

# Plan 130 Measures to address the Demographic Challenge

## *Good practice*

**Member State, Region:** Spain, National Plan

**Publication date:** July 2025



## Basic project details

### **Main institution heading the initiative:**

Government Delegate Commission for the Demographic Challenge (SGRD)<sup>1</sup>  
([Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge](#))

### **Main partners involved:**

- 18 Spanish Ministries<sup>2</sup> were involved through their own measures and actions within the plan's conceptualisation and the working group for Plan 130's realisation
- The plan seeks social participation through open governance mechanisms – **promoting public-private alliances** with the private sector and third parties, universities, research centres and citizens.

### **Project duration (start – end date):**

2021 – 2023

### **Main sectors targeted:**

Demographic dynamics and migration; Competitiveness and innovation; Digital and physical connectivity; Jobs and skills; Quality of life and equal access to essential services

### **Official website:**

[130 Measures to address the Demographic Challenge](#)

## Implementation costs

**Total budget:** EUR 13,000,000,000.00

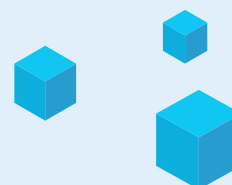
**Sources of funding:** National funding and EU funding through the national Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan under the Recovery and Resilience Fund. Projects funded through Plan 130 also have the possibility of applying individually to other European financing instruments.

### **Amounts:**

**National funding through the ministerial departments expenditure budgets makes up 25% of the plans financing:**  
EUR 3,250,000,000.00

### **EU funding:**

**Next Generation EU makes up 75% of the plans financing:**  
EUR 9,750,000,000.00



## Short summary of the project

**The 130 Measures Plan is Spain's multifaceted initiative addressing the demographic challenge.** Developed through coordinated actions across all ministries, this plan is fully aligned with the [Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan](#) and guarantees the incorporation of small municipalities into a green, digital, and inclusive recovery. **The different measures under the plan aim to improve territorial cohesion within Spain**, to eliminate the urban-rural divide and foster actions in disadvantaged areas, with an aim to transform the targeted territories into spaces of opportunity. **The plan is governed through a newly established governance mechanism, the Sectoral Conference for the Demographic Challenge, which enables the articulation of actions of the state and the autonomous communities and ensures effective monitoring of the plan's measures and actions.** Furthermore, a Working Group comprising focal points from the eighteen involved ministries is tasked with identifying updates and improvements based on the evolution of actions within each ministry's scope.

Plan 130 includes a total of 130 measures and over 200 actions that are organised into ten **strategic axes**: 1. Boosting the ecological transition, 2. Digital transition and full territorial connectivity, 3. Development and innovation in the territory, 4. Promoting sustainable tourism, 5. Equal rights and opportunities for women, 6. Promotion of entrepreneurship and business activity, 7. Strengthening public services and promoting decentralisation, 8. Social welfare and the care economy, 9. Promotion of culture, 10. Policy and institutional reforms to address the demographic challenge **The 10 strategic axes aim to encourage equal opportunities and balanced regional development through the economic diversification of the most disadvantaged areas.** This is to be achieved through the promotion of innovation, improvements in digital connectivity, reinforced rural and urban linkages, the adequate provision of basic services, and the integration of demographic considerations in every Government's decision.

## Regional context

Spain's demographic transition is driven by ageing, low birth rates, and internal migration trends. As of 2023, 21% of the population is aged 65 or older, raising the old-age dependency ratio to 31%. Most areas face population decline or stagnation due to emigration and ageing, while migration concentrates in a few urban centres. This dynamic leads to talent loss in rural areas, deepening territorial imbalances and social inequalities. In response, Spain's socio-territorial policies aim to promote more balanced development. Key priorities include supporting polycentric growth, strengthening small and medium-sized towns, and enhancing rural-urban linkages. The SGRD leads efforts to unlock regional potential and address demographic pressures with targeted, place-based strategies.



# Effectiveness

## Goals of the initiative

The plan addressed Spain's demographic challenges, with a focus on rural areas and small towns. It sought to strengthen territorial cohesion by promoting urban–rural linkages, economic reactivation, and social inclusion—particularly for women and young people. Aligned with the national Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan, it supported local strategies for sustainable growth while **embedding demographic and gender perspectives across all levels of policy and governance**. Emphasis was placed on **cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-level partnerships** to enhance territorial functionality. Core priorities included advancing ecological and digital transitions, diversifying rural economies, boosting the care sector, and improving overall well-being in underserved regions.<sup>3</sup>

## Types of activities

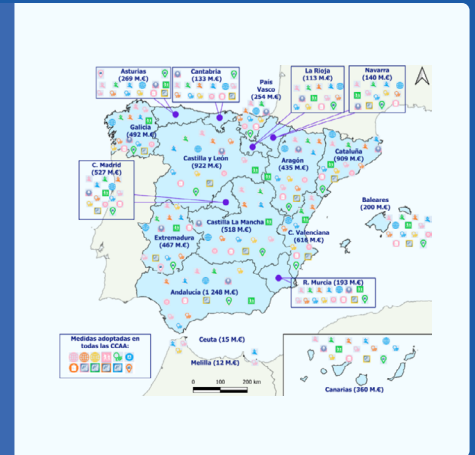
Plan 130 included a total of 130 measures and over 200 actions, these actions and measures were organised along the strategic axes presented below, with a few examples of actions and measures included for each axis<sup>4</sup>:

1. **Ecological transition**: Plan 130 promoted a fair energy transition in less resilient regions, focusing on the bioeconomy and biodiversity. Key actions included energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy installations in rural areas, energy storage R&D, and sustainable mobility initiatives.
2. **Digital transition and connectivity**: The plan prioritised ultra-fast broadband and 5G rollout to support rural digitalisation, education, and access to public services. Key actions included 5G deployment, digital tax administration, and vocational training for digital empowerment.
3. **Territorial development and innovation**: Economic growth was supported by nurturing local talent, promoting smart territories, and establishing innovation centres. Key actions included the Smart Territories Project, innovation centre networks, and the “Spanish Social Economy Capital”.
4. **Sustainable tourism**: Tourism was positioned as a tool for rural development and depopulation mitigation. Actions included sustainability programmes, tourism product development, and digital transformation plans for destinations.
5. **Women's rights and opportunities**: The plan promoted women's entrepreneurship and professional training in rural areas. It also supported victims of violence. Key actions included financial aid for women-led SMEs, cooperative-based job insertion, and youth programmes like Erasmus Rural.
6. **Entrepreneurship and business activity**: Rural areas were promoted as spaces for opportunity through national entrepreneurship programmes. Key actions included Entrepreneur Service Points, rural vocational training, and funding for industrial investment.
7. **Public services and decentralisation**: The plan strengthened local services and governance, especially in health, education, and social care. Actions included municipal justice offices, investment in police infrastructure, and support for UNED territorial centres.
8. **Social welfare and care economy**: Special focus was given to ageing rural populations through enhanced care systems and modernised social services. Actions included expanding National Health System services and the Spain Accessible Country programme.
9. **Culture promotion**: Cultural activities in rural areas were supported to preserve heritage and identity. Actions included rural library digitisation, cultural revitalisation grants, and festival organisation.
10. **Policy and institutional reform**: Reforms integrated the demographic perspective into governance, influencing financing systems and remote work legislation. Actions included creating a demographic observatory and eliminating pharmaceutical co-payments for vulnerable groups.

The declaration of interest for projects and initiatives as well as social stakeholders was launched by the Secretariat-General for the Demographic Challenge at the end of 2020. This call allowed to draft a better-defined image of the needs and opportunities in small municipalities. This draft was then combined with the characteristics of the projects based on the rural associative fabric to better scale Plan 130's actions.

# Important outputs / results / achievements

Overall, more than **4,200 initiatives** and projects have received funding from Plan 130. **Over 60 percent of the initiatives came from local authorities.** This indicates that the measures under Plan 130 could be scaled better at the local level and the plan was successful in gearing actions effectively towards small municipalities and rural areas.<sup>5</sup> The principal magnitude of Plan 130 is displayed in the map below, detailing the funding and support for measures and interventions within the Plan across Spain for the period of 2021 to 2022.



## Key initiatives funded through the plan:

- **DUS 5000<sup>6</sup>:** €325 million invested in unique local clean energy projects from which 1,800 small municipalities with a total population of 2.3 million people have benefitted.
- **Single-Broadband:** Ultra-fast broadband extended to 4,516 municipalities, affecting over 728,000 households and companies.
- **Unico-Rural Demand:** Satellite technology provided affordable ultra-fast connectivity (at least 100 Mbps) for €35/month in areas without fixed technology coverage.
- **Tourism Sustainability Plans:** Directed €1,858 million towards transforming tourist destinations into innovation hubs. 525 Tourism Sustainability Plans for Destinations benefitted, 262 of which were in rural areas.
- **Rural Campus:** This rural internship scheme sponsored students to take internships in rural areas. Nearly 1,500 students participated in 2022 and 2023, carrying out their training internships in municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants and contributing to the economic and social revitalisation of municipalities. This programme was renewed for a second edition within the Plan and continues after the Plan's conclusion due to its success in bringing students to rural areas.
- **Mentor Classrooms:** Grants for improving the professional qualification of population, mostly women (60%). Aim to extend to 3,000 municipalities.
- **Sustainable Rural Markets:** Business support subsidies for a total of €22 million were granted in 2023 (funding increased from an initial €5 million in 2021) towards modernising commercial activities in 111 rural localities.
- **Youth Demographic Challenge Aid:** Assisted youth (up to 35 years old) in accessing affordable housing, with an overall budget of €128 million.
- **Administration Near You:** Reduced digital divide by visiting 3,600 municipalities, assisting 40,000 people and issuing 30,000 digital certificates.
- **Spanish Urban Agenda:** The agenda spent €20 million on aiding the implementation of Local Action Plans of the Spanish Urban Agenda to promote urban and rural strategy planning, with €3.2 million (16% of the total call amount) spent on small municipalities.
- **Long-term Care and Support Plan:** Provided facilities to promote personal autonomy through advanced telecare and other technologies.
- **Modernisation of Social Services:** Incorporated new technologies and promoted innovative projects in social service care and infrastructure.
- **CODI Program:** Trained 950,000 children and adolescents in basic digital skills to reduce the digital divide.
- **De-concentration of General Administration (AGE) Bodies:** Promoted decentralisation of key support centres, including digital competency, social security data processing, postal services, and others.

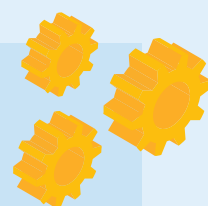
## Key success factors



A major success factor of Plan 130 was its **cross-cutting design**, involving all relevant ministries and thematic areas to address the demographic challenge. This approach ensured cohesive action and consistent implementation across Spain, particularly in rural and small to medium-sized municipalities. By making the demographic challenge central to all government activity, the plan fostered integrated responses across sectors. Another key factor was the **well-coordinated public communication and the simplified funding application process**. The Ministry's website offered accessible tools for citizens to propose projects and engage with the plan, making it easier for under-resourced regions to apply for support.

The plan's bottom-up approach was also critical, as it targeted small municipalities and rural areas with initiatives tailored to local needs, enhancing impact and sustainability. Finally, **the active involvement of local stakeholders** further strengthened the plan. By enabling direct participation in project proposals and implementation, the strategy secured local buy-in and drove community-led progress—an aspect highlighted by former Vice-President Teresa Ribera as essential to the plan's success.<sup>7</sup>

## Key challenges



National initiatives like Plan 130 often face implementation delays due to the involvement of multiple actors, bureaucratic complexity, and the need for cross-ministerial coordination. With contributions spanning several ministries, significant time was required to align directives and unify efforts. Effective inter-ministerial communication was essential to avoid overlaps and ensure a cohesive strategy. However, the plan's broad scope and numerous stakeholders—including NGOs and regional partners—slowed execution through lengthy processing and harmonisation efforts. To address this, a Working Group of the Government Delegate Commission for the Demographic Challenge and the Fight against Depopulation was formed, comprising the president as chair and 12 ministers. This group coordinated actions, streamlined processes, and reduced redundancies to improve efficiency.



# Scalability<sup>8</sup> and replicability<sup>9</sup>

## Scalability

Plan 130 was implemented at a **national level** in Spain, engaging multiple ministries and stakeholders to address demographic challenges comprehensively. Its cross-sectoral approach, spanning digital connectivity, sustainable economic development, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion, has made it a significant framework for tackling territorial inequalities. The plan has successfully scaled across diverse regions, from urban centers to remote rural areas, ensuring targeted interventions for different demographic and economic contexts.

Scaling **further to a European level** would require adapting its governance model to facilitate cooperation among EU Member States facing similar demographic shifts. Many of its measures—such as digital connectivity expansion, rural entrepreneurship support, and sustainable territorial development—align with existing EU policy frameworks, making integration into broader European strategies feasible. Through mechanisms like **EU cohesion policy, the Just Transition Fund, and Horizon Europe**, similar initiatives could be supported across multiple countries, fostering cross-border cooperation and shared best practices.

At the same time, Plan 130's model can be **scaled down for more localised applications**, particularly at the municipal or regional level. Certain measures, such as small-scale business grants, local infrastructure projects, and digital literacy programs, can be adapted to the needs of smaller administrative units without requiring large-scale national coordination. This flexibility allows the plan's core principles to be applied in **smaller municipalities or specific rural areas**, ensuring tailored solutions based on local demographic and economic realities.

## Replicability

Regarding replicability, **such a plan could be effectively implemented in other countries if selected conditions are met. First, it is important to involve all ministries to ensure that the plan includes all areas of the government related to combatting the demographic challenge and its related issues.** The inclusion of all ministries is essential for ensuring the cohesiveness and compatibility of the planned actions and measures of each ministry. It also helps to find synergies between ministries, allowing a more targeted approach to those thematic areas and projects. **Second, it is important to ensure the availability of proficient funding to realise the plan.** The programme relies on funding through the EU, as it makes up 75 percent of the funds available to Plan 130. As such, to replicate the same size and effect resulting from such a plan, the availability of large funding through a national government or international funds is necessary. The governmental structure is the third condition for the replicability of Plan 130. Spain has a **governmental structure** throughout the territory, which is divided into three axes: the national level, holding judiciary, executive and legislative power, the regional level and autonomous communities, with executive and legislative branches but no judiciary power, and the local government level that has only administrative power and must adhere to national and regional law in its legislation. A similar set up in the governmental structure can make the replication process easier but is not necessary for transferring the plan to another context. Should there be a different governmental structure, it is important to **have a clear overview of the important governmental bodies** present and needed for the realisation of the plan to adapt its structure to the regional circumstances.



# Sustainability<sup>10</sup>

Although Plan 130 ended in 2023, many of its supported initiatives continue, demonstrating the lasting impact of its efforts against demographic challenges. Building on this foundation, the **New Action Plan to Face the Demographic Challenge** aims to further combat depopulation, enhance socio-territorial cohesion, strengthen regional resilience, create opportunities in rural and declining regions, and ensure social inclusion. Therefore, the government remains committed beyond Plan 130, continuing to develop future plans and supporting ongoing initiatives. Additionally, the Working Group of the Government Delegate Commission for the Demographic Challenge and the Fight against Depopulation will continue to facilitate inter-ministerial coordination.

Plan 130 had **integrated monitoring and evaluation tools**. These have the purpose of providing a systematic monitoring tool to facilitate a coordinated management of communication of the progress made on the demographic challenge through the Plan's activities. Such tools facilitate decision-making on the alignment of measures under Plan 130 with the objectives posed by the national government. They also allowed an exhaustive follow-up analysis of the programme's success on a periodic basis throughout the execution period. This measurement mechanism enhanced the sustainability of the plan as it aided the plan in proving the success of its measures.<sup>11</sup> This largely contributed to the renewal of many actions through the new action plan to face the demographic challenge following from a thorough review process in 2025.<sup>12</sup>

## Innovativeness

**Plan 130 is one of the first national initiatives that involves all existing ministries within a country and, as such, it truly embodies a comprehensive perspective on battling the demographic challenge.** This collaborative and thorough approach, focused on placing the demographic challenge at the core of all ministerial activities to fight all associated circumstances, is unique to Spain. Furthermore, setting up a dedicated ministry for managing the demographic transition and coordinating the actions of the Plan is an innovative way of approaching the challenges resulting from demographic change, which allows a very focused and uniquely all-encompassing approach to tackling the problems, especially for rural areas and small municipalities.





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# Endnotes

- 1 From Spanish: Secretaría General para el Reto Demográfico (SGRD)
- 2 Ministries of: Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, Interior, Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation, Finance and Civil Service, Education and Vocational Training, Science and Innovation, Labour and Social Economy, Industry, Trade and Tourism, Culture and Sport, Equality, Health, Social Rights and Agenda 2030, Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Territorial Policy, Universities, and Justice
- 3 *Plan of Measures to Combat Demographic Challenge will allocate more than 10 billion euros and 130 active policies to combat depopulation and guarantee territorial and social cohesion. (2021, March 16). La Moncloa.* Retrieved January 24, 2025, from <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/news/Paginas/2021/20210316demog-challenge.aspx>
- 4 *Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge. (2022). Plan de recuperación 130 medidas frente al reto demográfico.* Retrieved from [Plan de recuperación 130 medidas frente al reto demográfico](#).
- 5 *Plan of Measures to Combat Demographic Challenge will allocate more than 10 billion euros and 130 active policies to combat depopulation and guarantee territorial and social cohesion. (2021, March 16). La Moncloa.* Retrieved January 24, 2025, from <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/news/Paginas/2021/20210316demog-challenge.aspx>
- 6 The “5000” in the title of the initiative “DUS 5000” refers to the target population size of the municipalities eligible for the program. Specifically, it is aimed at municipalities with up to 5,000 inhabitants, as well as non-urban municipalities with up to 20,000 inhabitants where all population centres have no more than 5,000 residents. DUS stands instead for “Desarrollo Urbano Sostenible” which translates to Sustainable Urban Development. See: <https://www.idae.es/en/support-and-funding/programa-dus-5000-ayudas-para-inversiones-proyectos-singulares-locales-de>
- 7 *Plan of Measures to Combat Demographic Challenge will allocate more than 10 billion euros and 130 active policies to combat depopulation and guarantee territorial and social cohesion. (2021, March 16). La Moncloa.* Retrieved January 24, 2025, from <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/news/Paginas/2021/20210316demog-challenge.aspx>
- 8 Scalability entails that a policy approach can be adapted to a bigger scale than just the local context.
- 9 Replicability entails that a policy approach can be applied to a different setting in a rather straightforward manner.
- 10 Sustainability refers to the capacity of the project to be sustained over the long term.
- 11 General Directorate on Policies against Depopulation & Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge. (2023). *Addressing rural depopulation using data and evidence* [Slide show]. Rural Vision Europe. Retrieved from [Rural Vision Europe - Addressing rural depopulation using data and evidence](#)
- 12 Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (n.d.). *Sara Aagesen anuncia una nueva Estrategia Nacional frente al Reto Demográfico.* Ministerio Para La Transición Ecológica Y El Reto Demográfico. Retrieved January 24, 2025, from <https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/prensa/ultimas-noticias/2024/diciembre/sara-aagesen-anuncia-una-nueva-estrategia-nacional-frente-al-ret.html>