

# Policy recommendations for climate adaptation at the **COAST OF CATALONIA**

## Why climate adaptation matters

Europe is already facing the cost of climate inaction. Between 1980 and 2023, climate-related economic losses totalled €738 billion – and that figure could rise to 4% of EU GDP annually by the end of the century without effective adaptation.

## The IMPETUS project

IMPETUS is an EU-funded project active across seven biogeographical regions – arctic, atlantic, boreal, coastal, continental, mediterranean and mountain. It aims to turn adaptation commitments into real-world actions that protect people, ecosystems, and infrastructure.

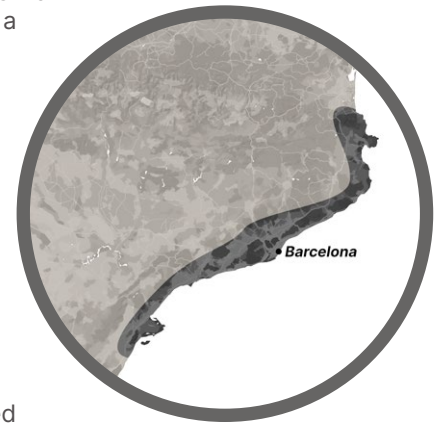
The project develops and tests tailored climate adaptation solutions, combining:

- technological and nature-based innovations,
- financing mechanisms,
- strong stakeholder and policy engagement.

## About the region

The Catalan coast in north-eastern Spain stretches over 600 km and hosts a rich mosaic of ecosystems. It is a Mediterranean hotspot for tourism, agriculture, urban development, and critical infrastructure – all competing for limited natural resources. This combination of intense land use and ecological importance makes the region especially vulnerable to climate change impacts such as drought, sea-level rise, and extreme weather.

Addressing these vulnerabilities requires coordinated policies, improved drought management, and targeted investment in climate resilience.



## Key recommendations for Catalonia

### Standardise drought response protocols

**Issue:** Current drought responses vary across regions and sectors, reflecting local needs but lacking coordination. This reduces effectiveness during periods of water scarcity.

#### **Actions:**

- Establish unified protocols for water prioritisation, tariff adjustments, and emergency measures.
- Coordinate regional responses using climate data, sectoral needs, and social equity considerations.
- Involve vulnerable and marginalised communities in the planning process.

**Outcome:** A more consistent and equitable approach to water management during droughts.

## Strengthen climate resilience in sectoral plans

**Issue:** Sector-specific strategies—such as those for tourism, forestry, and irrigation—have made progress but still lack systematic integration of climate adaptation. ESCACC’s guidance provides a strong foundation for aligning sectoral strategies with long-term adaptation goals.

### **Actions:**

- Update environmental planning regulations to require resilience assessments across all sectors.
- Ensure that ESCACC’s adaptation priorities are reflected in tourism, agriculture, and forestry policies.
- Provide clear guidelines to help sectoral departments implement adaptation measures.

**Outcome:** More robust and future-proof plans that address vulnerabilities across key economic sectors.

## Develop Catalonia-specific regulations to manage climate emergencies

**Issue:** Spain’s national framework for climate emergencies is largely top-down. Regions like Catalonia, already experiencing severe drought, need more tailored mechanisms.

### **Actions:**

- Establish bottom-up regulatory tools that empower local authorities to respond quickly to climate emergencies.
- Improve coordination across levels of government.

**Outcome:** Faster, more targeted responses that strengthen Catalonia’s resilience to local climate threats.

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## Balance financing across all climate-sensitive sectors

**Issue:** While sectors like agriculture and infrastructure receive adaptation funding, areas such as coastal protection remain underfunded.

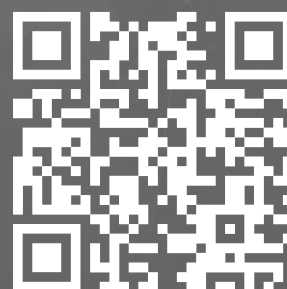
### **Actions:**

- Reform funding criteria to include all vulnerable sectors equally.
- Develop dedicated instruments for coastal resilience, using public-private partnerships and EU co-financing.
- Address conflicting priorities within decision-making bodies that hinder balanced funding allocation.

**Outcome:** Broader and more equitable investment in climate adaptation.



**DISCOVER MORE**



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