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GRASS CEILING

D3.1
Living Labs Methodology and Design

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GRASS CEILING LIVING LABS - METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES & TRAINING PROGRAMME

This document sets out the methodological guidelines and training programme for all nine GRASS CEILING Living Labs across 9 countries as follows,

a) LIVING LAB METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH
   a. Operational guidelines (p.3)
   b. Recruitment (p.4)
   c. The co-lead role (p.4)
      i. Co-lead mentoring and development of case studies (p.5)
   d. LL learning sets (p.5)
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b) LIVING LAB TRAINING PROGRAMME
   a. Business Model Innovation Training Overview (p.6)
   b. LL Meeting Schedule (p.7.)
   c. Annual Showcase Events (p.8)

c) SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
   - Document 1: Exhibit 1: Living Lab Focus (currently as per consortium agreement)
   - Document 2: FAQ - Rural Women Innovator
   - Document 3: Report on lab focus and recruitment progress
   - Document 4: LL Management Process & Key Activity Schedule 2023-2026
   - Document 5: LL Meetings and Innovation Training Plan Overview 2023-2025
   - Document 6: LL Meeting Session Plans (ongoing - for each LL meeting)
   - Document 7: Innovator Identity Workshop Session Plan
   - Document 8: Progress update- for mentor sessions
   - Document 9: Case study template (WP2)

d) ONLINE TRAINING RESOURCE (OTR)

Audio recordings, slide decks and activity templates will be uploaded to the shared drive and the website as they occur.

- Audio 1: Co-lead LL Training Introductory Meeting – Mar 2023
- Audio 2: Co-lead Briefing Session 1 – April 17th 2023
- Audio 3: Co-lead Innovation Training Overview and Step 1 – April 21st 2023

- Slide deck 1: LL Overview – March 2023
- Slide deck 2: Innovator Identity Lego Activity
- Slide deck 3: LL Meeting 1 template
- Slide deck 4: BMI Training Session 1

- Resources 1: Additional resources will be included and uploaded as the Living Labs progress.

1.1 LIVING LAB METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

GRASS Ceiling will develop a context where women can drive socio-ecological transitions, that is, develop innovations in response to socio-ecological challenges and strengthen the resilience of rural areas. The project involves women-innovators on farms and in rural areas who will participate in our 9 socio-ecological women innovator living labs (LL) in 9 case study countries. The 9 Living Lab case sites have been selected as comparative cases. Each lab will differ in terms of innovation requirements.

Our Living Labs are practical, women-led, interactive innovation initiatives that will increase knowledge and provide tools to assist women innovators and policy and support organisations at Member State and EU level. Each lab will be united under a women innovator focus (see Document 1), with rural women innovators at the core. LL participant composition can be quite diverse, which promotes optimal stakeholder interactivity proven to enhance small firm and rural innovator learning1. This approach presents opportunities and levels of integration that can be missing at individual and local level2.

The GRASS CEILING Living Lab methodological approach is underpinned by participatory action research (PAR) and re-thinks how we understand knowledge and the idea of the expert. It has roots in working with oppressed groups and women and it aims to give validity to the knowledge and expertise of all participants. All actors in our living labs are understood as problem solvers, thinkers, and learners. PAR is also driven to achieve social action and achieve social, political and policy change. This makes it an ideal fit for GRASS Ceiling.

Following a PAR approach offers guidance into the lived experience of the rural innovators and the operationalisation of the labs. By using PAR, GRASS CEILING will promote rural women's innovations in ecologically and socially sustainable farming and rural communities. This will be achieved by bringing women centre stage to progress socio-ecological innovation, inform policies, educate the wider multi-actors involved in the innovation eco- system in farming and rural development, network them with women, and create an environment where women develop an identity as responsible socio-ecological innovators, acquire the required skills, and access networks3.

The GRASS CEILING Living lab methodology is evolutionary in nature, with iterative cycles refining the intervention design as the project progresses. As such, the process is not planned completely in advance so that we have scope to explore the LL environment prior to applying the pre-measure, intervention and post-measure markers.

The LL design invoked significant planning before the initial LL co-lead intervention. Each action is proceeded and subsequently followed by a learning and adaption cycle (Document 4). During our LL, Briefing and Review meetings, discussions will reveal rich insights into the lab participants as individuals, innovators and/or farm/rural business owners. Our purpose is to move towards practical outcomes, enabling new forms of understanding and with a focus on reflection as we design/adapt the lab interventions. This approach allows us to observe and record the views and opinions of participants, the innovators environment, the innovation itself and ultimately the LL interventions and their outcomes.

[1] Kelliher, Foley, Frampton, 2007; Lange et al, 2000; Matlay, 1999; Sadler-Smith et al, 2000; EC, 2006
[2] Hossain, Leminen, Westerlund, 2019; Lynch and Morrison, 2007; Zavratnik, Superina, Stojmenova Duh, 2019
[3] Grass Ceilings Application, 2022, p. 202

1.1.1 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

There is substantial emphasis on the facilitation of knowledge transfer and information flow4 within and across the labs. This is led by the SETU anchor team and in action with the 18 co- leads representing the 9 Living Labs.

- Each lab will meet 3 times per year for 3 years: 81[5] living lab meetings,
- Approximately 8 rural and farming women socio-ecological innovators trained per lab = 72 socio-ecological innovators trained during the lifetime of the project.
- 9 practitioner and 9 academic co-leads will be trained to lead an innovation living lab; audio recordings of these training sessions and supporting documents (templates and tools) will be available as an online (open access) training resource during and after the project (partner CIHEAM Zaragoza will ensure their continued availability).

The co-leads ensure that the lab participants are goal focused6. Initial goals are co-developed in the LL meetings (Document 6). These are further developed through individual action plans captured in the lab mentor meetings and report (Document 8). The mentor progress report focuses on each step in the innovation process. Innovation activity templates will also be available to support innovation action at each phase.

The co-leads act as brokers/ facilitators of learning and knowledge7 to support the rural women innovator's goals. Over time, the co-leads become trusted intermediaries, bridging innovator learning and knowledge requirements with the resources available in the lab and through (AKIS) stakeholders8. Effective learning and knowledge exchange act as the glue to bind the labs as a 'learning community' and potentially address cultural blocks and gender barriers to the development of effective innovation capabilities9 within and among the participants.

The labs will support existing and potential rural women innovators. The rural women innovators, academic and practitioner co-leads will meet regularly, as detailed above. Key information on time commitment and per diem rates for participation are included in Document 2: 'FAQ - Rural Women Innovator'.

Each lab will further develop their lab description, including its particular focus; to be communicated with other lab leaders and the WP6 lead under the programme communication strategy.

Supporting Documents:

- Document 3: Report on lab focus and recruitment progress.

[4] Gulati, 1999; Gomez et al, 2004; Kaufman and Tödtling, 2002; Reinl, Owens, Kelliher, Harrington, 2015
[5] 3 meet * 3 years * 9 labs = 81 meetings
[6] Jenson and Molés, 2001
[7] Crupi et al, 2020; Meyer, 2010
[8] Kelliher, Reinl, Johnson, Joppe, 2018
[9] Adeosun, Shittu, Aju, 2021; Fabrizio, Kaczam, de Moura, 2022; Vu, 2020

1.1.2 RECRUITMENT

LL co-leads in each lab will work together to identify and recruit:

- Between 5- 8 women from farms and rural areas.
  - These women can be existing and potential rural women innovators, self-identified and/or identified by other key stakeholders.
  - These women may be considering innovating in their locality or they may already be engaged in a rural innovation.
  - In each lab, the co-leads decide if applicants are a suitable fit for their lab.
  - The innovation focus will likely be different for each participant.
- Up to 10 multi-actor stakeholders representing relevant companies, public authorities, policymakers, education research institutions, citizens' organisations.
  - The stakeholders should have a mix of skills and experience that are a fit with the LL focus and participant goals:
  - Specialist (may include for example biodiversity, farming/ multi-functional farms/ food innovation expertise/ experience etc.).
  - National, regional and/or local rural / business support stakeholders.
  - Functional / Business skills finance, marketing, IT etc.
  - As the LLs progress, it is advisable to identify 2-3 of each stakeholder type for any core expertise that may be required in the lab. This allows for some flexibility, where a person is unavailable other suitable stakeholders can be called on as required.

Ideally, the women and a core group of stakeholders should be recruited by the end of April 2023. However, the engagement of additional stakeholders can/will continue up to, and beyond Meeting 1 (May/June) as LL participant's goals and needs develop. The multi-actor stakeholders across the LLs will be able to identify these individuals.

1.1.3 CO-LEAD ROLE

Each lab will have an academic and a practitioner co-lead.

Co leads (and LL stakeholders) in each lab will support existing and potential rural women innovators in developing:

1) their innovator identity
2) co-creating knowledge within an innovator network
3) progress rural socio-ecological transition through green innovation skill development
4) In- and cross- country knowledge and resource sharing are embedded in the lab network structure

The co-leads will act as LL facilitators, organising the LL meetings, leading LL discussions and activities guided by the organic LL resources listed on pg. 1 (training, documents, slide decks, audio recordings and other resources). These resources will help to develop insights into rural woman innovation and to support the learning, skill building and knowledge exchange of the Rural Women Innovators within and between the Living Labs.

LL co-leads are responsible for the collection and collation of the above Living Lab and participant insights and the submission of progress updates as requested by LL WP 3 lead, SETU.

Key supporting documents:

- Document 4: LL Management Process & Key Activity Schedule 2023-2026
- Document 5: LL Meetings and Innovation Training Plan Overview 2023-2025
- Document 6: LL Meeting Session Plans (ongoing - for each LL meeting)
- Document 8: Progress update- for mentor sessions

1.1.3.1 CO- LEAD MENTORING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CASE STUDIES

Academic and practitioner co-leads will also engage with individual recruits between each LL meeting. These meetings will be approx. 30 -45 minutes in duration and can be held online. This engagement includes:

- Recording individual recruit progress in their community
- Documenting the innovation strategy in practice
- Capturing learning and knowledge requirements
- Facilitating access to shared resources, expertise and training as required

Supporting Documents:

- Document 8: Progress update (Mentor meeting)
- Document 9: Case study template (WP2)

LL meetings and mentoring program are supplemented by advice on where to source tailored training, drawing from the multi-actor stakeholder knowledge and network resources.

1.1.4 LL LEARNING SETS

The rural innovators recruited comprise a core 'learning set' in each lab. They meet in the LLs a minimum of three times per year, in each year of the project in a series of open and closed sessions.

Supporting Documents:

- Document 5 - LL Meetings and Innovation Training Plan Overview 2023-2025
- Document 6 - LL Meeting Session Plans (ongoing - for each LL meeting)

1.1.5 LL PARTICIPANT-MENTOR MEETINGS

LL meetings are supplemented with 3 individual mentor meetings with the lab co-leads. Each meeting focuses on a key step in the innovation process (see Document 5 and 8)

Supporting Documents:

- Document 5 - LL Meetings and Innovation Training Plan Overview 2023-2025
- Document 8: Progress update (Mentor meeting)

1.1.6 LL SPECIALIST TRAINING AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Additional optional training and networking opportunities ensure that the recommended network ethos can be embedded in the labs.

1.2 LIVING LAB TRAINING PROGRAMME

Participants are supported in achieving self-directed innovation objectives through a series of complementary LL training interventions. These include; business model innovation training and LL facilitated discussions and activities. Network facilitation opportunities will feature in the LL activities as the Labs progress.

It is important that success can be assessed. Participant-driven action plans, based on objectives and informed by the lab interventions, will exhibit progress.

Individual action plans captured in the mentor meeting (Document 8) are an effective control tool for LL co-leads to assess progress, as participants articulate their learning and knowledge requirements within these organic plans, which can be captured in the 'progress update' and discussed in the Co-lead Review Meetings (See Document 4 - schedule).

The learning, knowledge and networking requirements in the 9 labs will be mapped by the anchor team at SETU, with active co-lead engagement. This document will offer guidance in terms of future in-lab, and cross- lab, learning interventions.

1.2.1 Business Model Innovation Training

The Living Labs focus on the rural and agricultural innovations relevant to each region. At policy level, business model innovation (BMI) within small and medium sized enterprise (SMEs) has been identified as a key source for competitive advantage, economic growth and job creation within the European Union (EU)[10]. However, embedding BMI in SMEs is a documented challenge[11] not least due to the constrained innovation capabilities[12] and internal knowledge resources[13] affiliate to this business environment. One means through which these constraints can be overcome is through BMI co-discovery with supporting outside knowledge resources, such as HEIs that can help rural female innovators to embed BMI capability in their firms.

BMIs can be technically challenging requiring knowledge and skills from strategy, finance, business modelling, optimisation, management, innovation capability development and marketing specialists in order to create a sustainable business model for the rural female innovators. Reflecting this, AKIS stakeholder engagement is a key success factor in the design of the Living Labs.

The contents of each BMI will be unique to each innovator. They will be co-designed to reflect their needs and competencies[14]. Engaging participants in a baseline innovation process, delivered by RIKON SETU (www.rikon.ie), will help empower them in identifying the innovation capabilities and external knowledge resources that they can leverage, in a way and at a time that reflects their lived reality.

LL co-leads will receive the innovation training first, and on a phased basis reflecting the LL meeting roll out in order to optimise learning (Documents 4 and 5) and enable them to lead and support lab participants in the innovation process regardless of innovation type, phase or journey.

[10] EASME, 2015; Empirica, 2014
[11] Bouwman et al., 2017; Lingren, 2012
[12] Andersson and Loof, 2012; Trimi and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2015; Kelliher, Reinl, Holohan, Lynch, 2018
[13] Kaufman and Tödtling, 2002; Reinl, Owens, Kelliher, Harrington, 2015
[14] deJong and Marsili, 2006; Kelliher, Reinl, Holohan, Lynch, 2018; Stawasz, 2015

Supporting Documents:

- Audio 3: Co-lead Innovation Training Overview and Step 1 – April 21st 2023
- Slide deck 4: BMI Training Session 1

1.2.2 LL Meeting Schedule

Each LL meeting will follow a step in a user-led innovation process, guided by the BMI process outlined in section 1.2.1.

Each lab will meet every 3-4 months for a full day or two half day meeting to progress the living lab innovation activities; a total of 9 meetings per lab will be held over the project life. Meetings can be online or in-person, to be agreed democratically.

Each LL meeting will be organised and facilitated by the lab co-leads and will focus on a specific step in a user-led innovation process (detailed below) in addition to facilitated discussion and activities guided by the session plans (Document 6).

1.2.2.1 Meeting 1: Introduction

Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi- actors will provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we will:

- explore perspectives on what and who an innovator is.
- brainstorm how data on women's work on farms and in rural development is gathered (WP1) – does this reflect reality? What additional data is needed?

Outcomes may inform the innovation process (meeting 2-9).

1.2.2.2 Meeting 2: Explore

Women innovators and multi-actors exchange knowledge, learning, ideas and best practice insights. They engage in training to identify problems/challenges and or opportunities. They conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise to include context specific innovation practices and training requirements. They link identified training needs to multi-actor offerings and identify paths to training for women innovators. Following this they establish participant-led goals for the living lab. The aim is to understand how they will use the living lab to progress their innovator goals.

1.2.2.3 Meeting 3: Reframe

Women innovators and multi-actors will engage in training in problem prioritization and produce an actionable problem statement (POV).

1.2.2.4 Meeting 4: Idea co-generation

Active engagement with the idea generation process where innovators share stories and co- produce as many ideas as possible ideas that could potentially resolve the problems/pursue the opportunities identified in meeting 3/interim period in their own context.

1.2.2.5 Meeting 5: Idea screening- selection and planning

Multi-actors will work together to agree on the 'right' idea and co-produce a plan to generate ways in which to pursue this idea in each innovator's context. They will learn how to differentiate good ideas

from Bad by assessing their Ideas against particular criteria (e.g. Audience, profitability, product/service value, scalability, branding etc). Goals will be set in terms of analysing market demand (qualitative & quantitative research) and refining ideas into concepts (concept development).

1.2.2.6 Meeting 6: Prototype Phase

Women innovators and multi-actors will learn about prototyping and build a prototype (Minimum Viable Product). Establish feasibility of the idea in practice: Work together to identify the skills and resources needed to implement the idea in practice. Co-produce a skills and resource plan to help pursue the innovation in recruit's own setting. Discuss how to measure impact; work together to produce an implementation plan.

1.2.2.7 Meeting 7: Test Phase A

Women innovators and multi-actors will learn about user testing tools and techniques and business model generation. They will establish experiments to test their business/product and user assumptions. Participants will discuss progress, share experiences, collaborate in seeking resolutions for challenges faced, capture insights and link with WP2 re: insight-led case studies.

1.2.2.8 Meeting 8: Test Phase B. Capture learning, insights and impact.

Women innovators and multi-actors will learn about user testing and feedback, product/service refinement and refining their business model based upon validated learning. We will review each innovator's experience. We will discuss gender norms in policy and practice and the lab members' roles as women-innovator mentor in their own setting. Co- develop a plan to produce tools to support women innovators in farming and rural areas (with WP6).

1.2.2.9 Meeting 9: Embed findings in innovator/multi-actor organisations:

Women innovators will engage with the co-leads and multi-actors to help co-produce knowledge about the specific needs of women innovators and how multi-actors can best alter practice to better meet these needs. The insights will be included in the work of WP 1 (innovator insights), WP 2 (identified drivers and barriers of rural women innovation), and WP 6 (tools to support rural women innovation, national/ EU dissemination and communication of project outcomes). All WP leaders/ lab co-leads need to discuss to ensure data capture format is optimised for cross- lab data analysis.

1.2.3 Annual Showcase Event

Three annual showcase events are organised during the project, each to be held in Brussels. These events facilitate transnational networking and learning, and will demonstrate the similar and different experiences of women in different regions, and in different socio- political contexts.

Exhibit 1 – Living Lab Overview

This is version 1 as per the consortium bid and will be updated the end of April as the co-leads refine their lab focus to reflect their local/ regional and participant objectives.

	Country	Lab Co-Lead	Focus	Description
1	Croatia	Chamber of commerce, UNIZG FAZ	**Renewables**	Farm women on small farms interested in organic conversion and moving to the bio-economy process/ renewable energy
2	Ireland	Young Farmers' association (Macra n Feirme), SETU	**Youth**	Innovation needs of young farming and rural women innovators in south east region
3	Sweden	Rural Sweden Jönköping, SLU	**Forestry**	Women innovators in farming, forestry, and rural areas, in a region high in innovation, but with low rates for women.
4	Spain	Cooperativas Agro-alimentarias de Espana, UVA	**Livestock/ crops**	Innovation needs of farming women involved in livestock and herbaceous crops, and rural women providing socio-ecological support services (for example community electric cars)
5	Netherlands	Dutch Women's Union, WU	**Urbanising countryside**	Identify the specific socio-ecological innovation needs of farm women and rural women in an urbanising countryside, and the opportunities to combine their efforts in assuring both the future of agriculture and the viability of rural areas.
6	Italy	Legacoop, CIHEAM Bari	**Ecological supply chains**	Work with farm women ecological innovators operating in regional well-established agriculture value chains (wine, olive oil and olives fruits, wheat, and vegetables) and/or in multi-functional farms providing recreational, educational services to local and foreign tourists, schools and citizens and social innovation solutions to local communities.
7	Norway	Oi! Trondelag Food and Drink, RURALIS	**Fishing**	Innovation needs of women farmers, women in fishing (seafood) and rural women, to maintain a strong role in local food innovation.
8	Lithuania	VŠĮ Agri Food Lithuania DIH, LCSS	**Small farm social capital**	Innovation needs of women on very small farms, and of rural women developing initiatives to strengthen the social capital in rural areas.
9	Scotland	Scottish Crofting Federation, UNEW	**Crofting**	Work with women innovators in crofting/ small scale agriculture and rural women experiencing innovation challenges in remote islands with limited employment opportunities.