

Fundão, a smart rural city

Fundão



📍 Portugal
::: COUNTRY

👤 168 106
::: POPULATION

💰 +20M€
::: FUNDING

🏛️ Municipal budget
Diverse EU funding programmes
::: FUNDING SOURCES

🌱 Innovation ecosystems;
Local economic development;
Talent attraction;
Open government; Rural-urban.
::: TOPIC OF PRACTICE

🏛️ Municipality of Fundão
::: PRACTICE OWNER



📍 In a rural town threatened by depopulation, a strong and determined smart territorial innovation strategy, known as the Fundão Innovation Plan, has created an innovation ecosystem that is a reference in Portugal, attracting 16 IT companies, creating 1,000 skilled jobs, generating 80 start-ups, and supporting 250 private investment projects, while investing in R&D and pioneering initiatives in professional retraining and digital skills.

::: ABOUT :::

- 📍 1. Attracting investment and promoting the creation of skilled jobs.
- 2. Stimulating the innovation ecosystem.
- 3. Encourage urban regeneration and socio-economic revitalisation of the city centre.
- 4. Involve the local and regional community, working in partnership.

::: STRONG POINTS :::

- 📍 • Coordinating diverse stakeholders.
- Sustaining investment in a rural environment.
- Developing a skilled workforce from a rural population.
- Integrating new technologies with traditional industries.
- Ensuring local acceptance of rapid changes.

::: CHALLENGES :::

- 📍 • Strong leadership and strategic vision.
- Comprehensive innovation ecosystem.
- Strategic partnerships and networks.
- Investment in education and retraining.
- Economic diversification.
- Community engagement and urban regeneration.

::: ENABLING CONDITIONS :::

- 📍 • Supported 250+ private investment projects (€150M+ investment).
- Created 1,000+ skilled jobs in ICT and 1,000+ jobs in traditional sectors.
- Positive migration balance since 2015, hosting 70+ nationalities.
- Accelerated 80+ start-ups, with 3 in national top 25.
- Universal computer programming in public schools.

::: RESULTS AND IMPACTS :::

- 📍 Cova da Beira Living Lab, certified by the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL). The consortium consists of public entities, universities, and schools; civic and development; businesses; financial institutions, among others. On the other hand, collaboration within national and international networks and partnerships has been crucial.

::: KEY STAKEHOLDERS :::

- 📍 • Small rural town in Central Portugal facing depopulation and economic decline.
- Since 2012, implemented the Fundão Innovation Plan to enhance competitiveness, attract investment, and create jobs.
- Focus on address globalization and digital economy, while preserving traditional sectors as agri-food, industry, tourism.
- Establishment of a specialized support team, infrastructures, wide range of partners, competitive incentives, mobility programmes, and digital skills promotion.
- Fundão is a smart, sustainable, and inclusive city, that focuses on its low density and rural dimension.

::: CITY STRATEGY :::

- 📍 • Leverage city's strengths to attract investment and innovation.
- Invest in education and training for new industries.
- Build strong partnerships.
- Keep community central to development plans.
- Recognize transformation as a long-term, flexible process.

::: TRANSFER TIPS :::