

A photograph showing five women in the foreground, smiling at the camera. They are wearing various head coverings and clothing, including hijabs and a wide-brimmed hat. In the background, a long, arched greenhouse structure is visible, with several other people working in rows of berry plants. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

WAFIRA participants harvesting berries, Huelva

WAFIRA: Women as Financially Independent Rural Actors

The WAFIRA (abundance, in Arabic) project aimed to boost the **positive impact of circular migration between Morocco and Spain**. Women from remote rural areas in Morocco were selected and trained in business and soft skills. Selected women then travelled to Spain under the GECCO scheme, where they received more **training and support to develop income-generating activities**. Upon returning to Morocco, they received coaching and help to launch their business ideas. The project also strengthened Moroccan institutions to support migrant reintegration, adapting assistance to seasonal work patterns and market needs. Moreover, the project contributed to the **institutionalisation of the Moroccan Strategy of Circular Migration**.

250 women empowered as entrepreneurs



Visit to a local company,
Huelva, Spain

With the technical and financial skills they gained — and the self-confidence built through the WAFIRA project — out of 250 participating women, 209 launched businesses in their home regions in rural areas of Morocco. These **businesses provide income throughout the year, helping women and their families become more financially independent**, as well as boosting the local economy and society. The project has also encouraged family members to get involved, learn new skills, and contribute to the success of the businesses — bringing long-term benefits to entire communities

"At the beginning, I was afraid, but now I encourage all women not to hesitate. Don't think twice—just go for it. This is a great opportunity". For most participants, WAFIRA marked a turning point in their personal and professional lives. Several women shared that "both personal development training and financial literacy training have contributed significantly to increasing our self-confidence and helping us realise that we are capable of becoming entrepreneurs and continuing to manage our own businesses". As one woman stated, "the important milestone is having started a business at all".

209 businesses sparked by migration

209 women returned to Morocco and implemented their business ideas. Nezha engaged in dairy cattle breeding and milk processing into products such as kefir and butter; Sedia sells blankets, bedding, and kitchenware in her village; Fatima and Latifa now run grocery shops in their villages. Their business also impacted their families who support the entrepreneurial activities whilst the women work as seasonal workers picking berries in Spanish fields. Their journey demonstrates how WAFIRA empowered women to move from seasonal work to having their own businesses, contributing to improve the local economy in Morocco.



WAFIRA participant

“I had never dreamed of owning this business”

"I purchase women's and children's clothing wholesale and sell it at retail. I use a van to deliver the goods to various shops. Previously, I had to rent transport and find alternative ways to distribute the merchandise. Thanks to WAFIRA, I have been able to acquire my own vehicle, which has increased my profit margin. I had the business idea for a long time, but until now, I had not been able to make this qualitative leap and work autonomously" – WAFIRA participant.



WAFIRA Workshop, Huelva

Individual training and assistance

Each woman has received individual training and assistance throughout the launch of their businesses. The project also encouraged family members, especially husbands, to get involved in bringing long-term benefits to entire communities. As one of the participants shared, “WAFIRA showed us the way”.

About the MPF

This grant project is part of the EU-funded Migration Partnership Facility (MPF), managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) to support the external dimension of the EU's migration policy. MPF funds projects that promote dialogue and cooperation on migration and mobility between EU Member States and partner countries outside the EU.

About the project

The project 'Women as Financially Independent Rural Actors (WAFIRA)' was running between October 2021 and February 2025. The project was implemented by ICMPD in Morocco and Spain with support from the European Union, coordinated by the Ministry of Inclusion Social Security and Migrations of Spain, and implemented by the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC) of Morocco, the International Labour Organisation, the Ministry of Employment (MIEPEEC) of Morocco, and Agri-Food Cooperatives of Andalusia, Spain.

About the evaluation

Testimonies used in this document were gathered as part of a final evaluation of MCP Med TI, conducted in 2025. The evaluation was led by Policy Impact Lab who makes part of a consortium of six consultancies and NGOs, namely Blomeyer & Sanz, Diversity Development Group, Migration Policy Group, Policy Impact Lab, Samuel Hall and Tandans.



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