

Project title	Silver Economy - Innovation and Digitization of SMEs as a strategy sustainable development in rural areas that guarantees the provision of services to those over 55 years of age in rural areas.
Project acronym	SE - Innovation & Digitalization of SMEs
ERDF Policy Objective	4. More social Europe
Related specific objective	(v) Equal access to health care, health systems resilience, family-based and community-based care.

I. Project Background.

The rural area of most EU countries shares the same reality, the aging of its population; which in turn represents a decrease in local consumption that together with the aforementioned population ageing represents one of the main challenges for the economic development of companies in the territory.

However, this negative condition: the ageing of the population, which could initially be considered a weakness for the territory from an economic development perspective, can also represent an opportunity for the development of companies in the territory. Opportunity that manifests itself through the specialization of companies in products and/or services specifically aimed at this public, those people over 50 years old.

“In 2022, more than one fifth (21.1 %) of the EU population was aged 65 and over. The median age of the EU's population is increasing and was 44.4 years on 1 January 2022, meaning that half of the EU's population was older than 44.4 years.”

Data Source:

[Eurostat's Statistics](#)

In addition, this project not only responds to the need for specialization of companies in the territory in products and services aimed at the Silver Economy (older Adults); but it also provides a social component reflected in the improvement of the quality of life of the elderly in the territory; since many of the services and products to be developed by the companies will be linked to improving the health of the inhabitants of the territory, reducing unwanted loneliness, improving the supply of specific products and/or services,...; and ultimately, converting the territory into a more cohesive space and where social inequalities are reduced based on a proposal for social and sustainable development and entrepreneurship.

The project is faced through a revolutionary and innovative approach, the creation of a living ecosystem; aimed at companies in the territory, which facilitates the necessary conditions so that companies in the territory can, through advanced digitalization of the processes associated with the production and marketing of their products or services, meet the needs of the public that is part of the Silver Economy (older Adults). This process of digitalization of companies will be faced from the most avant-grade methodologies and through the use of disruptive technologies such as: Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, the XaaS approach, Blockchain,...

The project responds to the urgent need of offering a solution to the inhabitants of the rural areas, mostly over 50 years old, that contributes to improving the level of quality of life and that also responds to the targets pursued by the SDGs.

II. Project Idea.

The aging of the European rural environment is a reality that threatens the depopulation of many areas. If from the Regional/Local Public Authorities we want to respond to this threat, it is essential to promote policies and strategies aimed at Innovation and Digital Transformation of SMEs in order to train them in the creation of the products and services demanded by the people who make up the Silver Economy (elder Adults).

The development of a common methodology, in Innovation and Digital Transformation of SMEs, will guide the partners in the definition of an Action Plan to implement policies and strategies appropriate to the specific needs of the territorial reality of each partner, within a framework of national or regional action.

This methodology will allow the development of specific solutions, based on Innovation and Digital Transformation of SMEs, that respond to the needs of the population group that makes up the Silver Economy.

Solutions that within the project may be validated through pilot tests to be carried out by each of the members of the partnership, and whose results and validated knowledge will be subsequently transferred to the rest of the partners for their possible implementation in each of the territories.

In short, the project promotes a methodology that makes it possible to design, develop and validate innovative solutions aimed at people over 55 in rural areas as a response to the need to face the demographic challenge faced by rural areas in Europe.

III. Project Objectives:

1. Promote Innovation and Digital transformation of SMEs in rural areas in response to the products and services demanded by those over 55 years of age in rural Europe, as a strategy to improve their competitiveness.
2. Contribute to facing the demographic challenge facing the European rural environment.
3. Facilitate access to social services, especially preventive social and health services, for those over 55 years of age in rural areas.
4. Contribute to reducing territorial inequalities between rural areas and large cities, especially inequalities related to access to social services.
5. Contribute to the generation of employment, association to innovation and digital transformation, in the European rural environment.
6. Contribute to establishing population in the European rural environment, through an improvement in the quality of life of the inhabitants over 55 years of age; as well as through the creation of jobs for the new generations associated with the products and services demanded by those over 55 years old.

IV. We are looking for.

- Local, regional and national authorities with a statutory mandate to orchestrate preventivesupport for older adults.
- RDI & NCP units to facilitate transnational collaboration in the respective country.

V. Contact.

Ana Isabel Sánchez Iglesias

Head of the Entrepreneurship and European Funds Department

ana.sanchez@zamoradipu.es

José Ángel Casas

Technical at Entrepreneurship and European Funds Department

joseangel.casas@zamoradipu.es

ZAMORA COUNTY COUNCIL

Pza. Viriato s/n

49071 Zamora - Spain

00 (34) 980 559 300 (ext. 1485)

<http://www.diputaciondezamora.es>