



Catalonia 2020 Strategy

EMPLOYMENT
& TRAINING

SOCIAL COHESION

INNOVATION
& KNOWLEDGE

ENTREPRENEURISM

INTERNATIONALISATION

GREEN ECONOMY

Catalonia 2020 Strategy

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Ministry of Economy and Knowledge

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Catalonia 2020 Strategy



This document, which establishes the guidelines for the Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020), was drawn up based on the Europe 2020 Strategy and with the participation of all the Catalan Government ministries as well as economic and social stakeholders.

Contents

1. Executive summary

2. Bases for growth

3. Framework of reference and background

3.1. The Europe 2020 Strategy

3.2. Previous strategic agreements

3.3. The Government Plan and the ministerial plans

4. The Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020) and its ten defining component parts

5. The six priority areas of action under ECAT 2020

5.1. Employment and training

5.2. Social cohesion

5.3. Innovation and knowledge

5.4. Entrepreneurism

5.5. Internationalisation

5.6. Green economy

6. Shaping policy: strategic lines of action

6.1. Improving employability

6.2. Improving the performance of the employment market

6.3. Facilitating business access to finance

6.4. Promoting the strategic adaptation of businesses

6.5. Promoting entrepreneurship

6.6. Fostering the transition to a more resource-efficient economy

6.7. Modernising the Administration

6.8. Promoting strategic infrastructure

1. Executive summary

In accordance with the new framework established by the European Union in its Europe 2020 Strategy, and building on the experience gained from the two previous Strategic Agreements for the competitiveness of the Catalan economy (2005-2007 and 2008-2011), the Government of Catalonia has drawn up the Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020). ECAT 2020 is an initiative designed to ensure the long-term competitiveness of the Catalan economy and better employment, establishing a roadmap for economic recovery whilst preserving the model of social cohesion.

ECAT 2020 establishes objectives and provides a stable framework to guide policies for competitiveness towards the year 2020. This strategy is based on adapting production in line with the model of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth promoted by the EU. The ECAT 2020 is reinforced by the fact that it was drawn up in line with common objectives agreed by the EU, and which are widely accepted by governments and economic and social stakeholders.

Taking into account both the headline targets and the seven flagship initiatives established in the Europe 2020 Strategy and the needs of the Catalan economy, ECAT 2020 identifies six priority areas: employment and training; social cohesion; innovation and knowledge; entrepreneurship; internationalisation; and the green economy.

ECAT 2020 is organised around eight strategic lines of action. These are broken down into operational objectives and quantifiable targets for products and services, which are reviewed annually in an evaluation process based on a system of indicators.

ECAT 2020 is launched in a scenario marked by budget consolidation. These conditions make it more difficult to adopt multi-annual

budgetary commitments, and require substantial adjustment of public sector spending.

The Government is responsible for drawing up, planning and implementing policies to improve competitiveness and employment. In many spheres, however, the effective and efficient implementation of these policies depends on the action of other stakeholders (other public authorities, employers' organisations, companies, trade unions, workers' associations, etc.). The purpose of ECAT 2020 is to provide a framework that can unite the efforts of all those involved.

ECAT 2020 establishes a system of governance that promotes dialogue and, where necessary, provides for external contributions through a transparent, open system and a promotion and communication plan that will help to identify this initiative as a reference for Catalan competitiveness amongst citizens.

2. Bases for growth

The crisis situation requires an ambitious, motivating and well-thought-out response. To this end, on 25 March 2011, CAREC, the Advisory Council for Economic Recovery and Growth of the Catalan Government, presented a report on the situation and challenges facing the Catalan economy.

In its report, CAREC describes the situation and prospects for the Catalan economy and identifies the priorities that should guide policies aimed at helping Catalonia to recover and begin growing again. The report proposes strategic actions to help the economy recover from the crisis and move towards balanced, sustained growth. Moreover, it also identifies the four great challenges whose outcome will decide how the Catalan economy develops: employment, finance, productivity and confidence.

The CAREC report stresses that the strategy for the competitiveness of the Catalan economy should revolve around four basic ideas:

- Taking advantage of the crisis to thoroughly overhaul the Catalan economy.
- Back to basics, that is relaunching the project for an entrepreneurial Catalonia with a strong and firmly-rooted industrial base in order to attract more sectors with high potential for job creation and encourage new, emerging knowledge-based sectors.
- Eliminating the barriers and rigidity that prevent the Catalan economy from growing. The public authorities should foster entrepreneurial activity, providing guidance and establishing the necessary conditions to enable future-looking business sectors to advance and ensuring that they are not destroyed.
- In order to build the future, certain values must be reaffirmed. In the post-crisis scenario, Catalonia's institutional and legislative framework should be committed to finding the best possible balance between equality and efficiency and encouraging activities that will generate value.

The Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020) was drawn up in accordance with two recommendations put forward by CAREC:

- That the ideas expressed in it should result in specific operational proposals.

- That confidence should be strengthened through institutionalised agreements.

Noting the will expressed by economic and social stakeholders and the parliamentary groups, the Catalan Government reaffirms its conviction of the need to build, within the framework of institutional agreement, the foundations to support a long-term strategy for competitiveness.

3. Framework of reference and background

ECAT 2020 is inspired by the Europe 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiatives, which aim at improving competitiveness and sustainable growth potential in the European Union. ECAT 2020 also builds on the experience gathered from the two previous Strategic Agreements in Catalonia between the Catalan Government and economic and social stakeholders.

3.1. The Europe 2020 Strategy

The Europe 2020 Strategy, adopted by the European Council on 17 June 2010, is an initiative designed to help the European economy recover from the crisis and to emerge stronger from it by promoting competitiveness, productivity and growth. The Strategy sets out five headline targets that are to be achieved both in the EU as a whole and in each of the Member States. These targets focus on: employment, R&D, climate change and energy, education, and combating poverty and social exclusion.

Within the framework established by the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Member States are required to launch initiatives aimed at generating growth and employment through the so-called National Reform Programmes. These annual programmes develop and set specific measures for each Member State under the Europe 2020 Strategy, linking EU actions to those implemented by central, regional and local authorities.

Europe 2020 calls on the European economies to launch new engines to boost growth and jobs, and proposes that this should be done through seven flagship initiatives: a) An Agenda for new skills and jobs; b) European platform against poverty; c) Digital agenda for Europe; d) Innovation Union; e) Youth on the move; f) Resource efficient Europe; and g) An Industrial policy for the globalisation era. These flagship initiatives, which are to be implemented in coordination between the EU, the Member States and the European regions, focus on three overall growth priorities:

- Developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation (smart growth);
- Promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy (sustainable growth), and

- Fostering a high-employment economy that can ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion (inclusive growth).

ECAT 2020 follows the roadmap laid down by the Europe 2020 Strategy, adapting it to the Catalan context and the priorities of its economy.

3.2. Previous strategic agreements

Catalonia has had experience with two previous strategic agreements for the competitiveness of the Catalan economy since 2005. These proved to be valid tools for cooperation between the Government and economic and social stakeholders.

On 16 February 2005, the Catalan Government and economic and social stakeholders signed the Strategic Agreement for the Internationalisation, Quality of Employment and Competitiveness of the Catalan Economy. This strategy established eighty-six measures to be implemented over the 2005-2007 period to promote competitiveness and shape economic policy in order to boost productivity, economic growth, quality of employment and social cohesion.

When this agreement expired, the signatories decided to revise its content and give the initiative new impulse. As a result, on 3 June 2008, an agreement featuring 102 measures based on 23 priority areas, grouped into seven thematic blocks, was signed to cover the 2008-2011 period.

Although the capacity to fully implement this second initiative was inevitably conditioned by the current economic crisis and the subsequent budgetary restrictions, all the actors involved are convinced that these strategic agreements have enormous potential to help establish a project for the future development and projection of the country.

3.3. The Government Plan and the ministerial plans

The framework for the measures established in ECAT 2020 is provided by both the Government Plan and the ministerial plans. ECAT 2020 is a central pillar of Government action, encompassing and coordinating all measures implemented by Catalan Government ministries to seek synergies and complementarities and improve the efficiency of competitiveness policies.

ECAT 2020 includes measures established under the sectoral plans drawn up by Catalan Government ministries to translate the Europe 2020 Strategy to Catalonia. A particularly important initiative in this context is the Catalan Employment Strategy, whose main goal is to reduce unemployment. This Strategy is structured into three large blocks: job creation; employability; and improving the labour market.

The current situation of economic crisis and public spending restrictions requires appropriate, effective and efficient economic policy measures. The Government is responsible for designing, planning and implementing such policies, but in many cases they can only be put into effect in cooperation with other stakeholders (other public authorities, employers' organisations, companies, trade unions, workers' associations, etc.).

4. The Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020) and its ten defining components

The Catalan Government has drawn up ECAT 2020, a strategy for improving the competitiveness of the Catalan economy and employment. ECAT 2020 takes its inspiration from the Europe 2020 Strategy, which establishes a roadmap for economic recovery based on conserving the existing model for social cohesion.

The objectives established by ECAT 2020 are in line with those agreed within the EU and widely accepted by both state and regional governments and economic and social stakeholders.

The ten defining components

1. Government **leadership** and **dialogue** with economic and social stakeholders is vital. **Agreement** will strengthen moves to adapt the production model to a more competitive system, generating sustainable growth and creating more and better jobs.
2. The Government **balances** long-term strategic vision with a commitment to realistic, achievable short-term targets. These targets should take the shape of specific, effective initiatives aimed at achieving a clear and positive impact.
3. In order to facilitate its management, monitoring and assessment, ECAT 2020 has a **simple structure**.
4. ECAT 2020 **is built on solid foundations**: the Europe 2020 Strategy; the two previous Strategic Agreements for competitiveness; and the recommendations put forward by the reports of CAREC, the Advisory Council for Economic Recovery and Growth of the Catalan Government.

5. The content of ECAT 2020 is **flexible and adaptable**: it establishes mechanisms for ongoing review according to the results of evaluation and changing circumstances. This both implies and requires constant dialogue between the whole Administration and all economic and social stakeholders.
6. ECAT 2020 will be **monitored annually**, with an interim assessment report drawn up in 2015. In accordance with the evaluation model established by the Europe 2020 Strategy, both quantitative and qualitative analyses will be carried out.
7. ECAT 2020 is a **central element in Government action**. As such, it is included in the planning and budgetary system, as well as in the Government Plan and the sectoral plans established by the ministries to translate the Europe 2020 Strategy.
8. ECAT 2020 aims to ensure **that full advantage is taken of synergies** between different Catalan Government ministries, and that these synergies are enhanced to make action more efficient and optimise efforts and resources. The organisational structure of ECAT 2020 fosters a methodology that ensures a transversal approach to both formulating targets and monitoring the implementation of measures.
9. ECAT 2020 fosters **transparency and participation** based on the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. The management model adopted encourages debate and external proposals through a dynamic, transparent system of participation and a promotion and communication plan.
10. As in the two previous agreements, ECAT 2020 encourages participation and dialogue through **commissions** formed by different stakeholders. These bodies are:

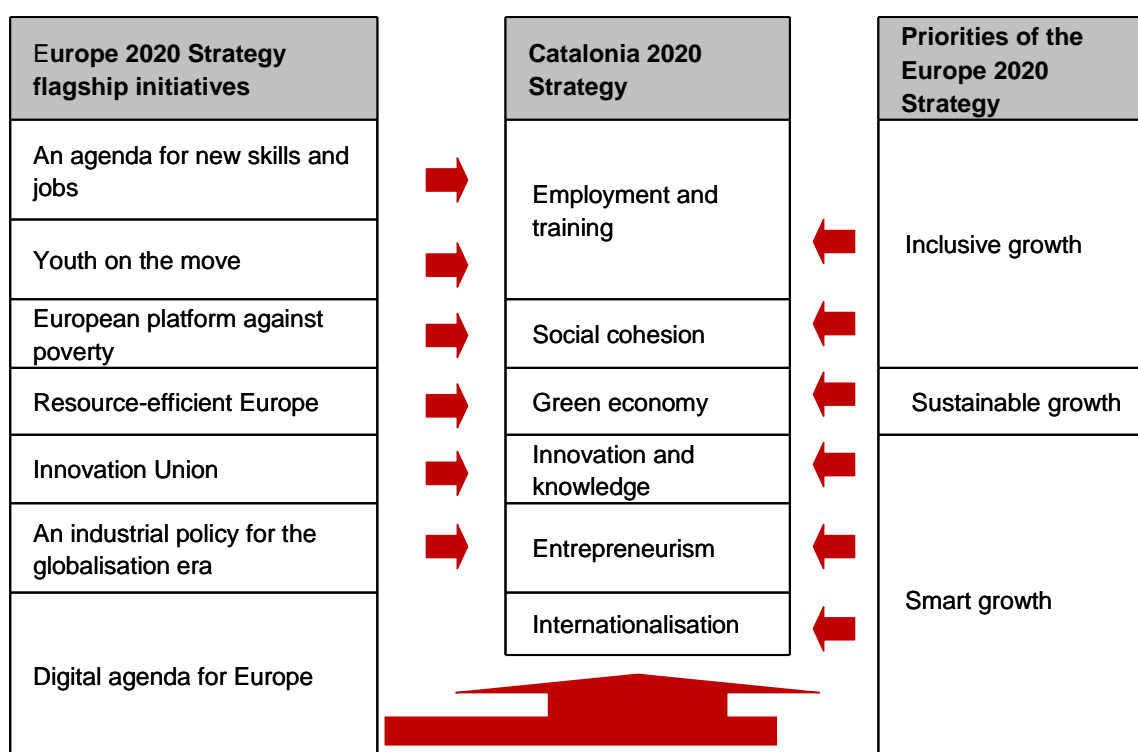
- An institutional commission, the highest body for monitoring ECAT 2020, formed by representatives from the organisations that endorse the strategy;
- Monitoring commissions, formed by representatives from the ministries involved and by economic and social stakeholders; and
- A parliamentary monitoring commission, formed by the members of the ordinary monitoring commission and the deputies appointed to it by the Parliament of Catalonia.

The Ministry of Economy and Knowledge, which acts as the technical secretariat for ECAT 2020, is also supported by other units with transversal functions. The measures established under ECAT 2020 are assessed and monitored by inter-ministerial working groups formed by those responsible for measures with the ministries themselves, personnel from the technical secretariat and, if appropriate, outside experts.

5. The six priority areas of action

ECAT 2020 identifies six priority areas based on, firstly, the headline targets and the seven flagship initiatives of Europe 2020 Strategy and, secondly, the needs and priorities of the Catalan economy.

Equivalence between the Europe 2020 Strategy flagship initiatives and headline targets and the six priority areas of action identified by ECAT 2020



5.1. Employment and training

The greatest challenge facing the Catalan economy is to create employment. The Government must provide a stable, reliable environment in order to restart the production system and economic growth, an essential condition for generating jobs and reducing the high unemployment rate. The Government will promote sectors with high potential for job creation. These sectors include, for example: the energy industry (energy efficiency and renewable energy sources); home rehabilitation; ICTs; care for

dependent people; logistics and transport; the agri-food industry; and certain company service activities (such as design, translation, consultancy and call centres). It should be noted, however, that workers in these sectors require specific training and skills, which the education system should provide.

It is necessary to improve the way the labour market works, correcting certain structural problems. For instance, in order to foster economic growth based on increased productivity and quality job creation, it is necessary to improve mechanisms for professional mediation, information and guidance so as to adjust supply to demand in the labour market. Policies promoting a culture of mobility with regard to employment and training are also crucial to improving employability.

Within its responsibilities, the Catalan Government should promote job quality and adopt measures to combat the informal economy and undeclared work. A commitment should also be made to reducing segmentation and establishing a labour relations model that fosters the maintenance of employment and the modernisation of labour organisations. Economic and social stakeholders should also play a major role in this sphere.

In order to ensure that the labour market operate adequately, the results achieved by the education system must also be improved, and this means a reduction in school drop-out rates and equipping human capital with improved skills. Professional profiles and training provisions should also be adapted to the real needs of the production system.

The Government has adopted as a priority measure the design and implementation of an advanced educational model aimed at generating an innovative, inclusive and quality vocational training model, one that offers lifelong, flexible education and is adapted to the needs of the production system. English has become the international language, with a high predominance in all spheres of life: economics, the media, the new technologies, postgraduate studies, international mobility, etc.

Catalonia faces the challenge of modernising its universities in order to respond to the demands of the knowledge society. In order to improve their contribution to individuals and to society as a whole, the universities should adapt to the needs of production sectors and their spheres of influence.

5.2. Social cohesion

Fighting poverty and social exclusion is vital not only in order to guarantee equality and to advance towards a fairer, more cohesive society that provides equal opportunities for all, but also as a necessary factor in economic recovery. The crisis and rising unemployment have caused a substantial increase in situations of social inequality and poverty. Today, unemployment is the main cause of poverty amongst the working-age population. For this reason, measures promoting social cohesion focus on integrating unemployed people into the labour market and on improving job-seeking skills.

Promoting the social economy is a basic means of correcting inequalities. In the present economic climate, public spending caps greatly restrict the public authorities' capacity to respond to growing social demands. More than ever, social challenges require social innovation. The creation of new business initiatives in the social economy—which has a long tradition in Catalonia—is essential to bring out the full potential of social enterprises to create new jobs and provide solutions for social problems.

5.3. Innovation and knowledge

Catalan companies cannot compete successfully on the world market without innovation. Technological innovation which enables energy efficiency, the optimum use of resources, the efficient provision of goods and services and the generation of new markets, is a major motor for increasing productivity. Moreover, non-technological innovation, linked to new challenges regarding organisation or processes, allows companies to adopt strategic or structural changes that can generate new business opportunities and provide a source of competitiveness.

The Catalan ICT industry should act as a driving force behind economic growth, helping to increase business productivity and competitiveness and creating jobs. The introduction and more efficient use of digital technologies improves people's quality of life (better health care, safer, more efficient transport, easier access to public services and cultural content, new opportunities for the media, etc.).

Research should be aimed at achieving objectives and results that can have a direct impact in Catalonia. Moreover, it is important to continue increasing the critical mass achieved by research centres by encouraging cooperation between companies, the public authorities and the universities.

R&D at universities and research centres, particularly in the facilitating technologies (industrial biotechnology, nanotechnology, advanced materials, photonics, microelectronics, nanoelectronics and energy), can provide the necessary base for developing new processes, goods and services, thereby generating new growth opportunities for companies in all sectors.

The Government supports universities, research centres, technology centres and science and technology parks in order to foster the establishment of companies with high technological content and highly qualified jobs. Consequently, attracting and retaining talent in the research system and employing highly qualified personnel in the production sector are crucial conditions for increasing the competitiveness of the Catalan economy. Biotechnology and biomedicine provide an example of the success of public policies for innovation based on research and highly qualified personnel.

5.4. Entrepreneurism

Business enterprises are expected to lead the recovery of economic activity. To emerge from the crisis, it is necessary to boost business activity, which is one of the strongest points of the Catalan economy. Businesses must maintain or intensify their activities, increasing in size and number.

The limited availability of resources causes problems of liquidity that, in turn, hampers business activity. For this reason, the Government must facilitate access to finance for business investment and innovation and provide support for the capitalisation of Catalan companies.

Given its key role in spreading technological change, industry should act as a motor to increase productivity. International competition and the economic crisis require companies to rethink their competitive strategies, particularly as regards technological innovation, internationalisation and adjustment towards activities and products with higher added value, and greater sustainability and growth potential.

Catalan industry, and SMEs, which account for the majority of enterprises in the Catalan industrial sector, should lead the recovery of economic activity and job creation. However, all too often, SMEs have neither the training nor the tools needed to adapt to a rapidly-changing and ever-more competitive environment. For this reason, the Government promotes SME cooperation strategies, establishing clusters and

special plans and providing resources and services to simplify procedures for start-ups. An outstanding initiative in this field is “Catalunya emprèn”, a programme whose objective is to help realise entrepreneurial potential. The initiative takes the shape of a public-private network that coordinates all stakeholders committed to launching new business projects. Similarly, the Government promotes a new model for relations between companies and the Administration through various measures. These measures include: providing a new framework law to reduce and simplify the administrative procedures required to create a business; assessing the impact caused by regulation; and introducing a one-stop-shop for companies.

5.5. Internationalisation

Catalan industry is strongly internationalised, but still has potential to increase exports. There are some 13,500 companies in Catalonia which regularly export goods and services, but more than 40,000 firms are potential exporters or export only occasionally. In many cases, businesses do not take the decision to export because they lack the necessary know-how or resources. The Government fosters this potential through programmes promoting exports and internationalisation.

Catalonia occupies a leading position in rankings of places considered good to do business in. Moreover, with more than 3,000 multinationals operating in the country, Catalonia has a long tradition as a favourite destination for direct foreign investment. The Government is active in promoting new investment, as well as business reinvestment and expansion.

Good infrastructure is a key condition for attracting and consolidating the presence of foreign companies and businesses with high added value. Consequently, measures to consolidate Catalan ports as logistic platforms and as a gateway to Europe for the Mediterranean region, as well as rail connections with the rest of Europe and the Peninsula and multimodality in the logistic system are crucial to the competitiveness of companies based in Catalonia. Other vital conditions include: improved quality of energy supply; and the provision of latest-generation fixed and mobile telecommunications networks.

5.6. Green economy

The Catalan economy, like that of the rest of Europe, has taken up the challenge of moving towards more efficient use of resources. Industry needs to speed up the process of transition towards an economy that produces low levels of greenhouse gas emissions and promotes an efficient use of energy and resources. This transition towards a more sustainable production model represents a new opportunity for reindustrialisation.

The move towards a more sustainable growth model depends largely on the commitment of established production sectors. Increasing efficiency in the use of resources gives companies competitive advantage, promotes the development of new activities and job creation and reduces dependency on imports of goods and raw materials.

The green economy offers great economic opportunities to industry, the energy sector, farming and tourism. The Government encourages businesses to take advantage of such opportunities by promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, renewable energy generation, the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity and local human activities to preserve and improve natural heritage. These actions create value and generate wealth and, particularly, jobs that help to anchor the population to the local territory and encourage new industries based on the emerging energy technologies.

6. Shaping policy: strategic lines of action

ECAT 2020 is structured around eight strategic lines of action which establish the guidelines for competitiveness policies towards the year 2020. These eight strategic lines of action are:

1. Improving employability
2. Improving the performance of the labour market
3. Facilitating companies' access to finance
4. Promoting the strategic adaptation of businesses
5. Promoting entrepreneurship
6. Fostering the transition to a more resource-efficient economy
7. Modernising the Administration
8. Promoting strategic infrastructure

Each priority corresponds to a number of operational objectives that translate into annually quantifiable measures (products and services) that have a direct impact on the six priority areas: employment and training; social cohesion; innovation and knowledge; entrepreneurship; internationalisation; and the green economy.

Targets, budgets and monitoring indicators for each product and service will be established annually. Moreover, quantitative evaluation and qualitative analyses of the impact of ECAT 2020 will be carried out in the six priority areas.

6.1. Improving employability

People's knowledge, skills and aptitudes are crucial elements for innovation, productivity and the competitiveness of the economy. In their two-fold function —social and economic— education and training should enable people to acquire the skills they need in order to find a place in the labour market and adapt to a rapidly changing world. In the present context of severe economic crisis and high unemployment, it is particularly important to improve employability as a way of working towards a change to

a more balanced production model, based on productivity. In the light of this, ECAT 2020 emphasises the importance of the new Catalan 2012-2020 Employment Strategy and the current Plan for the Development of Active Policies.

6.1.1. Improving personalised careers guidance for unemployed people

Providing more effective, active policies with regard to the labour market and making a decisive contribution to improving employability are two of the challenges facing the Catalan economy. On this point, all international organisations stress the vital role played by career guidance in integration into employment.

Career information and guidance services provide support for people who need to take decisions with regard to training and employment, helping to ensure that they make appropriate choices about their professional career and training needs. Consequently, a strategic element in improving employability is to ensure that everybody, especially the unemployed, has appropriate, personalised access to career guidance services.

6.1.2. Helping young people gain access to the labour market

The dramatic situation young people face in the labour market requires society to redouble its efforts in this area. The Government has identified as a major priority the challenge of lowering the unemployment rate and, more specifically, implementing policies to improve employability and increase job opportunities for young people.

Measures in this sphere, in accordance with the Catalan Government's competences, are aimed at the following objectives:

- Making vocational training more flexible in order to adapt the professional skills taught to current and future needs of the production system,
- Promoting alternative and dual training models,
- Enabling people to accredit skills learned through professional experience,
- Substantially increasing the number of young people taking vocational training courses, and
- Increasing personalised career guidance services.

6.1.3. Promoting new niches of employment

To foster job creation, Government measures need to focus on new employment niches and to train workers for the emerging sectors with potentially high future demand, such as personal care services, sustainability and multimedia content. Promoting such emerging industries is essential in order to reduce the high structural unemployment generated by sectors in decline and to establish a model for economic growth that is more balanced than previous models.

6.1.4. Matching vocational training to labour market requirements

Serious imbalances exist between supply and demand in the Catalan labour market, especially as regards vocational training. Vocational training should be a tool for professionalising people and helping them to find and retain jobs, and provisions need to be brought more in line with the actual needs of production.

The Government promotes an integrated vocational training system with the following objectives: to provide a single vocational training service that is adapted to the needs of the labour market; to develop a model for dual vocational training in cooperation with companies and production industries; to introduce a model for the recognition of work experience and to accredit professional skills; and to establish integrated career information and guidance services.

6.1.5. Raising rates of school success

In order to reduce the high school drop-out rate in Catalonia, action is needed with regard to the basic skills taught at primary school. This action should focus on the basic skills, particularly by encouraging reading and increasing the number of hours devoted to mathematics. With regard to reading, the aim is to improve habits and skills amongst the school population in the conviction that these are a key requirement for school success and lifelong learning. Moreover, individual support is provided to pupils in order to respond to special needs. If these needs are detected early, there is more chance of pupils successfully completing their schooling.

6.1.6. Promoting full comprehension of English as a third language

With its notable presence in the spheres of economics, the new technologies and higher studies, English has become *the* international language. In order to be

competitive on the international scene, it is necessary to improve English language. The Foreign Language Plan increases the number of classes given in English at all levels throughout the education system, as well as promoting other activities that encourage the use of English by pupils and teachers both in the classroom and outside.

6.1.7. Introducing a new university model based on excellence and internationalisation

The strategy aimed at adapting the university model to a model of excellence and a high degree of internationalisation focuses on six areas: restructuring university provisions; a new model for academic personnel; promoting common or joint services; new policy for fees and grants; a new model for the governance of universities; and strengthening the position of universities as driving forces for growth. This new model also includes employing teaching and research staff of excellence and establishing prestigious MA programmes with high international profiles.

6.1.8. Increasing integration into labour market of people from groups at risk of social exclusion

Unemployment is the main cause of poverty amongst the working-age population. For this reason, the Government promotes measures to foster integration into the labour market amongst groups at risk of social exclusion. These measures include, particularly: the provision of training; employment incentives; awareness-raising programmes; and career guidance services. Support is provided particularly for the integration into employment of people receiving the minimum income allowance, immigrants and ex-convicts.

6.1.9. Using ICTs to promote equal opportunities and improve vocational skills

Accessible use of information and communication technologies improves employability and inclusion and has positive effects on social cohesion. Efforts focus particularly on promoting digital literacy and computer skills and increasing regular Internet use amongst the under-privileged.

6.1.10. Attracting and retaining talent and employing highly-qualified professionals in the production sector

To prevent the brain drain and to attract talent to the production sector, it is important to ensure that sufficient opportunities exist for highly-qualified workers. In this respect, the

Catalan Government aims to promote the presence of PhD holders at companies and attract personnel capable of leading innovative projects in the production sector. Policies for attracting and retaining talent are focused particularly on such sectors as research and innovation, health care and sectors with high added value.

6.1.11. Promoting professional and training mobility

Engaging in professional or educational activities abroad adds greatly to the participants' curriculum, training and experience, and represents an opportunity for those wishing to obtain professional qualifications abroad. Measures to promote such mobility include providing more information about job offers in other European countries and promoting professional and educational stays abroad.

Operational objective	Employment and training	Social cohesion	Innovation and knowledge	Entrepreneurism	Internationalisation	Green economy
STRATEGIC LINE 1. Improving employability						
1.1. Improving personalised careers guidance for unemployed people						
1.2. Helping young people to gain access to the labour market						
1.3. Promoting new niches of employment						
1.4. Matching vocational training to labour market requirements						
1.5. Raising rates of school success						
1.6. Promoting full comprehension of English as a third language						
1.7. Introducing a new university model based on excellence and internationalisation						
1.8. Increasing integration into the labour market of people from groups at risk of social exclusion						
1.9. Using ICTs to promote equal opportunities and improve vocational skills						
1.10. Attracting and retaining talent and employing highly-qualified professionals in the production sector						
1.11. Promoting professional and training mobility						

6.2. Improving labour market performance

The Catalan labour market has some structural shortcomings that require correction in order to reduce the high levels of unemployment and to generate economic growth through increased productivity and the creation of quality jobs. The Catalan Government's powers in this field are limited. Several of the measures established in ECAT 2020 are contained in the Inter-Professional Agreement of Catalonia, which was signed by trade union organisations and employers' organisations in November 2011.

6.2.1. Improving efficiency and information with regard to employment mediation mechanisms

For the labour market to operate well, it is essential to ensure smooth communications between those looking for jobs and companies requiring workers. To this end, it is vital to improve public employment services, to strengthen company mediation services and to enhance and increase the information available to job-seekers.

The Government should also promote strategies to encourage Catalan businesses to implement measures at improving employability through open agreements that, for example, encourage companies to hire trainees.

6.2.2. Promoting a model of labour relations aimed at increasing productivity and maintaining jobs

The legal and institutional framework should help to create an environment that is favourable to job creation and to enabling companies to increase productivity and become more competitive. However, to guarantee job quality and security, collective negotiation processes should be aimed at increasing company productivity and creating and maintaining jobs, as well as taking into account the diversity of businesses and their circumstances, both at present and in the mid term.

Permanent social mediation bodies should contribute to building a labour relations model that can serve as a tool to promote productivity and job quality, as well as providing alternatives for resolving conflicts. To this end, economic and social stakeholders should undertake to focus collective negotiation on increasing productivity within the Catalan economy.

6.2.3. Improving job quality and conditions of employment

In order to foster sustained economic growth based on productivity, it is crucial to promote the creation of quality jobs. A quality working environment and secure conditions of employment are key factors in persuading workers to commit to company projects and contribute to improving competitiveness.

Government measures in this regard should be supported by economic and social stakeholders, who should foster job quality and security and spread prevention culture amongst Catalan businesses.

6.2.4. Preventing fraud connected to undeclared work and undue reception of benefits

Undeclared work leaves workers unprotected, reduces public revenues and causes unfair competition with firms that do comply with the law. In order to prevent fraud connected to undeclared work, the Catalan Government undertakes regular inspections of companies to ensure that immigration laws are not breached. Moreover, to prevent the undue reception of benefits (such as those for temporary disability), the Government establishes improved provisions for detecting cases of fraud.

Operational objective	Employment and training	Social cohesion	Innovation and knowledge	Entrepreneurism	Internationalisation	Green economy
STRATEGIC LINE 2. Improving labour market performance						
2.1. Improving efficiency and information with regard to employment mediation mechanisms						
2.2. Promoting a model of labour relations aimed at increasing productivity and maintaining jobs						
2.3. Improving job quality and conditions of employment						
2.4. Preventing fraud connected to undeclared work and undue reception of benefits						

6.3. Facilitating companies' access to finance

Due to the current economic situation, Catalan businesses are encountering serious difficulty in gaining access to the finance they need for their ordinary activities and to launch new activities. Through the Catalan Finance Institute (ICF), the Government promotes access to credit for investment, innovation and internationalisation, and supports the capitalisation of businesses so that they can improve their solvency and increase available working capital. Moreover, in cooperation with employers' organisations and social stakeholders, the Government also provides advisory services on SME funding.

6.3.1. Improving companies' access to finance

In view of the difficulties that companies encounter these days with regard to obtaining access to credit, it is necessary to improve the system, enabling them to finance their ordinary activity and invest in new projects that will stimulate their growth. To this end, various credit and security lines are made available to companies, adapted to specific

needs (for example, microcredits, direct loans, mediated loans in association with financial institutions, guarantees, capital risk funds, co-investment, etc.). It is also important to promote channels of access to finance and to ensure that companies, particularly SMEs and self-employed workers, are aware of all financing options open to them.

The Catalan Government also promotes other measures to provide access to finance, particularly in the case of SMEs and self-employed workers. These include refundable contributions and advisory services.

6.3.2. Promoting new instruments of finance

The highly specific nature of certain businesses often means that the usual provisions do not cover their specific needs with regard to financing. In order to provide a response to such specific requirements, new financial instruments are made available to companies, adapted to the different types of businesses and activities. These include, for example, new public-private partnership models, investment networks and partner search mechanisms.

Operational objective	Employment and training	Social cohesion	Innovation and knowledge	Entrepreneurism	Internationalisation	Green economy
STRATEGIC LINE 3. Facilitating business access to finance						
3.1. Improving business access to finance						
3.2. Promoting new instruments of finance						

6.4. Promoting the strategic adaptation of businesses to the global economy

The world economy is currently facing two great challenges: technological change and globalisation. To meet these challenges successfully, the advanced countries are implementing policies to increase their competitiveness. These policies revolve around two main priorities: innovation and internationalisation.

In recent times, a new industrial model has taken shape internationally, marked by a blurring of the borders between manufacturing activity and the service sector. Within

this new framework, business models and strategies that were once useful for competing are no longer tenable. For this reason, the Government is developing new lines of action to guide companies through the process of economic transformation.

6.4.1. Improving efficiency and effectiveness in the R&D and innovation system

Technology centres and certain specialised research facilities serve as channels for transmitting technology based on scientific know-how to the business sector. In order to improve their efficiency and effectiveness, and in line with what other European countries are doing, it is necessary to increase the critical mass of such centres. This will help to improve their competitiveness in calls for proposals to provide funding for R&D and innovation.

The Government promotes joint ventures between technology centres and university groups engaged in technology transfer, whilst also providing incentives for research centres with clear industrial potential to transfer know-how to the production system.

6.4.2. Increasing research into new technologies with applications in the productive economy

It is not easy to transfer the results obtained from research to the production system and, in order to generate economic growth, fresh efforts are required to create a real market for the results of research and for patents. The Government establishes programmes and instruments to promote useful applications of technology and the transfer of know-how from technology centres, as well as grants for projects in calls for proposals.

6.4.3. Fostering innovation in business

The policy for promoting technology innovation includes a series of initiatives aimed at providing resources to generate technology and know-how at companies. Measures include both direct and indirect incentives for business innovation activities, such as improving the institutional framework within which such innovation is developed. Only businesses capable of including innovation in their strategies can become more competitive, differentiating themselves and attracting new market segments.

Market-pull instruments are provided in order to increase demand for innovation services amongst companies and to provide incentives for companies to launch high-risk technological projects. With regard to mobilising private resources for innovation,

action focuses on promoting private sponsorship for projects, whilst proposals for amending legislation and changing fiscal conditions are put forward to the Spanish Government.

6.4.4. Increasing the internationalisation of the economy

Internationalisation is a key driving force for economic recovery. Some 13,500 companies in Catalonia regularly export goods and services, but there exist around 40,000 firms that are potential exporters or that export only occasionally. In order to enlarge the export base, the Government provides support and guidance for companies embarking on the process of internationalisation.

International competition to attract foreign investment is growing, and the number of investment projects at European scale is falling. Therefore, it is necessary to identify specific product and service lines that can generate investment projects and sectors and companies in Europe that currently have investment capacity and then draw up proposals aimed at selling specific investment projects.

6.4.5. Fostering the transition of companies to activities with higher added value

For a country with a highly heterogeneous production sector based on strong industrial traditions, and in which nearly 98% of all enterprises are SMEs, cluster policies are vital in order to guide the transition of companies towards activities with higher added value and to generate feasible and sustainable future strategies. Moreover, working with clusters enables a better use of public resources, thus creating economies of scale which can help both to identify problems and to act and draw up projects generated by working with a group of companies that face similar strategic challenges.

Initiatives involving clusters combine the Administration's role as promoter and catalyst with private sector leadership and professional management.

6.4.6. Promoting improved company and personnel management

With a production system based on small enterprises that have considerable differences in size and productivity compared to both traditional European and new international competitors, measures must be adopted in order to modernise Catalan SMEs, increasing their efficiency and improving their market orientation. Such

measures should be based on differentiated business models adapted to new requirements for competitiveness.

A key condition for improving companies' competitiveness is to introduce new models for an organisational culture based on professionalisation and improved business management, focusing on productivity and flexibility in the management of work time.

6.4.7. Encouraging corporate social responsibility as a strategy for competitiveness

Social responsibility is the premise that underpins a management model for businesses and organisations that is based on responsible criteria in the economic, social and environmental fields. Corporate social responsibility helps to improve competitiveness and to promote sustainable and inclusive development. It is important to highlight the socially responsible actions undertaken by companies in order to encourage more and more businesses to include social concerns in their strategies for competitiveness.

6.4.8. Promoting quality tourism

Tourism is a strategic sector of the Catalan economy. The Government seeks to foster tourism both in emerging and mature markets, whilst also promoting seals of quality in various segments of the tourism industry. These measures are further reinforced by initiatives to identify the profiles of tourists, enabling the industry to adjust its services and exercise its influence to encourage a potential change of profile.

6.4.9. Promoting projects with high impact on Catalan business

In order to compete on the world market, companies that do not have a minimum size need to cooperate with other businesses. To compensate for the lack of large enterprises in Catalan industry, the Government promotes projects with high economic impact and similarly high capacity to draw in other companies, both forward (clients) and backwards (suppliers). The main initiatives in this respect include projects with knock-on effects focused on ICT (linked to Barcelona Mobile World Capital) and on sustainable mobility (electric vehicles, development of new businesses and economic activities, etc.).

These plans, which have an organic structure based on public leadership and private management and are supported by the different levels of the public administration, pursue the goal of reactivating economic activity, particularly as regards SMEs.

6.4.10. Anticipating situations of business risk and detecting growth opportunities

The production sector requires policies to foster the maintenance of companies and jobs, particularly in the present context of severe crisis. In view of this, measures are aimed at supporting and protecting the industrial sector by drawing up a map of threats and opportunities and through Government intervention to help ensure the continuity of strategic industrial projects. In order to anticipate any situations of risk, the Government maintains permanent contacts with the business world.

Operational objective	Employment and training	Social cohesion	Innovation and knowledge	Entrepreneurism	Internationalisation	Green economy
STRATEGIC LINE 4. Promoting the strategic adaptation of businesses to the global economy						
4.1. Improving efficiency and effectiveness in the R&D and innovation system						
4.2. Increasing research into new technologies with applications in the productive economy						
4.3. Fostering innovation in business						
4.4. Increasing the internationalisation of the economy						
4.5. Fostering the transition of businesses to activities with higher added value						
4.6. Promoting improved business and personnel management						
4.7. Encouraging corporate social responsibility as a strategy for competitiveness						
4.8. Promoting quality tourism						
4.9. Promoting projects with high impact on Catalan business						
4.10. Anticipating situations of business risk and detecting growth opportunities						

6.5. Promoting entrepreneurship

The Government implements measures aimed at developing the capacity to create new companies, to promote the entrepreneurial spirit and to generate employment. The “Catalunya emprèn” programme pursues these objectives and seeks to promote a public-private network that can bring together and coordinate all stakeholders committed to establishing new business projects.

6.5.1. Introducing entrepreneurial values in the education system

According to the European Charter for Small Enterprises, education and training are vital for fostering the entrepreneurial spirit. The Government considers it essential to introduce the culture of business creativity at all education levels (compulsory, higher

and vocational training), throughout society and in public opinion in order to foster entrepreneurship, which can help to increase the will to set up businesses. To this end, for example, compulsory secondary education includes two programmes, “Enterprising School” and “Entrepreneurship at my School”, whilst students are also required to present a business plan in order to obtain certain university qualifications.

6.5.2. Promoting business initiative, cooperatives and self-employed work

In order to drive the creation of new businesses, the Administration provides such services as, amongst others: information, support and training for entrepreneurs; access to entrepreneurial resources; instruments to provide new businesses with legal, management and procedural support; and support programmes for companies with high growth potential (growth acceleration network, public investment, seed capital, business angels, etc.) to foster the consolidation of projects with the greatest potential.

Government action focuses particularly on the establishment of enterprises and on cooperatives and self-employed work. These are sectors of great economic and social importance in Catalonia that create wealth, generate employment and improve social cohesion.

6.5.3. Promoting regional economic development

Policies must take Catalonia’s great territorial diversity into account. Accordingly, in rural areas, priority is given to policies aimed at improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and agri-food industries by providing different lines of aid and business and association restructuring.

The rural economy has a high margin for generating added value, and public policies should reinforce this potential by promoting the introduction of new products (such as ecological), and improving the quality of produce, as well as raising the profile of Catalan goods on foreign markets.

In recent years, rural tourism, which has enormous potential for boosting the rural economy, has been the most rapidly growing tourism segment in Catalonia. Rural destinations, with their rich natural, historic, artistic and cultural heritage, and where local traditions are conserved in peaceful places far from the masses, foster the maintenance of both agriculture and tourism. Measures to promote rural, wine, oil and

fishing-related tourism offer new opportunities for the development of the tourist industry potential that is endogenous to country areas.

6.5.4. Fostering the creation of technology-based companies

In line with the need to adapt the economy towards sectors that generate higher added value and to encourage technology transfer to the production sector, it is considered vital to establish new, technology-based enterprises. In order to encourage the flow of know-how generated at universities and research centres towards the production sector, the Government provides incentives for marketing technology and developing new, technology-based enterprises. These measures include advisory services for projects, incentives and research programme contracts.

6.5.5. Promoting social innovation and entrepreneurship

In a context marked by restrictions on public spending and growing social demands, the social economy is vital for fostering the integration of groups most at risk of social exclusion. Government actions to this end are aimed at providing a framework to encourage new business initiatives in the sphere of the social economy.

Operational objective	Employment and training	Social cohesion	Innovation and knowledge	Entrepreneurism	Internationalisation	Green economy
STRATEGIC LINE 5. Promoting entrepreneurship						
5.1. Introducing entrepreneurial values into the education system						
5.2. Promoting business initiative, cooperatives and self-employed work						
5.3. Promoting regional economic development						
5.4. Fostering the creation of technology-based companies						
5.5. Promoting social innovation and entrepreneurship						

6.6. Fostering the transition to a more resource-efficient economy

Public policies to support economic activity should promote the transition towards a more resource-efficient economy, as much out of necessity (decreasing dependency on fossil fuels, rising energy prices, security of supply, reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants) as for the opportunities that such a transition offers to the production sector. In line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, ECAT 2020

seeks to guarantee that the Government's long-term strategies in fields such as energy, climate change, research and innovation, industry, transport, agriculture, fisheries and the environment achieve positive results with regard to efficient use of resources (particularly energy efficiency) whilst also benefitting from the opportunities that they offer for business development.

6.6.1. Promoting sustainability in the production system

Within the frame of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the roadmap for a resource-efficient Europe stresses particularly the need and the opportunity presented by guiding the production system towards a more sustainable model based on increased efficiency in the use of resources. Whilst it has been amply demonstrated that investment in sustainability generates economic and competitive advantages for the production system, some companies still fail to realise this. The Administration should play a key role in facilitating the transformation towards a more sustainable, more efficient economy in terms of use of resources. This can be achieved through such measures as: promoting voluntary agreements for sustainability; providing support for energy and environmental service companies; helping SMEs to adapt to the new context of sustainability; and introducing the sustainability variable in instruments supporting economic activity and in public procurement.

In this respect, the Catalan Ecodesign Programme 2011-2012 (ECODIScat) promotes sustainable production and consumption. The programme also provides incentives for the use of ecological design in production processes, as well as promoting the transversality of ecological design at universities and research centres and know-how transfer and the consumption of sustainable products and services.

6.6.2. Promoting more efficient use of energy and other resources

The Administration plays a key role in promoting energy saving and efficiency, and the rational use of other essential resources, such as water. The energy efficiency cluster in Catalonia provides innovative, integral energy efficiency solutions, through the cooperation of technological companies, improving competitiveness and taking advantage of business opportunities. The Plan for Energy Saving and Efficiency in Buildings, besides establishing measures to improve energy efficiency in public buildings, will also boost energy service companies in Catalonia. Through aid and

grants, moreover, the Government also provides incentives for energy saving and efficiency in all sectors of the economy.

6.6.3. Promoting renewable energy sources

Renewable energy sources generate business opportunities and employment and contribute to modernising the production system, whilst also reducing dependency on fossil fuels and improving security of energy supply. The strategy for promoting renewable energy is a maximum priority in Catalan energy policy, with measures focused on increasing consumption and raising installed power (wind farms, biomass facilities, local energy generation in buildings) and developing new and emerging energy technologies (through the Zèfir project, for example), which may play a crucial role in the future energy system whilst also helping to drive technology innovation in the energy industry.

6.6.4. Promoting waste minimisation and recycling

Waste minimisation and energy generation from waste are essential elements in a more sustainable production model, from the standpoint of both materials and energy. Measures in this sphere include: providing aid for investment and research into machinery and technology for waste minimisation and energy generation from waste; and promoting recycled, recyclable and biodegradable products.

Operational objective	Employment and training	Social cohesion	Innovation and knowledge	Entrepreneurism	Internationalisation	Green economy
STRATEGIC LINE 6. Fostering the transition to a more resource-efficient economy						
6.1. Promoting sustainability in the production system						
6.2. Promoting more efficient use of energy and other resources						
6.3. Promoting renewable energy sources						
6.4. Promoting waste minimisation and recycling						

6.7. Modernising Government

The public authorities should provide a framework for economic activity and public intervention that fosters business initiative and job creation whilst preserving the rights and duties of citizens and companies and minimising transaction costs. In this sphere,

Government measures include: promoting the electronic administration; reducing administrative burdens; improving administrative procedures; enhancing the quality of regulations governing competition; fostering competitiveness in public procurement; improving the functioning of the justice administration; and establishing an open data system.

6.7.1. Preventing legislation from having a negative effect on competitiveness

Legislation that is unclear, contradictory or obsolete, or that restricts competition, can create barriers against trade, investment, the creation of businesses and the efficiency of the economy in general. Moreover, unnecessary red tape has a negative effect on company productivity, something that is especially serious in the case of SMEs. For this reason, it is vital to raise the quality of legislation and to promote smart legislation that neither restricts competition nor generates unnecessary or disproportionate costs to economic activity. In this respect, it is vital to carry out impact assessments of laws, to integrate procedures and to implement legal reforms that can help to create a more flexible framework for businesses, without barriers to entry or any other unjustified restrictions.

6.7.2. Promoting competitive public procurement

Providing free access to potential tenderers is an essential condition for the efficient management of public resources. In order to achieve this objective, the most appropriate type of tender should be selected for each case, and any obstacles that prevent companies from gaining access to tendering processes should be detected and evaluated. Moreover, measures should be adopted to promote the highest possible degree of free competition between tenderers, in order to increase efficiency in the management of public resources and guarantee the quality of the services delivered to citizens. To this end, it is particularly important to establish internal mechanisms to detect and prevent any anti-competitive practices, such as, for example, collusion amongst bidders.

6.7.3. Introducing a new model for relations between companies and the Public Administration

The Catalan Government is working on a new model of interaction between businesses and the Administration that underlines the social utility of entrepreneurship and is

based on responsibility and mutual trust. Adapting the current model, the Government will promote this initiative by passing a framework law on relations between companies and the Catalan public authorities.

At present, businesses bear numerous unnecessary administrative burdens that hamper their competitiveness. The provisions of the plan to introduce the 'one stop shop' for business service, will enable companies to complete all procedures and formalities necessary to launch business activities at a single point, considerably decreasing administrative burdens.

6.7.4. Using ICTs to modernise the Administration

In order to facilitate economic activity, and as part of the process aimed at improving public services, it is essential to introduce the electronic administration as an instrument that will increase the flexibility, efficiency and efficacy of the public authorities. To achieve this, it is necessary to establish and maintain corporate tools that enable and optimise the implementation of electronic procedures. These measures should be introduced in accordance with the principle of interoperability both between the ministries, units and organisations of the Catalan Government and with other public authorities. Using ICTs in such areas as health care will improve efficiency and enable the catalogue of services to be extended, as well as rationalising resources.

6.7.5. Introduction of open data

In the evolution towards a network society, a new, relational model of innovation is emerging, in which all stakeholders add value to products and services (collective know-how). The Web and the social networks give products and services new functionalities, in terms both of management (saving on time and travel, networking, etc.) and characteristics (possibilities for marketing, simulation, accessibility, knowledge sharing, use of multimedia resources, storage, cloud computing, etc).

Interoperability between authorities and transparency are vital elements in open governance and allow better monitoring and evaluation of public policies. In this context, the Catalan Government promotes the provision of standardised, digital, open public data to enable businesses and citizens to create products and generate wealth and value.

6.7.6. Modernising and making more flexible the Administration of Justice

A flexible, efficient justice administration is essential to guarantee legal security and, therefore, to improve business competitiveness, attract foreign investment and facilitate the creation of new companies. The “New Legal Office” project will enable common services to be organised, centralising the procedures of all judicial bodies and thereby improving the speed and efficiency of the work carried out by the justice administration.

Operational objective	Employment and training	Social cohesion	Innovation and knowledge	Entrepreneurism	Internationalisation	Green economy
STRATEGIC LINE 7. Modernising Government						
7.1. Preventing legislation from having a negative effect on competitiveness						
7.2. Promoting competitive public procurement						
7.3. Introducing a new model for relations between companies and the Public Administration						
7.4. Using ICTs to modernise the Administration						
7.5. Introduction of open data						
7.6. Modernising and making it more flexible the Administration of Justice						

6.8. Promoting strategic infrastructure

Providing quality infrastructure is a key condition for making Catalan business competitive and attracting and fostering the consolidation of companies that generate high added value or exports.

Catalonia suffers from a historically accumulated deficit in public infrastructure, the consequence of insufficient State investment. Moreover, the centralised management model applied to ports and airports restricts the contribution that such infrastructure can make to the competitiveness of the Catalan economy.

In order to design the long-term policies and major public investment projects needed, the Catalan Government calls for the devolution of powers from Central Government to manage infrastructure that is vital to the competitiveness of the Catalan economy, or at least to play a decisive part in the management of such infrastructure.

In measures to consolidate the foundations for developing the digital society in Catalonia, the Government takes into account both technological infrastructure and the economic and social environment that will give this infrastructure value.

6.8.1. Promoting Catalan ports as southern Europe's gateway for goods

In order to consolidate the Catalan ports as southern Europe's gateway for goods, it is mandatory to build the necessary infrastructure and logistical areas at the ports of Barcelona and Tarragona and complete road and international-gauge railway accesses. Moreover, competitive railway services should be provided between these ports and the rest of Spain and Europe, progress is required in the operational and strategic coordination of Catalan ports and customs, and border inspection services should be made more efficient. To this end, and to provide the necessary impulse for these measures, the Catalan Government asks the Central Government for the devolution of management of the ports of Barcelona and Tarragona or, at least, to secure a decisive Catalan participation in their governing bodies.

6.8.2. Promoting goods transport by rail, logistics activities and intermodality

Promoting rail goods transport will help to increase, diversify and enhance the sustainability of current transport facilities. The Mediterranean rail corridor is the backbone for such mobility, and it is therefore vital to complete the measures established in the Catalan Agenda for the Mediterranean Corridor for the 2012-2015 period.

With regard to promoting rail goods services, the Government establishes new services and measures leading to the effective liberalisation of both goods and passenger services by rail and the simplification of the related administrative procedures. Catalonia also needs new intermodal railway terminals with their respective logistic centres. In this sphere of activity, it is also important to explore the possibilities of public-private cooperation.

6.8.3. Increasing the competitiveness and efficiency of the road goods transport industry

To increase the competitiveness of the road goods transport system, work should focus on infrastructure and, above all, management. As regards infrastructure, an efficient

road system and reductions in bottlenecks are essential in order to ensure that transport is competitive in terms of both time and cost.

Regarding management, it is important to speed up and simplify administrative procedures for road goods transport; provide arbitration for the resolution of disputes; encourage concentration and the joint marketing of goods transport services; and promote the use of information and communication technologies in the sector.

6.8.4. Increasing the connectivity of Catalan airports and ports and reinforcing their role as local economic motors

In view of the very important role that airports play in the internationalisation of the economy and as local economic motors, it is important to increase the connectivity of Catalan airports, opening up new routes and developing the air cargo industry. To achieve these objectives, the management model adopted by the Airport of Barcelona should be similar to that employed by main European airports. Moreover, it is important to diversify activities at the airports of Girona, Reus and Lleida and to attract industrial projects linked to the airport sector. Finally, in order to benefit from synergies between ports and airports, progress should continue towards the joint management of air and cruiser passenger travel.

6.8.5. Increasing the connectivity of the passenger railway system with Europe

To increase passenger rail connectivity with the rest of Europe, high-speed train links and the Mediterranean rail corridor are required. Measures to this end are established in the Catalan Agenda for the Mediterranean Corridor.

6.8.6. Improving telecommunications and energy distribution infrastructure needed by businesses to compete globally

Improving the quality, security and reliability of electricity and gas supply is essential for business competitiveness. Measures include, basically, the study, approval and supervision of investment plans drawn up by electricity and gas marketing companies.

Providing latest-generation land and mobile telecommunications networks is also crucial to business competitiveness. Action taken by the Government in this area is aimed at encouraging the installation of networks and promoting sectoral rings and instruments to develop production models and foster projects such as the Catalonia Neutral Internet Exchange Point (CATNIX).

6.8.7. Developing rural infrastructure

Rural road infrastructure ensures the accessibility of the Catalan countryside and is a vital condition for generating economic activity in rural areas. Irrigation infrastructure also plays a strategic role in boosting and integrating the territory, fostering the development of more competitive agricultural and livestock farming activities, increasing economic diversification and helping to retain population. Land consolidation is another important instrument for structuring and organising rural areas.

Operational objective	Employment and training	Social cohesion	Innovation and knowledge	Entrepreneurism	Internationalisation	Green economy
STRATEGIC LINE 8. Promoting strategic infrastructure						
8.1. Promoting Catalan ports as southern Europe's gateway for goods						
8.2. Promoting goods rail goods transport, logistics activities and intermodality						
8.3. Increasing the competitiveness and efficiency of the road goods transport industry						
8.4. Increasing the connectivity of Catalan airports and ports and reinforcing their role as local economic motors						
8.5. Increasing the connectivity of the passenger railway system with Europe						
8.6. Improving telecommunications and energy distribution infrastructure needed by businesses to compete globally						
8.7. Developing rural infrastructure						