

3 Minimum income schemes and inclusion itineraries in Spain

This chapter presents the characteristics of the national minimum income scheme (Ingreso Mínimo Vital, IMV) introduced by the Spanish central government in 2020 in terms of eligibility, adequacy of support and coverage, as well as the main changes brought with the IMV work incentives package, which entered into force in 2023. Before the introduction of the IMV, Spanish regions operated their own minimum income schemes. Thus, this chapter also provides an overview of these regional minimum income schemes and analyses the co-ordination mechanisms between national and regional stakeholders in providing minimum income benefits.

3.1. The Ingreso Mínimo Vital has lifted many out of poverty but suffers from low coverage

Establishing a minimum vital income was part of the 2019-23 Spanish National Strategy for Preventing and Fighting Poverty and Social Exclusion, whose Objective 1.1 is “Establish a minimum income scheme with sufficient coverage to allow people to live decently and promote an increase in net disposable household income, especially for households with dependent children or adolescents, since the highest levels of vulnerability are found in households with children” and one of the action lines “Progress towards developing a Minimal Living Income” (Ministerio de Sanidad, Consumo y Bienestar Social, 2019^[1]).

The Ingreso Mínimo Vital (IMV), created in May 2020 through the Real Decreto-ley 20/2020, is a non-contributory transfer with the goal of guaranteeing, through the satisfaction of minimum material conditions, the full participation of all citizens in social and economic life, breaking the link between the absence of resources and the lack of access to opportunities in the labour, educational and social sphere of individuals. It was initially targeted towards households headed by persons aged 23 to 65. Persons over 65 have also been granted access to this benefit since September 2020 (Real Decreto-ley 30/2020). In addition, persons under 23 who have dependent children are also eligible. The IMV includes means-testing thresholds for annual income and wealth, depending on the size of households and the number of dependent children. Recipients must also have had legal residence in Spain for at least a year (exceptions apply to victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence), be registered as a jobseeker, and have already requested the pensions and transfers for which they are eligible.

The IMV came to provide a national common floor to the previously existing regional minimum income schemes (MIS) (also known under the generic name of Rentas Mínimas), which had significant differences in design and coverage. For example, in 2016, coverage rates for low-income households formed by a couple with two children ranged from 26.8% in La Rioja to 64.4% in Comunidad Foral de Navarra. In terms of design, regional MIS also differed significantly, with those of Comunitat Valenciana, Galicia and Ceuta having a fixed duration of six months. In contrast, Castilla y León, Comunidad de Madrid and País Vasco offered indefinite-duration transfers (AIReF, 2019^[2]).

3.1.1. The IMV eligibility depends on a wide range of criteria

The IMV is part of the social security system in Spain and is configured as a subjective right or entitlement to an economic benefit. It guarantees a minimum income level to those in a situation of economic vulnerability. Since the IMV entered into force in 2020 during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, some changes have been introduced. In 2021, a Childhood Support aid (*Ayuda para la infancia*), mainly designed as a supplement for IMV recipient families with children, was created; in 2023, a “work incentives” package was introduced, which allows IMV beneficiaries to combine the benefit with earnings from work, under some conditions.

This section briefly explains the main characteristics of the IMV design. It is not exhaustive, and some exceptions are not included. For more information, see the Spanish Social Security’s web page (<https://imv.seg-social.es/>), which explains the IMV eligibility rules, benefit amount, modalities for applying, etc., in detail (in Spanish). The OECD Benefits and Wages page (www.oecd.org/social/benefits-and-wages/benefits-and-wages-country-specific-information.htm) provides a less detailed explanation in English.

Age

Recipients must be over 23 years old or above 18 if they have dependent children or have been in a public residential home the three years prior to becoming 18. This differs from many countries, where people 18 and above are eligible for minimum income (see Chapter 4).

Legal residence in Spain

Non-Spanish claimants must certify at least one year of uninterrupted stay immediately prior to application (except for victims of gender violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation). Spanish claimants can access the benefit provided they fulfil the eligibility conditions. As mentioned in Chapter 4, some OECD countries provide less restrictive legal residence criteria for some foreign groups, compared with Spain.

Means test

As a general principle, the income of the previous year is used to qualify for the programme. Households qualify not only based on their income but also their wealth. The main rules are as follows:

- For families, claimants must certify that the family unit has been formed at least six months prior to the application.
- Total household income (net of social security contributions and income tax) must be below the guaranteed household income corresponding to the household size.
- Total household wealth (excluding the main residence) must be below three times the annual guaranteed household income for a single-member household, with an incremental threshold per type of household.

In order to calculate the total amount of household income, the income of all household members is taken into account with the exception of:

- the regional MIS or similar social assistance aids granted by the autonomous communities
- other social and economic benefits covering specific needs, such as scholarships, some extraordinary public subsidies or redundancy payments and orphans' pensions.

Amount

The benefit amount is the difference between the guaranteed and total household incomes. The benefit is paid on a monthly basis, and the guaranteed income varies by type of household, with a bonus for single-parent households.

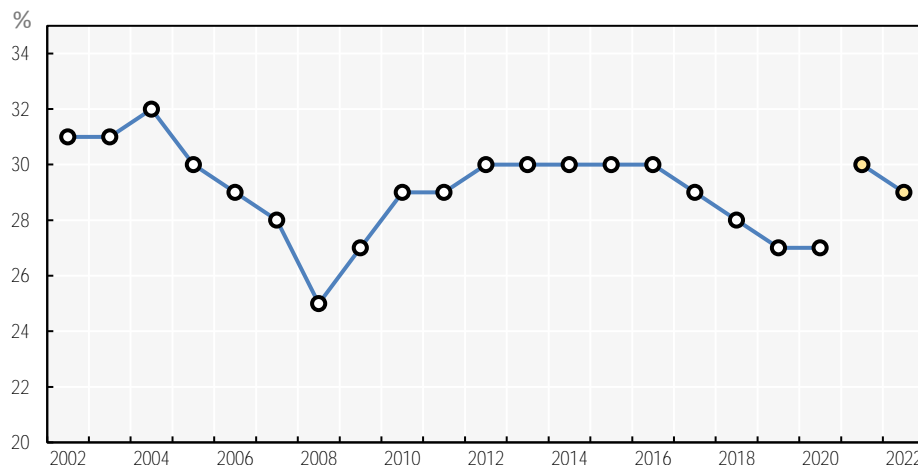
Article 13 of the IMV Law (19/2021) establishes that the guaranteed income depends on the family composition and is updated annually. Cases are numerous and are not detailed here.¹ By way of example, however, in 2023, an adult without children has a guaranteed income of EUR 6 784.44 per year (or EUR 565.37 per month); for a couple of adults without children, the amount is EUR 8 819.88 per year (or EUR 734.99 per month); for a couple of adults with two children, the amount is EUR 12 890.52 per year; and for a single parent with one child, the amount is EUR 10 312.44 per year (or EUR 859.37 per month).

Adequacy

During the last decades, the adequacy of minimum income benefits in Spain, measured as the ratio between the disposable income of a minimum income recipient and the median disposable income in the country, has moved around 30% (see Figure 3.1). The negative trend between 2004 and 2008 might be explained by the economic boom (and the resulting increase of the nominal value of the median disposable income in the country) before the 2009 financial crisis. The introduction of the IMV explains the discontinuity between 2020 and 2021.

Figure 3.1. Adequacy of minimum income benefit in Spain, 2002-22

Single individuals aged 40 without children



Notes: This indicator measures the income of jobless families relying on guaranteed minimum income benefits as a percentage of the median disposable income in Spain. Housing supplements are included, subject to relevant eligibility conditions.

Between 2002 and 2020, the indicator refers to the minimum income benefit of Madrid, which was among the lowest regional amounts (see Table 3.1). After 2020, it refers to the IMV.

Adequacy can change depending on family composition. The example of a single adult without children is taken for the sake of simplicity.

Source: OECD (2023), "Adequacy of minimum income benefits" (indicator), <https://doi.org/10.1787/dcb819cd-en>.

Turning the analysis to the regional context, regional MIS show significant differences in their basic amounts. Their adequacy is often compared with two national indicators: the Minimum Interprofessional Wage (Salario Mínimo Interprofesional, SMI) and the Public Indicator of Multiple Effect Income (Indicador Público de Renta de Efectos Múltiples, IPREM). In 2021, the average amount of the basic benefit was EUR 490.81 per month, with relatively strong regional differences. The Autonomous Community of Spain (Comunidades Autónomas de España, hereafter "AACC") with the highest basic amount was País Vasco, with EUR 706.22 (or 73% of the minimum wage); the second highest amount was in Cataluña, with EUR 664, and then Comunidad Foral de Navarra with EUR 636.73 and the Comunitat Valenciana, with EUR 630. In contrast, the lowest basic amounts are Comunidad de Madrid (EUR 400 or 41% of the minimum wage) and Galicia (EUR 423.68). These figures show a gap of around EUR 306 between the regions with the highest and the lowest amounts (País Vasco and Comunidad de Madrid)² (Ministerio de Derechos Sociales y Agenda 2030, 2021^[3]).

To illustrate this territorial gap, Table 3.1 displays the entitled basic amount of the benefit for a single-person household compared to the minimum wage in 2021. Although IMV amounts awarded slightly improved (on average), the situation for some family types with respect to regional schemes, the IMV has not substantially changed the historical average adequacy level of benefits in Spanish regions.

Table 3.1. Adequacy of regional minimum income benefits in Spain, 2021

Percentage of minimum wage

	Minimum income basic amount (in EUR)	% of minimum wage (EUR 965)
Comunidad de Madrid	400.0	41.5%
Galicia	423.7	43.9%
Andalucía	440.6	44.7%
Principado de Asturias	448.3	46.5%
Cantabria	451.9	46.8%
Castilla y León	451.9	46.8%
La Rioja	451.9	46.8%
Región de Murcia	452.9	46.8%
Illes Balears	469.9	48.7%
Ingreso Mínimo Vital	469.9	48.7%
Canarias	489.4	50.7%
Aragón	491.0	50.9%
Castilla-La Mancha	525.0	54.4%
Extremadura	564.9	58.5%
Comunitat Valenciana	630.0	65.3%
Comunidad Foral de Navarra	636.7	66.0%
Cataluña	664.0	68.8%
País Vasco	706.2	73.2%

Note: Figures refer to statutory amounts of the basic benefit (i.e. without eventual top-ups).

Source: Ministerio de Derechos Sociales y Agenda 2030 (2021^[3]), *El Sistema Público de Servicios Sociales. Informe de Rentas Mínimas de Inserción*, www.mdsocialesa2030.gob.es/derechos-sociales/servicios-sociales/r-minimas/R_M_I_2021.pdf.

Duration

The IMV does not have a fixed or maximum duration. Beneficiaries can keep the benefit as long as they fulfil the eligibility conditions. However, the right to the benefit can be suspended for several reasons. The most important are:

- temporary loss of any of the requirements for recognition
- temporary breach by the beneficiary, holder or any member of their cohabitation unit of the obligations assumed by accessing the benefit
- in the event of transfer abroad for a period over 90 calendar days
- failure to meet the terms related to compatibility of the IMV with income from work or self-employed economic activity.

Taxation and compatibility with other benefits

The IMV is not taxable and is compatible with other social and economic benefits as long as total household income does not exceed the guaranteed income thresholds established by the type of household. Regional benefits had a similar scope. In fact, individuals/families who received the regional benefit would have also been eligible for the IMV. However, the regions are progressively changing the design of their regional benefit to make them complementary and subsidiary to the IMV within the framework of their competences (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1. Adaptation of regional minimum income schemes to the introduction of the IMV

Since the introduction of the IMV, many AACC have started adapting regional MIS to the new national benefit. Although not fully incorporated into regional laws, most AACC have used regional benefits to extend the IMV's coverage through less stringent residency requirements or wider age eligibility, among others. In addition, some regions complement the cash support provided by the IMV (EAPN España, 2021^[4]). Table 3.2 summarises the adaptation of regional MIS to the IMV, including whether the new configuration of regional transfers foresees complementing the IMV by topping up its amount; and whether the regional minimum income scheme has a subsidiary character to the IMV, i.e. if it covers socio-economic profiles that are not covered by the national scheme.

Table 3.2 Adaptation of regional minimum income schemes to the IMV

	Regional MIS	Complementary to IMV	Subsidiary to IMV
Andalucía	Renta Mínima de Inserción Social		✓
Aragón	Former Ingreso Aragonés de Inserción (IAS), now Prestación Aragonesa Complementaria del IMV (PACIMV)	✓	✓
Principado de Asturias	Salario Social Básico (SSB)		✓
Illes Balears	Renta Social Garantizada (RESOGA)		✓
Canarias	Renta Canaria de Ciudadanía	✓	
Cantabria	Renta Social Básica (RSB)		
Castilla-La Mancha	Ingreso Mínimo de Solidaridad (IMS)		✓
Castilla y León	Renta Garantizada de Ciudadanía (RGC)	✓	✓
Cataluña	Renta garantizada de Ciudadanía (RGC)	✓	✓
Comunitat Valenciana	Renta Valenciana de Inclusión (RVI)	✓	✓
Extremadura	Renta Extremeña Garantizada	✓	
Galicia	Renta de Inclusion Social de Galicia (RISG)		✓
La Rioja	Renta de Ciudadanía (RC)		✓
Comunidad de Madrid	Renta Mínima de Inserción (RMI)		✓
Región de Murcia	Renta Básica de Inserción (RBI)		
Comunidad Foral de Navarra	Renta de Inclusión Social (RIS)	✓	✓
País Vasco	Renta de garantía de Ingresos (RGI)	✓	✓

Note: Regional MIS are considered complementary in those cases when the regional transfer is used to complement the amount of the IMV. AACC where complementarity is legally possible but whose regional MIS is less generous than the IMV, have been excluded from this category. Subsidiarity refers to those regional MIS covering profiles the IMV has rejected. In any case, to access the regional MIS, claimants must apply for the IMV first. Information refers to mid-2022.

Source: OECD social inclusion interviews and questionnaires (2022) and (EAPN España, 2021^[4]), *El Ingreso Mínimo Vital un año después: La perspectiva autonómica*.

3.1.2. Spain has introduced a number of initiatives to improve the take up of the IMV

Take-up and coverage

Incomplete take-up of social benefit programmes refers to the gap between the number of individuals receiving a benefit and the number of individuals fulfilling the statutory eligibility requirements. Although some non-take-up may be unavoidable in tightly targeted programmes, sizeable non-take-up rates can undermine their effectiveness by limiting their overall reach and making support inaccessible for targeted recipient groups. It can also compromise the transparency of targeting strategies and raise fairness issues.

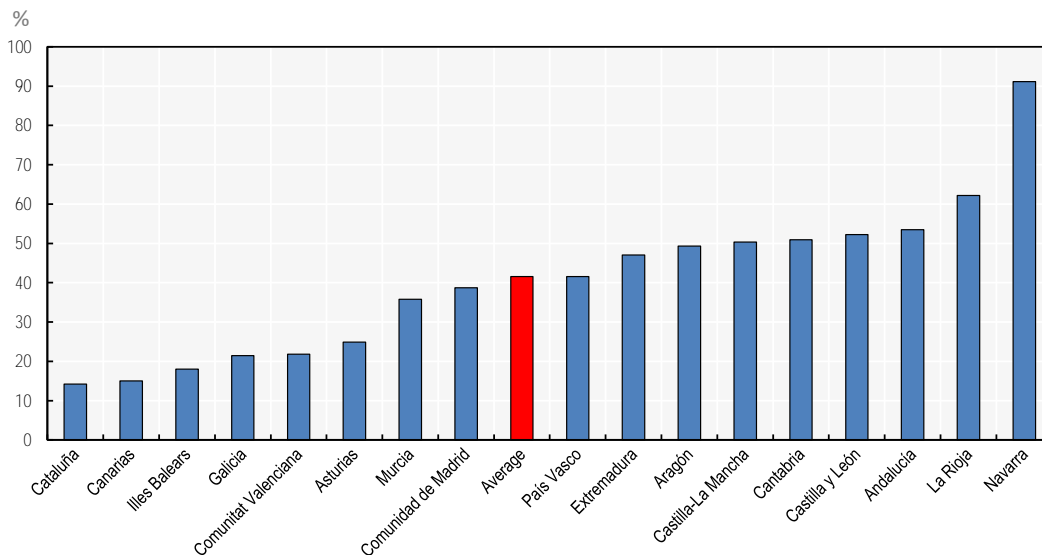
Non-take-up also prevents individuals from connecting to other services often linked with benefit receipt, such as active labour market policies, inhibiting the formulation and implementation of coherent inclusion strategies. When non-take-up is significant, it can result in non-negligible, long-term costs in the form of destitution, ill health and persistence of disadvantage, creating costs for individuals, society and government budgets.

Take-up of the new national minimum-income programme remains incomplete. Estimates based on survey and administrative data³ indicate that only 40% of eligible individuals received the IMV in late 2021 (AIReF, 2022^[6]). In 2023, a second study (AIReF, 2023^[6]) confirmed that, by end 2022, take-up remained low (42%), with a high rate of rejected applications (69%) and a high share of households that had benefited from the IMV since its introduction in 2020 (62% of recipient households in December 2022).

Figure 3.2 shows the estimated coverage rates of IMV in Spanish regions. They are calculated by dividing the number of IMV recipients in September 2021 by the estimated number of persons in extreme poverty (disposable income below 30% of the national average), as computed by the 2020 *Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida* (INE, 2020^[7]). The average over regions (41%) masks high levels of variation, with regional rates ranging from about 15% in Canarias and Cataluña to 62% in La Rioja and more than 90% in Comunidad Foral de Navarra. Studies also show that coverage rates of regional MIS were also below 100%, except in the Comunidad Foral de Navarra and País Vasco and were generally not higher than 50% in many regions (Hernández, Picos and Riscado, 2022^[8]). Although income poverty does not wholly determine eligibility for the IMV, these low coverage rates suggest room to improve IMV take-up.

Figure 3.2. Estimated coverage of IMV in Spanish regions

Percentage, 2021, by region



Note: Estimated coverage rates are calculated by dividing the number of IMV recipients in September 2021 in each region by the estimated number of persons in extreme poverty, as computed by the 2020 *Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida*. It should be noted that the requirements for accessing the IMV include other criteria beyond income, such as asset tests or residency requirements, that are not captured by this estimate. A more up-to-date version of this chart can be found in AIReF (2023^[6]), Gráfico 10. However, the results are very close to those shown here.

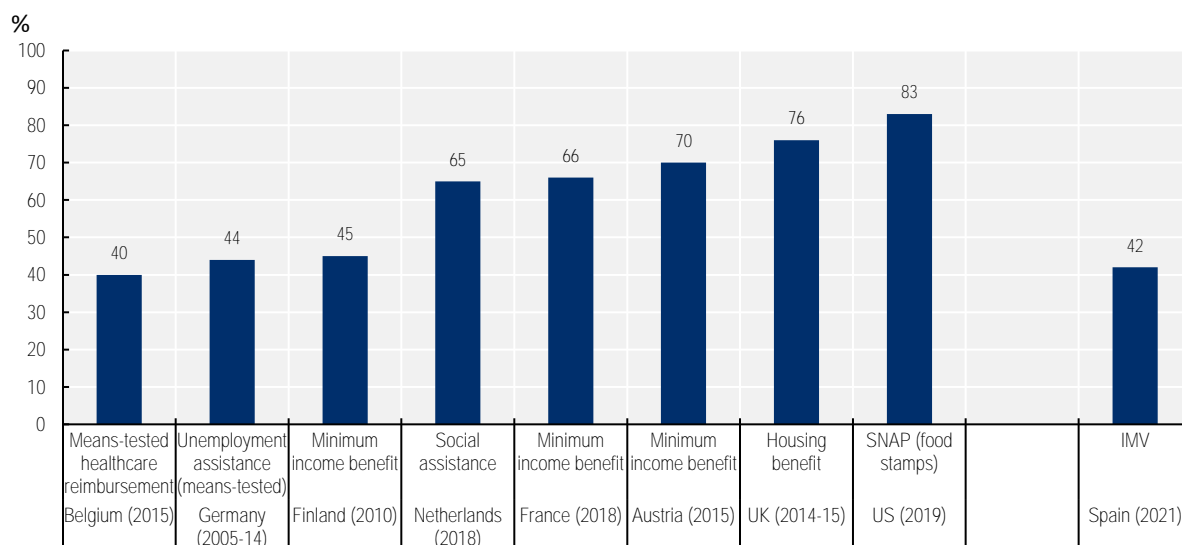
Source: Calculations based on data from MISSM (2021^[9]), *Distribución Territorial de las Personas Beneficiadas por el IMV*, <https://revista.seg-social.es/documents/39386/1362593/NP-IMV-septiembre-21-4.docx.pdf/15022613-edf9-0f16-f812-338c61fe1a22> and INE (2020^[7]), *Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida*,

www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176807&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976608.

Spain is not an exception. Figure 3.3 shows how take-up rates of means-tested programmes vary widely across countries and programme types, but incomplete take-up persists in different contexts. While some programmes in other countries have take-up rates comparable to the IMV in Spain, the best-performing programmes generally reach take-up rates of 70-80%.

Figure 3.3. Minimum income benefits take-up, selected countries

Share of individuals receiving benefits compared to all those eligible, various years



Note: Take-up rates refer to the share of individuals receiving benefits over all those eligible.

Source: Adapted from Ko and Moffitt (2022^[10]), "Take-up of social benefits", <https://docs.iza.org/dp15351.pdf>.

As in other programmes, non-take up of the IMV is due to institutional factors, like lack of administrative capacity to process applications in time, no proactive action to reach potentially eligible people and lack of information about programme rules or objectives, and to "individual decisional" factors ranging from uncertainties surrounding the application process, individual-level barriers, such as stigma, lack of digital skills or a limited capacity for successfully engaging in the claiming process. The high variation in coverage rates across Spanish regions and across countries suggests that programme design features and how they interact with pre-existing regional MIS are important and that a significant increase in take-up is possible.

A survey conducted by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration (MISSM) estimated that 25% of those potentially eligible do not know about the programme's existence (Martinez-Bravo, 2022^[11]). Moreover, in 2022, the average waiting time for the decision regarding one's application was 60 days, and almost 70% of applications were denied. These factors likely disincentivise individuals from applying in the first place. The still limited coverage of the IMV can be illustrated by the fact that only 64% of the total budget allocated for this programme in 2021 was implemented (Congreso de los Diputados, 2022^[12]). According to AIReF (2022^[5]), only 22% of households under the severe poverty line were covered by the IMV in December 2021 (284 000 out of 1 300 000). Furthermore, 400 000 households (57% of the total potential) could request the IMV and have not done so.

Digitalisation challenges and the outreach of potential claimants are also key factors in explaining the limited coverage of the IMV. According to interviews with local entities, claimants often do not know how to navigate the online request process and need specific assistance in this regard. Claims for the IMV can be submitted via the online application or in person at social security offices.⁴ As the IMV entered into force

in June 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, initial applications took place almost entirely on line, with the online channel representing 90% of applications in June and July 2020 (AIReF, 2022^[5]). In-person applications, however, have gained importance over time, with manual and mixed channels representing one-half of requests in December 2021. The decrease in the share of online applications may be related to digital difficulties faced by claimants during the process. In-person applications, however, are not always possible due to the scarcity of available appointments at social security offices, according to interviews with regional authorities.

While the online application form is now simpler and iterative (see below), there is still room for simplifying the paper form. Several studies have identified issues related to the readability of the IMV application form, which requires a reading time of approximately 25 minutes for 22 pages, uses formal and complicated language and has an unstructured visual design that does not help to structure or clarify the completion process. This lack of readability translates into a lengthy and complicated application process. Completing the submission procedure can take about one hour for professionals and social practitioners, and the process has been described as complex even for individuals with high education and solid digital skills (Costas, 2022^[13]; Prodigioso Volcán, 2020^[14]).

It also appears that non-take-up is related to institutional factors and claimants' personal situations. Take-up is much higher for households with minors, especially with respect to single-parent households. On the other hand, non-take-up is particularly high for those working or receiving unemployment subsidies. According to (AIReF, 2022^[5]), 91% of eligible households not requesting it have employment income, and 53% receive unemployment benefits. Non-take-up is particularly high for those whose potential income would increase by 20% or less if requesting the IMV, as the opportunity cost of the application appears high.

Information campaigns and support for claimants

Spain has launched initiatives to improve the benefit coverage through improved information and some automatisations of tasks.

The IMV information bus

In October 2022, the MISSM launched an information campaign to reach out to potential IMV recipients. One of the campaign's initiatives was the IMV information bus: a mobile social security office ("the bus") acting as a general information point for citizens where caseworkers explain the benefit, the eligibility criteria and other relevant details about the application process. Individuals who have already applied can also obtain information about the status of their application.

The bus has stopped in 40 different municipalities all over Spain and stayed in each for one to several days. It had two different points of contact for individuals. One is dedicated to those who might need general information about the IMV. The second is aimed at providing support for more specific questions, such as the status of one's application, the procedure to start claiming or how to find out what documents are required.

Application tutorials and simplification of the online process

One important possible reason for non-take-up is related to the complex eligibility requirements and administrative process, as well as, in some cases, long delays for process applications. Complex procedures often lead to errors and incomplete application forms. In this respect, over two years, the Instituto Nacional de la Seguridad Social (INSS) has performed a number of improvements in the application process. Simplified application processes are essential, especially in a context where the share of online applicants remains significant. As mentioned above, it is estimated that 70% of applications were rejected initially, with just over 40% of negative decisions due to the claimant not meeting the income and

wealth criteria; 10% were due to incomplete documentation; and 22% were due to problems with the justification of the household unit (often because of inconsistencies in the registration with a municipality or the fact that another person in the household had requested the IMV in parallel).

In terms of simplifying the online application process, the INSS has taken the following actions:

- It has designed an online tutorial to explain what the IMV is, its eligibility criteria and details concerning the online application.⁵
- The web version has a number of questions and answers to help with the process.
- One initial challenge was related to digital barriers and the requirement of a digital national identity certificate. To simplify the ID verification process, the INSS currently allows applicants to upload a selfie and a copy of their ID.
- The initial online application process had limits on data attachments of 30 Mbytes, which were often reached when applicants tried to attach images and other documents. This limit has since been removed.
- While previously, the form requested an email address, it is now possible to complete it using a smartphone, and the INSS is proceeding with ID checks via phone calls in some pilot regions.
- The online form only asks for information on household members if the person has indicated that there is more than one person in the household unit.
- The INSS has also created a system to generate a fictitious ID for minors who do not possess actual ID numbers, which previously generated errors for online applications.
- The INSS has also simplified the online application through an iterative form that displays explanatory windows and performs several consistency checks to simplify the process.
- The most recent version of the online form allows claimants to provide documents at a later stage if they are not initially available and to verify the state of their submission process.

In-person and phone outreach across Spain

Spain is also currently conducting a randomised control trial to evaluate the effectiveness of a campaign of active outreach to potential beneficiaries.⁶ Across 200 locations all over Spain, such as shelters or food distribution centres, social workers will be present for 12 weeks to provide information about the IMV. Social workers also help individuals assemble the documents required for the application and assist in filling it out.

The impact on take-up will be compared on the local level against the impact on take-up in 200 control locations. Additionally, there will be a social ads campaign in 200 locations (100 in the previous control group and the other 100 in the treatment group), with information on the IMV (simulator, general information and application platform).

To evaluate the impact, there are different types of information:

- A phone survey which contacts about 30 individuals in each of the 400 locations, both before and after the intervention. The questions are related to knowledge about the IMV, opinions about the application process and the benefit, as well as about trust in institutions.
- The number of applications for the IMV obtained from management data will be used, aggregated at the local level, to be able to measure if both treatments (outreach and ads) have impacted the reduction of non-take-up.

In addition, the MISSM has launched a pilot programme in co-operation with the tax authority to send texts (short message/messaging service, SMS) to potential beneficiaries selected on the basis of income and wealth data. The recipients of the SMS could authorise the MISSM to call them with a survey about the information they have on the IMV and offer support with the application process.

Barcelona Socio-economic Response Network

The Barcelona City Council operates the Socio-economic Response Network (XARSE), which assists people in accessing existing social programmes at the city level.⁷

The city launched XARSE in 2020 to assist people whose livelihoods were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The target population of its services are individuals who lack relevant information about benefits, have difficulties understanding bureaucratic language or do not have access to the Internet. XARSE operates multiple offices across the city of Barcelona and co-ordinates closely with the social services departments of the city. Its main services are:

1. Assist in the application process for social services, particularly the application to the IMV. XARSE staff assist individuals with the initial application and follow up with them to check their status.
2. Advise individuals on financial literacy and debt management and organise self-help support groups for users.
3. Assist individuals in handling problems that arise during the process of application for benefits, such as gathering the necessary supporting documents or accessing grievance redress mechanisms in case of rejected applications. The network thereby acts as an intermediary between applicants and local authorities.

Access to XARSE's services happens mainly through referral from social workers who identify relevant individuals in need and ensure that the neediest can receive adequate levels of support in accessing social services. Once individuals are referred to XARSE, they are assigned a caseworker and receive other relevant services (e.g. digital skills training) if required. XARSE can also directly refer applications and supporting documents to municipal social service offices.

Navarra processing units

As part of the AUNA project, the Comunidad Foral de Navarra operates "processing units" to support individuals in applying for the IMV or regional minimum income benefit.⁸ These units target both new applicants and existing recipients who wish to renew the benefit, providing both online and in-person support. They aim to assist individuals facing multiple barriers to facilitate their application for the IMV and, more generally, to speed up the overall process.

There are several points of contact through which individuals can get in touch with the processing units. Both the public employment and primary social services offices refer individuals. For instance, when users approach social services to claim the IMV, one eligibility condition is to be registered as actively looking for work with the employment services. If they are not registered, social services refer them to employment services, who will subsequently refer them to the processing units to support the IMV application.

This process ensures that vulnerable individuals benefit from an inclusion pathway by combining the monetary IMV support with support from social and employment services (Departamento de Derechos Sociales, Gobierno de Navarra, 2022_[15]).

3.1.3. Work incentives were introduced in 2023 and are likely to promote work, but not for all groups

A new measure to stimulate greater participation in the labour market among recipients of IMV was approved at the end of 2022 and entered into force at the beginning of 2023. The work incentive is aimed at motivating the beneficiary to enter the labour market or to increase the number of hours of employment by guaranteeing a higher benefit amount than without taking up employment.

According to OECD (2022_[16]), the employment incentive is divided into three tiers:

1. If a recipient's income increases compared to the previous year and is less than 60% of their IMV entitlement, they receive the total amount of their net earnings as a work incentive. This means that earnings below 60% of the IMV entitlement are not considered in the means test. It implies that the incentive provides the IMV recipient with an increase in income of the same amount as his or her income.
2. If the earnings increase falls between 60% and 100% of the previous IMV entitlement, the work incentive is partially added based on the composition of the recipient's household and whether the increase is due to a new job or increased working hours.
3. If the amount of the increase in income exceeds the amount of the guaranteed income, the household is not excluded directly from the benefit. The amount to be paid is so that the disposable total income does not decrease.

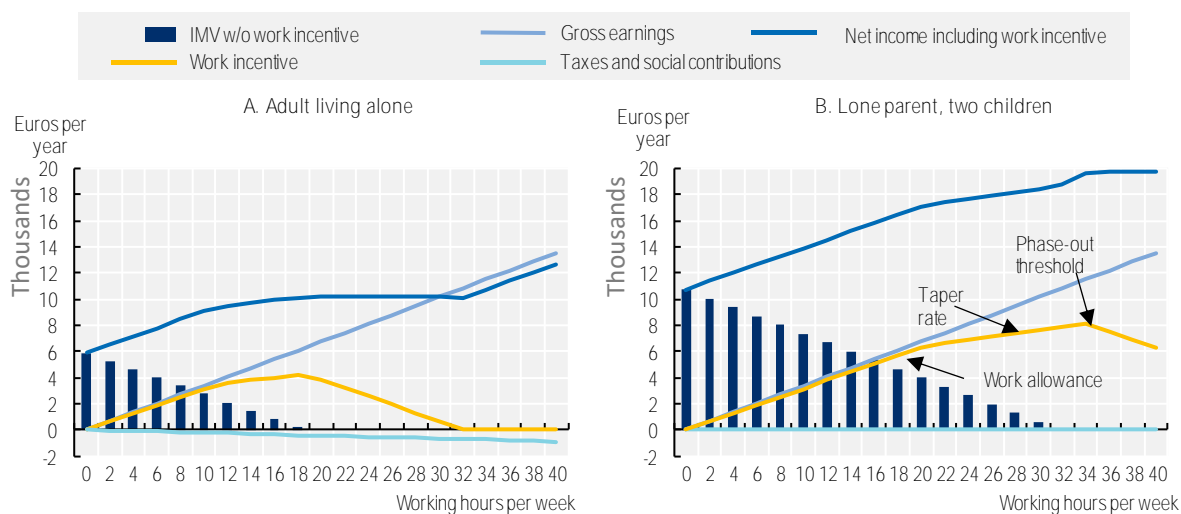
Regarding the reference periods, the new incentive is calculated from the increase between the previous year's income and the earnings before that year. This means that, for 2023, the IMV entitlement is measured on the basis of 2022 income, and the work incentive is calculated as the difference between 2021 and 2022 earnings.

The main findings of OECD (2022^[16]) (see Figure 3.4) show that:

*"The new work incentive significantly increases net incomes for recipients. Because it starts to phase out when earnings increases are equal to the (previous) benefit amount, for a single adult without children, it reaches its maximum of about EUR 4 000 per year at about three days of work per week at the minimum wage. Total IMV payments are maximised at about ten hours of work per week because the work allowance means that the work incentive completely compensates for the means test of the IMV. Increases in net income are therefore strongest for the lowest income increases, but net income remains flat or increasing up until full-time working hours."*⁹

Figure 3.4. Spain's new work incentive increases incomes for low working hours

Benefit amount, earnings and total income by working hours at minimum wage, by household type, 2023



Note: The new work incentive will be paid out from January 2023 but calculated based on wage increases between 2021 and 2022. Children are four and six years old. The lone parent benefits from the tax credit for large families, which offsets social security contributions (SSC) up to EUR 1 200 per year. These calculations correspond to the design of the IMV work incentives as of mid-2022.

Source: OECD TaxBEN model: IMV work incentive module. Taken from OECD (2022^[16]), "The new work incentive for Spain's national Minimum Income Benefit". www.oecd.org/social/benefits-and-wages/Note_on_the_new_work_incentive_Spain.pdf

Most OECD countries operate programmes that fall into partial unemployment benefit, into-work benefit or in-work benefit. However, only a handful of countries operated a benefit targeted at social assistance recipients in 2022 and can thus be compared in some of their aspects to the IMV work incentive introduced in Spain. Some examples in the European Union are:

- **Subsistence Benefit (Estonia):** Social assistance recipients retain part of their social assistance payments for up to six months after taking up work.
- **Prime d'Activite (France):** An in-work benefit for low earners.
- **Solidarity Income (Greece):** Social assistance recipients may retain part of their previous social assistance benefit for up to six months when moving into work.
- **Working Family Payment and Back to Work Family Dividend (Ireland):** An in-work benefit for low-earning families with children and a flat-rate subsidy for social assistance recipients moving into work.
- **Into-work Benefit for Recipients of Social Assistance (Italy):** Social assistance recipients continue to receive part of their social assistance benefits when moving into work and pay lower social security contributions on their earnings for 12 to 24 months.

Interesting examples in non-EU countries include:

- **Canada Workers' Benefit:** A targeted refundable tax credit for low-income workers.
- **Universal Credit (United Kingdom):** Social assistance benefit that is smoothly phased out for increasing earnings.
- **Earned Income Tax Credit (United States):** Fully refundable tax credit for low earners.

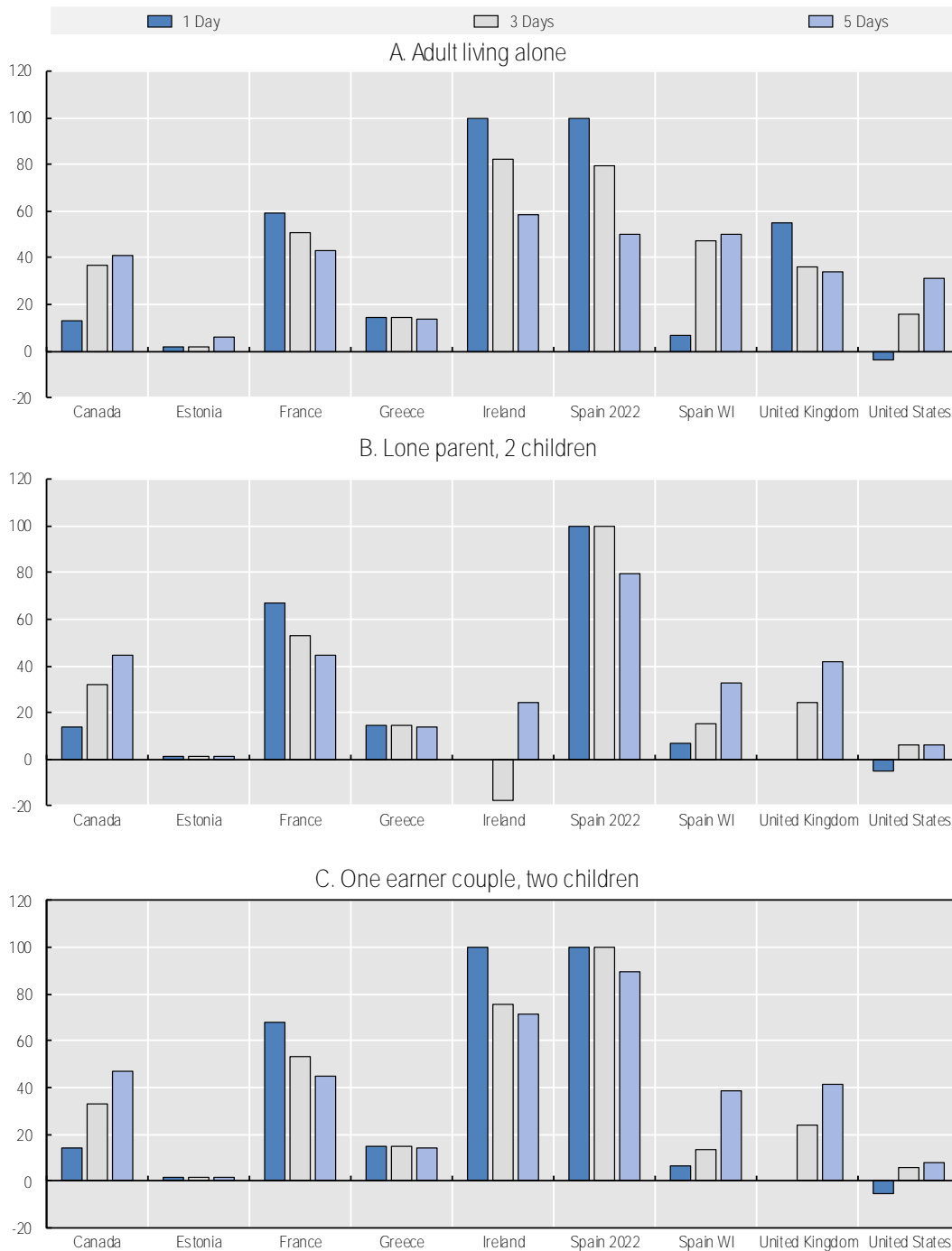
Comparisons based on OECD TaxBEN models show that the new work incentive significantly decreases the cost of taking up work. To illustrate this, Figure 3.5 presents the participation tax rate (PTR) for minimum income recipients taking up work at the minimum wage as a function of the number of days per week worked in the above-mentioned countries. In 2022, before the introduction of the IMV work incentive, the PTR for IMV recipients taking up a job working eight hours at the minimum wage was 100% for all household types. This means the IMV was fully withdrawn against labour income (see Figure 3.5, 1 day/week in all panels).

The new work incentive reduces the PTR for all household types. For an IMV recipient taking up eight hours (1 day in Figure 3.5) of work per week at the minimum wage, the PTR is only 7% because earnings are still below the work allowance. Looking at other countries, only households in Estonia and the United States would face even lower PTRs.¹⁰ For recipients taking up jobs with longer hours – three and five days, respectively – PTRs with the new IMV work incentive remain very low in Spain compared to other countries. For adults living alone, PTRs at substantial part-time (three days a week) and full-time work at the minimum wage are comparable to France but still higher than in all countries except Ireland. For households with children, however, working full-time at the minimum wage is substantially more attractive under the new IMV work incentive scheme than in France, Canada and the United Kingdom.

In sum, the new work incentive makes taking up work significantly more attractive, particularly for very low earnings (up to eight hours a week of work) and families with children. However, childless adults taking up full-time work at the minimum wage do not appear to benefit from the subsidy. This reflects the assumption that IMV recipients will choose a full-time job (even paid at the minimum wage) rather than receive the IMV, which may not always be the case.

Figure 3.5. **Spain's new work** incentive lowers effective tax burdens for low-earners

Average participation tax rates for minimum income recipients taking up work at minimum wage, by working time, 2022



Note: For (previous) minimum income recipients who were not entitled to unemployment benefits and are moving into work. PTRs include all benefits except housing support. The adult is aged 40, any children are aged 4 and 6. These calculations correspond to the design of the IMV work incentives as of mid-2022.

Source: OECD TaxBEN model: IMV work incentive module. Taken from OECD (2022^[16]), "The new work incentive for Spain's national Minimum Income Benefit". www.oecd.org/social/benefits-and-wages/Note-on-the-new-work-incentive-Spain.pdf

3.1.4. Access to active inclusion programmes for IMV recipients is not guaranteed

Currently, no specific assessment process is carried out for IMV beneficiaries, as so far, it has only been developed as a monetary benefit. However, the IMV legislation (Ley 19/2021, 20 December) foresees the development of inclusion itineraries to foster the social inclusion of recipients. According to the law, this inclusion process may be related to different dimensions, such as finding a job or treating a health condition. Itineraries shall be developed in collaboration with the AACC and local entities, as these administrative levels are closer to the concrete reality of beneficiaries through social services departments and offices and have the legal mandate to provide this type of support. Collaboration is also foreseen with third-sector entities and the private sector. The design of itineraries shall be aimed at removing social or labour obstacles that hinder the full exercise of rights and undermine social cohesion.

While social services are currently the most common entry point for regional minimum income recipients in Spain (see below), interviews with the AACC highlight that the target population for the IMV is typically broader and larger than the one for regional schemes, for which the assessment process was originally designed. Based on interviews, regional authorities agree that social services should be the entry point only when social accompaniment is needed and that overburdening these departments with the assessment and profiling of all IMV recipients may lead to an overburden of social workers with administrative tasks, reducing their capacity to perform accompaniment tasks.

While inclusion itineraries have not been developed for all IMV beneficiaries, a series of pilot projects are being implemented in different AACC that entail the assessment of IMV recipients' inclusion needs with the goal of establishing a personalised itinerary. These projects are part of two packages of pilot projects set up by the MISSM in 2021 and 2022. These packages aim to develop inclusion itineraries through grant agreements with local entities, the AACC and the third sector. Several pilot projects entail the referral of beneficiaries to specific inclusion itineraries, whether focused on social inclusion, labour inclusion, or both. Examples of how referral work in specific pilot projects targeted at IMV recipients include:

- In Aragón, a project includes referral to two types of pathways after the initial assessment of the participants. Each participant has a professional of reference who orients them towards a specific itinerary, which is characterised by networking between various services to achieve a multidimensional intervention that involves the personal, economic, health, housing, social and educational promotion, pre-employment and employment areas.
- Another interesting example is the “Barcelona pilot project”. After assessing the barriers and needs of participants, the professionals working in the one-stop-shop are responsible for referring the users to the most adequate inclusion programmes provided by various entities. Referring professionals work in co-ordination with these entities and continue to provide individualised support during and after the inclusion activities.
- A project in Extremadura seeks to improve the labour market insertion and health status of women aged 18 to 45 with dependent minors who receive the IMV and/or the regional minimum income. It includes social accompaniment actions, labour insertion itineraries, mental health services and therapy in healthy habits, as well as employment practices. As the result of an evaluation, participants are divided into three groups: 1) a socio-occupational group, which receives interventions from the teams in the socio-occupational field; 2) a health-intervention group, which receives interventions from the health sector; and 3) a group that receives support in social, labour and health areas. The support is provided by interdisciplinary and interterritorial teams comprising five professionals from the social, health and employment fields. They design individual plans and propose the appropriate measures for each person, referring them to the appropriate resources or services. Therefore, the process of referral to other services is initiated by the team of professionals working directly with the user.

In addition to specific pilot projects, IMV recipients are currently automatically referred to the public employment service (PES) for automatic registration as jobseekers. Such registration is waived for several categories, including students, carers of older people and those receiving disability or long-term care benefits. The legislation does not foresee any specific penalty for IMV recipients other than those already in force for any jobseeker registered with the PES.

3.2. Regional minimum schemes have different eligibility criteria, and the process for active inclusion differs widely

3.2.1. Application for regional benefits might be easier than IMV due to in-person application and easier forms, but there are significant differences

In most regions, the application process for minimum income includes the possibility of both online forms and in-person applications, either at the local social services or in employment offices. Some regional minimum income applications are less complex than the one used for the IMV. The only AACC where in-person submissions are not a possibility is Canarias, although it is still possible for claimants to receive assistance with the process in local social services offices. Online applications are not possible in Cantabria, Cataluña and the Región de Murcia. In addition to the most common channels, Comunidad Foral de Navarra and País Vasco offer support units for those claimants who choose to apply online but need assistance with the procedure. Among the regions with online and in-person means, based on the interviews with Castilla y León and Galicia, it appears that most of the time, the application is processed in person at social services to receive support in completing the application.

According to interviews with regional authorities, the regions face a high volume of in-person claims, as claimants often lack the necessary digital and administrative skills to fill in the online applications themselves. In some instances, this leads to an overburden for social workers, reducing their time to perform social support functions as they are overloaded with administrative processing tasks. In addition, this situation can lead to delays both when it comes to the first appointment for in-person applications and for the processing of the benefit once the application is submitted. While there is no systematic information on appointment waiting times, interviews with regional actors suggest significant territorial variation among local entities. In some regions, such as Cantabria, applications can be submitted on the same day the applicant goes to the social services desk without an appointment. In others, such as Galicia or Comunitat Valenciana, it can take up to one month to submit the application or to get a first appointment with social services. In País Vasco, it takes one to two weeks, and in Cataluña, it takes fewer than ten days. In terms of processing times, which in most cases are specified in the legislation, there are also significant differences, with maximum delays for resolution ranging from one month in Cantabria and Castilla-La Mancha to a maximum of six months in Comunitat Valenciana and País Vasco.

A possible alternative to the handling of all processes by local social services offices can be found in Canarias, where the new MIS (Renta Canaria de Ciudadanía), which entered into force in April 2023, has decreased the administrative workload of local social workers. With the new income, the application is made directly to the government of the Canary Islands. The centralisation of the application means that the municipality is no longer in charge of all the administrative procedures. Once the benefit is approved, the file is transferred to the municipality, and the social workers and intervention professionals can engage in the process of social inclusion and diagnosis of risk situations.

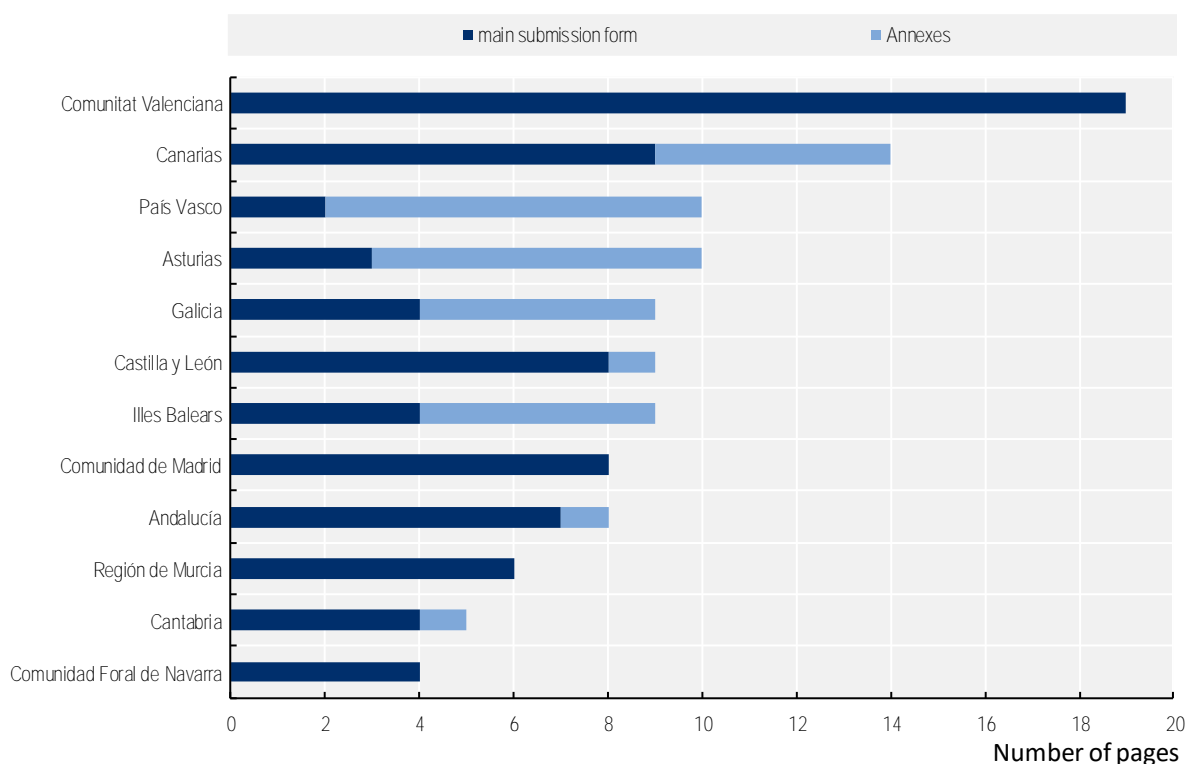
Regarding the readability of minimum income application forms in the different AACC, there is no systematic research on the language and process of all regional schemes. However, reports on selected cases suggest that the language and administrative burdens related to submission forms present a significant barrier for claimants. A questionnaire shared with professionals in the area of minimum income in all Spanish AACC in 2014 reported that, according to practitioners, up to 44% of individuals who had

the right to a regional MIS did not apply due to the complexity of documentation required (EAPN España, 2014^[17]). In Cataluña, third-sector entities remark that difficulties related to the application procedure often result in claimants needing to go more than twice to employment offices for the application and even requiring assistance from social services or third-sector entities, with some claimants even paying someone to do the application for them (Taula d'entitats del Tercer Sector Social de Catalunya, 2022^[18]). Similarly, in Andalucía, claimants often face difficulties understanding the technical vocabulary and the bureaucratic procedures, needing additional appointments and phone calls with professionals (Estepa Maestre and Roca Martínez, 2018^[19]).

A key element of readability can be the length of application forms, which shows significant variation between AACC. Those with simpler forms are Principado de Asturias, Illes Balears, Cantabria, Galicia and País Vasco, all with application forms of under four pages, a length that can make it more accessible for claimants with more limited administrative knowledge. The longest form is found in Comunitat Valenciana, with a total length of 19 pages. It should be noted, however, that some of these differences come from annexes. Figure 3.6 shows the length of forms and annexes to be filled by claimants in a selection of regions for which information is available.

Figure 3.6. The length of Spain's MIS application forms varies substantially by region

Number of pages of application forms and annexes for minimum income benefits



Note: Only AACC for which submission forms and annexes are available are included in the figure. Only one copy is counted for annexes that need to be filled once per family member.

Source: Regional minimum income claiming forms.

Another important aspect is the comprehensiveness of the information collected. Table 3.3 shows the elements covered in a selection of regional minimum income submission forms. All the forms cover income, wealth, employment and information concerning the family unit. Additionally, most of the forms also gather information on housing, disabilities and whether claimants belong to a vulnerable group, such as being a

victim of gender violence, single-parent family units, refugees or the Roma community. Education, care duties and language skills are less commonly included in submission forms.

Table 3.3. **Items covered in Spain's** regional MIS application forms

	Income	Wealth	Labour	Educa-tion	Housing	Incapacit-y	Depend-ency	Care duties	Family unit	Lan-guage	Vulnerabl-e group
Andalucía	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Aragón											
Principado de Asturias	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		
Illes Balears	✓	✓							✓		
Canarias	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Cantabria	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		
Castilla-La Mancha	✓	✓	✓						✓		
Castilla y León	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Cataluña											
Comunitat Valenciana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Extremadura											
Galicia	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓
La Rioja	✓	✓							✓		✓
Comunidad de Madrid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Región de Murcia		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		
Comunidad Foral de Navarra	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
País Vasco	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓		✓
IMV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Source: Regional forms from the regional websites and the IMV form from the Spanish Social Security platform. No information available for Aragón, Cataluña and Extremadura.

In general, the AACC forms that cover more items are usually longer. Therefore, while more aspects of the situation of the applicant and his/her family unit are captured, it does not reduce the complexity and time of the application process if the form has a high number of pages to be filled in. In other words, careful design is needed to capture more information in application forms without increasing their complexity and application times.

Gathering a comprehensive set of information can be particularly useful in making the assessment of beneficiaries' needs and tailoring social inclusion itineraries to each recipient's specific needs and circumstances more efficient. For example, one of the most comprehensive forms in the table is the case of Andalucía. In this region, the information from the form is automatically transferred into the tool used for the needs assessment, facilitating the work of social workers (see Table 3.3 and further comments below).

On wealth, both real estate and other financial assets are considered in examining claimants' wealth status. As with income, responsible declarations ("Declaración responsable de ingresos y patrimonio") are most commonly employed to check claimants' information.

Nine regions ask directly about the claimant's current employment situation (i.e. employed, unemployed, not active) in the form. The Canarias request the claimant's specific profession. Andalucía, Cantabria, Canarias, Castilla y León, Comunitat Valenciana, Comunidad de Madrid, Región de Murcia and Comunidad Foral de Navarra ask directly about the level of the claimant's studies and qualifications.

Regarding housing, eight regions include a section about the applicant's living situation. For example, if he/she lives in a rented flat, property, hostel, caravan, sub-standard housing or other type of dwelling. Castilla y León is the only region whose form includes the claimant's care duties. Moreover, it also has one section on the schooling of minors and the educational establishment where they are registered.

Despite the fact that in the regions with a second official language, the applicant is asked in which language he/she prefers to be addressed by the administration, the level of these languages is not included in any of the forms examined.

All forms request information regarding sources of income, but there is variation regarding the reference periods for assessing income and the required documentation. Andalucía and Comunitat Valenciana consider the month prior to the application, while Canarias or Castilla La-Mancha count the three months immediately prior to the submission. Comunidad Foral de Navarra considers the last six months, whereas Galicia considers the last fiscal year.

In a study framed in the Spanish regional MIS context, Berjón and Gorjón (2021^[20]) show that considering the poverty income of the year prior to the application to determine a person's current poverty status leaves half of the poor population undiscovered. This is because the transition factors into poverty are disregarded. In other words, the current design of the income proof does not cover all individuals who may have moved into poverty within the year of application. The study suggests that this gap could be addressed by asking for an attestation of the net income for the last three months instead of the income tax return for the last year.

The documents to provide for the income assessment also show differences in time periods. In Cataluña, the bank statement for the last two months is requested, while in Castilla y León, bank documents from the last year and the current balance of the accounts are requested. In Comunidad Foral de Navarra, a bank certificate is required with the current balance of all accounts held, and for employees under a regular contract, an employment contract and payslips for the last six months are required. For self-employed individuals, a tax declaration for the past two trimesters and balance, a certificate of benefits and rental contracts are required. However, most regions allow applicants to submit a responsible declaration of income.¹¹ This declaration reduces the number of documents that users need to provide to certify their income status, as it allows the administration to make the necessary verifications and enquiries. It simplifies how claimants fill in the section on income and assets.

Concerning health status, most regions consider the disability situation of the claimant and/or the family unit. As for the situation of dependency, five regions directly address this condition in their forms. An example of a clear section regarding health status can be found in Cantabria, whose form has a section dedicated to persons in a situation of dependency and disability in the family unit. In some AACC, such as Comunidad Foral de Navarra, data on disability and dependency status are not requested directly from users because they are checked directly by the administration. In the case of this AACC, only users with a disability or dependency assessment from another AACC must present the certificates.

Finally, the situations of vulnerability that users may be facing are also reflected directly in some of the forms examined. In this case, belonging to a minority or vulnerable group might include being a victim of gender violence, living in a single-parent family unit, being a refugee, or belonging to the Roma community, among others. Only those AACC with specific sections to be filled in by users in reference to these cases have been highlighted in the table above. It should be noted that in all of them, people in a situation of vulnerability, such as gender-based violence or asylum, can provide the necessary documents with their applications.

3.2.2. Needs assessment to design itineraries is not always carried out with systematic procedures and tools

Needs assessment for MIS beneficiaries is a key step in designing personalised social and labour inclusion itineraries. Table 3.4 provides an overview of the key elements of the assessment process for minimum income recipients in 11 AACC where regional MIS have associated social inclusion itineraries, either for the beneficiaries themselves or their entire family units. They include the first contact with the administration, the department responsible for acting as the entry point and the methodology used for conducting the assessment to determine the specific actions or areas to be included in the social inclusion itinerary.

Table 3.4. Assessment process for the design of social inclusion itineraries at the regional level in Spain

AACC	Entry point	First contact with beneficiaries of future itineraries	Specific tool to assess the design of the itineraries	Assessment made at the discretion of professionals
Andalucía	Social services	Social worker in charge of the itinerary	✓	
Principado de Asturias	Social services	Automatic contact from the social worker in charge of the itinerary		✓
Canarias	Social services	Social worker in charge of the itinerary		✓
Castilla-La Mancha	Social services	Social worker in charge of the itinerary	✓	
Castilla y León	Social Services	Social worker in charge of the itinerary	✓	
Cataluña	Employment office	Employment office during the processing of the benefit	✓	
Comunitat Valenciana	Social services	Social worker in charge of the itinerary	✓	
Galicia	Social services	Social worker in charge of the itinerary		✓
Comunidad de Madrid	Social services	Social worker in charge of the itinerary		✓
Comunidad Foral de Navarra	Social services and employment office	Automatic contact from administrative teams (AUNA project)	✓	
País Vasco	Employment office	Contact at the employment office	In development	

Note: Only AACC that implement social inclusion itineraries as part of their minimum income framework and for which information is available are included in the table. The answer for Castilla-La Mancha refers to the previous social inclusion itineraries linked to regional minimum income. País Vasco is developing a profiling tool to evaluate and design itineraries to be implemented in 2023. In regions with no specific tool to design itineraries, the evaluation is made at the discretion of professionals, mostly social workers.

Source: OECD interviews with regional authorities (2023).

Of the 11 regions for which information is available on the process of inclusion itineraries, social services offices are the most common entry point in 7, while employment offices are the entry point in 2 (Cataluña and País Vasco). Comunidad Foral de Navarra is the only region where both social services and the employment office act as a joint entry point. In this case, staff members from the AUNA project are responsible for contacting the recipients who will be offered integrated care provision from social and employment services. In regions where social services are the entry point for assessing a claimant's needs, social workers are typically in charge of it, whereas workers from employment offices act as the first contact in Cataluña and País Vasco. In Comunidad Foral de Navarra, a joint team of a social worker and an employment worker handles the first contact.

Regarding assessment tools, two approaches are observed in the selected regions. In five of them, specific tools have been developed to assess beneficiaries' social inclusion needs, while in Principado de Asturias, Canarias, Galicia, and Comunidad de Madrid, the assessment of needs is fully performed by social workers based on their professional judgement. Table 3.5 provides an overview of the assessment tools used in

Andalucía, Castilla-La Mancha, Región de Murcia and Comunidad Foral de Navarra, including the department responsible for the tool and the areas covered.

Table 3.5. Assessment tools in selected regions of Spain

Items	Andalucía	Castilla-La Mancha	Región de Murcia	Comunidad Foral de Navarra
Tool	SIRMI	SISO (social services) and SISPE (employment services)	Assessment of Employability Level ¹	Profiling process
Responsible department	Social services	Individual responsibility in each department: Social and employment services	Social services	Social services, employment or processing units
Type of co-ordination	No co-ordination	Data sharing	Co-ordinated referrals	Co-ordinated work
Dimensions covered				
Economic dimension	✓	✓		✓
Employment	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education and training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing situation	✓	✓		✓
Health status	✓	✓		✓
Support network	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: 1. The assessment tool in Región de Murcia was framed in the co-ordination protocol between social services and employment in 2017. Source: OECD interviews with regional authorities (2023) and official protocols of selected regions.

The tools mentioned in Table 3.5 have different characteristics depending on the specific categories and indicators and the room given to social workers to determine the needs of recipients of regional minimum income benefits and actions to be taken:

- In Andalucía, the *Sistema de Información de la Renta Mínima de Inserción Social* (SIRMI) pre-fills available information about recipients so that social workers only complete the additional information needed. The assessment regards different areas: cohabitation and social support network, economic status, employment, housing, health and education; and is used to set specific social and labour inclusion programmes in which the recipient is committed to participate, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure the expected results.
- In Castilla-La Mancha,¹² SISO (social services) covers a range of social exclusion dimensions: economic, employment, training, residential, health, relational and personal. In turn, each dimension is composed of specific indicators (for example, for economic exclusion: income, source of income, main expected source of income and severe material deprivation). Each indicator is rated on a scale of five levels: very difficult, quite difficult, some difficulty, little difficulty or none. An aggregate score indicates if the exclusion is severe, moderate or minor.
- In Región de Murcia, the assessment is focused on employability by analysing the education and employment information, complemented by information on the support network.
- In Comunidad Foral de Navarra, the AUNA project employs a profiling tool. A team of professionals from social services and employment completes a preliminary profile of beneficiaries covering six key exclusion areas: economic, employment, training, residential, socio-sanitary and relational. As in the case of SISO, each area is broken down into specific indicators. Once the assessment is completed, results are used to refer individuals to employment services if they are employable, social services if they are not ready for employment, or to a joint action of both services.

All the tools analysed include a multidimensional perspective assessing the economic dimension, employment, education, housing, health, and the social support network of beneficiaries. This is an

essential feature, as social exclusion is commonly related to income poverty, but also other aspects that capture an individual's level of vulnerability [see Chapter 1 and (Bak, 2018^[21]; Saraceno, 2001^[22])]. Therefore, using assessment tools that take a holistic perspective can help to ensure that all relevant areas of need are considered in the social inclusion itinerary, leading to a more comprehensive and effective approach to promoting social inclusion.

3.2.3. Some regions have established referral and co-ordination with other services for beneficiaries

This section describes how units in charge of the initial assessment of minimum income beneficiaries orient them to the most relevant unit to address their specific needs and the professionals in charge of their inclusion itineraries.

In many regions, social services are also the main actor in designing and providing many inclusion itineraries, originally developed to complement and support regional MIS. This is the case of Andalucía, Canarias (where itineraries are still being developed), Castilla y León, Castilla-La Mancha, and Comunidad de Madrid. For these cases, referral to other services and departments, such as employment services, only takes place for specific cases and programmes:

- In Andalucía, co-ordination with other areas is not consolidated and can vary depending on the municipality.
- In Castilla y León, referral to other departments, such as employment or education, can occur, although social services remain in charge of the itinerary. Specific referrals are organised through provincial social inclusion commissions that bring together representatives from social services, employment, housing, education and local and third-sector entities. Meetings are organised every two months. These commissions analyse specific cases to establish collaboration between agencies in the intervention.
- In Comunidad de Madrid, recipients of the regional minimum income can participate in specific programmes targeted at this collective by the employment department.

For those regions where the employment department is in charge of needs assessment, referrals can occur in different ways. Cataluña has a referral protocol between employment and social services, although the process is not automatic. Beneficiaries identified after the assessment as not having an employment profile are referred to social services for a social itinerary. Beneficiaries are the ones responsible for contacting the local social services during the ten days following the needs assessment to ask for an appointment to start the inclusion plan. In the case of País Vasco, employment services are currently in charge of all minimum income beneficiaries. However, a reform process will contemplate the possibility of establishing co-ordinated or integrated itineraries with other areas, such as social services, following a needs assessment.

Finally, regions with automatic referral mechanisms after the needs assessment include Principado de Asturias, Comunitat Valenciana, Galicia and Comunidad Foral de Navarra. In some of these cases, beneficiaries are automatically referred to employment services, whereas in others, joint itineraries can be established:

- In Principado de Asturias, after the needs assessment by social services, minimum income beneficiaries can be considered as having social, socio-occupational or only occupational needs. In the two first cases, the social services department is in charge of inclusion itineraries, with co-ordination with employment services for socio-occupational ones. For beneficiaries with only occupational needs, there is an automatic referral to the Principado de Asturias PES, which is in charge of those minimum income recipients who only need labour integration support due to lack of employment.

- In Comunitat Valenciana, for regional minimum income recipients, social services automatically initiate the referral to the employment services (LABORA) if the itinerary the beneficiary must follow is only focused on employment barriers. Each person has a reference professional in the social services centres and the employment office. To guarantee co-ordination, there is always a reference professional at the social services centre since this is the department in charge of the economic benefit.
- The Renta de Inclusión Social de Galicia has several stages depending on the beneficiaries' social condition. In social services, an employability diagnosis is conducted in co-ordination with employment technicians to determine whether a person is suitable for employment. A socio-labour insertion agreement can then be established in collaboration between departments. Co-ordination between social services and employment is structured through a protocol between departments.
- Finally, in Comunidad Foral de Navarra, after the joint needs assessment performed by professionals from the social services and the employment department, beneficiaries can be referred to social services to start the social itinerary (if they do not have a sufficient level of employability), to employment services (if they only need job reinforcement) or to the AUNA project, which combines the joint intervention of social and employment services. The referral is made directly at the agencies where the person has applied for the benefit and where the profiling is made. Therefore, social services, employment and benefit processing units can refer to the relevant agency after assessment of the recipient's needs (following profiling).

In Comunidad Foral de Navarra, when the profiling process detects that the beneficiary needs more comprehensive care, a referral is made directly to the attention of both the departments of social services and employment services. In this joint co-ordination, personalised itineraries are prepared for each beneficiary through pair teams of professionals formed by a professional from social services and a technical profile from the employment agency. The beneficiary's competences, labour and social expectations are examined through each expert's Social Assessment and Employability Assessment instruments. The professionals meet regularly to build a shared diagnosis and plan the joint intervention process. In addition, the pairs draft the Personalised Plan for Social Inclusion (PPIS) with the beneficiary within a maximum of two weeks following the initial interview. The team works with the participant in preparing the PPIS, which includes both social support and support for the active job search (i.e. tutoring, social accompaniment, design of a personal plan of insertion, training offer, job offer, etc).

In brief, the intervention model of the joint action in Comunidad Foral de Navarra between social services and employment is based on the following elements:

- high-intensity support processes for the beneficiary
- common assessment tools and shared information (connection between employment and social services information systems)
- spaces for joint interaction and close co-operation between employment and primary care social services.

3.2.4. Regions with inclusion itineraries tend to have conditionality requirements, but requirements vary

Conditionality on participation in social inclusion itineraries

Regarding inclusion itineraries, conditionality might be linked to the obligation to attend appointments with social services and/or employment, participate in specific integration programmes or comply with the measures decided on in the personalised plan. Almost every AACC that proposes concrete social inclusion itineraries establishes the commitment to and participation in the itineraries as a condition for continuing to receive the benefit. In some cases, the conditionality is associated with a top-up of the cash support; for

example, the basic benefit is unconditional, but supplements might be subject to conditions. For example, in Comunitat Valenciana, there is a basic unconditional minimum income, and people can participate in social inclusion itineraries that entitle them to additional benefits on healthcare. Most recipients prefer the conditional option. In Cataluña, the conditionality of the benefit is only applied in one of the components of the regional minimum income: the conditional part only applies to recipients of a EUR 150 top-up and conditions are defined in their personalised plan.

There are some geographical disparities within the AACC in the application of conditionality. For instance, in La Rioja, it was pointed out that larger cities can apply conditionality in specific activation measures. At the same time, it cannot be efficiently implemented in rural areas due to obstacles to geographical mobility or beneficiaries' lack of resources.

Some regions extend this conditionality criteria to members of the family unit. In this scenario, the beneficiary signs the personalised plan, but all the family unit members must participate in the activities and measures. This is the case in Andalucía, Principado de Asturias, Comunitat Valenciana or Galicia, among others. In other AACC, only the person who applied and receive the income support is subject to the conditions. Examples of this last case occur in Cataluña, where the social inclusion itinerary is to be signed and followed only by the entitled beneficiary. An intermediate situation occurs in Castilla y León, where members of the family unit must commit to the fulfilment of the individualised insertion project only if they are in a situation of severe social exclusion (structural social exclusion); in other cases, only the entitled beneficiary must participate in the itinerary.

Drawing from the interviews with regional authorities, another condition that seems of great importance is the fulfilment of school attendance for children within the beneficiaries' family units. This requirement is embedded in several regional minimum income laws. In Castilla y León, complying with the children's schooling is a requirement to continue receiving the regional minimum income benefit. In Cataluña, if the plan includes the commitment to take children to school and it is not fulfilled, the beneficiary will lose the top-up. It has been reported that, in some cases, the end of the social inclusion itinerary when moving on to receive the IMV has implied an increase in school absenteeism for those previously receiving regional minimum income benefits.

Using conditionality in providing minimum income benefits requires a comprehensive understanding of the beneficiaries' situations, considering barriers, obstacles and their engagement in the social and labour measures. In general, conditionality is assumed by AACC as a positive reinforcement of social and labour insertion itineraries rather than as a stick to constrain beneficiaries to fulfil the conditions under the penalty of being punished (by a suspension or cancellation of their entitlement). Even more, some AACC have implemented measures to help vulnerable recipients fulfil the entitlement conditions (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2. Measures to encourage the fulfilment of entitlement conditions in Spain's AACC

Whether it is to attend appointments with social services, employment, job interviews or training courses, fulfilling these activities can be a challenge for users who do not have access to transport or live in areas with access restrictions. To overcome these barriers, a pilot project in Canarias for the improvement of digital skills for beneficiaries of minimum income (funded by the MISSM and implemented by the European Anti-Poverty Network [EAPN] Canarias) provides transport for participants so that individuals without access to transport can reach the training.

In Comunitat Valenciana, beneficiaries granted the IMV do not cease to be registered as a recipient of the regional income benefit. Thanks to this, although the beneficiary no longer receives the cash support from the regional minimum income benefit, he/she continues to be entitled to other benefits whose access is only possible through the regional MIS (i.e. scholarships, books and/or medicine subsidies). In this way, recipients also remain linked to the social inclusion itineraries and comply with its conditionality requirements as they are still regional minimum income beneficiaries.

Source: OECD interviews with regional authorities (2023).

Conditionality on being registered as a jobseeker

Another type of widely used behavioural conditions is related to active job search. This is the case of the IMV, which requires recipients (with a few exceptions) to be registered as jobseekers and foresees sanctions in case of non-compliance. Also, the condition of being registered as a jobseeker in the local employment offices exists in almost all regional legislations. The exceptions are Aragón, Extremadura, Comunidad de Madrid, Región de Murcia and Galicia. Aragón does not mention this condition in its laws, while Extremadura, Comunidad de Madrid and Región de Murcia do not formally establish the condition as such but state the requirement to actively participate in the individual labour insertion project (which often requires registration in the PES). In Galicia, it is not necessary to be registered to apply for the first benefit level. However, there is a conditionality element linked to employment to receive the labour inclusion level of the scheme (tramo de inserción al empleo).

In some regions, the condition of being registered as a jobseeker applies to the family members of working age of the family unit. This is the case in Andalucía, where all working-age persons who are not studying or providing care for a dependent person must register as jobseekers at the employment office. In most regions, the jobseeker registration condition can be exempted in some specific cases. A typical example is when a person is declared unable to work. For instance, in Castilla y León, mental health disorders or addictions are considered cases of exception.

In many cases, being registered in the employment offices may grant access to other benefits. For example, in Principado de Asturias, if someone cannot be employable when the minimum income benefit is awarded, the claimant should be registered as a jobseeker because the jobseeker status opens the door to receiving other benefits. Regional authorities see this “implicit condition” as positive because it helps keep people connected with the labour market; however, this may also overload the employment services with people who are not employable.

The possibility of combining income from social benefits and work is understood as an entitlement conditionality rather than as a behavioural conditionality (see Section 3.1.2). To provide a general overview, Table 3.6 shows the conditionality criteria concerning participation in activation measures, registration as jobseekers and the extent to which these conditions extend to the family unit.

Table 3.6. **Conditionality of minimum income schemes in Spain's AACC**

	Participation in labour activation and/or inclusion measures	Registration as a jobseeker	Activation to the family unit
Andalucía	✓	✓	✓
Aragón			
Principado de Asturias	✓	✓	✓
Illes Balears		✓	
Canarias	✓	✓	✓
Cantabria	✓	✓	
Castilla-La Mancha			
Castilla y León	✓	✓	Only compulsory in severe social exclusion
Cataluña	Partially	✓	
Comunitat Valenciana	Partially	✓	✓
Extremadura	✓		
Galicia	✓		✓
La Rioja	✓	✓	
Comunidad de Madrid	✓		✓
Región de Murcia	✓		✓
Comunidad Foral de Navarra	✓	✓	✓
País Vasco	✓	✓	✓
IMV		✓	

Source: Minimum income laws in AACC and OECD interviews with regional authorities (2023). Information not available for Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha.

3.2.5. Specific support programmes to transition from minimum income benefits into employment are not widespread

A key goal of minimum income benefits is to empower recipients to live on their own earnings and avoid the benefit dependency trap,¹³ possibly on a stable basis, i.e. with a low probability of being forced to reapply for income support. Active labour market programmes, ideally, should lead beneficiaries to take up a stable job or, at least, to reintegrate into the labour market stably. In countries with dynamic labour markets, it is easier for PES to connect jobseekers with employers and propose training and upskilling programmes. Also, job offers are better and more frequent, making it easier to ask jobseekers to accept them.

This might be a challenge in Spain, where unemployment is high and, in some sectors and regions, is objectively difficult for PES to find reasonable job proposals. However, some policies exist to help those who exit MIS to take up jobs, such as in-work benefits to open the possibility of combining earnings from work or specific agreements between social partners to boost the recruitment of beneficiaries. Geographical labour mobility is an instrument still to be explored in Spain. This last measure includes providing support to jobseekers to relocate or commute to take up new jobs.

Initiatives to encourage transition to employment

Social employment, self-employment, or hire subsidies targeted at recipients of minimum income benefits are initiatives that favour the transition to employment. Such measures allow beneficiaries to access the labour market and gain experience and encourage companies' involvement in promoting social inclusion.

In most regions, minimum income recipients who participate in social inclusion itineraries have priority for participating in employment and vocational plans. Additionally, some regions have developed specific

agreements with local agents to build employment plans. This is the case of Principado de Asturias, which has developed municipal employment plans in which 15% of places in social enterprises are reserved for people receiving the Basic Social Benefit. Similarly, the agreement with employment services in Castilla-La Mancha allows reserving 25% of total contracts for people facing social exclusion who are referred by social services.

Subsidies provided by the administration for recruitment in public institutions or companies with specific insertion goals are another mechanism to encourage minimum income recipients' sustainable employment. For example, the public administration in Principado de Asturias covers up to 50% of the wage cost when certain companies hire beneficiaries. Castilla y León, Cataluña, Comunitat Valenciana, La Rioja, Navarra and País Vasco have subsidy programmes to encourage hiring minimum income beneficiaries in municipalities or social insertion companies. The granting of subsidies to non-profit organisations that develop employment support programmes for people at risk of social exclusion is also widely used.

Some regions provide incentives to those who want to start an independent activity or, more generally, to encourage self-employment. This is the case in Región de Murcia, where labour integration programmes include promotion and support for self-employment, specifically by promoting and raising awareness of the entrepreneurial culture and advice for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of projects where people start their own business, as well as through subsidies for self-employment.

Lastly, one of the measures in the AUNA project (Comunidad Foral de Navarra) is a noteworthy initiative aimed at enhancing employment access for individuals following a social and labour itinerary. It involves various measures to connect job opportunities with active jobseekers participating in the project. The programme aims to establish a network of companies interested in assisting and hiring minimum income beneficiaries through internships, in-company training and employment opportunities. The Confederación Empresarial Navarra (CEN) is involved in managing the job search and itineraries for selected beneficiaries. A team from CEN identifies employment prospects and demands, matching them with the skills of AUNA participants across different sectors. The selection process involves pre-screening by employment services and final candidate selection by CEN, resulting in a recommendation (to the hiring companies) of two or three candidates per job position.

Support to geographical mobility

Support to geographical mobility can often represent a good alternative for jobseekers willing to commute or move to take up a job in a different city. Measures combining the promotion of labour mobility within a country and assisting jobseekers during the process have been an instrument available in some countries to increase the chances of unemployed people finding a job. Relocation assistance and mobility subsidies are some policy instruments that can be employed in this regard (Immervoll and Knotz, 2018^[23]).

Although it does not target recipients of minimum income benefits (but rather, young jobseekers), the European employment services (EURES) Targeted Mobility Scheme provides support for jobseekers to overcome the challenges of working abroad. It can provide grants for specific purposes and finance language courses, the recognition of qualifications and travel and subsistence costs. This programme is open to any jobseeker (aged at least 18 years old) or company established in an EU country (plus Iceland and Norway). It puts them in contact via local EURES counsellors and provides assistance before departure. In Spain, as part of the measures of the labour market reform in 2012, the Royal Decree 1674/2012 establishes, in its Article 1, that Spanish PES (SEPE) co-ordinates and manages the EURES support to promote and boost labour mobility in Europe through the EURES Network.

Within Spain, support for labour mobility between regions encounters the difficulty of dealing with regional autonomy and competences. In fact, since social services and employment services are of regional competence, it is difficult to find examples of social and labour market insertion programmes involving

more than one region (in particular, by helping a beneficiary of minimum income benefit in region A move to region B).

3.3. Co-ordination between central and regional stakeholders is with respect to minimum income schemes is not forthcoming

A significant challenge in the minimum income system in Spain is establishing co-ordination networks between national, regional and local authorities to ensure comprehensive service delivery to applicants of regional MIS and the IMV. Means of co-ordination may include inter-administrative bodies, formal protocols or information systems that allow for data sharing or more advanced forms of interoperability between different service providers and levels of the administration. To meet the individual needs of minimum income beneficiaries through personalised itineraries, it is necessary to connect the social security administration, employment services, health and social services.

To facilitate the implementation of the IMV at multiple levels, efforts have been made to bring together the different administrations. In 2022, the IMV Monitoring Committee was established through a Royal Decree (64/2022) as an inter-administrative co-operation body to monitor the implementation of the national minimum income. Its functions are, among others, to evaluate the impact of the IMV; to evaluate and monitor proposals in relation to the benefit and social inclusion; to promote co-operation mechanisms between administrations; to monitor the systems for the exchange of information on applicants and beneficiaries; and to co-operate in the implementation of the social digital card (Tarjeta Social Digital, TSD).¹⁴ Unfortunately, it appears that this body has not acted as an effective co-ordination organ, as there have been no meetings of this committee since its creation.

Regarding data sharing, an established mechanism to co-ordinate the transmission of information on IMV beneficiaries from the central to the regional level is envisaged in one of the articles regulating the IMV. The information shared by the INSS with the Autonomous Regions Information System is transferred through the TSD. The INSS shares case file registries with the AACC on a weekly basis. The data flow includes information on the details of the claimant and the other members of the cohabitation unit, the outcome of the application (status of the benefit, dates of application, start of benefit, amount, supplements), as well as possible variations and relevant information for the recognition and control of the regional benefits in the AACC. Data from the social security office regarding the IMV benefit is incorporated daily through a standardised flat file, sent by Editran, the communication channel used by social security.

However, gaps have been identified in the information provided and in the delivery of information at certain levels. First, the information regarding benefit status includes only resolutions (i.e. approved, refused, rejected, and variations). As a result, no information is provided on applications that are still pending and unresolved. At the regional level, the department that receives the information is the department of each autonomous community that manages the minimum income programmes. Nevertheless, drawing on interviews with regional authorities, information seldom reaches the social service centres in the municipalities. In some cases, regional authorities reported that social workers in local centres get to know the status of IMV applications through the claimants themselves. Access to information on the IMV application status of their users appears to be driven by differences between information technology infrastructure and security protocols existing in each region:

- In Andalucía and Castilla y León, information on the resolutions of processed applications is received weekly; still, social workers do not have access to it. According to Castilla y León, autonomous regions are not able to transfer data to local social services since they are not the owners of the information. The digital social card should be a step forward in this respect, but it has not yet been implemented.

- In Cantabria, social workers can consult the data of the regional administration, and this allows them to automatically adjust the amount of Renta Social Básica (the regional minimum income benefit) if a person starts receiving the IMV or to suspend it, if necessary.
- In Castilla-La Mancha, the INSS files are sent to regional delegations and, from there, to local primary care centres. In addition, the AACC have created a series of documents and held meetings with primary care on the functioning of the IMV. However, co-ordination with social security is deficient, with difficulties in making contact at both local and provincial levels.

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Notes

1. For more details, see <https://loentiendo.com/ingreso-minimo-vital/#percentageC2%BFCuanto se cobra en esta ayuda>.
2. The gap increases to EUR 406 considering Ceuta, with a basic minimum income of EUR 300.
3. These pseudo coverage rates are calculated by dividing the number of beneficiaries based on administrative data by the estimated number of persons living in extreme poverty, based on 2020 survey data.
4. Specific third-sector entities that are part of a mediator registration (Registro de Mediadores) can help applicants by providing certificates requested with the application form.
5. For more details, see <https://revista.seg-social.es/-/c%C3%B3mo-realizar-tr%C3%A1mites-en-el-inss-de-manera-telem%C3%A1tica-sin-certificado-digital-ni-cl-ve>.
6. The project is implemented by the Spanish branch of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-ES).
7. Information about XARSE is based on OECD interviews with local entities (2022).
8. The AUNA project is establishing an integrated Management Information System (MIS) for Comunidad Foral de Navarra's social and employment services. It also aims to profiling and refer individuals to the most relevant department and consider their availability for employment.
9. This citation corresponds to a publication before the final design of the work incentives packages was set. In its final design, the benefit starts to phase out when earnings increases are equal to the minimum guaranteed threshold.
10. In the United States, the Earned Income Tax Credit subsidises very low earnings, such that the participation tax rate is negative for very low hours of work.
11. No information could be collected for Extremadura about income assessment documents.
12. In Castilla-La Mancha, it is no longer possible to apply for regional benefits, since the introduction of the IMV. A pilot project is also being implemented in which social workers also have access to evaluations performed by the employment department using SISPE.
13. To learn more about the concept of benefit dependency and the main determinants of dependency on minimum income benefits, see Immervoll (2015^[24]).
14. The Social Digital Card (TSD), introduced in 2018 by Law 6/2018, is an information system that integrates social benefits managed by the public administration (central state, AACC and local entities) such as contributory and non-contributory pensions, childcare or the IMV. The TSD aims to: 1) reduce the administrative burden of public services users; 2) for public administrations, improve the security of data exchanges and make the management of benefits and services easier; and 3) improve the overall system and move towards a common taxonomy, data models and processes. For more information, see www.tarjetasocialdigital.es/wps/portal/tsu/TSocial.



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