**PEER REVIEW**
**Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform**

## INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT TO FIGHT DEPOPULATION

## FINAL REPORT

**Peer Review hosted by**
**CIM Coimbra Region**

*Dates: 16th - 17th of May of 2023*

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# 1. CIM Coimbra Region

In Portugal, the Intermunicipal Communities (CIMs) correspond to a territorial unit composed of a set of municipalities. In administrative terms, the CIMs manage the economic, social, and environmental development strategies of the territories covered, prioritizing the coordination of municipal investments and community funds.

The Intermunicipal Community of Coimbra Region (CIM-RC) is a public association of 19 municipalities, with a total of 436.949 inhabitants (Census, 2021) in a territory of 4,335.57km² (average of 101.7 inhabitants/km2).

Is an intermunicipal entity of an associative nature of territorial scope, governed by Law No. 75/2013 of 12 September, as amended, with the following purposes:  promoting the planning and management of the strategy of economic, social and environmental development of the covered territory; linking municipal investments of inter-municipal interest; participating in the management of programmes supporting regional development; and planning the actions of local authorities.

The CIM-RC is committed with the diversity of identities and ways of life through the enhancement of the endogenous potential, mobility and ensuring equity in the access conditions to employment, health, education and social protection.

In administrative and statistic terms, the Coimbra Region constitutes a NUT III with identical denomination, located in the Centre Region (NUT II) of Portugal. It comprises the municipalities of Arganil, Cantanhede, Coimbra, Condeixa-a-Nova, Figueira da Foz, Góis, Lousã, Mealhada, Mira, Miranda do Corvo, Montemor-o-Velho, Mortágua, Oliveira do Hospital, Pampilhosa da Serra, Penacova, Penela, Soure, Tábua and Vila Nova de Poiares.

The 19 municipalities exhibit very heterogeneous population characteristics and there is also a substantial dichotomy between coastal vs. inland and urban vs. rural municipalities, specially regarding demography.

## 1.1. Depopulation problem in Coimbra Region

In terms of population density, Coimbra Region is the second largest region in the Central Region having a very dynamic demographic history in recent decades (1950-2018).

According to the data from the General Population Census, Coimbra Region has been characterised by significant demographic changes and affected by significant migratory phenomena.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the most significant demographic phenomena were the rural exodus and emigration which implied a decrease in population from 465,388 (1950) to 427,762 inhabitants (1970) at a time of high birth rates. In the following decade (1970-1981) the Region reversed this trend and recorded a gain of 39,158 inhabitants and a resident population of 466,920 inhabitants.

In this decade the decrease in emigration due to the economic crisis provoked by the oil shock and the return of the portuguese from the former colonies were the main causes of demographic changes.

Considering the 19 municipalities that make up the CIM-RC, the population decrease tends to be more expressive in the interior, a territory of low population density, where a large part of the parishes have values below 100 inhabitants/km2, which contrasts with the territories close to the coastline with a high concentration of population and areas of high population density and high urban nature.

These territorial and demographic asymmetries between the coast and the interior of Coimbra Region, which are becoming increasingly evident and even worsening, are essentially the result of a greater concentration of population around the most important urban centres, particularly on the coastal strip of the region, which concentrates almost 75% of the inhabitants of the CIM-RC.

The highest number of people in the region was 472,334 in 2001. In the last available census decade (2011-2021), Coimbra Region has been losing population, having registered a decrease in population of 5,3% from 460,139 (2011) to 436,929 inhabitants (2021). This population represents 19,6% of the population of the Centre Region and 4,2% of the population of the country.

The population decrease in Coimbra Region has several complementary explanations. On the one hand, there is a significant decrease in the number of births (-25% in 2017 compared to 2001), and a slight increase in the number of deaths (+4.6% between 2017 and 2001) generating a natural balance (difference between births and deaths) of -2,500 individuals. On the other hand, this number allows to project the existence of a negative migratory balance in the order of 30,000 individuals that is not offset by internal migration or by international migration whose numbers remain stable throughout the period under analysis.

Besides the low birth rate and the increase in emigration, the low population density in the Coimbra Region reflects the strong ageing population, as well as the territory's insufficient capacity to attract investment and create jobs, particularly for the most qualified young people, which is a bottleneck in the territory's own process of economic and social development.

In addition to socio-demographic fragilities, there are weaknesses at the level of business structure, where micro-enterprises predominate, based on economic activities of little added value, low technological density and innovation, and lack of export capacity.

At the level of the region, these weaknesses strongly condition the attraction of investment, which is reflected in the low rates of business creation, talent retention, inovation and competitiveness.

Nevertheless, despite the weaknesses described, this territory contains in itself the elements necessary if properly articulated and leveraged in knowledge and know-how, for an intervention directed at mitigating the main factors that determined the problem of demography in the Region.

## 2. Motivation to host a Peer Review

Currently, Coimbra Region is facing major demographic challenges, such as depopulation, a problem that is leading to regional imbalaces, witch is reflected in the inability to attract talent and investment to the territory, as mentioned above,

It is, therefore, in view of this scenario with significant impact on people's lives, but also at an economic, social, cultural and environmental level, that the CIM-RC aims to boost active policies for the development of low-density territories, promoting an integrated territorial approach in response to demographic loss, expressive geographical dispersion, population ageing and weak socio-economic dynamics.

However, there are a lot of obstacles and challenges that CIM-RC faces that need to be addressed in order to revert/improve this pressing scenario in the Region.  In this sense, the main goal in participating at the Policy Learning Service is to learn and received guidance on good practices about European projects that have successfully had an impact on the competitiveness of the regional economy supporting entreprises and as a consequence reversed the structural and demographic challenges specially related of the ones that Coimbra Region faces nowadays.

With the peer review, CIM-RC is aiming to receive advice and, therefore, gain more knowledge to aid better decision-making and efficient responses to correct territorial asymmetries, attract investment, diversify and qualify the productive sector, while promoting the settlement of people in the territory.

## 3. Policy challenges encountered

The "thematic blocks" encountered by CIM Coimbra Region are:

- ✓ The demographic decline that penalizes the region's innovation performance;
- ✓ The lack of infrastructure and advanced services to support internationalisation and competitiveness;
- ✓ The exodus of young and highly qualified population that further hinders the economic performances of rural regions, becoming a bottleneck in the territory's economic and social development process;
- ✓ The entrepreneurial sector is not very competitive and is based on activities of low added value;
- ✓ The gap on the availability of public services and fundamental infrastructures between urban and rural areas.

In this sense it is essential to implement policies guided by the articulation of territorial management instruments and the definition of sectorial strategies and socio-economic development in the territory that reinforce its attractiveness and allow the regulation of an integrated demographic programme that meets the territory's need for human resources.

With the help of peers experts, CIM-RC aims to find new and effective ways and approaches on how to increase investments, attract talent and support competitiveness of regional SMEs in rural areas of the region and by doing so enhance the overall economic development of the region and reduce the currently strong depopulation trend.

The main focus is to fix population, promote birth rate and the provision of essential basic services, attract investment and support for the establishment in the region of entrepreneurs, of qualified and highly qualified professionals.

## 3.1.   Guiding questions of the Peer Review

| | QUESTIONS |
|---|---|
| 1 | What measures have already been tested and implemented that have allowed a reduction in the depopulation decline in territories similar to that of the Coimbra Region? |
| 2 | What measures have already been tested and implemented in territories similar to the Coimbra Region to boost the creation of SME's and the settlement of qualified population, namely the retention of young people from the region and the return of young people born or descended from the diaspora? |
| 3 | What measures have already been tested and implemented to create qualified employment in heterogeneous territories such as the Coimbra Region, both in terms of population characteristics and the profiles of the coastal vs. inland and rural vs. urban regions? |
| 4 | What type of support/strategies have already been sucessfully created for the establishment of entrepreneurs, qualified and highly qualified professionals in similiar territories to that of the Coimbra Region? |
| 5 | How to strengthen the provision of basic essential services to the population in the most interior territories, in order to promote resilience, attraction and settlement of people and investment? |
| 6 | How can technological transition and environmental sustainability be used to reduce the levels of vulnerability of the most inland territories in order to recover their image and resilience, and make them possible attractors of initiatives, young people and investment? |
| 7 | Can Social Innovation help reverse rural depopulation in diverse territory like the Coimbra Region? How? Is there any data to support this statement? |

## 4. Participants of the Peer Review

| List of Participants |
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**CIM Coimbra Region**

- **Jorge Brito,** Executive Secretary of CIM Coimbra Region
- **Nuno Pomar**, Team Leader of the Technical Support Structure (EAT) of the CIM Coimbra Region
- **Beatriz Pereira,** CIM Coimbra Region
- **Vera Lopes,** CIM Coimbra Region
- **Vânia Fernandes,** CIM Coimbra Region

**Peers**

- **Urpo Johannes Moisio,** Regional Council of South Karelia, Finland. Manager of international relations
- **Alberto Lorente Saiz,** CREA 360 SL (Municipality of Medina del Campo - Spain), Project coordination
- **Pellervo Kokkonen**, Savonlinna Development Services Ltd. (SDS), South Savo, Finland. Senior advisor
- **Osman Saidabdala**, Association of Local Authorities Västernorrland, Sweden, EU project manager and Coordinator for EU collaborations

**Regional Stakeholders**

- **Carla Coimbra**, Head of Planning and Evaluation Division of CCDRC
- **Ana Luísa**, Coordinator of cross-cutting projects at the Instituto Pedro Nunes (IPN)
- **Amílcar Falcão**, Rector of the University of Coimbra (UC)
- **Nuno Mendonça**, Pro-Rector of the University of Coimbra (UC)
- **Pedro Góis,** Centre for Social Studies (CES) of the University of Coimbra (UC)
- **José Gaspar**, Vice-President of the Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra (IPC)
- **Claúdia Azevedo,** Head of International Networks Unit - Pilar III Horizon Europe at the National Innovation Agency (ANI)
- **Luís Matias,** Consultant at CIM Coimbra Region
- **Sónia Pinto**, Director of the Employment and Professional Training Center of Coimbra (IEFP)
- **André Cester Costa,** Head of Unit National Policies at INOVA+

**Interreg Europe Programme**

- **Ilaria Ramaglioni**, Policy Officer
- **Laurentiu David**, Policy Officer

**Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform**

- **Elena Ferrario**, Thematic Manager
- **Rene Tonnisson**, Thematic Expert, SME Competitiveness
- **Luc Schmerber**, Thematic Expert, SME Competitiveness

## 5. Peer's Recommendations

### 1. What measures could be most effective for countering depopulation in Coimbra Region?

**Summary of recommendations**

**a) Territorial branding involving all stakeholders**

- A **communication package** on the existing offer for the newcomers and the benefits of the region is needed. It should be shared by all stakeholders

- A territorial branding building on the specificities of the Coimbra region (niche) needs to be developed and adapted to different target groups (families, elderlies, digital nomads, businesses, young talents, etc.)

**b) A multidimensional (housing, work, mobility, education leisure…) strategy for the region addressing depopulation is needed:**

- It needs to **involve the local population in an open participatory process**, to generate ownership and commitment

- Although the strategy addresses long-term goals, it needs to be actionable over a short to mid-term period, so that progress can be monitored and implementation with compatible with the length of political mandates and usual planning time horizon for municipal actions:

  o **Action plan** and goals for the next **3 to 5 years**

  o **Small scale actions** to test and validate ideas fast (a few months) can be implemented in order to generate momentum

**c) A dedicated management structure** for developing the strategy and monitoring its implementation is necessary.

**Recommendations**

**a) Integrated approach - Participative strategic approach necessary - Participatory rural development strategy and planning**

- The municipality should develop a "**development program strategy**" for stronger population growth. The strategy's main topics to address is development orientation within both jobs and skills in this case both in terms of opportunities and challenges available.

- The strategy should provide well **prepared information about land for establishment of companies and infrastructure**, including the energy supply capacity of the region and transportation as well the infrastructure.

- When we make a common municipal and comprehensive, we need to include **goals for attractive housing and quality of life**. Which is a frequently recurring question when it comes to new settlements and new people moving into the municipality.

- Develop an integrated city-plan for demographic challenge involving the stakeholders that will work with you against depopulation.

- Create structures for managing, implementing and follow up of the plan!

- Bottom-up agile approach to implementing initiatives. Define common goals and work together.

- **Shift from growth policy to smart adaptation policy** - From economic development policy toward 'revitalization policy'.

**Examples**

**- Development plans for smaller conurbations and larger villages based on local initiative** – public sector commitment to supporting the implementation of measures. (Savonlinna development plans for conurbations and villages)

**- Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development of Medina del Campo** – recommendations to think over 5 years (realistic planning). Thinking too long ahead is not realistic and therefore not useful

**- Municipal policy instrument for population growth and supply of skills in Örnskoldsvik** https://www.ornskoldsvik.se/download/18.4906b9b418409207da811bdc/1667898335988/Utvecklingsprogram%20f%C3%B6r%20en%20kraftig%20befolkningstillv%C3%A4xt.pdf

**b) Improve regional attraction potential for skilled labor force, talent and economic development**

- Attraction campaigns to promote professional opportunities, quality of life and recreational opportunities in the region. Communicate about opportunities for work, life and entrepreneurship in a systematic and targeted way:
  - o « why we live here » Western Development Commission, Galway, Ireland
  - o « Savonlinnaan.fi » Savonlinna Business Services, Finland

- **Strengthening « soft » attraction** especially with regard to rural areas, service innovation, valorization of heritage, promoting flexible accessibility to housing and property. Activate communication with key target groups

- **Örnsköldsvik 2030 is a vision for a new city district** with strong development initiatives. A place to increase the population by 5,000 more inhabitants & more with faith in the future. A place where people feel, sense of community and joy.

- Depopulation is a common problem and is not always related to economic growth.

- One **fast solution is immigration**. This is easiest from areas with lower GDP/capita (Africa, Asia, South America?). But is there political will for that?

- **Refugees** may also offer a possibility. After learning the language and the culture, many might stay.

- The question is how to make Coimbra (the region) attractive for immigrants/refugees to **come and stay**?

- Reflection on target group needed – different target groups have different needs/motivation to come to a region

- **Establish an action plan on target groups vs. offer (profile of the different locations – urban vs. rural)** from the Coimbra region:
  - o Qualified workforce – identify the gaps in the region (sector/place) and organize matching (matching agency?)
  - o Families – look for security, education opportunities
  - o Elderly – health services
  - o Digital nomads

- Small scale actions to have 'quick' validation and results of the approach

- **Actions with long term** effect needed:

- o attractive study possibilities,
- o creation of youthful image,
- o green economy.

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**2. What measures could be most effective for Coimbra Region in order to boost the creation of SME's, attraction of talents to the region, as well as retention of young people?**

**Summary of recommendations**

a) The region Coimbra should establish a **policy to come and stay** addressing relevant target groups:

- ▪ Talents
    - o Matching pro-actively (foreign) students with businesses
    - o Creating opportunities for students to stay, e.g. entrepreneurship summer schools
- ▪ Highly qualified workforce
    - o Target digital nomads through incentives and offers (co-working, housing…)
    - o People with multifocal lifestyles, living part-time in Coimbra

b) Promote a **culture of entrepreneurship in all generations**

- ▪ Develop entrepreneurial education, starting at school, not only targeting high-tech businesses
- ▪ Create also spaces for entrepreneurship in rural areas ('service points')

c) Active **cluster policy** - Develop systematically collaboration and synergies in few selected areas of S3, defining a niche for positioning Coimbra

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**Recommendations**

**a) Business creation**

- ▪ Support business creation, develop support 'ecosystems', promote innovation and business incubation - Support new companies,
- ▪ Promoting business generation of young scientists
- ▪ Development of supporting structures: business incubators, university research, aid in sourcing of raw material and staff
- ▪ Making dynamic start-up scene visible for investors and the general public: start-up competitions and events

**Examples**

- in **Sundsvall** they have started a business service for companies and a **new entrepreneur center** that will support new companies with business plans and financing

- to make the **old Simón Ruiz Hospital a reference centre for economic development**, as well as being a centre for technological innovation

- ▪ Provide loans for entrepreneurs (national program in Norway)
- ▪ Network of business developers throughout the region – local contact points
- ▪ Importance of managers of spaces for entrepreneurship
- ▪ Culture of entrepreneurship / creativity to be developed starting from school
- ▪ Need of central signposting organization (CIM) for want-to-be entrepreneurs
- ▪ Role models are part of the culture of entrepreneurship
- ▪ Bizmaker network (Sweden) – entry door to a network of support providers

**Good practices from the Interreg Europe community – Entrepreneurship and innovation in rural areas**

**a) Further resources from the Policy learning Platform – Entrepreneurship and innovation in rural areas**

- Boosting entrepreneurship in rural areas

PDF **POLICY BRIEF ON BOOSTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL AREAS**
Policy brief on boosting entrepreneurship in rural areas
⬇ **Download** (782.51 KB)

**b) hoppid.no - Møre and Romsdal County - successful partnership for more and better entrepreneurs**

- The Norwegian Møre and Romsdal County is a rural region with about 265.000 inhabitants and a population density of 18.3 inhabitants per square kilometre.
- The practice highlights how the County Authority manages to setup and operates since 2007, in the framework of a formalized collaboration with all the municipalities and Innovation Norway, a first line service for entrepreneurs which is unique in Norway: hoppid.no.
- The agreement brings all municipalities under one roof and creates a unique distributed one stop shop for entrepreneurs.
- The practice is closely connected to the following two practices.
    - Digital tool for supporting start-ups
    - Innovative partnership to boost start-ups and SMEs in rural municipalities
- Altogether they illustrate well how the different levels of the entrepreneurship support policy in the Møre and Romsdal County. Those practices build a comprehensive set of measures which have the potential to inspire many rural regions.

2014 - 2020

**hoppid.no - Møre and Romsdal County - successful partnership for more and better entrepreneurs**

A success story of the partnership agreement to boost entrepreneurship culture and entrepreneurs in the municipalities in the County of More and Romsdal.

30 Nov 2020 | By project OSS
✔ Expert approved

**Check our website here**

**Recommendations (cont.)**

**b) Attracting / retaining talents**

- Profile possible target groups, develop attraction factors for identified TGs and improve communication in channels suitable for reaching desired audience
- Leveraging university IT faculty student doing their masters to cooperate with growth enterprises in the region in order to improve competitiveness with state-of-the-art digital solutions. Facilitating at the same time attraction and retention of skills in the region – potential employment of graduates in enterprises.
- Project: **DIGIHUB** – pilot project with city of Savonlinna Business Services and the IT Faculty of Jyväskylä University, Finland.
- **REWARD - skills development** - attraction and retention of skills: Interreg Europe project 2nd call (Interreg Europe 2. call 2023, Savonlinna Development Services, Regional Council of South Savo
- **Policy to stay**
    - Creation of a program to match businesses with (foreign) students

- o Coordinators for the « match-making » - For example University & Chamber of Commerce
- Summer schools for students (entrepreneurship), so they do not leave after the end of academic year / graduation – can also be done in the rural areas.
- Mapping (dashboard) for entrepreneurs: resources, housing…

**c) Connecting jobs and employers**

- Summertime jobs, traineeships for local students studying elsewhere
- Promoting connections between local businesses and local young professionals.
- God-father practice for foreign students in the region (business – student)
- God father practice by private volunteer
- Better communication between companies and (vocational) training providers. Inventory of professional skills
- Job fairs

**d) Remote working / multilocality policy**

- **Connected hubs** – attracting talent to rural areas by combining quality of life and attractive co-working spaces – option for harness desire for multilocal lifestyles (https://connectedhubs.ie/)



**NEWS**

**Ireland – seizing the potential of remote working for rural development**

Explore in this article the potential benefits and opportunities of teleworking for regional development.

02 March 2023 | By Platform

**Check our website here**

- Ireland tackles specifically the issue of pro-active remote working and adequate co-working opportunities and does this with a holistic set of measures and initiatives:
  - o "Invest significantly in remote working infrastructure to enable more people to live and work in rural communities, with good career prospects, regardless of where their employer is headquartered.
  - o Provide financial support to Local Authorities to bring vacant properties in Town Centres back into use as Remote Working Hubs.
  - o Utilise remote working facilities to support the retention of skilled people in rural communities and attract mobile talent to rural areas
  - o Move to 20% home or remote working in the public sector in 2021, with further annual increases over the lifetime of this policy."
- **Donegal remote working strategy** - under the vision statement of "Donegal a superb location of choice for remote working", the strategy is structured under 5 areas of intervention:



**2014 - 2020**

**Donegal Remote Working Strategy**

Promoting Donegal nationally & internationally as a superb location for remote workers with ideal work spaces and multiple supports

23 Aug 2021 | By project CARPE DIGEM

✓ Expert approved

**Check our website here**

  - o **Workspaces:** to give response to the need for accessible and affordable co-working spaces including digital hubs and other flexible coworking solutions
  - o **Promotion:** to give response to the need to promote Donegal as a great location for remote working and to raise awareness among employees and employers in a targeted and effective manner.
  - o **Support:** support for both employers and employees, has been identified as a key requirement in the positioning of Donegal as a great location for remote working.
  - o **Talent:** Access to talent is a key influencing factor for employers when considering remote working opportunities and there is a need to have information on talent and skills availability in the region.
  - o **Infrastructure and connectivity**: The availability of good quality infrastructure such as broadband, mobile phone coverage, childcare services, education,

housing, recreational amenities, libraries, cultural services and so on contribute significantly to the quality-of-life aspect of living.

- **Harnessing the potential of multilocal lifestyles (Savonlinna)**
  - o Attracting new skills to the region through development multilocal lifestyle opportunities. Inclusion of second- home owners and part-time residents based on interests and skills
  - o Utilizing demand for services and retail from second-homes owners.

### e) Ecosystems – collaboration – 'Coimbra quadruple-helix policy'

- Promoting **cooperation between university research and enterprises**
  - o Creation of contact hub(s) in the university for enterprises and start-ups
  - o Generation and support to joint research project
  - o Support for turning research into businesses
- Facilitate **development of business clusters** (business-public sector-research and education) in relation to the S3 and local resources / culture (e.g. food, health…)
- Leverage focused smart specialization strategy in collaboration with stakeholders
  - o Define focus areas in the s3 – e.g. health for Coimbra
  - o Define RDI ecosystem/network/development platforms to create synergies and boost external funding potential for RDI
  - o Launch EU cluster initiatives for key sectors in s3 www.clustercollaboration.eu
  - o Several activation measures for facilitating collaboration, developing clusters/ecosystems and supporting internationalization, wide participation and mobilization from chamber of commerce, education, research, economic development agencies

### Generic aspects

- To attract talent; have a good job to offer, employers must be attractive, there must be restaurants, shopping centers, a good school for children leisure etc.
- Important to communicate what is positive and exists in the city/area. Invest in the right educations, identify which industries there are jobs in. It is the employee's market that rules nowadays, and it is important that employers realize this. An example is the restaurant industries are bad at retaining staff, they don't think new.
- Youth friendly environment
- Open, international culture ('you are here in the middle of everything' feeling)

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**3. What measures could be most effective for attracting investments, setting up of new high value adding companies and creation of new jobs with higher qualification in heterogeneous territories such as the Coimbra Region, both in terms of the coastal vs. inland and rural vs. urban sub-regions?**

### Recommendations

### a) From resources to business

- Find your "niche" (lifestyle)
  - o Knowledge + wine, food, nature, … (centuries of tradition in developing knowledge)
- What is the element that makes "unique" your territory Identify your own resources and work for them

### b) Policy on added value

- Promoting the positive image of Coimbra: lifestyle (wine, food, nature, climate, heritage…)

- Promoting public purchases for local products
- Support to research related to local materials and products

**c) Joint regional invest-in and inward programme in order to attract investments and new business to the region**

- BAM – **business attraction management**, communicate clearly about attraction value – offer incentives, etc
- Build a **service concept for investors**
- Develop investment objects portfolio for presenting objects ready for investment without red tape

**d) Increasing competitiveness of rural SMEs**

- Policy: promoting **innovation of rural SMEs and visitor economy sector**
- Green innovative solutions to increase the competitiveness SMEs and as driver for the sustainable development in the rural regions.
- Increased and sustained economic opportunities based on competencies and regional asset

**e) Valorising of (cultural) heritage**

- Developing the visitor economy of rural regions: events, experiential services, faciliting access to markets for local high added-value products.
- Communicate about cultural heritage and capitalize through media productions in order to generate new revenue and promote the region
- Develop and utilize new distribution channels

**Examples**

- **Culture Finland** programme workshop for tourism entrepreneurs developing cultural tourism products in Savonlinna

- **Renaissance week** (Medina del Campo)

- **Wine Route of Rueda** - https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/ruta-del-vino-de-rueda-rueda-wine-route - Promotion of the territory under the brand of Wine Route of Rueda

**Generic aspects**

In order to promote growth and new investments, there must be **land for establishments, electricity industry, green and modern industry, investment in modern technology**.

  - On the 4/May **Torsboda Industrial Park** has signed an agreement with the world-leading green tech company PTL – one of Northvolt's most important suppliers. A billion-dollar investment that is initially estimated to create 1,900 jobs at the Torsboda site.
- **Access to skills and infrastructure** is important. Anyone who wants to move to a rural area may think, can I live in the countryside and commute to work? is remote work possible?
- **Housing** is needed, in the context of northern Sweden, the roads need to be sanded in winter (from the snow). There must be schools at a reasonable distance. Added to the fact that there are opportunities for jobs in rural areas.
- For the growth of rural area, you should have to provide a good **fiber connection, broadband** for growth and entrepreneurship outside the city center.
- **Territories of 30 minutes (proximity in terms of accessibility)**

**Further resources from the Policy learning Platform – Regional branding – Agrifood sector - Silver economy**

**a) Rueda wine route**

- Rueda Wine Route is a good example of supporting regional SMEs in the wine making business by linking it with the market opportunities provided by tourism. The practice is exemplary in the sense that local strengths of a wine making region were put to use in attracting tourists and therefore making the region more known whilst supporting small businesses locally.

- Given the limited resources used and their private origins, the practice is a noteworthy case where results can be obtained by bringing locals together towards one goal. As the practice never became dependent on public funding, it is therefore also more sustainable as the local community is directly invested in the success.

**2014 - 2020**

**Ruta del Vino de Rueda / Rueda Wine Route**

It is a wine tourism project which aims to improve the quality of tourist products and unite their efforts to create synergies and benefit the joint promotion.

04 Mar 2019 | By project RuralGrowth

Expert approved

**Check our website**

**b) Visit Savonlinna open collaboration and tourism marketing platform**

- Visit Savonlinna is an open platform offer as public service to local companies and business associated to promote their services. It utilized adaptive website design, open interfaces making it possible to link data to/from other websites.

- Collaborators are granted content editor privileges. In this way the responsibility for the website management is distributed. Businesses update their own information through automatically updated link. Responsibility for updating belongs to owner/author of information.

- By utilizing 'crowdsourcing' In this way, the region has been able to mobilize and commit over 200 companies to share their info and rich contents to a wide online audience - 400 000 pages view annually for Visit Savonlinna and over 500 000 for Savonlinna Nyt event calender. The usage of website has been boosted by promotion of hashtag #SaimaaMoments.

**2014 - 2020**

**Visit Savonlinna open collaboration and tourism marketing platform**

Visit Savonlinna was designed together with its sister site Savonlinnanyt.fi was designed as on open platform to facilitate collaboration between companies.

16 Apr 2018 | By project RuralGrowth

Expert approved

**Check our website here**

**c) Regional branding for SME success**

This policy brief covers topics such as regional identity, product quality labels, cooperation between SMEs in a rural area, agritourism (adding a tourism component to traditional agriculture businesses), co-creation for promoting cultural heritage.

**PDF** POLICY BRIEF ON REGIONAL BRANDING FOR SME SUCCESS
Policy brief on regional branding for SME success

☁ **Download** (1.79 MB)

**d) Supporting the agrifood sector**

In the policy brief, we cover topics such as:

- The EU agriculture and food policies
- Improving the food value chain
- Collaboration in the food sector
- Access to funding
- Accelerating food businesses
- Encouraging organic farming and production



POLICY BRIEF ON SUPPORTING THE AGRIFOOD SECTOR

Policy brief on supporting the agrifood sector

Download (1.07 MB)

**e) The silver economy and opportunities for SMEs**



**Key learnings: The silver economy and opportunities for SMEs**

On 30 March we hosted a webinar on the silver economy and the opportunities it can create for SMEs. Watch the recording and access the presentations.

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**4. How to strengthen the provision of basic essential services to the population in the most interior territories, in order to promote resilience, attraction and settlement of people and investment?**

**Recommendations**

**a) Basic community services** must exist and be provided, e.g., care for the elderly, health centers, dental care, public services, everything that is required by law. But decision-makers must dare to invest more and more than just simply offering basic service.

- These main services should work: good roads, good bus connections, mobile and internet connection, a library and a meeting place for social inclusion and a preschool and school within a reasonable distance.

**Examples**

- Service vans/buses
- Joint call-taxi transportation services to towns (MaaS, Mobility as a Service)
- https://projectsites.vtt.fi/sites/maasdigiboksi/files/Etel%C3%A4Karjalan_MaaS_loppuraportti.pdf
- E-doctor services
- Pharmacy etc. deliveries via general stores
- Automated container shops
- Goods delivery services or common delivery points

**b) Rural service points (SARURE)**

- Grants for rural retail https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/grants-for-rural-retail-given-by-pgt
- Aragon's Generational Relay Programme in retail https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3013/aragon-s-generational-relay-programme-in-retail/

**5. How can technological transition and environmental sustainability be used to reduce the levels of vulnerability of the most inland territories and make them possible attractors of new initiatives, young people and investment?**

**Recommendations**

**a) Facilitating digitalization in the SME sector**

- Digisteps (Digiportaat) – digital skills coaching programme for SMEs and microenterprises - training and coaching provided for hundreds of SMEs on dozens of topics helping marketing, promotion, sales, back-office solutions etc. - https://digiportaat.fi/, South Savo, Finland

In order to **use digital developments for better social services**, the municipalities need to work together.

- ALAV brings their expertise in the development of digital public services and private-public collaboration like the approach used in the **Digitalisation Guide Project**. Important aspect of this experience is how the public sector can act as promoter and adopter of solutions available in their area maximizing the existing capacity at the time, they help solutions to be implemented in real-life conditions.

b) A commitment to new technologies and new green deal, and to creating an environment conducive to creativity and the development and implementation of ideas.

**POLICY: Green transition strategy as a core of regional development strategy**

- Enhanced and holistic environmental governance

- Identify key ecosystems in need of preservation or environmental restoration/renaturalization

- Sustain and develop ecosystem services: Harness EU biodiversity strategy to support regional development.

- Utilize EU and national funding for supporting biodiversity, engage local SMEs in the projects in order to create new business opportunities and jobs.

- Exploit natural ecosystems to support quality of life and tourist attraction:

  o **Geopark** to promote touristic attractions based on geology https://saimaageopark.fi/

**6. How can Social Innovation help reverse rural depopulation in diverse territory like the Coimbra Region?**

**Recommendations**

- South Karelia has created e-services
- Multiservice – other premises to use of traveling nurses etc.
- Voluntary kept village houses / centres for clubs and hobbies (eg. schools etc.)

**Further resources from the Policy learning Platform – Silver economy - Others**

**a) Silver economy (Silver SMEs) - Action plan for the province of Burgos**

- Detection of entrepreneurship's opportunities to establish new companies in the silver economy sector in rural areas.

- o **Telecare:** connected health and care solutions to help elderly people with chronic diseases and other vulnerable groups, as well as the people aiming to live in the calmest, safest and most independent possible way and with the best quality of life in their own home.
- o **Home care services:** personal care at home, as well as help in activities of the daily live for the elderly population, who requires some kind of assistance in their homes due to age, illness, or other physical/mental reasons; or simply because this service is not being offered in their municipalities. Examples are hairdressing, grooming, etc.
- o **Home shopping services:** purchases' delivery from different shops as well as the preparation of cooked dishes to be dispatched to the customer's home. Supplying hygiene products and medicines are also considered.

| **b) The social economy and support to social enterprises** | **c) Webinar on social enterprises** |
|---|---|
| PDF<br><br>POLICY BRIEF ON THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND SUPPORT TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES<br>Policy brief on the social economy and support to social enterprises<br><br>⬇ Download (658.67 KB) | ▶ WEBINAR ☆<br><br>**Webinar on social enterprises**<br>Watch the webinar recording on social enterprises and access the presentations and key learnings. |

## 6. Conclusions

Following the peer review, CIM Coimbra Region began a consultation process with government entities involved in the implementation of policy instruments and policies on the topics included in this peer, namely the Minister of the Presidency and the Management Authority responsible for the management and implementation of the Operational Programme PESSOAS 2030.

The purpose of holding a meeting with these public bodies is to discuss the demographic policy of Coimbra Region and present the recommendations provided by the peers in order to identify and evaluate the possibility of implementing the best public policies that allow to tackle the demographic challenge that the country is facing, particularly in Coimbra Region.

This consultation process began immediately after the peer review and the CIM Coimbra Region expects to have concrete action plans in place to address this pressing challenge by the end of this year.

The aim is to create a "guide" to support better-informed political decision-making, therefore these plans will be presented to the CIM Coimbra Region Intermunicipal Council (executive and deliberative body) and will constitute a tool to support and guide the Region's Integrated Territorial Development Strategy between the period 2021-2027 on the topic of depopulation.

*Coimbra, June 2023*

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*(Jorge Brito, Executive Secretary of CIM-RC)*