



**Santa María
la Real** fundación

empleo e
inclusión social



REN
RURAL
EMPLOYABILITY
NETWORK

DIAGNOSIS OF THE RURAL SECTOR IN SPAIN AND EUROPE



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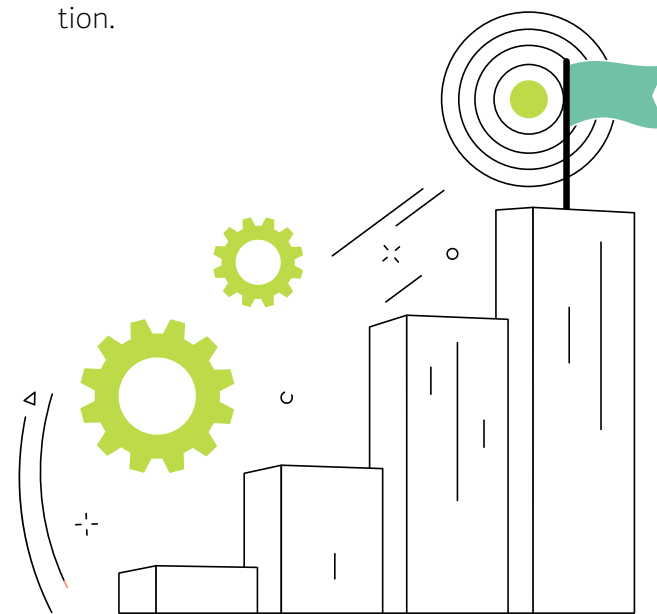
1 | INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

The Rural Employability Network (REN) project runs from November 2020 to June 2023 (32 months) and **its main objective is the creation of a European Transnational Network to identify good practices and innovative projects that promote social and labour inclusion in rural areas and areas in transition**, working towards their adaptation and transfer to the Spanish national context.

Objectives of the REN

In order to reach this general objective, the Employment and Social Inclusion Area of Fundación Santa María la Real has placed special emphasis on achieving a series of specific objectives:

-  **To identify innovative projects and initiatives of socio-labour inclusion** aimed at unemployed people living in rural areas or in transition areas at European level..
-  **To carry out events and study visits** visits to projects of interest in partner countries of the European Union.
-  **To promote the transfer of experiences based on innovative methodologies**, through the exchange of good practices and useful tools, joint research, etc.
-  **To produce materials and tools** tools for the scaling up of the projects identified as good practices.
-  **To provide training and support** to national entities willing to adopt innovative projects.
-  **To create a learning community** of European entities in the field of socio-labour inclusion in rural areas or areas in transition.




Diagnostic Methodology


The aim of the elaboration of this diagnosis is **to gather the necessary information to know and analyse the reality of the European rural world and to contextualise the main problems that limit its development**; focusing on employability as one of the main problems that aggravate the depopulation and ageing of rural areas.


This diagnosis has allowed to know and identify the most relevant aspects to be taken into account when selecting the Best Practices in Europe, as well as the most important issues to be taken into consideration for the rest of the activities promoted by the REN, which has allowed to achieve the objectives mentioned above.


The following steps were taken to carry out the diagnosis:

 **DATA REVIEW:** consultation and collection of information from secondary sources. Data has been collected from the macro to the micro level, to identify needs and possible opportunities in the national context and the different regions and to identify European good practices that bring value and innovation to the national context.

 **KEY AGENTS MAPPING:** identification, grouping and classification of the national and European key agents of the ecosystem and their activities and contact with them to validate the information collected in the consultation phase in secondary sources. Of the 80 agents initially identified at national level, 32 were contacted for meetings and exploratory interviews.

 **INTERVIEWS:** interviews lasting between 15 and 45 minutes were conducted to validate the statistical and documentary information collected on employability, rurality and key agents in the territory, and to collect additional information from those key agents identified. Of the 32 agents contacted, 14 replied, with whom we held online meetings and telephone calls.

 **DIAGNOSTIC:** elaboration of a SWOT study and a CAME analysis based on all the information previously obtained to assess the needs and opportunities in the national context.

 **INFOGRAPHS:** creation of infographics to synthesise and show the information in a more visual way for publication on the project's website, generating the dissemination of knowledge through the network itself.

What is rurality and key figures

If we consider the OECD Rural Development Programme, **a territorial limit of rural areas is established based on population density and the number of people living in the largest nucleus.**

The methodology is developed in three phases (OECD, 1994) and is applicable to OECD territorial level 3 (TL3) regions, which in Spain corresponds to the provinces.

Firstly, **a local community with a density of less than 150 people/km² is considered to be rural.**

Secondly, **a regional classification is established by differentiating three types according to the percentage of the population living in the municipalities** defined above as rural:

- **Predominantly Rural Region:** regions where more than 50% of the population lives in communities considered rural.
- **Intermediate region:** where between 15 and 50% of the population is rural.
- **Predominantly Urban Region:** less than 15% of the population lives in rural communities.

For its part, **EUROSTAT also provides a broad characterisation of the rural environment in different variables**, in three basic categories (rural, intermediate and urban) classifying the regions (NUTs - Nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units) according to the population density and the size of the population centres that are predominant in their territory.

According to Eurostat, a low-populated municipality is one with a population density of less

than 100 people/km² and the regions, NUTs 1, 2, 3 are classified according to the percentage of population living in rural or urban areas (Rural, Intermediate or Urban).

In Spain, both Law 45/2007, of 13 December 2007, for the sustainable development of the rural environment in its article 3, and the National Institute of Statistics, use the size of the population nucleus to delimit rural areas, although they differ in the number of people per municipality, setting the limit at 5.000 in the first case, and 10.000 in the second.

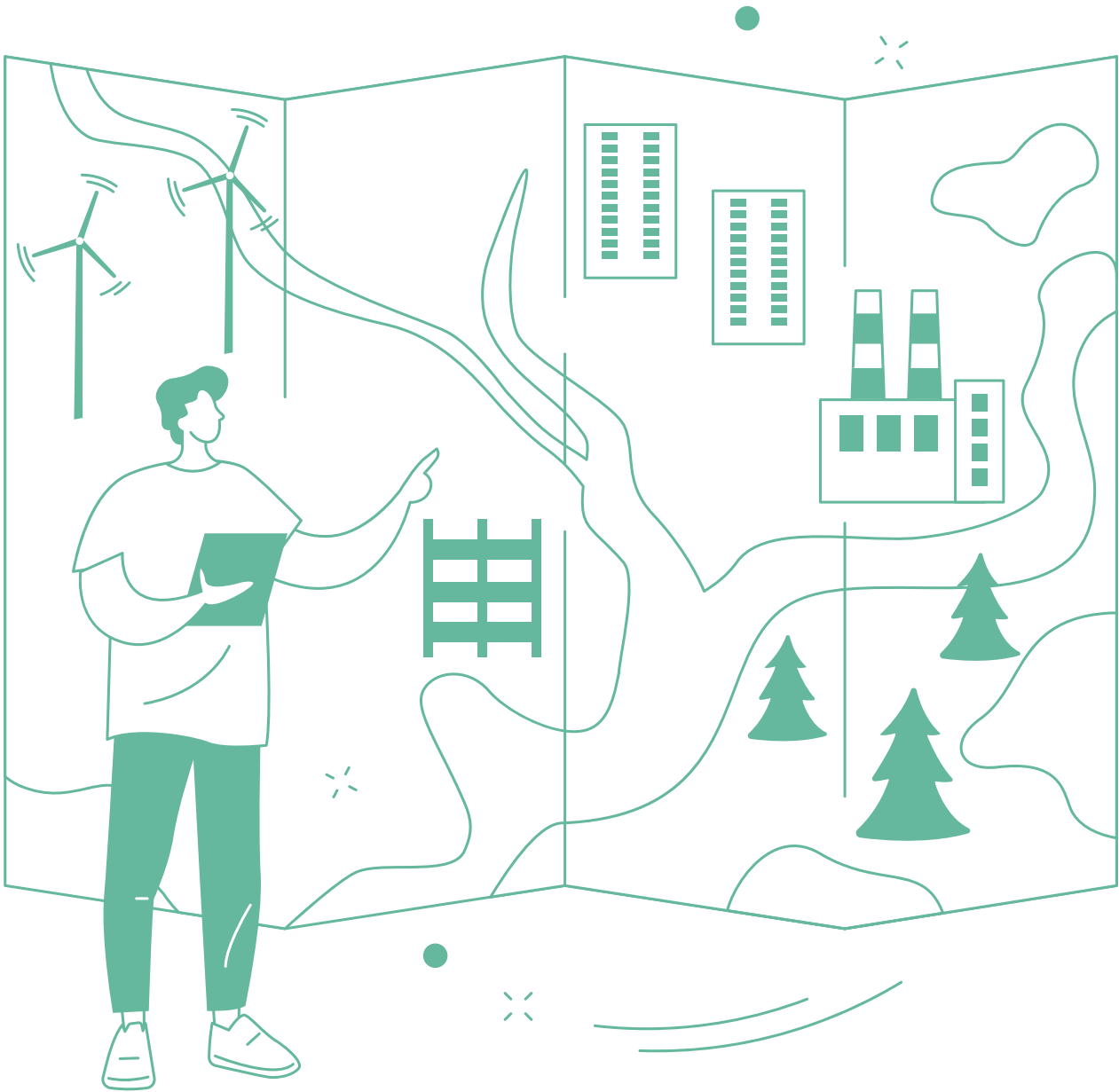
According to Article 3 of Law 45/2007:

a) Rural area: the geographical area formed by the aggregation of municipalities or smaller local entities defined by the relevant administrations with a population of less than 30.000 people and a density of less than 100 people per square kilometre.

b) Rural zone: area of application of the measures deriving from the Sustainable Rural Development Programme regulated by this Law, of county or sub-provincial scope, delimited and qualified by the Autonomous Community.

c) Small rural municipality: a municipality with a resident population of less than 5.000 people, and which is integrated in the rural environment.

Within the scope of this analysis, the delimitations used by the INE will be used, for reasons



of accessibility and homogeneity of the statistical information compiled for the comparative analysis between the regions under study.

The INE classification is as follows:

- **Rural municipalities:** when they have less than 10.000 people.
- **Small municipalities:** they have a population of less than 2.000 people.
- **Intermediate municipalities:** have a population between 2.000 and 10.000 people.

2 | SPAIN IN FIGURES

This section shows the **framework for action and the main strategic lines being followed in Spain to promote and boost rural development in the country**, mainly in the most disadvantaged areas, highlighting the measures that are intended to be implemented in the coming years and the main problems faced in order to achieve these objectives.

It also presents the European framework and the main common problems affecting the rural environment in Europe, which serve as a basis for promoting common policies that mark the lines of action of national and regional policies.

The second part of the section shows the main characteristics of the six national territories analysed in the context of the REN:

- **Jaén (Andalucía)**
- **Principado de Asturias**
- **Castilla-La Mancha**
- **Palencia (Castilla y León)**
- **Extremadura**
- **Comunidad Foral de Navarra.**

In these territories, an attempt will be made to replicate some of the 6 initiatives selected as "Role Models", that is, those Best Practices selected in Europe for their innovative approach and their potential for replicability in these territories.

Finally, the conclusions extracted from the analysis of the information gathered through interviews with key agents in the Spanish territories analysed are presented, which have been key in deciding what criteria should be taken into account when searching for and selecting innovative initiatives across Europe, given that beyond their innovative approach and potential replicability, the ultimate objective is to scale up projects that have a real impact on rural environments through the generation of employment and social inclusion.

2.1. National strategies for rural development and social and labour market integration

Spain's National Rural Development Framework sets out the common elements of the country's Rural Development Programmes and how the resources of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) are to be used, specifically on the following measures.



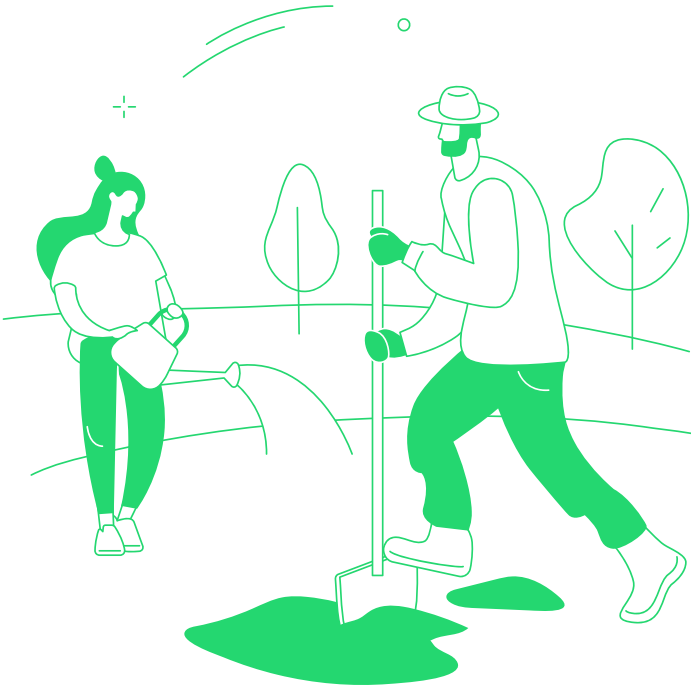
Currently, Spain has a National Rural Development Programme (PNDR) and 17 regional programmes. The PNDR includes supra-autonomous actions of general interest or whose competence corresponds to the General State Administration. On the other hand, each of the

regional programmes details the specific needs of each territory and adopts the actions of EU Regulation 1305/2013 -which sets out the general rules governing EU support for rural development- that it considers to be priorities.

The European Commission proposes, for the period 2021-2027, to articulate the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) around nine key objectives, of which we highlight the following:

Goal 7: Attract young farmers and facilitate enterprise development in rural areas.

Goal 8: Promote employment, growth, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including the bioeconomy and sustainable forestry.



The summary document of the sub-working group of the specific **objective 7** of the Strategic Plan of the CAP of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, "Attracting young farmers and facilitating business development in rural areas", draws **the following conclusions on the reality of rural areas in Europe:**

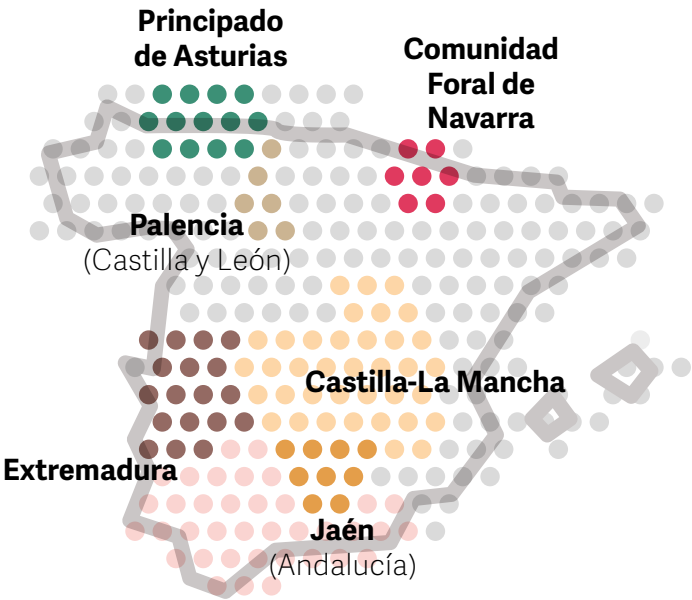
- 1 **Ageing, male-dominated rural environment with over-qualification of women.**
- 2 **Percentage of young farm owners (under 40 years old) is 8.6%.**
- 3 **Women are over-represented in incomes** from €400 to €1,000.
- 4 **48.3% of Spain's 8,124 municipalities are at risk of depopulation.**
- 5 The **female unemployment rate** for **women under 25** is nearly **50%**.
- 6 The **"AROE" poverty rate** rises to **31%** in Spanish rural areas.
- 7 **Entrepreneurship:** TEA was **5.2%**, compared to 6.1% in 2019. **Lower than the EU average.**
- 8 **14.4% of women perceive fewer opportunities** for entrepreneurship.

Source: Summary document of the sub-working group for specific objective 7 of the CAP Strategic Plan. "Atraer a los jóvenes agricultores y facilitar el desarrollo empresarial del medio rural". Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación. 2021.

2.2. Regions, factors, challenges and strategies

One of the objectives of the REN is to replicate in Spain some of the 6 initiatives selected as "Role Models", that is, those Good Practices selected in Europe for their innovative approach and their potential for replicability in the national territory, which stand out for their impact on employability and social inclusion in rural areas.

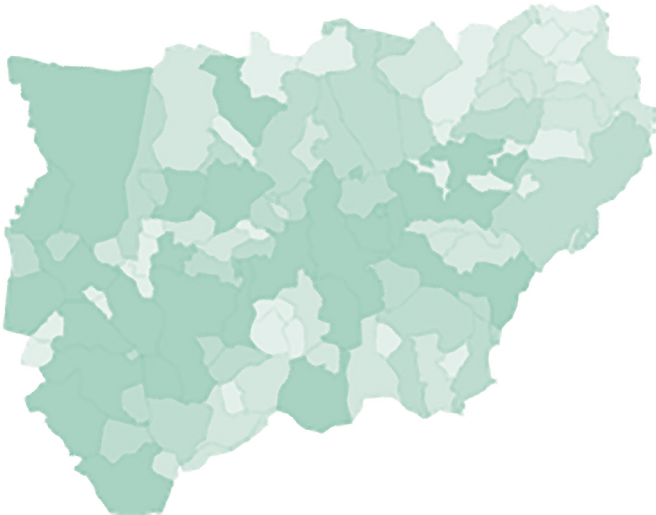
To this end, an analysis of the main territorial, demographic and socio-economic aspects of the 6 territories analysed within the context of the REN has been carried out:

















Similarly, the Key Actors of the territory have been identified, which is of fundamental importance when it comes to launching any rural development initiative, as well as the legal framework in which active employment and socio-economic development policies are articulated in the rural areas of the regions analysed.

Below is an infographic for each of the 6 regions analysed, which shows the main statistical indicators consulted in the INE and the SEPE, as well as the most relevant information gathered from other secondary sources to determine the criteria to be taken into account when searching for and selecting the innovative initiatives that best meet the needs identified through Europe.

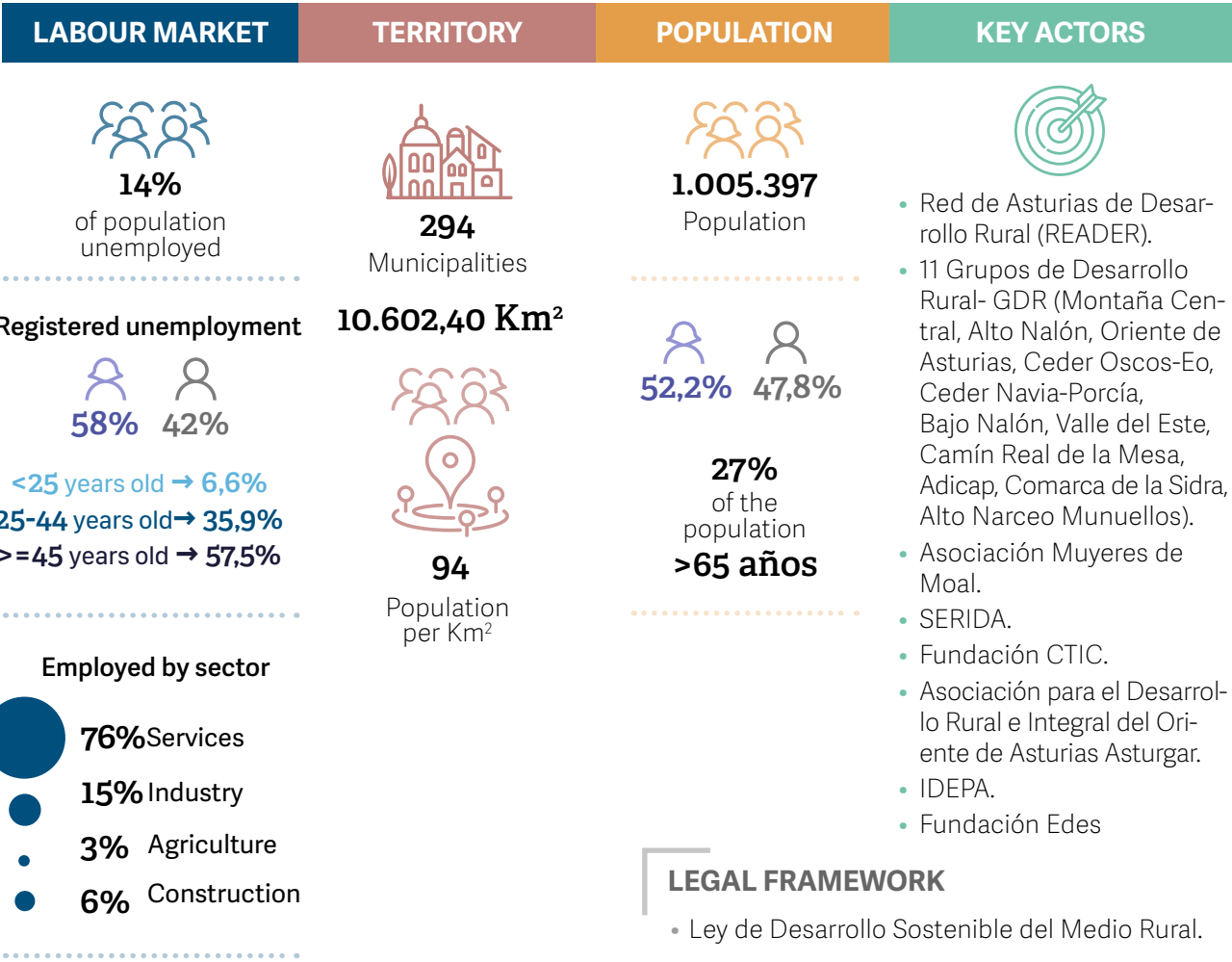
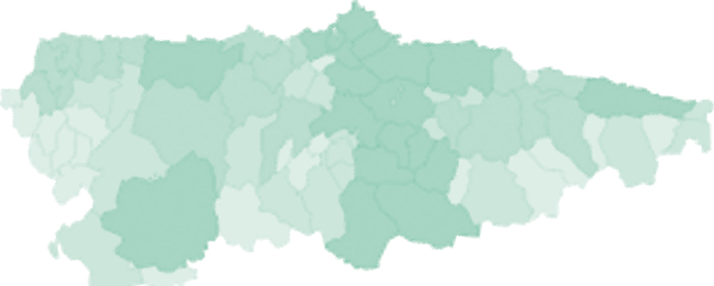
Jaén (Andalucía)



Source: Own elaboration based on data from SEPE and INE and official sources from local and regional governments.

LABOUR MARKET	TERRITORY	POPULATION	KEY ACTORS
<div> 20% of population unemployed</div> <div>Registered unemployment</div> <div><div>65%</div><div>35%</div></div> <div><25 years old → 8,9% 25-44 years old → 41,9% >=45 years old → 49,2%</div> <div>Employed by sector</div> <div><div>65% Services</div><div>16% Industry</div><div>14% Agriculture</div><div>6% Construction</div></div>	<div> 97 Municipalities</div> <div>14.496 Km²</div> <div>  42 Population per Km²</div>	<div> 620.763 Population</div> <div><div>50,4%</div><div>49,6%</div></div> <div>20% of the population >65 años</div>	<div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Asociación para el Desarrollo Rural de Andalucía (ARA).COAG Jaén.</div> <div><div>LEGAL FRAMEWORK</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Programa de Desarrollo Rural de Andalucía.Programa Reto Demográfico de la diputación de Jaén.Plan Estratégico de la Provincia de Jaén.</div></div>

Principado de Asturias



Source: Own elaboration based on data from SEPE and INE and official sources from local and regional governments.















LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Ley de Desarrollo Sostenible del Medio Rural.
- PDR, Programa de Desarrollo Rural Plan demográfico del Principado de Asturias

Castilla - La Mancha

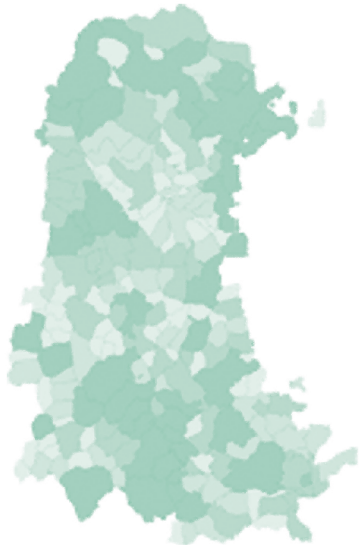


Source: Own elaboration based on data from SEPE and INE and official sources from local and regional governments.

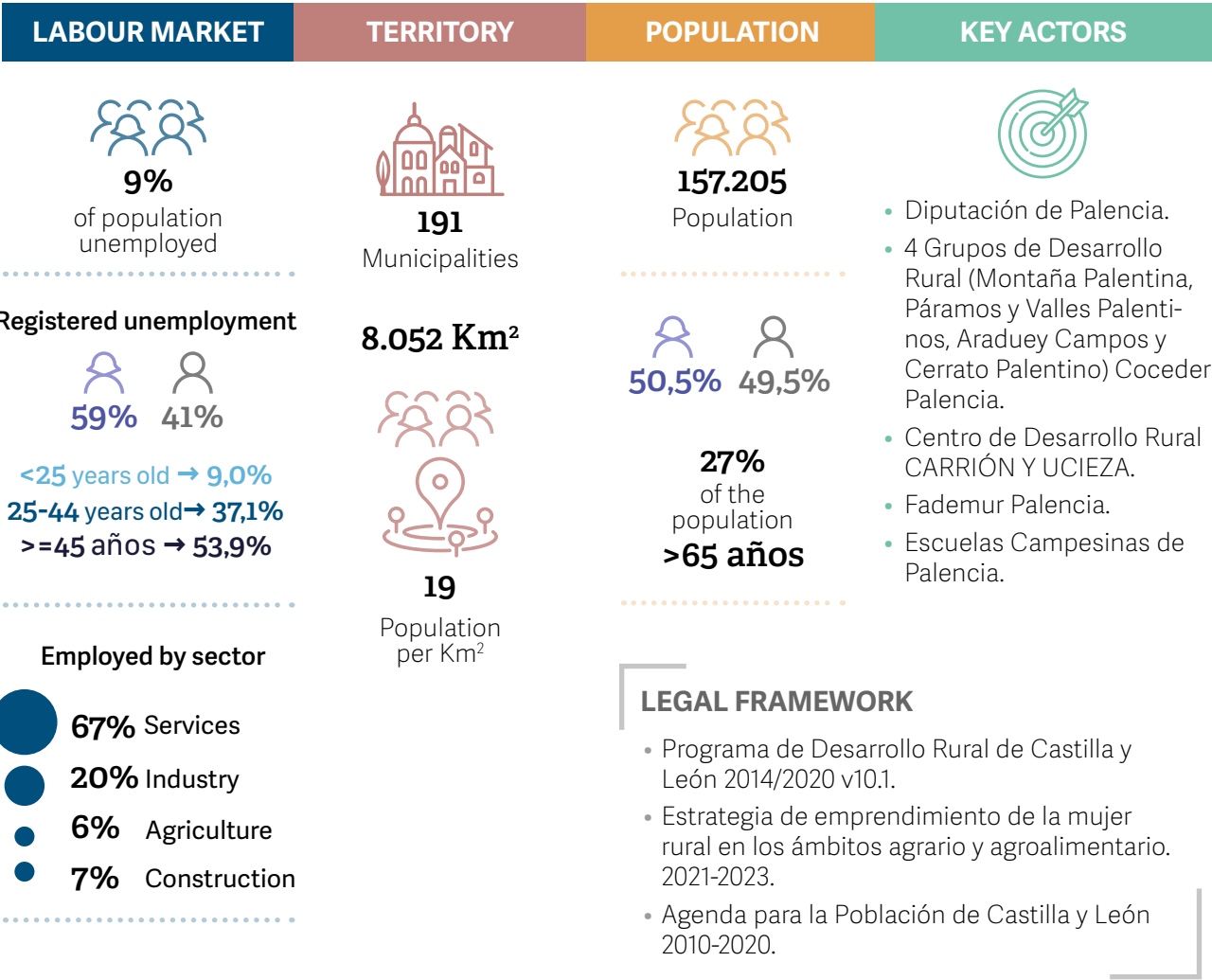
LABOUR MARKET	TERRITORY	POPULATION	KEY ACTORS
<div> 17% of population unemployed</div> <div>Registered unemployment</div> <div><div></div><div>62%38%</div><div><25 years old → 10,5% 25-44 years old → 37,9% >=45 years old → 51,6%</div></div> <div>Employed by sector</div> <div><div>69% Services</div><div>16% Industry</div><div>7% Agriculture</div><div>8% Construction</div></div>	<div> 919 Municipalities</div> <div>79.463 Km²</div> <div> 25 Population per Km²</div>	<div> 2.058.049 Population</div> <div><div></div><div>49,8%50,2%</div><div>19% of the population >65 años</div></div> <div>LEGAL FRAMEWORK</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ley de Medidas Económicas, Sociales y Tributarias frente a la Despoblación y para el Desarrollo del Medio Rural en Castilla-La Mancha.• Programa de Desarrollo Rural de Castilla La Mancha 2014-2020• Pacto contra la despoblación• Estrategia para el desarrollo de zonas con despoblamiento y declive socioeconómico de Castilla la Mancha</div>	<div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red Castellano Manchega de Desarrollo Rural.• 29 Grupos de Desarrollo Rural Subdirección General de Dinamización del Medio Rural.• AFAMMER• Escuela de Organización Industrial Llanero Solidario.• Fundación Eurocaja Rural.• Fundación CADISLA de Tomelloso Rumbo Rural.• Asociación entre todos.• Cáritas Diocesana de Toledo.</div>

Palencia

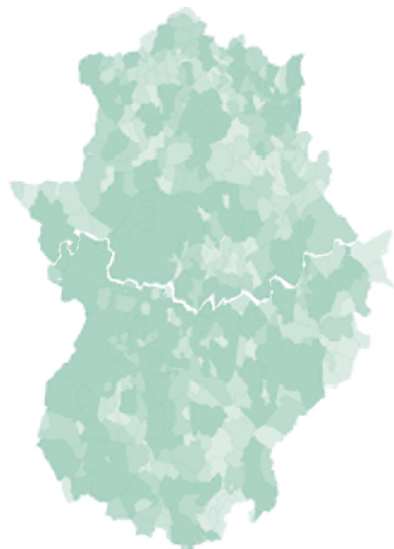
(Castilla y León)

















Source: Own elaboration based on data from SEPE and INE and official sources from local and regional governments.



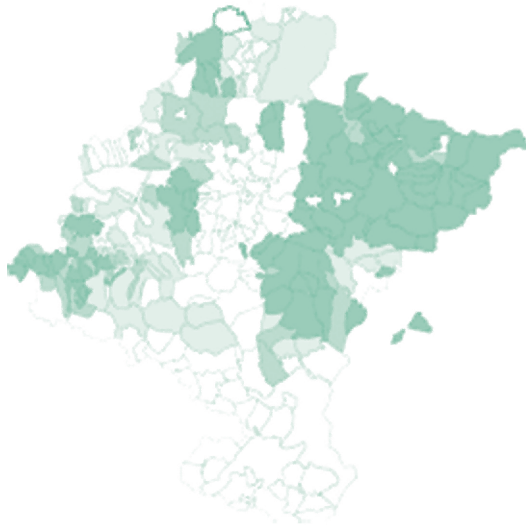
Extremadura



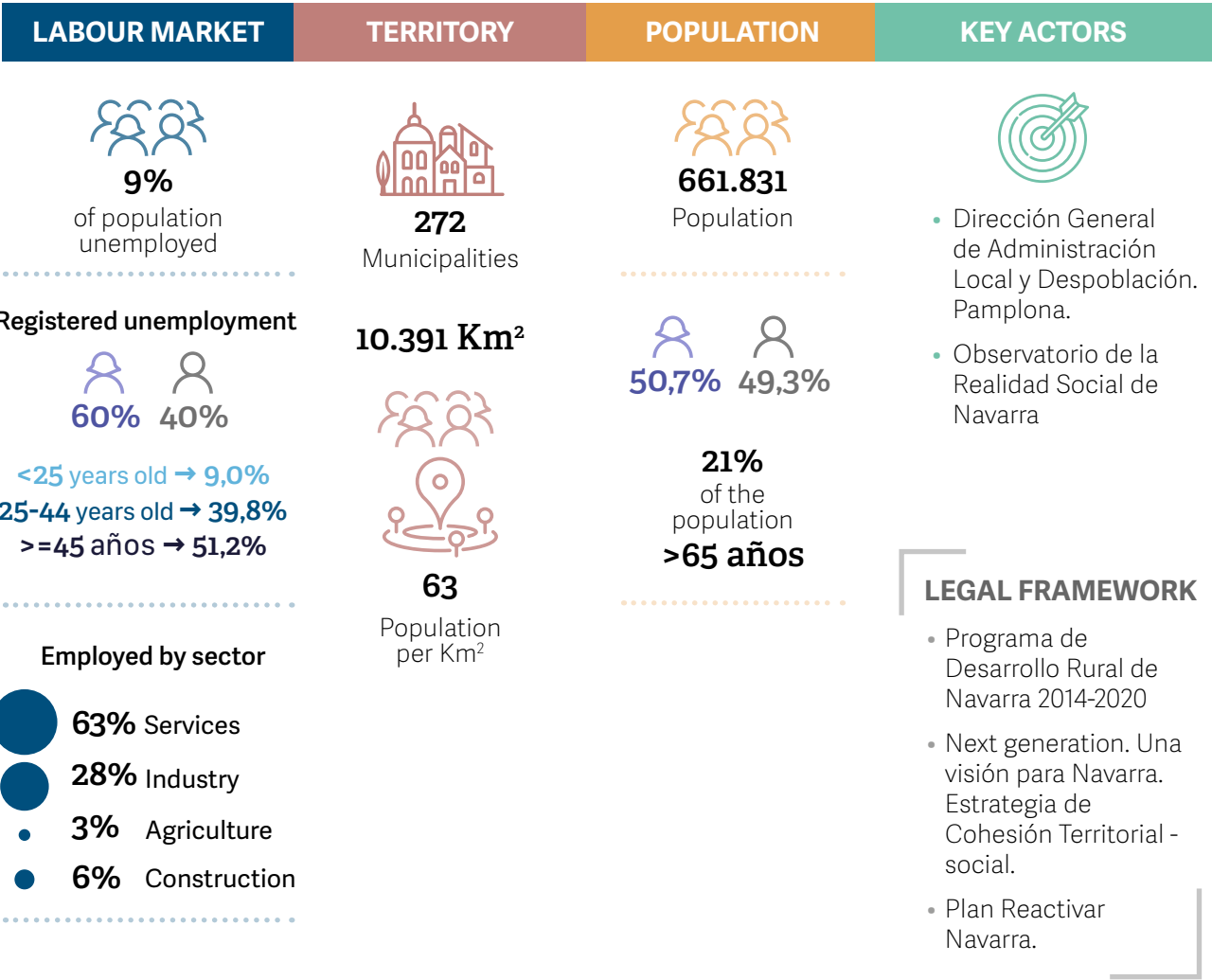
Source: Own elaboration based on data from SEPE and INE and official sources from local and regional governments.

LABOUR MARKET	TERRITORY	POPULATION	KEY ACTORS
<div> 18% of population unemployed</div> <div>Registered unemployment</div> <div> 63% 37%</div> <div><25 years old → 6,9% 25-44 years old → 37,9% >=45 años → 55,1%</div> <div>Employed by sector</div> <div>73% Services</div> <div>11% Industry</div> <div>8% Agriculture</div> <div>8% Construction</div>	<div> 388 Municipalities</div> <div>41.635 Km²</div> <div> 25 Population per Km²</div>	<div> 1.051.738 Population</div> <div> 50,4% 49,6%</div> <div>22% of the population >65 años</div>	<div></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red Extremeña de Desarrollo Rural -REDEX.• Subdirección General de Dinamización del Medio Rural.• Rurex Asociación para el desarrollo Cooperativas Agroalimentarias Extremadura.• Extremadura Emprende.• AUPEX - Asociación de Universidades Populares de Extremadura.• CEPAIM - Nuevos senderos.• Tierras agroecológicas• Grupos de Acción Local Cáceres Grupos de Acción Local Badajoz.</div> <div><div>LEGAL FRAMEWORK</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programa de Desarrollo Rural Extremadura 2014-2020.• Estrategia Extremadura 2030 Estrategia de Desarrollo Sostenible de la Diputación de Badajoz.</div></div>

Comunidad Foral de Navarra



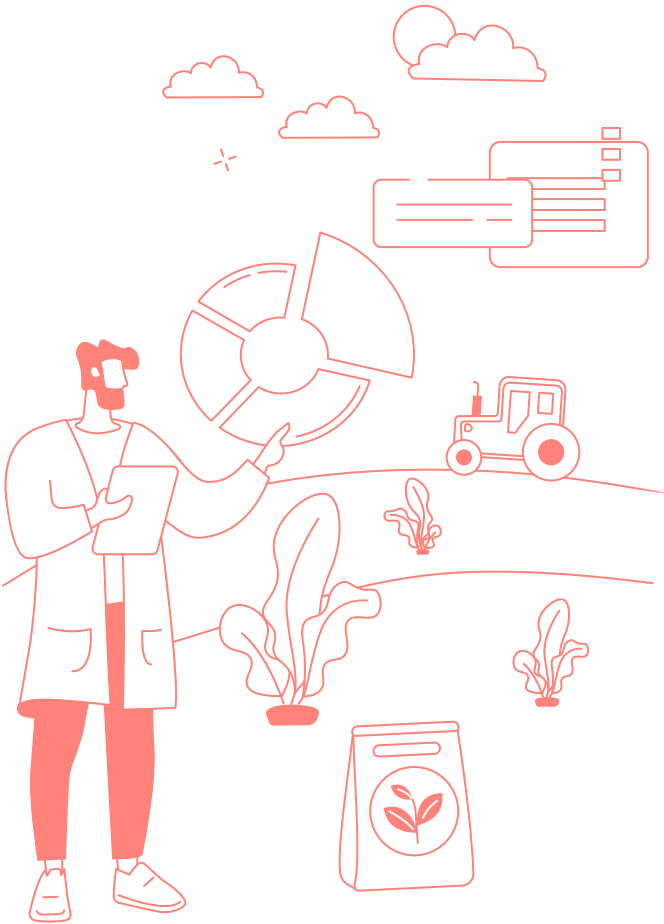
Source: Own elaboration based on data from SEPE and INE and official sources from local and regional governments.



2.3. Conclusiones

As mentioned above, **in order to understand the reality faced by people living in rural areas in the regions analysed, 80 entities were contacted** with the aim of interviewing the main key actors identified in each of the 6 territories.

These are the **main conclusions obtained:**



- 1 **Depopulation, ageing of the population** and **lack of generational replacement.**
- 2 **Insufficient provision of basic services.**
- 3 **Access to land, made difficult** by abandonment and growing speculation in agricultural land by large landowners and investment funds.
- 4 **Lack of institutional support** for rural areas.
- 5 **Insertion of vulnerable groups**, women, migrants, intergenerational relations.
- 6 **Low self-esteem** and **mistrust** in the local rural populations, with the consequent difficulty in welcoming new residents.
- 7 **Generate economic development that stays** in rural areas.
- 8 **Preservation of local culture** and **ethnographic value.**
- 9 **Lack of digital infrastructure** impedes the movement of potential newcomers from more digitised areas.
- 10 **More concrete voices are needed** to improve the lives of people already living in rural areas.

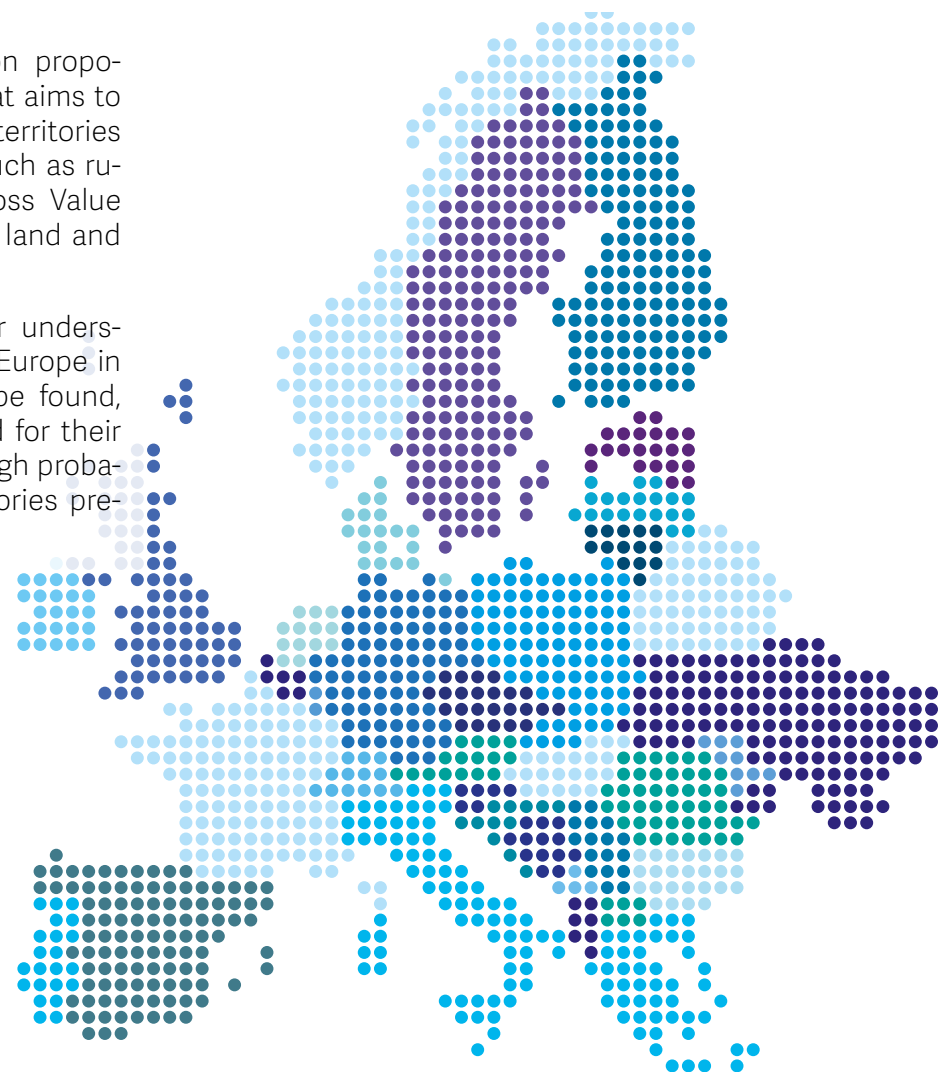
Source: Own elaboration based on the analysis of interviews with key actors in the territory.

3 | EUROPE IN FIGURES

In this section, **an analysis has been made of the reality of rural regions in Europe**, showing the main challenges faced by these environments and which are the cause of their at-risk situation, promoting depopulation and the abandonment of small municipalities that see their history and heritage disappearing.

It also shows a cluster classification proposed by the European Commission that aims to group national and regional NUTS 3 territories on the basis of different indicators such as rural population, employment and Gross Value Added of the first sector, agricultural land and land abandonment.

This has made it possible to better understand and identify those territories in Europe in which innovative initiatives should be found, and which have finally been selected for their potential to identify projects with a high probability of being replicable in the territories previously analysed.



3.1. Territorial factors

According to the study **"Smart villages Concept, issues and prospects for EU rural areas"** by Ana Martínez and James McEldowney, the rural regions of the European Union covering **44.6% of the EU and home to 93.1 million people (20.8% of the total EU population)**, the EU's rural regions are multifunctional spaces facing a number of challenges:



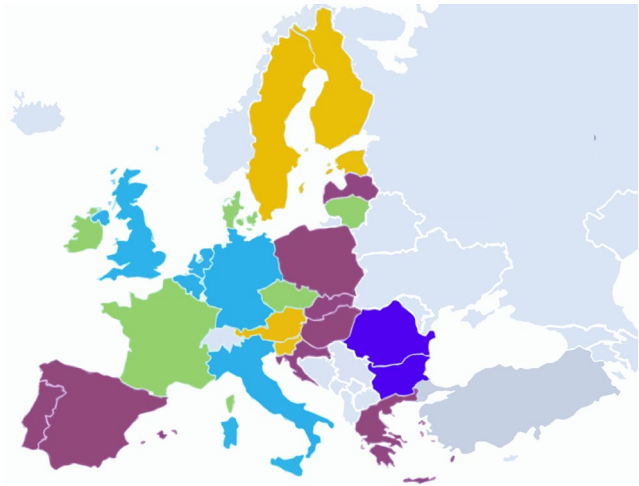
- 1 **Demographic ageing**, decrease in the number of people of working age.
- 2 **Weak labour market** and even **depopulation** of some rural and remote areas.
- 3 **Lack of infrastructure** and service provision.
- 4 **Poorly diversified economy**, low economic income combined with an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion.
- 5 **Abandonment** of farmland.
- 6 **Absence of education**, high number of early school leavers.
- 7 **Digital gap** (lack of reliable connections limiting both individuals and businesses).

Source: Martínez, Ana & McEldowney, James: Smart villages Concept, issues and prospects for EU rural areas. EPRS - European Parliamentary Research Service. March 2021.

3.1. Territorial CLUSTERS

The European Commission report "Territorial facts and trends in the EU Rural Areas within 2015-2030" proposes a **clustered classification of national and regional NUTS 3 territories based on the analysis of rural population, employment and Gross Value Added of the first sector, agricultural land and land abandonment.**

This classification shapes different socio-economic and demographic profiles as can be seen in the image below. According to this report, by 2030, almost 183 million hectares of agricultural land are projected to be at potential risk of abandonment. Mainly in Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Cyprus, Spain, Portugal and France.



	RURAL POPULATION	AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT	VGA PRIMARY SECTOR	% OF AGRICULTURAL LAND	LAND ABANDONMENT
CLUSTER 1	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
CLUSTER 2	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High
CLUSTER 3	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
CLUSTER 4	High	Medium	Medium	Muy Bajo	Medium
CLUSTER 5	High	Muy Alto	Muy Alto	Medium	Medium

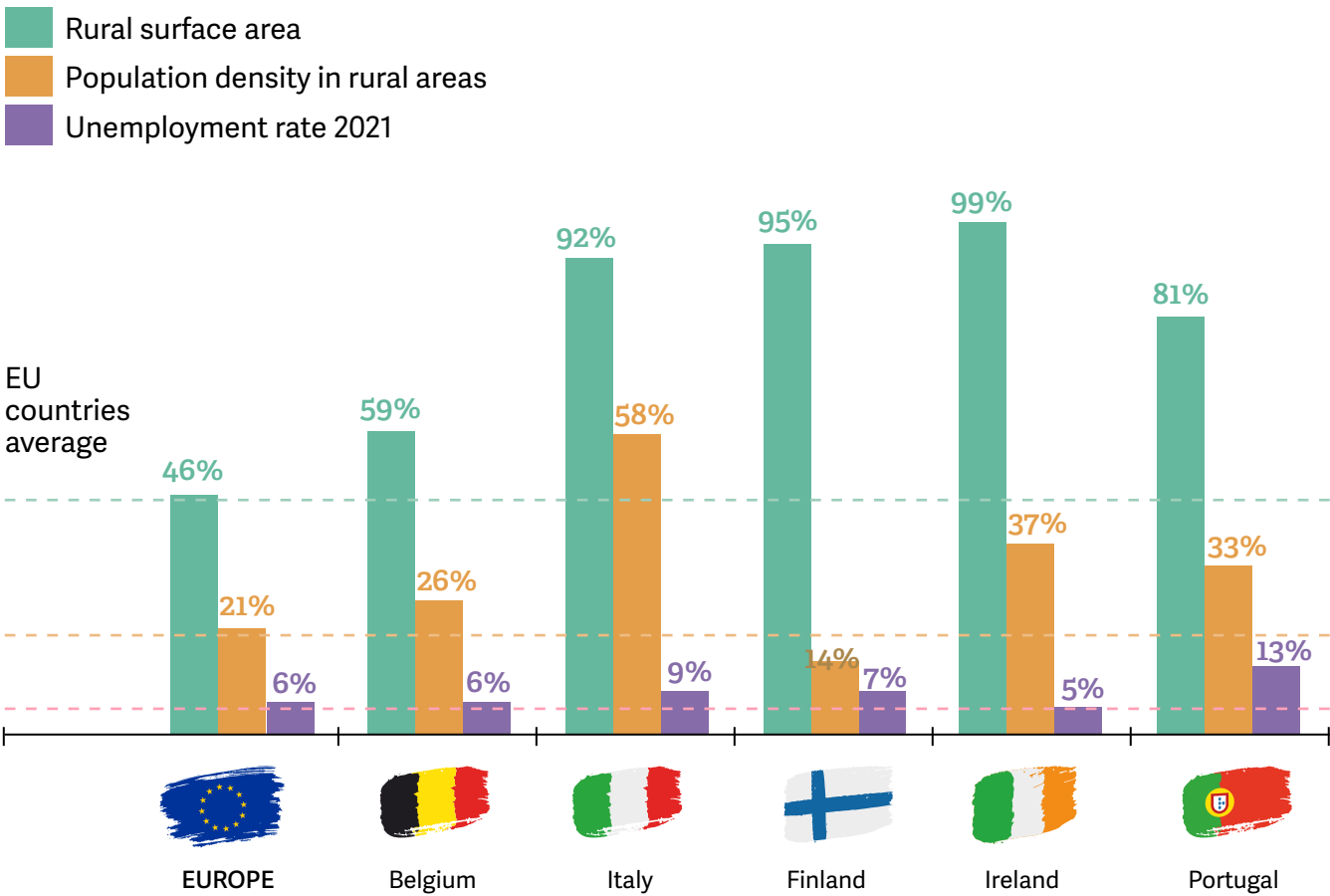
Source: Perpiñá Castillo, Carolina & Barranco, Ricardo & Kavalov, Boyan & Jacobs-Crisioni, Chris & Silva, Filipe & Baranzelli, Claudia & Lavalle, Carlo & Diogo, Vasco. Territorial Facts and Trends in the EU Rural Areas within 2015-2030. Joint Research Center. European Commission.2019.

For the development of this diagnosis, the legal framework, strategic lines, key agents and networks of the following territories have been analysed: Belgium, Italy, Finland,

Ireland and Portugal. These were the territories finally selected in Europe to identify good innovative practices.

3.2. Territories analysed in Europe

In addition to the analysis described above, **the study of the rural surface area, population density and unemployment rate**, among others, of each country has been added to provide an overview of the singularities and points in common in each of them. Below is a **comparative graph of these aspects analysed, which have been crucial in identifying the type of innovative initiative** in each country.



Source: Own elaboration based on Eurostat data.

4 | SWOT

Next, using the **SWOT tool**, the **analysis of the situation in the rural environment in Spain in relation to employability and social inclusion** is presented in a square matrix, taking as a basis the results of the previous diagnosis and analysing its internal characteristics (Strengths and Weaknesses) and its external situation (Opportunities and Threats).

Internal Analysis

Weaknesses

Depopulation | Male-dominated population | Low population density | Rural areas with deficiencies | Public transport | Bureaucracy | Employment and unemployment rates | Dependence on primary sector | Variable tourist occupancy | Poor heritage conservation | Risk of poverty or social exclusion | Low retention power | Lack of connectivity | Lack of access to land | Unattractive agricultural work prospects for young people.

Strengths

The environment, nature, quality of life and health | More economic assets | Cultural, anthropological, historical and collective wisdom, environmental, landscape and gastronomic heritage | Indicators similar to those of large cities | Sense of community and identity | Strong agricultural sector as a space for self-employment | Wide range of tourist establishments | Bioeconomy as a productive sector | Extensive experience in forest planning and management: transfer of good practice.

External Analysis

Threats

Rural exodus | Lack of social mass | Minority and loss of women | Lack of preparation of villages | European funds that do not arrive | Land under speculation | Loss of employment | Lack of homogeneity | Low awareness | Comparative disadvantage in goods and services | Abandonment of agricultural land | Loss of acquired knowledge | Deterioration of public and social services | Investments in intensive agriculture, and monoculture with temporary and rotational labour.

Opportunities

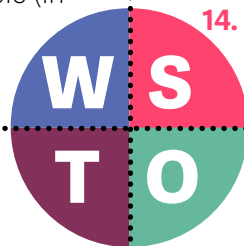
Neo-rurality | European, national and regional governmental strategy | The current importance of demographic challenge policies | Primary and industrial activities | Resilience of the agri-food sector | Support for entrepreneurship. Rural areas close to urban centres | Land banks. | Promotion of heritage | Demand for natural products | Ecotourism and agro-silvicultural uses | Green Deal | Development of social and sustainable economy.

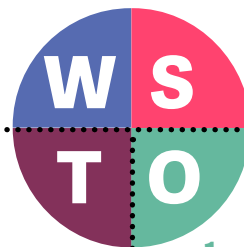
Weaknesses

1. **Depopulation.** Scarce population and an ageing population.
2. **Male-dominated population.**
3. **Low population densities** (many areas at severe risk of disappearance).
4. **Rural areas with deficiencies** in various infrastructures, as well as services and facilities, social and welfare services.
5. **Little or no public transport.**
6. **Excessive bureaucracy.**
7. **Worse employment and unemployment rates than in the cities** (especially among women and young people), and some of this employment is also characterised by its seasonality.
8. **Greater dependence on the primary sector**, which has, in general, a lower average profitability and is more dependent on climatic and natural conditions.
9. **Variable tourist occupancy.** Saturation of supply in some areas.
10. **Deficient conservation of rural, natural, historical and cultural heritage:** with shortcomings that make its maintenance and profitability difficult.
11. **High rate of risk of poverty or social exclusion (31.1%),** which is accentuated in rural areas (4.5 percentage points above the rate in the cities).
12. **Low retention power** for young people or migrants.
13. **Lack of connectivity** and access to housing in villages.
14. **Lack of access to land.**
15. **Unattractive expectations of agricultural work** for young people (investment, working hours, low wages).

Threats

1. **The rural exodus** continues to this day. Areas totally uninhabited and at risk of disappearing.
2. In some areas with very low density, **there is not enough social mass and associative and business fabric** for adequate participatory local development.
3. **Minority and loss of women** which leads to a drop in the birth rate.
4. **The lack of preparation of the villages** to welcome new settlers.
5. **European funds not reaching the land** (to people who want to move to the countryside).
6. **Land under speculation** for macro infrastructures
7. **Loss of employment** in the agricultural sector in some Autonomous Regions.
8. **Lack of homogeneity** in the definition of rural areas between Autonomous Regions.
9. **Lack of awareness** among the non-rural population **of the vulnerability, isolation and differences** that threaten the rural population.
10. **Comparative disadvantage in the goods and services** of the rural population with respect to the non-rural population.
11. **Abandonment of agricultural land** is leading to an increase in unmanaged forest area.
12. **Loss of knowledge acquired** throughout the activity due to a lack of generational replacement.
13. **Progressive deterioration of public and social services** for the rural population.
14. **Investments in intensive agriculture**, and monoculture **with temporary and rotating labour.**





Strengths

1. **Territory, nature, quality of life and health.**
2. **Cheaper goods**, housing, food, etc.
3. **Cultural, anthropological heritage, historical and collective wisdom, environmental, landscape and gastronomic heritage** in rural areas that rural tourism can enhance and develop in a sustainable way.
4. Ageing and masculinity **indicators in larger rural municipalities tend to be similar to those of large cities.**
5. **Sense of belonging and identity** of people in rural areas.
6. **Strong agricultural sector as a space for self-employment** and paid employment.
7. **Wide range of tourist establishments** in intermediate rural areas.
8. **The bioeconomy as a productive sector** that takes into account environmental sustainability and circularity in line with current environmental policies.
9. **Extensive experience in forestry planning and management: transfer of best practice.**

Opportunities

1. **Neo rurality**, "amenity migration", "lifestyle movement" or "slow movement".
2. **European, national and regional governmental strategy** with policies and aids supporting rural development initiatives.
3. **The current prominence of demographic challenge and depopulation policies** is an opportunity for local development.
4. **Primary and industrial activities** in rural areas have the potential to diversify their productive structure towards other areas that create jobs and wealth, especially in new technologies, renewable energies, energy efficiency, the bio-economy, the circular economy, the improvement of environmental sustainability, rural tourism, etc.
5. **Resilience of the agri-food sector** in the economic crisis caused by Covid19.
6. Private initiatives to **support entrepreneurship.**
7. **Rural areas that are close to urban centres** with good transport links have a better chance of development.
8. **Land banks.**
9. **Villages with a welcoming protocol.**
10. **Promotion of the cultural heritage** of rural environments.
11. The **demand for natural products** promotes the growth of entrepreneurial initiatives and the creation of green jobs in forest areas at risk of depopulation.
12. Capacity to promote **ecotourism and agrosilvopastoral uses**, with the existence of an extensive network of livestock trails and nature trails.
13. **The Green Deal** and the improvement in climate awareness generates a framework for boosting demand for forest products, including substitutes for others with a significant carbon footprint.
14. **Development of social and sustainable economy** in the rural environment as associated cooperatives.

5 | CAME

After compiling each of the factors (internal and external), through the CAME tool, we can detail the **strategies to consolidate the strengths, minimise the weaknesses, take advantage of the strengths and opportunities of the environment** and to reduce or minimise the consequences of external threats.

Internal Analysis

Correct weaknesses

Actions for the retention and return of young people and women | Working together with public authorities | Dispersion of rural employment initiatives | Improving accessibility, use and quality of ICT | Improving the inclusion of the migrant population | Support for entrepreneurship | Land access programmes | Connectivity and transport services | Definition and differentiation of rural policies | Investment in transport infrastructures and public services.

Maintain strengths

Conservation of the ecosystem by working | Facilitating access to basic goods | Recovery of abandoned lands | Maintenance and care of heritage | Support for the agricultural sector | Maintenance and expansion of the tourist offer | Support and generation of employment | Strengthening the sense of community and pride in rural populations.

External Analysis

Address threats

Fight against depopulation | Networking | Retention of women | Work of LAGs | Better dissemination, information | Support in administrative procedures | Control over speculation | Clear definition of rural areas | Lack of awareness | Comparative disadvantage in goods and services | Abandonment of agricultural land | Loss of acquired knowledge.

Explore opportunities

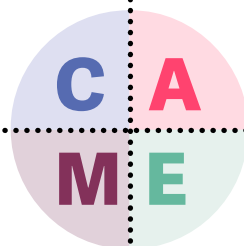
Take advantage of the benefits offered by the digital world. Make visible and facilitate access to aid and financing | Generate publicity campaigns | Tax benefits | Managed land banks | Diversify primary and industrial activities | Generate a greater offer of natural products.

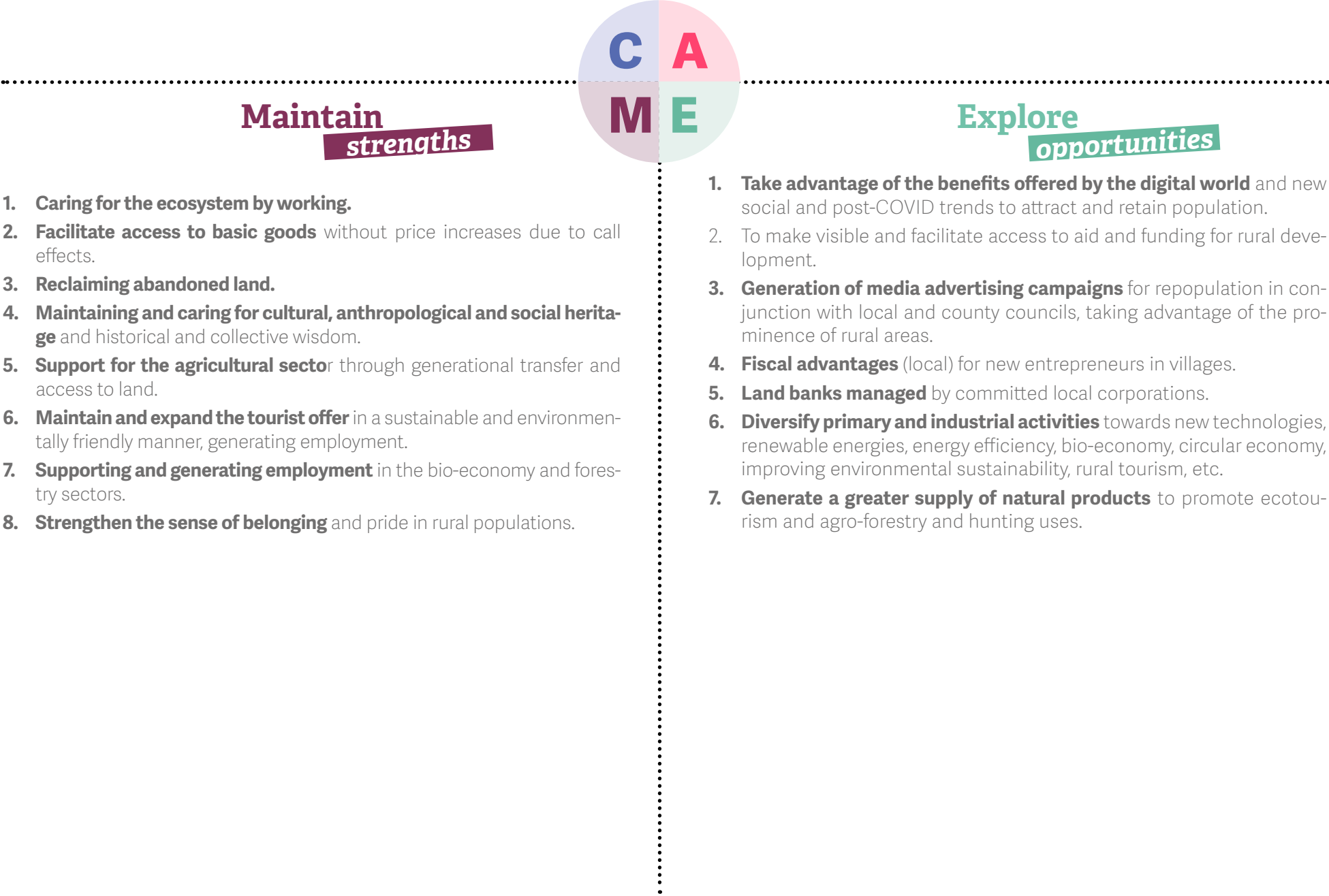
Correct weaknesses

1. **Actions for the retention and return of young people and women** through public-private partnerships for the generation of employment and the maintenance of local services.
2. **Working together with the Public Administrations** to offer infrastructures and services of proximity to people living in rural areas.
3. **Dispersion of rural employment initiatives.**
4. **Improving the accessibility, use and quality of ICTs** in rural areas can contribute to job creation and to the improvement of the income of the rural population, which has an impact on poverty reduction.
5. **Improving the inclusion of the immigrant population** in rural areas, attracted mainly by the demand for labour in the agricultural sector, can help to alleviate the loss of population in rural areas, thus fixing the population in rural areas.
6. **Support for entrepreneurship** through direct aid without excessive bureaucracy with personalised advice.
7. **Programmes for access to land** and generational change in the primary sector.
8. **Connectivity and transport services**
9. **Definition and differentiation of rural policies** from the rural rather than the urban sphere, addressing real needs.
10. **Investment in transport infrastructure** and public services.

Address threats

1. **Fighting against depopulation** through employment generation and social innovation.
2. **Networking** of similar initiatives in different territories.
3. **Retention of women** in rural areas through the maintenance and accessibility of basic and proximity services for both women and their children. Support for entrepreneurship and female employment, as well as continuing with actions such as shared ownership.
4. **LAGs work** with the local population to identify the best way to retain and welcome new settlers.
5. **Better dissemination, information**, clarity and advice on how European funds can be used for employment and entrepreneurship initiatives in the rural world.
6. **Support** in the burden of **administrative procedures** to manage European funds.
7. **Control of land speculation** to avoid the loss of employment in the agricultural sector in some Autonomous Regions.
8. **Clear** national and homogeneous **definition of rural areas.**
9. **Lack of awareness** among the non-rural population of the vulnerability, isolation and differences that threaten the rural population.
10. **Comparative disadvantage in goods and services** for the rural population compared to the non-rural population.
11. **Abandonment of agricultural land** is leading to an increase in unmanaged forest area.
12. **Loss of knowledge acquired** throughout the activity due to the lack of generational replacement.





6 | CONCLUSIONS

From the Rural Development plans, which offer a logical and legal framework for the actions outlined from the CAP, we find that **its priority 6**, which frames all the actions that work on the human component, its welfare and its inclusion of rural environments, **does not fully materialise in the improvement of the employability of its inhabitants.**

In addition, **areas heavily affected by monocultures and depopulation have been found** found to face real challenges in improving the quality of life of people living in rural areas. In territories that depend on monocultures, work is temporary, precarious and often without social security contributions. This leads to social exclusion, poverty and deterioration of the mental health of the most vulnerable people.

The lack of basic resources, services such as transport, schools, health centres, and even ATMs, are disappearing from Spain, which further limits the reception of new settlers.

Finally, it should be noted that **there is a tendency to idealise the repopulation of Empty Spain, which is not real.** Some of the organisations interviewed stressed that in order to repopulate, one has to have a very high degree of conviction. Many families do not spend more than a year in the village due to the precarious living conditions. That there is a lack of many means to support repopulation, including,

most importantly, access to work and to decent and affordable housing.

In summary, the diagnostic shows us an ageing rural environment with a tendency towards acute depopulation, where women play a secondary role in the labour market, with access to less qualified and more precarious jobs; where young people have a low labour supply, limited access to farmland and few opportunities for entrepreneurship, especially among women.

The lack of active policies that focus on the rural environment, generating opportunities that favour population replacement and socio-economic development in a sustainable way, accentuates depopulation and ageing, increasing the risk of poverty, the reduction of basic services and the loss of cultural heritage.

"Role Models" selection

The 6 "Role Models" identified meet each of the indicators described below, having a great reception among the heads of the different Public Administrations of the Spanish territories who were able to visit them through the study visits organised during the year 2022. As well as all the participants of the 2022 Annual Congress who were able to get to know them thanks to the participation as speakers of the 6 representatives of the collaborating European entities.

In order to select good practices of social innovation in Europe that are potentially scalable in Spain, a series of basic indicators were established:



INNOVATION

Responding to challenges using new methodologies, tools and approaches. Identifying, within this::

Digital methodologies: new or newly applied methodologies to solve a problem.

Social innovation: innovative social methodologies, with a community approach, including the final population in the identification and solution of problems.



SCALABILITY OF THE PROJECT

Consideration was given to:

Adaptability in terms of the regional problems it addresses and its coincidence with regional and national priorities in our context.

That it allows **collaboration between different agents** and promotes the generation of alliances.



IMPACT

where it has been measured:

The capacity to have a **positive impact on a large scale** or in several areas.

The **effectiveness of the project** in achieving results in terms of job placement or entrepreneurship generation and how the impact has been measured.



SUSTAINABILITY

lasting impacts that have attracted funding for the sustainability and durability of projects.

Project **within the framework** of Spanish or EU national or regional **funding lines**.

Projects whose **positive impacts are long-lasting**.



VULNERABLE GROUPS

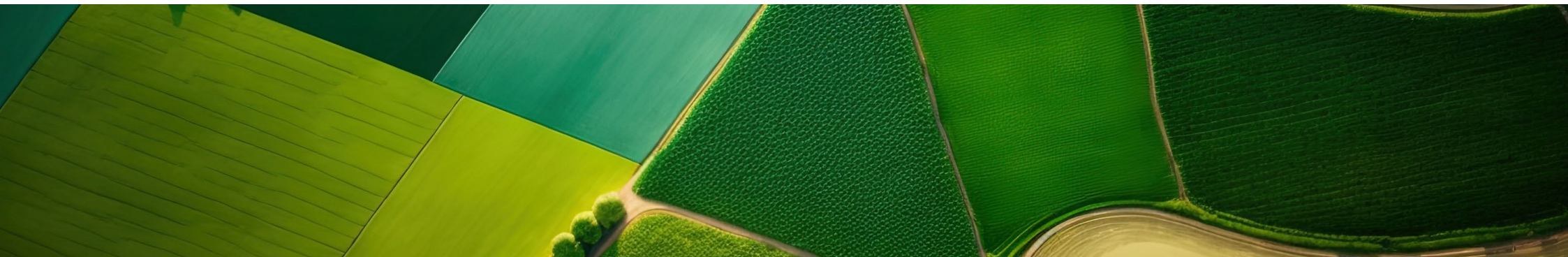
Women, young people, migrants and/or refugees, people with disabilities, the elderly.

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Rural Employability Network



Project developed by Fundación Santa María la Real and funded by the European Social Fund, within the Operational Program for Social Inclusion and Social Economy, in its Priority Axis 7, as a transnational cooperation project. "2014ES05SFOP012".



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