# Spain: Building a National Breastfeeding Ecosystem

**Authors** Salomé Laredo Ortiz (1, 2), Paula Lalaguna Mallada (1,3), Ana Isabel Gª Morago (1,4), María-Teresa Hernández-Aguilar (1,5)

Affiliations 1) IHAN – Initiative for the Humanization of Birth and Breastfeeding, BFHI Spain,(2) University of Valencia. Hospital (3) Barbastro, Huesca. (4) Primary Health Care Center Morro Jable, Fuerteventura (5) BFHI Network

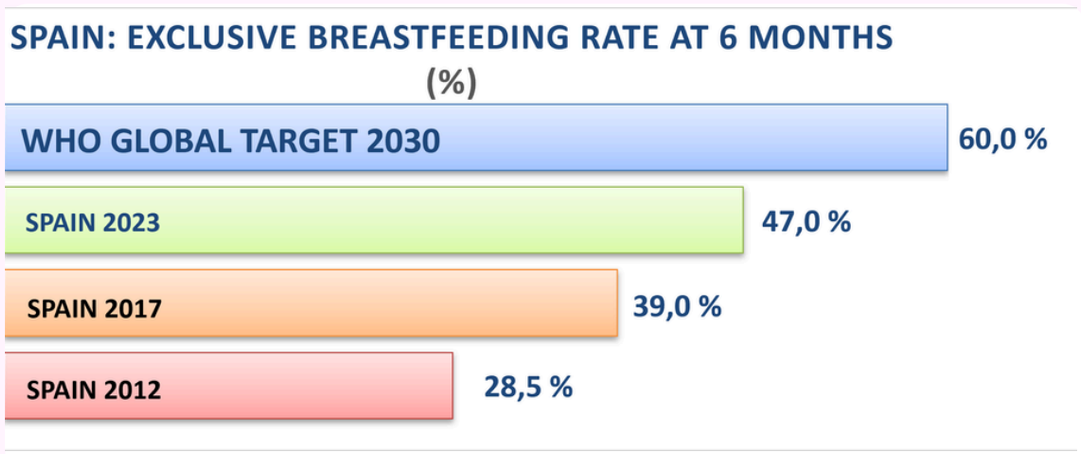
## INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months in Spain reached 47%, the highest prevalence reported to date (Spanish National Health Survey 2023, National Centre for Health Statistics).

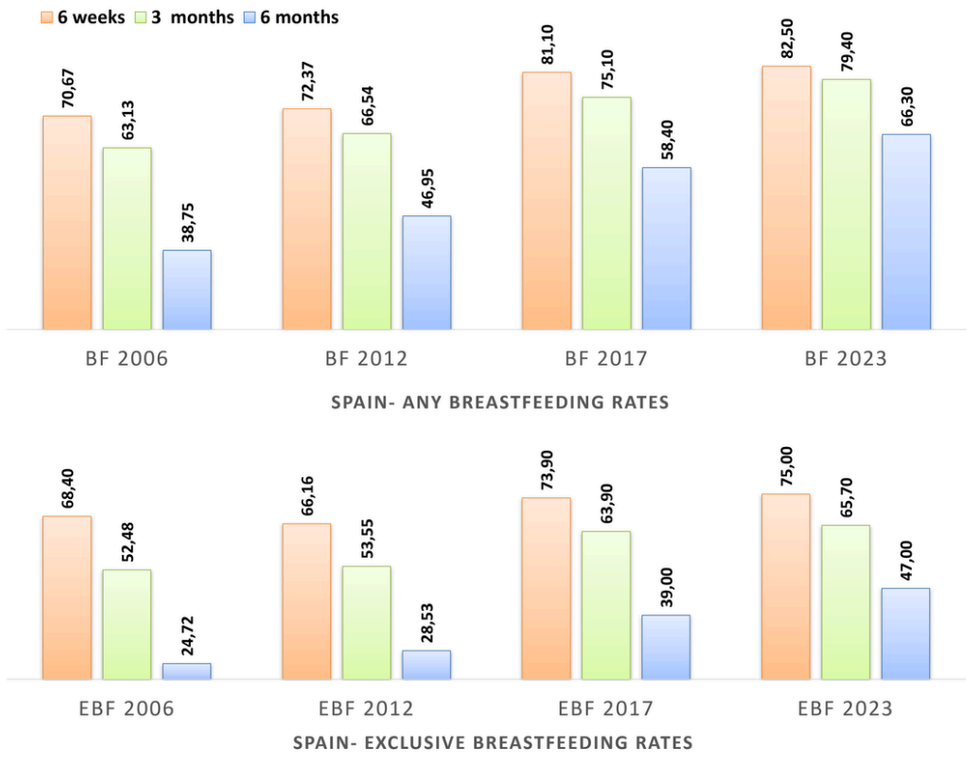
This progress has occurred alongside coordinated national efforts involving health authorities and key maternal and child health stakeholders, including health policy, BFHI and BFCI implementation, professional training, academic collaboration, and community engagement.

We describe IHAN's national approach to creating an enabling environment for the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding across Spain.

## RESULTS




Source: Spanish Health Survey (ENSE) 2017 & 2023; WHO Global Nutrition Target.




## CONCLUSIONS

IHAN's experience illustrates how coordinated action across sectors can strengthen the conditions needed to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding at national level.

Connecting policy, healthcare, education, and community action helps create a more coherent and sustainable breastfeeding-supportive environment.

This multisectoral approach may offer a transferable framework for countries seeking to strengthen breastfeeding support through coordinated national action.

## METHODS: A MULTILEVEL MULTISECTORAL APPROACH

### Macro Level: Legislation & National Strategy

**Policy & Legislation:** Collaboration with health authorities in developing policies and legislation to protect breastfeeding and strengthen implementation of the International Code.

**Public Funding:** Collaboration with the Ministry of Health resulted in funding to support BFHI/IHAN accreditation in primary care centres through the 2025–2027 Action Plan.

### Clinical Level: Healthcare Services



168 Hospitals in BFHI accreditation process

411 Primary Health Care centers in BFCI accreditation process.

**Joint BFHI-BFCI Accreditation**

- **Fuerteventura:** ***A BFHI-BFCI Island***.(BFCI &BFHI joint accreditation in 2025
- **Murcia Region:** Region-wide strategy advancing all hospitals and primary care centers toward accreditation simultaneously (Awarded Best Practice by the Ministry of Health).

### Breastfeeding training



**Nationwide Pre-service Training: Pediatric, Midwifery & Obstetric Residents.** Theoretical and practical breastfeeding course reaching 350 first-year residents across 33 Spanish hospitals, mentored by 70 expert trainers..



**Online training offer. Healthcare professionals, support groups, lactation counsellors, IBCLC.** Breastfeeding basics, Recording of breastfeeding conferences, competency verification, NICU breastfeeding support, cleft palate and more

### Community Level

**Higher Education Alliance:** University of Valencia & IHAN partnership embedding breastfeeding in Community Health curricula.



**Early Childhood Education (0-3 years): AESAN 2025**
Consensus Document & updated protocols for handling breast milk in nurseries.




**Breastfeeding-Friendly Cities:**
National IHAN initiative & Cullera's retail network (+50 participating local businesses).




**National support network: IHAN + Breastfeeding Support Groups**
IHAN brings together breastfeeding support groups and associations across Spain to strengthen collaboration between community organisations and health services.

Breastfeeding for a Sustainable Start in Life: Strengthen What Works
WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2026

## KEY REFERENCES

Scan for full references and official sources sites

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

WHO · UNICEF · Spanish Ministry of Health · AESAN · IHAN

**"Every family deserves a breastfeeding-friendly society."**