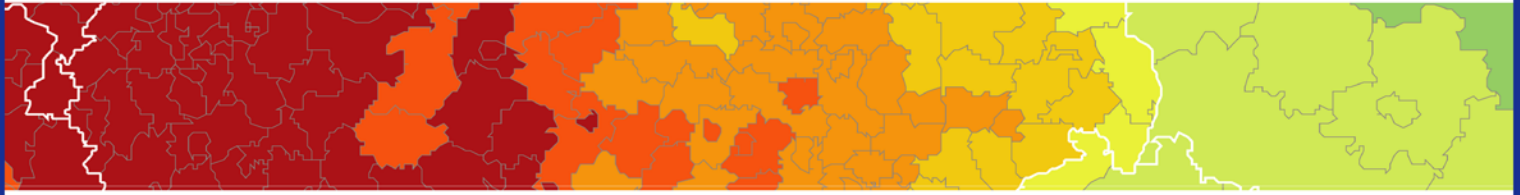


Inspire policy making by territorial evidence



# PROFECY – **Processes**, **Features** and **Cycles** of Inner Peripheries in Europe

(Inner Peripheries: National territories facing  
challenges of access to basic services of general  
interest)

Applied Research

**Final Report**

## **Annex 15** **Case Study Report** **Montsià (Spain)**

Version 07/12/2017

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# PROFECY – Processes, Features and Cycles of Inner Peripheries in Europe

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## Abbreviations

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
EC	European Commission
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
EU	European Union
GVA	Gross Value Added
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
inhab.	Inhabitants
IPs	Inner Peripheries
IT	Information Technology
LAU	Local Administrative Unit
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
R & D & I	Research & Development & Innovation
SIG	Services of General Interest
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## **Executive Summary**

The concept of inner peripherality (IP thereafter) has a key component of relativity with respect to the situation and performance of neighbouring territories. When speaking of peripherality, we usually refer to the existence of situations of difficult access, whether this is due to geographic, non-geographic factors, or a combination of both. It is the "relational peripherality" that we try to understand in this research and that explains the choice of a region of the Catalan south coast. These are elements such as human and social capital, the existence and strength of networks between companies or within civil society, the degree and strength of "connectedness" through actions of networks, lobbies, experts, etc. of a particular territory with centres in which decisions are made, etc.

### **Background**

The Montsià County is located in Catalonia Region in eastern Spain. The area has a population of 67,646 inhabitants, and a population density of 92.00 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. It includes twelve municipalities grouped in two distinct geographical zones: the inner-mountainous zone and the axis that connects the Ebro River and the Mediterranean coast. The economy is based on traditional agriculture and on importantly on the services sector and manufacture industry. The real estate crisis from 2008 that dragged not only the prominent local industrial sector of furniture production, but also the rest of the production chain associated with the building sector. The entrepreneurial structure, with an absolute dominance of micro and small, family-based enterprises, is a more resilient model in times of crisis, but it is unable of being at the forefront given the scarcity of resources, lack of strong and focused networks, and scarce capacity to invest in R & D in the absence of specific policies from the public administration. The Montsià County has important environmental and cultural assets, but protection figures also entail limitations, especially regarding land use and environmental protection. Despite its location on the Spanish Mediterranean coast and the existence of most relevant natural and cultural resources, the region loses population in selective processes of outmigration of the youth and more qualified population that does not find sufficient opportunities to develop their professional aspirations.

### **Challenges and problems**

Several factors are at the basis of the classification of the Montsià region as an "inner periphery". These are the following:

#### *Living in the "south-east border"*

The situation of the region in the south-eastern corner of Catalonia implies important added difficulties for the provision of services and for access to the large regional power centres. Montsià County is located on the border with the Valencian region to the south, Aragón to the west and other counties of Catalonia to the north and northwest. To the east is another important barrier like the Mediterranean Sea. Given that powers for basic services have been largely transferred to Regions (*Comunidades Autónomas*), and that there are no collaboration

agreements between them for the provision of basic services such as health or education, a large part of the case study area cannot benefit from basic services offered in the two larger towns of the region of Valencia that fall close to the Montsià area (Vinaròs and Benicarló).

#### *"Disconnected" in the middle of the "Mediterranean corridor"*

Although the Montsià is located in the middle of the "Mediterranean corridor", a trans-national axes of transport of first magnitude in Europe, its location occurs in one of the places where the corridor weakens in both rail and road. This physical "disconnection" has continuity in a sort of "socioeconomic disconnection" from the main regional decision centres, and beyond.

#### *Historical lack of cooperative governance*

For decades, the region has not acted politically as a unit of interest. Political activism has been local in character and often creates conflicts within the region. Only in recent times, and in the opinion of some as a consequence of external threats, a major regional action has been launched and the region counts on a regional strategy and an institutional action organized around common interests. As a result, historical political individualism has given way, in the last 10 years, to a situation of cooperation between local actors and a strategic action "bottom-up" that can contribute greatly to improve the situation of the area.

#### *Challenging economic ecosystem*

The pillars of the local economy are found in traditional sectors generally with little added value. Despite their low degree of innovation, there are some sub-sectors that perform well: on the one hand, large areas of intensive agriculture; on the other hand, a unique natural area (the Ebro Delta) with municipalities specialized in fishing. The Montsià County does not hold universities or relevant higher education extensions, and vocational training suffers from shortcomings.

#### **Future developments**

The current situation shows an uncertain future as a consequence of the weaknesses derived from the condition of inner periphery. The conditions of provision and access to services of general interest are, on average, worse than those of the neighbouring territories, although the quality of life is optimal, in the opinion of most of the people who participated in the study. This apparent contradiction is due to the fact that the territory offers very good life quality to those who manage to stabilise in the local labour market, and generates a strong sense of belonging that is transmitted from generation to generation. The Montsià has the internal conditions to stop being an inner periphery in the future, as long as: (i) local society continue on the path of collective action under the leadership of decision-makers; (ii) leaders contribute to implement the strategically generated vision agreed in recent years; (iii) economic and political actors lobby in order to strengthen internal networks and their ability to reach decision-making centres; and (iv) everybody work on overcoming the weaknesses that, at present, limit the development of the region's growth potential.

# 1 Introduction of the case study background

## 1.1 General information and location in European Space

The Montsià County is located in Tarragona Province, which belongs to Catalonia Region. At country scale, it is located in the eastern coast of Spain, between Barcelona and Valencia (the second and the third relevant cities of the country, respectively). The county is located in the middle of an economic triangle configured by the institutional and business relationships between Madrid-Barcelona-Valencia, together with Zaragoza (Figure 1.1). Madrid and Barcelona, together with the Mediterranean corridor, represent the main development axis of Spain. However, the area is not currently taking advantage of this location, as there exists discontinuity with those areas (both regarding the infrastructural network and regarding city networks).

*Figure 1.1: Location of the Montsià in relation to the main economic development poles of Spain*



Furthermore, the proximity of medium-size more competitive metropolitan areas (with a higher population and centrality), such as Tarragona-Reus and Castelló, or Lleida, at similar distance from Barcelona metropolitan area (Map 1.2) result in competitive disadvantages. Those secondary areas attract investment, skilled labour and they are better positioned in the existing networks. As a result, the remaining areas inside the Madrid-Barcelona-Valencia triangle have a less prominent role regarding territorial function provision. In addition, the presence in the Montsià county surrounding areas of larger towns (Tortosa, in Catalonia, and Vinaròs and Benicarló, in the region of Valencia) with higher economic dynamism and acting as territorial reference centres for service provision also hinders reversing the peripheral importance of the Montsià county.



### 1.1.1 The case study area

As shown in Map 1.2 and Map 1.3, the county, shares a border with the Valencian region to the south, Aragón to the west and other counties of Catalonia to the north and northwest. To the east the Mediterranean Sea acts as another important barrier. To the north, the border of the county is defined by the Ebro River, separating the Montsià County from the Catalanian County of “Baix Ebre” (Map 1.1:).

In Spain, there is a very decentralized (and deconcentrated) administrative structure; therefore, NUTS2 regions delimit the border of regional governments, in charge of providing many services of general interest (education, health care, guidance in job-seeking, transport, etc.). The Montsià area is part of “Terres de l’Ebre” (in English “Lands of the Ebro River”) (Map 1.1:). This is a non-administrative unit conformed by territories that share similarities (and includes the counties of Baix Ebre, Terra Alta and Ribera d’Ebre). These four counties have Tortosa (in Baix Ebre County) as the reference capital city for Services of General Interest (SGI). Tortosa is the most populated city in the area. From the administrative point of view, although Catalan counties have some territorial responsibilities, the most important decisions depend on the Regional Government of Catalonia and the Spanish Government.

Map 1.1: Left. Map of LAU1 units in Catalonia NUTS2. Right: Map of the 4 LAU 1 units conforming the “Terres de l’Ebre” and the Montsià among them <sup>1</sup>



Map 1.2: Geographical location of the case study area in regional and national scale



- NUTS-2 boundaries
- Montsià case study area
- NUTS-3 regions
- NUTS3 capital cities
- Regional centers close to Case Study area

Local level: LAU2  
 Source: ESPON PROFECY  
 Origin of data: TCP International /University of Valencia, 2017;  
 RRG GIS Database, 2017  
 CC - UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries

The Montsià county covers an area of 735,4 km<sup>2</sup> (0,145% of the surface of Spain) and includes twelve municipalities (Map 1.3) grouped in two distinct geographical zones (Map 2.2): the inner-mountainous zone (Figure 1.2) and the axis that connects the Ebro River and the Mediterranean coast (Figure 1.3). The inner-mountainous zone is formed by the municipalities of Freginals, la Galera, Godall, Mas de Barberans, Masdenverge, Santa Barbara, la Sénia and Uldecona. The coastal fringe is configured by the municipalities of Alcanar, Amposta, Sant Carles de la Ràpita and Sant Jaume d'Enveja (Map 1.3).

Map 1.3: Location of the case study area within administrative structures



- LAU-2 units
- NUTS-3 regions

Local level: LAU2  
 Source: ESPON PROFECY  
 Origin of data: TCP International /University of Valencia, 2017;  
 RRG GIS Database, 2017  
 CC - UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries

Regarding the urban-rural typology the Montsià county is classified as an “intermediate region, close to city”. However, the inner area of the Montsià is part of the mountain range conforming “Els Ports” Natural Park (since 2001). This natural park extends over neighbouring Baix Ebre and Terra Alta counties, and across the Aragon and Valencia side of the border. In addition, the coastal zone is connected with the Ebro River and Delta, a coastal wetland and rice cropping area (classified as Natural Park since 1983). The Ebro nature reserve has a recognized international importance and is one of the most important wetlands in the Mediterranean Coast (recognized as Natura 2000, UNESCO heritage, Ramsar site, Special Bird Protection Areas, etc.). Due to the importance of those natural areas, “Terres de l’Ebre” was declared a biosphere reserve by the UNESCO in 2013. The declaration as a biosphere reserve is a recognition of the important value linked to the existing natural resources, landscape, historical and cultural heritage. Therefore, it presents an opportunity to

take advantage of the existing assets. However, protection figures also entail limitations, especially regarding land use and environmental protection.

Figure 1.2: Inner mountainous zone in the surroundings of Mas de Barberans<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1.3: Aerial view of Sant Carles de la Ràpita (Mediterranean coast)<sup>3</sup>



From the point of view of the regional centres identified at European scale (selected in delineation 1), there is no regional centre in the case study area. However, in Tarragona province there are two regional centres (Tarragona and Reus), in the neighbouring province of Teruel province there is another one (Alcañiz) and a fourth one (Vinaròs), closest to the case study area in Castelló province (Map 1.2 and Map 1.3). When looking at the area in more detail, we can identify three main villages providing services at different levels. In first place, Amposta, as the capital city of the county presents a higher density for proximity service provision. Secondly, the two largest cities in the neighbouring areas, Tortosa and

Vinaròs, are also very relevant for service provision. Although they have a population of a similar magnitude, Tortosa has a higher importance for the Montsià area because it is their “reference” city. Therefore, some specialised services not currently available in the case study area are provided in Tortosa (as we will see below the fact of being located in Catalonia and therefore under the ruling of the same regional government has an important impact on service provision). The city of Vinaròs, although close to the case study area, belongs to a different regional government area (Valencia Region). Therefore, although it provides commercial and public transport services to the area, there administrative barriers for service provision present a discontinuity with the Montsià county. Table 1.1 presents the distance of Montsià villages to centres for service provision. It can be observed that southern villages (Ulldecona, la Sénia and Alcanar), present a higher distance to Amposta and Tortosa, their main centres for service provision.

Table 1.1: Distance (km) to the centres providing SGI from the twelve municipalities of the Montsià

	Distance from Amposta	Distance from Tortosa	Distance from Vinaròs
<b>Amposta - LAU2</b>	-	18.2	34.6
<b>Sant Carles de la Ràpita - LAU2</b>	11.2	28.4	25.8
<b>Alcanar - LAU2</b>	24.5	37	12.5
<b>Ulldecona -LAU2</b>	20.4	29.1	18
<b>Sénia, la -LAU2</b>	30.7	36.4	28.6
<b>Santa Bàrbara - LAU2</b>	8.6	14	33.3
<b>Sant Jaume d'Enveja - LAU2</b>	13.9	33	46.6
<b>Masdenverge - LAU2</b>	5.2	15.5	35.2
<b>Galera, la - LAU2</b>	16.7	22.5	31.7
<b>Godall - LAU2</b>	17.3	23.1	30.5
<b>Mas de Barberans - LAU2</b>	24.3	17.9	47.4
<b>Freginals - LAU2</b>	7.8	19.5	28.3

## 1.2 IP delineation outcomes

Regarding the different four delineations that were implemented to identify Inner Peripheries, the Montsià responds to a region in which peripherality is associated with elements less dependent on geography and closer to the concept of bad relational proximity. That is our main reason for having selected the Montsià County.

The Spanish structure of NUTS3 units has some particularities that limit the delineation of inner peripheries at the territorial level required. Due to the large administrative units used, equivalent to the province level, the scale is not appropriate to show the effect of inner peripherality, as these peripheralization processes occur at municipal level or supra-municipal level. The Spanish administrative and statistical reality makes it really difficult, if not impossible, to identify inner peripheries using the existing data compiled at NUTS3 level. In addition to the large NUTS3 units, the delineation process defines inner peripheries as areas

performing not as neighbouring NUTS3 regions. Scale, in the comparison with neighbouring regions, has an even larger area of influence. Due to the large NUTS3 area and the scale of the averaging process, the inner peripherality phenomenon becomes blurred among the Spanish territory. Therefore, delineation results in the Spanish case show most unfavourable peripheries (mostly mountain and rural remote areas).

As a result of this process, and also because there are four regional centres (Tarragona, Reus, Alcañiz and Vinaròs) relatively close to the case study area, the Montsià area has not been identified as an inner periphery according to delineation 1 (longer travel time to Regional Centres). However, although relatively well connected by car, those centres are located outside the county area, and two of them belong to different administrative regions (and depend on different regional governments).

Regarding delineation 2 (Economic potential interstitial areas), the area is not identified as an inner periphery. Nonetheless, the case study area has a worse position in terms of GDP than Tarragona province, Catalonia and Spain and a lower population density (Table 1.2 and Table 1.3). In addition, neighbouring NUTS3 include areas of the “Spanish Lapland” (having in some cases a lower population density than northernmost European territories) or areas including important mountain ranges, as the Pyrenees. Both situations affect the average used for the delineation and standardization processes, and although some of these areas are at a significant distance (in some cases more than 200 km away), the Montsià county appears as a better performing region than those neighbouring NUTS3, because the delineation process does not capture internal NUTS3 differences.

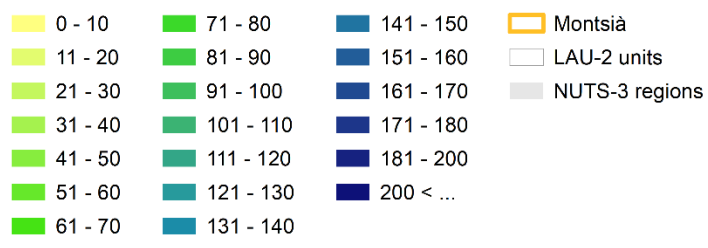
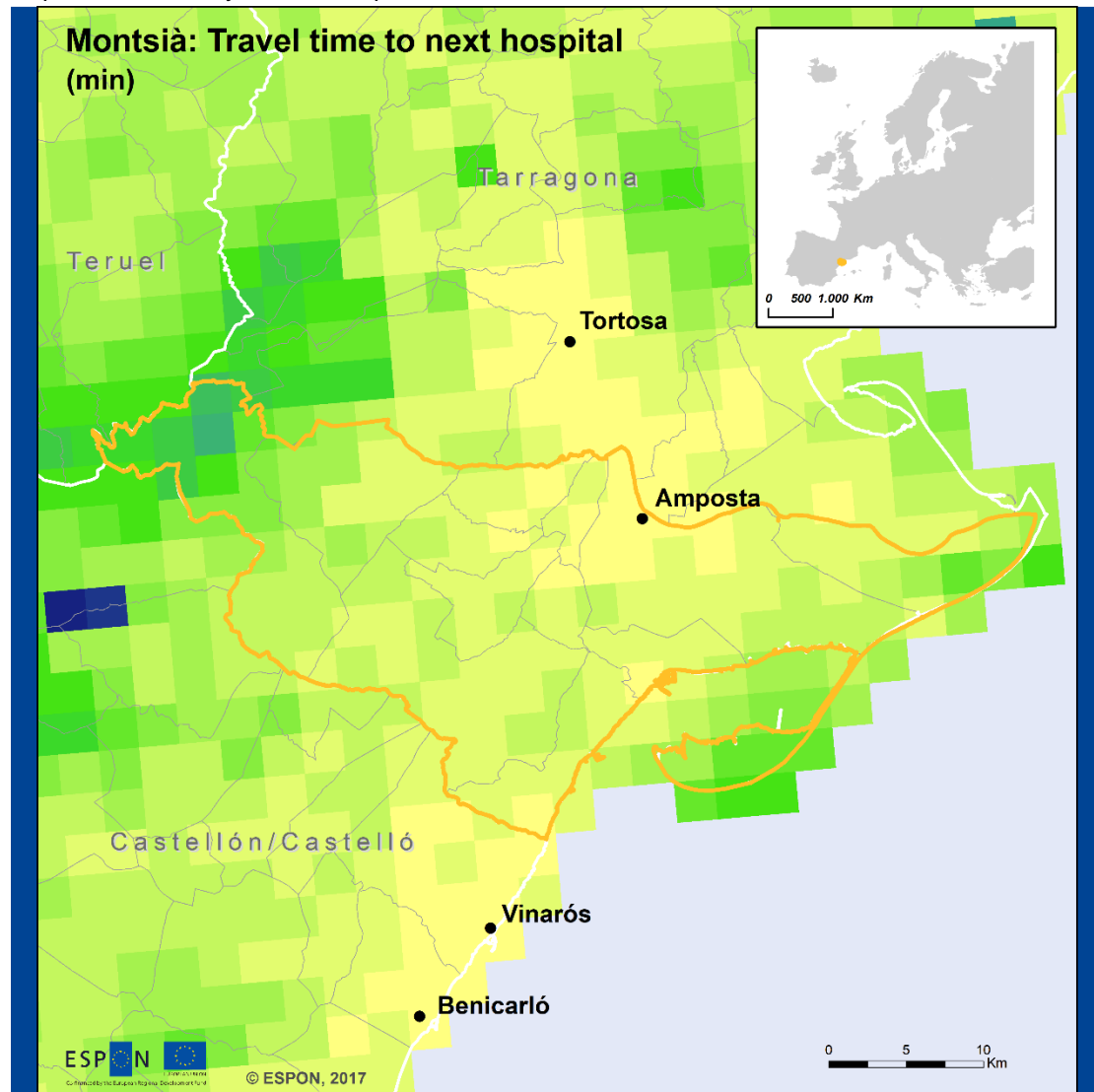
Regarding delineation 3, the Montsià area is not an inner periphery according to areas of poor access to SGIs. In this case, the county is relatively well provided with various selected SGIs distributed across the county. The more common SGIs of daily use, such as primary schools, doctors or convenient stores can be found in most villages. By contrast, more specific services (specialised health care, cultural services, secondary schools, etc.) are more concentrated in Amposta, the capital city of the county, or in Tortosa, the reference city for service provision (where basic hospital services, government administrative offices, main police stations, etc. are found). Some examples of accessibility to SGI are presented in Map 1.4 (hospitals) and Map 1.5 (UMZ as a proxy to jobs).

Regarding delineation 4 (depleting areas at the European scale), indicators show negative trends related to depletion processes. As mentioned earlier, the area shows complex negative socio-economic peripheralization processes characterized by low levels of interaction and connection with other areas. Again, the available socioeconomic data at European scale (NUTS2 and NUTS3 level) is not suitable to analyse depletion processes of occurring at supra-municipal level.

However, as it will be shown below, when a more detailed information is available at a lower scale, some socio-economic process appears to affect negatively the Montsià area. The analysis of indicators related to depletion processes shows that the Montsià is experiencing,

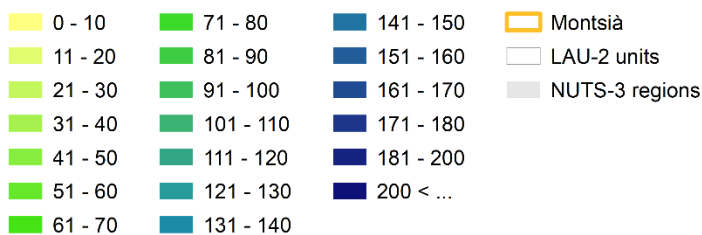
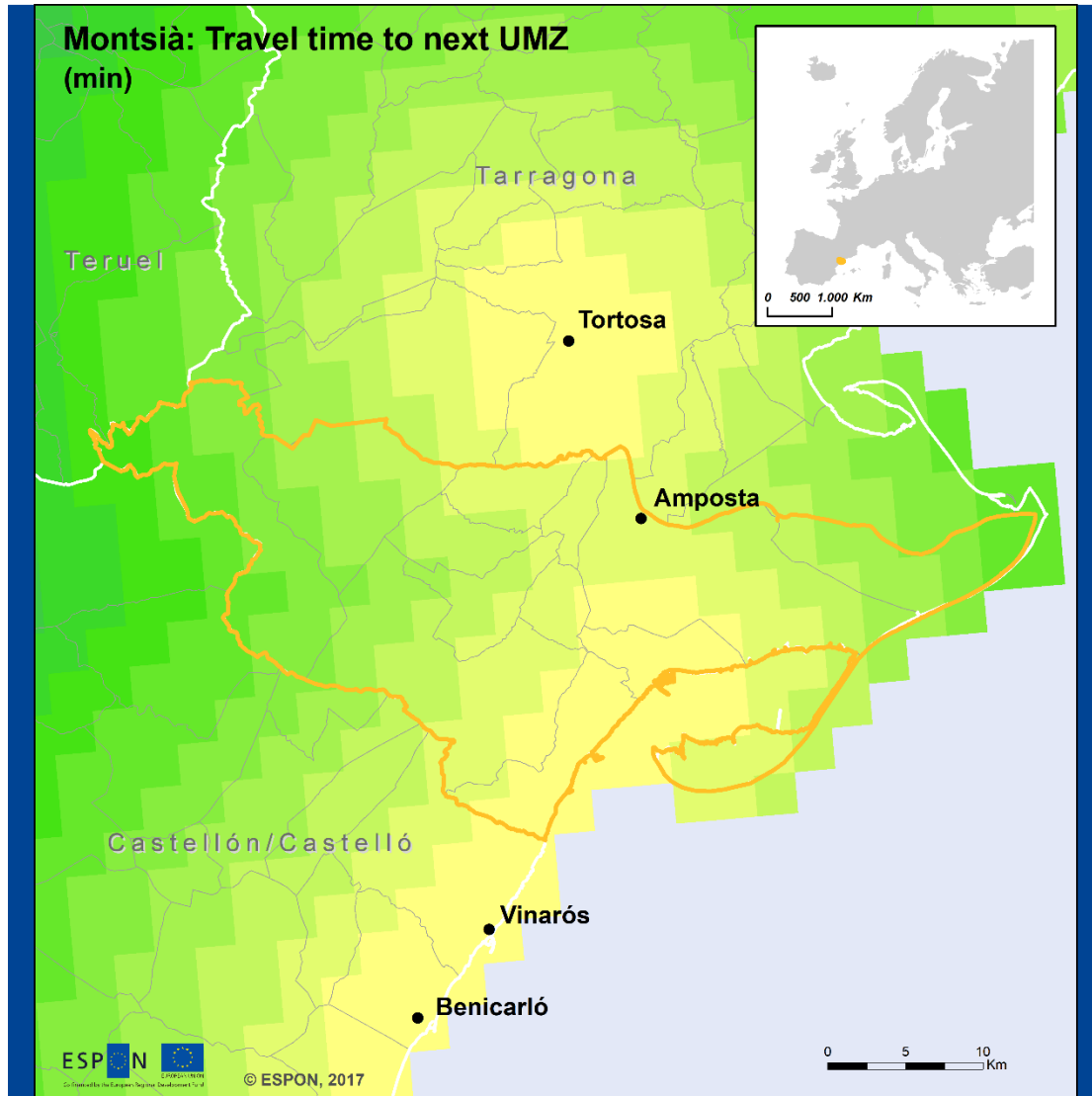
in comparison to its neighbouring areas, a lower GDP per capita, a regional border effect that affects access to SGIs, a demographic decline, youth outmigration and population ageing, etc. All these factors are exacerbated by the fact that, although the area is not especially remote, it is in practice distant (and disconnected) to the centres of decision-making.

Map 1.4: Accessibility to SGIs: hospitals



Local level: grid cells (2.5x2.5 km)  
 Source: ESPON PROFECY  
 Origin of data: TCP International  
 Accessibility Model, 2017;  
 RRG GIS Database, 2017  
 CC - UMS RIATE and RRG for  
 administrative boundaries

Map 1.5: Accessibility to SGIs: UMZ (jobs)



Local level: grid cells (2.5x2.5 km)  
 Source: ESPON PROFECY  
 Origin of data: TCP International  
 Accessibility Model, 2017;  
 RRG GIS Database, 2017  
 CC - UMS RIATE and RRG for  
 administrative boundaries

### 1.3 Basic socio-economic characteristic

#### 1.3.1 Demographic trends

The Montsià County has a population density of 92.00 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (2016). The population in the Montsià area presented in the last decades an increasing trend until year 2010 (23% from 2000 to 2010, with a maximum population of 72,333 inhabitants in 2010). Since then, the area has been experiencing an important population decrease, down to 67,646 inhabitants in 2016 (6.5% population decrease during 2010-2016). This decreasing trend contrasts with a slight population increase in the case of Spain (0.2%) and Catalonia



(0.8%) for the same period, and a population decrease of 1% in Tarragona (NUTS3). However, when looking at the balance for the period 2000-2016, population has overall increased by 21.17%. The overall population evolution contrast with the loss of population between 18 and 30 years old (-21.84%) for the same period (2000-2016). We can observe that outmigration has affected mostly the younger population groups, resulting in an old age dependency ratio of 31.6% (2016).

Skilled young people migrate to other Spanish regions, or to other areas of Catalonia, with better job prospects and higher levels of income, making it difficult for skilled people to return in the future. The Montsià shows a continuous net outmigration trend to Spain (since 2010) and a less marked migration to Catalonia (Figure A11.3, Annex 11 of this document)<sup>a</sup>.

Table 1.2: Basic demographic characteristics of the Montsià county<sup>4,5</sup>

Indicators	Montsià county (LAU1)	Tarragona (NUTS3)	Catalonia (NUTS2)	Spain (NUTS1 – NUTS0)
Population density (2016) - per km <sup>2</sup>	92.00	125.6	234.3	92.12
Total population (2016) – inhabitants	67,646	792,299	7,522,596	46,557,008
Population development (2000-2016) - %	21.17	32.37	20.13	14.96
Population development (2010-2016) - %	-6.5	-1	0.8	0.2
Population development age 18-30 (2000-2016) - %	-21.84	-15.75	-28.16	-28.27
Old age dependency ratio (2016) - %	31.6	27.51	27.79	25.57
Gender imbalance (2016) - female/male %	94.79	96.23	98.45	97.76
Ethnic composition (2016):				
<i>Europe</i> - %	94	91.01	90.93	91.56
<i>Africa</i> - %	3.27	5.54	3.83	2.38
<i>North and Central America</i> - %	0.22	0.47	0.94	1.10
<i>South America</i> - %	1.33	1.84	2.36	4.04
<i>Asia and Oceania</i> - %	1.18	1.14	1.94	0.92

In the Montsià County, the overall population increase until 2010 is explained by the fact that population out-migration was compensated, to some extent, with foreign population immigration. In 2010, the share of foreign population represented 21.6%, a percentage that has been decreasing down to 17.1% in 2016. Out of them 62.5% are from Europe, 18.5% are African, 9.4% are American and 6.6% are from Asia. However, the structure of foreign

<sup>a</sup> A similar trend is experienced in the province of Tarragona, although with a higher outmigration to Catalonia (Figure A11.4, Annex 11 of this document). Annex 11, presents the results of inner migration among the villages of the Montsià county. In addition, it also includes results of net migration from the Montsià county to Catalonia and Spain; as compared with net migration from Tarragona to Catalonia and Spain; and also from Catalonia to Spain.

population shows a contrasting pattern as compared to Catalonia region and Tarragona province, where out of the foreign population Europeans represent 27% and 38% of foreign population respectively, Africans 23% and 32%, and Americans 19% and 14%.

Notwithstanding that, most of the people living in the Montsià was born in Catalonia (around 72.4%), while 10.5% was born in other parts of Spain (this rate is low in comparison to Catalonia region, where the population born in Spain represents 17.9%)<sup>6</sup>.

Regarding gender imbalance (in 2016), representing the proportion of active female population compared to the active male population, the gender imbalance ratio is 94.79%, so there are more active men than women in the region.

### 1.3.2 Employment and education

The Montsià LAU1 has the fifth highest unemployment rate in the Catalonia region<sup>7</sup>. Unemployment rate has grown from 2007 until 2013, and has started to show a decreasing trend since 2014<sup>8</sup>. However, regarding unemployment rate the Montsià shows a good result when compared to Tarragona region or to Spain (Table 1.3). When looking at youth unemployment, the Montsià county shows a higher rate than Tarragona province but performs better than the average for Catalonia and Spain. Although unemployment has decreased for the third consecutive year, unemployment levels are high, and above pre-crisis level, being the most important socio-economic problem of the LAU1 area.

Table 1.3: Basic socio-economic characteristics of the Montsià county<sup>4,5</sup>

Indicators	Montsià county (LAU1)	Tarragona (NUTS3)	Catalonia (NUTS2)	Spain (NUTS1 – NUTS0)
Growth potential measured with GDP per capita in PPS (2014) - €	16000	23816	27800	22780
Unemployment rate (2016) - %	16.89	19.06	12.87	19.63
Youth unemployment rate (2016) - %	23.51	20.61	34.33	44.46
Main economic basis: Share of employees per sector (2016):				
<i>Agriculture - %</i>	6.00	5.05	1.60	4.25
<i>Industry, construction - %</i>	29.00	24.25	24.10	19.60
<i>Services - %</i>	65.00	70.70	74.30	76.15
Share of tertiary educated people (according to ISCED, 2011) (2011)	17.23	24.62	27.63	25.29

When looking at more detailed unemployment by age<sup>9</sup>, the recent reduction of unemployed people has excluded mainly the younger population (people between 20 and 34 years old represent 22% of unemployed population) and also people over 45 years old (representing 51% of total unemployed people, in line with the Catalan average). This latter population group is possibly the most hardly hit by the economic recession. In addition, the Montsià area is among the four LAU1 areas of Catalonia with a higher percentage of unemployed people not receiving any unemployment benefits (56.9%)<sup>10</sup>. In addition, unemployment shows an

increasing gender imbalance since 2015, as 46% of unemployed people are men and 54% woman.

The Montsià has a low level of tertiary educated people (17.23%) (Table 1.3). Out of them, 33.96% corresponds to people with higher vocational training and 66.04% to people with university studies<sup>11</sup>. In the area, there is a shortage of skilled labour and a mismatch between demand and supply of skills. Therefore, some job vacancies cannot be covered by the existing unemployed people with a low educational profile (89% of unemployed people has a secondary education level or lower, 5% has a higher level than secondary education studies and only 6% has received university training<sup>12</sup>). The low level of education is related to the historical importance of the primary sector in the region, and more recently the construction sector.

Companies working on the territory are not very satisfied with the current system of vocational training, and they prefer employees formed in the previous vocational training system. Moreover, people with university studies usually work in jobs related to public and administrative services (local government, education, health care, etc.). University education facilities are very limited (including only one degree in a private university in Amposta, and two degrees in the Tortosa delegation of the regional university). In most cases, young people have to move to another city or region to study and, once they finished their studies, they generally do not return due to limited job opportunities. In this context, young people staying in the region present a low education profile, which poses difficulties to find a job.

### 1.3.3 Economic development and productive sectors

#### General overview

The evolution of the Gross Value Added (GVA) showed a decreasing trend since 2012. These decreasing trend was also observed at the level of “Terres de l’Ebre”, Tarragona province and Catalonia region (in the latter case in a more moderate way) (Table 1.4). The general economic trend reflects, to some extent, general socio-economic conditions (exacerbated due to some of the previously noted particularities of the area). Since 2014 the GVA trend has been reversed, showing a 0.9% increase during 2014 and a 3.8% during 2015).

Table 1.4: Growth of GVA (basic prices) evolution in the Montsià county <sup>13</sup>

Yearly real variation rate in %. 2012-2015	Montsià county (LAU1)	Terres de l’Ebre (4 counties)	Tarragona (NUTS3)	Catalonia (NUTS2)
2012	-5.0	-2.3	-2,5	-2.8
2013	-1.5	-6.9	-4,4	-0.9
2014	0.9	-2.9	-0,2	2.1
2015	3.8	4.9	3,7	3.4

As shown in Table 1.3, the area has a productive model characterized by a strong agricultural sector and agro-food industry (characterised by a low-value added products), and a secondary sector linked to traditional activities that have experienced a serious decline (furniture and construction). In addition, the area is showing an increasing tertiarisation (78% of companies in the area belong to the services sector). Furthermore, as shown by sectoral statistics at county level<sup>14</sup>, the Montsià shows difficulties for adapting to new technologies and tapping into the IT sector.

Table 1.5 shows the GVA growth by sectors (2015). GVA growth has been negative for the agricultural and building sectors (showing notably worse trends than the neighbouring territory of “Terres de l’Ebre” and the regional Catalonia average). By contrast, the industrial and services sectors have shown a growing trend, in line with “Terres de l’Ebre” average, higher than the regional average.

Table 1.5: Growth of GVA (basic prices) by sectors in the Montsià county <sup>13</sup>

Yearly real variation rate by sectors in %. 2015	Montsià county (LAU1)	Terres de l’Ebre (4 counties)	Catalonia (NUTS2)
Primary	-4.4	-1.2	-1.2
Industry	4.5	5.5	2.7
Building	-0.4	1.2	3.4
Services	5.2	5.2	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>

Regional Expert 14<sup>b</sup> pointed out that, *“although the agricultural sector is quite important in the county in comparison with the whole region (Catalonia), the service sector is growing at the expense of the other sectors, causing the economy to become more and more unbalanced.”* This expert pointed out that all economic sectors are characterized by low innovation, low dynamism, and also low value-added activities. As noted by the same expert, *“people do tasks or generate products in the way always it has always been done. Therefore, if the region is competitive in any economic activity it is due to the fact that there are low production costs, which are directly related to low salaries.”*

### **Industrial and building sector decline**

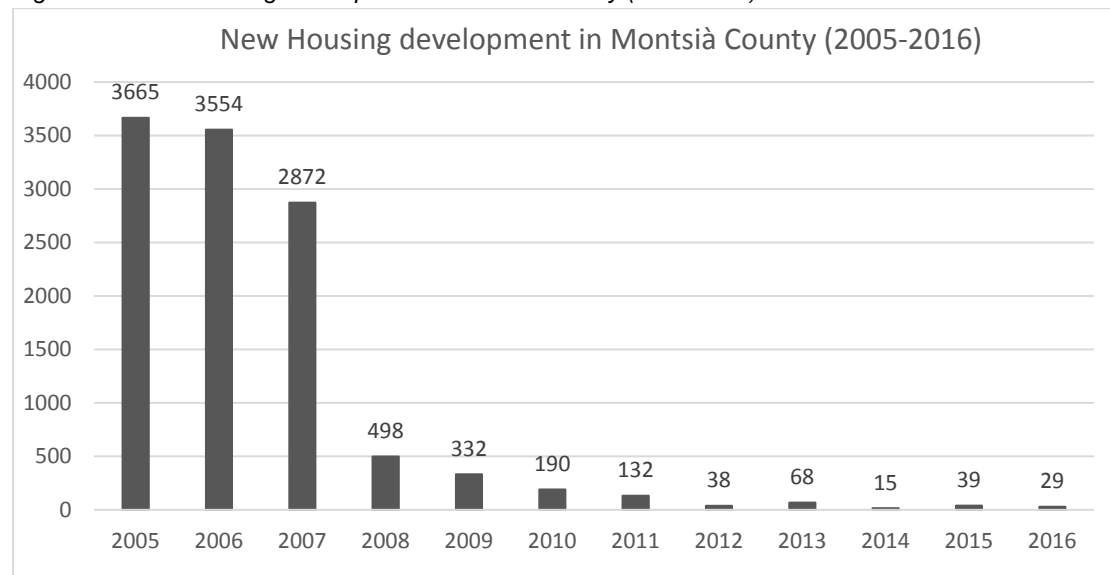
The area has experienced an important industrial decline in the past decade due to the explosion of the housing bubble and the subsequent effects in the building sector. This sector had a big influence and relevance in the local productive model and labour market in the Montsià County. The building sector collapse has also affected the traditional furniture sector, which supplied the new housing construction sector.

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<sup>b</sup> For further details on the list of the interviewed experts or the contents of focus group discussions please refer to Annex 8. Additional information regarding the results of a questionnaire conducted to residents of the Montsià county is presented in Annex 10.

Before the downfall of the construction sector, 16% of the employed population in Montsià was directly working on this sector, which also generated indirect jobs. Nowadays its relevance has fallen down to 7% of the employed population. The reason for this decrease is clearly related to the abrupt decline in new housing development since 2007 (Figure 1.4). In addition, the sector has also been affected by a decrease on public expenditure in infrastructure and facilities development linked to austerity policies and the economic crisis.

Figure 1.4: New Housing development in Montsià County (2005-2016)



Furthermore, the area had an industrial sector strongly specialized in the furniture, consisting of a cluster including furniture shops and factories. The importance of the sector was more prominent in the inner municipalities of the Montsià county (La Sénia, Uldecona and Santa Bàrbara) and in the capital city of Amposta. When the building sector collapsed, the consequences importantly affected collaterally this sector, and many of the small companies that characterized the industrial fabric disappeared. According to the study of the *Collective of Furniture Entrepreneurs of La Sénia* the furniture sector has lost around 2,000 direct jobs. Many of the furniture shops and factories have disappeared, although some companies have adapted focusing on exports. According to the opinion of an interviewed expert (Expert 8) there are currently only 10 furniture shops, as compared to the 30 shops that were in place before the crisis, and the number of furniture factories has also decreased from 30 down to 20. Although the furniture sector has lost weight in the whole county, it is still the most relevant sector in some inner municipalities (i.e. La Sénia).

One of the worst consequences of the industrial decline of the construction and furniture sectors is that the previously employed people have a low educational profile which presents challenges for reconversion. As a consequence, according to Expert 2, many unemployed people coming from these sectors are currently long-term unemployed people older than 45 years old, which poses difficulties for their reconversion.

Figure 1.5: Clearance sale of furniture products due to the closure of a furniture shop<sup>15</sup>



### **Agriculture and agri-food industry**

The primary sector has a significant relevance in the area (both regarding the Gross Value Added and the people employed). Regarding agricultural production, there is an important diversity of agricultural products. In the coastal area, the most important are: rice and orange cropping, fishing and seafood farms. The rice cultivated in the Natural Park of Ebro Delta is the most characteristic and well-known product of the county and its production received the support of the European Common Agrarian Policy (CAP) and agri-environmental subsidies. Therefore, the local economy is sensitive to CAP modifications. In addition, the fishing sector is relevant in coastal municipalities. The Fishermen's Association of Sant Carles de la Ràpita is especially prominent with one of the highest and most powerful fishing sectors in Catalonia. In the inner area, oranges are also produced, although other rain fed crops, such as olive trees have also an important weight (Figure 1.6), almonds and carobs tree.

According to Expert 15, the Montsià was characterized in the past, due to distance and transport connection, by being far away from important metropolitan areas (not only Barcelona, but also Tarragona and Castelló). According to Expert 15, this intermediate location has also importance to understand the economic development path of the area: *“due to this intermediate characteristic, the area did not have an important industrial sector, and the distribution of population was determined by the population growth linked to rice culture development and the colonization of the [Ebro] Delta... these characteristics resulted in the area having an income below than Catalonia average”*.

Figure 1.6: Olive trees orchard in the village of Freginals



Figure 1.7: Rice fields in the Natural park of Ebro Delta<sup>16</sup>



In this context, the agri-food industry is actually one of the most relevant industries together with carton/packaging industry and the tourism sector. However, there is a remarkable ageing and a lack of generational relief. It should be noted that the agricultural sector is essential for the touristic attraction in this rural county, as the activities related to agriculture modify and create a landscape that provides the raw material for tourism. For instance, local olive oil

producers have joined efforts to develop rural “oil tourism” and to improve product branding and the value-added of local “millenary olive oil” (Figure A9.1, Annex 9).

### Distribution of employees per sector

Table 1.6, shows the evolution of the share of employees per sector in the municipalities of Montsià in the past decade.

Table 1.6: Share of employees per sector in the municipalities of Montsià (evolution 2007-2016)<sup>17</sup>

Municipality	Year	Agriculture	Industry	Construction	Services
Alcanar	2016	0.18%	20.88%	5.20%	73.75%
Alcanar	2007	0.28%	20.40%	27.43%	51.88%
Amposta	2016	2.15%	28.38%	4.53%	64.94%
Amposta	2007	1.91	22.20%	21.72%	54.17%
Freginals	2016	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	90.91%
Freginals	2007	0.00%	0.00%	41.18%	58.82%
Galera, la	2016	2.50%	48.75%	1.25%	47.50%
Galera, la	2007	1.27%	78.34%	7.64%	12.74%
Godall	2016	20.00%	12.50%	0.00%	67.50%
Godall	2007	10.53%	15.79%	15.79%	57.89%
Mas de Barberans	2016	6.25%	15.62%	0.00%	78.12%
Mas de Barberans	2007	3.95%	9.21%	14.47%	72.37%
Masdenverge	2016	1.16%	61.63%	8.14%	29.07%
Masdenverge	2007	3.11%	45.96%	24.84%	26.09%
Sant Carles de la Ràpita	2016	0.04%	9.22%	3.76%	86.97%
Sant Carles de la Ràpita	2007	0.43%	13.37%	20.18%	66.02%
Sant Jaume d'Enveja	2016	1.86%	14.42%	21.86%	61.86%
Sant Jaume d'Enveja	2007	5.29%	7.41%	52.38%	34.92%
Santa Bàrbara	2016	2.44%	28.61%	14.18%	54.77%
Santa Bàrbara	2007	1.48%	24.72%	24.72%	49.08%
Sénia, la	2016	0.74%	48.84%	3.89%	46.53%
Sénia, la	2007	0.40%	62.73%	7.72%	29.16%
Ulldecona	2016	2.67%	56.10%	1.92%	39.3%
Ulldecona	2007	3.37%	57.25%	10.28%	29.10%



As shown in Table 1.6, the biggest share of employees in the Montsià county are working on the service and industry sectors. The evolution of the county after the crisis shows some common trends:

- The agricultural sector has maintained a relevant position throughout the years. It has also been a “safe” sector during the crisis for inner rural municipalities, such as Mas de Barberans, Godall or La Galera, and even for La Sénia. In the past years, the working people involved in the agricultural sector has doubled.
- The collapse of the building sector had a very large impact in all municipalities.
- The importance and relevance of the industrial sector still persists in most municipalities. This is not the case in La Sénia or Godall where, due to an important specialization in only one sector (furniture), they have experienced an important industrial decline.
- There has been a specialization in the services sector in all municipalities, being more intense in Freginals (90.91%) and Sant Carles de la Ràpita (86.97%).

## **2 Characteristics of the case study: Patterns and processes**

### **2.1 The evolution of IP case study region**

The Montsià area shows an important population decline since 2010, which has been concentrated in the young population. In addition, population is characterized by a prevail of a low educational profile. Furthermore, per capita income is the lowest in Catalonia region, and unemployment rates are well above Catalonia regional average (but lower than the average for Tarragona province).

These characteristics are related with the territorial economic development model, which is not currently providing attractive perspectives for young, skilled people. As presented below, the phenomenon of economic decline is not only related to geographical aspects or location but also to aspatial processes of peripheralization. Furthermore, the area shows an important disconnection with external networks of political and economic influence, and has also weak territorial social, economic, and cultural networks. Both aspects, together with other previously mentioned “spatial” processes (Chapter 1) present some barriers for territorial development.

In practice, the population of the Montsià is affected from the conjunction of these factors, which have more severe consequences for young people, especially those with a higher educational level (after leaving the territory for studying at the University they have difficulties to return) and younger population groups with a lower educational level (which have more difficulties to find a job). In addition, as mentioned earlier unskilled people over 50 years old also experience high unemployment rates and suffer hardly the consequences of the economic crisis. According to Expert 7, women have better adapted to difficult employment conditions: *“woman are getting out of the crisis better than men, with precarious jobs. Men are being less able to work in micro-jobs, they come from working in a factory, a way of working”*.

#### **2.1.1 Historical background**

Political action in the area has been characterized by individual initiatives, a lack of cooperation and poor coordination among the twelve municipal governments and local administrations. Traditionally, local policy has focused on small sectoral and local benefits, with an absence of strategic territorial action to achieve common objectives with a beneficial impact on the area (Expert 10). This type of attitude or mind-set at the political level was defined by some interviewees as “localist”, “complex”, “rural” and “autocratic” (linked to the power of local elites) (Expert 1, 9, 10, 12).

Expert 14 pointed out that the higher historical relevance of Tortosa also had an influence on the lack of territorial joint action: *“The rivalry between Tortosa and Amposta, both capitals cities of neighbouring counties of the same region (NUTS3), has created a lack of territorial cohesion.”* Several experts mentioned the need to develop a joined political action: as pointed out by Expert 9 *“It is not the same to have a project jointly proposed by 8 municipalities of the county than having each village proposing a different project. There is a need to agree on what is needed at the territorial level to demand a global project jointly by all the*

municipalities. This is not easy to achieve, but municipalities need to give up doing things on their own". Similarly, Expert 10 also highlighted the need of an increased cooperation among the local governments "Even if it is difficult to change the mind-set from thinking on oneself to thinking jointly, politicians need to learn to explain that maybe there is no need to build a facility in their village but in the neighbouring one, and learn to do that in a jointly responsible way, based on agreements".

Figure 2.1: Demonstration against the Castor project in Alcanar (6-10-2013)<sup>18</sup>



During the interviews it was also mentioned that due to the location of the Montsià in the southernmost area of Catalonia, there is a feeling that the area has historically been "forgotten" from Catalonia. Furthermore, it was mentioned that the area has suffered from a historical situation of institutional abandonment, lack of investment and received very low attention from the Catalonia Government. On the other hand, it was also stressed that the area (and the neighbouring counties that comprise the "Terres de l'Ebre", the "Lands of the Ebro River") is only recalled when natural resources are needed (i.e. water) or for unpopular infrastructural projects such as nuclear, thermal, hydroelectric and wind power plants. As noted by Expert 10 "at the level of Catalonia, these counties have been deeply forgotten, and it has been the place where politicians want to locate problematic facilities. From Tarragona to the River Sénia we can find: wind turbines, Castor, nuclear plants... when there is something conflictive this is the place where they locate it".

The most recent conflictive one was the Castor project, a submarine natural gas storage facility (in front of Amposta), that shut down in 2013 because it was responsible for the earth tremors that caused problems in the closer villages: Alcanar, Sant Carles de la Ràpita and Ulldecona (and other coastal villages) (Figure 2.1). Interviewees also mentioned that the feeling of abandonment, combined with unpopular projects and political individualism contributed to a self-image and politics of "victimhood" (Expert 1, 2, 7, 11, 12). This has fostered a situation of political inaction, which also made difficult the promotion of policies and measures to revert the existing socio-economic trends.

However, the public mobilizations against the Ebro water transfer in 2003 represent a turning point to reverse this trend. Many activities in the Montsià area (a riparian and coastal area) are strongly dependent on the Ebro's water quality and quantity (fish farming, rice culture, tourism, etc.). Therefore, the Ebro water transfer project posed serious challenges for the future good ecological status of the Ebro watershed and the delta natural park. Subsequently, there was strong public opposition to a water transfer to Barcelona (in Catalonia) and to other southern provinces (Valencia and Murcia). These mobilizations received not only public and political support in the area, but also the support of other areas of Catalonia and Aragón (at the origin of the Ebro water transfer, mobilizing more than 100.000 people in demonstrations in Barcelona and Zaragoza). Most importantly, in the Montsià area these mobilizations triggered the coordination among public administrations for the common objective of stopping the water transfer project, which was finally achieved (Figure 2.2). Expert 12 mentioned this as an important milestone that set the basis for the process of starting to develop a common territorial vision. At this time, local authorities and organizations, realized that joining efforts was a prerequisite for successful policies targeting shared territorial problems and developing common objectives in the area.

Figure 2.2: Demonstration against the Ebro River Basin Plan in Amposta (7-02-2016)<sup>19</sup>



### 2.1.2 Processes and drivers leading to peripherality

The area of the Montsià presents clear signs of disconnection with neighbouring territories and networks. This disconnection is related with geographical distance and accessibility (and has therefore a spatial dimension). Geographic factors do not impose strong structural limitations (as compared to more remote and mountain areas) but they determine how different regions interact: regarding transport by road and rail, due to a flat topography the Montsià county is better connected with other coastal counties than with the inner mountainous areas. Expert 15 noted the weaker relationships between coastal and inner-

county areas, explained by two main reasons: the existing mountain range, and the lack of a populated urban core on the other side of the mountains that could generate some interaction linked to economic activities. Moreover, there are “barriers” that favour relational disconnection at different levels (social, administrative, knowledge-based, cultural and institutional).

Subsequently, the linkages with surrounding territories or “organised proximities” are weak and there are some limited interactions, at different spatial scales, that provide knowledge exchange, dynamism and innovation to the economic networks. In the following paragraphs those barriers are explained in more detail.

### **Administrative barriers**

As mentioned in Chapter 1.1, the Montsià area is located in Catalonia and shares a border with Aragón and Valencia Regions. Therefore, NUTS2 borders present some of the characteristics that have long been identified for national border areas in Europe: difficulties for small-scale and regional cross-border cooperation and strategy development, and they also represent an important barrier for political action. In addition, borders also result in the fragmentation of the management of infrastructure, and cross-regional natural areas. These barriers, as it will be shown below, also have an impact on service provision (hospitals, secondary schools, frequency of public transport, etc.).

### **Location and disconnection**

The location of the area is important to understand the disconnection from political and economic networks. The case study area is located in Tarragona, according to the urban-rural typology an “intermediate region, close to city”. However, the Montsià county is located in the southernmost area of the province, and has a peripheral relation with Tarragona and Barcelona cities (Map 1.2). The area is not very remote, and travel time to the nearest capital cities is of approximately of 1h. by car (to Tarragona, the capital city of the province, or to Castelló). However, both capital cities have a population lower than 170.000 people, and are ranked in 31st and 25th place in the list of the most populated Spanish cities. By contrast, the Montsià is at 2 hours travel time from the 2nd and 3rd most populated Spanish cities (Barcelona and Valencia).

Therefore, although the Montsià is not exceptionally remote from centres of decision-making and power at the regional level, it is considerably disconnected. It was mentioned that the capacity of influence of political representatives was low at all decision-making levels: in Barcelona (where the headquarters of the Regional Government of Catalonia are located); in Madrid (where the Spanish Government is based) and in Brussels (where many European administrative bodies are located). The lack of political influence was, in the view of local politicians, one of the main problems that resulted in difficulties to put their concerns in decision-making arenas and lobby to develop adequate policies tailored to local needs (Expert 1 and 13). For instance, it was mentioned during the interviews that there has been

an absence of policies and incentives to attract companies to the area and little or no support to recently created companies.

In addition, it was also mentioned that there is an important disconnection with other neighbouring more prosperous areas such as Tarragona metropolitan and coastal areas. As mentioned by one interviewee the Montsià “is an unknown territory both for Barcelona and for Tarragona” (Expert 12). Interviewees also mentioned that there is a general perception in Catalonia that “Terres de l’Ebre” area end in the Ebro River, while the Montsià county is located across the Ebro River shore, an important geographical barrier. It is also remarkable that when talking about networks or relations with other areas, references to the neighbouring regions of Valencia and Aragon appeared rarely in the discussion and regional centres at the other side of the border as Vinaròs or Benicarló where seldom mentioned. However, as shown in Chapter 2.4, there are local initiatives tackling cross-border problems.

### **Infrastructure provision and connectivity**

In order to provide a favourable environment to establish external connections, the existing infrastructure and service quality also represents a limiting factor. While past years’ infrastructural investment has resulted in important improvements in the road network connections between villages in the county, connectivity with external areas (and also virtual connectivity) could be significantly improved. Although being located in the Mediterranean core corridor that links the area with the centre of the EU, the county has connectivity problems by road and rail. The Mediterranean corridor is part of the TEN-T corridor network including a rail freight corridor, road networks and a multimodal link to the ports (Map 2.1:). As mentioned during interviews and focus group discussions, all important infrastructures cross the area (highway, railway, optical fibre, etc.) but there is not a good connection to them.

Map 2.1: The proposed Mediterranean Corridor<sup>20</sup>



Regarding the **road networks**, it is worth mentioning that the area is not fully benefiting from the connection with the E-15/ AP-7 toll highway as the area is literally located between two highway exits (Map 2.2). Therefore, only the area close to Amposta has good access to it. The N-340 road runs parallel to the toll highway, but has a lower speed limit and higher accident rates (Figure 2.3). In the area, there have been public mobilizations and political pressure claiming for a highway exit in the Montsià and also for the use of the highway free-of-charge (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.3: N-340 road crossing Alcanar municipality<sup>21</sup>

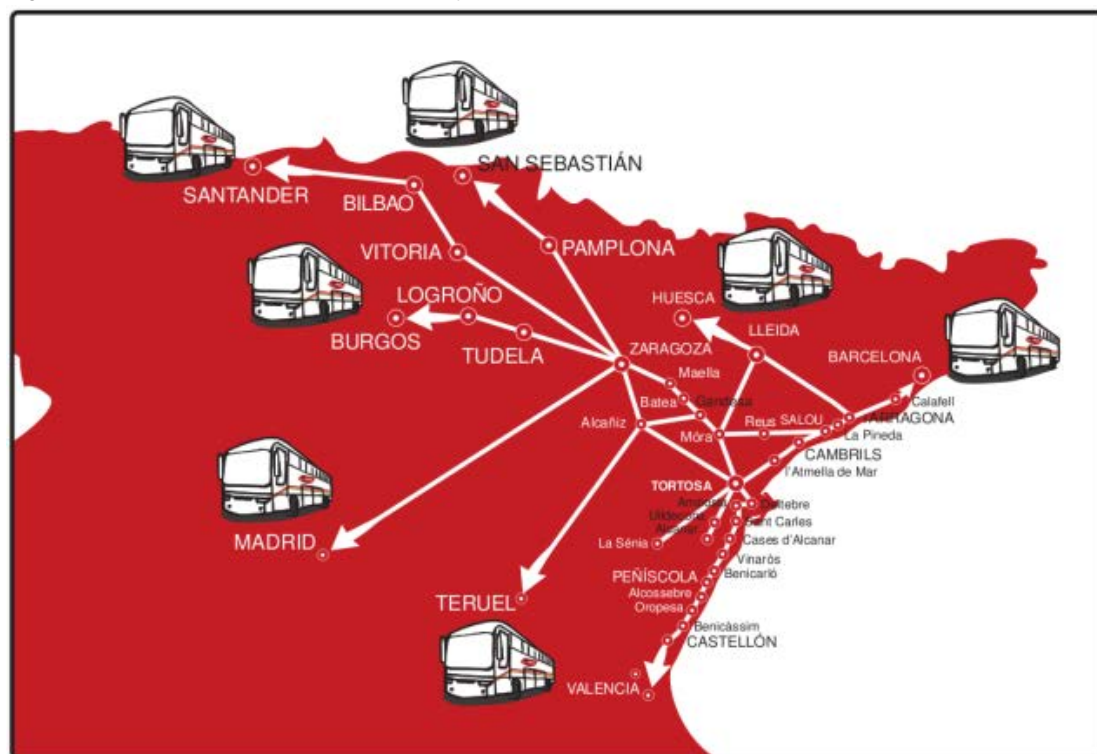


Figure 2.4: People cutting the N-340 claiming for the use of the toll highway AP-7 free-of-charge (31/03/2017)<sup>22</sup>



Infrastructures connecting different municipalities have been improved in the last years. However, although the road network has been improved during the past years, the connection with other areas still presents deficiencies. This is mainly due to the need to pay for the use of the toll highway and, on the other, because if an infrastructural investment will be made in a free carriage way, the connection to already existing infrastructure will significantly improve.

Figure 2.5: Routes of the Hife bus company<sup>23</sup>



Regarding **internal public transport**, there is a bus service providing a connection between the coastal villages and Tortosa and Vinaròs. Since 5-6 years ago, an express bus service has started to connect different municipalities inside the county (La Sénia, Uldecona, Alcanar, Sant Carles de la Ràpita and Amposta) with Tortosa. According to Expert 3, this has improved mobility in the county (Figure 2.5). However, this company does not provide service to the most rural and depopulated municipalities of the county, making it necessary to use private vehicle in these areas. In addition, the existing service has a low frequency making connections long in time and kilometres. Therefore, having a car is necessary for people living in rural municipalities or for people living in a municipality different than their working place.

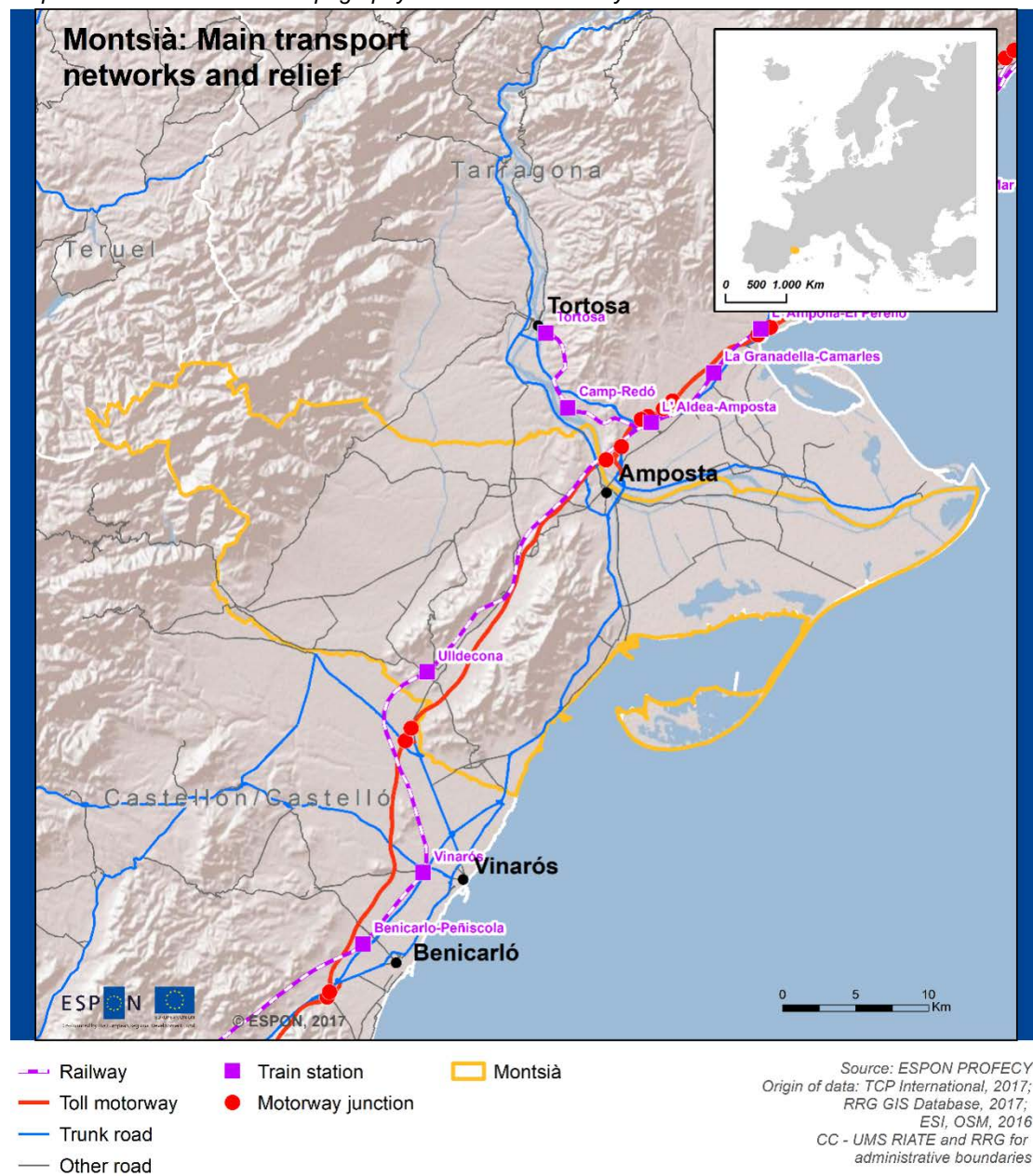
Regarding the **rail network**, there are four train stations in the neighbouring areas (Tortosa, Camp-Redó, Aldea-Amposta and Vinaròs), and only one inside the Montsià County, in Uldecona (Map 2.2). The latter is located between the main station of the area, Aldea-Amposta, and the first station of the Valencia region (Vinaròs). In practice, Uldecona station is somehow disconnected, in a peripheral position in the rail network. As transport management is a regional responsibility, Uldecona is poorly connected to the train network of the Valencia Region (that ends in Vinaròs) and it is the terminus of the train network of



Catalonia (and most trains do not go further away than Aldea-Amposta or Tortosa stations). Ulldecona, has only a frequency of 4 trains a day to Tarragona, Barcelona, Vinaròs and Valencia. By contrast, the main station of Aldea-Amposta provides a much better train frequency to Barcelona. Similarly, the station of Vinaròs has a more frequent train connection with the regional capitals. Therefore, railway infrastructure provides a very limited service in the county, with low frequencies and important delays, both for passengers and freight transport.

As it can be observed in Map 2.2, municipalities in the inner area of the county have also a more difficult access to improved road and rail infrastructure, as these infrastructures are located in the coastal axis.

Map 2.2: Infrastructures and topography in the Montsià county



## **Networks**

In the area, there are entrepreneurial and commercial associations but they show low dynamism. There is a lack of strong and focused networks, with capacity to invest in R & D, and present in the centres of power, with capacity for action and influence. This was mentioned to be the result of a weak entrepreneurial fabric, characterized by a dominance of micro and small, family-based enterprises and a lack of smooth and effective internal dynamics. As previously mentioned, social networks and coordination among political local actors has been traditionally weak, linked to a tradition of political individualism and local interest seeking. In this sense, there has been a low cooperation and trust among local actors.

Another important factor that explains the lack of cohesion and divergence of interests at the local level is the geographical and productive diversity in the Montsià area. On the one hand, the inner area presents the characteristics and problems of rural and mountain areas, characterized by worse accessibility and the pre-eminence of the agricultural and industrial sectors. On the other hand, the coastal area has better infrastructure facilities. Besides, the services sector and tourism have gained importance, linked to the Ebro Delta natural park. Although in the coastal areas agricultural activities are also important, their production is based on a very different set of agricultural products. This diversity was also mentioned as a challenging factor to develop common objectives at a supra-municipal level.

Notwithstanding that, there has been an important shift in the past decade that has currently resulted (in March 2016) in a territorial agreement to foster economic development and employment. The agreement includes all municipalities, the Montsià government at county level (the County Council or *Consell Comarcal* in Spanish), and the economic and education sectors. This process is the result of a changing trend in local territorial dynamics and policy. This shift represents starting point for cooperation between actors to address territorial problems in an area that has been hardly hit by the recent economic crisis. As explained in Chapter 2.4, the ongoing territorial agreement has consisted in the development of a territorial strategy (since 2016), with important public participation efforts and the consensus of local actors, identifying main strategic lines and main actions, and the commitment to develop a shared vision for territorial development.

### **2.1.3 Peripheral aspects of disconnection: link to the conceptual models**

These previously identified processes and drivers are related with the different conceptual types of inner peripheries identified. However, in practice, these processes are multidimensional, dynamic and appear interlinked. In this sense, the different types of peripheralization processes seem to feed off and alter each other:

#### **Type 3 – absence of “organized proximity”**

As mentioned above, there are important features of disconnection which are not driven by geographical distance but also by a relational peripheral position in political, economic and socio-cultural networks. Stakeholders and institutions have a lack of influence linked to a

weakness of organisation and interaction with external actors and institutions. In addition, there is also a lack of strong internal networks that have only started to be developed. These aspects have an effect on the peripheral position of the area in information flows and innovative activities, as illustrated by the low establishment of companies with a medium or high technological component, (linked to the low educational level of the population), which results in a lack of social networks, and limited capacity for investment and innovation.

However, processes of image stigmatization were not found very relevant in the area. Newspaper articles present positive, neutral and negative images of the area. Negative images are related to the industrial decline (especially on the furniture sector), lowest levels of per capita income, the construction of a gas storage in the sea, the poor railway service, the water transfer from the Ebro river and the refusal of a toll highway exit due to the low population density. By contrast, positive images are related to the growth of a multinational company in the area with a positive impact for the local economy, the recovery of the furniture industry, the cooperation between different regions to deal with the problems generated by the administrative border, actions developed to attract tourism to the county and the improvement of public transport. In addition, neutral images present innovative or social projects such as rural schools, tourism initiatives for inner areas, policies to employ people in risk of social exclusion or recharge points for electric boats in the leisure port (Annex 7 of this report).

## **Type 2 – Areas with poor access to Services of General Interest**

The low density of population is one of the reasons for a low service coverage regarding more central services (i.e. specialised hospital services and university education). The mobility need represents an additional economic burden that could be compensated by means of public policies (mobility or subsistence). In addition, although secondary education coverage is generally good, most secondary schools present a reduced number of education itineraries (therefore some students need to attend to high school in Amposta, with a wider secondary education and vocational training offer). The failure of banks, resulting in the closure of bank offices was also noted as a problem in the area by Expert 15. The disappearing and reduction of “saving” banks offices were mentioned as a reason that made more difficult for businesses or small local initiatives to access credit, having as a result a lower territorial incidence of investment.

Due to the sparse population across the county and the higher concentration of people in the coastal axis, the provision of some services presents a modest quality. In Amposta, there is a hospital with basic daily and emergency services, but the reference hospital for the area is located in Tortosa (Figure 2.6). This is the reference city for SGIs and also for administrative affairs in “Terres de l’Ebre”. However, in the Montsià there are also services such as agricultural research centres (linked to the aquaculture sector and the Ebro River related activities) and a technological centre specialized in the wood and furniture sector.

As mentioned by Expert 14 in “*Terres the L’Ebre most services can be found at few minutes travel time, even though what is missing is a better public transport to provide better access to those services*”.

Figure 2.6: Hospital of Tortosa, reference hospital for the Montsià county<sup>24</sup>



In addition, in the Montsià there are municipalities where, although being closer to the Valencia region for service provision, people cannot use the available facilities at the other side of the regional border. Services such as healthcare, education and employment search assistance present important administrative barriers for people living on the Catalan side of the border. This is due to the fact that services located in a different region depend on a different Regional Government. In some cases, the barriers have been “non-officially” relaxed, for instance regarding health care emergency and ambulance facilities when there is a risk for life. Expert 15 pointed out that these inner borders between regions of the same country are an important barrier. Those barriers are induced by a lack of cooperation between regions due to the decentralization of competencies and power which had the aim of arriving closer to citizens. This problem is also common in the border between countries, however Expert 15 emphasised that, “*while some European Policies have been created to deal with this problem at country level, the borders inside each country have been forgotten.*”

### **Type 1 - Enclaves of low economic potential**

The commercial fabric is characterized by small and family enterprises of local implementation. In addition, the private sector of social services (childcare, elderly care, health, etc.) has recently grown as a response to demand in the area and its surroundings. By contrast, the IT sector (new technologies, consultancy, design, etc.) has a low establishment, linked to the low density of population and the need for a qualified workforce.

The tourism sector is relevant and contributes to 8% of the GDP in the area, and the recognition of the “Terres de l’Ebre” as a biosphere reserve by the UNESCO presents future opportunities for sustainable tourism and activities related to the green economy. However, the growth of the tourism sector in the past years has been moderate. Even though it is a largely important activity, there is a lack of consolidation of a professional, stable and integral touristic offer, which has grown at a slower pace than the Catalonia average. Although the Montsià has important natural and coastal areas, they are not integrated in the Tarragona’s touristic circuit.

The problems of the productive model are related to a peripheralization and disconnection from “economic potential” and agglomeration benefits, but also to the disconnection from closer metropolitan areas, such as Tarragona-Reus, and Castelló (regional centres), and the closer area of Vinaròs-Benicarló. Currently, there is a low capacity for attracting economic dynamic enterprises, investment and young talented professionals, which could contribute to the creation of knowledge networks and a shift of the productive model. The lack of job opportunities (with unattractive conditions, due to the prevailing low salaries and high temporality of jobs) contribute to the processes of deprivation and marginalization, and difficult future prospects for young people. These drivers are contributing to the migration of younger population groups and to population ageing.

## **2.2 The case study against the region, country and Europe**

The Montsià is located in the periphery of Europe regarding core-periphery patterns. However, Tarragona NUTS3 region does not present a GDP per capita lower than 75% of the EU or the Spanish average, so it cannot be considered a lagging area.

Notwithstanding that, Spain is characterized by having an important number of remote areas, with a low population density and where mountainous topography and upland terrain make accessibility and service provision particularly complex. In comparison, the Montsià area is not located in a remote or mountainous area that imposes important geographical or “spatial” constraints. However, even though not being located in a very “disadvantaged” or “peripheral” position the Montsià shows a pattern of economic and demographic decline. These trends are linked to process of peripheralization that, as mentioned earlier, depends on spatial and peripherality but also, and more importantly on aspatial factors.

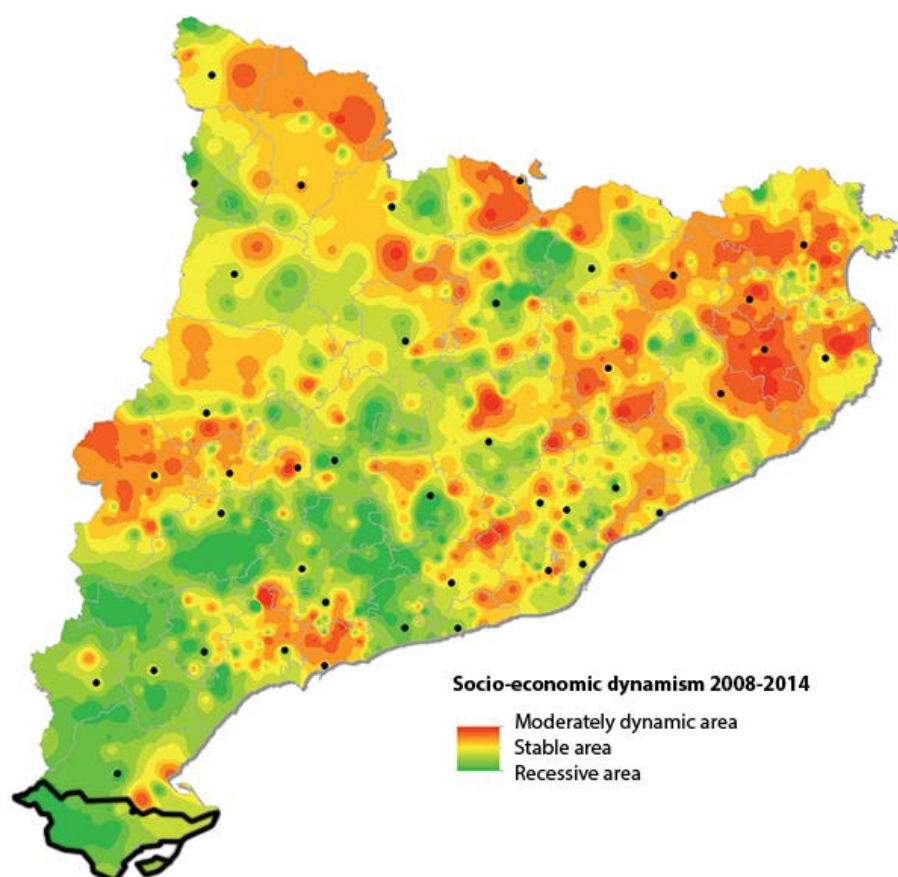
Population density in the Montsià is relatively low (92 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>) compared to the average of Catalonia (NUTS2) (234.3 inhab. / km<sup>2</sup>), and Tarragona (NUTS3) (125.6 inhab. / km<sup>2</sup>), and similar to the Spanish average. In addition, the old age dependency ratio is higher than regional and national averages (31.6% in the Montsià, 27.8% in Catalonia and 25.6% in Spain). Regarding economic indicators, GDP per capita is very low (16.000€, compared to 27.800€ in Catalonia and 22.780€ in Spain), and the area has the lowest per capita income of Catalonia.

These economic and demographic trends are occurring at a higher regional level. The four counties comprising “Terres de l’Ebre” (Map 1.1) show all a low performance compared to Catalonia in the following indicators: old age dependency ratio, unemployment (unemployment of low qualified people, long-term unemployment and young unemployment), per capita income, and temporary contracts. However, it should be noted that compared to the Montsià, the location of the two inner counties is markedly remote (they are inner rural and mountainous areas with worse infrastructural provision). By contrast, the neighbouring coastal county of Baix Ebre shows, according to the interviews, a similar or a slightly better situation, mainly due to the having the city of Tortosa as a capital city, which has better SGI provision and more centrality.

These trends correspond to characteristics of inner peripherality (to be distinguish from peripherality in inland and more remote areas) where limited economic development can be attributed partly to a lack of “organized proximity”, including weak internal and external networks. Regarding peripherality, the Montsià is not in a very disadvantaged geographical situation, but neither in a very favourable one. It is not near main centres of economic activity, neither well connected with the more important cities and decision-making centres, a fact that is exacerbated by the peripheral position in infrastructure networks and relational networks.

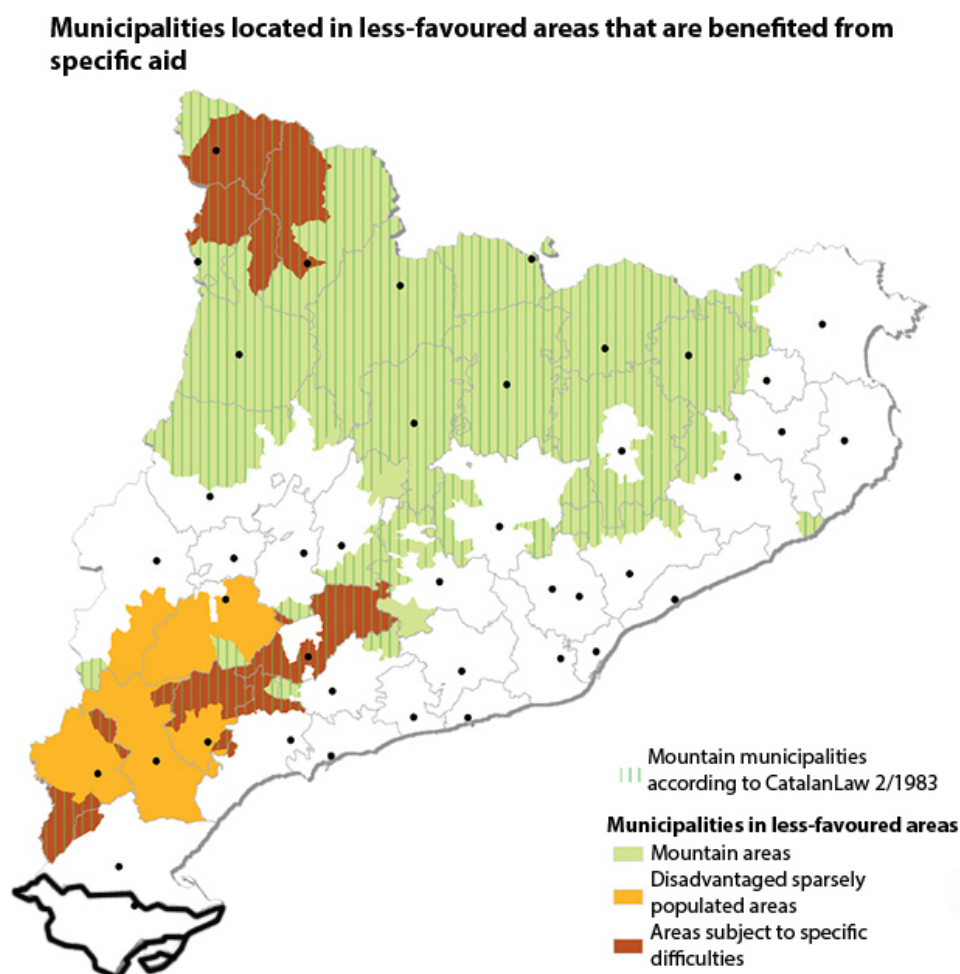
Map 2.3: Rurality regarding territorial socio-economic dynamism 2008-2014<sup>25</sup>

### Rurality regarding the territorial socio-economic dynamism 2008-2014



The Montsià area showed a low performance regarding socio-economic dynamism for the period 2008-2014. This result, which is represented in Map 2.3, was built on the following indicators: municipal unemployment rate, unemployment evolution, population growth, new housing development and evolution of workers affiliated to Social Security in non-agricultural sectors. The map also shows that the inner mountainous area of the Montsià county is more recessive than the coastal one. This situation contrasts with the higher socio-economic dynamism that it is generally found in other Catalanian areas for the same period (as it can be observed in the map), especially in the coastal and northern areas closer to France. However, despite being a socio-economic recessive area in the regional context, the Montsià is not classified as a less-favoured area or territory. This is due to the fact of not being identified as a mountain area, neither as an area suffering depopulation, nor as an area subject to some specific difficulties (Map 2.4). Therefore, the Montsià county has not received specific aids to less-favoured areas, in contrast to the mountainous regions close to the Pyrenees which, despite having a positive socio-economic dynamism, receive specific regional aid as established in the Rural Development Plan of Catalonia (Map 2.3 and Map 2.4).

Map 2.4: Municipalities located in less-favoured areas that are benefited from specific aid<sup>26</sup>



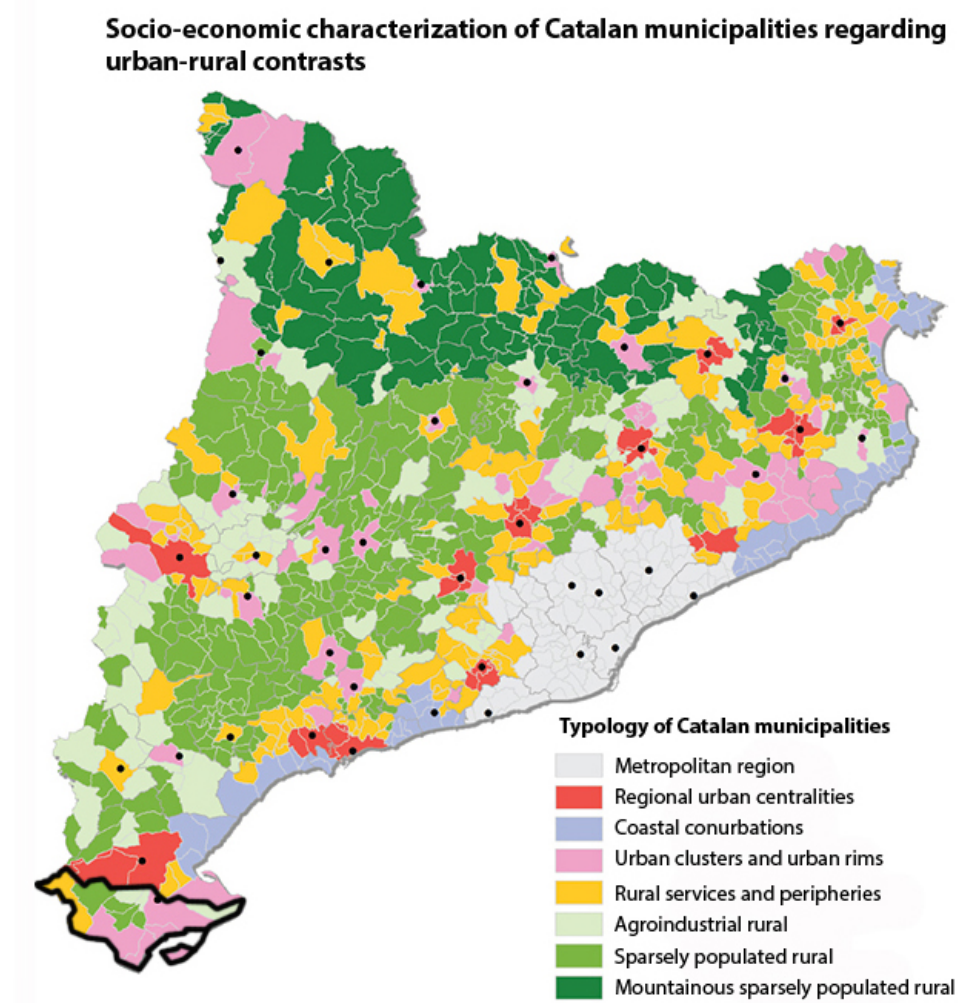
## 2.3 Internal structure and disparities inside case study region

### 2.3.1 Socio-economic disparities

When looking at the Montsià county at a higher territorial scale, analysing the group of counties of *Terres de l'Ebre*, it can be observed that the “Regional urban centrality” in the area is located close to Tortosa-Roquetes, in “Baix Ebre” county (Map 2.5). When Looking at a county scale, the Montsià area presents four different typologies of municipalities regarding urban-rural contrasts. Sant Jaume d'Enveja, Masdenverge and Santa Bàrbara are “agroindustrial rural” municipalities. In addition, in the inner zone of the county, there are four “sparsely populated rural” municipalities: Mas de Barberans, Godall, la Galera and Freginals. The typology of la Sénia is “Rural services and peripheries”, which reflects the higher importance for service provision in the neighbouring municipalities. Besides, there most populated municipalities are classified as “Urban clusters and urban rims”. These municipalities include Amposta, Sant Carles de la Ràpita, Alcanar and Ulldecona (Map 2.5).

Map 2.5 also shows the intermediate character of the Montsià area. When compared to Map 2.4, it becomes clear that other traditional less-favoured areas are characterized by having a higher rurality, mountainous or sparsely populated areas.

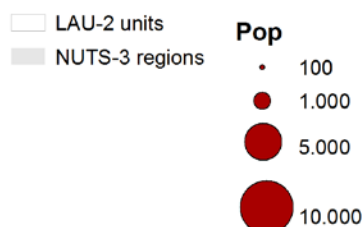
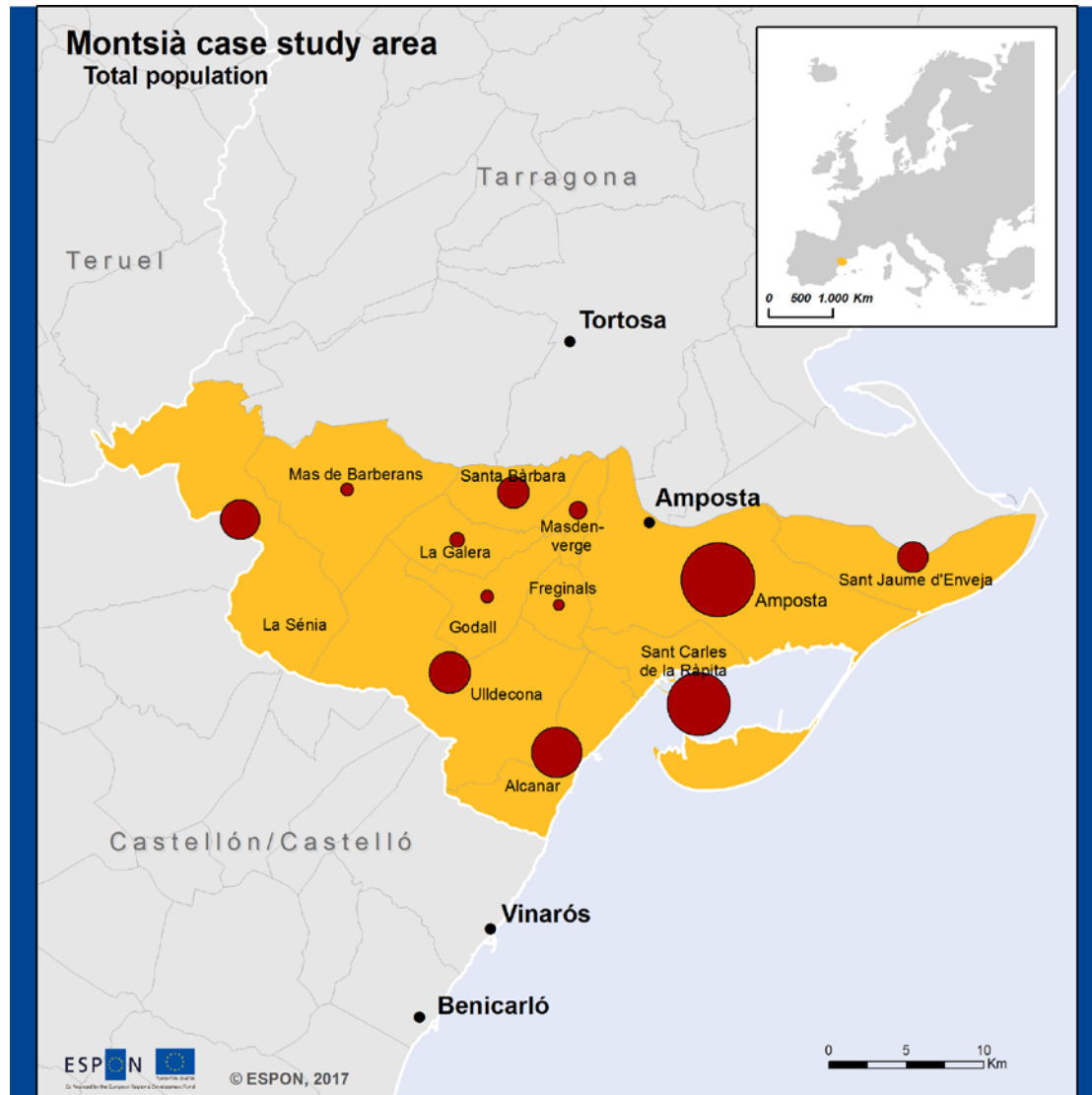
Map 2.5: Socio-economic characterization of Catalan municipalities regarding urban-rural contrasts<sup>27</sup>





As it has been noted earlier, the Montsià territory is characterized by geographic, accessibility and functional disparities. In addition, there are also significant demographic disparities; mainly among the inland mountainous area, with smaller villages and less population; and the coastal areas and plains, which have a higher population and contain most of the economic and productive activities, but also the main communication axis.

Map 2.6: Graphical comparison of the total population (2016) of the twelve different municipalities.



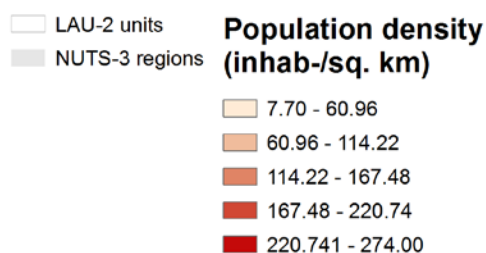
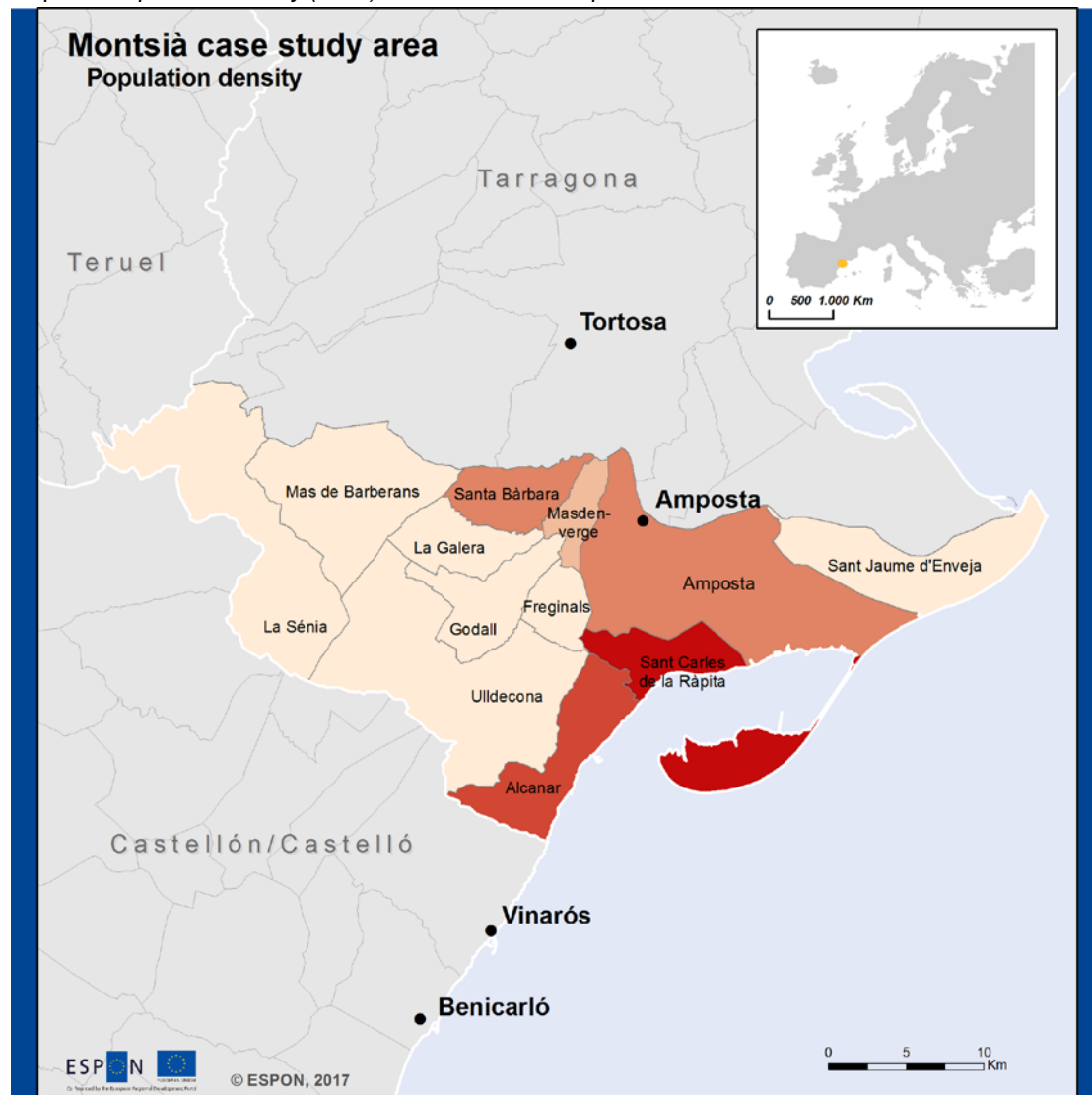
Local level: LAU2  
 Source: ESPON PROFECY  
 Origin of data: TCP International /University of Valencia, 2017;  
 RRG GIS Database, 2017; Idescat - Catalunya, 2017  
 CC - UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries

The population is mostly concentrated (71.52%) in the coastal axis that connects the Ebro River and the Mediterranean coast (in the municipalities of Alcanar, Amposta, Sant Carles de la Ràpita and Sant Jaume d'Enveja). This urban coastal zone contrasts with the rural inland areas where four municipalities with less than 1000 inhabitants are located (Freginals, la

Galera, Godall and Mas de Barberans). In the inner-intermediate area, there are larger municipalities as Santa Barbara (3,774 inhabitants), la Sénia (5,654 inhabitants) and Ulldecona (6,368 inhabitants). And also, Masdenverge, which slightly exceeds 1000 inhabitants (Map 2.6).

Although the population decline is especially relevant in those rural and less populated municipalities, the highest population loss since 2010 is concentrated in the bigger municipalities (Alcanar, Amposta, Sant Carles de la Ràpita and Ulldecona), possibly attributed to economic reasons and a lack of job opportunities.

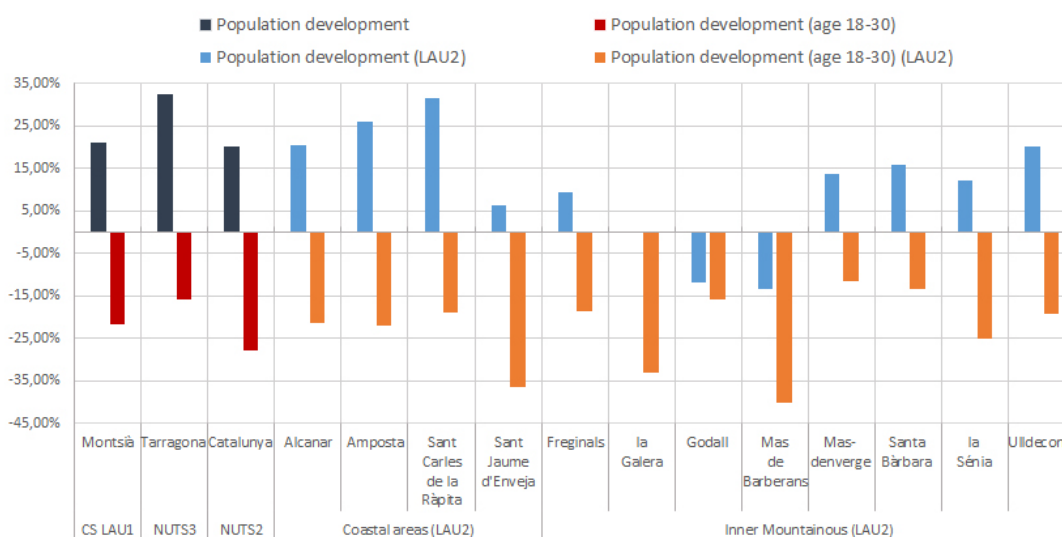
Map 2.7: Population density (2016) of the twelve municipalities inside the Montsià



Local level: LAU2  
 Source: ESPON PROFECY  
 Origin of data: TCP International /University of Valencia, 2017;  
 Idescat - Catalunya, 2017; RRG GIS Database, 2017  
 CC - UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries

When analysing the population density of the different municipalities of the Montsià, a highest density can be observed in the coastal area, with the exception of Sant Jaume d'Enveja (which is characterized by having an important surface consisting of natural areas). In addition, the municipalities near the Amposta urban core also present a higher population density (Map 2.7). However, due to influence of the size of the municipality in the indicator, population density does not reflect, in some cases, the total population distribution (Map 2.6): the cases of La Sénia and Ulldecona, which are the fourth and fifth most populated cities, result in a very low density due to the larger surface of the village. Meanwhile, Santa Bàrbara and Masdenverge show a high population density due to their small extension. The effect of municipality size on population density can be clearly observed when comparing Santa Bàrbara and Sant Jaume d'Enveja that have almost the same population (Map 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Population evolution between 2000 and 2016.



Regarding population evolution during the period 2000-2016 (Figure 2.7), a similar phenomenon is observed at different scales (LAU2, LAU1, NUTS3 and NUTS2): there is an increase of total population which contrasts with a relevant decrease of younger population groups. At the regional level, the county shows a similar population evolution trend than Catalonia and Tarragona, although with a more marked negative pattern. At LAU2 scale, there is a clear distinction between the two existing geographical areas. In the coastal area, there has been an increase in population between 2000 and 2016, which is more significant than in the inner mountainous area (except in Sant Jaume d'Enveja). Regarding the inner mountainous areas, where three of the four less populated municipalities are located, the population trend presents a higher young population decrease and a lower total population increase (except in Godall and Mas de Barberans which presented a total population decrease and in la Galera, which showed a stable population).

In the area, there is an imbalance between men and women in several municipalities, which is markedly higher in inner-rural municipalities (Freginals, La Galera o Mas de Barberans) where population imbalance ranges from 77.3% to 85.6% of women as compared to men.

Regarding GDP per capita in the Montsià (16,000€), there are important variations between the municipalities: Alcanar (12,100 €), Amposta (20,300 €), Sant Carles de la Ràpita (12.800 €), la Sénia (16,900 €) or Ulldecona (18.600 €)<sup>c</sup>.

### **2.3.2 Services of General Interest**

Regarding secondary education, which is a service of central influence (as compared to primary education), there is an acceptable distribution of secondary schools in the region. There are secondary education facilities in Amposta (the capital), Ulldecona, La Sénia, Santa Bàrbara and Sant Carles de la Ràpita. The secondary school in Santa Barbara provides education services to the five rural municipalities in the inner-county area (Santa Barbara, Freginals, La Galera, Godall and Mas de Barberans). The significant availability of secondary schools in the area allows students from bigger municipalities to continue its studies in their place of residence. However, among the interviewed experts there was a divergence in opinions regarding how the secondary education model at county level should be, with some experts in favour of a more central model and others arguing in favour of a more dispersed model. Some of these controversies arise from an observable lack of regional planning for public education facilities. This results in a competition between the larger villages aiming at having their own secondary school. Similarly, regarding sports equipment, there are also four heated indoor pools in the region.

Regarding banking services, in some smaller rural municipalities, the service has been closed down or substituted by cash machines (Freginals and Godall). Both actions collide with the needs of an ageing population in those areas which may be excluded from banking and cash retrieval services (Expert 5, 6 and 7).

Telecom services are provided by private companies that invest in infrastructure according to the number of clients and the expected benefits. There are differences on access to internet and mobile coverage, mainly between inner and coastal population. As the county has a low population (67,646 inhabitants), there was until recently a poor service coverage. However, in the past 7 years, one company entered the market investing in the infrastructure and, as a result, this pushed the remaining companies improve their services to be competitive (Expert 9). Currently, the improvements in internet and mobile coverage are located in the most populated zones of the region. In contrast in some small urban areas, there is no mobile coverage as in Godall; or a very poor coverage in La Galera, and also poor access to internet for businesses (Expert 3, 5, 6 and 9). In addition, in the rural municipality of La Galera it is also difficult to obtain a telephone landline at home (Expert 9). In the focus group discussions, local agents also pointed out that there were problems for receiving main television channels by DTT infrastructure in some neighbourhoods of Ulldecona.

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<sup>c</sup> This level of detail is only provided for the municipalities with more than 5,000 inhabitants.

Regarding the cultural indicators, there is a quite good network of libraries distributed in the main municipalities of the territory while cinemas have been decreasing in the last decades. Currently, there is only a cinema in Amposta. However, different experts agreed that this phenomenon is related to a general change in population leisure habits due to the appearance of new offers and technologies. During focus group discussion, there was not a perception of absence of cultural offer, as associations offer activities at the local level, and it was well accepted in small municipalities the need to move for having access to cultural activities.

## **2.4 The case study as a subject of local, regional and state coping strategies**

In the case study area, main European policies have dealt with rural development. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and agri-environmental measures provide support to the coastal rice-cropping areas. In the LEADER framework, the Government of Catalonia has developed the specific program for Rural Development for the planning period 2014-2020, including four challenges: promoting employment, implementing specific policies for young people, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and fostering innovation and technology transfer to the agricultural sector. In addition, there are two LEADER Local Actions Groups (1) the “Consorti per al Desenvolupament del Baix Ebre i Montsià” (in English: Consortium for the development of Baix Ebre and Montsià counties), that covers both the mountain range areas and the coastal plain with the river delta, and (2) “Mar de l'Ebre”, the Fishing Local Action Group in Terres de l'Ebre, which was created recently (July 2017). The latter includes the coastal villages of the Montsià (and Baix Ebre county). LEADER initiatives, and rural development programs, although present in the area, were not mentioned as prominent policies during the interviews with political and economic actors.

The Spanish and Catalan Government do not have specific programs for addressing the problems and processes related to inner peripherality. In the area, the most important policies addressing peripheralization processes and problems are: the ongoing process of developing the “Montsià 2026 Strategy” and the “Taula del Sénia” initiative. Both strategies are presented in more detail below (and in Annex 6 of this report).

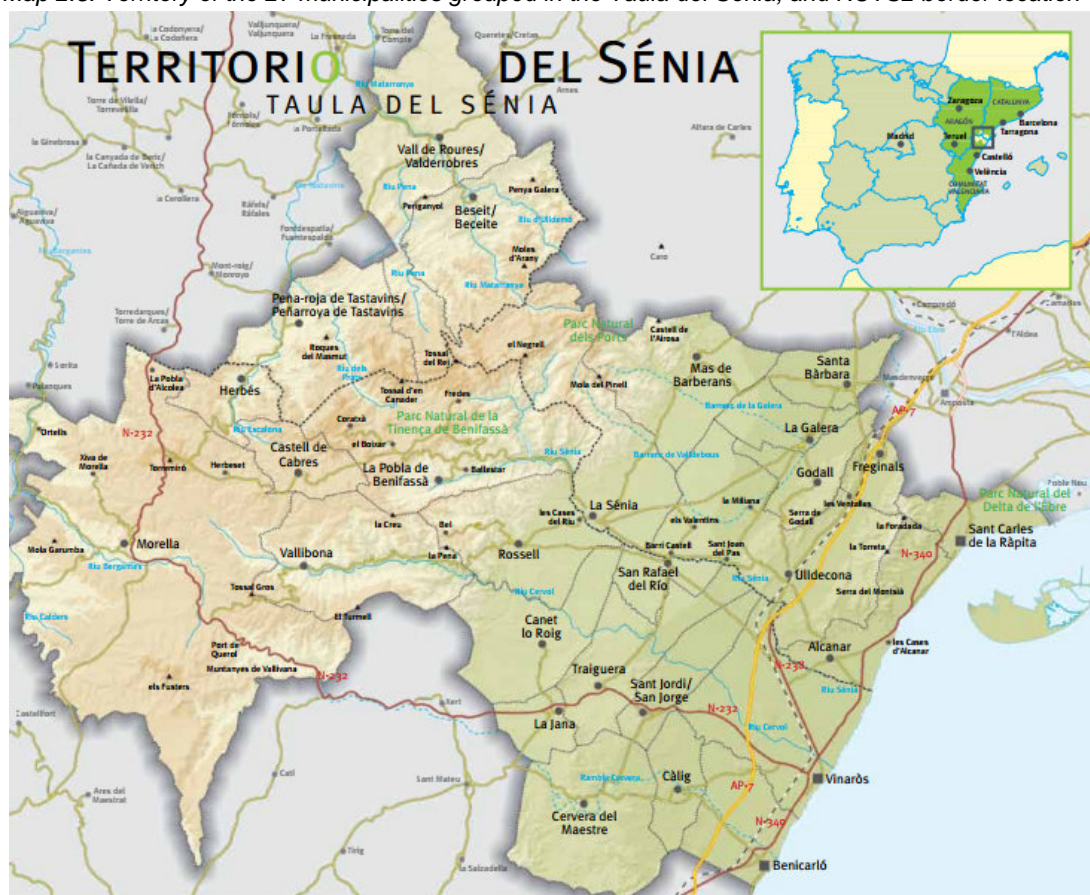
At the regional level there has traditionally been a lack of policy arenas to debate, share and expose supra-municipal or municipal problems. As the main competencies are assigned to the Catalan government, or to the regional government of Tarragona, local governments are far from decision-making centres. In addition, their competences regarding certain issues are very limited. Therefore, there is a lack of debate and weak networks of political and economic cooperation at this territorial scale. Furthermore, when dealing with autonomic borders, this problem becomes clearly evident.

## 2.4.1 Taula del Sénia

In this context, the “Taula del Sénia” was created (in 2003) as the grouping of 27 municipalities in the area of the Sénia River (it includes municipalities from Valencia, Aragon and Catalonia NUST2 regions) (Map 2.8:). The grouping constitutes an initiative at supra-municipal level. It is a meeting point for debate, networking, cooperation and cooperation towards improving the quality of life and wellbeing of the local population. The initiative addresses problems that are shared by the different municipalities, with the aim of developing common policies at the different sides of the administrative borders.

The “Taula del Sénia” has worked in the improvement of healthcare across the borders. Since the creation of this initiative informal agreements have been developed and implemented to provide emergency attention in hospitals closer to the different population. Before, an ambulance attending an emergency in the Montsià area, close to the border, could not go to the Vinaròs hospital (at 10 minutes travel time) but had to go to Tortosa (at 40 minutes travel time). Although there is no formally established cooperation between different health care services, in practice some flexibility is applied (Expert 13). Similarly, improving the proximity of the secondary education service was also an objective of the initiative. Currently, in some areas, students need to travel by car or bus to secondary schools because there is no agreement among the different regional governments to access other secondary school at a walking distance.

Map 2.8: Territory of the 27 municipalities grouped in the Taula del Sénia, and NUTS2 border location<sup>28</sup>



In addition, other lines of action of the “Taula del Sénia” have been the improvement of roads and paths, cultural initiatives, employment and reindustrialization and developing an added value for agricultural products (see Annex 6 of this report).

#### **2.4.2 The Montsià 2026 Strategy**

As mentioned during the focus group discussions, one of the problems to tackle peripheralization processes is that received financing is, in many cases, specifically linked to certain objectives that do not tackle related territorial needs. However, in the case of the Montsià, local actors have started joint efforts to reverse these trends and to overcome some of the main problems by developing a territorial strategy for the mid and long term.

In 2011 the Catalonia Government (Catalonian Employment Service) started a program addressing employment promotion and local development policies in the seven counties with “*a higher need of economic reactivation*” in Catalonia. Among them, the Montsià and the other counties of “Terres de l’Ebre” were included.

This program resulted on the creation of “Montsià Actiu”, an occupation and training program that is the embryo of a local development office. The program is led by the “Consell Comarcal”, the government at county level. In addition to achieving improvements in employment, training and supporting company creation, the program and the leading team have been crucial to overcome “lock-in” and path dependency trends of political individualism and victimhood. As explained in the following paragraphs, this has been the basis to start the current work for reversing some peripheralization trends and developing a common vision and a shared territorial strategy.

Since 2011, “Montsià Actiu” program’s objectives were related to reducing unemployment and fostering economic development. The program, that started with only one employee, now has a team of seven people, and has developed a network for cooperation among local actors (employment officers at village level, companies, training organizations, etc.). The positive results of the program in the recent years were also a key aspect to foster cooperation with the political representatives in the area.

In this context, in 2016 and with a favourable political context, the municipalities of the county have signed a “*Territorial agreement for economic reactivation and employment in the Montsià*”. In line with this agreement, a process for developing a territorial strategy has started. The “Montsià 2026 Strategy” is a cooperation framework for technical, institutional and private actors. In this process, important efforts have been devoted to develop a sound communication strategy as a key for the successful involvement of local actors and for promoting public participation. Currently, strategic lines and related programmes have been defined in a participatory way and the work is now focusing on setting political priorities for the planned actions. According to Expert 12 “*when there is no strategy there is no awareness and no cooperation. If you look at territories that did things properly, you can see that there is strategy behind these processes, there is cooperation and there are lined-up policies*”.

According to some of the interviewed actors, there is a general perception that the “Montsià 2026 Strategy” is a very important process to join efforts, develop a common vision, and to establish clear objectives and priorities for problems that are similar for all municipalities in the area. Furthermore, local actors valued positively the strategy as a governance arena for debate, exchange and cooperation that did not exist previously at supra-municipal level. The territorial strategy development is still a new and ongoing process, therefore some local actors mentioned there are high expectations on how the measures will be better defined and implemented (see Annex 6 of this report).

## 2.5 Future scenarios

The Montsià County experienced a significant economic recession since 2008 related to the real estate crisis that affected relevant sectors of the local economy. Current economic trends are starting to show some signs of recovery, such as a gradual decline in unemployment and an increasing company creation and entrepreneurship. However, the underlying elements that contribute to the peripheral position of the Montsià in the regional context and its “disconnection” persist and present challenges for the sustainability of the productive model. According to the interviewees and focus group discussions, the most significant factors contributing to peripheralization processes are:

- Population ageing and selective outmigration of young skilled people due to a lack of job opportunities and high unemployment.
- Deficient economic model: low industrial diversity, low investment and innovation, and lack of adaptation to new technologies and trends.
- Low accessibility: poor connection to infrastructure, both by public transport (train and bus), and also limited internet access.
- Disconnection with external areas, and distance to centres of decision-making and power.
- Lack of specialized SGIs, i.e. healthcare, education and cultural services (although the existing population of 60.000 inhabitants poses limitations for having more “central” services).
- A low share of skilled and trained labour force, as a result of the inability to attract and fix young skilled people, which is linked to the limited availability of knowledge-intensive jobs.

Regarding demographic development trends in the Montsià area, interviewees all agreed that ageing is likely to show an upward trend, contributing to peripheralization processes. Besides, it was also mentioned that population potential is expected to show a sideways or downward trend. Although the area has a good quality of life according to the results of the conducted interviews and questionnaires (see Annex 10 of this report). Economic conditions and job opportunities for skilled people limit the attractiveness of the area, contributing to a continuous process of young outmigration. These challenges are on the focus of the “*The Montsià 2026 Strategy*” that addresses the challenges of diversifying the productive model, attracting



talented young professionals and rethinking the educational model to respond to territorial needs using a more integrated approach (developing a wider educational offer).

On the social level, interviewees perceive that the share of well-educated people will possibly show an upwards or sideways trend. There is, however, a divergent of criteria on the impact it will have on peripheralization trends, with some interviewees pointing out it will have a positive influence, while others mentioned it may have no influence or a negative effect. This divergence is possibly explained by the complexity of future development paths. In case a higher share of educated people continues migrating, the situation could worsen or remain the same. Meanwhile, if skilled professionals are fixed to the territory, this might be linked to a change in economic patterns, and a higher industrial development linked to knowledge-intensive companies providing more attractive working conditions.

The actors leading the territorial strategy are working towards a better coordination among the educational and the business sectors to tailor vocational training to local labour market demands. Furthermore, there is a growing awareness that those aspects are essential, and that they need to be addressed in a common strategy in order to devote joint efforts and leadership towards a shared territorial future vision. If the territorial strategy succeeds in promoting the development of new industrial sectors, providing incentives for entrepreneurs and for the establishment of new companies with a higher IT and services, it will contribute to attract well-educated people to the county. However, according to Expert 15 this is not a simple change, as these type new industries related with new technologies, and based in providing a high added value need to be located where there are concentrations of talent and good transport connections. These two characteristics currently present limitations in the Montsià area. Facing these limitations will need the committed involvement of all the different territorial agents to be able to attract a new type of companies contributing to a shift in the productive model.

Regarding future development on economic aspects, interviewees did not have a very strong position whether in the future the number of jobs will increase, decrease or remain stable. Although in the past years the area has shown an important decrease in employment opportunities, and there might be some signs of recovery (decrease in unemployment, increase in entrepreneurships, etc.), there remains high uncertainty. Regarding individual income, interviewees perceive that income levels are likely to remain the same therefore sustaining the trend of the area as having the lowest income level in Catalonia region.

The sustainability of the economic model needs to face challenges related to weak transport and internet infrastructure. Regarding infrastructure, the county experiences important problems due to poor connectivity by road (toll highway) and rail (low frequency and service quality). However, the problem would notably be higher if this type of infrastructure would not be available nearby. Therefore, there is a significant potential to improve this situation if highway and rail connectivity improves in the future. In addition, interviewees also mentioned

optic fibre infrastructure was limited. Infrastructural investments in the area could contribute positively to improving accessibility to services and economic development.

In addition, the tourism sector, which is important for the future of the area shows a low professionalization, that results in an insufficiently promoted and an uncoordinated touristic offer. In this context, the tourism sector will also benefit from a more intense networking and cooperation among local actors but also from better planned external connections by means of public and private transport.

Another key aspect is the size of the existing companies (micro, small and medium enterprises) that results in a lack of coordination, strategic action and weak linkages with the education and training institutions. In addition, the small size of the companies was also mentioned as a crucial factor that hinders access to available external funding. These characteristics limit the creation of new employment opportunities that could attract people to the county. There is a tradition to focus in agriculture, agri-food industry and tourism, while the area is lagging regarding the implementation of IT and knowledge-based sectors. In this sense, further measures to promote innovative business investment and improve skills are needed for the sustainability of the productive model. There are other future challenges ahead regarding the green economy and circular economy models, as the area has a good position to develop activities linked to natural assets and sustainable development.

Regarding accessibility, interviewees did not perceive an improvement in the transport system and on access to SGIs was likely to happen. However, accessibility improvements would have a significant impact on reducing peripherality. Interviewees (in line with focus group discussion and questionnaires) identified public funding and infrastructural investment to improve connection with major communication axes as key factors to promote growth in the future. In addition to infrastructural investment, a need for better transport planning was also highlighted as an important factor. As it has been explained in more detail in Chapters 2.1 and 2.3, infrastructure is one of the challenges ahead that has called the attention of public actors and has resulted in population mobilization, as it imposes currently limitations for economic development.

In addition, interviewees also mentioned there is a need for a higher decentralization of services and a reduction of existing barriers for administrative procedures. In this sense, the ongoing implementation of the e-administration in Spain, could contribute to reduce those barriers together with incentives for digitalization uptake.

Regarding future governance, the political context of the case study area, with a Catalan Independence referendum planned for 1st October 2017, made especially difficult to imagine and interpret possible scenarios regarding national subsidies and other governance factors. Having now in mind the severe conflicts generated between the State and Catalonia region after that date, it is even more difficult to imagine future scenarios including the governance dimension. Interviewees agreed, in general, that cooperation of local authorities and access

to policy networks will contribute to reduce peripherality, and both are likely to increase in the future if the territorial conflicts are solved.

Regarding the territorial vision, "The Montsià 2026 Strategy" includes governance among the strategic lines of this action plan. The objectives include creating a "working table" that encompasses education and institutional actors, and representatives from economic sectors and civil associations. The current strategic action is focusing on the creation of a permanent debate and exchange arenas regarding two key aspects: employment and economic development; and education at the territorial level. Regarding education, the aim is to promote an innovative and inclusive territorial education plan. In addition, priority actions include the strengthening and unification of technical support services in the county (avoiding duplicities and joining efforts) and fostering public participation and transparency for strategy implementation. During the territorial strategy development process important efforts have been devoted to engage with local population and to promote cooperation among private, public and education actors. This "bottom-up" approach, based in promoting population empowerment, shows a shift towards more participatory governance modes. These are important steps for shifting the trend of traditional lack of cooperation between municipalities and actors in the area, which is paving the road for a more efficient institutional action.

However, there is still significant scope to improve coordination and cooperation of local authorities at the national, regional, county and municipal level, including cross-border cooperation. Strengthening and developing those networks is a key aspect to have influence in the centres of power and decision-making. As it has been mentioned, there are cross-border initiatives tackling accessibility to SGIs but they need wider institutional support to face problems at the regional level. Similarly, the tourism sector will also benefit from a wider regional support. If the territorial strategy succeeds in boosting cooperation among local and regional actors towards developing a shared territorial vision, and strengthening internal and external networks, there is scope to reverse inner peripherality and the related underlying factors that are currently limit the economic development potential.

### 3 Discussion

#### 3.1 Inner peripherality and peripherality in inland areas: a necessary distinction

The concept of inner peripherality has a key component of relativity with respect to the situation and performance of neighbouring territories. It is, therefore, a phenomenon that is not shown in absolute values but in relation to the values of the environment. This characteristic is fundamental in explaining the choice of the case study in Spain.

When speaking of peripherality, we usually refer to the existence of situations of difficult access, whether this is due to geographic, non-geographic factors, or a combination of both. While in the standard conceptualization of "periphery" dominates, almost in an absolute way, the influence of geographic factors (mainly "distance"), when we speak of *inner peripherality* a set of factors come into play whose behaviour does not depend so linearly on geography; that is, they are somewhat "non-spatial" or "aspatial". This means that their importance, status and evolution do not fully depend on their position with respect to centres or agglomerations of population, financial capital, employment and other resources. These are elements such as human and social capital, the existence and strength of networks between companies or within civil society, the degree and strength of "connectedness" through actions of networks, lobbies, experts, etc. of a particular territory with centres in which decisions are made, etc.

It is this "relational peripherality" that we try to understand in this research and that explains the choice of a region of the Catalan south coast, with important evidence of "border effect" due to the functioning of the decentralised state, and certainly disconnected from the main centres of regional, national and international power. In the same region, an intense process of mobilization of civil society and local governments has been taking place for the last years, which could be considered exemplary to deal with the effects of IP in the medium and long term, by introducing fundamental shifts from the first day.

The concept of inner peripherality has a particular meaning in Spain. The extension of the country, together with the historical processes of depopulation of extensive INLAND mountainous rural areas, have contributed to the configuration of an unbalanced territorial occupation model. This "Hispanic" model, which could also be applied to the rest of the "Iberian" area, is characterized by the existence of large rural and demi-depopulated areas in an inner quadrant of the Peninsula that covers more than 63,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and is recognised as a "geographical periphery". This vast territory (the remotest part of which has been described by some authors as "Lapland of the South" because it shows densities of population similar to those of this Scandinavian territory) has suffered constant "blows" for the maintenance of its socioeconomic balance. The difficulties are, on the one hand, structural, such as the rigors associated with the difficult geomorphology and climate, difficulties derived for human settlement and transportation, and displacement. On the other hand, there are also difficulties associated with processes such as expulsions of important segments of the population for reasons of creed and thought (expulsions of Jews and Muslims in the seventeenth century),

later expulsion of the Jesuits and confiscation of their properties in the eighteenth century and, since the beginning of the twentieth century, a tendency to depopulation as the processes of industrialization and urbanization were attracting distant cities to those left without jobs by the process of modernization of agriculture or generations that saw in "urban" a possibility to improve their living conditions.

The territorial relevance of geographic peripherality should not confuse us. In the Iberian Peninsula, it would have been much simpler to point out a portion of the "deep" periphery. But this would have meant keeping us in the profile of erroneous peripherality. The one that depends strictly on factors and geographical processes. Our commitment to the objective of this project has led us to seek a territory that, beyond absolute indicators, leads us to a region in which peripherality is associated with elements less dependent on geography and closer to the concept of bad relational proximity. And that is our reason for having chosen the Montsià County.

### **3.2 Characterising Inner Peripherality in “El Montsià” County**

Several factors are at the basis of the classification of the Montsià region as an "inner periphery". These are the following:

#### *Living in the “south-east border”*

The situation of the region in the south-eastern corner of Catalonia implies important added difficulties for the provision of services and for access to the large regional power centres. Montsià County is located on the border with the Valencian region to the south, Aragón to the west and other counties of Catalonia to the north and northwest. To the east is another important barrier like the Mediterranean Sea. Given that powers for basic services have been largely transferred to Regions (*Comunidades Autónomas*), and that there are no collaboration agreements between them for the provision of basic services such as health or education, a large part of the case study area cannot benefit from basic services offered in the Valencia region, such as the two larger towns that fall close to the Montsià area (Vinaròs and Benicarló).

#### *“Disconnected” in the middle of the “Mediterranean corridor”*

Although the Montsià is located in the middle of the "Mediterranean corridor", a trans-national axes of transport of first magnitude in Europe, its location occurs in one of the places where the corridor weakens in both rail and road. The area has access to two ramps of the toll highway AP-7, although both of them are located in the neighbouring counties, while in the rail plane, the area is taken off the connection with the main axis by the situation of the station of Ulldecona, unique access to the railway network that remains like "term station" without continuity.

This physical "disconnection" has continuity in a sort of "socioeconomic disconnection" from the main regional decision centres, and beyond. The origin of this disconnection has to do with a peripheral location in the regional context, but also with a set of "disconnection

elements" that interact to keep the region further away from what reflects its internal geography and its position on the map. Among these factors, two stand out. On the one hand, until recently, the striking absence of joint institutional action to build a strategic vision and carry it out in a cooperative manner. On the other hand, the inability of economic actors to be present in the centres of power and to have capacity for action and influence in these centres. What is most striking in this case study is that, in recent years, the regional institutions, with an outstanding role of technicians, have drawn up a plan to mobilise local society and its public and private institutions around the elaboration and implementation of a common vision for the future (Montsià 2026 Strategy). The process has been consolidated but requires continuity over the next years and the implementation of the appropriate participation tools to maintain the interest of local actors and increase their capacity to generate internal "synapses" and to "connect" the region with the centres of power. The second, however, is hardly attainable unless the former has been secured. But, apparently, the process is following the right path.

#### *Access to services is challenging*

Although we cannot treat the entire territory as an equidistant unit, in general terms, there are some deficiencies in the provision of services and equipment, mainly when we compare the situation with other neighbouring counties of similar geographical characteristics but bigger regional centres. Some of the services that produce more centrality and attractiveness for the location of population and economic activity offer limited provision and/or are not always close, with low accessibility by public transport. This issue affects mainly the more specialised business services and access to higher education and specialized healthcare.

#### *Historical lack of cooperative governance*

For decades, the region has not acted politically as a unit of interest. Political activism has been local in character and often creates conflicts within the region. The management of economic activities and public services has also followed this localist logic. Only in recent times, and in the opinion of some as a consequence of external threats, a major regional action has been launched, in order to join forces in the face of external threats. Taking these initiatives as a starting point, it has been passing to regional initiatives with a strategic vision, reason why the region counts on a regional strategy and an institutional action organized around common interests and channelled through the "Consell Comarcal" (the county government). As a result, historical political individualism has given way, in the last 10 years, to a situation of cooperation between local actors and a strategic "bottom-up" action that can contribute greatly to improve the situation of the area.

#### *Challenging economic ecosystem*

The pillars of the local economy are found in traditional sectors generally with little added value. The agricultural and agri-food based activities are fundamental. Despite their low degree of innovation and added value, there are some sub-sectors that perform well: on the

one hand, large areas of intensive agriculture; on the other hand, a unique natural area (the Ebro Delta) with municipalities specialized in fishing (Sant Carles de la Ràpita). There has also been an important furniture industry, mostly concentrated in La Sénia, which decay with the real estate crisis from 2008, which dragged not only the production of furniture but also the rest of the production chain associated with the building sector. The Montsià county does not hold universities or relevant higher education extensions, and vocational training suffers from shortcomings that prevent students from staying in the territory beyond the age of 16-18, if they want to continue their studies. In these circumstances, it is difficult to attract or retain companies with a significant R & D & I component that are experiencing difficulties due to the conditions of the local economic and technological ecosystem. The entrepreneurial structure, with an absolute dominance of micro and small, family-based enterprises, is a more resilient model in times of crisis, but it is unable of being at the forefront given the scarcity of resources, poor organization, lack of strong and focused networks, and scarce capacity to invest in R & D in the absence of specific policies from the public administration.

#### *Future perspectives*

The current situation shows an uncertain future as a consequence of the weaknesses derived from the condition of inner periphery. Despite its location on the Spanish Mediterranean coast and the existence of most relevant natural and cultural resources, the region loses population in selective processes of outmigration of the youth and more qualified population that does not find sufficient opportunities to develop their professional aspirations. The conditions of provision and access to services of general interest are, on average, worse than those of the neighbouring territories, although the quality of life is optimal, in the opinion of most of the people who participated in the study, as it was repeatedly mentioned by the local population during focus group discussions, interviews and in response to questionnaires (see Annex 10). This apparent contradiction is due to the fact that the territory offers very good life quality to those who manage to stabilise in the local labour market, and generates a strong sense of belonging that is transmitted from generation to generation. The Montsià has the internal conditions to stop being an inner periphery in the future, as long as: (i) local society continue on the path of collective action under the leadership of decision-makers; (ii) leaders contribute to implement the strategically generated vision agreed in recent years; (iii) economic and political actors lobby in order to strengthen internal networks and their ability to reach decision-making centres; and (iv) everybody work on overcoming the weaknesses that, at present, limit the development of the region's growth potential.

## 4 Conclusions

Montsià is an Inner Periphery, dominated by the processes, features and cycles related to a remarkable internal and external "disconnection" that has marked the destination of this territory during the last decades. It is important to note that, in recent years, local actors have worked together to internally connect the territory as a preliminary step to establish links with neighbouring territories and centres of power.

At the moment, Montsià is a territory in its way out from inner peripherality if the main geographic and relational challenges are faced successfully. In order to achieve this goal, local actors have defined the so called Montsià 2026 Strategy; a main tool for the future design and implementation of action in and for the area. Figure 4.1 gathers, in a schematic way, the main processes, triggers and drivers, as well as the cause-effect chains that cause and maintain inner peripherality.

Geography-based processes have a common cause: the location of Montsià in the south-eastern corner of Catalonia, surrounded by natural and administrative boundaries that hinder the functional relations that naturally occur between neighbouring regions. Natural boundaries are present in the form of mountain ranges that slow down movement to/from and in the inner areas. With the exception of the coastal corridor (the "Mediterranean Corridor"), also broken at some points by the *Serra del Montsià* (Montsià range), access to the west is hampered by successive mountain ranges that constitute the extremes of a huge mountain system (the Iberic System), where isochronous "pile up" at the same time that indicators of rurality and inaccessibility raise quickly (intense depopulation, ageing, lack of specialized services, disempowerment, etc.). The Montsià county does not belong to this remote periphery, but its geographical location is, from a different point of view, a determining obstacle for three reasons: first, because of its location in the less accessible margin of the Catalan southeast; secondly, by being in contact with a "border" barrier with the Valencian region that prevents better access conditions to certain basic services such as health and education for which there are no official agreements that allow the transfer of students or patients in the regional border to their closest health centres, schools, secondary education centres or hospitals. Finally, the Mediterranean border which, in the case of Montsià, has not become an exit route and a potential axis of commercial exchange, due to the lack of the necessary structural changes for the fishing ports to turn into commercial and / or tourism ports.

Acting on geographical barriers is, at least, costly in terms of resources and time. Investments to improve and finalise the Mediterranean Corridor Hub are delayed in a State that does not recognise that this is its main commercial and transport axis (as opposed to alternative routes such as the "central corridor" or the also relevant Atlantic axis). Resources are coming very late, and both the railway corridor and the highway corridor are, at least, a decade behind. On the other hand, the decentralization of the State promoted a process of progressive transfer of powers from the Central State to the Regions (Autonomous Communities) that began with the Constitution of 1978 and that still continues. In the case at hand, the regional boundary



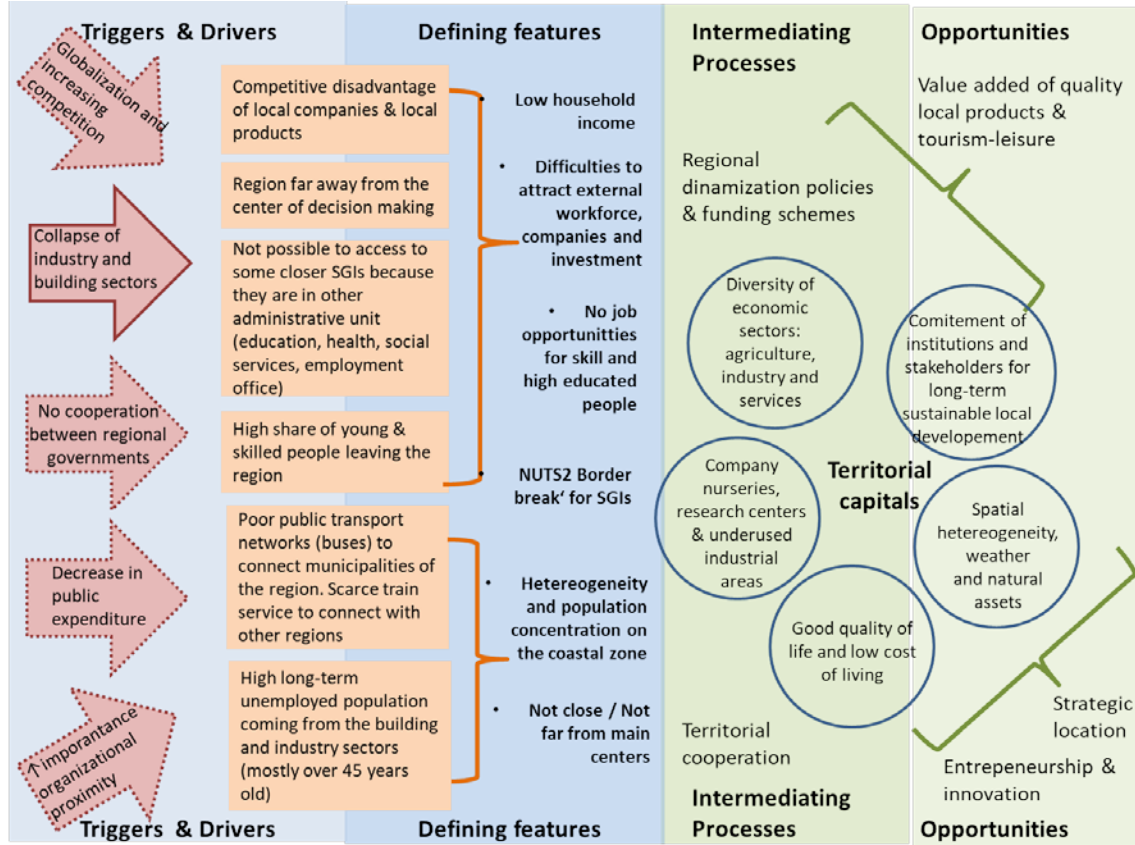
between Catalonia and the Valencian Country becomes relevant. There is a portion of the territory of Montsià whose population is situated closer to the regional centres of the north of the Valencian country than to the ones in the south of Catalonia. However, as it has been pointed out, there is no interregional collaboration framework that allows for the use of health and educational provision equipment by the neighbouring inhabitants of the other region. This adds difficulties in a situation which, in fact, has an easy, quick and economical solution through collaboration agreements. Local, regional or national agreements could easily help overcome the "border effect" that is manifested mainly in the south and east quadrant of the region.

The processes that generate inner peripherality and are less related to the position of the territory on the map refer to the following triggers and drivers of change:

- The configuration of an economic fabric based on traditional activities and with little capacity for innovation. It is also an economic fabric dominated by small family business that can hardly cope with their survival, mainly in the production chain of construction, but also in other sectors with low added value and low qualification jobs (raw agricultural production, small trade with no territorial brand value, furniture sector in the absence of initiatives for retraining and innovative reuse of know-how, etc.).
- The existence of a labour market constrained by the difficulties that companies encounter in order to consolidate and become profitable due to the lack of a sufficiently populated, interconnected, innovative and technological productive environment.
- The lack, practically absence, of powerful business networks with a capacity to influence local, regional, and national power centres, which cause an almost permanent "disconnection" from centres of power where the main decisions are taken, not only in terms of economy and business, but also in terms of infrastructure, investment priorities in general budgets, establishment of strategic objectives, etc. To the extent that Montsià is not somehow "present" in these places, the ability to negotiate and "put on the agenda" the challenges and objectives of the territory is reduced, if not null.
- The existence of a county head that is not strong enough to articulate the region and retain selective migratory flows outside the county. The relative proximity of other more powerful regional centres in the region (Tortosa, Reus, Tarragona), exert a "gravitational effect" to which part of the local population cannot literally resist; at least the one which must continue its life journey towards higher education or specialised vocational training. Alternatively, also the one that finds no possibilities closer to those offered by these more powerful centres in their way back their place of origin.
- The lower level of basic public services, as compared to neighbouring areas, due to the combination of several geographic and relational factors already explained.

Action on non-geographic factors is possible and, indeed, is already taking place through a series of processes that have their origin, to a large extent, in the activation and cooperation of local actors towards a common and consensus project for their territory.

Figure 4.1: Visualisation of triggers / drivers / defining features of case study area



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## Annex 1: Table 1a: Introductory data

1	<b>Identification of case study area</b>	
1.1	Administrative regions involved	(Montsià - LAU1); (Tarragona - NUTS3), (Catalonia - NUTS2) and (Spain - NUTS0)
1.2	Name and ID of the LAU2 areas that are (partly) covered by IP area	Alcanar (43004), Amposta (43014), Freginals (43062), la Galera (43063), Godall (43068), Mas de Barberans (43077), Masdenverge (43078), Sant Carles de la Ràpita (43136), Sant Jaume d'Enveja (43902), Santa Bàrbara (43138), la Sénia (43044), Ulldecona (43156)
1.3	Size of IP in km <sup>2</sup> (and national average IP size)	735,4 km <sup>2</sup> (It represents the 0,145% of the surface of Spain)
1.4	Classification of concerned NUTS3 area according to urban-rural typology as developed by DG AGRI and DG REGIO	Intermediate region (3 categories); Intermediate region, close to city (5 categories)
1.5	Names of the regional centres within the IP	From the point of view of the regional centres at European scale, there is not any regional centre within the Case Study Region (Montsià - LAU1). However, in the same NUTS3 region there are two regional centres (Tarragona and Reus) and two others in the neighbouring NUTS3 (Alcañiz and Vinarós). Looking the area in more detail, there are three villages providing services of regional centres at different levels: inside the LAU1 unit, the city of Amposta. In the neighbouring LAU-1, Tortosa and Vinarós cities. The first one is more relevant for the case study area because it is in the same administrative LAU-1 region and provides different public facilities (like hospitals). However, there are municipalities within the CS which are closer to Vinarós and Tortosa and because of that reason the Hospital service is provided there (although, in the case of Vinarós, by another Regional Government).
2	<b>Delineation outcomes</b>	
2.1	IP according to Delineation 1 (Travel time to Regional Centres) y/n	No
2.2	IP according to Delineation 2 (Economic potential interstitial areas) y/n	No
2.3	IP according to Delineation 3 (Areas of poor access to SGI) y/n	No
2.4	IP according to Delineation 4 (Depleting area index) y/n and % of area coverage; brief qualitative description of the situation	Low GDP per capita in relation to the region, administrative border effect which affects to access to SGI (hospitals, secondary schools, frequency of trains, ...), youth emigration, there are no job opportunities for people with university studies, aging population, little industrialization, relevance of the primary sector, the area is far away (and disconnected) from the centres of decision making.
2.5	Type of IP according to PROFECY delineation-typology	Third type: Areas showing complex negative processes due to low levels of interaction



## Annex 2: Table 1b: Exploratory data

No.	Issues		Case Study (Montsià - LAU1)	Region (Tarragona - NUTS3)	Region (Catalunya - NUTS2)	State (Spain - NUTS1 - NUTSO)
<b>3</b>						
3.1	Population density per km <sup>2</sup> (2016)	Inhabitants/Km2	92.00	125.6	234.3	92.12
3.2	Total population (2016)	Inhabitants	67,646	792,299	7,522,596	46,557,008
3.3	Population development (2000-2016) %	(Total population (2016) - Total population (2000))*100/Total population (2000)	21.17%	32.37%	20.13%	14.96%
3.4	Population development age 18-30, (2000-2016) %	(Total population (18-30)(2016) - Total population (18-30)(2000))*100/Total population (18-30)(2000)	-21.84%	-15.75	-28.16	-28.27%
3.5	Old age dependency ratio (2016)	Total population (65+) / Total population (15-64) * 100	31.6 %	27.51%	27.79%	25.57%
3.6	Gender Imbalance (2016)	Female population (15-64) / Male population (15-64) * 100	94.79%	96.23%	98.45%	97.76%
3.7	Ethnic composition (2016)		Europe: 94% ; Africa: 3.27%; North and Central America: 0.22%; South America: 1.33%; Asia and Oceania: 1.18%	Europe: 91.01% ; Africa: 5.54%; North and Central America: 0.47%; South America: 1.84%; Asia and Oceania: 1.14%	Europe: 90.93% ; Africa: 3.83%; North and Central America: 0.94%; South America: 2.36%; Asia and Oceania: 1.94%	Europe: 91.56% ; Africa: 2.38%; North and Central America: 1.10%; South America: 4.04%; Asia and Oceania: 0.92%
<b>4</b>						
4.1	Growth measured as GDP per capita in PPS (2014) in Euro		16.000 €	23.816 €	27.800 €	22.780 €
4.2	Unemployment rate (2016) %		16.89%	19.06%	12.87%	19.63%
4.3	Youth unemployment rate (2016) in %		23.51%	20.61%	34.33%	44.46%
4.4	Main economic basis: Share of employees per sector (2016) (agriculture, industry, services) if possible in more detail and with time series		Agriculture: 6.00%; Industry: 22.00%; Construction: 7.00%; Services: 65.00%	Agriculture: 5.05%; Industry: 17.60%; Construction: 6.65%; Services: 70.70%	Agriculture: 1.6%; Industry: 18.32%; Construction: 5.78%; Services: 74.30%	Agriculture: 4.25%; Industry: 13.75%; Construction: 5.85%; Services: 76.15%
4.6	Share of tertiary educated people (according to ISCED, 2011) (2011)%	Superior VET + University Studies	17.23%	24.62%	27.63%	25.29%

No.	Issues		Case Study (Montsià - LAU1)	Region (Tarragona - NUTS3)	Region (Catalunya - NUTS2)	State (Spain - NUTS1 - NUTS0)
4.7	Forms / Amounts of received financial transfers		:	:	:	:
4.8	Virtual Accessibility (Next-generation network (NGN) coverage in %, 2016)	Households with internet access Broadband (out of households with internet)	78,8% 95.1%	:	80.7% 96.2%	78.7% -
4.9	Virtual SGI provision (local government initiatives / support of virtual services) (please describe in a few sentences)		Mas de Barberans: local government has started implemented a local public WIFI service provision	:	:	:

### Annex 3: Table II. Policies and programmes

Types of policy/programme	Duration of participation (period of implementation)	Objectives related to the study area	Type of project implemented in the study area	Financial expenditures in the study area (public expenditure)
<b>5. Regional/Cohesion policy</b>				
5.1. Specific policy measure financed by the Operational Programme (ERDF, ESF)	ESF 2007-2013, 2014-2020; and Catalan Strategy to Foster employment 2007-2013	Innovative and experimental projects with the objectives of increasing employment, promoting job training and regional quality employment, using a public-private partnership and local agents' involvement approach.	"Montsià Actiu" (embryo of a local economic development agency). See information below and in (See more information regarding regional schemes, below, and in Annex 6). Financed by the programme "Trebball a las 7 comarques" (for employment creation and local development programmes in the less favoured Catalan counties).	0.4M€ (2016) 0.4M (2015) 0.4M€ (2014) 0.3M€ (2013) 0.1M€ (2012) 50% Financed by ESF, 40% financed by Catalonia Employment Office, 10% local funds
	ERDF 2014-2020	Catalonian transposition of the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). Endogenous development, ICTs, knowledge transfer and innovation to generate economic activity and quality employment.	Project of territorial specialization and competitiveness of the Biosphere reserve of Terres de l'Ebre. (in Catalan: "Projecte d'Especialització i Competitivitat Territorial PECT de la Reserva de la Biosfera") covering the broader area of Terres de l'Ebre. Includes the creation of a FabLab in Amposta.	1.4M€ (provisional) 50% Financed by EFRE, 12% Tarragona government and 38% local partner's own funds.
	ERDF 2007-2013			
	ERDF Axis 1: knowledge and innovation economy and development	Internationalization and competitiveness	Internationalization and model shift in the "domestic furniture" cluster of the Montsià area (La Sénia City Council)	0.6M€ (50% EFRE)
		Economic development	Centre for entrepreneurship, company creation, training to entrepreneurs and company consolidation (Montsià County Council)	1M€ (50% EFRE)
		Creation of R+D Centre	Technological research centre focusing on nautical, aeronautic and eolian research. "Antena tecnològica de l'Ebre" (Amposta City Council)	0.8M€ (50% EFRE)

	ERDF Axis 2: environment and risk prevention	Infrastructure	Rainwater collection infrastructure (Amposta City Council).	0.3M€ (50% EFRE)
	ERDF Axis 4: local and urban development	Village renovation	Rehabilitation of material heritage "convent dels Josepets" (Alcanar City Council).	1M€ (50% EFRE)
		Village renovation	Improvements in a cultural exhibition centre: air conditioning and electrical network (Amposta City Council).	0.4M€ (50% EFRE)
		Village renovation	Rehabilitation of architectural heritage (Amposta City Council).	0.5M€ (50% EFRE)
5.2. Transnational / inter-territorial cooperation	-	-	-	-
5.3. Other initiatives	LIFE programme	Environment and climate objectives		
	LIFE Ebro-ADMICLIM (2014-2018)	Climate change mitigation and adaptation	Take climate adaptation measures in the delta (very vulnerable areas to sea level rise and subsidence)	1.2M€ (EU contribution)
	LIFE CLINOMICS (2016-2019)	Climate change Adaptation, Resilient communities	Climate change impact analysis, creation of a territorial climate change participatory platform, capacity building and pilot adaptation measures.	0.8M€ (EU contribution)
<b>6. First CAP pillar + Rural Development programmes (EARDF)</b>				
6.1. CAP, Pillar 1 and pillar 2 measures	On-going	Viable agricultural production potential and sustainable management of natural resources	Direct payments, market support and environmental sustainability	14.7 M€ (2016)
6.2. Specific policy measure financed by the RDP	RDP Catalonia (2007-2013)	Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, improving the environment and the countryside, quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy		Total public expenditure: 38.4 M€ (2007-2014) (4,5% of total expenditure in Catalonia)
6.3. LEADER initiative	Local Development Strategy – LAG Baix Ebre-	Bottom-up rural development through public-private partnership	Rural hosting and restaurant renewal and development, tourism development, technological acquisition for company development support, agricultural	69 projects: 3.6M€ of public expending (resulting in an investment of 9.5

	Montsià (2007-2013)	410. Rural development strategies 421. LAG's cooperation 431. LAG operation and capacity building and territorial dynamism  312. Micro-company creation 313: Promotion of tourism activities 323: Conservation and improvement of rural heritage 12301: Agricultural competitiveness.	diversification, agricultural improvement of agricultural transformation and commercialization processes.  LAG's cooperation: sustainable and isolated rural housing, young employment and return to rural areas, energy efficiency, corporate social responsibility.	ME) (2007-2013)
<b>7. Other initiatives</b>				
7.1. European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) "Mar de l'Ebre" (2017-2023)	Economic and social development linked to fishing, and promotion of quality of coastal environment.	Creation of new opportunities linked to the fishing sector, increasing the added value of fisheries products, diversification, heritage protection and climate change mitigation, promoting social cohesion and cultural heritage, drive local communities into local development.	3.6ME budget (2017-2020)
<b>8. National/regional/local schemes (own funds)</b>				
8.1. Taula del Sénia	Since 2006	It is a "table" (meeting point for dialogue) with the objective of providing the means to work together towards improving the quality of life in the area.	Economic development, infrastructural improvement, cooperation and coordination among neighbouring public administrations and reduction of administrative barriers on access to SGIs (health, education, water management).	Member's fees from municipalities and funding from finalist subsidies (EU, National, Regional level). Since 2010 funding has significantly decreased.
8.2. Museu de la Pauma	Since 2007	Actions to favour local economic diversification and valuation of the ethnological local heritage.	Innovative Rural development Centre: "Museu de la Pauma" museum specialized in vegetal fibres and handcraft. The project puts into value traditional "jobs" and heritage developing new products to create employment, and promote sustainable tourism, based public-private partnerships. It organizes training courses, fairs, and international events focused in valuation of	[?]

			local handcraft (located in Mas de Barberans village, in the rural-inner area of Montsià)	
8.3. Montsià Actiu	Since 2010	Local economic development	<p>Project which is an embryo of a local economic development agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving support to unemployed population.</li> <li>- Supporting the productive tissue</li> <li>- Organization and planning of local development</li> </ul> <p>It stands out by including innovative aspects such as: cooperation, active participation, a territorial vision and an integrated approach.</p>	<p>0.4M€ (2016) 0.4M (2015) 0.4M€ (2014) 0.3M€ (2013) 0.1M€ (2012) 50% Financed by ESF, 40% financed by Catalonia Employment Office</p>
8.4. Territorial Agreement & "Territorial Strategy 2026"	Since 2016	Local Agreement for the strategic reactivation and employment in the Montsià	<p>It is a new instrument and framework for local cooperation to foster local socioeconomic development, promoting public-private partnerships.</p> <p>In a context of a territory hardly hit by the economic crisis, resulting in population loss, lack of economic dynamism, the gravity of the situation has been the basis towards developing the innovative "Territorial Strategy Montsià 2026" to foster employment and economic development based in the cooperation between public, private and educational stakeholders, and including public participation.</p>	Montsià County's council funds [?]

#### Annex 4: Table III. Governance structures

Governance structures		Role of local actors in the process of			
Types of policy/programme		Strategy design	Composition of the partnership involved in the project	Project implementation	Project financing and control
<b>5. Regional/Cohesion policy</b>					
5.1. Specific policy measure financed by the Operational Programme (ERDF, ESF)	ESF 2007-2013, 2014-2020; and Catalan Strategy to Foster employment 2007-2013	Regional Government (Department of business and employment)	"Montsià Actiu" public partnership: local administrations in the Montsià county, and County's government	"Montsià Actiu" public partnership	Regional Government and Montsià County Council
	EFRE 2014-2020 (Projects of territorial specialization)	Regional Government (Department of business and employment)	Collective actors (Consortium of environmental policies of Terres de l'Ebre), included county's governments, two larger town halls (Amposta and Tortosa), "Provincial Council" of Tarragona NUTS3 and sectoral private organizations (furniture and fishing)	Local administrations and Regional Government.	Regional Government
	EFRE 2007-2013	Project application	Individual (town council or County Council)	Local administrations and Regional Government	Regional Government
5.2. Transnational / inter-territorial cooperation	-	-	-	-	-
5.3. Other initiatives	LIFE Ebro-ADMICLIM (2014-2018)	European Commission (DG Environment and DG Climate Action)	Research Institutions, Water Public Agencies, Water User's Associations (irrigation), Regional Climate Change Office.	Joint implementation under the management of the lead partner	Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Regional Government
	LIFE CLINOMICS (2016-2019)		"Provincial Council" of Barcelona NUTS3, Chamber of commerce of Barcelona, Consortium of environmental policies of Terres, de l'Ebre, Catalanian farmer's Union, Regional Climate Change Office.		

<b>6. First CAP pillar + Rural Development programmes (EARDF)</b>					
6.1. CAP, Pillar 1 and pillar 2 measures		Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Government	No partnerships involved	Private beneficiaries	Regional Government and payment agency
6.2. Specific policy measure financed by the RDP	RDP Catalonia (2007-2013)	Regional Government	Project application	Private beneficiaries	Regional Government and payment agency
6.3. Leader initiative	Local Development Strategy – LAG Baix Ebre- Montsià	Local Action Group with local stakeholders	Private and public partners	Local Action Group	Regional Government and Local Action Group
<b>7. Other initiatives</b>					
7.1. European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) "Mar de l'Ebre"	Fishing Local Action Group with local stakeholders	Private and public partners	Fishing Local Action Group	Regional Government and Fishing Local Action Group
<b>8. National/regional/local schemes (own funds)</b>					
8.1. Taula del Sénia		Local public stakeholders	Public partnership: city councils included in the area (27 municipalities: 15 from Valencia, 9 from Catalonia, and 3 from Aragon)	Public partnership	Depending on funding sources (as they apply for finalist subventions).
8.2. Museu de la Pauma		Village council and local stakeholder relevant in the programme	Public-private partnership: Municipality council (Mas de Barberans), "Montsià Actiu", Local Art and Handcraft actors (School, organizations), Immaterial Heritage Observatory	Joint implementation under the management of the village council	Village council
8.3. Montsià Actiu		Local public stakeholders	"Montsià Actiu" public partnership: local administrations in the Montsià county, and County's government	Public partnership and Montsià's County Council	Montsià's County Council
8.4. Territorial Agreement & "Territorial Strategy 2026"		"Montsià Actiu" public partnership	Private and public partners (signed by 13 local village council's, the county's council and also sectoral organizations and education institutions)	Montsià's county council	Received the support of the Montsià's County Council



**Annex 5: Table IV: Socio-economic characteristic of administrative units of case study area (internal structure)**

	Alcanar - LAU2	Amposta - LAU2	Freginals - LAU2	Galera, la - LAU2	Godall - LAU2	Mas de Barberans - LAU2	Masdenverge - LAU2	Sant Carles de la Ràpita - LAU2	Sant Jaume d'Enveja - LAU2	Santa Bàrbara - LAU2	Sénia, la - LAU2	Ulldecona - LAU2
Population density per km <sup>2</sup> (2016)	201.7	149.3	22.5	27.2	18.8	7.7	74.5	274	57.8	134.1	52.1	50.2
Total population (2016)	9,494	20,654	396	748	631	605	1,088	14,718	3,516	3,774	5,654	6,368
Population development (2000-2016)	20.51%	26.15%	9.39%	0.27%	-12.48	-13.45%	13.81%	31.48%	6.38%	15.87%	12.32%	20.06%
Population development age 18-30, (2000-2016)	-21.55%	-21.90%	-18.75%	-33.05%	-15.96%	-40.20%	-11.49%	-18.90%	-36.50%	-13.45%	-25.22%	-19.24%
Old age dependency ration (2016)	32.12%	27.12%	46.00%	43.29%	60.45%	51.11%	37.79%	33.39%	39.13%	33.11%	30.01%	30.70%
Gender Imbalance (2016) Female/Male	95.39%	95.38%	77.30%	82.61%	93.44%	85.57%	94.90%	99.33%	94.25%	91.44%	94.39%	88.22%
Ethnic composition (2016)	Europe: 96.42% ; Africa: 2.57%; North and Central America: 0.21%; South America: 0.59%; Asia and Oceania: 0.21%	Europe: 91.46% ; Africa: 3.28%; North and Central America: 0.23%; South America: 2.44%; Asia and Oceania: 2.59%	Europe: 98.23% ; Africa: 0.76%; North and Central America: 0.25%; South America: 0.25%; Asia and Oceania: 0.51%	Europe: 97.46% ; Africa: 2.27%; North and Central America: 0%; South America: 0.27%; Asia and Oceania: 0%	Europe: 99.68% ; Africa: 0.16%; North and Central America: 0%; South America: 0.16%; Asia and Oceania: 0%	Europe: 99% ; Africa: 0.17%; North and Central America: 0.17%; South America: 0.66%; Asia and Oceania: 0%	Europe: 96.23% ; Africa: 3.13%; North and Central America: 0%; South America: 0.64%; Asia and Oceania: 0%	Europe: 95.03% ; Africa: 2.47%; North and Central America: 0.33%; South America: 1.49%; Asia and Oceania: 0.68%	Europe: 97.7% ; Africa: 1%; North and Central America: 0.11%; South America: 0.37%; Asia and Oceania: 0.82%	Europe: 92.45% ; Africa: 5.78%; North and Central America: 0.4%; South America: 0.9%; Asia and Oceania: 0.47%	Europe: 95.67% ; Africa: 3.71%; North and Central America: 0.08%; South America: 0.42%; Asia and Oceania: 0.12%	Europe: 91.52% ; Africa: 6.47%; North and Central America: 0.14%; South America: 0.61%; Asia and Oceania: 1.26%
Growth measured as GDP per capita in PPS (2014)	12.100 €	20.300 €	:	:	:	:	:	12.800 €	:	:	16.900 €	18.600 €

	Alcanar - LAU2	Amposta - LAU2	Freginals - LAU2	Galera, la - LAU2	Godall - LAU2	Mas de Barberans - LAU2	Masdenverge - LAU2	Sant Carles de la Ràpita - LAU2	Sant Jaume d'Enveja - LAU2	Santa Bàrbara - LAU2	Sènia, la - LAU2	Ulldecona - LAU2
Unemployment rate (2016)	13.7%	17.47%	11.66%	11.52%	10.33%	9.46%	18.81%	16.63%	14.05%	17.21	24.27%	17.11%
Youth unemployment rate (2016)	18.89%	30.08%	15.79%	5.49%	24.19%	7.84%	15.36%	18.78%	18.46%	28.04%	23.66%	18.60%
Main economic basis: Share of employees per sector (2016_T1) (agriculture, industry, services) if possible in more detail and with time series	Agriculture: 0.18%; Industry: 20.88%; Construction: 5.20%; Services: 73.75%	Agriculture: 2.15%; Industry: 28.38%; Construction: 4.53%; Services: 64.94%	Agriculture: 0%; Industry: 0%; Construction: 9.09%; Services: 90.91%	Agriculture: 2.50%; Industry: 48.75%; Construction: 1.25%; Services: 47.50%	Agriculture: 20.00%; Industry: 12.50%; Construction: 0%; Services: 67.50%	Agriculture: 6.25%; Industry: 15.62%; Construction: 0%; Services: 78.12%	Agriculture: 1.16%; Industry: 61.63%; Construction: 8.14%; Services: 29.07%	Agriculture: 0.04%; Industry: 9.22%; Construction: 3.76%; Services: 86.97%	Agriculture: 1.86%; Industry: 14.42%; Construction: 21.86%; Services: 61.86%	Agriculture: 2.44%; Industry: 28.61%; Construction: 14.18%; Services: 54.77%	Agriculture: 0.74%; Industry: 48.84%; Construction: 3.89%; Services: 46.53%	Agriculture: 2.67%; Industry: 56.10%; Construction: 1.92%; Services: 39.30%
Share of tertiary educated people (according to ISCED, 2011)	16.25%	16.72%	:	:	:	:	17.54%	22.74%	:	14.08%	16.81%	7.68%

## Annex 6: Table V. Content analysis of coping strategies documents

- When the information regarding the initiatives having major impact in the study area (as perceived by local actors) are not fully reflected in the available documents it has been complemented with information extracted from interviews and focus group discussions.
- Document 1 and 2, although presented separately, should be considered together as they are intimately linked (document 2 appears as a result of the process explained in document 1).

Document 1	
Title	Territorial Agreement for the economic reactivation and employment in the Montsià
Information and status of the document:	The document is an agreement among stakeholders in the case study area, to foster collective action towards local socio-economic development and employment (agreement signed 16 March 2016).
Type of the document (plan/strategy/...)	Territorial agreement among local actors
Governance level/levels (local/regional/...)	Local/sub-regional level, implemented at case study level
Synthesis/general findings of the document – in context of peripherality of case study region or its part	<p>The document is an agreement among local stakeholders in the case study area. The agreement is signed by public administrations, sectoral private networks (Rice producer's association and furniture sector entrepreneur's association) and the educational community. Focus on improvement of local economic development and governance. Main objective is to foster social and economic development strategies, to improve living conditions and employment and provide a framework for territorial cooperation.</p> <p>Firstly, the document provides as a background the harsh economic situation and characteristic lack of dynamism which are not conducive for a prosperous future in the case study area. These conditions, are resulting in a young out-migration and loss of high-qualified human capital. These present conditions are presented as a basis for the need to develop an innovative territorial strategy to foster employment and economic development, based in the cooperation of local actors (public, private and educational).</p> <p>Secondly, it is stressed the need of a paradigm shift in the governance and development models (more dynamic, network-based and cooperative). Furthermore, it includes a participatory process to be conducted to diagnose, plan and decide on a common strategy to implement socio-economic development and employment policies in the area.</p> <p>Thirdly, the document recognizes the worth of the work conducted in "Montsià Actiu" towards the development of a territorial and local development agency, including the development of a network of local professional experts supporting: (1) unemployed people, (2) the business sector, and (3) local development organization and planning. The outstanding results of the "ACTIVA'T program", for unemployed people support and job placement, are also highlighted, specially noting the use of a territorially balanced approach, looking for social cohesion and equality of opportunities in the area. In addition, the support offered to the business sector is also noted as a key aspect to develop new employment opportunities in the area, using a public-private</p>

	<p>cooperation approach.</p> <p>Fourthly, it includes the compromise of the signing institutions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Drive social and economic development strategies that improve the living conditions of the local population. Foster decent work and training for the socioeconomic reactivation of the territory.</li> <li>*Create and facilitate a new framework for cooperation between public institutions, productive sector and the educational community for the diagnosis and planning of socioeconomic development policies.</li> <li>*Develop a strategy for economic and social development by means of a "Territorial Agreement Table" including the above stakeholders.</li> <li>*Recognition of the work conducted in the "Montsià Actiu" project and agreement to support it with their local professional experts.</li> <li>*Compromise to publicly disseminate the agreement and the openness to additional local entities, educational centers and business.</li> </ul> <p>It is also remarked that the agreement is based in the altruism and generosity of the actors, bearing in mind the interest of territorial development, its population and the work towards a common good.</p>
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Document 2	
Title	"Territorial Strategy Montsià 2026" (the strategy is the result of the process explained in Document 1).
Information and status of the document:	<p>The document was approved by the County Council the 4th July 2017, to be subsequently approved by the area municipality councils (ongoing). After the strategy is approved by local actors the next steps to implement the strategy will be developed.</p> <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The agreement (document 1) comprises the development of the "Territorial Strategy Montsià 2026"</li> <li>*During 2016 the public participation process to develop the Strategy Montsià 2026 was conducted. It comprised 3 working groups: (1) Economic development and social impact, (2) Employment, equality and social cohesion, and (3) Educational Territory.</li> </ul> <p>Next steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The creation of two "Territorial Agreement Tables": (1) economic development and employment and (2) Educational Territory.</li> <li>*The creation of the structure needed to implement the 10 working lines: (a) service for employment support, (b) service for business support and (c) service for strategic territorial projects.</li> <li>*Development of mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and devolution to signatory institutions and territorial agreement tables.</li> <li>*Scheduling of the working lines and programs</li> </ul>
Type of the document (plan/strategy/...)	Strategic document for the period 2020-2026.
Governance level/levels (local/regional/...)	Local/sub-regional level, implemented at case study level

<p>Synthesis/general findings of the document – in context of peripherality of case study region or its part</p>	<p>The strategy is a 6-page document. The aim of the document (according to the interviewees) was to have a document that could serve as a basis for strategic planning, easily readable and understandable to everyone, summarizing the main working lines and program, that could be further developed and prioritized.</p> <p>The objectives are structures in three axes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employment</li> <li>2. Economic development</li> <li>3. Educational Territory</li> </ol> <p>The Strategy includes 50 programs (to be developed in a later stage) structured in 10 strategic working lines</p> <p>Employment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employment and vulnerable groups</li> <li>2. Employment and medium-high skilled profiles</li> <li>3. Employment and attraction of inhabitants to the territory</li> <li>4. New employment, new business</li> </ol> <p>Local Economic development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Boost of entrepreneurial activity</li> <li>6. Industrial sites</li> <li>7. New entrepreneurial sectors</li> </ol> <p>Educational Territory</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Educational territory: people, activity, space and school</li> <li>9. Towards a new educational and cultural paradigm</li> <li>10. New model of territorial concerted governance and new technical management model to foster the Territorial Strategy Montsià 2026</li> </ol>
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<b>Document 3</b>	
Title	Taula del Sénia
Information and status of the document	It is a "table" (meeting point for dialogue) with the objective of providing the means to work together in improving the quality of life in the area.
Type of the document (plan/strategy/...)	It is not a document but a local initiative, which represents a coping strategy to deal with inner peripherality.
Governance level/levels (local/regional/...)	Local/sub-regional level, implemented at an area different than case study level.
Synthesis/general findings of the document – in context of peripherality of case study region or its part	<p>The initiative includes the grouping of 27 municipalities for institutional cooperation and development of shared public policies across the regional borders (9 from Catalonia, 15 from Valencia, 3 from Aragon). Its governing board is composed by representatives of the 27 villages, and has two workers: a manager and a technician.</p> <p>Those neighboring villages, which have a territorial and cultural nexus (as they are located in the area structured by the Sénia River, Figure 2.9) are experiencing similar problems: low income, outmigration, population ageing, etc., in addition to low infrastructure development, distance to centers of power and administrative barriers linked to border location.</p> <p>In this context, in order to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants, the main objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increasing and improving coordination among involved public institutions.</li> <li>-Find public funding sources to obtain the investment needed to improve the situation.</li> </ul> <p>Until now, several projects have been led by the "Taula del Sénia" applying for public financing. Previous projects have dealt with: reindustrialization, employment, young workforce talent recovery, economic and rural development (millenary olives valuation and millenary oil branding), tourism, infrastructural improvement, cooperation and reduction of administrative barriers in SGIs (health, education, water management).</p> <p>Its strong point is the search for consensus between municipalities, cooperation between different administrations and collaboration with economic and social sectors. It also provides a meeting point that makes possible a more efficient use of available resources and coordination (toward local festivities and local festivals organization).</p>

## Annex 7: Table VI: Content analysis of newspaper archives – image / stigmatization

Forty-six articles from the last eight years (2009-2017) were analysed:

		Description of findings
Size of the article	Short (less than 1 page)	Nineteen articles were transmitting an idea in less than an A-4 page.
	Medium(1-2 pages)	Twenty-six articles were one-two A-4 pages.
	Long (more than 2 pages)	There was only one article, which makes a long history to develop the news. It was not only talking about the county (LAU1) but about the whole region (NUTS2).
Author of the article	Journalist	Most of the considered articles were written by journalists (forty-three)
	Publicist/expert	Three articles were written by a person who was promoting the region.
	Local authority	
Author's attitude	Positive	There were nine articles in which it is noticed that the information is transmitted from a positive point of view.
	Neutral	Almost all the articles (thirty-four) have a neutral attitude.
	Negative	There are only three articles in which the there is a negative writer's attitude.
Context	Positive	<p>Some topics were developed during the last years:</p> <p>2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Immigration/foreign people in the region (2)</li> <li>- The relevance of a company located in the region</li> <li>- Political petition to improve N-340 road infrastructure</li> <li>- Tourist impact due to a SGI facility (1), improvement of the seafront (1), new tourist offers (2)</li> </ul> <p>2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action to not be restricted by administrative border (television)</li> <li>- Increase of tourism</li> </ul> <p>2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvement of the furniture sector</li> </ul> <p>2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvement of public transport in the county</li> <li>- Brand to promote products and tourism</li> </ul> <p>2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy to cooperate between different neighbouring regions</li> </ul> <p>2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New SGI facility to attract tourism</li> <li>- Tourist promotion of a seacoast municipality</li> </ul>
	Neutral	<p>Some topics were developed during the last years:</p> <p>2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actions affecting territory and tourism</li> <li>- Health transport service of the county comes back to the public control</li> </ul> <p>2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SGIs facilities (2)</li> <li>- Book that analyse the rurality of the region (NUTS2 unit)</li> <li>- Policy to create employment for people in social exclusion</li> <li>- Network for demanding "Mediterranean Corridor" infrastructure</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Petition to improve ambulance service in the region</li> </ul> 2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Situation of the county</li> <li>- Promotion of agricultural shop of the region</li> </ul> 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tourist proposals of the interior of the county</li> </ul> 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Searching oil in the sea</li> </ul>
	Negative	<p>Some topics were developed during the last years:</p> 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bad connectivity to the AP-7 Highway</li> <li>- Low GDP per capita when comparing with the region</li> <li>- Actions affecting territory and tourism (2)</li> <li>- Gas storage maintenance</li> </ul> 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstration to save water resources (2)</li> </ul> 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bad railway (1) and N-340 road (1) infrastructures</li> </ul> 2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstration to demand a good railway service</li> </ul> 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstration against gas storage</li> <li>- Problems of the county</li> </ul> 2012 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Destruction of employment in the furniture sector (3) and construction materials sector (1)</li> </ul> 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Destruction of employment in the furniture sector</li> </ul> 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gas storage in the county</li> </ul>



## Annex 8: List of experts and conducted focus groups

### List of interviewed experts:

Expert 1	Local policymaker (Mayor)
Expert 2	Regional economic stakeholder
Expert 3	Regional economic stakeholder
Expert 4	Regional education stakeholder
Expert 5	Expert on local development planning in the study area
Expert 6	Local policy-maker
Expert 7	Expert on local development planning in the study area
Expert 8	Local policy-maker and entrepreneur
Expert 9	Leaders of higher education unit
Expert 10	Economic stakeholder (former president of agricultural sectoral network)
Expert 11	Director of Agricultural Research Institute
Expert 12	Expert on local/regional development planning in the study area
Expert 13	Local policy-maker (Mayor)
Expert 14	Regional environmental stakeholder
Expert 15	University professor specialized in Regional Planning

### List of conducted focus groups:

Different focus groups discussions took place with local stakeholders in one session held the 14th July. The agenda consisted of a general presentation of the PROFECY project to local stakeholders (15 minutes), a plenary debate with some of the participants (1h.) and an additional discussion in two smaller thematic groups (1h.):

- **Plenary debate:** the discussion evolved around the main problems of the area (and its causal relations), the main strengths of the area, future risks and types of intervention needed to reverse current trends. The plenary debate included 14 participants from private, public and educational sectors.
- **Thematic group about Montsià's productive model.** The discussion was triggered by questions regarding the following aspects of the productive model: main economic "engines" of the Montsià county, mismatches between active population and demanded skills, activities in decline, dynamism of the economic fabric, existing and operation of business and commercial networks, mid and long-term sustainability of the productive model and future risks and opportunities. It included 6 participants from the private and public sector.
- **Thematic group about Access to SGIs and connectivity.** The discussion was prompted by questions regarding SGIs provision and connectivity issues: general perception about SGIs provision, reasons for the identified problems, solutions that could be implemented at the local level, and who should lead the proposed solutions. In addition, the discussion also dealt with the valuation of existing formal and informal social network and cooperation at county level. Besides, there was a dialogue regarding different aspects of external connectivity (infrastructure, business and commercial networks, political and economic power, IT communication and capacity of influence) both in relation to neighbouring areas and with further away the metropolitan areas (Tarragona, Barcelona, Madrid) and national a global centres of power. The group was formed by 5 participants and it included local policy-makers and public sector stakeholders.

## Annex 9: Additional photographs

Figure A9.1: Millennial olive trees of Ulldecona, which are a tourist resource in the inner county<sup>d</sup>



Figure A9.2: Nautical Station of Sant Carles de la Ràpita, which is an economic engine for the city<sup>e</sup>



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<sup>d</sup> <http://www.elcami.cat/pobles/ulldecona>

<sup>e</sup> <http://www.ebredigital.cat/economia/3017-l-estacio-nautica-de-la-rapita-ha-generat-un-impacte-economic-de-mes-de-4-7-milions-durant-els-ultims-cinc-anys>

Figure A9.3: Business Incubator of la Galera. It is a facility without use, due to bad management<sup>f</sup>



Figure A9.4: Coastal zone of Alcanar<sup>g</sup>



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<sup>f</sup> <http://jjroig.com/?p=90> and <http://www.montsia.cat/el-viver>

<sup>g</sup> Ignasi Aldomà and Fundació del Món Rural. Available at: <http://www.fmr.cat/atles/imatges.html>

## **Annex 10: Results of the questionnaire conducted to residents of the Montsià county**

### **A10.1 Introduction**

This annex presents the result of an online survey conducted in the Montsià county during June-July 2017. The survey was conducted online and distributed among local actors, who invited other contacts to respond the survey and distributed it on local webpages and social networks. In total, 37 people responded, covering wide age profiles and including a majority of woman. Regarding the village of residence of the respondents, there is a majority from Ulldecona. In addition, there were respondents from all the county's villages, except from Freginals.

The results of the survey are presented in the following sections. Section 1.2 presents the quantitative results related to the characteristics of the respondents. Section 1.3 presents the quantitative results regarding the valuation of the Montsià county as a place to live in, and also reasons to live there. The survey included closed questions (using a 7 point Likert scale), covering different aspects the living conditions, the reasons to live in the area, a general valuation of the socio-economic situation of the county in comparison to neighbouring areas and a valuation of the area as having (or not) poor access to services. In addition, Section 1.4 presents the opinion of the respondents about the provision of services general interest in the area. The survey included a question referring to each category of services (health, education, transport, commercial services, culture and communication technologies). Respondents were asked to select from a fixed list of services the ones that present important shortcomings in the area (they could also add additional services in an open-field per category). Section 1.5 presents the qualitative results regarding the general strengths and weaknesses of the area. Three open questions were included: one question asked respondents to describe up to three main problems of the area, another question up to three main attractions and, the last one, up to three main factors and conditions that could contribute to reduce problems in the future in the Montsià county.

## A10.2 Survey respondent's data

Table A10.1: Survey respondent's characteristics

<b>n =</b>		37	
<b>Age</b>			
18-20	1	2,7%	
21-25	1	2,7%	
26-30	4	10,8%	
31-35	7	18,9%	
36-40	4	10,8%	
41-45	3	8,1%	
46-50	4	10,8%	
51-55	7	18,9%	
56-60	2	5,4%	
61-65	2	5,4%	
66-70	2	5,4%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Village of residence</b>			
Alcanar	3	8,1%	
Amposta	4	10,8%	
Freginals	0	0,0%	
Godall	1	2,7%	
La Galera	1	2,7%	
La Sénia	1	2,7%	
Mas de Barberans	1	2,7%	
Masdenverge	2	5,4%	
Sant Carles de la Ràpita	5	13,5%	
Sant Jaume d'Enveja	2	5,4%	
Santa Bàrbara	1	2,7%	
Ulldecona	15	40,5%	
N/A	1	2,7%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	14	37,8%	
Female	23	62,2%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Working sector</b>			
Public	26	70,3%	
Private	10	27,0%	
Unemployed	1	2,7%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Figure A10.1: Age and sex of the survey respondents

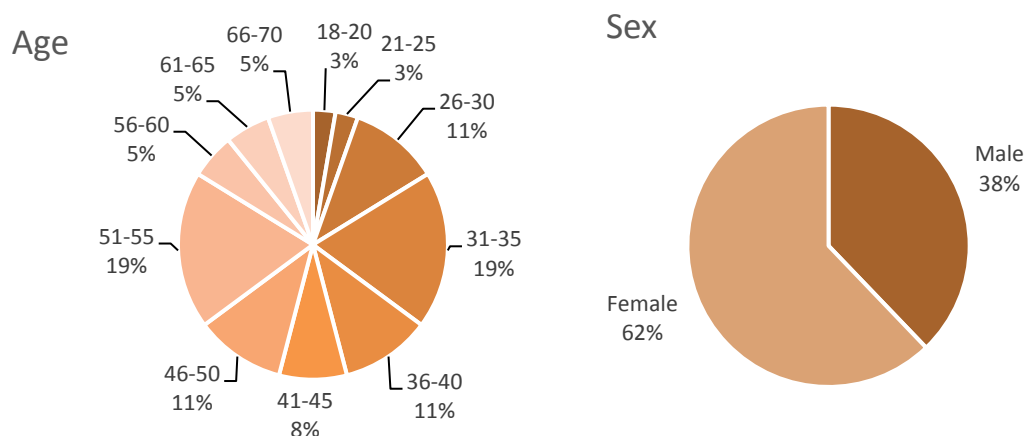


Figure A10.2: Working sector of the survey respondents

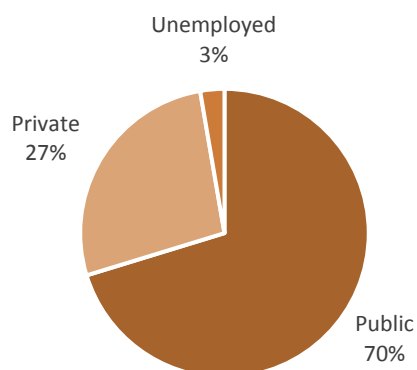
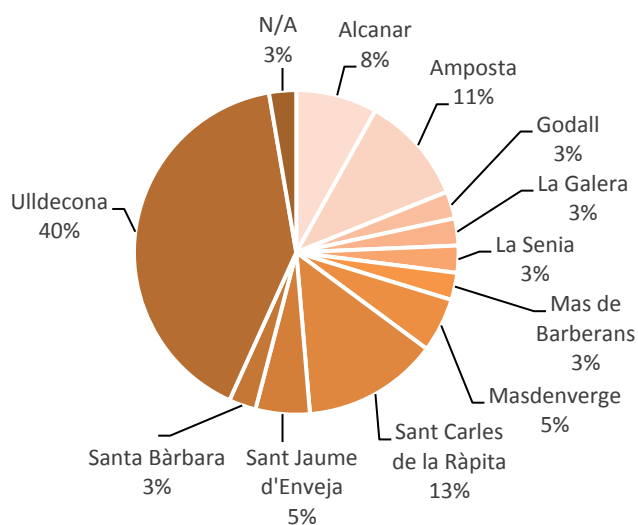


Figure A10.3: Village of residence of the survey respondents



### A10.3 Valuation of the Montsià county and reasons to live there

Figure A10.4: General valuation of the Montsià county

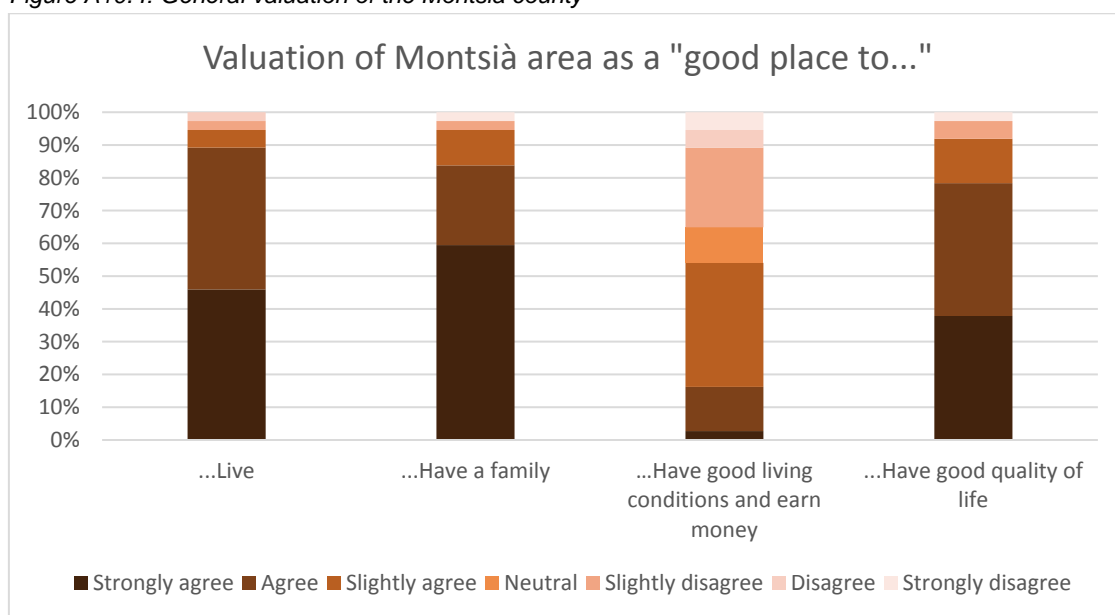


Table A10.2: General valuation of the Montsià county

Montsià is a good place to	...Live		...Have a family		...Have good living conditions and earn money		...Have good quality of life	
Strongly agree	17	45,9%	22	59,5%	1	2,7%	14	37,8%
Agree	16	43,2%	9	24,3%	5	13,5%	15	40,5%
Slightly agree	2	5,4%	4	10,8%	14	37,8%	5	13,5%
Neutral	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	4	10,8%	0	0,0%
Slightly disagree	1	2,7%	1	2,7%	9	24,3%	2	5,4%
Disagree	1	2,7%	0	0,0%	2	5,4%	0	0,0%
Strongly disagree	0	0,0%	1	2,7%	2	5,4%	1	2,7%
Total	37	100%	37	100%	37	100%	37	100%

Figure A10.5: Reasons to live in the Montsià county

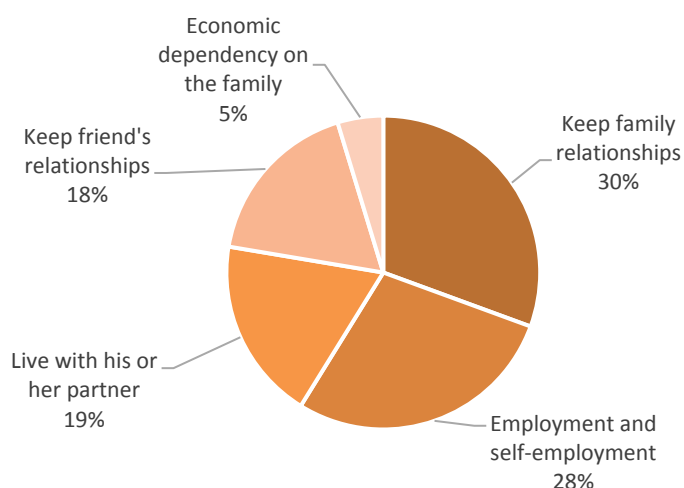


Table A10.3: Reasons to live in the Montsià county

Reason to live in Montsià county		
Keep family relationships	26	70,3%
Employment and self-employment	24	64,9%
Live with his or her partner	16	43,2%
Keep friend's relationships	15	40,5%
Economic dependency on the family	4	10,8%
Total	37	100%

Figure A10.6: General valuation of the Montsià county

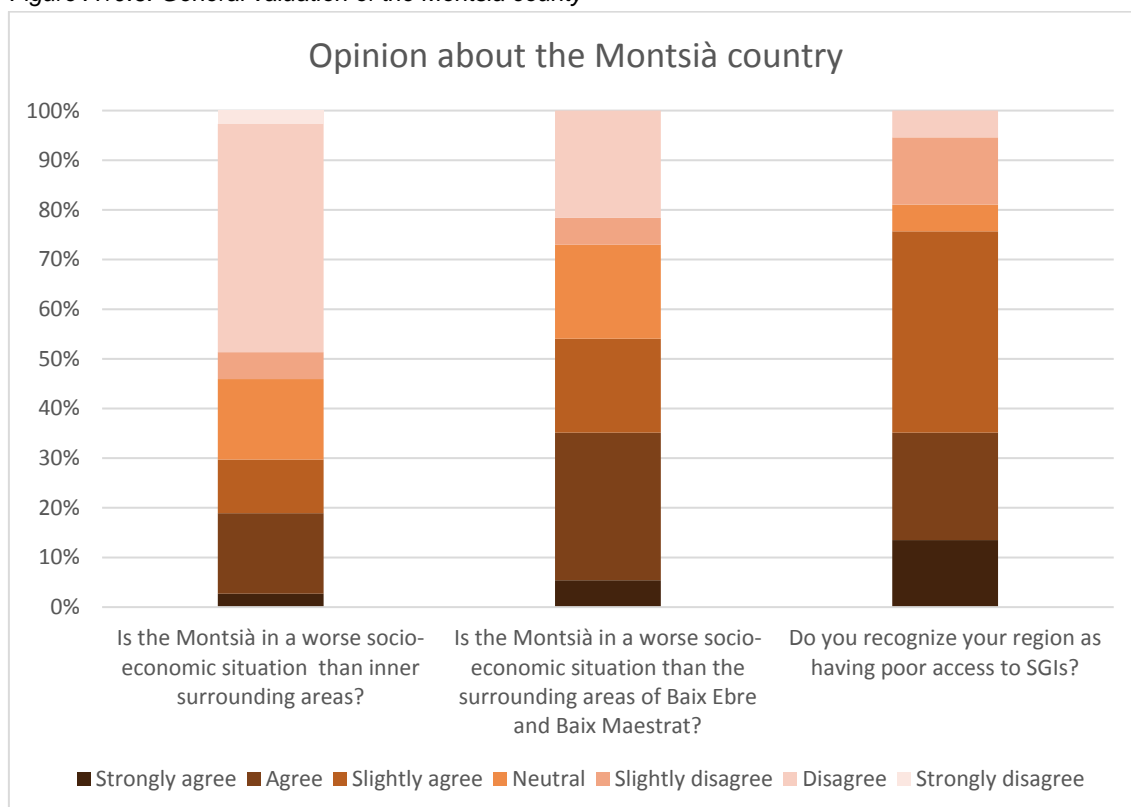


Table A10.4: Reasons to live in the Montsià county

	Is the Montsià in a worse socio-economic situation than inner surrounding areas?		Is the Montsià in a worse socio-economic situation than the surrounding areas of Baix Ebre and Baix Maestrat?		Do you recognize your region as having poor access to SGIs?	
Strongly agree	1	2,7%	2	5,4%	5	13,5%
Agree	6	16,2%	11	29,7%	8	21,6%
Slightly agree	4	10,8%	7	18,9%	15	40,5%
Neutral	6	16,2%	7	18,9%	2	5,4%
Slightly disagree	2	5,4%	2	5,4%	5	13,5%
Disagree	17	45,9%	8	21,6%	2	5,4%
Strongly disagree	1	2,7%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Total	37	100%	37	100%	37	100%

## A10.4 Valuation of Services of General Interest in the Montsià county

Table A10.5: Opinion about services that present an important shortcoming in the Montsià area

Health			Education		
Specialized Health	31	43,1%	University	28	39,4%
Hospitals	29	40,3%	Professional training	22	31,0%
General doctors	11	15,3%	Secondary Schools	12	16,9%
Pharmacies	1	1,4%	Primary Schools	5	7,0%
There is no lack of services	0	0,0%	There is no lack of services	4	5,6%
Total	72	100%	Total	71	100%

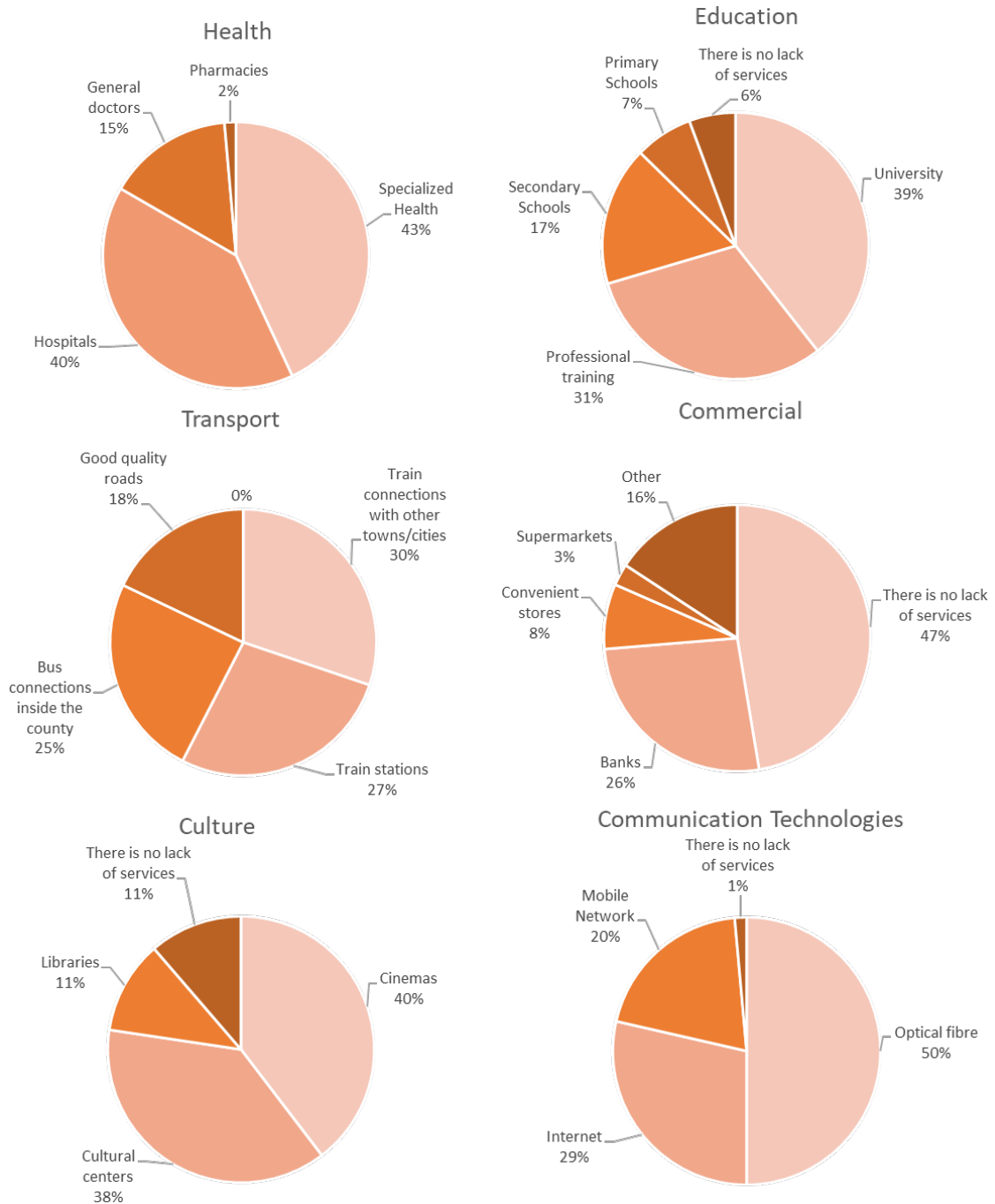
Transport			Commercial		
Train connections with other towns/cities	32	30,2%	There is no lack of services	18	47,4%
Train stations	29	27,4%	Banks	10	26,3%
Bus connections inside the county	26	24,5%	Convenient stores	3	7,9%
Good quality roads	19	17,9%	Supermarkets	1	2,6%
There is no lack of services	0	0,0%	Other	6	15,8%
Total	106	100%	Total	38	100%

Culture			Communication technologies		
Cinemas	21	39,6%	Optical fibre	35	50,0%
Cultural centres	20	37,7%	Internet	20	28,6%
Libraries	6	11,3%	Mobile Network	14	20,0%
There is no lack of services	6	11,3%	There is no lack of services	1	1,4%
Total	53	100%	Total	70	100%



Figure A10.7: Opinion about services that present an important shortcoming in the Montsià area



## A10. 5 Assessment of main problems, attractions and factors to reduce problems in the future

Figure A10.8: Summary of main territorial problems

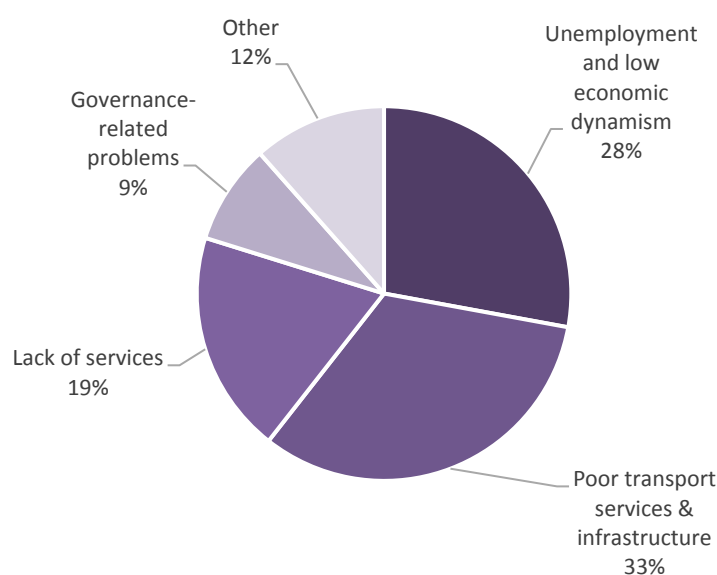


Table A10.6: Detail of the assessment of main territorial problems

Main territorial problems	
Category	Number of responses
<b>Unemployment and low economic dynamism</b>	<b>29</b>
Low employment level	16
Low dynamism and innovation of economic sector	5
Low industrialization	4
Low professional prospect and specialization	4
<b>Poor transport services &amp; infrastructure</b>	<b>34</b>
Public transport (bus and low number of train connections)	22
Road network (poor status of road infrastructure and paid highway)	12
<b>Lack of services</b>	<b>20</b>
General lack of specialized facilities (health, education, administrative services, police, etc.)	9
Low educational offer (professional training and university)	5
Internet and communication technologies	4
Low cultural offer	2
<b>Governance-related problems</b>	<b>9</b>
Distance to decision-making and lack of lobbying capacity	4
Low investment in the territory	4
Localism	1
<b>Other</b>	<b>12</b>
Mosquitos and public health	3
Population ageing and young and skilled outmigration	2
Other	7

Figure A10.9: Summary of main territorial attractions

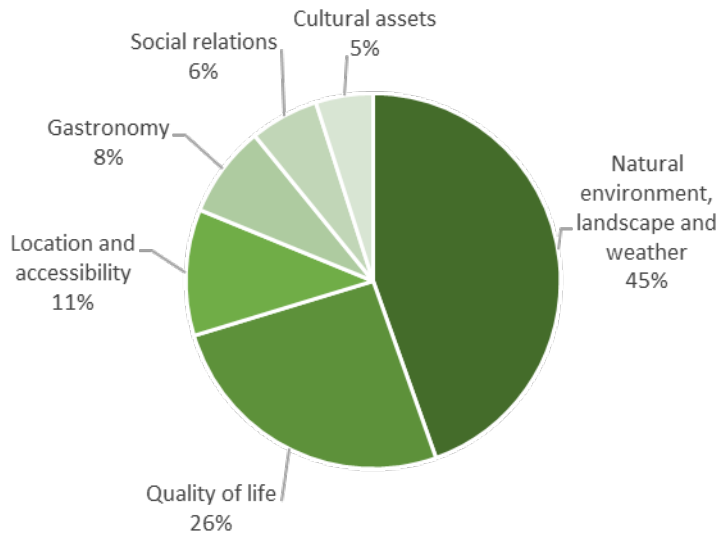


Table A10.7: Detail of the assessment of main territorial attractions

Main territorial attractions	
Category	Number of responses
<b>Natural environment, landscape and weather</b>	<b>45</b>
Natural environment: Els Ports, Delta, beach and mountain	25
Landscape	9
Natural and landscape diversity	6
Weather	5
<b>Quality of life</b>	<b>26</b>
Quality of life	11
Calm atmosphere and lack of overcrowding	9
Good relation price-quality of life	4
Security	2
<b>Location and accessibility</b>	<b>11</b>
Good inner communication	4
Location	3
Proximity to main cities	2
Distant of big cities	2
<b>Gastronomy</b>	<b>8</b>
Gastronomy	8
<b>Social relations</b>	<b>6</b>
Proximity to family, friends and "village" relations	5
The local people and their values	1
<b>Cultural assets</b>	<b>5</b>
History	3
Heritage	2

Figure A10.10: Summary of main factors and conditions to reduce problems in the future

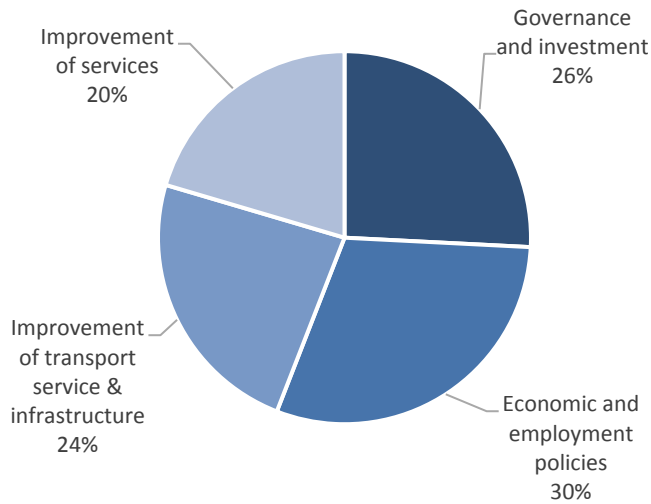


Table A10.7: Detail of the assessment of main territorial attractions

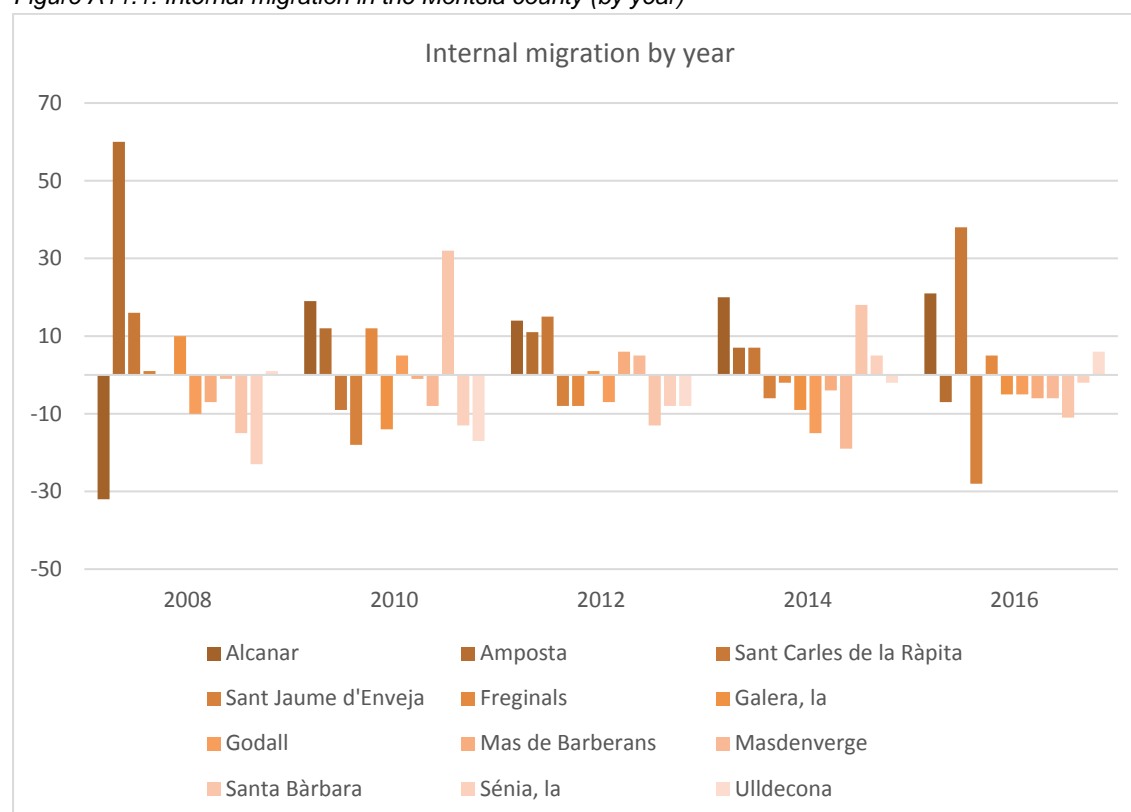
Main factors and conditions to reduce problems in the future	
Category	Number of responses
<b>Governance and investment</b>	<b>24</b>
Higher public investment	11
Coordination and territorial strategy development	5
Higher infrastructural investment	3
Public participation and empowerment	3
Lobbying capacity at decision-making centres	1
Independence	1
<b>Economic and employment policies</b>	<b>28</b>
Entrepreneurial development and industrialization policies	11
Employment and training policies	8
Tourism development	5
Investment, innovation, retaining talent and connection to networks	4
<b>Improvement of transport service &amp; infrastructure</b>	<b>22</b>
Infrastructure: faster roads, better connectivity and train infrastructure (i.e. highway way entrance, dual carriageway, national road improvement, Mediterranean corridor, etc.)	11
Higher frequency public transport (bus and train)	10
Efforts to value local harbours	1
<b>Improvement of services</b>	<b>19</b>
Improved health services	5
Administrative decentralization & one-stop register	5
Wider educational offer	4
Good digital communication infrastructure and service	3
Increased cultural activities	2

## Annex 11: Internal migration data in the Montsià county

Table A11.1: Internal migration in the Montsià county<sup>h</sup>

		Year				
Village		2008	2010	2012	2014	2016
Coastal areas	Alcanar	-32	19	14	20	21
	Amposta	60	12	11	7	-7
	Sant Carles de la Ràpita	16	-9	15	7	38
	Sant Jaume d'Enveja	1	-18	-8	-6	-28
Inner Mountainous	Freginals	0	12	-8	-2	5
	Galera, la	10	-14	1	-9	-5
	Godall	-10	5	-7	-15	-5
	Mas de Barberans	-7	-1	6	-4	-6
	Masdenverge	-1	-8	5	-19	-6
	Santa Bàrbara	-15	32	-13	18	-11
	Sénia, la	-23	-13	-8	5	-2
	Ulldecona	1	-17	-8	-2	6
Balance		0	0	0	0	0

Figure A11.1: Internal migration in the Montsià county (by year)



<sup>h</sup> Data from IDESCAT. Catalonia inner migration movements: <https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=mm&lang=es> (accessed 3/07/2017)

Figure A11.2: Internal migration in the Montsià county (by municipality)

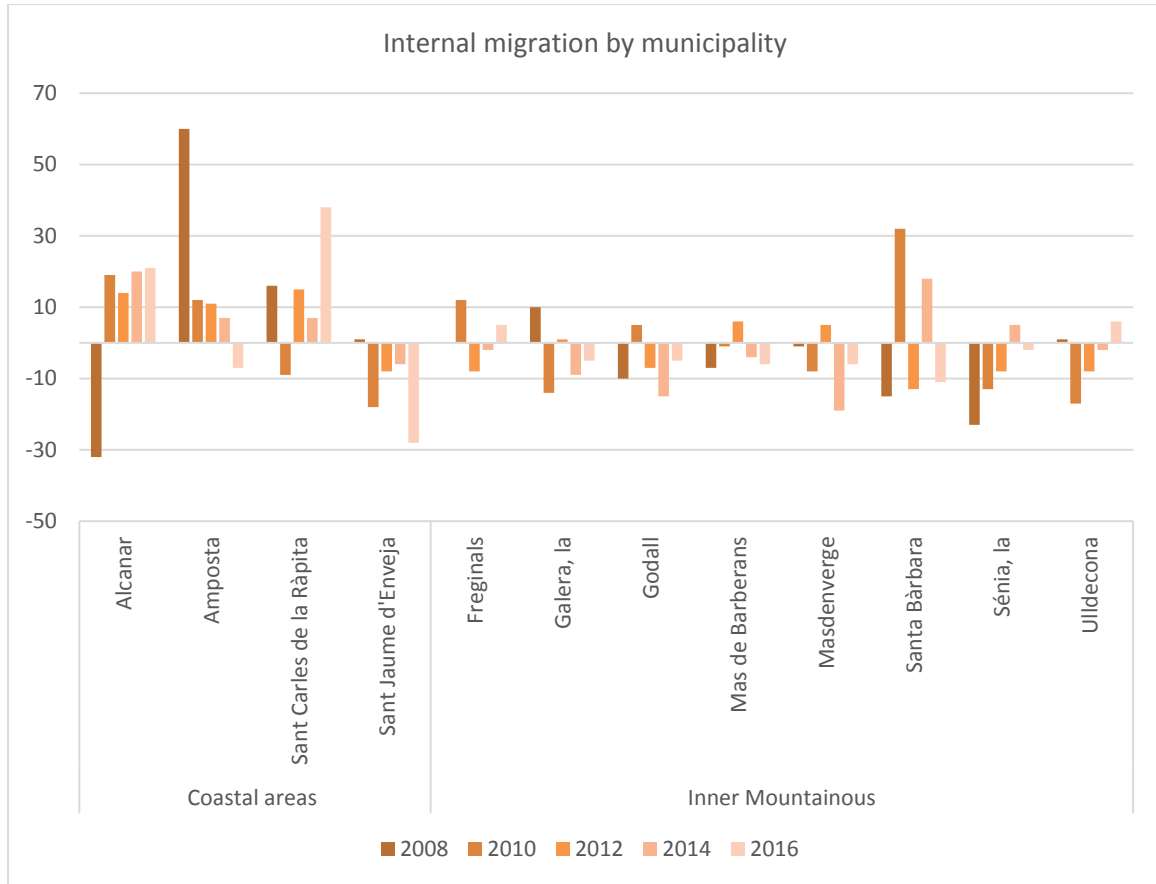


Table A11.2: Internal migration in the Montsià county<sup>i</sup>

Year	Montsià			Tarragona (province)			Catalonia (region)
	Migration to/from Catalonia	Migration to/from the rest of Spain	Total migration to/from the Montsià County	Migration to/from Catalonia	Migration to/from the rest of Spain	Total migration to/from Tarragona	Total migration from Catalonia to the rest of Spain
2016	101	-31	70	469	-71	398	3.889
2015	-31	-177	-208	-894	-605	-1.499	5.103
2014	-19	-132	-151	-375	-693	-1.068	3.413
2013	-10	-176	-186	-39	-846	-885	-697
2012	188	-189	-1	384	-1.079	-695	-3.655
2011	-133	-97	-230	113	-750	-637	-182
2010	80	-22	58	1.420	-663	757	-781
2009	198	-160	38	1.153	-1.162	-9	-2.827
2008	379	-126	253	2.164	-1.271	893	-4.082

<sup>i</sup> Data from IDESCAT. Inner migration balance, by municipalities: <https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=mm&n=223&geo=com:22&lang=es#Plegable=geo> (accessed 3/07/2017)

Figure A11.3: Inner net migration in the Montsià County

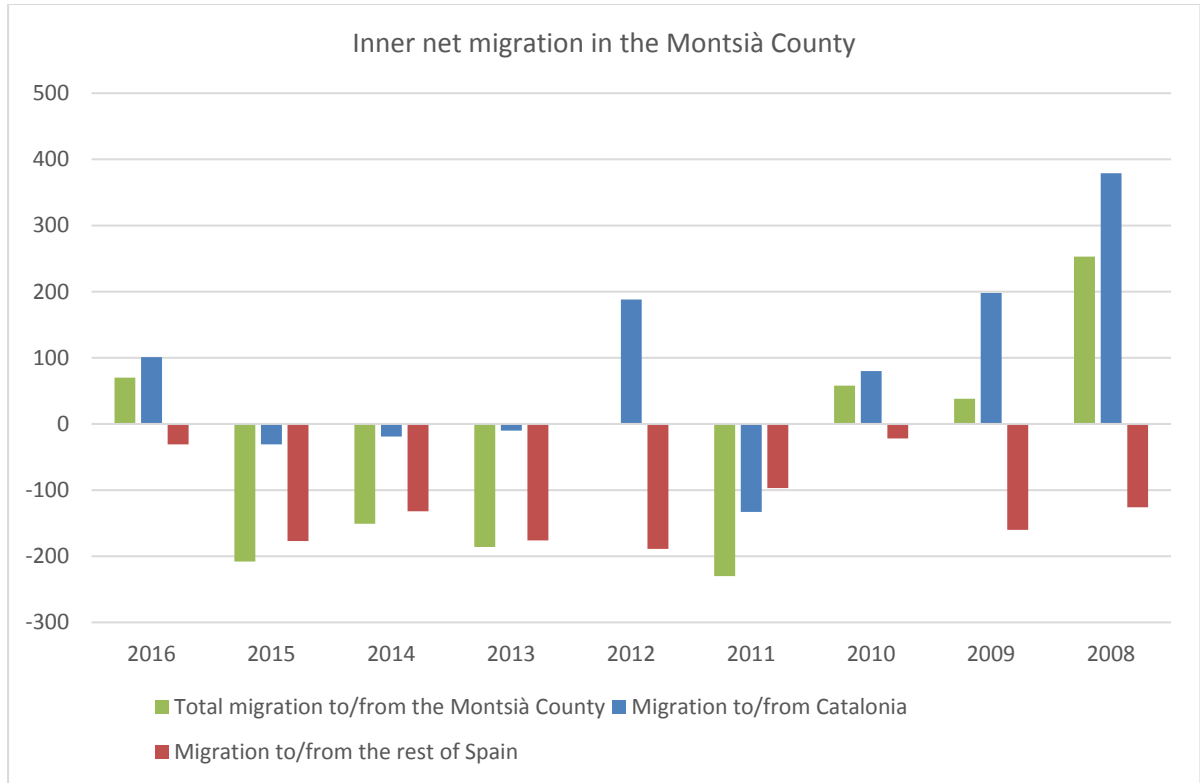


Figure A11.4: Inner net migration in the Tarragona Province

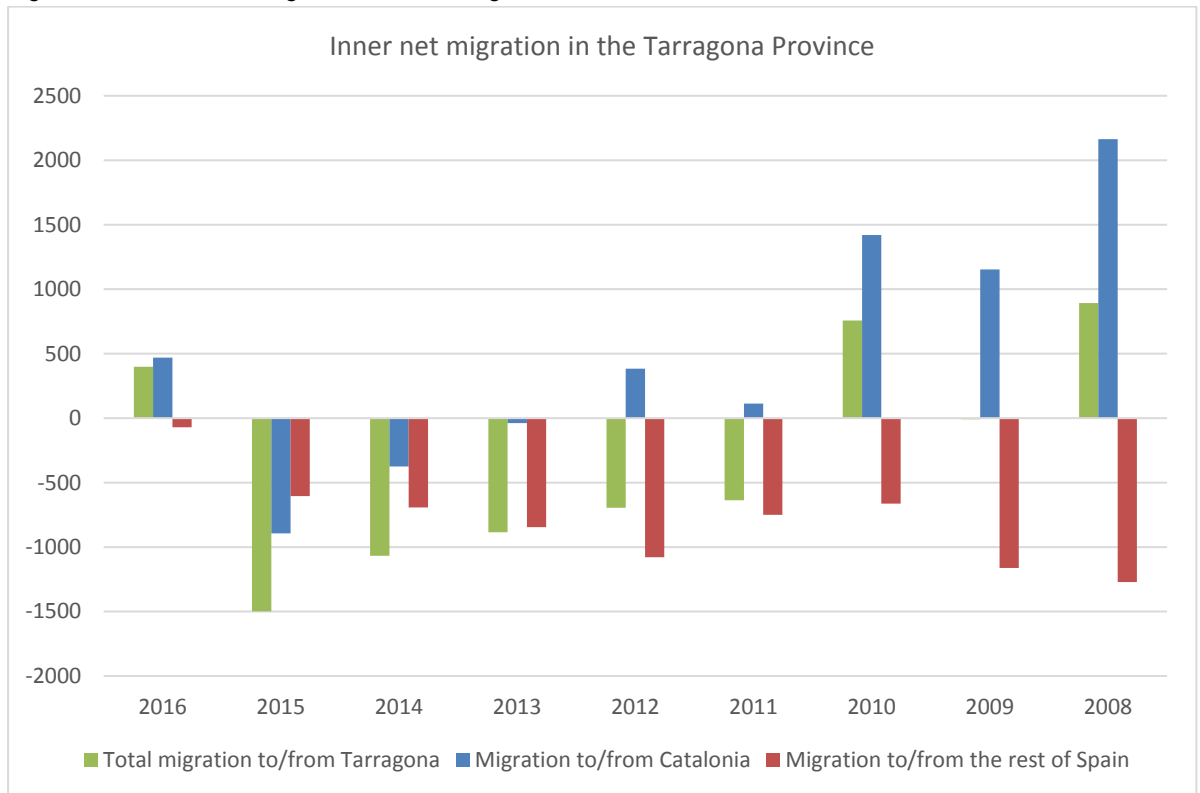
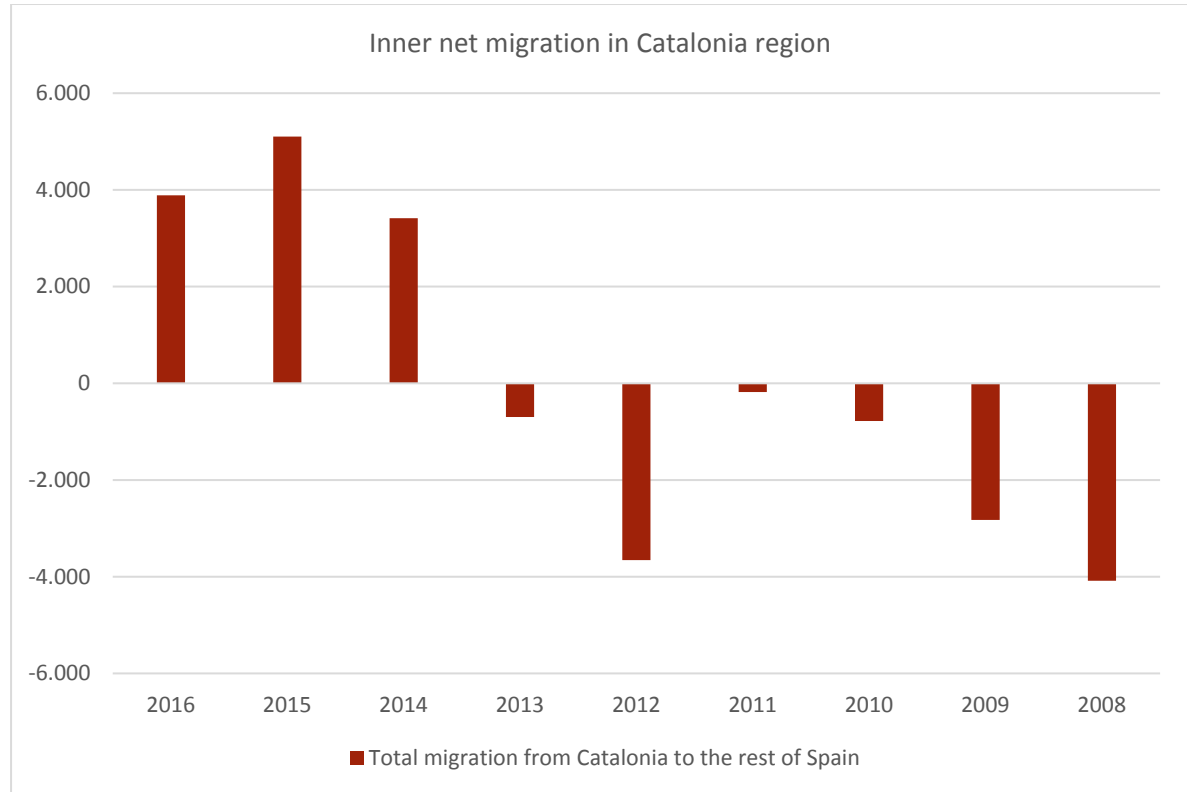
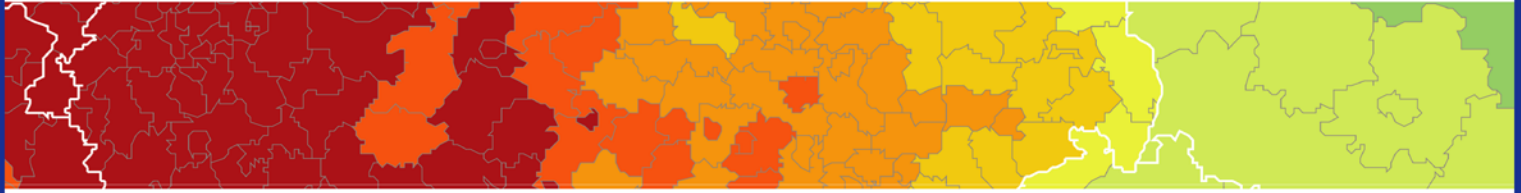


Figure A11.5: Inner net migration in Catalonia region







### **ESPON 2020 – More information**

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