Añora Declaration

"*Digitisation and Smart Rural Territories: for a smart, intelligent, dynamic and connected Rural World*"

teleworking collaboration community
resilience revitalization cooperation training
digitisation share Local Action Groups
entrepreneurship
data talent trust
rural empowerment innovation interoperability
Smart Rural Territorios connectivity co-working
governance diversification
adaptation flexibility commitment
ecosystems
education real needs

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Experts in the fields of rural development and rural areas, digital divide, connectivity, training, smart villages, entrepreneurship, business and employment in the smart rural areas, and public policy makers, met in Añora (Córdoba) on 31st May 2018, on the occasion of the Day *Digitisation and Intelligent Rural Territories: for an intelligent, dynamic and connected Rural World*, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment, with the collaboration of the National Rural Network, to share experiences and good practices related to innovation and digitisation as instruments to boost smart rural territories.

Based on the contributions of all of them, the **following declaration** is made:

Digitisation and promotion of *smart rural territories* are key to the future of the economy, society and the environment. The revitalising of rural areas through social and digital innovation, can not only contribute to the leadership of a competitive and sustainable economic, social and environmentally agri-food sector, but also makes it possible to establish and attract population to an attractive rural areas, generating wealth and quality employment, and therefore impacts all sectors of activity in rural areas, producing an integrated and transversal development.

The Digitisation Strategy for the Agri-food and Forestry sector and Rural Areas, in which the Ministry of Agriculture works, therefore acquires a strategic importance as part of the solution to the depopulation and the boost of smart communities and territories, which ensure that our rural areas are kept populated, alive, and generators of wealth and quality employment permanently. Therefore,

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1. Multidisciplinarity

We recognize that **building** complex, systemic, adaptive, efficient, competitive and sustainable **territories** is a complex task, which requires a huge multidisciplinary effort, comprehensive vision, perseverance, consensus building, commitment, an important economic and financial dimension, a social capital threshold and a strong political will and involvement of the stakeholders in the territory.

We must therefore address the territorial challenge from a multidisciplinary and transversal approach with the participation of economic and social agents, both in the public and private spheres, and from the different Public Administrations.

2. Innovative talent

We need not only to value **innovative talent** in rural areas, but also **to attract and retain it**, to offer employment or entrepreneurship opportunities, and thus establish population in rural areas, especially young people. The **teleworking** and **co-working** that the digitisation of rural areas allows, can contribute to the development of this talent, within the framework of innovation and social entrepreneurship initiatives.

3. Cooperation

We recognize that collaboration and cooperation between **Public Administrations** at different levels, in particular municipalities, councils and Autonomous Communities, as well as with Universities, organizations and companies in the agri-food and technology sector, and Local Action Groups and civil society, are key to work out and execute a development strategy for territory development, that allows to end the digital divide, redefine the urban-rural relationship, promote the application of new technologies and new production models and settle population with more diversity of profiles and particularly women and young people.

4. Governance

We are convinced that **governance, resulting from co-participation and co-leadership**, is at the centre of the solution. Because although technology, infrastructure investment or business development are important, success requires good governance of the involved agents.

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5. Digital training

We need to promote **digital literacy and digital training** of the whole society, especially adults, and especially the **recycling** of teachers in new technologies, integrating technologies in teaching, improving the adoption by different types of users (homes, companies, administrations) of existing technologies, particularly in the agri-food sector. **Tele-training** can allow reorienting the education system from a collective approach to a personalized one, focused on the opportunities offered by the territory or on which can be generated from it.

6. Interoperable data

We need to have **accessible, reliable and interoperable data**. The culture of cooperation and collaboration in the sharing of data generates value in decision-making and contributes to the increase of competitiveness, profitability, sustainability and improvement of the environment, as well as to reduce the asymmetries generated by the irruption of the Information and Communication Technologies. The reduction or removal of legal barriers and the generation of mutual trust are key to this. There are already public policies and regulations for the reuse of public sector information, but it is necessary to promote its widespread adoption, especially in the agri-food sector, and wherever it should be extended to the academic and private sectors.

7. Telecommunication networks

We need to execute coordinated actions of public-private policies, to achieve the adoption and use of **broadband in rural areas**, and the removal of administrative barriers. The **New Generation Broadband Extension Program** will carry out 300 Mbit/s optical fibre, guaranteeing coverage to 95% of the population of each province in 2021.

However, local authorities must contribute in the **deployment of telecommunication networks**, communicating important white areas (areas without coverage), through public consultation processes.

We are convinced that broadband coverage in rural areas, which is achieved through **satellite coverage** in Spain, which covers 100% of the territory giving full ubiquity for any type of exploitation outside the population centres, will be an ecosystem catalyst such as **Agriculture 4.0**, and it will allow having greater performance and accuracy in farm management.

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8. Public Services 4.0

We need to define the public services to which Information and Communication Technologies can be applied and turn them into **Public Services 4.0**: proactive and personalized, with the aim of making life easier for citizens in both the procedural and the benefits. To make this possible, cooperation between administrations and interoperability is essential. The educational, health and care for the elderly services are strategic to guarantee the population settlement in the rural areas. The National Plan for Smart Territories is a complementary tool to economic growth policies, being focused on improving the provision of public services.

9. Smart Villages

We are convinced that **smart villages**, are those where the rural community takes the initiative to reach practical solutions and take advantage of new opportunities to meet the challenges. Digital innovation together with social innovation, allow this process that is based not only on the development of digital infrastructure, digital public services and the population training in digital skills, but on empowering citizens to know and take advantage of existing technologies and social innovations to add value to their life and community; people and their ideas contribute definitively to the innovative and intelligent character of their community. This Objective is compromised in many areas, since demographic emptying and aging entail losses of social capital and disposition to economic or social entrepreneurship.

10. European financing

We must in a holistic and comprehensive way identify, study, coordinate and take advantage of **European financing tools**, which are multiple and varied, to look for those that best fit the projects to be promoted at rural level and in particular to boost the development of Smart Villages.

11. Facilitating agents

We need to have **facilitating agents** capable of supporting, leading, managing and multiplying projects and empathizing with the needs of new settlers.

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Digital transformation of rural areas, and primary sector as the economic, social and environmental main engine – in no way exclusive – of the rural areas, is necessary, but not sufficient in order to cope with the demographic challenge faced by rural areas. It is a key tool to consolidate population, contribute to economic development and bring the Administration closer to citizens. There is enough developed technology, whose put in value can contribute to mitigate depopulation. The new digitisation paradigm is key to promote teleworking and to improve the services provided to businesses and citizens in areas such as education, health, care for the elderly, mobility, energy, etc. Also as a reducer or remover of the digital divide between rural and urban and between large and small companies. For this, it is also necessary to make public policies of equal opportunities between urban and rural citizens and to remove or reduce the technical, legislative, economic and training existing barriers.

We urge, therefore, to the Public Administrations with competences in these matters to commit themselves to carry out Public Policies that allow to face this set of proposals, and to advocate for a more integrated, participative rural development policy (as reflected in the Cork 2.0 declaration) and coordinated between administrations. We also urge Universities and organizations with capacity to boost and transform in the areas of training and research, as well as companies in the technological, agri-food, health, energy and education sectors, as well as local development groups, to invest its resources in the rural world, in order to make progress in making the stated in this declaration a reality with the objective of achieving an smart, intelligent, dynamic and connected rural world.

#EsRuralEsVital