

LIVING LAB SPAIN



Most Spanish rural areas, especially those located in the northern half, have experienced continuous depopulation and recession of their economic and social sector. In these depopulated areas, agriculture and livestock farming maintain significant productivity importance, simultaneously generating dynamic related service industries and serving as a supply of raw materials to a thriving agri-food industry.

Women and young people play a fundamental role in the agrarian sector, as they are the guarantors that the necessary changes and innovations are adopted to achieve the ultimate goals of feeding the population, obtaining economic profitability, ensuring generational succession and complying with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Special support is provided to women within the Strategic Plan of the Common Agricultural Policy for the period 2023-27, with additional payments for young farmers that increase by 5% if the applicant is a woman. Women are prioritised within other lines of CAP funding eligibility criteria and aid provided.

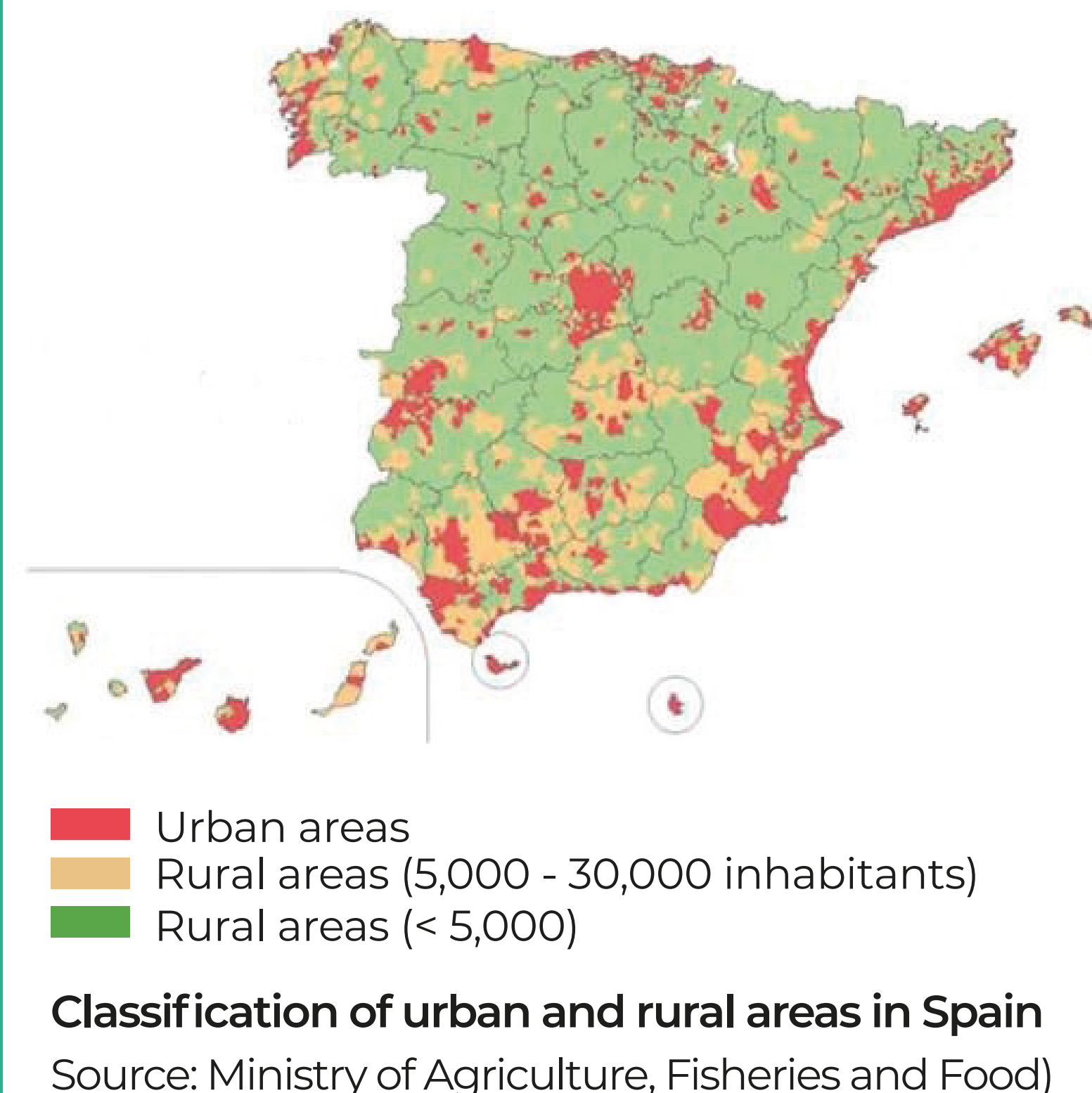
It is also necessary to mention the Law on shared ownership of agricultural holdings that empowers rural women through a regulatory tool that would allow their access to social security protection. There are other aids aimed at supporting activities of special interest for rural women's associations, training, leadership or entrepreneurship.

The Living Lab (LL) of Spain will focus on innovative agri-food initiatives led by women in uninhabited rural territories in the north of the country. The main reason why this topic has been chosen is related to the wide-ranging opportunities offered by the agricultural and livestock sectors as key elements in territorial development, food production, and economic and social revitalisation.

From this point of view, women play a crucial role in rural areas, from economic, social and environmental perspectives, contributing to settling population in the countryside. Their ability to lead innovative initiatives has an impact on wealth and job creation, and contributes to the production of sustainable food in line with the European Farm to Fork Strategy and the Green Deal. This reflects the strength that collaborative work and the interrelationships between university/business/organisations represent.

Work will be carried out in mountainous areas, where extensive livestock farming is developed. On the other hand, work will also be carried out in plateau areas where extensive agriculture (herbaceous crops), intensive agriculture (horticultural crops and vineyards), and some types of livestock are relevant. In both territories, the case studies will focus on innovative and differentiated agri-food initiatives, managed by young women, that are environmentally friendly and that could integrate both primary production and the transformation of these inputs.

The ultimate goal of the LL is to provide support to women leading these innovative activities in the agricultural sector of depopulated territories in northern Spain, working with and for them. The associative and cooperative agri-food movement and the creation of networks will also be fundamental characteristics of this Living Lab.



In order to achieve the ultimate goal of providing support to women leading or engaged in innovative activities in the agricultural sector of depopulated territories, **a series of activities are proposed to be implemented within this project.**

- Meetings between women farmers and livestock breeders to facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange best practices across different territories and subsectors.
- Collaborative actions with male farmers and livestock breeders to share perspectives and develop new working models.
- Participation of women farmers in thematic webinars and panel discussions featuring women leaders and subject matter experts to address topics of particular interest.
- Awareness-raising workshops aimed at acquiring skills for advancing leadership within the sector and in various representative organisations.
- Multi-stakeholder gatherings and influential parties to present objectives achieved and make recommendations (including relevant government agencies in the agricultural and equality sectors, private entities, etc.).
- Visibility activities for women utilising tools such as media, the internet, and social media platforms.



The LL involves a total of **eight women: three arable farmers (dryland crops, irrigated horticultural crops, and vineyards) and five livestock farmers (free-range chicken eggs, semi-extensive sheep farming, confined pig farming, beekeeping and extensive beef cattle farming)**. Their ages range from 33 to 60 years, and half of them have university degrees, while all of them have completed numerous agricultural training courses.

Regarding the group of external agents, there are representatives from various fields: central and regional public administration (agriculture and livestock, equality, digitisation and rural development), local action groups, cooperatives, sectoral and women's associations, agricultural producer organisations, financial sector, media and researchers.