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D7.4 Practice Abstracts – Batch 2

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

CoP	Community of Practice
EU	European Union
LAG	Local Action Group
LWL	Longford Women's Link
WP	Work Package
Project Partners	
GALWAY	NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND GALWAY
TU Delft	TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITEIT DELFT
TEAGASC	TEAGASC - AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
UNICAL	UNIVERSITA DELLA CALABRIA
LWL	LONGFORD WOMEN'S LINK CLG
UTU	TURUN YLIOPISTO
UL	UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
CE	CONSULTA EUROPA PROJECTS AND INNOVATION SL
HNEE	HOCHSCHULE FUR NACHHALTIGE ENTWICKLUNG EBERSWALDE
ELARD	ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE LEADER POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT RURAL
UOULU	OULUN YLIOPISTO
ECOLISE	RESEAU EUROPEEN POUR DES INITIATIVES COMMUNAUTAIRES SUR LES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE
MENDELU	MENDELOVA UNIVERZITA V BRNE
LNU	LINNEUNIVERSITETET
HLK	HOGSKOLAN FOR LARANDE OCH KOMMUNIKATION I JONKOPING - HLK SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION



INTRODUCTION

FLIARA (Female-led Innovation in Agriculture and Rural Areas) is a three-year HORIZON Europe funded project that aims to create a European-wide ecosystem, supporting women-led innovative practices in farming and rural areas. The core objective of FLIARA is to ensure that women are embedded in, and supported by, a more effective innovation ecosystem, which: spotlights their achievements; provides them with a source of inspiration and knowledge; networks them with key actors engaged in innovation; heightens their visibility within national and international institutional decision-making contexts; increases capacity and improves skills to empower them to continue leading or start leading innovative practices in farming and rural areas.

To achieve its aim, FLIARA devised a work plan centred around seven work packages, each with a unique aspect that contributes to a deeper understanding of specific issues, with each producing a relevant set of proposals and/or solutions. In addition to this, and key to the research process, has been the strategic integration of key stakeholders and multi-actors from the outset and throughout the whole project. Their input has meant that at every stage of the project there were multi-directional flows of knowledge exchange between researchers, policy makers and key stakeholders, leading to a better understanding of challenges faced by (end-) users. This in turn ensures that the research and innovative (R&I) process and its outcomes were “more reliable, demand-driven, shared, and relevant to society, and maximise impact ([European Commission, 2023](#) p. 21).

Practice Abstracts are one of the means through which FLIARA disseminates its findings and lessons learned to ensure that the stakeholders we engage with and those outside of the project (the end-users) can benefit from the research and effect change. The Practice Abstracts present findings in an easy and accessible format, ensuring that different target audiences can exploit research outputs. Deliverable 3.5 Practice Abstracts Batch 1 produced 10 Practice Abstracts, while this Deliverable, D7.4 Practice Abstracts Batch 2, requires the development of four practice abstracts emerging from Work Package 1, 2, 4 and 5. However, as a multi-actor consortium, partners are acutely aware of the limited time that end-users have to engage with or search for useful research findings. As a result of this, partners have produced 15 Practice Abstracts for this Deliverable. There is at least one Practice Abstract from each research work



package. The intention is to increase wider adoption and implementation of the project's outcomes.

In this document, Practice Abstracts are presented under each work package to clearly link results with the activities that generated them. An overview of each work package is presented and then followed by at least one Practice Abstract. Each Abstract summarises key findings, highlights practical implications, and provides accessible messages tailored to end-users. This structure ensures coherence, traceability, and easy access for practitioners and stakeholders seeking results most relevant to their needs.

To increase the reach of this output, this Deliverable will be uploaded to the FLIARA website, submitted to the open access research repositories of Zenodo and the University of Galway Research Platform, while the Practice Abstracts will be extracted from the wider Deliverable document and individually uploaded onto the EU CAP Network platform.



WORK PACKAGE 1: CONTEXTUAL CONCEPTS AND ASSESSMENT

The FLIARA (Female-led Innovation in Agriculture and Rural Areas) project aims to create a European-wide ecosystem, which supports women-led innovative practices in farming and rural areas, however while studies on women and innovation are increasing, a clear definition of women-led innovation is missing and less still is understood about what makes women-led innovation different or the capacity of the existing innovation ecosystem to support women-led innovation and why it should matter for policy (Farrell et al., 2024). To begin a process of understanding and to establish a framework for the entire project, WP1 devised novel approaches to ensure that the expertise, different forms of knowledge, perspectives, resources, and experiences (practical, scientific, policy based, etc.) of all partners were included. This approach has supported the project to develop a deeper understanding of key issues, build consortium wide capacity, raise project awareness, trigger end user's interest to engage with the project's outputs and support more viable and tangible solutions.

To inspire other organisations to become involved in proposals for research funding, Practice Abstract 1 is an account from a 'Multi-Actor' organisation that details the role and benefit of being involved in Horizon Europe Projects, while Practice Abstract 2, based on the experience of FLIARA, provides some guidance for groups aiming to build a multi actor consortium.



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 1

MUTUAL GAINS: GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS AS KEY PARTNERS IN HORIZON EUROPE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Longford Women's Link (LWL), a rural Irish women's community organisation, demonstrates how including grassroots organisations as part of multi-actor consortiums strengthens the relevance, inclusivity, and impact of Horizon Europe research while building its own organisational capacity.

LWL ensured representation: LWL were involved in all aspects of the project. It co-authored early concept notes to broaden definitions of innovation beyond economic and technological forms, incorporating social and advocacy-based innovations. Through its contributions to Stakeholder Mapping and the Community of Practice (CoP), it brought forward the voice and lived experiences of women from rural communities experiencing multiple challenges including lack of access to education, domestic violence and underrepresentation in political life. Combining their knowledge with findings from FLIARA, LWL developed policy briefs that reflect the needs of the diverse groups of women accessing their services and supports.

Mutual benefits: LWL strengthened its own research and policy capacity while enriching FLIARA's findings with grounded insights. As a gender-based organisation, they expanded their connections through the diverse networks of the FLIARA consortium and CoP enabling the organisation to share their message with wider audiences and on international platforms. The inclusion of multi-actors in research projects bridges the gap between research, policy and practice ensuring greater impact of the project. Lessons include the need to highlight the benefits of engaging with grassroots organisations and to provide them with the resources and tools needed to participate in European projects.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.lwl.ie/>

[D1.1 FLIARA Conceptual Framework](#)



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 2

FLIARA: MULTI-ACTOR CONSORTIUM - A KEY INGREDIENT TO SUCCESS

Through a multi-actor consortium FLIARA has developed a deeper understanding of key issues and combined knowledge from science and practice to produce proposals that will contribute to and speed up the acceptability and uptake of new ideas, approaches and solutions developed in the project.

Build a Multi-Actor Consortium: Identify partners with expertise in core topics and ensure diversity of perspectives and skills. Consider the reach and stakeholder connections of each partner. FLIARA has a transdisciplinary consortium, roles for 20 Female Ambassadors, and established a diverse Stakeholder Advisory Board.

Embed Participation in Design: To maximise value, dedicate activities and spaces for meaningful collaboration. FLIARA held activities at local, national, and international levels—from co-creation of reports to futures workshops and policy discussions with practice and academic partners at CoP events, the European Parliament, and academic conferences.

Engagement and Tailored Outputs: Stakeholder mapping and targeted communication and dissemination ensured a wide diversity of participants and maintained interest. Tailored messaging and outputs was integral to this process. FLIARA developed a website, social media channels, Practice Abstracts, Fact sheets, Vlogs, academic papers, newspaper articles, reports, organised webinars and policy forums.

Multi-Actor Engagement. Horizon Europe has increased the mandatory requirement for multi-actor participation in many of its research calls. This reflects the growing need to bridge the gap between policy, science and practice. FLIARA has proven that a multi-actor consortium through effective collaboration can support real-world relevance and adoption of results.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://fliara.eu/partners/>

https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/multi-actor-projects-research-and-practice-co-creating-solutions_en

<https://premiere-multiactor.eu/community/stakeholder-engagement/>



WORK PACKAGE 2: FORESIGHT AND TREND ANALYSIS

Rural areas across Europe suffer from many sustainability challenges in demographic, economic, environmental and socio-cultural domains. To address these, the FLIARA project applied a foresight and trend activity, helping stakeholders and policymakers envision alternative sustainable futures related to farms and rural areas. By engaging 577 stakeholders across nine diverse rural EU regions, the process ensured that local realities could shape these futures, making stakeholders the true ‘owners’ of the vision, but also empowering them to begin working toward these alternative, more sustainable futures (Kuhmonen and Tembo, 2024).

Findings from WP2 revealed that, even if the portfolio of problems varied across different types of rural areas (rural areas close to city, rural villages, remote rural areas), the innovations that were needed to address the problems did not deviate a lot between the different types of areas. The same applied to measures to increase women’s contributions to these innovations. We found out that women have extensive possibilities in contributing to environmental and social innovations, but there were extensive obstacles in contributing to economic–technological and, especially, political innovations. While many recent EU visions and strategies on agriculture, food and rural areas provide strong support for the evidence-based proposals of FLIARA foresight activities, our results may assist in focusing the actions to most promising topics that observe the gender as well as the specific sustainability issues and rural contexts. Practice Abstracts 3 and 4 provide an insight into the findings from the extensive research conducted in WP 2 (for more details, please see D2.1; D2.2; D2.3; D2.4 here- [Deliverables - FLIARA Project](#)).



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 3

MEASURES TO INCREASE WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATIONS IN FARMING AND RURAL AREAS

The FLIARA project has identified effective measures for promoting women-led innovations. Altogether 577 stakeholders and experts across Europe participated in teasing these out. Successful strategies to add women-led innovations in all types of rural areas include three key topics:

Apply social measures: Looking at the big picture of the measures to address the issue, about 80% of the proposed effective measures were social in character (examples such as good practices, education, equality, empowerment, visibility), and only 20% were 'traditional' administrative or economic measures (infrastructure and facilities, finance and subsidies and simplification of bureaucracy).

Invest in networks: Networks are by far the most effective measure to promote women-led innovations in all types of rural areas. All kinds of networks are needed: peer networks, stakeholder networks, client networks, etc. What are most needed are networks for co-creation and co-operation.

Remove obstacles: The single most common obstacle for women-led innovations is lack of demand for novel practices. Co-creation of progressive visions for the future and setting incentives for researching these visions creates demand for novel products, services, practices and organisations.

USEFUL LINKS

D2.4 Women's Potential Contributions to Sustainability Innovations.
<https://zenodo.org/records/14045295>



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 4

THERE IS MORE TO THE PICTURE THAN MEETS THE EYE. ATTACHMENTS BETWEEN RURAL PLACE AND RURAL VISION

As part of WP2 of the FLIARA project, organising workshops on rural visions brought together different Slovenian stakeholders and actors in rural areas close to the town/city. In identifying the representative participants, we theoretically linked with Halfacree's model on the three-fold architecture of rural. The co-construction of rural visions included representatives of:

- a) rural practice (local municipalities and regional authorities providing the formal representations of rural)
- b) material rurality (people living and working daily in rural areas – farmers, rural entrepreneurs, several key NGO members and others)
- c) imaginative form of rurality (mostly representatives from different national rural associations with their own social constructs on rurality)

The represented and accepted rural visions reflected the participants' contemporary and potential future role in rural localities and rural communities. Our participants and their civic engagement which was reflected in rural visions (e.g. engaged and vibrant rural areas, digital rural areas, the green belt, food-sustained rural areas), produced and reproduced their experience of rurality in various forms, which have implications for rural communities and the diversity of people that reside in them.

The principal drivers of participants' proposals were to maintain vibrant rural places and rural communities with the maintenance of key infrastructure (public, social, educational, ICT, green), in terms of keeping community institutions and services viable. They also advocate for the design and planning of environments and services that fit the needs of rural people residing close to the town/city but with a clear focus on the further development of rural amenities.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://fliara.eu/how-fliara-workshop-is-empowering-the-local-community-in-slovenia/>



WORK PACKAGE 3: WOMEN-LED INNOVATIONS IN FARMING AND RURAL AREAS

'If you see it, you believe it and you can become it' has become an unofficial mantra of the FLIARA project. WP3 provided the voices, the evidence, the faces, the inspiration and the FLIARA Ambassadors to shape our understanding of women-led innovation. Investigating twenty thematic case studies (in ten different EU countries), that represented a variety of rural and farming innovations, covering all four dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic, social and cultural) and engaging directly with 200 female innovators and entrepreneurs, resulted in capturing the experiences and innovation journeys of 200 innovations led by women in farming and rural areas.

The findings of this WP fed directly into the FLIARA CoP events and informed the FLIARA policy proposals. The outputs from this WP are finding expression in reports (<https://fliara.eu/deliverables/>), academic journals (<https://fliara.eu/scientific-publications/>), the FLIARA toolkit (<https://fliara.eu/toolkit/>); Innovator Profiles (<https://fliara.eu/ambassadors/>), Innovator Fact Sheets (<https://fliara.eu/innovators/>). Practice Abstracts 5 and 6, provide an example of how these research findings are being critically analysed to point to direct measures that can be implemented to support women-led innovation.



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 5

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF DIGITAL TOOLS

Digitalisation has transformative potential for farming and rural development, particularly when it supports women-led innovation. Key lessons include the critical importance of broadband access, tailored digital training, and technology design that considers women's needs. Despite barriers like poor connectivity, traditional gender roles, and lack of targeted training, many rural women successfully adopted digital tools for farming and business through self-learning and peer networks, proving the power of accessible, practical tech solutions.

Practical Steps for Women Innovators: Women innovators in rural areas should seek support through funding programmes like LEADER or CAP for digital tools, infrastructure, or AI training. Participating in business or farm women's networks, accessing online learning, and using social media and apps for sales and outreach are also key. Affordable access to smartphones, laptops, and AI tools can unlock new opportunities, while peer mentoring and case study sharing can encourage broader adoption.

Building Inclusive Digital Futures in Rural Communities: Policy should ensure rural broadband equity, fund women-specific digital literacy and AI training, and incentivise gender-inclusive tech design. Local communities can spotlight female innovators to challenge stereotypes. Policymakers must embed digital inclusion into rural agendas, support tailored training, and promote AI access to empower women and ensure sustainable rural development.

USEFUL LINKS

D3.2 Inventory of Female-led Innovations Report: <https://zenodo.org/records/14045348>

D.3.3: Women-led Innovations in Agriculture and Rural Areas, Lessons Learned Report and Fact Sheets on Female Innovations: <https://zenodo.org/records/14045390>



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 6

HOW TO BETTER ENGAGE AND SUPPORT WOMEN AS PART OF THE AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE INNOVATION SYSTEM (AKIS)

FLIARA evidence shows the current and future potential of women-led innovation in farming. Better inclusion of women in Agricultural Knowledge Innovation Systems (AKIS) can help build on the untapped potential.

Increase awareness among women of what AKIS offers: Many women interviewed for FLIARA case studies were not familiar with AKIS. It should be more visible to women, particularly, training programmes, access to networks and knowledge transfer, all of which can be a huge advantage to women innovators. **Gender balance within AKIS actors:** A well-functioning AKIS should have gender balance among the actors involved. Women are under-represented in farming, meaning there is also a knock-on gender imbalance in the AKIS. Other areas include better representation of women in AKIS governance spaces as well as wider AKIS actors.

More network-based knowledge flows: FLIARA evidence shows that networks are part of women innovator's strengths and are key to how they gain necessary knowledge to support their innovation. Creating more types of network-based knowledge exchange spaces appears important, such as peer-to-peer learning, mentoring, practice-based learning and wider support networks.

Recognise distinct needs, but do not create silos: Women in farming can have specific knowledge needs, such as for technical training (e.g. new technology, digital applications, robotics, and farm safety). How AKIS operates should also match the work-life demands facing women, such as balancing caring and farm responsibilities. This calls for flexibility and a bottom-up approach to how, for example, advisory services are delivered. Women -only-groups, such as for knowledge transfer, can play an important role, but must not create silos in the AKIS.

USEFUL LINKS

FLIARA Highlights Women-Led Innovation with ModernAKIS: <https://fliara.eu/fliara-highlights-women-led-innovation-with-modernakis/>

AKIS In Action: Strengthening AKIS Through Women-led Innovation: <https://modernakis.eu/wp-content/uploads/FLIARA-cases-Ireland-and-Spain-Maura-Farrell-Victor-Martinez.pdf>



WORK PACKAGE 4: FLIARA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE NETWORK

From the outset, FLIARA considered the concept of gender as a social construct, which forced a lens on all aspects of society and exposed 'social structures, practices and representations that imply certain gender orders that subordinate women to men' (Farrell et al., 2024, p. 586). From this perspective, it implies that to challenge these embedded inequalities, all members of society must be brought on a journey to challenge and change them. FLIARA designed WP4 as the engine of this journey.

Placing the FLIARA 20 Ambassadors at the core of all WP4 activities, WP4 established the FLIARA CoP Network. Centred around four in-person international events, the FLIARA CoP had the purpose of developing an interchange platform for multi-actor exchanges, create the FLIARA Toolkit for knowledge transfer and learning ([tps://fliara.eu/toolkit/](https://fliara.eu/toolkit/)) and establish and drive a Campaign of Visibility to advance women led rural and farming innovations.

Emerging from WP4, Practice Abstracts 7 and 8 focus on the need for and establishment of networking spaces, while Practice Abstract 9 focuses on Policy Benchmarking, one of the many tools that FLIARA identifies as having potential to advance gender equality for women-led innovations.



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 7

FLIARA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: BRIDGING PRACTICE AND POLICY FOR SHARED LEARNING AND IMPACT

The FLIARA Community of Practice (CoP) is a European platform designed to connect women innovators in agriculture and rural areas with policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders.

Spaces for connection: Four macro-regional CoP in-person networking events were held, alongside online events and the opening of a LinkedIn CoP. Twenty women from FLIARA case studies were chosen as Innovation Ambassadors and were central to the CoP. Emerging from CoP activities, some members established their own informal WhatsApp group. This reflects the value participants place on networking and extends the legacy of the FLIARA CoP.

Co-creation activities: The events involved diverse actors in sustainable rural innovation through workshops, field visits, and structured policy dialogues. Members provided key input into future rural and farm policy through foresight analysis and policy benchmarking. Engagement in the CoP demonstrated the importance of peer-to-peer exchange and its role in building capacity to sustain and scale sustainable innovations.

Participation: To support participation at FLIARA CoP events a Buddy System was established. Each Ambassador was matched to a native speaker with proficiency in English that could support their engagement. FLIARA findings and feedback forms were used to keep topics relevant and to identify needs from the community.

Recognition and influence: The CoP builds on the strength of social networks and the FLIARA Campaign of Visibility, ensuring that women innovators gain recognition as central actors in shaping sustainable rural futures. The diversity of members of the FLIARA CoP ensured that topics from the women were brought to the attention of and discussed alongside policy makers and key agencies.

USEFUL LINKS

FLIARA CoP Strategic Action Plan <https://zenodo.org/records/14045414>

European Commission. The communities of practice playbook – A playbook to collectively run and develop communities of practice, Publications Office.
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/443810>

<https://fliara.eu/funding-matters-fliara-webinar-addresses-gaps-and-opportunities-for-women-innovators-in-rural-areas/>



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 8

CONNECTING WOMEN: A DRIVER FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

The FLIARA project's CoP brings together women rural innovators from across Europe. Feedback from participants of in-person events underscore the value of exchange and networking activities offered. For optimal inclusion, FLIARA also offers a CoP LinkedIn space and regular online events and webinars to cater to women's schedules.

Call for action: A Thünen Institute study shows in Germany the lack of networks is a hindrance to women-led start-ups in rural areas. It also finds women would like more exchange with other women when founding agri-businesses. A Gender Solution study finds women in agri-food feel most empowered, secure and heard in entrepreneurial support formats tailored to them.

Inspiring examples: In Germany the following initiatives currently facilitate women networking in relation to agriculture:

- The German Farmers' Association (DBV) via the 'Kompass-program' offers opportunities to build networks through events and parliamentary meetings
- The German Agricultural Association (DLG) runs the Female Agri Fellows network, connecting women leaders in agri-business.
- The Rural Women's Association (DLV) federal and regional chapters organise events to highlight women in agriculture.
- The Organic Women Network (BioFrauenNetzwerk) fosters collaboration and visibility of women across the organic farm sector.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.bauernverband.de/themendossiers/pflanzenschutz/themendossier/kompass-mehr-frauen-im-verband>

<https://www.dlg.org/landwirtschaft/netzwerke/female-agri-fellows>;

<https://www.landfrauen.info/verband>; <https://www.oekolandbau.de/umwelt-und-gesellschaft/bio-branche-im-fokus/biofrauennetzwerk-staerkt-und-vernetzt-frauen/>



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 9

HARNESS SOME OF THE PRINCIPLES OF GENDER BENCHMARKING AS A POLICY-INFLUENCING LEVER

Benchmarking can be a comprehensive policy assessment exercise. FLIARA has focused on defining benchmarks that advance gender equality and foster innovation within rural areas and farming. However, for stakeholders seeking to influence policy, benchmarking principles can also be used as a broader tool. For example:

Find the leading lights and use a lever to raise awareness: In essence benchmarking seeks to compare policies, identify where the leading lights are and use this information to improve policy in other contexts. Pointing to these benchmarks can provide concrete, practical, engaging ideas for policy changes.

A specific policy change that could make a big difference: Good practices and leaders in achieving greater gender equality from other countries and contexts can be held up as benchmarks and desired targets for others to achieve. For example, the family policies of countries such as Sweden are potential benchmarks for others.

Identify key indicators to compare and track a policy issue through time: Statistics can also provide powerful hooks that act to raise awareness of gender equality issues in rural areas and farming. For example, what is the percentage of young female farmholders in your country and how is this changing through time? Is there a country that exceeds others, has greater gender equality and do we look to them as the benchmark in the short-term or longer term?

Finding a range of leading lights, pushing for a specific policy change or tracking issues using key statistical indicators are some of the broad ideas underpinning benchmarking that can be useful policy influencing tools.

USEFUL LINKS

Policy Benchmarking in FLIARA: <https://fliara.eu/shaping-policies-to-empower-women-led-sustainable-innovation-in-agriculture-and-rural-areas/>

FLIARA D1.5: Initial Guidelines for Policy Benchmarking:

<https://zenodo.org/records/14045204>

FLIARA D4.3: Benchmarking Initial Report (forthcoming) <https://fliara.eu/deliverables/>



WORK PACKAGE 5: POLICY DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT

FLIARA has generated new knowledge and brings together underexplored areas and investigates their intersections, namely rural and farm-based women-led innovation and rural sustainability. Through WP5 this evidence-based knowledge is being dissected and critically assessed to develop more effective policy and identify tools and measures that can be used or adapted at different scales and by a range of different stakeholders. These policy proposals will find expression through the production of a policy booklet and national policy briefs. These documents will also contain useful references to existing cases to ensure that end users can take action at their relevant level.

Farrell et., al (2024) are keen to note that women-led innovations are not only to be supported by policy because of equality objectives, instead, they should be viewed for their wider potential contributions to also achieving other sustainability and policy goals. The diversity of topics presented in Practice Abstracts 10-13 reflects this observation and highlights that no one policy or measure alone can support women-led innovations.



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 10

FARMER RELIEF SYSTEM

Finland's farmer relief system, regulated under statute 20.12.1996/1231, is designed to support agricultural entrepreneurs by providing substitute services during vacations, illness, or other periods of incapacity. This system ensures that farmers can maintain their operations without interruption, promoting their social security and work motivation.

Responsive measures: The relief service includes assigning substitute workers or compensating farmers for the costs of self-arranged substitutes. The approach not only enhances farmer well-being but also contributes to local employment and farm safety.

Support work-life balance: A farmer relief service is especially important for pregnant farmers and for those with small children. As many farmers are self-employed, social security provisions that are meant for workers, such as Sweden's system for parental leave and for caring for sick children, do not apply as these systems are built on the supposition that parents can take time off from work, which is not always the case for farmers, as the processes in the farm will go on. The solution for many farming parents is to bring their children along while working on the farm. However, having children in agricultural work involves a major safety risk that many farmers are concerned about.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.mela.fi/en/agricultural-entrepreneurs/farmers-holiday-and-stand-in-scheme/>



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 11

ESTABLISH REGIONAL ADVISORY SERVICES NETWORK FOR WOMEN

Specialised advisory services can play a role in addressing the unique challenges faced by women in agriculture and rural entrepreneurship. Examples from FLIARA point to:

Access to specialised advisors: Ensure access to specialised regional advisors that are trained and equipped to support women, who are well familiar with specific challenges and opportunities faced by women in agriculture and entrepreneurship in rural areas. Such advisory support can be provided within the public agricultural advisory service; regional business incubators may play a complementary role by offering support for women-led rural enterprises and start-ups. This also requires that advisory support for women on farms and in rural entrepreneurship is recognised and included as a standalone thematic area within the broader framework of public agricultural and rural entrepreneurship advisory services, ensuring that gender-specific needs are addressed systematically and consistently across regions.

Existing model: Farm advisory services in Slovenia are provided by the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry which operates at three levels: national, regional, and local. Advisory service is organised in five topics: 1) advisory support for successors and retiring farmers, 2) farm economic efficiency consulting, 3) legal assistance, 4) psychosocial support and 5) social security for farmers and family members. Each regional advisory centre employs specialised advisors for young farmers. Many rural women realise their entrepreneurial ideas through these activities, as they are more accessible than starting an independent business, especially in terms of legal, tax, and administrative requirements.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.kgzsi.jsks>



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 12

TRAINING FOR WOMEN INNOVATING IN FARMING AND RURAL AREAS

Through interviews, the FLIARA project found that training has been a challenge for Italian women innovators. Most of them had difficulty in finding appropriate courses, which in most cases were offered by non-governmental organisations, associations, informal groups and networks and they have to self-finance these courses. Some Italian women innovators attend business start-up courses such as EWA (Empowering woman in Agrifood) to acquire basic skills for running a business. Training for women innovating in farming and rural areas is key to furthering success and opportunity.

Best practices include:

- Warmonderhof (Netherlands): a small-scale vocational school training on biodynamic and sustainable agriculture. The school provides training, education, teaching facilities, internships, and practical testing.
- The Business Incubator created at the Polytechnic Secondary School of Technology in Kyjov (Czechia). The purpose is to keep high school graduates in the region through the development of the local business environment utilising start-ups, a co-working centre, the involvement of companies from the region and the Chamber of Commerce. The school also focuses on adult education.
- The Irish CAP Strategic Plan provides for female focused knowledge transfer groups for women to influence peer-to-peer learning while addressing shared challenges and gender balance. In Spain, the Rural Women's Advancement Program supports women through training, mentoring and finance, also including a focus on entrepreneurship and innovation.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/ewa-empowering-women-in-agrifood>

<https://aereswarmonderhof.nl/english/>



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 13

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION; BUILDING SUPPORT FOR INNOVATIONS

Women's active participation in political debates and decision-making is crucial for addressing the unique challenges faced in rural and agricultural settings. FLIARA innovators from Germany demonstrate a strong commitment to improving sectoral conditions, often with a particular emphasis on rural women's rights and gender equality. Recognising the political relevance of their innovations, several innovators became actively engaged in political processes, acquiring skills in advocacy and policy engagement.

Inspiring Examples

- A self-employed carpenter campaigned at the federal level for statutory maternity leave for the self-employed, building an alliance of sectoral professional groups.
- A dairy farmer formed a producer's association on cow-bound calf-rearing and contributed legislative input at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture.
- One innovator invited local decision-makers from different political parties to her project, while another engaged the mayor for a promotional video.
- As part of the German rural women's network, one policy officer led a successful program supporting women in rural areas to enter local politics.
- Another organic farmer leveraged her broad social media network to connect government and citizens on agricultural policy.

Practical Recommendations

- Identify relevant local and regional stakeholders for your innovation.
- Seek training and coaching on political education and advocacy through NGOs, political foundations, or government agencies.
- Connect with civil society organisations active in your area of interest or form new alliances with like-minded individuals.

USEFUL LINKS

D1.5: Initial Guidelines for Policy Benchmarking <https://zenodo.org/records/14045204>

FLIARA Deliverables <https://fliara.eu/deliverables/>



WORK PACKAGE 6: COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION

Increased awareness, understanding and recognition of women's current and future role in the farming sector, rural economies and communities amongst policymakers, rural citizens, innovation support services and scientists is a core objective of FLIARA. Through a comprehensive CD&E strategy, WP6 ensured that generated knowledge and innovative solutions from across the project were curated and tailored to ensure they were accessible by all target groups. Embedded within this objective was the goal to enhance the capacity of rural women, present and future, to continue to innovate for change.

The campaign of visibility initiated in WP6, mobilised through a comprehensive CD&E Plan, was a central pillar in achieving the above objective. The process involved various strategies, such as promoting the project on the FLIARA website, sharing content across social media platforms, engaging with media and press outlets, EU-level organisations, establishing dedicated sections on the website, generating blog articles and press releases, and actively participating in dissemination events involving all project partners (Martínez et al., 2024). These strategic actions amplified the visibility of the project and the project's message, engaged key stakeholders, centralised women within the discourse of innovation and policy and led to meaningful impact within the targeted communities.

Applying a CD&E lens to the innovation journeys of the women interviewed in FLIARA, has resulted in the development of Practice Abstracts that provide strategic insights that can be utilised to enhance the viability of initiatives. Practice Abstract 14 and 15 highlight the marketing strategies that women can adopt and adapt to establish and drive forward their innovation.



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 14

MARKET LEADERSHIP: INVESTING IN RURAL WOMEN'S COMMERCIAL GROWTH

Rural and farm women entrepreneurs play a vital role in marketing their innovations, helping to add value, reach wider markets, and increase household and farm income. Their active participation in marketing empowers them economically and strengthens local food systems and rural economies. Insights from the FLIARA project's Visibility Campaign highlight the importance of marketing and reveals how some rural women innovators use a highly strategic approach to marketing.

Robust online presence—including professional websites, active social media, and sophisticated e-commerce platforms with clear marketing funnels—demonstrates deep involvement in brand development and targeted promotion. These women effectively manage online and offline strategies to engage audiences, build a compelling public presence, and drive direct sales.

A key focus on demonstrating the tangible economic and social impact of their products or services. While recognition of women's leadership is central, their entrepreneurial drive emphasises bringing offerings to market and making a measurable difference. This reflects best practices where commercial outcomes are paramount; however, their marketing and sales skills, though effective, often operate without explicit highlighting of the individual talent behind them, allowing the product's or service's value to take precedence.

Engage direct market connection. FLIARA found that rural women entrepreneurs cultivate strong client relationships and an intuitive market understanding via networking and public engagement. This experience highlights a critical, unmet need: while marketing and sales training are valuable, businesses primarily need strategic financial investment.

USEFUL LINKS

- FLIARA Webinar: Funding for Rural Women Innovators: <https://fliara.eu/funding-matters-fliara-webinar-addresses-gaps-and-opportunities-for-women-innovators-in-rural-areas/>
- Innovator Profile: Ursula Kelly: <https://fliara.eu/innovator/ursula-kelly/>
- Innovator Profile: Saša Kržič: <https://fliara.eu/innovator/sasa-krzic/>
- Innovator Profile: Sarah Khoudja: <https://fliara.eu/innovator/sarah-khoudja/>



PRACTICE ABSTRACT 15

AMPLIFYING VOICES: CONTINUOUS VISIBILITY FOR RURAL WOMEN INNOVATORS

The FLIARA project's Visibility Campaign highlights the need for sustained promotion of rural women innovators across online and offline activities. While events create peaks, consistent, diverse communication drives real change. Continuous impact reinforcement is crucial for lasting recognition, moving beyond single exposures.

A clear, compelling narrative is vital for effective visibility. Defining rural women's realities, challenges, and contributions reflects their impact, elevating their community role. FLIARA's objective—to spotlight women-led innovations and build a responsive European ecosystem—shows how precise narratives boost understanding and outreach. Engagements with FLIARA target groups underscore that gender equality is key for resilient rural communities. Discussions highlighted breaking systemic barriers, promoting gender-responsive policies, and empowering women as innovation drivers. **Showcasing achievements** via media and events shifts rural women entrepreneurs from "exceptions" to the norm. Integrating women into broader networks and highlighting accomplishments first (not gender) prevents marginalisation.

Diversify media for continuous promotion. The broader innovation system can foster clear narratives by incorporating women innovators into existing campaigns, leveraging networks for local engagement. Translating insights into practical support requires ongoing collaboration among policymakers, industry, and grassroots innovators. This creates inclusive ecosystems that fund, support, and recognise them as innovation architects, promoting mentorship and integration into broader sectoral networks for full participation and leadership.

USEFUL LINKS

- FLIARA Webinar: Gender Equality & Rural Innovation: <https://fliara.eu/building-inclusive-rural-futures-the-fliara-webinar-on-gender-equality-and-innovation/>
- FLIARA Ambassadors: Connecting Innovators: <https://fliara.eu/fliara-ambassadors-connecting-women-innovators-in-rural-europe/>
- FLIARA: 4th Community of Practice Conclusion: <https://fliara.eu/fliara-project-successfully-concludes-4th-community-of-practice-in-vaxjo-sweden/>



CONCLUSION

A strong CD&E strategy has been central to the work and impact of FLIARA. It has ensured that project results are not only communicated widely but also strategically disseminated to its target audiences and exploited for real-world application. By linking research excellence with visibility, CD&E maximises the societal, policy, and market impact of research and innovation.

Practice Abstracts are a key tool of the FLIARA CD&E plan. Translating technical findings into concise, user-friendly formats enables end users to access, understand, and apply results in daily practice. This directly supports EU priorities for sustainable agriculture and rural development.



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