



# BENCHMARKING STUDY AND CASE ANALYSIS

Exploring new ways of providing  
long-term care in rural areas to  
inform the RuralCare Project in  
Castilla y León



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RuralCare is a European innovation project in social services that consists of the design, testing and evaluation of an innovative systemic approach, for the provision of integrated long-term care, adapted to people living in rural areas, according to their individual values, wishes and preferences.

In the last two decades, numerous pilot projects have been developed with the aim of finding long-term integrated care solutions in rural areas, which respect the individual will of each person. In order to take advantage of examples of good practices and evidence already available in this regard as a frame of reference, in the first phase of the project a comparative study and case analysis of similar projects that have been launched in other regions has been carried out on an international level.

To carry out this study, a mapping exercise and identification of cases of long-term care projects, based on integrated care, in rural areas, in the community, and at home (instead of residential resources) was carried out. Of the thirty-eight cases identified, the ten most relevant were selected based on the scope of implementation, the objective of the project, the care environment and target population, the type of professionals involved, the evidence of impact and the intervention approach used. (person-centered). The ten most relevant cases were finally reduced to three, adding criteria regarding the coordination systems involved, the characteristics of the territory, the financing and sustainability of the model, and the technological factor.

The study carried out an in-depth analysis of the three selected cases, accompanied by interviews with six experts in the field, in order to determine a series of recommendations on the key elements for the creation of a sustainable rural care model focused on rural areas. people. This work also aims to highlight the specificity of each territory, each target population and the social services system, which in turn requires a different 'combination' of these elements to achieve a fruitful result.

Among the key elements, the facilitation of interdisciplinary and intersectoral teams stands out; the promotion of shared leadership and management approaches at all levels involved in the model; creating a proactive, agile and responsive learning culture; the exploration of innovative digital solutions that support the application of the model and facilitate remote access and information; and the promotion of diversified financing that appeals to shared responsibility and ownership within the model.

In rural areas, the family, communities and volunteers are the greatest force when it comes to active aging in the home, that is why co-production and community participation are fundamental, as well as contemplating informal information channels and a close and friendly language tailored to target people.