



GRANULAR

LIVING LAB SPAIN

**Better knowledge for better
rural policies**



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Ourense (Spain)



International Observatory
of Rural Research

ABOUT THE TERRITORY



Characteristics and trends

The Spanish Living Lab is located in Ourense, the only landlocked province in Galicia region, Northwest of Spain, at the border with Portugal. Ourense covers a surface area of 7,278 km² and it includes 92 municipalities, with a population of approximately 308,000 people. The mountainous terrain and isolation have kept the province economically challenged and encouraged much emigration to the rest of Spain, Europe and America.

Today, Ourense suffers from the classic problems of many European rural areas, including depopulation, ageing, lack of a strong business sector, lack of economic innovation. Being predominantly rural, Ourense has a low population density, and the number of inhabitants is decreasing very rapidly. At the same time, it has one of the highest life expectancies in Europe and Spain. From an economic point of view, ageing causes a lack of economic innovation, although it represents an unexplored business opportunity; it is also causing environmental challenges; and there is too little population to manage a large part of the territory.


Industries in the Ourense province include poultry processing companies, chemical manufacture, milk production, wine production, olive oil production, water bottling and clothing manufacture. Although not a major tourist centre, thermal tourism contributes somewhat to the economy.

THEMATIC FOCUS

The Spanish Living Lab selected its thematic priorities to address the three most urgent challenges of the Ourense province.

These are: an exceptional concentration of hyperlongevos; a lack of forest inventories getting critical to prevent mega-fires in the context of climate change; and an ambition to develop a digital administration in the post-Covid context.



 Ourense, Galicia (Spain)



 Living Lab



Ageing

Priorities



E-governance



Large forest fires



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Challenges

Ageing is both a critical issue and an opportunity for this Living Lab. By 2040, Spain will be the oldest country in the world, surpassing Japan and Switzerland, with some forecasts suggest that the number of Spanish centenarians could exceed 220,000 in 2066. Galicia has an exceptional concentration of extremely elderly population, and the ratios shoot up to the stratosphere in some regions of Ourense hinterland: they triple the number of centenarians that Japan has. In Ourense, the average age exceeds 50 years; 33% of residents are over 65 and 7% are above 85 years old. The elderly from Ourense not only live many years, but they also live to the fullest: on a tractor, with their cows or behind a counter. Women lives four years longer on average.

The elderly with extreme longevity present greater complexity, as mental health and integration in the social environment are added up to restricted physical mobility. It is necessary to gather better data on caregiver overload, loneliness, euthanasia, low income, abuse, cognitive impairment, ethical-legal aspects, digitalisation and long-life education, misuse of psychotropic drugs, or the architecture and conditions of nursing homes.

The World Health Organisation declared 2020-2023 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing. This is an extremely important and promising opportunity to counteract the negative consequences of ageing and guarantee older people's quality of life. Ourense can become the European laboratory of ageing. To this scope, Ourense capital will run a pioneering inter-generational program.



ABOUT THE LIVING LAB

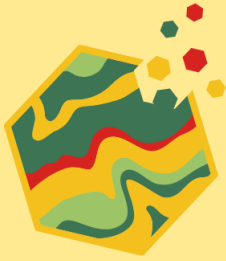
Objectives

- To develop a forest biomass map and innovative pilot projects;
- To analyse the situation of fires in classrooms and the relationship between fires and longevity;
- To investigate the lack of skills in rural areas;
- To assess the feasibility of Artificial Intelligence interactions in the rural world.



Composition

This Living Lab is composed of public and private entities from all over the province of Ourense. It involves public authorities (local and provincial), research centres, associations, companies and other social entities.



GRANULAR

GRANULAR is a four-year multi-disciplinary and transnational project. It aims at generating new datasets, tools and methods to better understand rural diversity and to promote place-based rural policies.



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