

TAKING ACTION TO TACKLE RURAL DEPOPULATION IN SPAIN

Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge

General Directorate on Policies against Depopulation

ERDF 2021-27. Territorial strategies and Integrated Action Plans in non-urban areas



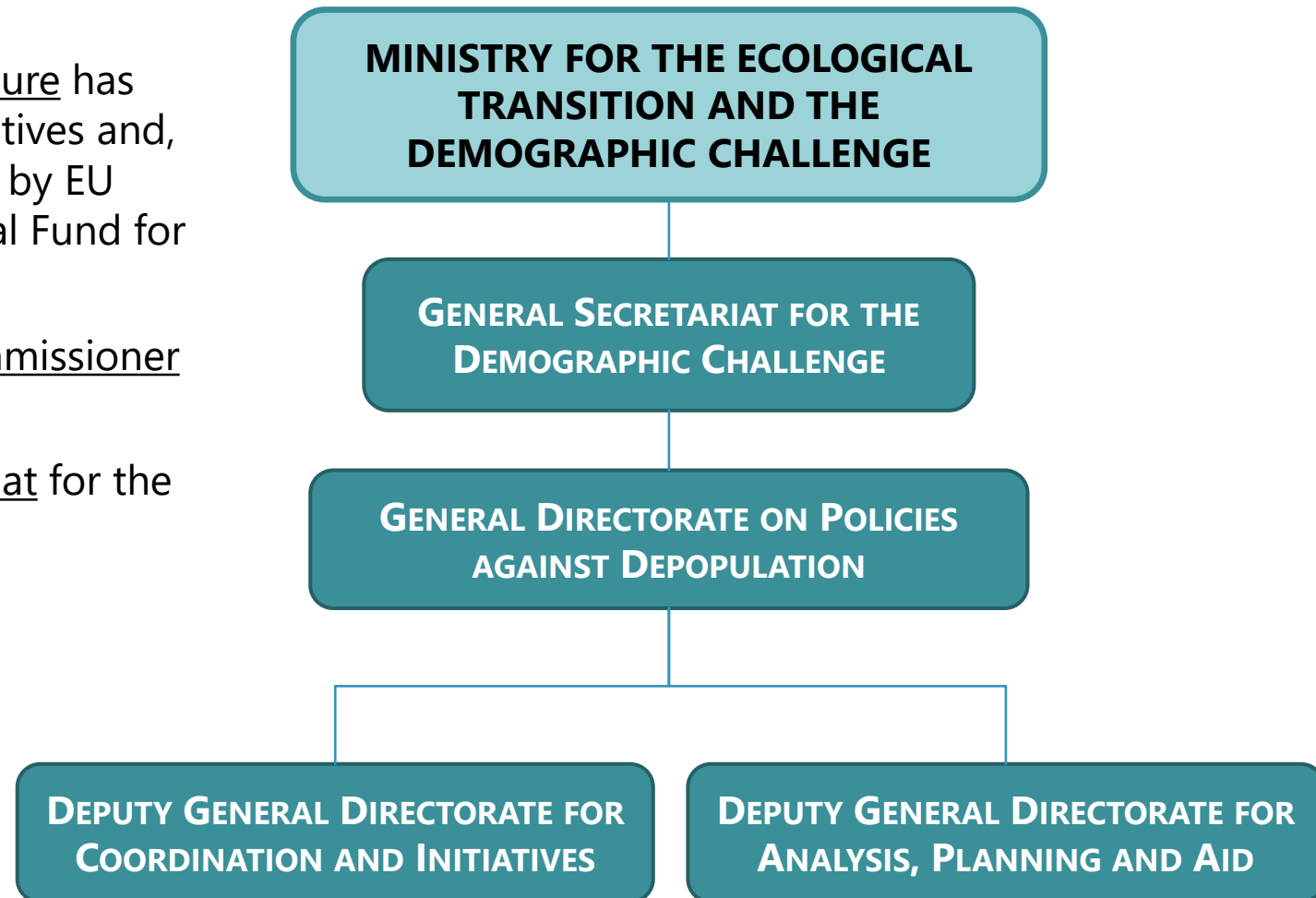
GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
PARA LA TRANSICIÓN ECOLÓGICA
Y EL RETO DEMOGRÁFICO

General Secretariat for the Demographic Challenge

Background

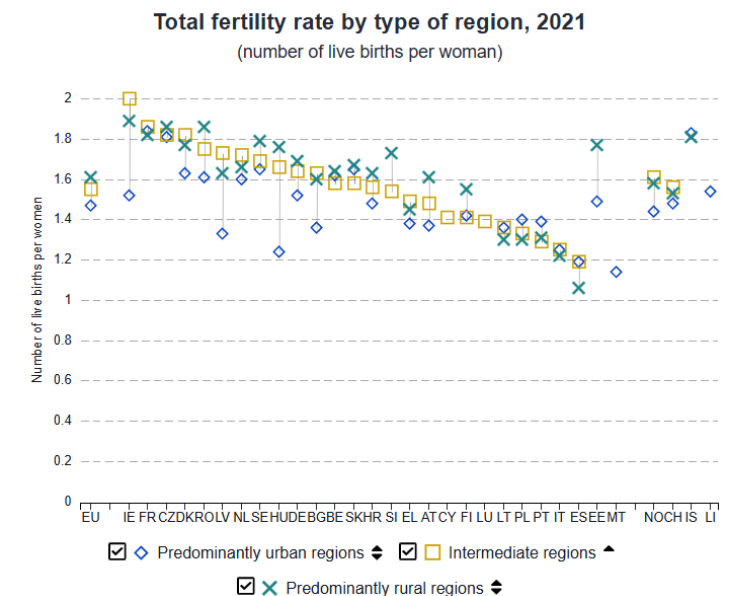
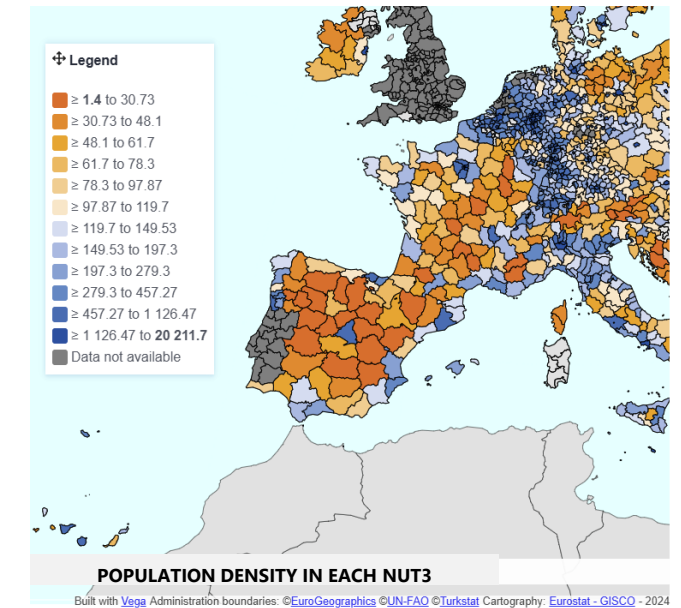
- **Previously:** Spain's Ministry of Agriculture has historically led rural development initiatives and, specifically, rural areas were supported by EU funds such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.
- **2017:** Creation of the Government Commissioner for the Demographic Challenge
- **2020:** Creation of the General Secretariat for the Demographic Challenge



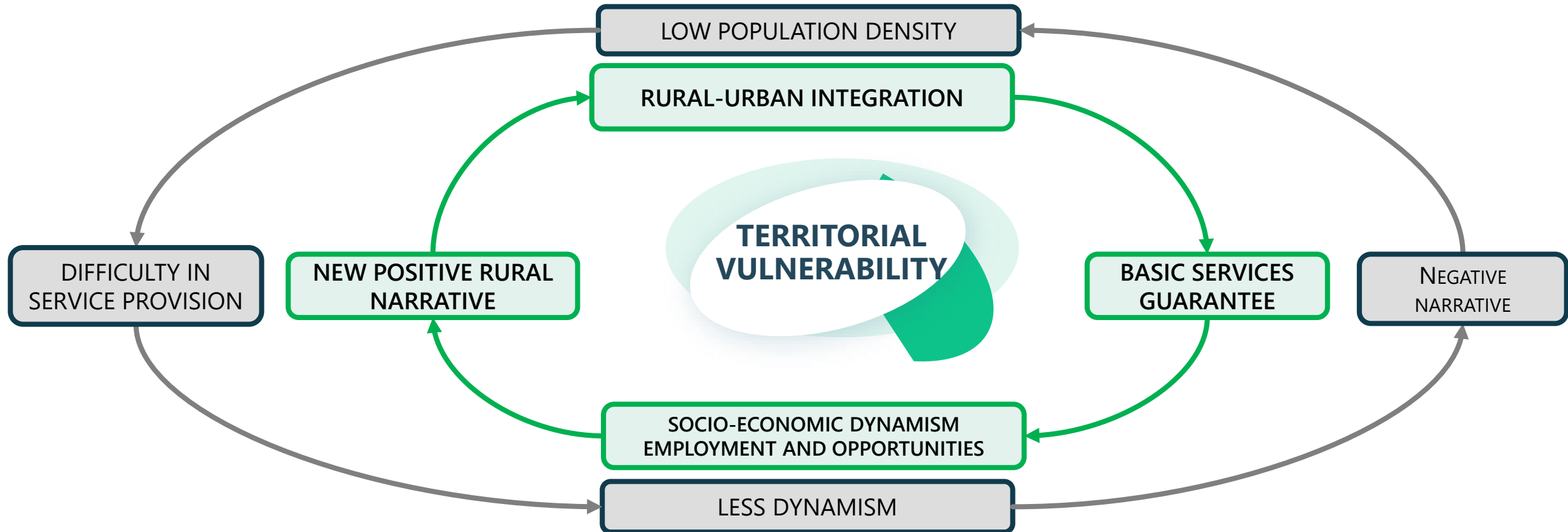
Why a national demographic challenge policy?

Demographic change is a **global trend** but has specific characteristics in Spain

- **Low fertility rates** (1.12 Spain VS 1.38 EU average in 2023).
- **Increase in life expectancy** (83.77 Spain) → **aging population**
- **Spain is a sparsely populated country** → **uneven population distribution**
 - **Areas of low population density:** 4,000 municipalities <12.5 inhab/km2 (out of 8,000 in ES)
 - **60% territory = 15% population** → population concentrates in large cities, the coast, and the Balearic and Canary Islands.
- **Depopulation: generalized in Spain** → **>80%** municipalities in rural areas have lost population in the last decade.
- **Aging population:** 20% >65 years old.
 - Rural areas: 25% > 65 years.
 - Towns <1,000 inhabitants → 31%
- **Masculinization**



Why a national demographic challenge policy?



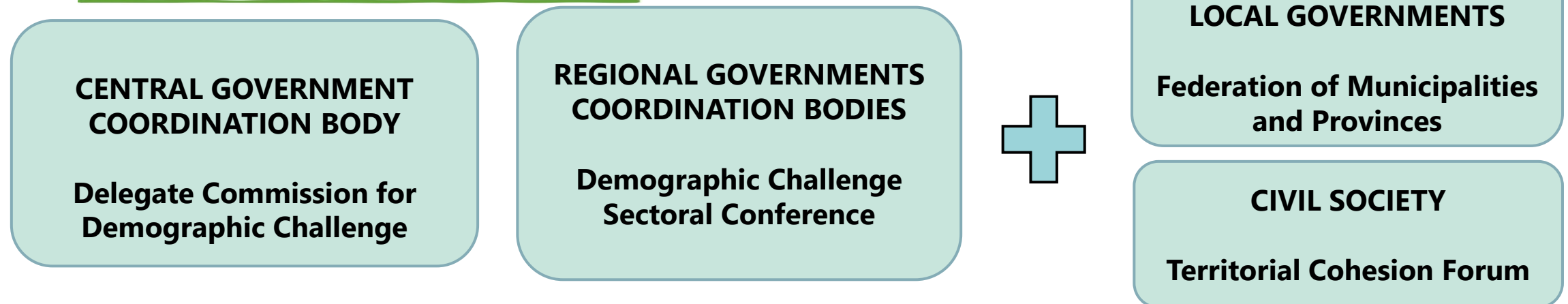
IT IS NECESSARY TO REVERSE THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

The construction of a more balanced territorial distribution **benefits all citizens**, allowing opportunities for quality of life throughout the territory

Administrative levels in Spain



Governance mechanisms



New strategic framework. Instruments

National Strategy
for Territorial
Equity and the
Demographic
Challenge

State action plan:
"30-Minute
Country"

Observatory of
territorial equity
and the
demographic
challenge

Current Framework (Year 2019)

- Contextual approach centered on:
 - Channeling RRF funds
 - Demographic policy
 - Diagnosis



New Framework

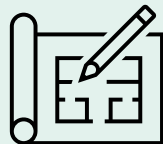
- Structural approach
- Wider policy experience
- Capacity of adjustment and policy definition

Main initiatives implemented

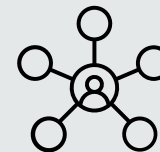
PLAN 130 MEASURES



SUBSIDIES: INNOVATIVE PROJECTS



TERRITORIAL INNOVATION NETWORK



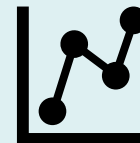
CAMPUS RURAL



TERRITORIAL COHESION FUND



SIDAMUN (INTEGRATED LOCAL DATA SYSTEM)



RRF INVESTMENTS



CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM



ERDF 2021-27. Territorial strategies and Integrated Action Plans in non-urban areas

NEW: INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 5.2 ERDF 2021-2027 FOR SPAIN

- Pluri-regional programme Spain ERDF 2021-2027 includes for the first time the **Specific Objective 5.2. "Promote integrated and inclusive social, economic, and environmental development,** culture and natural heritage, sustainable tourism, and security in **non-urban areas.**
- Total EU Investment 2021-2027: **29 million euro.**
- The planned innovative projects will be developed in the following regions:
 - **Andalucía:** 8,000,000 euros 85% co-funded
 - **Extremadura:** 8,000,000 euros 85% co-funded
 - **Castilla-La Mancha:** 8,000,000 euros 85% co-funded
 - **Castilla y León:** 5,000,000 euros 60% co-funded

ERDF 2021-27. Territorial strategies and Integrated Action Plans in non-urban areas

Aim of the integrated projects

- Promote land management measures that favor a new productive-territorial model.
- Incentivize economic activity in areas facing territorial vulnerability and demographic decline.
- Address territorial imbalances regarding citizens' access to public or essential services
 - Including health, education, housing, or those affecting territorial mobility or connectivity.
- Ensure, through social responsibility programs, **sustainable development and the well-being of the inhabitants** in the functional area.

ERDF 2021-27. Territorial strategies and Integrated Action Plans in non-urban areas

Main requirements

- Implemented in a **Functional Rural Area (FRA)**
 - Demonstrate the existing links between the municipalities within the same FRA.
 - Demonstrate the rural nature.
 - Comply with the population requirements.

- Promoted by **local entities** and have a **supramunicipal character**.

BENEFICIARIES: PROVINCIAL COUNCILS (DIPUTACIONES PROVINCIALES)

- Have a **pilot or experimental character**:
 - Provide an evaluable experience that can be continued and improved in subsequent years.
 - Transferable to other territories at a national and European level.
- Framed within an **Integrated Territorial Strategy**.
 - Articles 28 and 29 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (Common Provisions)

ERDF 2021-27. Territorial strategies and Integrated Action Plans in non-urban areas

Integrated Territorial Strategies

- Requirements of the Integrated Territorial Strategy.
 - Delimitation of the geographical area covered by the Integrated Territorial Strategy.
 - Analysis of the development needs and potential of the area.
 - Integrated approach to address the identified development needs and the potential of the area.
 - Description of the involvement of partners in the preparation and in the implementation of the strategy.
 - Analyse the demographic challenge and measures against depopulation.
- Recommended approach.
 - Follow the methodology developed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Agenda for the development of Integrated Territorial Strategies.



ERDF 2021-27. Territorial strategies and Integrated Action Plans in non-urban areas

Integrated Action Plan (PAI)

- The projects to be co-financed will be included in an **INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN (PAI)** that will be submitted as an annex to the application.
- The PAI will be **aligned with** the objectives of the previously approved **Integrated Territorial Strategy**.
- The **minimum total investment cost** of each Integrated Action Plan will be **2.5 million euros**.
- **The plan will contain the set of projects:** set of actions aimed at achieving a common objective within the Functional Area affected by the Plan.

ERDF 2021-27. Territorial strategies and Integrated Action Plans in non-urban areas

Eligible costs

- The eligible expenditure for the purposes of ERDF co-financing 21-27 will generally be The expenditure incurred and paid between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2029.
- Technical assistance can be financed.
- Activities can be financed if they correspond to the areas of intervention defined in the document framed in the following groups:
 1. Research, innovation, and support for SMEs.
 2. ICT and broadband infrastructure.
 3. Energy efficiency and renewables.
 4. Environment and adaptation to climate change.
 5. Infrastructure and services.
 6. Tourism and culture.
 7. Regeneration of the environment, security, and territorial development.

ERDF 2021-27. Territorial strategies and Integrated Action Plans in non-urban areas

Schedule

1. Submission of Applications

➤ Deadline:
15th of July

2. Admissibility and evaluation of the Applications

➤ Deadline:
15th of November

3. Remedy of Applications

➤ 10 working days

4. Operations selection

5. Monitoring and control of operations

➤ Until final justification



Thank you for your attention.



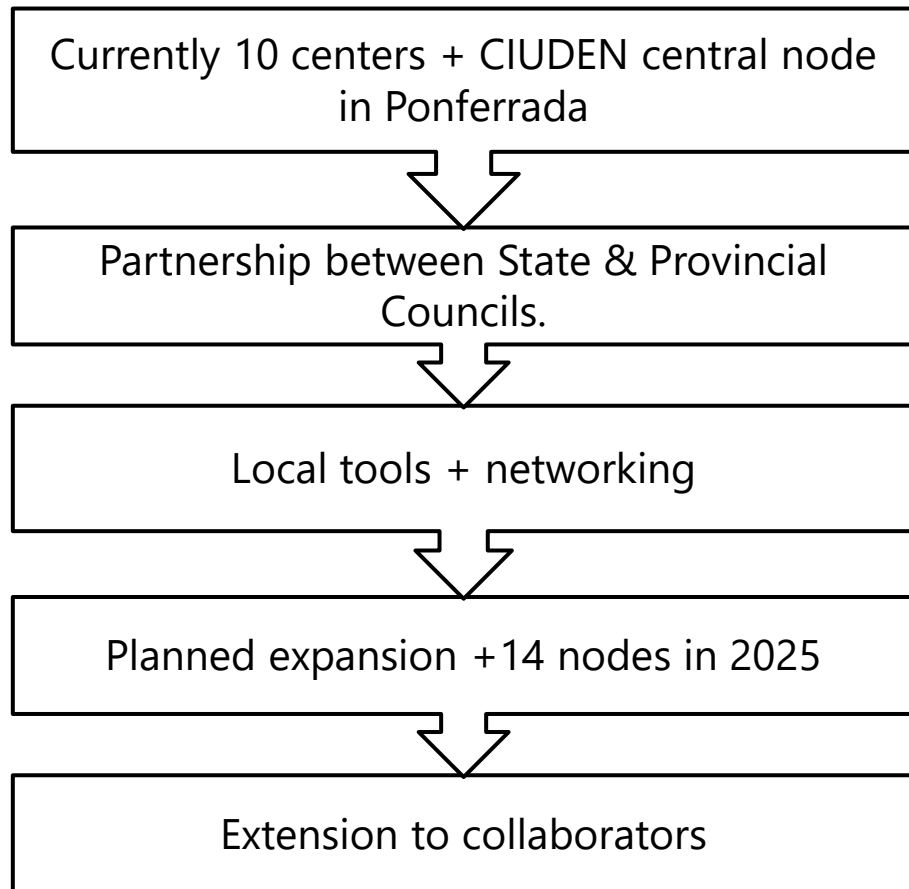
GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
PARA LA TRANSICIÓN ECOLÓGICA
Y EL RETO DEMOGRÁFICO

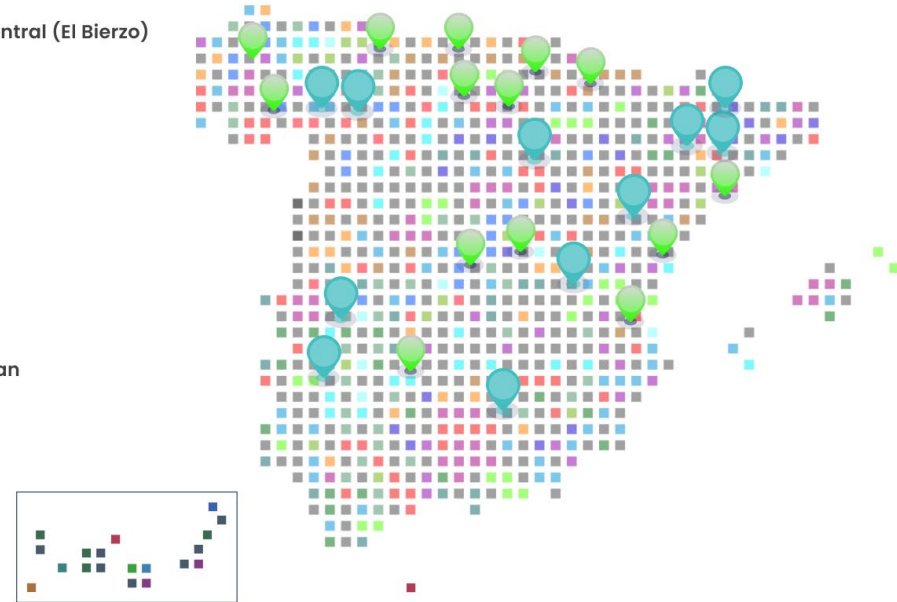
CIT Network

The **CITs (Territorial Innovation Centres)** are collaborative spaces in which to develop and share initiatives that contribute to the social, economic and functional reactivation of rural territories, from which to promote the creation and development of activities in these rural areas, and to innovate in new forms of cooperation between actors in these areas.

They are an instrument to foster territorial balance, through economic development, the talent retention and socio-economic innovation in rural areas



1. Nodo Central (El Bierzo)
2. Badajoz
3. Cáceres
4. Cuenca
5. Huesca
6. Jaén
7. León
8. Lleida
9. Soria
10. Teruel
11. Val d'Aran



12. Asturias
13. Cantabria
14. Navarra
15. Madrid
16. Guadalajara
17. Ciudad Real
18. Tarragona
19. Castellón
20. Valencia
21. Burgos
22. Palencia
23. Ourense
24. Álava
25. Lugo

Collaboration with Autonomous Communities (regions)



Sectoral Conference on the Demographic Challenge → Coordination forum with Autonomous Communities

- **Funds**
 - **Singular Projects, 2021**
 - **Territorial Cohesión Fund (2022-2024)** → demographic and socioeconomic criteria
 - **PRTR – Component 4** – biodiversity projects
 - **PRTR – Component 19** – digital skills program for rural areas

In the period 2021– 2024, 176 million euros have been distributed to the Autonomous Regions.

Campus Rural: talent attraction to rural areas



The **Rural Campus Programme** promotes internships in rural areas through agreements with public universities

Duration: 2-5 months.

Objectives:

- Talent attraction of young students to rural areas
- Economic dynamization
- Vital experience for career development

**DATA: IN 2024, 41 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, ALMOST 600 STUDENTS, 426 ENTITIES IN OVER 400 VILLAGES
MORE THAN 750 INTERNSHIPS FROM 44 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES PROJECTED FOR 2025**

Annual subsidies for innovative projects



Innovative projects for territorial transformation to **promote the social and economic reactivation of areas with depopulation problems and revalue rural areas**

Subsidies targeted at:

- Local entities (institutional projects)
- Social projects (non-profit organizations).
- Business projects (companies, with special attention to women and young people).

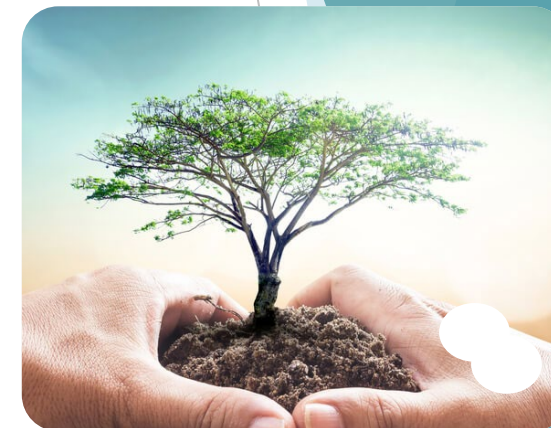
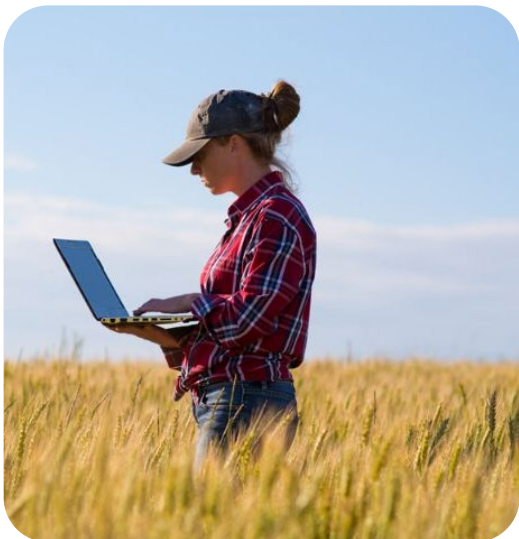


2022: >€50M euros

2023: funding for >600 projects

Recovery, transformation and resilience funds: PRTR investments

120 M EUROS FOR LOCAL BIO-ECONOMY PROGRAMME

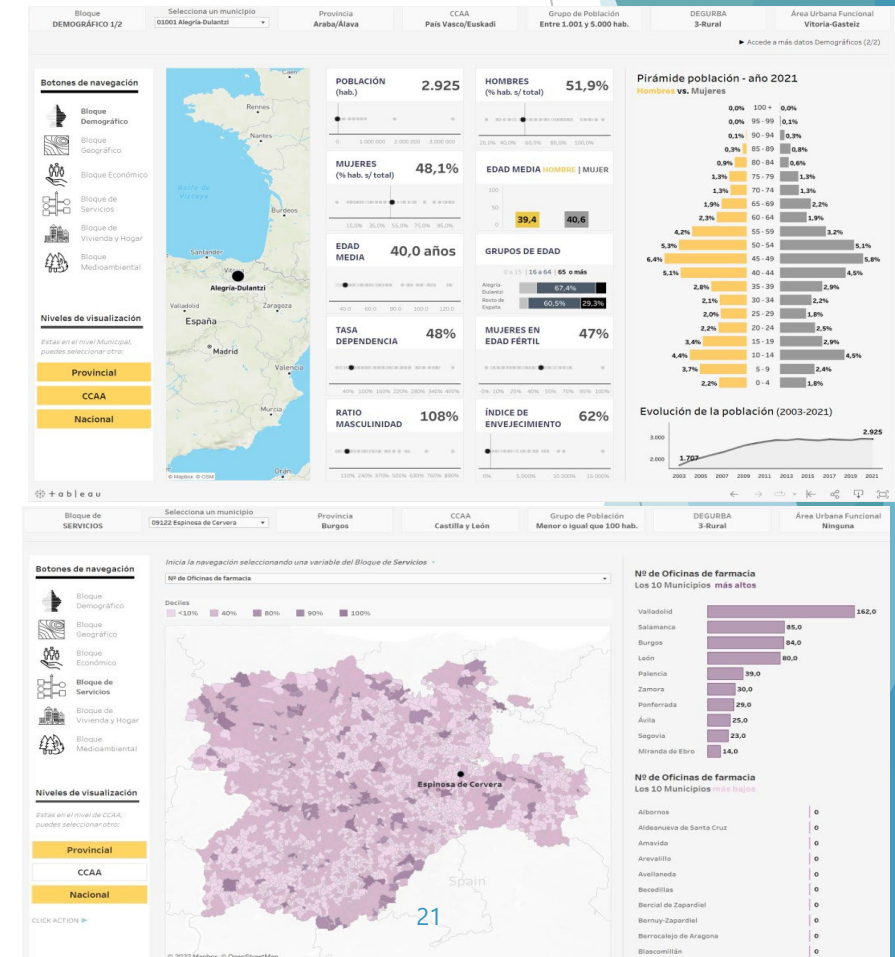


90 M EUROS FOR DIGITAL RURAL CHALLENGE PROGRAMME

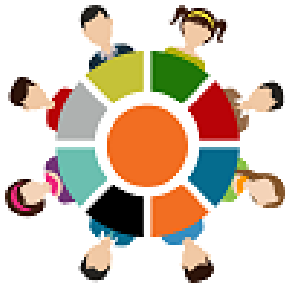
SIDAMUN: Using data and evidence for policy making

- ❑ Open-source data
- ❑ Indicators and data on different topics
 - ❑ Demography,
 - ❑ Economics,
 - ❑ Public services,
 - ❑ Housing
 - ❑ and household, environmental and geographic).
- ❑ Displays data by municipality (LAU level).

POLICY MAKING: COHESION AND TERRITORIAL TRANSFORMATION



Civil Society Forum



Territorial Cohesion Forum: a space for dialogue in terms of territorial cohesion and the demographic challenge.

It aims to generate:

- ▶ Active social participation,
- ▶ Promote public-private alliances with
 - ▶ Third sector,
 - ▶ Private sector,
 - ▶ Universities
 - ▶ Research centres and citizens as a whole, especially young people.

New strategic framework. Instruments

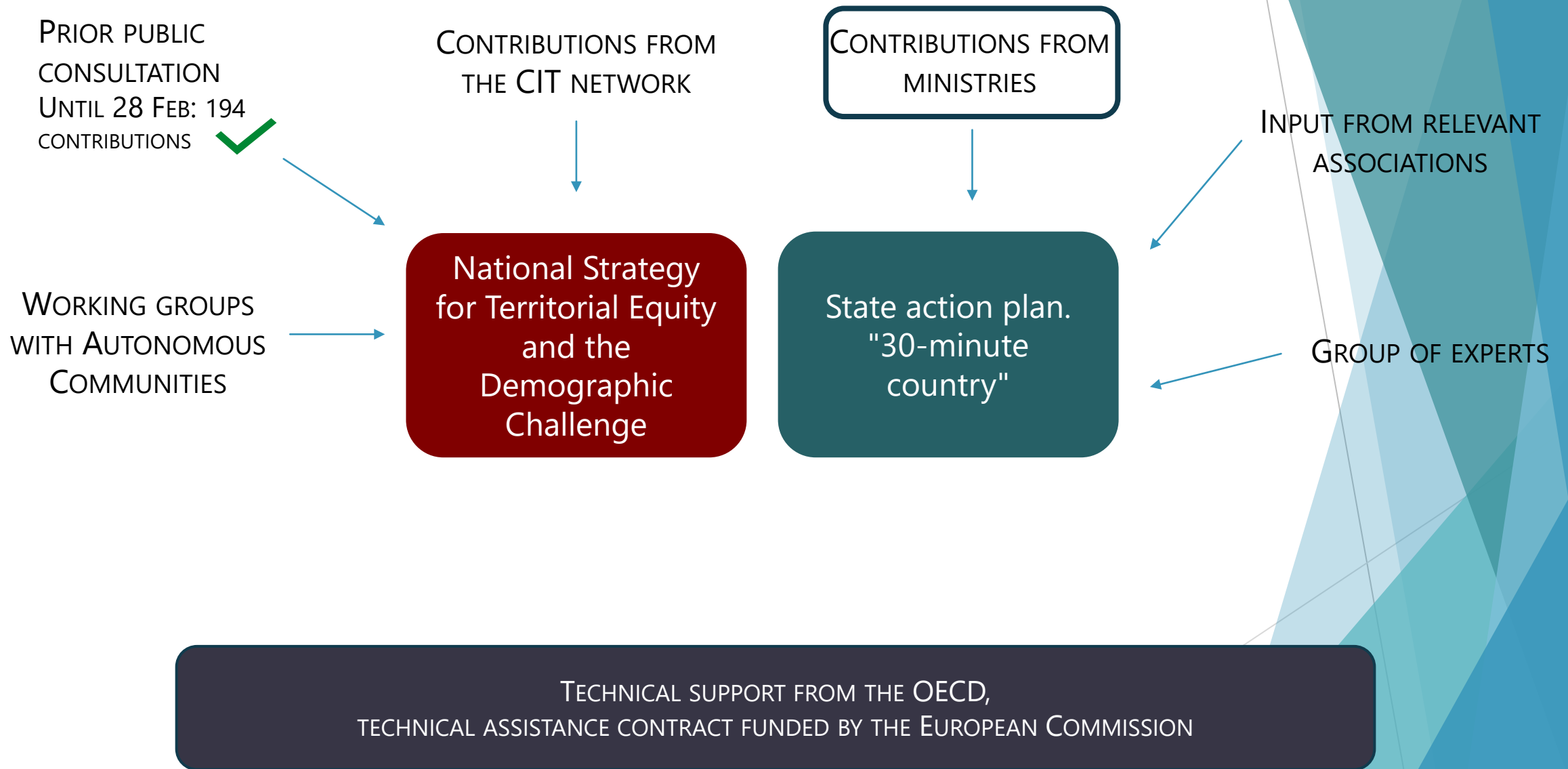
National Strategy for Territorial Equity and the Demographic Challenge

- It is a **country strategy**, which appeals to all agents (every administration as well as the private sector and civil society)
- It must start from a rigorous **analysis** of the different territorial vulnerabilities and propose ad-hoc measures. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. It is necessary to adapt policies to each reality.
- Detect **challenges/opportunities** and set objectives

State action plan. "30-Minute Country"

- It is a **state plan**, to be implemented with measures from all relevant ministries and associations.
- It is necessary to reflect on economic endowment. An ambitious policy requires ambitious funding and plans.
- It incorporates experiences learned in the development and implementation of the "Plan 130 Measures to the Demographic Challenge"

New strategic framework. Extensive participation process



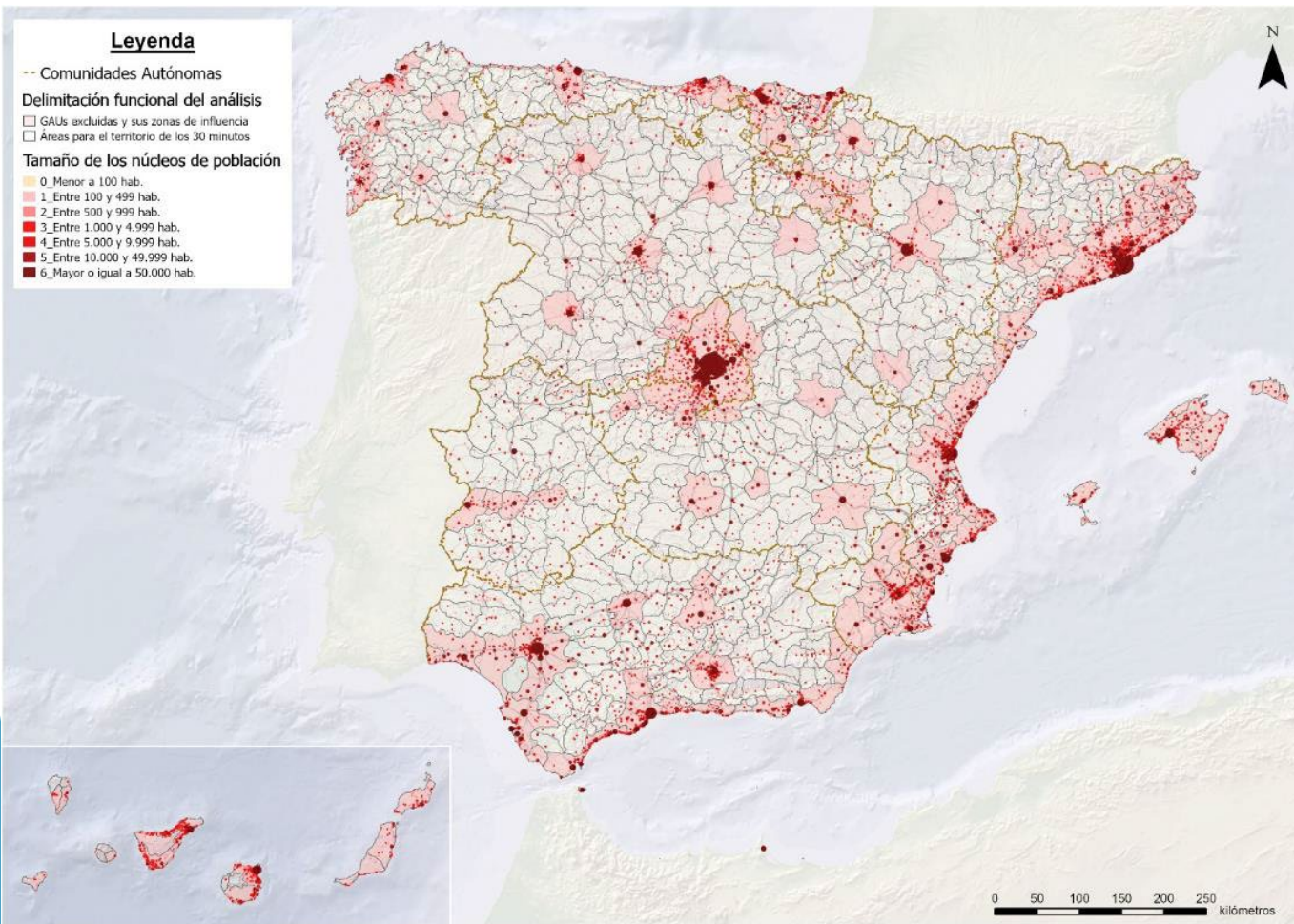
New strategic framework. Instruments

Observatory for
territorial equity
and the
demographic
challenge

- **Consultation and benchmark tool** on the demographic challenge and socio-territorial cohesion
- Ensures that the measures adopted are based on the best available evidence
- Based on the Municipal Data System (SIDAMUN), it is intended to expand and strengthen it with the aim of:
 - ✓ Provide **indicators** to monitor the vulnerability of each territory
 - ✓ **Evidence-based** decision-making and policy design
 - ✓ **Analysis of the success** of the policies implemented or the need for redesign
 - ✓ Preparation of **in-depth analyses** on topics of interest
 - ✓ Preparation of **rural proofing guides** and monitoring of the impact of different policies.

New strategic framework. Territorial Functionality Analysis

Observatory of territorial equity and the demographic challenge



**43
INDICATORS
GROUPED
INTO 16
DIFFERENT
TYPOLOGIES:**

GEO-ENVIRONMENTAL

TERRITORIAL

DEMOGRAPHIC

SOCIO-SPATIAL

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC

SOCIO-RESIDENTIAL

SOCIAL PERCEPTION

SOCIOECONOMIC

AGRARIAN PRODUCTION

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION

EXTERNAL PROYECTION

ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE

FUNCTIONAL COVERAGE

INFRASTRUCTURE.

PROSPECTIVE