In 2021, the Catalan region, in northeastern Spain, launched the Strategic Food Plan for Catalonia 2021-2026 (PEAC), ushering in a new era for the future of food in the region. PEAC is a plan to establish a comprehensive, sustainable, and competitive food system, geographically rooted in and based on Catalonia’s diversity of healthy, accessible, and quality foods. It is the result of more than a year of collaboration with a wide range of Catalans: primary producers, food industry representatives, distributors, restaurateurs and chefs, researchers, local and national agencies, and residents. The result is a consensus-driven food policy for the region, integrating various food system sectors and levels of government, from the local to the EU level.

**ENABLERS**

**FOOD COUNCIL AS CATALYST FOR PARTICIPATORY, INTEGRATED FOOD POLICIES**

The Strategic Food Plan for Catalonia is an initiative of the CATALAN FOOD COUNCIL. Created in 2017 by the Department of Agriculture, the Catalan Food Council acts as a forum to debate, propose, and advocate food policies. The Council is a joint collaboration between civil society, producers, and governmental bodies with representatives from all links along the Catalan food chain. As an inclusive institution, it was paramount to the council that the Strategic Food Plan for Catalonia results from an open, co-creative process with the full participation of Catalan residents and food chain actors. The Catalan Government helped set up such spaces for debate and reflection for each municipality to ensure all views were heard and considered. While the public meetings that began in 2020 were all held virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic, participation remained high due to community interest.

The public process was carried out to prioritize the most relevant issues to residents and collect suggestions for proposals for action based on the needs identified and existing regional opportunities. For example, one of the challenges raised by the Rural Women’s Association and other organizations was the disconnect between urban, rural, and maritime communities. While rural and maritime communities are less populated, they are a major producer of food, whereas urban communities often remain unaware of the origins of what they eat. The participatory process resulted in 38 specific actions that encourage territorial cohesion and the promotion of Catalan food, including integrating women in rural and maritime food system work and promoting local, seasonal, and sustainable food in public food procurement.

**ALIGNMENT WITH EU-LEVEL SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES**

The Strategic Food Plan for Catalonia also serves to implement the EU GREEN DEATH and the EU Farm to Fork Strategy at the regional level. The drafting of the PEAC followed a year of debate and consultation with a wide range of experts, 367 organizations, 217 organizations, and 217 organizations.

**THE STRATEGIC FOOD PLAN FOR CATALONIA (PEAC) 2021-2026**

• An integrated strategy that defines the vision, objectives, and actions to build an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable food system in Catalonia.

• The Plan is based on a four-dimensional approach, and aims to (1) sustainable, transformative, and based on the circular bioeconomy, (2) local and rooted in the territory, (3) fair, equitable, and cohesive, and (4) healthy and accountable.

• The drafting of the PEAC followed a year of debate and collaboration among 367 experts, 412 residents, and 217 organizations.

**BARRIERS**

**SLOW PACE OF BUREAUCRACY**

A great strength of the Catalan Government is that it is a lawmaking body, but crafting and enacting laws is often a slow and cumbersome process. Political will for integrated food policies is at an all-time high, but Catalan’s challenge is to maintain a sense of urgency through administrative turnover and long legislative processes. The law on sustainable public procurement has been particularly challenging, especially since departments outside the Department of Agriculture have broadened the law beyond food procurement, lengthening the consultation and negotiation process. The Department of Agriculture is working to link the public procurement law with the environmental footprint initiative. Hoping that both can align value, buy-in, and quickly come to fruition.

The age-food sector is a vital sector of the Catalan economy and the Strategic Food Plan for Catalonia (PEAC) focuses on the way toward a sustainable and resilient future of the region’s food system. Several institutional, social, and economic factors enabled Catalonia’s vision to be a single governance tool to create food system change. These factors included high levels of political will, the creation of the Catalan Food Council, and EU-level policy alignment with plans like the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and the Product Environmental Footprint initiative. With the PEAC, Catalonia is well on its way to ensuring that the Catalan food system becomes sustainable, equitable, healthy, and economically robust.

46 In Catalonia, the link between rural and urban areas is crucial and needs to be strengthened. They need us, and we need them. If we lose the people who live in the rural areas, we not only lose the people who make our food, but we also lose the guardians of our natural landscapes. **

**48 One of our greatest achievements is that we involved all food system stakeholders in the creation of our Catalan Food Strategy, from setting goals to implementing actions. The result is a food strategy with buy-in and consensus from all the agents involved.**