

**Interreg
Europe**



Co-funded by
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Down to Earth

Down to Earth project

Introduction

Inés Santé Riveira

General Director of the Galician Development Agency (AGADER)

downtoearth.agader@xunga.gal

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What is Interreg Europe?

The **Interreg Europe Programme**, **financed** by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), was designed to **support interregional learning among policy relevant organisations** across Europe.

This programme is **focussed to enable public authorities and other relevant organisations to actively learn from the experience of other regions**. This is a **learning process** which **involves** identifying, analysing, and transferring **good practices** with the aim of **improving** regional development policy instruments and ultimately **delivering** solutions that benefit all citizens.

The Programme designed for the new period 2021-2027 has an **ERDF budget of €379 million** for the development of various regional development issues in the field of cohesion policy (strengthening of capacities for more effective regional development policies) **through 5 policy objectives and 6 topics:**



What is Interreg Europe?

Down to Earth Call

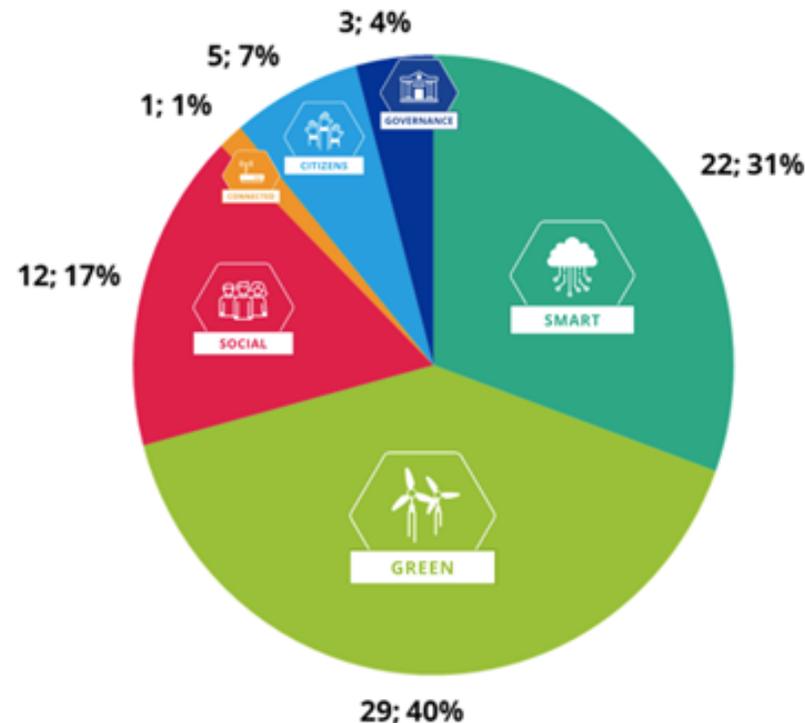
Under this Programme, several competitive calls for proposals are launched to fund specific projects within the six identified topics.

The Down to Earth project was selected in the **first call for the 2021-2027 programming period, which closed on 31 May 2022**. This call had an ERDF budget of 130 MEUR, representing 40% of the total budget for the entire period.

From 5 April to 31 May 2022

- 134 submitted proposals
- **72 approved projects**

52%
Success rate



Programming 2021-2027

Interreg Europe is in the process of preparing the new programme for interregional cooperation. The provisional timeline presents the key steps in the process.



What is Interreg Europe?

Down to Earth Call



The Call had the following **main eligibility requirements**:

Type of partners and % of funding

- **Public and public law bodies from EU Member States: 80%.**
- **Private not-for-profit bodies from EU Member States: 70%.**
- **Public, public law and private non-profit bodies from Norway: 50%.**
- **Bodies from Switzerland:** to be determined.

Geographic coverage

Partners from **all four geographical areas defined by the Programme** (North, East, South and West) are required.

Geographical areas	Countries covered
North	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden
East	Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
South	Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain
West	Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland

Focus on "Investment Programmes for employment and growth objectives"

At least one of the Policy Instruments included in the application must be **"Investment Programmes for employment and growth objectives"**.

Involvement of policymakers

Policymakers must be involved in at least 50% of the policy instruments addressed in the project application. They must be included as "associated policy authorities" **in the remaining ones.**

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Overall Objective

To improve the **policy instruments** of the participating regions by identifying and promoting win-win solutions to manage, maintain and enhance natural capital **to reduce the risk and impact of environmental disasters** while **generating economic and social opportunities to attract population to rural areas.**

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Partnership



Poslovno podporni center Kranj
Regionalna razvojna agencija Gorenjske

Regionalverband
Oberzentrum



Neckar-Alb
Reutlingen/Tübingen



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Project Approach

The **learning process** will be based on **identification, analysis** and **exchange** of policy knowledge and practice among the participating regions.

Core phase



One topic per year

- **Year 1** – Environmental risks related with depopulation and aging population in rural areas
- **Year 2** – All-type of access barriers to young farmers in depopulated areas
- **Year 3** – Policy instruments to foster the role of farmers and land managers in fighting climate change and environmental risks



Different activities for each topic

1. **Digital workshop with experts** (state-of-the-art analysis)
2. **Stakeholders group meetings** and preparation of regional report
3. **Interregional study visits**
4. **Final report** for each topic
5. **Conference**

Follow-up Phase



Regional and interregional monitoring

Semester 1 – Regional monitoring.

- **Webinars** with the relevant partner and the stakeholder group
- **Dissemination activities** (two per partner)

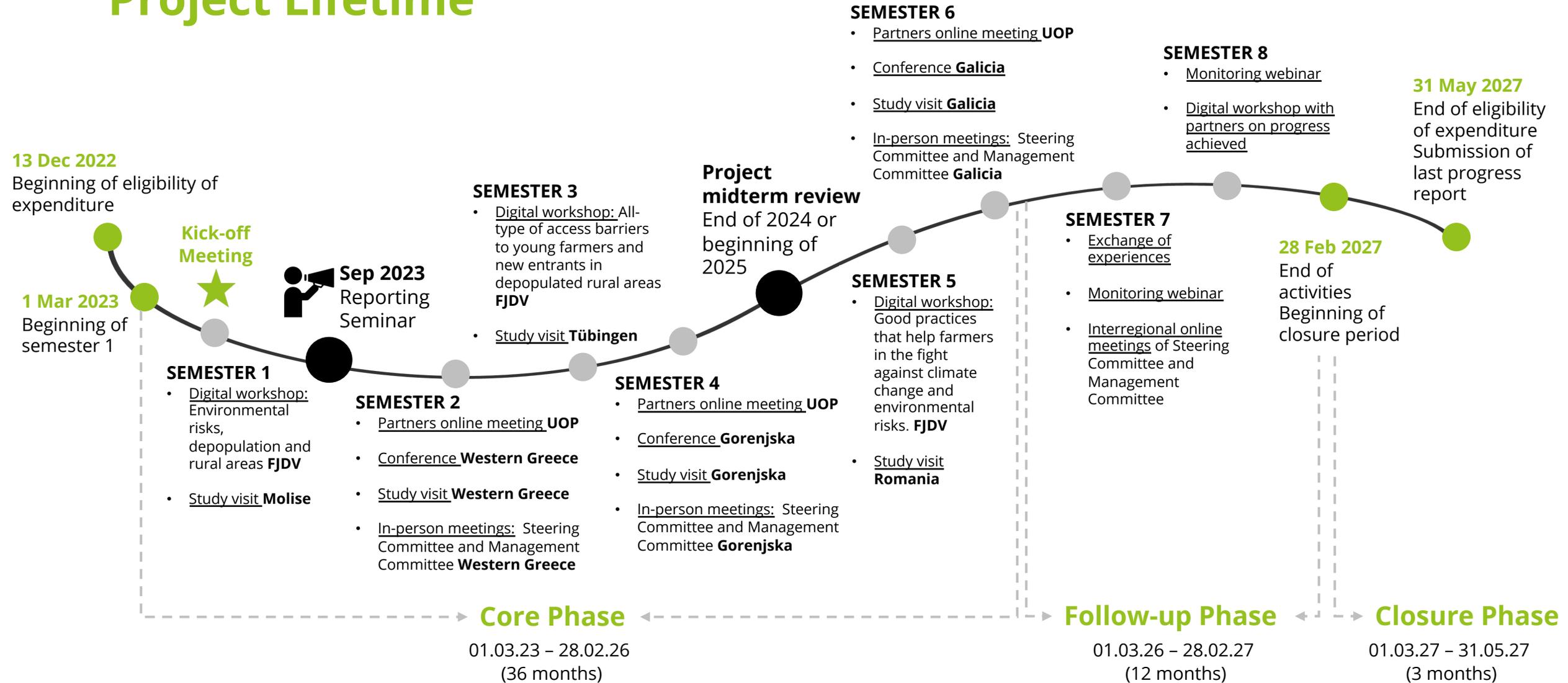
Semester 2 – Interregional monitoring.

- **Workshop** to share conclusions achieved at regional level
- **Presentation of project results** in Brussels
- **Online conference for the wider public.**

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Project Lifetime



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Expected outcomes



Result indicators



65%

Organisations with increased capacity due to their participation in Project activities



100%

Policy instruments improved thanks to the project

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Communication



Inform on project results



Maintain stakeholders involved



EU & Interreg role visible

- Implementation and evaluation strategy

- Media



Communication Strategy



Conferences



Newsletter



Multilingual videos



Programme's website



Social media



Management

Steering Committee (SC)



Representative partners

Management Committee (MC)



Project coordinator



Financial manager



Communication manager

Day-to-day coordination

Financial

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Policy Instruments

ROMANIA´S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2018	1	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, WATERS AND FORESTS (Romania)
GALICIAN ACT ON RECOVERY OF AGRARIAN LAND (2021)	2	GALICIAN AGENCY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (Galicia)
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM´S FOR GORENJSKA REGION 2021-2027 (RDP)	3	BSC BUSINESS SUPPORT CENTRE (Slovenia)
LET´S BUILD THE FUTURE TOGETHER: NEW CONNECTIONS FOR CAMPOBASSO VAST AREA STRATEGY-STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CAMPOBASSO VAST AREA	4	MUNICIPALITY OF CAMPOBASSO (Italy)
REGIONALPLAN NECKAR-ALB 2013)	5	REGIONALVERBAND NECKAR-ALB (Germany)
REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAM WESTERN GREECE 2021-2027	6	REGION OF WESTERN GREECE (Greece)



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GALICIAN ACT ON RECOVERY OF AGRARIAN LAND (2021)



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Territorial Context

Rural areas in Galicia cover 4/5 of its territory and are home to a quarter of its 2.7 million inhabitants.

In recent decades, a **process of deagrarianization** has led to the **disappearance of more than 2/3 of the agricultural farm holdings and 95% agribusiness.**

This **new model** has had **several negative effects:** territorial depopulation, demographic decline, insufficient or non-existent management of the territory...

Rural land ownership is extremely fragmented, with a majority of owners disconnected from land management duties. This encourages the **abandonment of rural areas and highly productive land.**

Serious deficits in land management feed the risk of natural disasters such as forest fires.

Although the indicators related to forest fires have improved substantially in recent decades, **60% of the municipalities of Galicia were high risk fire areas in 2021**



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GALICIAN ACT ON RECOVERY OF AGRARIAN LAND (2021)



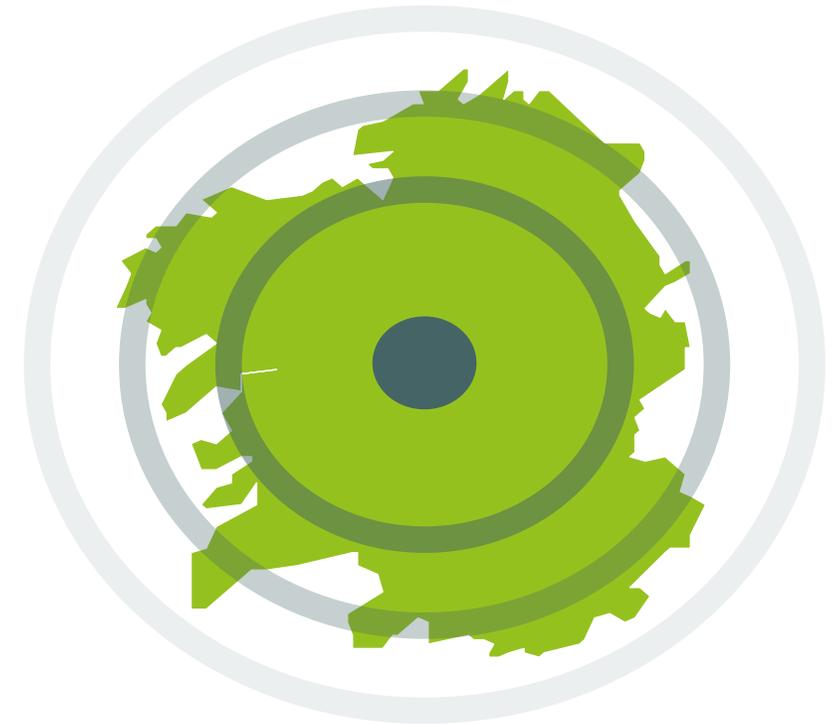
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Main features

It aims at **fighting abandonment and promoting agriland recovery, tackling environmental risk linked to depopulation** (forest fires), while **enhancing resilience and adaptation to climate change of our rural areas**, by putting that land into green agriproduction.

Some **examples of relevant issues covered by this act**: agriland ownership legal inquiry procedure, mobilisation of abandoned rural properties, the Galicia Map of agroforestry uses, the Catalogue of high productivity soils, specific land recovery legal instruments (agroforestry plots or model villages), support and fiscal measures. Access to agriland for all (vulnerable groups) and sustainable agroforestry jobs and wealth creation will help to fight environmental problems in depopulated areas.

It is a **pioneering piece of agrilaw in Spain (in full force since 22nd May 2021)** that sets up the general framework for the management and use management of agriland.



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GALICIAN ACT ON RECOVERY OF AGRARIAN LAND (2021)



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Expected policy improvement

1. New projects financed by the instrument

It is in the **initial phase of implementation**, so it **provides for the possibility of applying several new instruments to promote its goals and objectives**.

These instruments are, to a large extent, **yet to be defined and they offer a wide range of possibilities of action** depending on the approach and the specific objectives pursued with these actions.

The experience and knowledge gained through the exchanges of experiences in the framework of the DOWN TO EARTH project will provide valuable input to shape upcoming projects for the implementation of these instruments.

Example

Article 126 (Promotion measures) establishes that Agader may directly grant aid, sign agreements with interested parties or with financial entities regarding subsidies and financial aid, grant subsidies to favour the use of the instruments included in the law, subsidize previous projects on agroforestry farms or co-management actions, sign agreements with other administrations or public or private entities that own agroforestry land to mobilize agroforestry land, establish incentives for owners of agroforestry farms to mobilize them, etc.

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Expected policy improvement

2. Change in the management of the instrument

It creates new legal figures and reinforces previously existing ones, with the aim of facilitating compliance with the objectives and purposes fixed by the legal text.

The objectives and purposes of the law are closely related to the purposes of the DOWNTOEARTH project.

1

The **legal figures for mobilization and recovery of agricultural land** began to be applied recently and **there is a clear need for definition and assessment criteria for its optimal management**, especially in this initial phase.

The DOWNTOEARTH project will provide valuable knowledge that will serve as a basis to this task.

2

The law also provides (Title IV, Title VI) several **innovative procedures for the mobilization and recovery of agroforestry lands**, as well as **provisions related to integrated and joint actions for which the participation of various public and private actors** is required (Art. 82.). The application of these procedures also requires **evaluation criteria for their effective orientation and management** in accordance with the purposes they pursue.

The DOWNTOEARTH project will provide an opportunity to learn about the experience of other regions in key topics (severely depopulated rural territories, environmental problems linked to climate change, aging populations) to shape the orientation of the evaluation criteria and overall management of the instrument.

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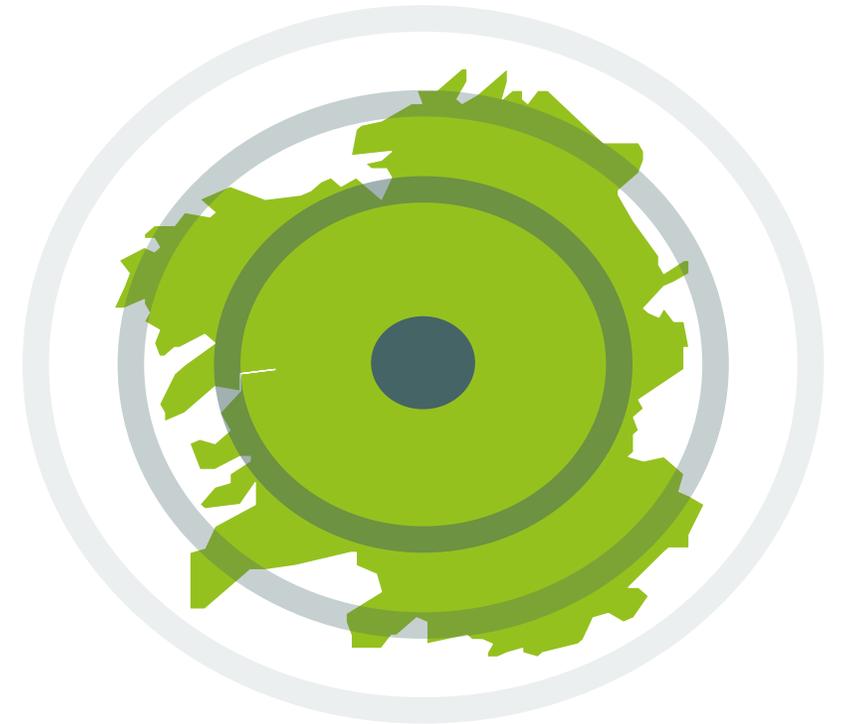
GALICIAN ACT ON RECOVERY OF AGRARIAN LAND (2021)



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Main stakeholders

1. **Dirección Xeral de Defensa do Monte** (Consellería do Medio Rural. Xunta de Galicia)
2. **Dirección Xeral de Familia, Infancia e Dinamización Demográfica** (Consellería de Política Social. Xunta de Galicia)
3. **Dirección Xeral de Xuventude, Participación e Voluntariado** (Consellería de Política Social. Xunta de Galicia)
4. **Axencia Galega da Industria Forestal** (consellería do medio Rural, Xunta de Galicia)
5. **Asociación de Grupos de Desenvolvemento Rural** de Galicia
6. Federación Galega de Municipios e Provincias (**FEGAMP**)
7. **Universidade de Santiago de Compostela**
8. **Universidade de A Coruña**
9. **Universidade de Vigo**



**Time for
questions**



Thank you!

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The project Down to Earth is implemented in the framework of the Interreg Europe programme and co-financed by the European Union.

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