

## Spain

### Biodiversity's restoration, preservation & enhancement

**CAP funds help support long-term sustainability of transhumance shepherding in Spain.**

#### Summary

The Ovinnova project focused on improving the competitiveness of transhumance grazing traditions. It configured a new business and management model for livestock farming that contributes to preserving biodiversity while giving incentives for young people to remain and work in rural areas.



#### Location

Andalucía, Castilla y León and Extremadura

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P4- Ecosystems management

#### Measure

M16 - Cooperation

#### Funding

Total budget 600 000 (EUR)  
RDP contribution 600 000 (EUR)

#### Project duration

2019 – 2021

#### Project promoter

Fundacion Montre Mediterraneo (FMM)

#### Email

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#### Website

<https://goovinnova.org/>

#### Project Results

The project created jobs for 15 shepherds, out of which four were women.

12 trainees benefitted from the project activities and six of them went on to become shepherds.

#### Lessons & Recommendations

- Transhumance shepherding can provide important environmental and socio-economic benefits for upland areas.

## Context

Transhumance is a traditional and naturally sustainable livestock management system. The seasonal grazing of pastures in transhumance management practices helps enable the restoration and fertilization of the grass and creates opportunities for insects and plant seeds to spread across the territory, helping to restore and preserve biodiversity.

The number of transhumance shepherds in Spain has been decreasing recently for several reasons. Generational renewal has diminished because of the labour intensity and limited profitability of the work. Also, sheep herd numbers had decreased due to a reduced demand for their meat.

Across Spain, challenges were emerging from the abandonment of this ancient tradition. These included the degradation of biodiversity (due to lack of fertilisation) across high mountain areas that were formally used as grazelands. In contrast, lowlands experienced more overgrazing because herds were no longer moved to higher ground during the summer months. This limited the pasture's ability to regenerate itself and thereby support a new cycle of grazing during the following year.

## Objectives

The aim of the Ovinnova Operational Group was to configure an innovative, productive, and competitive business model for transhumance grazing. This should create new employment opportunities for young people as shepherds and have a positive impact on biodiversity.

## Activities

Between 2019 and 2021, the Operational Group carried out a wide range of activities in the Cantabrian mountains and dehesas (which are multifunctional, agrosylvopastoral areas of southern and central Spain). CAP funded activities included providing administrative and logistical assistance to transhumance herds, training, research, habitat conservation, and testing the use of innovative technologies in receiving areas and livestock stations.

The project also worked on: the identification of ranchers interested in grazing; the mapping of grazing areas in the north; and the certification of transhumance pastures and products. An exchange programme for transhumant shepherds/stockbreeders was organised thanks to a collaboration with the German cooperative Württembergische Lammfleischerzeugergemeinschaft–Viehzentrale.

The Operational Group also contributed to the creation of an 'International meeting of transhumant shepherds and ranchers' to share experiences and create synergies with other countries where transhumance is still practiced.

## Main results

The project created jobs for 15 shepherds, out of which four were women. Another 12 trainees, among which were six women and six men aged between 22 and 45, participated in the project activities, and six of them went on to become shepherds.

## Key lessons

Preserving the practice of transhumance shepherding can deliver important socio-economic and environmental benefits for remote isolated mountain areas.

For its success, the project relied on a wide network of well-informed partners and associates in Spain and abroad.