
- Climate change and atmospheric contamination
- Sustainable Tourism
- Management and reduction of waste

The next step, according to the principle of “institutional compromise” set by the document, consists of a process of institutional consultation with public administrations at any level—ACs and municipalities—and with the Social and Economic Council (CES), the highest consulting institution of the central administration regarding economic and social matters. The CES issued its Report in February 2002 and made a number of criticisms. Among the most significant remarks, it pointed to the lack of precision with regard to both specific policies of sustainability and financial resources to be allocated, the absence of public and private stakeholders from the design of the strategy, or the exclusion from the process of relevant institutions such as the Advisory Council for the Environment.

Although the EEDS proposal has been welcomed, it also has received important criticisms from both the theoretical and methodological points of view. One of the main criticisms is that the objectives of the EEDS are stated in a rather abstract and ambiguous way, making almost no references to specific actors, implementation plans, estimated deadlines, monitoring, and evaluation systems. Furthermore, it does not specify a coordinate strategy between the central administration and the ACs (it only refers to “distribution of competences between institutions”). As has been indicated, “the document of the EEDS faces the risk of simply becoming the partial view of the central administration, which no longer has neither the capacities nor the competencies to start by itself a process of sustainable development” (Alonso García, 2002: 6).

As for the method, the lack of updated statistics has been highlighted as a serious drawback, since data for the period 2000-2001 are completely missing from the report (in most cases, statistics and social trends do not go beyond 1997). Besides, statistics have not been disaggregated by sub-national units, so that no specific diagnoses are made regarding Autonomous Communities. The “statistical blackout”, in sum, makes it difficult to elaborate an accurate strategy for the period 2002-2027 (CES Report, 2002; Alonso García, 2002).

NGOs have strongly reacted to the EEDS proposal. In this regard, the most important ecologist organizations—Ecologistas en Acción, Greenpeace, SEO/BirdLife, and WWF/Adena—have proposed the so-called “Alternative EDDS”, an alternative document which presents four basic principles and 225 measures to be applied in fifteen key areas.

The purpose of the Alternative EEDS is to foster greater participation and debate of the EEDS at the present moment of public discussion.

At the present time, the EEDS proposal is subject to public debate with civil society representatives. Nevertheless, at the writing of this report the official information regarding the work-in-progress has disappeared along with the official Internet site of the Spanish Strategy.

## 2. Regional Sustainable Development

### 2.1 National Strategies Linked to Regional Sustainable Development

The quasi-federal structure of the Spanish political system has deprived the national level of significant capacities on regional sustainable development strategies. Since the proposal of the Spanish Strategy on SD (EEDS) makes no specific provisions to link strategic SD goals to sub-national programs (it only indicates that Autonomous Communities are responsible for the fulfillment of certain objectives) it can hardly be considered as program relevant to regional sustainable development.

National strategies linked to RSD are therefore better understood as bottom-up civil society forums and initiatives. One of the prominent forums is the National Congress of the Environment (CONAMA) that organizes every two years a round table and different working groups on sustainable development. One of the most important initiatives is the Spanish Network of Rural Development. The Network was created in 1995 to bring together different regional networks which, in turn, include more than 200 local actors in charge of rural development projects (basically LEADER projects and Operative Programs related to development and diversification of rural areas. The main purpose of this Network is the exchange of experiences and implementation strategies for sustainable development on the national and regional levels in order to discuss questions of rural sustainable development.

### 2.2 Regional Strategies Linked to Regional Sustainable Development

In few years, Autonomous Communities have become key actors for regional sustainable development. Apart from directly managing a number of Structural Funds (see point 2.3 below), Autonomous Communities have promoted regional strategies of sustainable development and are currently leading and coordinating LA21 processes. The historical nationalities of Catalonia and the Basque Country paved the way for SD initiatives (Catalonia by creating the Advisory Council of Sustainable Development in 1998 and CAT21, the governmental initiative currently working on the Catalan strategy, and the Basque Country by setting up the Basque initiative on SD in 2002). Other Autonomous Communities have followed by promoting their own SD strategies, while others still lag behind. The present situation for each Autonomous Community is summarized as follows:

- **Andalusia** has recently approved the *Estrategia Andaluza para el Desarrollo Sostenible*, started as a document open to debate and public participation. It establishes priorities of sustainable development by considering different areas: conservation of biodiversity, environment and employment, institutional coordination, energy, water resources, industrial development, sustainable tourism, public participation and international cooperation against poverty and inequalities. The strategy also creates the Andalusian Water Agency to promote the sustainable use of water resources.

- **Aragon** has no regional strategy of SD at the present moment. Nevertheless, there is a sectorial strategy on conservation of natural environment (*Estrategia de Conservación del Medio Natural*, 2003).
- **Asturias** is currently developing the *Estrategia de Desarrollo Sostenible del Principado de Asturias*. In June 2002 the Autonomous Government approved an Institutional Declaration for the Sustainable Development (*Declaración Institucional por el Desarrollo Sostenible*). Subsequent documents need to be approved by a Inter-sectorial Commission (composed of representatives of different government departments related to environmental and social aspects of SD) before being opened to public discussion.<sup>3</sup>
- The Government of the **Balearic Islands** is currently promoting SD strategies by supporting LA21 in its municipalities. To do so, it created the Balearic Network of Sustainability in 2002, which establishes the minimal requirements that a LA21 has to comply with and gives some financial support to start the processes (up to 46 LA21 processes at present).<sup>4</sup>
- The **Canary Islands** are currently discussing its SD strategy: the *Estrategia Ambiental Canaria de Desarrollo Sostenible* (as a previous step, the government issued the “General Guidelines of Planning” to guarantee a sustainable development of the different islands, with special attention to tourism development). In October 2003 were created two basic institutions: (i) the *Foro Canario de Desarrollo Sostenible* (the forum charged of supervising the strategic process by promoting participation, debate, and proposals); (ii) the Observatory of Sustainable Development (in charge of the technical evaluation of the process).<sup>5</sup>
- The government of **Cantabria** does not have a SD strategy for its territory, but an Advisory Council of Sustainable Development has recently put in place (February 2004). The Council depends on the Department of Environment and its mission is to foster participation from social agents in order to establish and develop environmental strategies for the Autonomous Community.<sup>6</sup>
- **Castile-La Mancha** links its programs on SD to the 2000-2006 Structural Funds Framework. It therefore establishes as a basic goal the improvement and the maintenance of the regional environmental capital, favoring the sustainability of the development, the social welfare and the quality of life by managing the resources received. Apart from that, 143 municipalities of Castile-La Mancha have created the “Network of Sustainable Cities of Castilla-La Mancha.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Data available at <http://tematico.princast.es/mediambi/siapa/web/dsostenible/astur/index.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Data available at [http://www.caib.es/medi\\_ambient/DG\\_residusier/al21/index.htm](http://www.caib.es/medi_ambient/DG_residusier/al21/index.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Data available at <http://www.benmagec.org/archivos/ReglamentoForo.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Data available at [http://boc.gobcantabria.es/boc/datos/MES\\_2004-03/OR\\_2004-03-04\\_044/PDF/2392-2393.pdf](http://boc.gobcantabria.es/boc/datos/MES_2004-03/OR_2004-03-04_044/PDF/2392-2393.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Data available at <http://www.jccm.es/medioambiente/>

- **Castile-Leon** approved in January 1999 the “Strategy of Sustainable Development of Castile and Leon: Agenda 21” to be linked to the Regional Plan of Development 2000-2006. The Structural Funds Framework, in this case, has proved effective to foster sustainable development priorities in sectorial policies of the region.<sup>8</sup>
- **Catalonia**, as said earlier, set its the Advisory Council of Sustainable Development in 1998. The governmental strategy on SD is called A21CAT and was started at the same year. A21CAT has gone through different deliberative phases, but final results are not been provided so far.
- The **Community of Madrid** also has an Advisory Council on Sustainable Development, but no regional strategy has been set in motion so far. The strategy has mainly consisted on promoting the LA21 of the municipalities.
- The government of the **Community of Valencia** started the process towards its regional strategy in 2002. The initial proposals of *Estrategia para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Comunidad de Valencia* established a period of 24-26 months before final adoption.
- **Extremadura** has a program linked to the 2000-2006 Structural Funds Framework and with the Regional Plan of Development of Extremadura. It evaluates the environmental situation and quantifies the present situation with regard to disparities, delays, and possibilities of development of Extremadura.
- The Government of **Galicia** drafted in January 2003 technical and working documents as the starting point of a regional strategy on SD.<sup>9</sup> The Ministry of the Environment created the General Directorate Centre of Sustainable Development (GD CSD) to promote and lead the Strategy. The process is currently going through a consulting period.
- Similarly, the Community of **La Rioja** is currently discussing its regional strategy. It has published a working document emphasizing the need of integration and coordination among sectorial politics and agents of development, open to participation and debate to reach a global consensus.
- **Murcia** has elaborated a highly detailed strategic plan which to cover the period 2000-2006. The plan organizes the tasks of public bodies and tries to coordinate the role of policy-makers with the businesses/industrial sector.
- **Navarra** pioneered SD in 1999 by approving the “Strategy for the preservation and sustainable use of biologic diversity (1999-2004)”. Almost simultaneously, the autonomous government drafted the documents towards the Territorial Strategy of Navarra, which is to be approved by the Parliament in 2004. The Territorial

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.jcyl.es/jcyl-client/jcyl/cmaot/tkContent?idContent=26374&locale=es\\_ES&textOnly=false](http://www.jcyl.es/jcyl-client/jcyl/cmaot/tkContent?idContent=26374&locale=es_ES&textOnly=false)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.xunta.es/conselle/cma/CMA11k/CMA11kf/p11Kf01\\_Estrat\\_Galega.htm](http://www.xunta.es/conselle/cma/CMA11k/CMA11kf/p11Kf01_Estrat_Galega.htm)

Strategy of Navarra is an global plan to be developed over the next 20 years (up to 2025)

- The Basque Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development was approved by the Basque Government in 2002.<sup>10</sup> The Strategy establishes the basis for a new model of sustainable development up to the year 2020, including guidelines for common action by the public authorities, producers and civil society at large.

**Table 2.2 Regional Strategies Linked to Regional Sustainable Development**

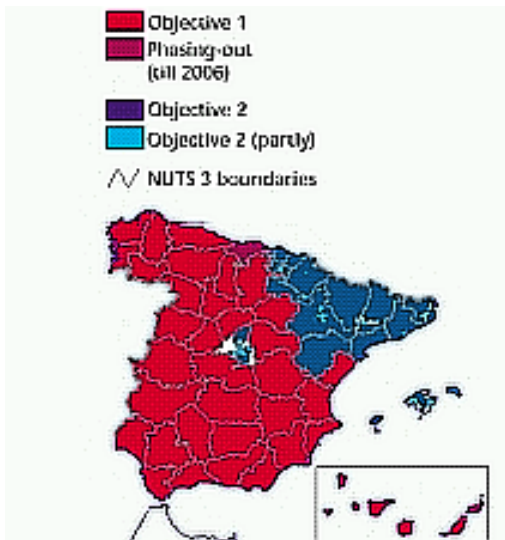
<b>Autonomous Community (AC)</b>	<b>Regional Sustainable Development Strategy</b>	<b>Status (at February 2004)</b>
Andalucía	<i>Estrategia Andaluza para el Desarrollo Sostenible. Agenda 21</i>	Approved by the AC government
Aragón	-	-
Asturias	<i>Estrategia de Desarrollo Sostenible del Principado de Asturias</i>	Pending to be submitted to public debate
Baleares	<i>Balearic Network of Sustainability Xarxa Balear de Sostenibilitat</i>	Promotion of LA21 (up to 46)
Canarias	<i>Estrategia Ambiental Canaria de Desarrollo Sostenible</i>	Draft version to be submitted to public debate
Cantabria	-	Advisory Council on Sustainable Development
Castilla-La Mancha	Network of Sustainable Cities of Castilla-La Mancha	-
Castilla-León	<i>Estrategia de Desarrollo Sostenible de Castilla-León: Agenda 21</i>	Part of the Regional Development Plan (2000-2006)
Catalunya		
Comunidad de Madrid	-	Advisory Council on Sustainable Development
Comunitat Valenciana	Strategy for Sustainable Development of Valencia	To be approved
Extremadura	-	2000-2006 Structural Funds Framework
Galicia	Strategy for Sustainable Development of Galicia	Under consulting period
La Rioja	Strategy for Sustainable Development of la Rioja	To be approved
Murcia	Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo de la Comunidad de Murcia (2000-2006)	-
Navarra	Territorial Strategy of Navarra	To be approved in 2004
País Vasco	Basque Environmental Strategy for Sustainable Development	Approved in 2002
<b>Spain</b>	Spanish Strategy for Sustainable Development	To be approved

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ingurumena.net/English/GV/Estrategia/index.htm>

## 2.3 Structural Funds and Sustainable Development

Since the Structural Funds Reform of 1988, 10 out of 17 Spanish ACs (NUTS II) have been considered as Objective 1 (development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind). The remaining 7 ACs (Catalonia, the Basque Country, Madrid, Navarra, La Rioja, and the Balearic Islands) were eligible for objectives 2 (support of economic and social conversion in industrial, rural, urban or fisheries-dependent areas facing structural difficulties) and former objective 5b.

### 2.3.1 Regions Eligible for Structural Funds in Spain (2000-2006)



Source: Ministry of the Environment

Since 1986, therefore, EU funding is a key instrument for the development of lagging regions). In the period 1989-1993, the financial support received by Spain was € 8,275 Million; in 1994-1999, this amount reached € 20,099 Million, that is, roughly 22,5% of the total budget of the structural funds. The biggest relative weight came from ERDF (more than 75%) and the vast majority of Objective 1 projects focused on basic infrastructures (such as roads and ports), other support infrastructures linked to the economic activity, agriculture and rural development, and transports system development. The following table shows the allocation of resources by ACs and types of structural funds:

Table 2.3.2 Total Structural Funds (1989-1999) (€ Mill.)

	ERDF		ESF		EAF		TOTAL	
	1989-93	1994-99	1989-93	1994-99	1989-93	1994-99	1989-93	1994-99
Andalucía	1448.24	3193.32	93.89	318.80	271.32	692.41	1816.45	4204.54
Aragón	143.80	166.27	12.76	45.53	145.44	262.14	302.01	473.96
Asturias	318.42	648.35	9.26	36.65	71.06	166.87	398.75	851.88
Baleares	15.42	28.41	5.75	20.25	19.17	28.27	40.35	76.94
Canarias	420.80	961.54	31.38	194.22	78.84	178.50	531.03	1334.28
Cantabria	52.77	383.23	0.87	7.04	38.33	109.37	92.00	499.65
CL	607.06	1475.60	28.91	129.69	270.18	559.38	906.15	2164.68
CLM	554.33	1036.59	7.95	41.08	98.55	403.57	741.61	1481.24
Cataluña	361.04	700.03	94.86	281.00	108.80	211.84	554.46	1192.89
Valencia	429.60	1241.06	37.31	285.45	108.80	239.57	575.72	1766.09
Extremadu	390.41	747.18	31.68	157.47	103.24	220.25	525.35	1124.91
Galacia	510.76	1799.62	29.75	180.43	264.55	765.51	805.07	2745.39
La Rioja	14.80	29.69	1.59	19.45	15.77	35.03	32.17	84.17
Madrid	108.64	205.08	52.78	104.66	21.53	54.51	182.96	364.27
Murcia	163.84	520.94	10.88	83.37	46.71	102.04	221.43	706.36
Navarra	36.18	52.57	3.50	48.30	44.19	69.93	83.89	170.32
País Vasco	274.65	444.67	55.32	173.41	78.97	132.23	408.95	750.32
Total	5907.82	13740.85	511.52	2126.71	1856.05	4232.27	8275.40	20099.84

Source: Pardo García (2003)

ESF: European Social Fund

EAF: European Agricultural and Guide and Guarantee Fund

For the present period (2000-2006) Spain receives € 42,887 Million from the Structural Funds. Compared to the increase of 41.2% from 1989-93 to 1994-99, the funds have been raised by 46.7%. A break down of these funds is provided in table 2.3.3 below:

Table 2.3.3. Structural Funds (Spain, 2000-2006)

<b>EU Structural Funds</b>	<b>€ Million</b>
Objective 1	37,774
Transitional Support under Objective 1	353
Objective 2	2,553
Transitional Support former 2 and 5b	98
Objective 3	2,140
Total	42,887

Source: European Commission

As for the four Community Initiatives or specific programs devised by the EU (5.35% of the budget of the Structural Funds), Spain has been granted the following figures:

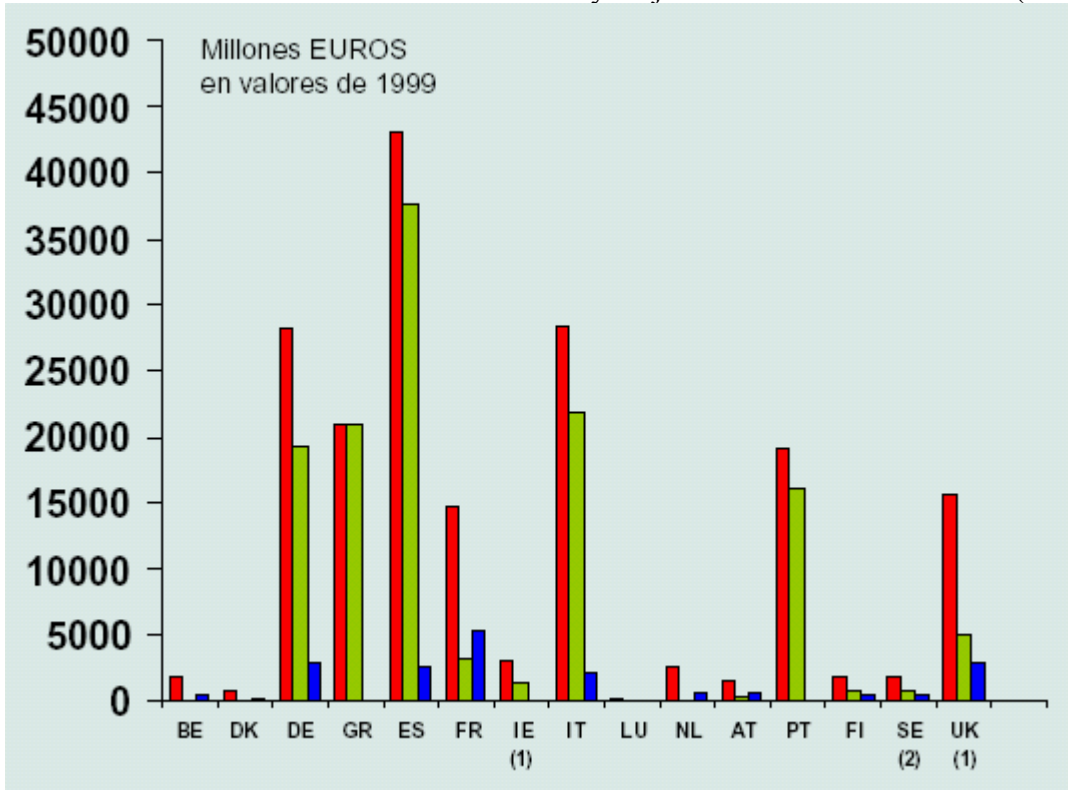
Table 2.3.4. Four European Community Initiatives (Spain, 2000-2006)

EU Programs	€ Million
Interreg III	900
Urban II	106
Equal	485
Leader	467
<b>Total</b>	

Source: European Commission

In absolute terms, no other EU Member than Spain has benefited from a larger financial support. The following chart summarizes the distribution of Structural Funds by Objectives 1 and 2 for each Member State:

Chart 2.3.5 Distribution of Structural Funds by Objectives and Member States (2000-2006)

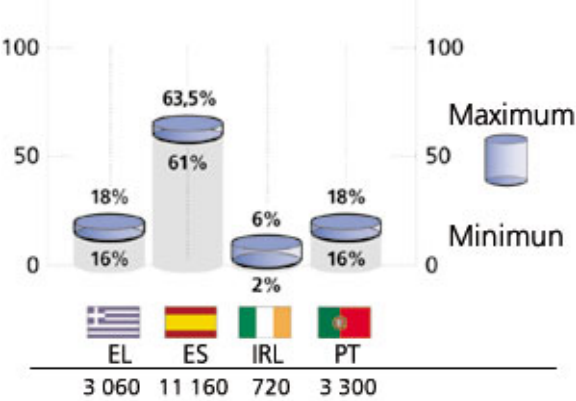


Source: Diputació de Barcelona (2002)

At present, Greece, Portugal, and Ireland, Spain also receive EU support from the Cohesion Fund (CF). The CF was established in 1993 to help the four least developed EU Members. The CF objectives were to provide assistance and financing to large projects in the environment and transport areas. In Spain, up to 31 December 1999 50% of the CF were allocated to the environment to finance more than 200 environmental projects linked to the subjects and sectors identified in the Fifth EC Environmental Action Program "Towards Sustainability". For the period from 2000 to 2006, the annual budget of the Cohesion Fund

will amount to €2.5 billion, or €18 billion over seven years. Spain, as shown below, is allocated the largest sum (€ 11,160 Million).

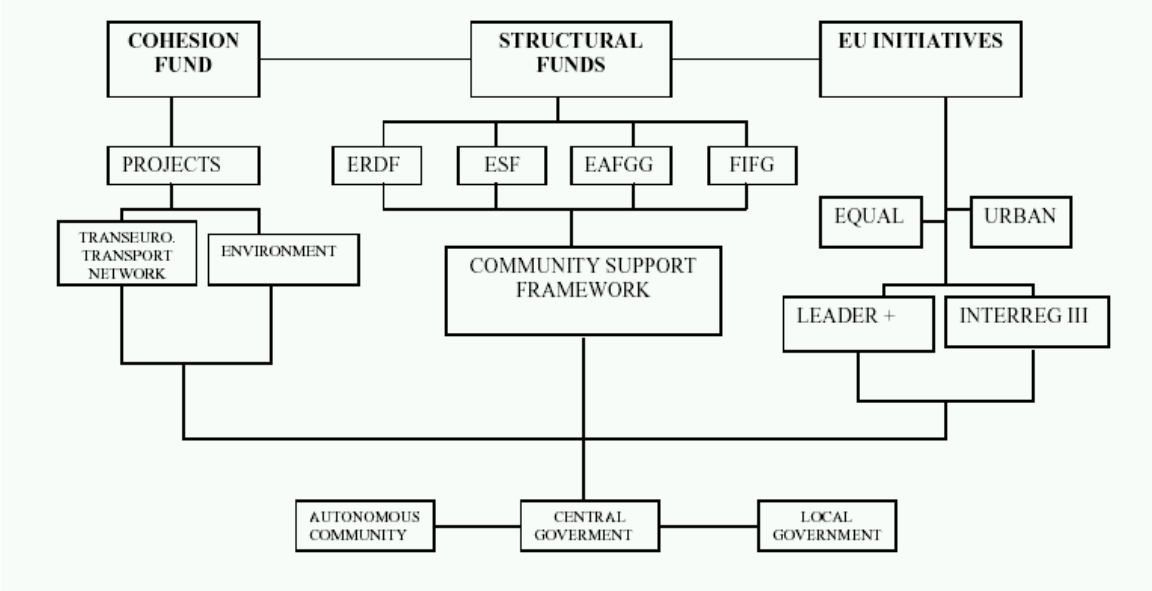
Chart 2.3.6 Distribution of Cohesion Funds by Member States (2000-2006)



Source: European Commission

As it is well known, the regulations of the current Structural Funds provide for a clearer structure of responsibilities between the different institutions. In this regard, the concept of ‘partnership’ establishes the division in Managing Authorities (MAs), Paying Authorities (PAs) and Monitoring Committees (MCs). To complete this general framework, it is necessary here to underline the crucial role played by the ACs in the management of Structural Funds in Spain, since the quasi-federal distribution of competencies also leads to a greater decentralization of management of Structural Funds. This results in a basic organizational chart of institutions at different levels:

Table 2.3.7 Organizational Chart of Institutions Managing Structural Funds



Source: Jiménez Pascual (2001)

In general terms, Spain has set up an administrative system to manage Structural Funds in which “concentration has been the principal aim” (Jiménez Pascual, 2001:47). In this regard, we need to primarily distinguish between Multiregional Operational Programs (MOP)—fully managed by the central government—and Regional Operational Programs (ROP) that are shared between the ACs and the central government.

For the period 2000-2006, a total of 39 MAs have been established. The central government appointed the General Department of EU Funds and Territorial Financing of the Ministry of Treasury as Management Authority of the Community Support Framework (CSF) for Objective 1, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs as MA of the Community Support Framework designed for Objective 3. Besides, there are 11 MAs dedicated to the management of the Multi Regional OP’s, 12 managing the Regional OP’s under objective 1, 7 in charge of the Regional OP’s under Objective 3, and finally 7 MAs dedicated to the management of the Single Programming Documents SPD). The following table shows the distribution by objectives, regions of both the OPs and SPDs for the present period.

Table 2.3.8. Operational Programs & SPDs (Spain, 2000-2006)

Title Operational programme	Type	Objective
Competitiveness improvement and the productive framework development	Multiregional OP	Objective 1
Local	Multiregional OP	Objective 1
Erdf-esf of research, development and innovation	Multiregional OP	Objective 1
Information society	Multiregional OP	Objective 1
Fifg	Multiregional OP	Objective 1
Agriculture productive systems and structures improvement	Multiregional OP	Objective 1
For development of the employment	Multiregional OP	Objective 1 and 3
For the vocational training system	Multiregional OP	Objective 1 and 3
For the management initiative and continuous training	Multiregional OP	Objective 1 and 3
For the fight against discrimination	Multiregional OP	Objective 1 and 3
ERDF-ESF-EAGGF (O)-FIFG technical assistance	Multiregional OP	Objective 1 and 3
Cantabria	Regional OP	Objective 1
Andalusia	Regional OP	Objective 1
Asturias	Regional OP	Objective 1
Canary island	Regional OP	Objective 1
Castile and la mancha	Regional OP	Objective 1
Castile and leon	Regional OP	Objective 1
Ceuta	Regional OP	Objective 1
Valencian community	Regional OP	Objective 1
Extremadura	Regional OP	Objective 1
Galicia	Regional OP	Objective 1
Melilla	Regional OP	Objective 1
Murcia	Regional OP	Objective 1
Aragon	Regional OP	Objective 3
Baleares	Regional OP	Objective 3
Cataluña	Regional OP	Objective 3
Community of Madrid	Regional OP	Objective 3
Navarra	Regional OP	Objective 3
Basque country	Regional OP	Objective 3
La rioja	Regional OP	Objective 3
Aragon	SPD	Objective 2
Baleares	SPD	Objective 2
Cataluña	SPD	Objective 2
Community of Madrid	SPD	Objective 2
Navarra	SPD	Objective 2
Basque country	SPD	Objective 2
La rioja	SPD	Objective 2

Source: Jiménez Pascual (2001)

Apart from intervention, application, and monitoring of the CSF, MAs share responsibilities in Regional OPs with the intermediate bodies set by the ACs, which are

also responsible for the proper implementation policies and coordination of their own internal departments.

In accordance to the Amsterdam Treaty and the Council Regulation 1260/99 laying down general provisions regarding Structural Funds, Spain set up the Environmental Authorities Network (EAN) as a coordinate forum of environmental authorities of different administrative levels (national, ACs, and local levels) and the authorities responsible for the management of SF. The European Commission is also represented at the EAN by members of the DG Environment, the DG Regio, the DG of Employment and Social Affairs, the DG Agriculture and the DG Fishery. The EAN is also member of the Monitoring Committees with the aim of achieving the integration of the environment in SF activities.

## **2.4 Impact of Structural Funds on Regional Sustainable Development**

Generally, the impact of Structural Funds on RSD has been rather low. Although environmental concerns are increasingly taken into account in the implementation of projects, the main priorities of SF investments remain the economic development of rural regions and metropolitan areas (roads, infrastructures, ports, airports, railroads, etc.).

To be sure, accession to EU membership of Eastern Europe countries will align the Spanish GDP to the European average (since EU15 GDP will be approximately lowered of 12%) If the criteria applied to allocation of structural funds for the period 2000-2006 remain the same (i.e. less than 75 percent of the average GDP), Andalusia, Extremadura and Galicia will be the only ACs eligible as Objective 1 of the Structural Funds. In addition, Spain will not be eligible for Cohesion Funds. This may have an impact on the Spanish economy, since the withdrawing of European funds may result in a reduction (from 0.5 to 1%) of the Spanish GDP by 2007 (La Caixa, 2003).

### **3. Multi-level governance**

#### **3.1 Regional issues and cases involving EU, national and sub-national coordination**

The idea that sustainable development requires coordinated strategies at all levels of government, from the global down to the local, has currently become mainstream. By multi-level governance we may understand “a system of overlapping and shared powers between actors on the regional, national and supranational (or even international) levels” (Bomberg & Stubb 2003: 234).

Due to their intermediate position in the local/global axis and to the functions they perform, regions play a strategic role in promoting sustainable development. EU may therefore be considered as an emerging system of multi-level governance with significant implications for regional governance. With regard to sustainable development, regions consist of the “linking pins between European policy programs and local concretization of commitments to SD” (Morata, 2002: 44). This is especially the case of Spanish Autonomous Communities, which are European regions (NUTS II) in the sub-national sense. In this regard, the support of the European Union for the work of sub-national and local authorities has become essential. Both as a result of European integration and domestic decentralization, ACs have reinforced their role in the implementation of many strategies, initiatives, and projects somewhat related to sustainable development issues. Because ACs are the politico-administrative level generally entrusted with the implementation of community law, the regional role is especially important in the descending phase (Aguilar Fernández, 2003: 686). All ACs have also created specific units to deal with internal coordination and the contacts with the state administration related to EU affairs.

This growing capacity notwithstanding, governance for regional sustainable development becomes a complex issue. Contrary to other policy areas (infrastructures, industry, labor, environment, etc.), neither constitutional provisions and further legislation nor Statutes of the ACs refer to exclusive or shared competencies on “sustainable development”. Since SD itself is currently understood as an adaptive process of integration between social, economic, and environmental subsystems or “pillars”, there are no “decision structures” addressing regional sustainable development as an integrate framework, but different multi-level organizations responsible for different policy sectors (energy, water, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, etc.). Under such circumstances, institutional coordination remains more needed than ever.

The always troublesome process of political negotiations regarding the distribution of competencies between the central government and the ACs (even more problematic between the Popular Party government and nationalist governments in Catalonia and the Basque Country) has not facilitated the establishment of general basis for the governance of regional sustainable development. Furthermore, as it is well known, SD involves making trade-off decisions on highly contested issues. Access to EU in 1986, the need to organize the management of Structural Funds and, more recently, the new “partnership” criteria in SF regulation have certainly proved to be a satisfactory learning process, but both decision structures and coordination still lack criteria of transparency.

At the sub-national level, the lack of coordination across the various departments of the Autonomous Communities may be pointed out as one of the main challenges to achieve an integrated approach to sustainable development. Typically, initiatives starting at the departments of environment face resistance (if they are not simply left aside) when “exported” to the other areas of government. In this regard, “it is crucial to widen the scope of environmental policymaking so that policies in other areas show an increasing concern for and commitment to environmental protection” (Urquijo Zamora, 2004: 5).

Since SD challenges tend to defy administrative boundaries, most Spanish ACs are currently networked with other European regions to share experiences on SD. This is the case of Andalusia, Catalonia, the Basque Country, Murcia, and the Canary Islands joining the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development. Most regional Advisory Councils are also linked to the European Environmental advisory Councils network. Interregional and trans-regional cooperation provides for more opportunities to define common strategies and mutual learning. Direct cross-border cooperation remains nevertheless scarce, because its potential benefits are weakened by the different types of “regions” existing in the EU, even at the same NUTS level (constitutional regions, administrative regions, economic regions, urban areas).

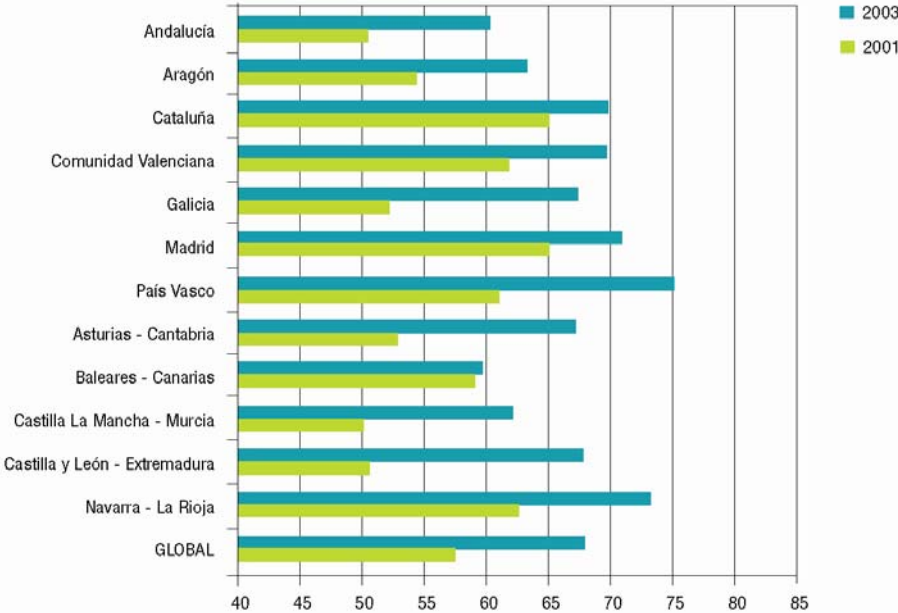
### **3.2 Multi-level interaction among the different stakeholders**

Although the final responsibility for the execution of sustainable development policies lies on governments, sufficient participation of social actors in defining sustainable development strategies is most welcomed in nearly all SD guidelines. To date, however, interaction between central and ACs governments, on the one hand, and large social groups such as commerce chambers, producers, consumers, members of NGOs, etc., on the other, has been rather poor. Having businesses on board always remains difficult, with some exceptions. In this sense, it looks as if SD were still approached from a *government* rather than from a *governance* standpoint, the latter being characterized by active engagement of citizens groups, pressure groups, private firms, private research organizations, and environmental knowledge entrepreneurs who participate in decision-making along with public actors (Kemp & Parto, 2003). To believe the experience of the ICLEI (2002), nevertheless, “success typically results from steady implementation, over time, of a comprehensive strategy that reflects a community’s vision”.

The Banking Group Santander (SCH) has recently presented an environmental rating to evaluate the environmental risks in which companies may incur for their ordinary activities. The Program, called VIDA (Evaluation of the Impact of Environmental Development) establishes three levels of risks, covering aspects such as pollution, eco-efficiency, and landscape impact). Poor results in the evaluation of social responsibility, including the violation of environmental legislation, may result in denial of credits. The interesting point is to consider environmental behavior as a factor of solvency of companies, since some activities may endanger the survival of the company.

However, some of the problems regarding low levels of participation in SD strategies may directly be attributable to the way information is not only accessed, but organized, interpreted, communicated, and differently judged to be relevant. According to data from the Fundación Entorno (2003), 50% of the Spanish companies do not have enough information on environmental matters, especially in the tourism and oil sectors. The differences among Autonomous Communities are also significant. As shown in the following graph, companies from the Basque Country and Navarra rank first with regard to environmental awareness. A significant number of them have also set environmental management systems.

Graph 3.2.1. Degree of compromise with the environment by ACs



Source: Fundación Entorno (2003)

Similarly to SD awareness within companies, most LA21 processes have already highlighted conflicts over information, data, ideas, and knowledge from which lessons for the design of SD policies could be drawn. With regard to the process of generating, compiling, analyzing and ultimately utilizing specific technical information—to date mostly driven by national, regional and local public authorities—more coordination between top-down policies with bottom-up initiatives would be desirable.

**3. 3 Cross-sector policy integration**

As said earlier, access to European membership led to a growing pressure of the Autonomous Communities for participation in European Affairs. Since no formal mechanisms for ACs participation were previously established, negotiations with the central government led to the setting up of the Conference for European Community Affairs in 1988, which establishes cooperation procedures between the two levels in a

number of sectorial matters (agriculture, fisheries, environment, rural development, etc.). As an example, the Sectorial Conference of the Environment was created in 1995 as a formal channel of cooperation between the central government and the ACs regarding environmental policies. The Conference also holds a number of Commissions on particular environmental issues: water, forestry, biodiversity, protected areas, waste management, etc.

Along with more and better coordination between top-level policies, local policies, and bottom-up initiatives, there should be more coordination between horizontal policies as well.

## 4. Evaluation Methods and Tools for Regional Sustainable Development

### 4.1 Existing evaluation methods and tools (including indicators)

Evaluation of regional sustainable development requires a holistic and integrated approach to economic, environmental and social concerns. This general perspective notwithstanding, evaluation methods and tools also call for precise indicators capable of capturing the links between the economic, social and environmental dimensions and, by the same token, translating sustainability issues into quantifiable measures of economic, environmental and social performance.

Generally, neither the national nor the regional strategies on sustainable development recently promoted by Spanish public authorities have proposed detailed methods for the evaluation of SD objectives beyond the frameworks proposed by the OCDE, the EU or the UNCSD. Some of them—i.e. the EEDS, the Basque and the Valencia strategies propose the setting up of *Observatories of Sustainability* which are entitled to perform external audits of the programs.

The national strategy on SD (EEDS) proposes a “culture of continuous evaluation” based on the work done so far at the European level. It also proposes the development of a set of indicators as a primary goal of the strategy, but no further specifications are provided.

The Basque strategy of SD, referring to three types of indicators, is perhaps the one going into more detail so far. First, it considers “basic indicators” to be developed on the basis on the P-S-R model (pressure-state-response). Second, it proposes up to 23 headline environmental indicators (consumption of natural resources, climate change, gas emissions, quality of water, air, soil, waste management, environmental risks, corporate sustainable development, etc.). Finally, it considers indicators of “compromise” (with the objectives of the program) and “integration” (of the environmental variables within sectorial policies).

As a general trend, it may be concluded that indicators developed to date generally consist of the selection, analysis and combination of official data from a number of sources (National Institute of Statistics, Government, EU and inter-governmental organizations, etc.). With regard to economic development and social aspects, for example, GDP and unemployment rates are generally used as headline indicators of sustainable development. With regard to environmental aspects, indicators measuring some consequences of environmental pressures (relatively easy to apply) are most preferred.

At the local level, the Catalan Network of Peoples and Municipalities towards Sustainability—composed of 180 municipalities—has developed a system of local SD indicators based on the previous models. But, apart from these imports, there is little knowledge about options and potentials of evaluations in the field of sustainable development. As Isla Pera (1997) suggested with regard to environmental indicators for urban sustainable development, the present situation is characterized by:

- a) Dispersion of contents and scope of proposals (lack of heterogeneity and coordination among methodological proposals)
- b) Indicators are not framed in a general model ensuring the interactions between the different aspects of SD.
- c) Inconsistencies in the definition of indicators
- d) Indicators do not cover all the areas required to become a system of sustainable development indicators.

## 4.2 Types of measurement

As said earlier, there is not such thing as a “Spanish model” of evaluation of SD. Furthermore, neither specific methods or a generally applicable approach for the evaluation of sustainable development exist. Most frequently, evaluation guidelines and systems of indicators are based on standard international models, such as the OECD framework of P-S-R (pressure-state-response). As an example, the P-S-R model has been used to evaluate the impact of mass tourism in the Balearic Islands (Meaurio & Murray, 2001). Tourism is the most important industry in the Balearic Islands and it had been traditionally evaluated only in terms of contribution to GDP and number of tourists.

A most relevant descriptive indicator of sustainable development tendencies is provided by the calculus of ecological footprint as designed by Rees and Wackernagel in the 1990s. In Spain the ecological footprint has been mostly used at the local level. As regards Autonomous Communities, some of them have calculated its ecological footprint, but it is still hard to find temporary series of data. An exception to this may be the cases of Catalonia and Navarra. Catalonia has estimated its ecological footprint twice: in 1998 the footprint was equivalent to 6.6 times the total surface of Catalonia, while in 2003 this figure rose to 7.7 times.<sup>11</sup> The equivalent figures for Navarra are 3,46 ha. per inhabitant (1998) and 3.08 ha. per inhabitant (2003)<sup>12</sup>; the footprint registered in the Basque Country is 2.03 ha. per inhabitant (2002) and 2.3 for La Rioja (1999).<sup>13</sup>

The Basque Country has carried out a measurement of the ecological impact similar to that of the ecological footprint. It applies to the overall territory the materials flow analysis (MFA) methodology, that is, the relation between extraction, transformation, consumption, and recycling of natural resources, and the capacity of the environment to produce those inputs and then to absorb the residues. MFA allows a better understanding of potentially hidden interactions from extraction to elimination of natural resources. Taking this methodology into account, in 2000 each Basque citizen consumed 92 tons of materials, (11.6 tones more than in 1998 and 16.7 more than in 1986).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Data available at <http://fes.olot.org/docs/butlleti-fes-num8.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Data available at [http://www.mayorgoma.com/a/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=1677](http://www.mayorgoma.com/a/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=1677)

<sup>13</sup> Data available at [http://www.larioja.org/ma/prevencion\\_ambiental/huella\\_ecologica/huellas\\_mundo.htm](http://www.larioja.org/ma/prevencion_ambiental/huella_ecologica/huellas_mundo.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Data available at [http://www.ihobe.net/Publicaciones/descarga/22Sostenibilidad\\_cast.pdf](http://www.ihobe.net/Publicaciones/descarga/22Sostenibilidad_cast.pdf)

### **4.3 Harmonization**

To a considerable extent, there is no harmonization between different evaluation systems for regional sustainable development processes beyond the import of international guidelines and standards. This is quite understandable, because regional sustainable development is a relatively new policy area—compared to environment itself—that has only been given high priority in EU’s policy for a relatively short period of time.

To be sure, such a harmonization process is envisaged in the future, most likely via harmonization of requirements for evaluation of Structural Fund programs. Harmonization coming from the national level is unlikely to happen, because of [at least] three reasons: (i) distribution of competencies on SD between the central government and ACs is not clear and will be subject to ongoing political negotiation; (ii) ACs will tend to perceive national initiatives as hierarchical guidelines imposed on them (specially in conflicts arising in ACs ruled by nationalist governments); (iii) most ACs have already shown greater rapidity and flexibility to adapt to European standards.

## 5. Analysis of Regional Sustainable Development

### 5.1 Experiences with regional sustainable development

As it is well-known, the European Summit in Gothenburg (June 2001) launched a European strategy for sustainable development in which it put the bases for the integration of environmental, social and economic areas. Article 2 of the EU treaty summarizes the prevalent *Zeitgeist* by stating that sustainable development is to be characterized by a high degree of employment and social security, by continuous economic growth and the strengthening of the competitiveness of European industry, as well as by environmental protection and improved environmental quality. The improvement of the quality of life is also indicated as an overall objective.

Along with the European impulse towards sustainable development, Europe is leading the adoption of Regional and Local Agendas 21, since 80 percent of LA21 are being developed within the European borders. In Spain, the actual implementation of LA21 has nevertheless been moderate. According to the ICLEI database, 738 Spanish municipalities are signatories of the Åalborg Charter (out of 8,098). It is necessary to highlight that in Spain, Environmental Departments of ACs governments are responsible for coordinating LA21 initiatives (with the exception of Catalonia, where the Department of Presidency is the responsible one). This may be disadvantageous for the implementation of SD strategies, since environmental departments tend to have a relatively low budget compared to other government areas and, as a result, the programs may be reduced to internal action plans (Aguado & Echebarría, 2003: 23). As for the involvement of ACs in LA21 processes Aguado & Echebarría (2003: 22) have elaborated the following typology:

- ☑ ACs with a significant number of activities promoting LA21: Catalonia, Balearic Islands, Navarre, Andalusia, the Basque Country, and Castile-León.
- ☑ ACs with a lesser number of activities promoting LA21, but significant altogether: Madrid, Asturias, La Rioja, Galicia, and Murcia.
- ☑ ACs with a low number of activities oriented towards development of LA21 processes: Castile-la Mancha, Comunidad Valenciana, Aragón, Cantabria, Canary Islands, and Extremadura.

With regard to the Catalan case, the situation is two-fold: on the one hand, Catalonia does not have an Agenda 21 as a regional entity yet: to date, preparatory work is being done and there is a report prepared for the Johannesburg Summit that provides a global idea of current progress on the initiatives and discussions, but the overall process is far from being completed. On the other hand, local authorities are promoting projects on sustainable development and cooperating through networks, but there is no straightforward relationship between these projects and LA21 processes. The wording of the official data provided by the Catalan government is altogether ambiguous concerning municipalities:

### 5.1.1. Catalonia at a glance

- ✘ 25 percent of the Catalan municipalities are engaged in LA21 processes, (32 percent have signed the Åalborg Charter)
- ✘ The 21 largest Catalan cities (> than 50.000 inhabitants) have initiated processes of environmental planning
- ✘ 82 percent of the Catalan population lives in a city that has a LA21 or projects of environmental planning

Source: Government of Catalonia (Department of Environment, 2002)

## 5.2. Practical implications of regional sustainable development

The idea of adjusting progress and technological innovation to sustainability standards faces two important criticisms. On the one hand, the concept has been contested by its ambiguity, its vagueness, or its failure to reconcile inconsistent ideas (Smith, 2002: 247). On the other hand, the standard Brundtland definition suggests that a sustainable balance can exist between the needs of the biosphere and those of the present and future generations. However, as McDonach & Yaneske put it (McDonach & Yaneske, 2002: 225):

Unfortunately, no one knows what this balance is or, indeed, whether the needs of the biosphere have already been compromised. Further, there is evidence to suggest that balances which are sustainable are limited to bounded discrete states of equilibrium conditions with the corollary that there are far more sets of conditions which lead to non-sustainable states than *vice versa*. It would be comforting to suppose that, should equilibrium fail, a higher state would naturally collapse to the next lower state of sustainable dynamic equilibrium, e.g. Type 2 to Type 1 sustainability. However, it is perfectly possible that all higher states would collapse catastrophically to the Type 0 or Ground State of Sustainability on failing. This suggests that the more individual subsystems tend towards higher states of dynamic equilibrium, the more dire the risk of catastrophic failure on a global scale.

Practical policy outcomes of regional sustainable development, either at the regional or the local level, will face those challenges. To date, the search of such an alternative balance is a far cry from the scope of both regional and local policies displayed by Spanish ACs. If EU regions are ready to adopt SD beyond the rhetoric of A21, the gap between the economic and the ecosystem time scales will need to be bridged at different levels. Spanish ACs will have to make an effort in acting as an interface between the global and the local if they are to be effective poles of sustainable development. As current attempts to promote sustainable development have mainly been undertaken on the regional and local level, regions have a vantage point to assess the difficulties experienced locally in a broader, interrelated manner.

### **5.3 General trade-offs**

As most European regions, regional sustainable development processes face the same trade-offs in economic-environmental terms as well as in environmental-social issues. In Spain, mass tourism is a case in point, especially for its most relevant contribution to GDP of Mediterranean ACs and the Canary Islands. Since the 1960s, Spanish public authorities fostered a sun-and-beach tourist industry that succeeded in attracting millions of Europeans to the peninsula. But the “Sunny Spain” model inherited by the Spanish democracy eventually led to a dramatic degradation of coastal regions and their surrounding landscape resources.

In spite of present efforts of both central and autonomous administrations to rationalize urban and coastal planning, the quest of a sustainable tourist model that neutralizes the impulse towards maximum tourist growth remains an adventurous enterprise.

For more than 30 years, Calvià has been the main tourist destination of the Balearic Islands and one of the most important resorts of the Mediterranean Sea. In cooperation with AC programs, national, and international institutions, Calvià succeeded in putting in place a local agenda to manage environmental degradation, urban growth, and loss of attractiveness of its model of massive tourism. By establishing 10 lines of action and 40 initiatives, the Local Agenda concentrates its efforts on the preservation of nature, restructuring of the urban areas, and modernization of the tourist economic model. At present, Calvià is considered to be a paradigmatic example of successful implementation of a SD model in cooperation with multiple actors and level of governance

### **5.4 Post-2006**

Structural funds have been major driving forces for regional development of lagging Autonomous Communities in Spain, even though the vast majority of projects have been focusing on rural, industrial and transports system development rather than on regional sustainable development itself. In any case, 50 percent of the Cohesion Funds up to 31 December 1999 were allocated to the environment. These funds financed more than 200 environmental projects linked to the subjects and sectors identified in the Fifth EC Environmental Action Program “Towards Sustainability”.

No doubt, Structural Funds have broadened the development models envisaged in the 1980s and have offered a major challenge for the introduction of the principle of sustainable development as major economic doctrine. However, roughly 70% of Spanish population still remains unfamiliar with the concept of sustainable development. To a great extent, therefore, RSD success will largely depend upon a consensual, clearer and more detailed specification of goals, methods, indicators, and evaluation of results for each particular program. Furthermore, since European funds allocated to Spanish regions are expected to decrease in the post 2006 scenario, the involvement of industries, business, and civil society at large in both the design and implementation of both RSD strategies and institutions will be more critical than ever. This will be specially the case of institutions

formed in the context of Structural Funds. In other words, efforts for regional sustainable development will have to be shared by multiple public and private stakeholders.

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