

Reversing the Trend: Castilla-La Mancha's Strategy Against Depopulation (2021-2031)

A pioneering blueprint built
on open governance and
adaptive evaluation.

#CLMpueblosparavivirlos



The Demographic Challenge: Vast Territory, Dispersed Population

Castilla-La Mancha spans 79,463 km², but faces severe territorial imbalances defined by population aging, low birth rates, and unequal distribution of resources.

1 Aging Population

Median Age is higher than the national average.

Rural areas are significantly older, with a large proportion of the population over 65.



2 Low Birth Rates

Birth Rate is among the lowest in Spain.

Fertility Rate is significantly below the replacement level.



3 Territorial Imbalance

Resource Distribution: 70% of economic activity concentrated in 5 major urban centers.

80% of the territory is at risk of depopulation.



A Pioneering Dual Framework

The Foundation: Law 2/2021

First regional law of its kind in Spain with a multisectoral, 360-degree vision.

Guarantees territorial equality in access to basic public services.

Establishes tax incentives and a mandate for **demographic impact reports** on new regulations.

The Engine: Strategy 2021-2031

The operational planning instrument to execute the Law.

Comprises 210 **concrete actions** designed for a 10-year horizon.

Built to **guarantee the functionality of least populated areas.**

The Four Strategic Pillars of Intervention

Ultimate Objective: Promote settlement, facilitate entrepreneurship, and guarantee equal rights for residents of rural areas.



Economic

Focus: Entrepreneurship, employment, circular economy.



Social

Focus: Equality, housing, culture, basic services.



Territorial

Focus: Digital connectivity, renewable energy, mobility.



Demographic

Focus: Family support, youth retention, integration.

Targeted Interventions: Territorial Zoning

Actions and tax reliefs scale proportionally to the severity of the demographic challenge in specific municipalities.

Zone 1: Extreme Depopulation

Maximum positive incentive criteria and regional aid.



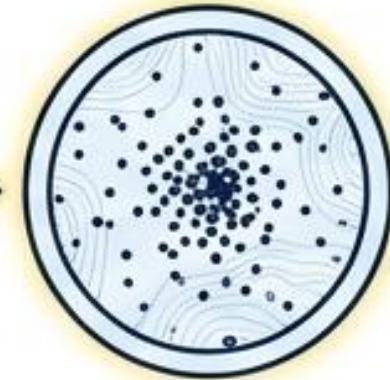
Zone 2: Intense Depopulation

Moderate, targeted support structures.



Zone 3: At-Risk of Depopulation

Preventative measures and baseline incentives.

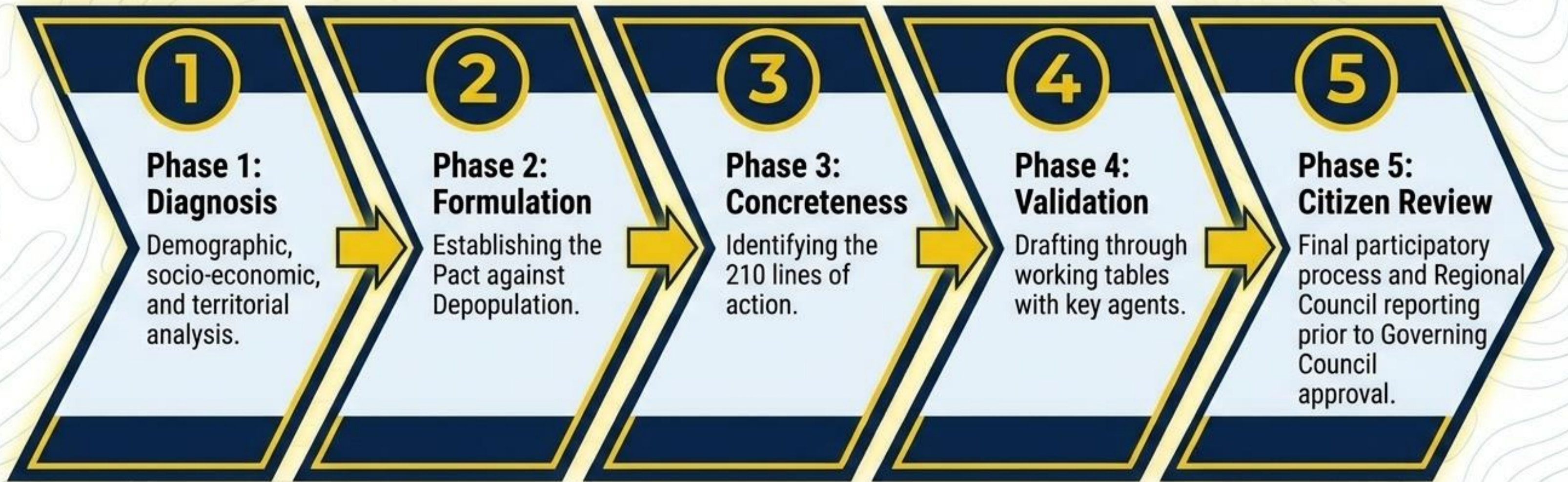


Principle 1: Built on Open Governance



Tackling demographic decline requires a shared vision. The strategy originates from a **unanimous political and social agreement**, ensuring long-term viability beyond political cycles.

The 5-Phase Manufacturing Process



Mechanisms of Engagement: By the Numbers

2,077



Online questionnaire responses from citizens and local agents.

3



Dedicated working tables focusing on economic, social, and territorial areas. representatives deeply involved in drafting.

50+



Key agents, experts, and Provincial Council representatives deeply involved in drafting.

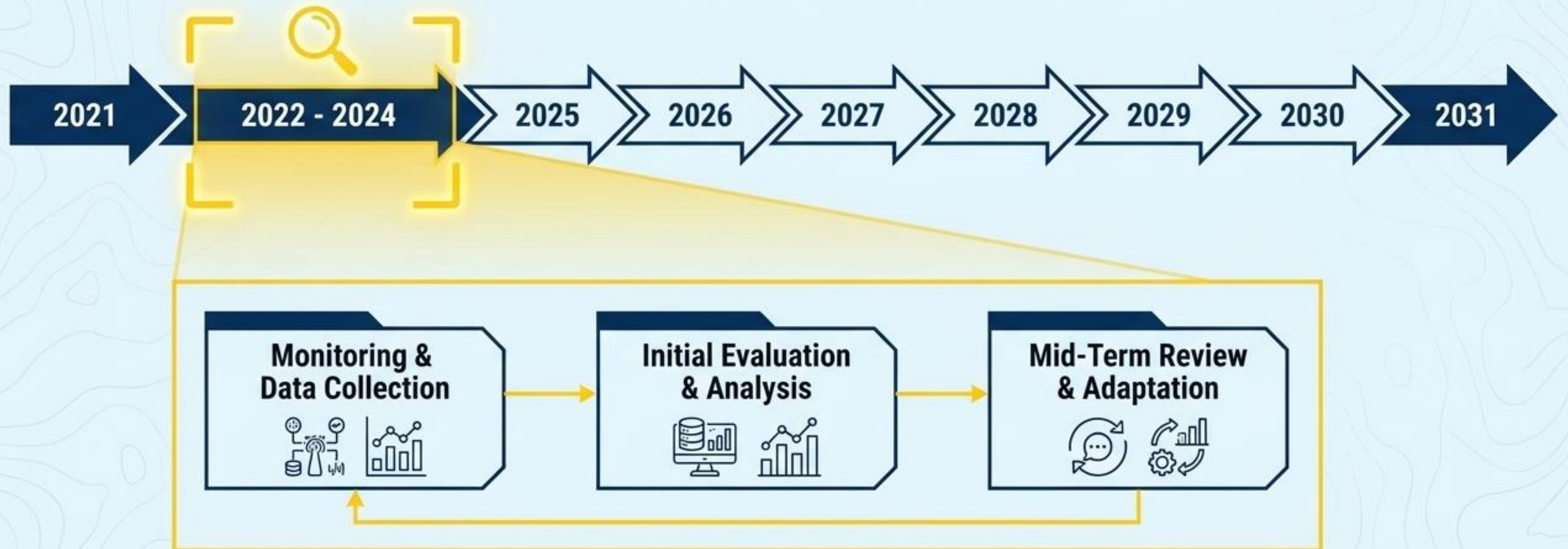
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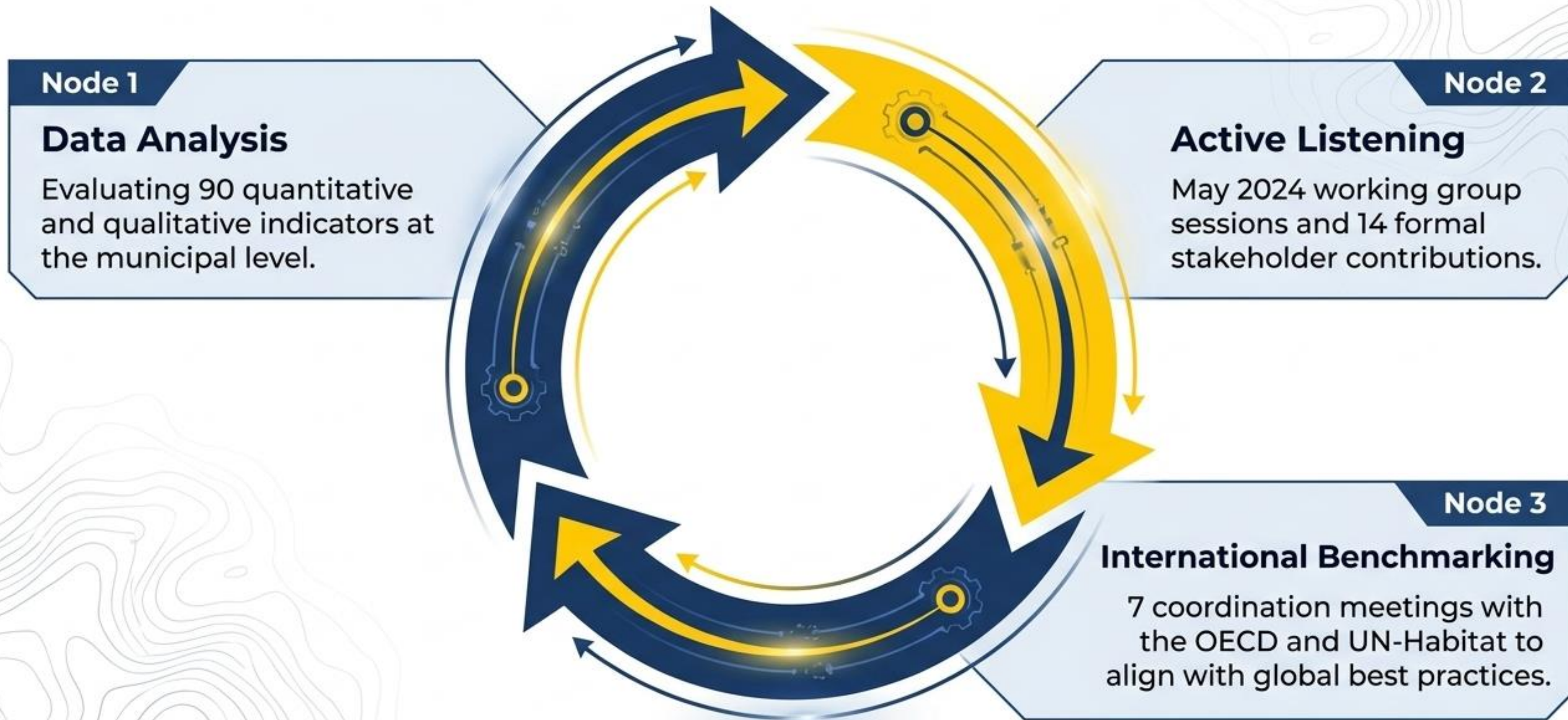
Unanimous approval in the Regional Courts.

A Living Document: The Mid-Term Review (2022-2024)

Key Insight: The strategy is not static. It features a multi-phase monitoring system designed to detect deviations, assess effectiveness, and adapt to emerging needs.



Review Methodology: Listening to the Territory



Execution Milestones: Unprecedented Mobilization

Context

Significantly exceeds the initial 10-year projection of €3.3 Billion.



**€5,143
Million
Mobilized
(2021-2024)**

Funding Engine

Leverages European Structural and Investment Funds (ERDF and ESF+), directing specific budgetary allocations and positive incentive criteria to sparsely populated areas.

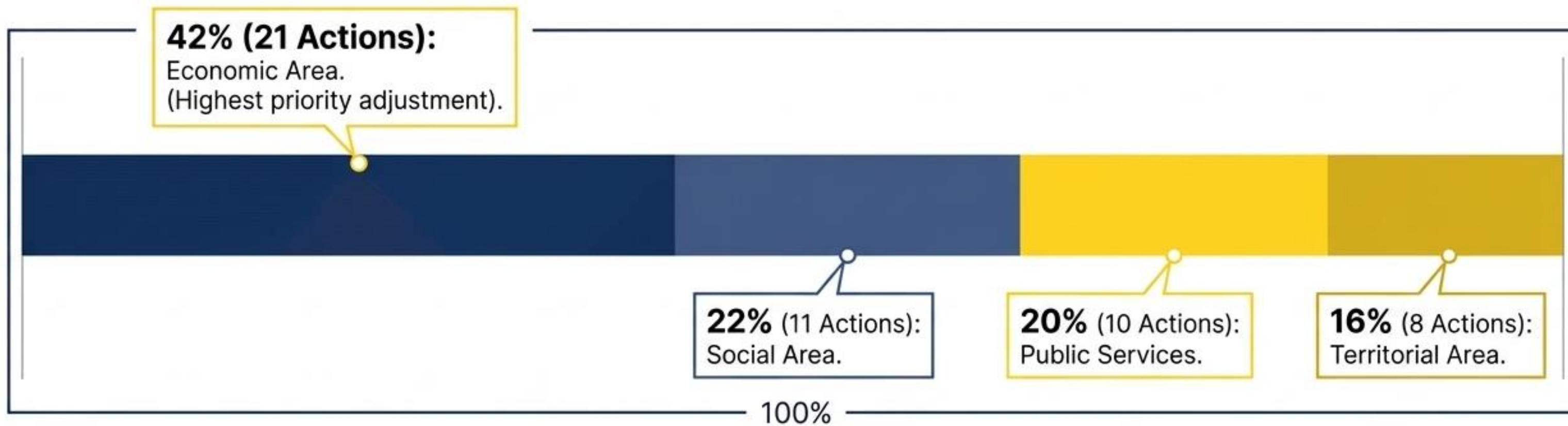


The Action Adaptation Matrix

50 actions from the original strategy were amended to improve efficiency and response to ground realities.



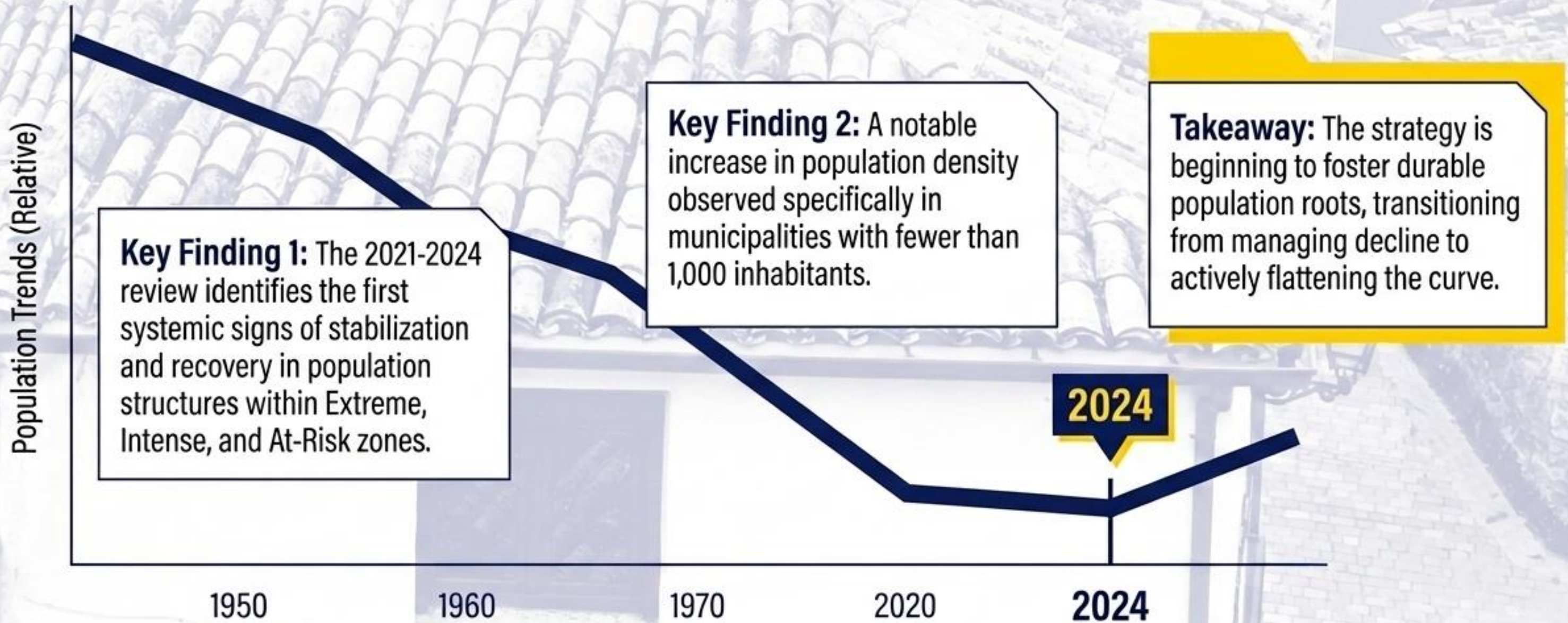
Sectoral Shift: Where the Strategy Pivoted



Key Insight

The heaviest **realignment** occurred in the **economic** sector, reflecting real-time feedback on the need for stronger **entrepreneurship** and **employment incentives** in rural zones.

Early Impacts: Stabilizing the Demographic Curve



Since the adoption of the Depopulation Law and the implementation of the Strategy in 2021, Castilla-La Mancha's depopulated areas have recorded a positive migration balance of **20 236** people. This means that one in every five people moving to the region has settled in municipalities previously affected by depopulation.

Strategy Results: Practical Improvements and Renewed Growth

The implementation of the Strategy has resulted in practical improvements in **infrastructure**, services and economic opportunities across rural areas.



Access to services and mobility

Demand-Responsive Transport benefits **147,528** users.

106 early childhood education centres created **2,162** places.



Digital connectivity

High-speed **fibre broadband** in **943** towns.

5G coverage extended to **1,001** municipalities.



Rural entrepreneurship and employment

Entrepreneurship grants for **5,600** individuals.

Over **5,000 young farmers** entered the profession.



Fiscal incentives and housing access

EUR 145 million in tax deductions for residence, housing, and relocation, reducing barriers.

Strong implementation progress (Mid-term Review 2025)

52%

Measures implemented

96%

Measures launched



Positive demographic trends

Positive migration balance of **20,236 people** in depopulated areas since 2021.

Population growth of **1.8%** in extreme depopulation areas.



Adapting to emerging challenges

13 additional measures introduced, including housing programmes, self-employed flat-rate schemes, entrepreneur financing, transport passes, and energy communities.

A sustained policy framework combining legislative action, strategic planning, and investment is crucial for long-term rural revitalisation and reversing demographic decline.