GRASS CEILING

D3.2

Individual lab programmes and report on 1st year operation





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Abstract

Deliverable D3.2 reports on the Individual Living Lab programmes and the 1st year operation of the Grass Ceiling project's Living Labs (LL). In addition to lab descriptions and focus, the individual lab programmes included in this report, demonstrate strong lab engagement on the part of the women innovators, the co-leads and a wide range of AKIS stakeholders.

An individualisation of approach is evident across the 9 labs, guided by the LL methodology to help ensure consistency of approach. Examples of good practice highlighted in this report reflect that the co-leads have responded well to the unique LL contexts, innovator requirements and socio-cultural dynamics unfolding in their LLs.

Key aspects of year 1 operation include innovator recruitment and membership profile, stakeholder engagement, co-lead facilitation of the LLs and delivery of the innovation training. A safe, supportive and dynamic learning environment has been established for the innovators, co-leads and AKIS stakeholders in year 1. Innovator identity has improved and the innovators see the value of LL membership which has enhanced their access to innovation support and strengthened their visibility and voice to influence the change required to propel their innovation activities. AKIS stakeholders are also developing a better appreciation of the context and conditions under which rural women-led innovation can flourish.

Following a summary of year 1 LL operation insights, a number of actions that will inform years 2 and 3 are highlighted. GRASS CEILING aims to have an impact beyond the three-year lifecycle of the project by supporting women to play an increased role in advocating for change at an EU level. This report demonstrates that the LLs have had a strong first year, with commitments already made by some innovators to continue to work together beyond the life of the project.

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01 First Year Operation of the GRASS CEILING Living Labs

Key aspects of year one operation of the Living Labs (LL) are detailed below.

1.1. Living Lab focus and description

The LL descriptions have been refined in the process of co-creation in the first year of lab operation. In collaboration with WP6 under the programme communication strategy, detailed descriptions can be viewed on the GRASS CEILING website https://www.grassceiling.eu/living-labs/. Summary descriptions for each Living Lab (LL) are provided in Annex 1, p. 20. Significant insights and developments are discussed in this section with references to detailed examples within the individual LL reports (see A.3 – A.11).

1.2 Innovator selection and recruitment

- All LLs have engaged between 6-8 women innovators.
- All innovators share a common innovation focus.
- Many LL co-leads intentionally sought a diverse innovator profile in terms of age, business and innovation experience, and business type. This diversity united under a common LL focus has created social capital value for the LL innovators and stakeholders.
- The Spanish and Norwegian LL innovators are reported as being at more advanced stages of innovation. However, they are now contemplating further innovations in their businesses.
- All LL co-leads sought advice from Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation System (AKIS) stakeholders concerning innovator recruitment in their lab contexts. Notably:

- The Scottish LL collaborated with a partner organisation and advertised the LL using digital flyers on their social media and website; 28 applications were filtered according to geography (e.g., lab theme), type of business, and availability to participate. Shortlisted candidates were contacted for a discussion. While the interest was very welcome, the associated workload and applicant expectations were challenging to manage.
- In Sweden, innovator recruitment was guided via a working group of stakeholders. Initial promotional materials were adjusted beyond an 'innovation only' focus to generate broader interest.
- The Italian LL is embedded in a bio-district (an established living lab) with an existing governance structure and a dense stakeholder network.
- Other labs identified potentially suitable innovators and then followed up via email and/or phone call to discuss the required commitment and expectations.

- Initial innovator expectations and concerns centred around the nature, pace and

expected outcomes of the Grass Ceiling project's innovation activities. These expectations required careful management and discussions among and between the co-leads across the 9 LLs and between co-leads and innovators in each LL setting.

1.3 Year 1 Living Lab meetings and meeting format

- As of April 2024, meetings 1 - 4 have been completed for all LLs.
- Greater flexibility and individualisation of the LL meeting format, innovation training and stakeholder engagement is evident across the labs with activities tailored to each LL and their innovator requirements (guided by the LL methodology and training process).
- Five LL meetings have been held online. The online format worked well in terms of overcoming barriers to participation. These included time, travel and weather-related restrictions and seasonal farm and/or rural business commitments. Reported downsides of online delivery and LL participation included; difficulties maintaining rapport among the innovators and difficulty facilitating discussions in what was perceived as a 'more formal' online environment.
- Two LLs delivered blended/ hybrid meetings (with in-person and online participation). In the case of the Spanish LL, this blended format facilitated the attendance of geographically distant (350km) innovators.
- In several LLs, meetings 2 or 3 were held at stakeholder organisations and/or at the innovator's own business premises.

1.4 Living Lab formation and early stage development

- Rural Innovator Engagement: All 9 LLs report strong innovator and stakeholder engagement in the LL meetings and activities to date.
- Lab identity: Many labs have refined their lab descriptions to more closely reflect their women innovator's goals.
- Lab descriptions and individual innovator profiles were presented by representative innovators and co-leads from each participating LL at the inaugural Showcase event in Brussels, in September 2023. These are highlighted on the Grass Ceiling website and are accessible to all innovators and the public.
- Individualised lab names (e.g. in the Croatian, Spanish and Norwegian LLs) logos, innovation definitions and innovator-exclusive communication channels are tangible examples of LL ownership on the part of its members. The Swedish and Croatian LL branding (logos and taglines) strongly reflect the participatory process underpinning the LL approach and methodology. These developments represent early-stage LL success.
- Innovator communication platforms: WhatsApp groups are in use by innovators in Croatia, Scotland and the Netherlands and to communicate outside of the LL meetings. The Irish LL innovators were reluctant to use this channel owing to too many other social group notifications on it (e.g. School, clubs and activities). They expressed a preference to keep their LL activity separate from other distractions and an alternative channel was suggested.
- Learning preferences: For some innovators, the 'slow pace' of the innovation training timeline (see fig. 3 p.18) was appreciated (the LLs in the Netherlands and

Ireland); for others, it represented an uncomfortable 'step back' (Norwegian LL, an advanced innovator lab). Regardless, the establishment of trust between the co-leads and innovators, and innovator willingness to reframe their innovation focus is pivotal to the success of the labs in year 1.

1.5 Stakeholder engagement in the Living Labs

- As per the LL methodology (outlined in section 2, p.15), most labs commenced by engaging 10-12 influential stakeholders (including men and other rural women- led innovation allies) in an advisory capacity. In the early stages of LL establishment, these AKIS stakeholders were instrumental in identifying innovators and other valuable LL allies.
- The stakeholder profile is dynamic in all LLs, with support organisations, groups and individuals drawn into individual meetings and activities where their expertise is required.
- The co-leads have been instrumental in leveraging their professional networks for the benefit of the LLs.
- AKIS stakeholders include but are not limited to; representatives from central and regional public administration including those focused on agriculture and livestock, equality, digitization and rural development, local action groups, cooperatives, sectoral and women's associations, agricultural producer organisations, finance stakeholders, media and researchers, local authorities, regional continuous professional development (CPD) providers, and individual consultants, business developers, digital facilitators, experts in local development, other entrepreneurs as champions (see LL Netherlands for example), and women's empowerment activists.
- Online meetings allow LLs to engage valuable national and International stakeholders as guest speakers on a host of agri, food and innovation-related topics. These AKIS stakeholders would otherwise be beyond the reach of the innovators in terms of geographic distance and time constraints. The Lithuanian LL, for example, engaged the CEO of EIT food, the world's largest and most dynamic food innovation community. They also linked their meeting (hybrid format) to an Agri-Food Forum 2023 conference, which allowed the women to embed their innovation ideas in practice and then seek timely guidance from expert speakers concerning their individual innovator journeys. Other LLs provided access to policy specialists (e.g., Ireland, Lab 3 [online]), providing a platform for the innovators to better understand the policy domain, most recent policy developments and to influence policy actors through sharing their lived experience. In this example, it took time and effort to build trust between the co-leads and policy actors who had not met prior to the event.
- In some LLs (in the Netherlands and Italy for example) meetings 1-2 were intentionally closed to external stakeholders to allow trusting relationships to be established between the innovators and the LL co-leads in a less formal way. In other LLs (Spain, Scotland) an extensive group of stakeholders were invited to meeting 1. Stakeholders showcased their business support offering to the Scottish LL participants. The Irish lab, embedded in a University, invited two key University Innovation ecosystem champions to join the mid-morning break to welcome the

women to the University's innovation eco-system. These different approaches to early stage stakeholder engagement in the LLs were discussed among the co-leads and reflect important cultural dynamics present in each country that required consideration for meetings 1 and 2 in particular.

- Notably, in the Croatian LL the stakeholders were not all equally engaged and some expressed gender stereotypes and prejudices. As the Croatian co-leads noted the LL provides a forum for important conversations to surface and to promote change.
- The Norwegian LL co-leads noted that budget limitations have a negative impact on potential additional training they can offer their innovators. The Scottish LL co-leads experienced similar constraints owing to the need for some stakeholders to charge a fee to deliver training.

At the end of year 1 operation all LLs are continuing to engage existing LL stakeholders and are actively expanding the reach of their AKIS stakeholder networks to further inspire and support their innovators.

1.6 Individual Living Lab programmes

The Living Lab methodology (Annex 2) and co-lead training help ensure consistency of approach across all 9 Labs. In year 1 of LL operation, each LL has co-designed and delivered a unique programme focused on their innovators. A summary description of the individual LL approaches and activities is reported below.

Table 1. Living Lab Methodology - Meeting 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 provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed how data on women's work on farms and rural development is gathered (WP1) – does this reflect reality? What additional data is needed? Outcomes may inform the innovation process (meeting 2-9).

Meeting 1 - Summary of unique/ individualised lab components and approaches

- All labs followed the core introductory aims outlined in the LL methodology in Table 1 and discussed in the co-lead training.
- Some LLs (e.g. the Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, and Scotland) delivered an 'entrepreneurial identity' workshop using the Lego Serious Play methodology. While several co-leads had been sceptical about how a Lego activity would be received by the innovators, all co-leads subsequently reported that it had helped to frame discussions and garner deeper held meaning and beliefs about innovator identity among attendees. Other useful technology/ software packages used for this activity included Canva and Mentimeter (Spanish LL).
- Many LL innovators (in Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Scotland) had difficulty seeing themselves as innovators. In the Swedish LL, for example, the women are more

comfortable with the label 'entrepreneur', explaining that they add value in a different way to traditional farming/ rural offerings and approaches. One novel approach used to highlight the innovator's experience and value was a 'Sparkling Moment' icebreaker activity that promoted confidence among the innovators (Scottish LL).

- Following meeting 1 activities, the innovators expressed greater confidence in their innovation identity and discussed solutions to increase the visibility of women innovators in each context.
- The Scottish LL co-designed an 'innovator identity development tracking' tool and shared it as a learning resource with other LLs. This tool (spidergram format) captures how each innovator feels about innovator identity against five set metrics and three free choice metrics at the end of each LL meeting.
- Meeting 1's focus and objectives allowed for the establishment of shared understanding and agreed terminology among the innovators in each LL setting about innovation, innovator, entrepreneur, Living lab, and innovation ecosystem (see for example the Spanish, Italian and Swedish LLs (see A.3). This type of activity facilitates the emergence of unique LL artefacts that are tangible to see on the Grass Ceiling website and in individualised LL promotional materials. Intangibly, this 'shared meaning' sets the foundation for individual LL identity.
- LL Ireland and Sweden used visioning techniques and media 'headlines' to imagine future innovation possibilities, providing a forward-thinking lens when innovating.

Many co-leads noted the emotional nature of sharing their innovator experience which is linked to dynamics of family and care and the perceptions of 'outside others' about what they do. In Norway, Scotland and Ireland, the women expressed gratitude and excitement at being involved in the labs. Words including *'confidentiality'*, *'safety'*, *'coaching' and 'counselling'* emphasise that the LLs provide a safe, *'neutral space for sharing ideas and contacts'* (LL Scotland) and a 'framework' (LLs Sweden and Croatia) to *'try innovation'* (Co-lead, the Netherlands).

Table 2. Living Lab Methodology - Meeting 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.

Meeting 2 - Summary of unique/ individualised lab components and approaches

- The majority of the LLs had a dedicated stakeholder engagement component to their meeting 2 (as guided by the LL methodology/ co-lead training). In some labs, this took the form of stakeholder knowledge sharing about for example social media and other business support topics.
- LL Scotland included a session dedicated to updating the women on the Showcase

in Brussels. This empowered the female innovator who had represented the LL in Brussels and helped to set the wider context of the Grass Ceiling project for the other LL innovators. The innovators were interested in learning more about the women in the other LLs who may have similar businesses and challenges.

- Labs have taken different approaches to their innovation focus. Many LLs chose to work on a shared/group innovation idea, others (Ireland) chose two participant innovation project ideas to work through in the LL meetings, while others (for example the Netherlands) worked on individual business ideas.
- Some LL co-leads reported that innovation tools (the Empathy Map for example) fostered team building between stakeholders and women innovators and improved their ability to identify the 'users' of their innovation and to consider previously unexplored customer segments (e.g. in Italy, Ireland, Lithuania).
- The persona and empathy mapping exercises were met with different levels of comfort across the labs, both from innovators and co-leads:

- In some LLs (Scotland, Ireland) innovators found the persona mapping exercise effective and were happy to utilise it with their business ideas.
- Other LLs (including the Netherlands) found the tools difficult to understand and expressed concern about using them in their business setting. They have since taken a pragmatic view, applying the principles 'in practice', simplifying the lanuage used and as a result have overcome early application challenges.

Table 3. Living Lab Methodology - Meeting 3

Meeting 3: Reframe
Women innovators and multi-actors will engage in training in problem prioritization and produce an actionable problem statement (POV).

Meeting 3 - Summary of unique/ individualised lab components and approaches

- Building on preliminary stakeholder exchanges in meeting 2,

- In some labs, AKIS stakeholder contact details were collated and distributed to foster connections to support individual innovator journeys and and promote autonomy.
- In the Irish lab, the co-leads mapped the innovator's own contacts and encouraged them to share valuable connections where appropriate with the other innovators.
- Individual stakeholder engagement strategies;
- Some labs had 'gender-focused' activities which sought to better understand gendered barriers to innovation (see Spanish LL A.6 for example) with an action orientation to the development of solutions.
- In the Italian LL, meeting 3 was closed to stakeholders to dedicate the entire day to support participants in the 'Reframe' step in the innovation process.
- In LLs including in Sweden, Ireland and Scotland, innovator actions and goals related to further training and education, policy insights and influence (e.g. Sweden's Regional Food Strategy; Regional Tourism and Hospitality Strategy; Ireland's Rural Futures Strategy). In these examples, the importance of the development of AKIS stakeholder networks is emphasised.

- In Scotland, a dedicated Q&A session with stakeholders was very successful and will be repeated in future meetings.

In many labs (e.g. Norway, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Croatia) the women lacked comprehensive knowledge about AKIS stakeholders and the support they provide within their own regions and/or countries. Following year 1 of LL operation, the innovators can see the value of AKIS stakeholder engagement and have a stronger comprehension of available support in the context of their innovation focus. LL facilitators (co-leads) recognise that a lot of knowledge exists among the LL innovators and some LLs have invited their innovators to share their expert advice on various topics (in the Netherlands for example), while Norwegian LL stakeholders are assisting with the delivery of more advanced innovation training. Through lab interactions, AKIS stakeholders are developing an appreciation of the context and conditions under which these women are innovating. These LL activities are helping to establish a better appreciation of unique female rural innovator needs among AKIS stakeholders and they offer insight about how timely, tailored advice can mobilise their innovation efforts.

  - In the reframe phase, the women innovators were trained on the POV [point of view] statement and shared practical examples of the personas they created. Skills in relation to 'user observation' and 'empathy' were reinforced;
- In the Norwegian lab (advanced innovator environment), they planned exercises to lay the foundation for conducting the POV. Notably, while many of the innovators had completed similar exercises before ('who is the customer') no one had pursued the POV in the way that the training suggested. The innovators expressed surprise and gratitude for what they uncovered in the process and reflected on how important the exercise was.
- In the Italian LL, being trained to define Empathy maps and Persona maps helped innovators to better identify the users of their innovation solutions and understnd their specific needs.
- In Ireland, the reinforcement of observation and empathy techniques to understand users' needs proved pivotal in terms of refining the POV statements and customer focus.

1.7 Key insights on Year 1 Living Lab operation

Innovator and stakeholder engagement in year 1 of LL operation is very strong across all 9 LLs. All LLs have reported an inspiring and supportive LL atmosphere. The value of having time to think, share their experience and ideas and reflect in the LLs has been reported by all co-leads.

  - **Individualised design of the LL meetings and activities increased significantly from meetings 1 to 3.**
- *Adapting the LL innovation process to fit the stage of development:* While some labs are in nascent innovator environments, others are engaging with **advanced innovators** (in the Spanish and Norwegian LLs for example). Each LL co-lead is **adapting the innovation methodology** to suit the stage of development; early-stage innovators are building in first-cycle innovations while more experienced innovators are actively considering other innovations in their businesses. Notably, the Spanish LL have proposed a group innovative action with regard to the

establishment of a permanent working group to continue beyond the life of the Grass Ceiling project (2025).

- *Full participant – innovator challenges:* Reported challenges to full innovator participation (i.e. attendance at every meeting) include; personal and business-related commitments (e.g. National business/ industry events and International trade shows, farm-related commitments (for instance calving season)).
  - **Strengthening societal awareness of rural women's innovator identity is a goal defined by the women in the early stages of the labs.**
- In many LLs, despite being engaged in several innovations, the women were unable to see themselves as innovators and some were hesitant to talk about themselves being 'innovative'.
- By LL3, innovators expressed greater confidence in their innovation identity and discussed solutions to increase the visibility of women innovators.
- Many felt that recognition of their innovator identity in their own context and community is required to support their innovation efforts. **AKIS stakeholder support is required to reinforce innovator journeys and spotlight innovation outcomes.**
- The innovators are enthusiastic about the 'practical knowledge exchange' occurring between the women innovators and AKIS stakeholders. Each LL meeting draws on external AKIS stakeholders to provide (and receive) valuable advice, information and expertise to support their innovation journeys.
  - **The LL path to growing a co-learning community:**
    - Innovators noted the emotional nature of the innovator experience and an appreciation of being part of the experience *together.*
    - Trust in each other and the lab facilitators (co-leads) is strong following year 1 operation.
    - Mutual understanding is being established through shared discussions and activities. These lead to collective objectives and terminology/ language.
    - *Knowledge sharing involves everyone as* knowledge sources: LL facilitators recognise that a lot of knowledge exists among the LL innovators and that AKIS stakeholders are developing an appreciation of the context and conditions under which these women are innovating. Knowledge sharing in the LLs is helping to establish a mutual appreciation of unique female rural innovator needs and capacity and can offer insights as to how timely, tailored advice can mobilise their innovation efforts. Some year 1 LL meetings have been held in stakeholder organisations and/ or in the women's business premises (Scotland and Sweden for example) or at other rural innovator business sites (Josva House bakery, Lithuania). By LL meeting 3, numerous tools and resources were shared among the co-leads and many of these tools and resources have been applied or adapted by other LLs. Additional training and panel discussions have been delivered via invited stakeholders in the majority of labs.

The innovators are *'learning about and learning within'* an innovation framework. This live innovation training process and shared learning experience '*makes more sense,'* (LL Italy) to the innovators and the LLs guide and support them to future action.

1.8 Year 2 Living Lab actions

Reflecting on year 1 insights, a number of actions have been identified to inform year 2 oepration of the Living Labs;

- Co-lead confidence is building as they better understand their role as facilitators of learning and knowledge exchange in the LLs, rather than as trainers who need to possess and impart the required knowledge and expertise. As noted by the Norwegian LL co-lead *'The labs go better than you [co-leads] would think, the women … have the day off work to be together, eat, socialize, learn and be creative. So, while we provide the framework, we can also step out of the way'.* Innovator leadership will be further supported in year 2. Advice will be offered on this for the co-leads through the review meetings and further supported through a video series 'How to lead a Living Lab' being developed in 2024 and 2025.
- Reinforce an action orientation to help innovators progress their innovation ideas once back in their resource-constrained environments. Many co-leads report that innovators are beginning to see results from their LL participation but challenges back in their own environments have been noted. Moving forward the LL co-leads will be encouraged to build greater autonomy among the innovators concerning their goals and projects. It will also be recommended that they continue to seek ways to bolster innovator confidence.
- Promote the value of sharing co-designed learning tools and resources. Due to the emphasis on establishing the LLs and developing innovator and co-lead roles in year 1, the sharing of co-designed LL learning tools and resources was somewhat limited. Interestingly, numerous co-designed tools noted in the individual LL reports (A.3-A.11) were not shared with other co-leads. This may indicate a lack of perceived value and/or importance of some of the learning tools on the part of the co-leads. Future co-lead review meetings will address this barrier to capturing, acknowledging and sharing co-created LL artefacts.
- Enhance the LLs as a gateway to innovator network opportunities: The innovators are enthusiastic about networking opportunities within and across their LLs. These will be built upon in year 2 LL training.

1.9 Key co-lead learning and actions

Key co-lead learning from year one operation and resultant actions that the co-leads are contemplating in their respective Living Labs moving forward are summarised in table 4 overleaf.

Table 4. Key co-lead learning and actions

Croatia	Ireland	Sweden	Spain	Netherlands
Learning Insight 1: Innovation potential is constrained by lack of institutional support and/or lack of recognition of by local government. **Action 1:** Encourage engagement in policy decision making processes through the legal bodies within the Croatian Chamber of Agriculture (HPK). Encourage advocating to local government. **Learning Insight 2**: Women innovators need support through networking and business skill enhancement in order to refine their business strategies. **Action 2:** Organise training on financial literacy and digital marketing.	**Learning Insight 1:** Constrained innovation capabilities and internal knowledge resources are a barrier to innovation for our LL participants. **Action 1:** In year 1 additional support was required for the innovators in the following areas: Opportunity recognition – delivered in meeting 2; Embedding innovation goals into the working day – delivered in meeting 2 **Learning Insight 2:** Innovators need support to identify and leverage external knowledge resources through network skill development in a way, and at a time, that reflects their lived reality. **Action 2:** Deliver a workshop 'Building and leveraging your innovation network' for LL Ireland innovators. This can be offered as an online cross Lab training event for all co-leads.	**Learning Insight 1:** The women were not all aware of existing regional stakeholders and their work and potential support for the women's business development and development of new ideas. **Action 1:** Invite regional stakeholders to present their potential support to the women – and to learn from the women's points of views and experiences as rural entrepreneurs. **Learning Insight 2:** One of the main barriers for women related to how they were being viewed as women and not as farmers e.g. taking the main responsibility for care work sometimes implying lack of time and energy. **Action 2:** We will present previous research on work-life balance and welfare-systems in Sweden and discuss the women's experiences of barriers and gender norms (also identified in the focus group discussion with them in meeting 2).	**Learning Insight 1:** The "Review meetings" of the project allow us to take inspiration from other LL actions. **Action 1:** Adapt and use the reflection tool for the mentoring talks and invite men farmers to participate in the meetings as stakeholders (both developed in meeting 3). **Learning Insight 2**: After the reflections carried out in the three meetings of 2023 and the results obtained, women demand the implementation of several action measures within the Living Lab. **Action 2:** In 2024, several training actions will be implemented on topics proposed by women, with the aim of minimizing some of the main barriers they face.	**Learning Insight 1:** The programme is difficult to give confidently without more training for the trainer **Action 1:** I bought a book on Design thinking to get some more background; and we decided to be less strict about applying the exact concept; if PoV does not work, we use 'problems' more generally for developing ideas in the ideating phase. **Learning Insight 2:** The participants have a lot of relevant knowledge too. **Action 2**: We invited one of the participants to tell us about marketing.

Table 4 cont.

Italy	Norway	Lithuania	Scotland
Learning Insight 1: Identification of shared barriers (e.g. organisational, economic and cultural) that may hinder their path as innovators in rural and agricultural areas through the sharing of experiences, successes and difficulties. **Action 1:** During the first year of the project, the women project participants (after meeting 2) were provided with information and contacts of the project stakeholders to have a direct connection with them and to be promptly informed about the opportunities they offer to support innovation and support to the innovation journey. **Learning Insight 2**: Through the LL program participants are learning about (and placing themselves) into an innovation theoretical framework in which, they feel, their innovation process and current experiences make more sense and which can guide them in future actions. **Action 2:** In year 1, innovation training helped to align the participants' knowledge, provide innovation-related terminology and support the development of future innovations. Training support skills and knowledge will emerge during the development of the innovation process.	**Learning Insight 1:** The labs go better 'than you would think' because the women come together and have the day off from work to be together, eat well, socialize, learn and be creative. So, while we provide the framework we can also step out of the way. **Action 1:** We have to provide stakeholders and presenters in our LLs to 'up' the game for our innovators because they are quite far along in their innovation journeys. **Learning Insight 2**: The training 'prompts' about tasks and exercises do not always seem appropriate for our participants, so we have to trust that we are planning the right content for our LLs and participants and adjust the tasks and exercises to match their needs. **Action 2:** As a result of the Living Labs, the participants get invited to local food innovations put on by the Oi! company, as appropriate (the women got invited to a local food network the Oi! company is creating in the region)	**Learning Insight 1:** Recognising the LL participant as an innovator, understanding women's contribution to the agricultural sector, and appreciating equal opportunities in the agricultural sector. Identification of women's strengths/opportunities. **Action 1:** Self-understanding as an innovator, goal setting, identification of strengths as an innovator/identification of LL as a platform for learning and knowledge sharing. **Learning Insight 2:** Understanding the process of innovation in farm activities, evaluation of own farm activities. **Action 2:** Identification and search of target experts for women innovators is required to broaden women's opportunities and choices for the implementation of innovations on their farms.	**Learning Insight 1:** Creating a safe space with a trusted group of people to share ideas and learning is essential to the success of the Living Lab and enormously beneficial to the participants. **Action 1:** A part of the trusted space creation is dependent on in-person interaction and activities. Through partnership with the Scottish Government, the co-leads in Scotland aim to ensure all of the remaining Living Lab meetings take place in person. **Learning Insight 2**: Many of the participants are very innovative in how they approach their business/community engagement/activities but do not recognise this predisposition as 'innovative'. **Action 2:** Provide the framework and tools for participants to understand their inclination to innovation and build on that experience to further take advantage of resources and approaches to develop their ideas.

02 Co-designing the Living Lab Methodology

GRASS Ceiling set out with a key objective to 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 sought to engage women-innovators on farms and in rural areas to participate in 9 Living Labs (LL) in 9 case study countries. The 9 LL case sites were selected as comparative cases with each Lab differing in terms of innovation requirements.

Our LLs were intended to be 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 is united under a women innovator focus (see Annex 1), with rural women innovators at the core. LL participant composition can be quite diverse, this can promote optimal stakeholder engagement with the LLs and is proven to enhance small firm and rural innovator learning[1]. This approach to lab participant composition presents opportunities and levels of integration that can be missing at the individual and local level[2].

The GRASS CEILING LL methodological is underpinned by participatory action research (PAR) and re-thinks how we understand knowledge and the idea of the expert. 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. Using PAR, GRASS CEILING promotes rural women's innovations in ecologically and socially sustainable farming and rural communities. This is 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 networks[3].

The GRASS CEILING Living Lab methodology is evolutionary and LL co-leads refine the Lab design as the project progresses (Figure 1 overleaf). While an outline of each LL meeting cycle acts as a baseline for LL activity, meetings are not planned completely in advance, so that we have scope to explore the LL environment and refine the process to meet the emergent needs of the innovators in each LL. This approach involves significant planning before each LL meeting and requires co-lead

[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

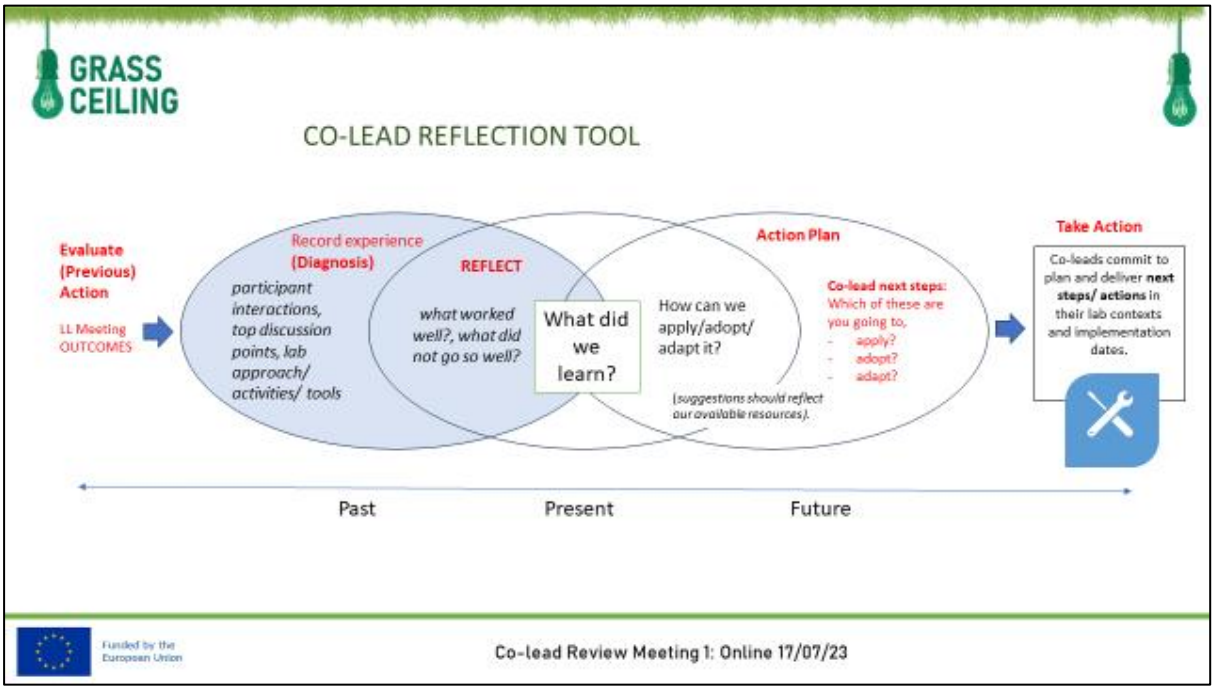
reflection after each meeting. This review of our approach and recorded planned adaptions to future LL meeting activities ensure changes are documented and can be implemented. In year 1, we completed 3 of 9 planned LL cycles.

Fig 1: GRASS CEILING Learning and Adaption Cycle - Co-lead Meeting Structure



Our purpose is to move towards practical outcomes, enabling new forms of understanding with a focus on reflection, as we design and adapt the LL interventions. This approach allows us to observe and record the views and opinions of participants, the innovator's environment, the innovation itself and ultimately the LL activities and their outcomes. Our reflections and insights as co-leads about LL learning and adaption in practice are documented in this report.

Fig 2: GRASS CEILING learning and adaption cycle



03 Living lab training: business model innovation co-discovery

3.1. Background

At a policy level, business model innovation (BMI) within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a key source for competitive advantage, economic growth and job creation within the European Union (EU)[4]. Embedding BMI in SMEs is a challenge[5] due to the constrained innovation capabilities[6] and internal knowledge resources[7] affiliated with SMEs. Constraints can be overcome through BMI co-discovery. This approach draws on external knowledge resources, such as Higher Educational Institutes (HEI's) that can help rural female innovators to embed BMI capability in their firms.

BMIs which create sustainable business models can be technically challenging requiring knowledge and skills from strategy, finance, business modelling, optimisation, management, innovation capability development and marketing specialists. Therefore, AKIS stakeholder engagement is a key success factor in the design of the Living Labs. The contents of BMI are unique to each innovator and LL context. They are co-designed throughout the project lifecycle[8]. Engaging co-leads in BMI training (delivered by RIKON, SETU- see Annex 2) empowers them to support innovation capability development for the woman innovators and to identify external knowledge resources (AKIS stakeholders) that the LLs can draw on to support innovation goals, in a way, and at a time, that reflects their LL context and the lived reality of their women innovators.

[4] EASME, 2015; Empirica, 2014

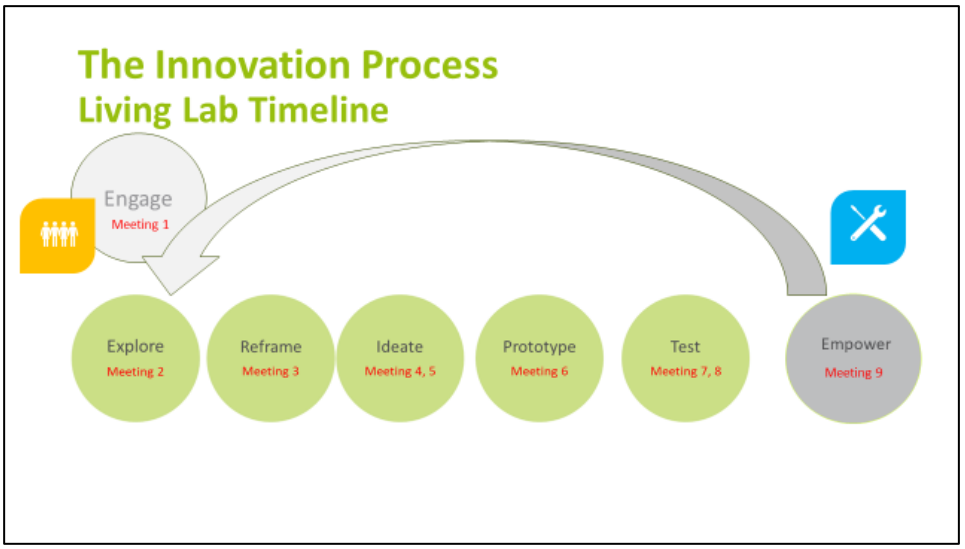
[5] Bouwman et al., 2017; Lingren, 2012

[6] Andersson and Loof, 2012; Trimi and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2015; Kelliher, Reinl, Holohan, Lynch, 2018

[7] Kaufman and Tödtling, 2002; Reinl, Owens, Kelliher, Harrington, 2015

[8] deJong and Marsili, 2006; Kelliher, Reinl, Holohan, Lynch, 2018; Stawasz, 2015

Fig 3: GRASS CEILING Business Model Innovation Timeline

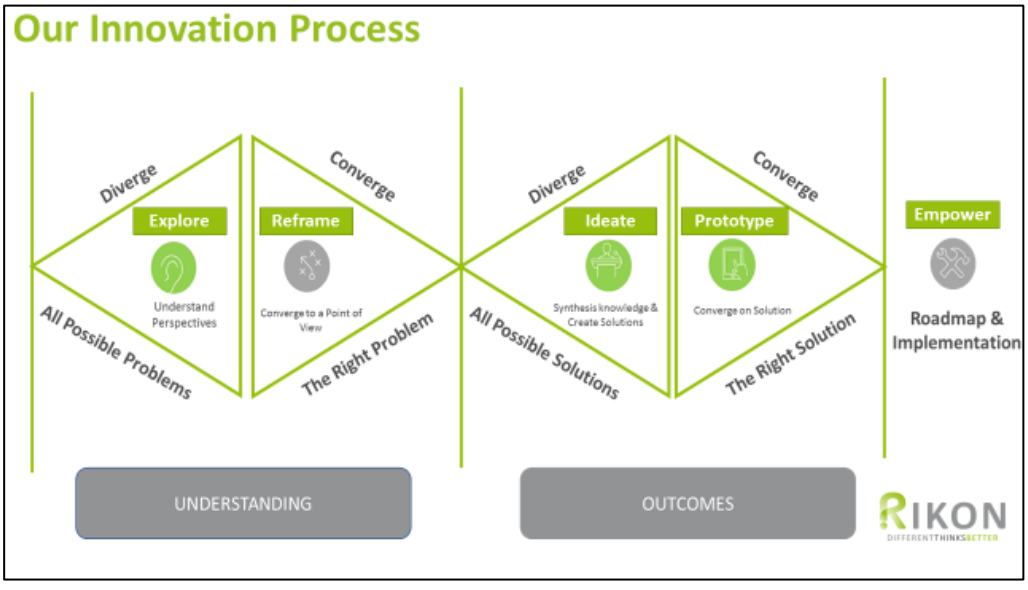


LL co-leads receive innovation training on a phased basis to enable them to lead and support lab participants in the innovation process regardless of innovation type, phase or journey. Resources provided to the co-leads include:

- Online training blocks (recorded) for each step of the BMI process with an emphasis on co-lead skill enhancement and practical advice on delivery.
- Training materials including presentation slide decks, workshop session plans and training activity templates. A catalogue of these resources is available on the Grass Ceiling project's shared online folder.

Each LL meeting is then organised and facilitated by the co-leads and focuses on a specific step in a user-led innovation process (illustrated in Fig. 4 overleaf). Each Lab co-lead designs and delivers tailored activities and stakeholder interactions guided by the emergent requirements in each Lab context (detailed in section 3 of A.3 – A.11).

Fig 4: GRASS CEILING Business Model Innovation (BMI) Training



LL participants discuss their learning and knowledge requirements in the LL meetings and during 1-2-1 sessions. These are captured by the co-leads and then discussed in the co-lead 'Review Meetings' which inform future LL programme design and delivery (training, facilitation, networking and stakeholder engagement). During this process, future LL learning events can also be identified (these are detailed in section 8 of A.3 – 11).

The innovation training programme commenced in April 2023 and 4 of 8 co-lead review cycles have been completed to the end of April 2024. This report details co-lead reflections and insights about what worked well, the challenges of LL delivery, what we learned, and how we adapted our approach to meet the unique requirements of each LL context and our innovators.

A1 Annex 1. Living Lab Overview

Table A.1.1: GRASS CEILING Business Model Innovation Timeline

Country	Lab co-lead	Focus	Description
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
Ireland	Young Farmers' Association (Macra n Feirme), SETU	Youth	Innovation needs of young farming and rural women innovators in the South East region
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.
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)
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.
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, and educational services to local and foreign tourists, schools and citizens and social innovation solutions to local communities.
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.
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.
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.

A2 Annex 2. Business model innovation: a co-discovery approach

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).

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.

Meeting 3: Reframe

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

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 context.

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).

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 innovation in the recruit's setting. Discuss how to measure impact; and work together to produce an implementation plan.

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.

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 on 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 mentors in their setting. Co-develop a plan to produce tools to support women innovators in farming and rural areas (with WP6).

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 practices 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.

The Grass Ceiling project BMI training is being delivered by the RIKON research group, SETU (www.rikon.ie).

A3 Annex 3. Living Lab Croatia

A.3.1 Lab description

The focus of establishing Living Lab Croatia was to gather innovative rural women and pioneers who can inspire and empower other women and men to recognise and promote gender-equal opportunities values and resilience through social and environmental innovation. In our Living Lab Eco-Women Entrepreneurs (EWE) we gathered rural women whose innovations have arisen from their awareness of the interconnectedness of economic, ecological, and social issues and solutions. The focus of the EWE Living Lab is to empower rural women entrepreneurs in their bioeconomy business ventures and to support their further self-development as innovators. EWE participants are engaged in bioeconomy practices in their local contexts, which is important from the point of several rural development aspects, demographic, economic, and cultural. Women are proving to be innovative and aware of many social and environmental issues and they are prone to innovate by making the economy more local and authentic, through multifunctional agriculture and other activities toward rural resilience.

Indications from the Living Lab show that the support and networking for new women innovators is one of the crucial needs. Thus, EWE Living Lab is focused on empowering rural women to network horizontally (among women innovators) and vertically (with the stakeholders, especially those from the public institutions including local government) and eventually and hopefully to become the local leaders in ecological innovations which would support further rural women to entrepreneurial engagement.

A.3.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

The selection and recruitment of the Croatian Living Lab innovators resulted in the participation of 8 committed rural innovators. The process entailed:

- Organising the initial meetings with our partner HPK in cooperation with whom we published a call for LL participation. We have compiled a rural innovator and a stakeholder database.
- Choosing the most motivated participants, considering the diversity in age, location, innovation level or stage of business ownership and with different types of business product and service offerings. The same call comprised stakeholder applications. There is a wider group of stakeholders which are selected for each LL

meeting, according to each meeting's topic and goals.

- Our LL participants (innovators) are actively practising organic agriculture and transitioning to the bioeconomy. They are involved in agricultural production and in arts and crafts products based on natural and local resources that are often unused or treated as waste. Innovations from their farm production relate to bringing together ecological, cultural and social sustainability through the production of organic olive oil, organic and traditional cheese, organic and old variety fruits and vegetables, and autochthon cattle breeds. There are also fascinating innovations from the arts and crafts industry producing cosmetics made of local aromatic plants, woollen balls for washing machines and dryers, and lamps from the old oak beams. Through their work, EWE women are innovating thus transforming the ways of thinking and practicing local rural resilience.

- We selected innovators with different types of business and at different stages of the business progress, and product and service offerings. However, all of them have common goals:

- Female support and networking.
- To innovate with a focus on local resources (nature and culture).
- A desire to make an impact on local communities.
- Aspiring to the sustainability (people and resources).

- The first meeting was very inspirational for participants, as they were fascinated and inspired by each other. Most of them had not previously known each other. As participants were very engaged, we ensured that there was enough time for sharing their stories and insights.

- Although we had developed an extensive list of key AKIS stakeholders for the Croatian Living Lab before the LL meeting 1, we were mindful at the first meeting to let the women innovators build relationships with one another and with the co-leads. We have invited the academic and local government stakeholders. As the Lab meetings progressed, we drew in additional stakeholders to support the emergent innovation goals of the women. In LL meeting 2, we included national and regional policy stakeholders and civil organisations. For the LL 3 (online) we have decided not to invite the stakeholders, for two reasons. The meeting will be held online, and we thought it would highlight the distance between participants which we think would be amplified if the group were too wide. Another reason is that we have a lot to deliver during this meeting considering the innovation learning process so the focus should be on that.

A.3.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme, focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 3.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Croatia, year 1.

Table A.3.1: Living Lab Croatia – Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participants presented their innovation ideas and shared their experiences in terms of business, introduction of innovations and obstacles they encountered while starting their entrepreneurship. In meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ identified what inspires them to innovate (changing environmental awareness, hunger for knowledge and sharing the knowledge for a better world, changing traditions, healthier living environment, reviving childhood stories and living with nature) ▪ identified obstacles which they encountered in their social environment and with administrative processes and institutions. ▪ LL1 participants: Jasminka Gršković, Silvija Terlević, Ines Dundović, Birgit Boljun, Vesna Jakić, Marijana Svetić, Ana Kovačić, Tatjana Klepo.
Stakeholder engagement Stakeholders in the EWE Living lab come from academic, civil society and policy backgrounds and are necessary to be involved in the process of raising awareness about rural women-specific barriers and of directing and shaping the ground for creating the policies for overcoming those barriers. In the second part of the day-long EWE workshop, the participants were joined by representatives of the civil sector, professors and sociologists: ▪ Professors and Sociologists from the Department of Sociology at the University of Zadar (associate Professor Valerija Barada, PhD and senior lecturer Nensi Segarić, PhD). ▪ Anita Silvana Ilak Peršurić, a researcher at the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism, director of the Šibenik-Knin County Development Agency. ▪ Mira Lepur, an employee of the Šibenik Development Agency Stipe Španja. ▪ Assistant professor at the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Zagreb Ana Matin, Elizabeta Pezo Paliska holder of OPG. ▪ Katarina Banić a member of OPG. ▪ Morana Jednačak IPS consulting. Not all stakeholders were all equally engaged and some expressed gender stereotypes and prejudices and were not familiar with the need for gender equality policies. The differences in gender equality awareness are perhaps the reason for reluctance in some stakeholders' participation.
Individual Lab activities ▪ Networking within LL (WhatsApp group), encouraging innovators to resolve actual business barriers. ▪ During the first LL HR, the participants got to know each other and exchanged experiences related to business, the introduction of innovations, the obstacles they encountered and proposed measures that need to be taken to improve the status of women in rural areas. A wish to make an impact on the social environment, hunger for

knowledge, transfer of knowledge for a better world, changing traditions, a healthier living environment, revival of childhood stories, and coexistence with nature motivated them to innovate. On their way to success, they encountered a great misunderstanding of the environment as well as numerous administrative barriers, frequent changes in laws and regulations, and a lack of adequate assistance in the transfer of knowledge and research.

- The participants see the solution in constant education, practical transfer of knowledge from farmers who already have good practices, digitization of production and sale of products, as well as the opening of special measures for women within the framework of the CAP Strategic Plan. In addition, the women emphasized that the issue of agricultural land is a big problem for them and suggested a tax on uncultivated land and/or renting it out.
- Identified areas for training: financial literacy, digital marketing, and project proposals

Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- Perspectives on innovator identity shared, mapped and documented.
- Innovation challenges and barriers discussed, mapped and documented.
- Initial Lab objectives developed.
- Network initiated to support early-stage innovator engagement with the project.
- Innovator goals and expectations discussed.

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023

Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs.

- In the first part of the Living Lab, 2 meetings focused on the introduction to the innovation process with an emphasis on design thinking and the double diamond methodology. Three main fears were also discussed.
- The participants shared their activities between LL1 and LL2 and determined their needs and goals for the next year. Their goals for the near future relate to the further expansion of their businesses. Their needs are mainly related to education and training: communication skills, stress management tools, digital marketing, agricultural knowledge, legislation, and accounting basics.
- In the second part of the Living Lab 2 meeting, discussion within the small groups focused on identifying opportunities to meet educational needs. Institutions that could provide educational content were discussed and identified by participants and stakeholders.
- The discussion identified problems with information flow in local communities as well as within and between institutions. The information about available training in remote areas of Croatia is insufficient. When training is available, the timing of workshops and the terminology used need to be adapted to the needs of rural dwellers (after 6 pm, video material). One group expressed the intention and desire to share their knowledge and experience, pointing out problems with administration at the local level, land leasing, wool thrown into the environment and the idea of including felting in the education system.
- LL2 participants: Jasminka Gršković, Silvija Terlević, Ines Dundović, Birgit Boljun Čujo, Vesna Jakić, Marijana Svetić, Ana Kovačić.

Stakeholder engagement

- Dana Jurman Jukas (Urbanex assistant manager responsible for smart villages and urban cities).
- Ivana Starčević Aleksović (Head of LAG Lika).

- Anita Silvana Ilak Peršurić (researcher at the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism, Poreč).
- Anita Bušljeta Tonković (Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar).
- Maja Sporiš (Government Office for Gender Equality).
- Zorana Cetinić Frankos (Ministry of Agriculture, Entrepreneurs and Women from Rural Areas).
- Ana Matin (Associate Professor at the Faculty of Agriculture, president of the ALUMNI association, member of the panel for evaluating innovation).

Individual Lab activities

- Meeting 2 mostly followed the Living Lab methodology above.

Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- We identified participants' training needs:

- financial and administration skills
- digital marketing and self-presenting on social networks
- promotion
- photography quality

- Participants and stakeholders did a mapping exercise to identify stakeholders who could/should provide the type of training they need or want to enhance their innovation practices and business development.
- The innovators shared their ideas for future activities of the LL:

- training on promotion in social networks
- the annual event where each woman can present herself and her products.
- the establishment of an association to support women where Living Lab innovators can advise other women
- the development of a logo for the Croatian Living Lab
- The need for networking has been repeated and emphasized in the discussion.

Meeting 3: Reframe - January 2024

Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs.

- In Living Lab Meeting 3, we dealt with the Reframe phase of the innovation process. The participants did a great job filling out the persona map and the empathy map for their current or prospective customers/users. They were also very articulate when it came to articulating their problems for which they will look for solutions (ideas) in the next step. The innovators seemed to be prepared to make a POV statement at the next meeting.
- As a part of the LL3 meeting, innovators attended the introductory training on digital marketing.
- The short demonstration on operational groups (CAP) was presented to the innovators. The innovators expressed an interest in applying for operational groups (the call is expected in April 2024).
- LL3 participants: Jasminka Gršković, Ines Dundović, Birgit Boljun Čujo, Vesna Jakić, Marijana Svetić, Ana Kovačić, Tatjana Klepo.

Stakeholder engagement:

We have decided not to invite stakeholders to the LL 3 meeting. It was an online meeting, and we had a lot to deliver (innovation process methodology – reframe phase).

Individual Lab activities

Meeting 3 mostly followed the Living Lab methodology above.

Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- Completed the persona map and the empathy map for innovators' current or prospective customers/users.
- Most of the innovators articulated problems for which they will look for solutions (ideas) in the next step (ideate).
- The innovators are prepared to make a POV statement at the LL4 (March 21-22, 2024).
- Innovators attended the introductory training on digital marketing.
- Innovators expressed an interest in applying for operational groups (CAP, the call is expected in April 2024).

A.3.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) /In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	June 16 2023	I	Complete	Šibenik, City Development Agency
2	Oct 13 2023	I	Completed	Zagreb, UNIZAG FAZ
3	Jan 24 2024	O	Completed	Zagreb, UNIZAG FAZ / Online
4	Mar 21-22 2024	-	To be completed	Island of Cres, Ruta Arts&Crafts
5	June/Sept 2024	-	To be completed	Križ/Sesvete or Zagreb (TBC)
6	Nov/Dec 2024	-	To be completed	Križ/Sesvete or Zagreb (TBC)

A.3.5 Key Living Lab Insights

- Croatian LL participants are highly motivated to improve their businesses, they are open about their educational needs and are eager to learn.

- Although the LL participants are extremely capable and successful women, they all encountered a lack of understanding within the local community, some even from their partners. Since the beginning of the LL, the participants started to enter policy bodies entering the HPK assembly (Croatian Agricultural Chamber). They also started to articulate their needs to their local government (on issues such as land tenure, paving the roads, and street lights).

- In their running of successful businesses, they encountered barriers to institutional support thus they were often faced with solving the problems alone (this is also an experience faced by male innovators, as was found through the focus groups with men). They need empowerment to enter political and governing bodies. They need and want to network with other women from whom they can learn and share experiences.

A.3.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

- **Learning Insight 1:** Possible innovations are constrained by a lack of institutional support or lack of recognition of innovative potential by local government.
- **Action 1:** Encouragement for engagement in policy decision-making processes through the legal bodies within the Croatian Chamber of Agriculture (HPK). Encouragement to address local government to advocate for the specific issue.
- **Learning Insight 2**: Women innovators need support through networking and in increasing their business skills to refine their business strategies.
- **Action 2:** Organising training on financial literacy and digital marketing.

A4 Annex 4. Living Lab Ireland

A.4.1 Lab description

The Irish Living Lab comprises women innovators in the southeast region pursuing agri- and rural socio-ecological innovations through a sustainable lens. The Living Lab has the following objectives:

- Engage rural women at early and more advanced stages of innovation and rural business experience.
- Understand their innovation needs through the exploration and development of local sustainable rural innovations.
- Enhance their innovation capability and visibility.
- Support their innovation journeys by embedding them in an innovation ecosystem.
- Map key insights from the Irish Living Lab to enhance young women's ability to innovate within their rural setting.

Living Lab Ireland will draw on Macra Na Feirme's young rural members, and on SETU's eco-innovation experience in the agri sector to support these goals.

A.4.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

- The selection and recruitment of the Irish Living Lab innovators was time intensive but resulted in the participation of 7 very committed rural innovators. The process entailed:

- Initial meetings with stakeholders who recommended potential innovators for the LL.
- Compilation of a stakeholder and rural innovator database which included research on the innovators and their companies.
- Creation of a tailored introductory communication sent out to selected women outlining key information about the project and the commitment required.
- Follow up with a call to each person to discuss the project, and their potential fit and address any concerns they had about taking part. Two key concerns expressed were:

1. Am I innovative enough?
2. Do I need to produce a successful innovation over the life of the project?

- Several women got in contact directly expressing a strong interest in supporting women-led innovation. Some were deemed unsuitable as they were not intending to innovate in the future. These women were added to the stakeholder database.

- Mindful that LL participant composition can be quite diverse, which promotes optimal stakeholder engagement and innovator learning, we selected innovators at different stages of business ownership and with different types of business product and service offerings. However, all had common goals:

- Innovation focused
- Female support and development ethos
- A desire to be agents of change
- A passion for the circular economy and sustainability.

- The above commonality between the women resulted in a very engaged first meeting. Conversation and discussions flowed easily between these women, most of whom had not previously known each other. As co-lead I set the scene for our LL interactions by reinforcing that we were commencing a learning journey with one another that required mutual trust and respect and an openness to learning.

- Although we had developed a comprehensive list of **key AKIS stakeholders** for the Irish Living Lab before the delivery of meeting 1, we were mindful at the first meeting to let the women innovators build relationships with one another and with the co-leads. We invited a small number of SETU entrepreneurial support stakeholders and representatives from our partner co-lead organisation Macra Na Feirme. As the Lab meetings progressed we drew in additional SETU stakeholders to support the emergent innovation goals of the women. By meeting 3 we had included regional business support stakeholders and National policy stakeholders.
- Of note, some AKIS stakeholders played an important role in an advisory capacity to the LL co-lead but due to the nature of their role, but it was not necessary or appropriate for them to engage in the Lab meeting activities or with the innovators directly.

A.4.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme, focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 4.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Ireland, year 1.

Table A.4.1: Living Lab Ireland – Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi-actors provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed 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).
Stakeholder engagement: ▪ Dr Margaret Tynan, Growth Hub Project Lead, SETU https://growthhub.setu.ie/ ▪ Dr Eugene Crehan, Director of Programmes, Centre for Enterprise Development and Regional Economy, ArcLabs SETU. http://cedre.ie/ https://www.arcLabs.ie/ ▪ Gillian Richardson Macra Agricultural Skillnet Network Manager, Macra na Feirme
Individual Lab activities: ▪ Meeting 1 was mostly delivered as per the Living Lab methodology above. ▪ Rather than a stakeholder mapping exercise, several key SETU and Macra na Feirme Entrepreneurial and Innovation Ecosystem stakeholders were invited to meet the women innovators for this first meeting. ▪ Gillian Richardson, Macra Skillsnet also participated in meeting 1. ▪ Dr Margaret Tynan, Growth Hub Project Lead, SETU facilitated a workshop using 'Lego Serious Play' in which the women built metaphors of innovator identity, which enabled them to share stories of their experiences, contexts and communities.
Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators: ▪ Perspectives on innovator identity shared, mapped and documented ▪ Innovation challenges and barriers discussed, mapped and documented ▪ Initial Lab objectives developed ▪ Network initiated to support early-stage innovator engagement with the project ▪ Innovator goals and expectations discussed.

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. 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.

Stakeholder engagement

- Prof. Felicity Kelliher, Senior Lecturer in Management, Academic Lead of the RIKON Research Centre. Specialises in management skill development and studies innovation capability development in SMEs.
- Prof Denis Harrington, Head of Graduate Business, Innovation Research and Doctoral Supervision, and academic lead EU Interreg project focusing on Green Innovation and Future Technologies
- Dr Arthur Kearney, School of Business, Lecturer in Management, Researcher in Small Business Rural Innovation

Individual Lab activities

Meeting 2 mostly followed the Living Lab methodology outlined above.

- Additional workshop activities to support 'opportunity recognition' skill development were designed and delivered. Inspiration to identify opportunities for innovative business ideas came from good practice examples brought in to the lab and shared by the women, the identification of key sectors, lifestyle and market trends and an instruction to generate ideas starting with an unlimited resource base. This stimulated 'out of the box' thinking and idea generation by removing the limitations and doubts that often curtail innovation and resulted in a fun and energetic lab atmosphere. Individual and collective resources (available from Grass Ceiling project membership) were used to refine initial opportunities.
- Following a case study (WP1) focus group discussion, policy stakeholder engagement at regional, and local level was proposed as a means to explore and discuss some of the reported gaps in support for sustainable innovation.
- A further workshop was delivered to support innovator goal setting and to encourage embedding goals into the innovator's working week between the LL meetings. These were subsequently shared with the co-leads leading the other Labs.

Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- Skill development: Opportunity recognition - two group opportunities were developed and participants were trained on the use of empathy and persona maps to gain customer insights
- Skill development: Goal setting – we co-produced individual plans to help identify key innovator activity in their own business (drawing on existing and shared resources)
- Skill development: Networking skills - the value of the Grass Ceiling network (within and across LL) was discussed with requests from the Irish Innovators to access the other LL member bios in pursuit of cross Lab networking, and learning and knowledge exchange.
- Participants actively 'explored' innovation ideas guided by user insight gathering. Three participants have reported being inspired to 'pivot' their existing innovation focus in the 1-2-1 meeting discussions.

Meeting 3: Reframe - January 2024

Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors will engage in training in problem prioritization and produce an actionable problem statement (POV).

Stakeholder engagement

- Dr Margaret Tynan, Growth Hub Project Lead, SETU https://growthhub.setu.ie/
- Gareth Makim, Department of Rural Community & Development
- Jacqui Gaule, Waterford Local Enterprise Office
- Dr Yvonne Byrne, rural consultancy

- Dr Maria Snell, Senior Research & Policy Executive, Macra na Feirme

Individual Lab activities

Meeting 3 (online) followed the Living Lab methodology outlined above. In addition:

- We selected 2 real project ideas (due to resource constraints associated with a 1-day event) to work through rather than 'an ideal gift' project. The women quickly agreed on 2/7 potential businesses to focus on. The two businesses selected gained valuable business development ideas and solutions while the others all took away key learning relatable to their businesses.
- We trialled Miro www.miro.com, an online visual workspace for innovation that allows teams to effectively engage in design thinking activities associated with the Reframe step of the innovation process. It worked well and permitted the women to share stories and others to support them in the reframing of their ideas based on user insights. Additional resources for conducting effective user interviews were distributed to the Irish Lab participants and shared for use by the other LLs.
- A policy stakeholder panel event explored and discussed some of the reported gaps in support for sustainable innovation from an EU, National, regional to individual business perspective.

Outcomes of meeting 3 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- Skill development: Reframing – participants learned the value of good user insight data and working in the collaborative lab environment to guide innovation options through a point of view statement.
- Skill development: AKIS stakeholder interaction and insights - the value and influence of Grass Ceiling network membership and potential network reach were realised. The panel provided multi-level insights concerning rural and innovation policy and trends which influenced the reframing of innovation focus in the lab activities which followed.
- Requirements for rural innovator support emerged (e.g. finance and mentoring support). Several stakeholder support contacts were shared by the women. We will plan an online support clinic in 2024 drawing in relevant stakeholders. Living lab Ireland will also lead/ deliver 'network development' training for co-leads, which can be rolled out across all labs.
- There is a need to allow time for reflection in the meetings and permit rich knowledge exchange to emerge.
- Both innovators whose innovation projects were selected for the innovation activity 'reframed' their innovation focus from the previous meeting. One is exploring an educational community initiative, and the other is rebranding her story to reflect her growing business and the resultant changes to her business model.

A.4.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	20th June 2023	I	Complete	ArcLabs, SETU
2	10th Oct 2023	I	Complete	Growth Hub, SETU
3	17th Jan 2023	O	Complete	Online, SETU
4	4th Mar 2024	I	Complete	Growth Hub, SETU
5	3rd May 2024	I	Planned	TBC
6	Oct 2024	I	Date TBC	TBC

A.4.5 Key Living Lab Insights

1. Barriers to innovation at individual business/ innovator level are being overcome through participant interactions and innovator skill enhancement in the Irish Lab. Participant feedback confirms the value of the LL environment in terms of providing safe, supportive and collaborative space, and time out of the business to develop innovation capability.
2. The perspective that innovative rural business models focusing on circular economy principles lack visibility and support, was a recurring theme in year 1 meetings. As it is often the case that these types of innovation do not follow or align with traditional business success criteria, currently they are not well understood or supported.
3. Innovators require specific support structures, skill development and confidence to be able to:

    - Identify and embed innovation goals in their current business domains
    - Build an AKIS stakeholder network and leverage support to achieve their goals.

    By meeting 3 participants instigated knowledge flows were emerging organically.

A4.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

Learning Insight 1: Constrained innovation capabilities and internal knowledge resources are a barrier to innovation for our LL participants.

Action 1: In year 1 additional support was required for the innovators in the following areas: Opportunity recognition – delivered in meeting 2; Embedding innovation goals into the working day – delivered in meeting 2

Learning Insight 2: Innovators need support to identify and leverage external knowledge resources through network skill development in a way, and at a time, that reflects their lived reality.

Action 2: Deliver a workshop 'Building and leveraging your innovation network' for LL Ireland innovators. This can be offered as an online cross Lab training event for all co-leads.

A.4.7 Additional innovation resources created, adapted or shared

Created & Shared
▪ Participant reflection tool (meeting 1) ▪ Presentation slide deck: 'Living Lab goals to actions' (meeting 2)
Shared
▪ Design thinking user interview resources ▪ Miro tutorial ▪ Sharing stories – understanding user insights activity (can also be used online – Miro)
Adapted
▪ LL Scotland's stakeholder engagement approach for meeting 3 (online panel)

A5 Annex 5. Living Lab Sweden

A.5.1 Lab description

The focus of the Swedish Living Lab is women who are active in farming, forestry and related activities. They pursue various rural and farm businesses, at various stages of innovation. The women have different backgrounds, and their entrepreneurial endeavours include a forest garden, a boarding house for retired dairy cows, a farm café and vegetarian protein production, farm shops, natural pasture meet production, locally produced pork, and organic milk production, horse activities and an on-farm dairy cheese production.

The main objectives for the Living Lab, in line with the GRASS Ceiling project, are for the participants to develop themselves and their businesses, and work with new ideas. The women also have a chance to develop ideas and innovations that can meet societal and environmental challenges to contribute to a sustainable, equal and vibrant countryside. Further, they will be able to extend their network and co-operate with other women in rural areas in addition to various support organisations and stakeholders. The women will contribute to identifying and sharing conditions and obstacles for women entrepreneurs and innovators in rural areas for the GRASS Ceiling project and stakeholders and support organisations.

A.5.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

For us to recruit engaged and motivated women for our Living lab, the Lab's co-leads Siv Lindén, Hela Sverige ska leva, and Dr Katarina Pettersson, SLU, decided to have a nomination and selection process of women participants. We anchored the project with Siv as co-lead (participation by SLU) presented the project at a board meeting of Hela Sverige ska leva Länsbygderådet Jönköping. The co-lead, who is the chairperson, suggested to the board to decide on a working group of board persons (inclusive of called-in members from the Swedish Board of Agriculture; the County Administrative Board and the regional branch of the Association of Swedish Farmers (LRF). The board members were encouraged to nominate and spread the word about the nomination of women. For nomination, we developed a folder with information and the commitment required by the women participants. We translated to goals submitted by WP3 on goals for the LLs and adjusted and broadened them as we were concerned about not being able to recruit participants with a too strong focus on innovation. In the folder, we presented a broader set of issues to be dealt with development and research-wise in the Living lab, and mentoring sessions to be able to attract and recruit participants. We named our LL Living Lab för en levande landsbygd (LL for vibrant

countryside). We called it our Living lab and the women participants to seek to create shared responsibility/ownership, and a participatory process. The folder was designed nicely with support by SLU (see Figure 5.1), printed on nice paper and distributed on various occasions and through various people in Jönköping county via the co-leads network. Besides, the working group had an additional meeting for them to spread the word and nominate members during March 2023.



Fig 5.1. Image from folder for recruitment of Living lab participants.

The working group and co-leads had a meeting and decided on the 8 participants (230403). We had had 18 nominations. There were quite animated discussions on who should be selected. We focused somewhat on the women being able to support themselves in their (business) activities and some focused on the women being representative of agriculture, mainly beef and milk production, in the county of Jönköping. We also aimed for a mix of women in terms of businesses from agriculture, forestry and rural environments, as well as how established the businesses were and their 'innovations'.

Before engaging a range and a larger number of stakeholders, we believed we needed to identify a clear purpose, among the women participants for them to participate. We therefore used the first two workshops to explore what we would want to do in our LL. In the first meeting, we were hosted by Nina Elmsjö, Head of the Division of Rural Development, at the County Administrative Board. For the third workshop, we engaged stakeholders Bella Rådberg from the County Administrative Board in Jönköping, Christina Odén and Katrin Löwe from the Region Jönköping County (A Region is a self-governing local authority in Sweden. There are 21 regional councils each corresponding to a county

in Sweden) who presented theory work and available support for entrepreneurship and innovation with the Regional Food Strategy as well as the Regional Tourism and Hospitality Strategy.

A.5.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme, focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 5.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Sweden, year 1.

Table A. 5.1: Living Lab Sweden – Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi-actors provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed 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).
Stakeholder engagement ▪ Nina Elmsjö: Head of the Division of Rural Development, at the County Administrative Board.
Individual Lab activities During the event, a series of discussions and exercises were performed – with the overarching aim of creating a shared understanding of the GRASS Ceiling project, the living lab participatory methodology and getting to know each other. The participants and co-leads also initiated discussions on gender equality, innovation, sustainability and rural development, which enabled us to exchange experiences and reflections. The participants all shared a strong commitment to contributing to sustainable rural development – and the importance of women's entrepreneurship required for such development.
Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators During an exercise called 'The headlines' the women were encouraged to make visions for the future – imagining what they and the Lab will have achieved during the GRASS CEILING project, and beyond. Thoughts on the Lab's achievements comprised it having contributed to the creation conditions for thriving rural areas – including well-functioning social and child care services – more rural women pursuing rural businesses and a larger degree of self-sufficiency in food production. The women participants decided that they wanted the next meeting to focus on sharing more in-depth experiences of the respective women's business development, including reflections on conditions and difficulties for development. Between meetings 1 and 2, we conducted individual interviews with all participants at their farms/business premises for research and mentoring purposes – as well as to identify the needs of the participating women. We decided to do this instead of doing online mentoring to listen in on their needs and expectations on the LL process – and come up with suggestions in terms of mentoring opportunities, and contacts for their enlarged networks in the region. For the interviews, we developed a set of questions based on the WP2 research questions and focus group discussion questions, plus we added a few more for our research purposes. We interviewed seven of the eight women for 1.5-2 hours each, and we walked their farms/business premises.

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors exchange knowledge, learning, ideas and best practice insights. They engaged 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 linked identified training needs to multi-actor offerings and identified 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 innovation goals.
Stakeholder engagement No stakeholder was participating as the meeting focused on the women sharing more in-depth experiences of their respective business development, including reflections on conditions and difficulties for development.
Individual Lab activities The participants prepared short presentations of their businesses, motivations, and support, then shared their experiences of their business development, including reflections on conditions and difficulties for development. The co-leads also led a focus group discussion with the women on innovation. We discussed if they do view themselves as innovators and what comes to mind when thinking about the concept of 'innovator'.
Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators The exploration of the 'innovator' concept brought to the fore that some of the women's general opinion is that an innovator is someone who invents something brand new and that the women in the focus group rather are 'entrepreneurs' and that the concept of 'innovation' is associated with technology. For others being an innovator is the same as being an entrepreneur, which is about having an open mind to absorb new ideas on how to improve how they work to have goals for what they do, and to become more effective – that this is what it means to be an entrepreneur. The women discussed that they have established rural companies that focus on other things than traditional farming, which could be seen as innovations only that they are unable to see it that way. The understanding in the group was that women and couples, to a larger extent than men alone, establish new kinds of companies in rural areas, in particular in tourism and hospitality, and in the horse industry.

Meeting 3: Reframe - January 2024
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors will engage in training in problem prioritization and produce an actionable problem statement (POV).
Stakeholder engagement Bella Rådberg - County Administrative Board in Jönköping; Christina Odén and Katrin Löwe - the Region Jönköping County Both stakeholders presented theory work and available support for entrepreneurship and innovation.
Individual Lab activities The focus of this meeting was for the participants to get more knowledge on support opportunities concerning the *Regional Food Strategy* as well as the *Regional Tourism and Hospitality Strategy*. The participants engaged in feedback and discussions on how their businesses can be better supported. At the workshop, a couple of the participants also presented their businesses, as they had not had the opportunity to do so previously. The participant who had been at the show-case event also presented her experiences from representing the Swedish team in Brussels.

Outcomes of meeting 3 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

As the main objectives for the Living Lab, in line with the GRASS Ceiling project, are for the participants to develop themselves and their businesses and work with new ideas, they need to reflect on their businesses and ideas, and also get to know each other so that they can support each other. Thereby the women have extended their networks and co-operated with other women in rural areas in addition to various support organisations and stakeholders, which are objectives of the meetings. For the benefit of the women supporting each other – by getting to know one another – meetings 2 and 3 were conducted at the premises of two of the participants.

A.5.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	3rd May, 2023	I	Complete	County Administrative Board in Jönköping county, Nina Elmsjö, Head of the Division of Rural development (stakeholder).
2	4th Sept, 2023	I	Complete	At participant Sandra Levinsson's farm café – Flättinge Gårdscafé.
3	14th Nov, 2023	I	Complete	At participant Emma Hartelius' farm – Grimstorps Gård – where she is producing ecologically certified beef from natural pasture-fed cattle.
4	6th Feb, 2024	I	Complete	At participant Elin Skörde's forestry Åsenhöga.
5	29th Apr, 2024	I	Planned	At participant Lisbeth Karltorp's horse farm.
6	Nov, 2024	I	Planned	To be decided.

A.5.5 Key Living Lab Insights

- The women were somewhat hesitant to talk about themselves being 'innovative'. The women discussed that they have established rural companies that focus on other things than 'traditional' farming, which could be seen as innovations only that they are unable to see it that way. However, women are engaged in many kinds of innovations including the 're-invention' of 'old' innovations; developing new products; doing things in new ways and using existing things innovatively. The women, in addition, developed technical solutions. The motivations for the women were interlinked and concerned personal issues, and personalities, but also using the farm resources in 'better' and new ways, as well as being more 'sustainable', adapting to new conditions and doing the work in improved ways.

- The main barriers for women related to how they were being viewed as women and not as farmers, for example – them taking the main responsibility for care work sometimes implying a lack of time and energy. Support missed by the women included financial support and being viewed as the farmer. They did not discuss how taking main responsibility for care work could be relieved.

- The women had a lack of knowledge of the stakeholders active in the county and the support available. Therefore, the stakeholder engagement in the LL meetings serves the twofold purposes of:

1. the women learning about them and the opportunities for support
2. the stakeholders learning and being made aware about the women, the conditions for and challenges around their business and innovation development.

A.5.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

- **Learning Insight 1:** The women were not all aware of existing regional stakeholders and their work and potential support for the women's business development and development of new ideas.

- **Action 1:** Invite regional stakeholders to present their potential support to the women – and to learn from the women's points of views and experiences as rural entrepreneurs.

- **Learning Insight 2**: One of the main barriers for women related to how they were being viewed as women and not as the farmer, for example – them taking the main responsibility for care work sometimes implying lack of time and energy.

- **Action 2:** We will present previous research on work-life balance and welfare-systems in Sweden and discuss the women's experiences of barriers and gender norms (also identified in the focus group discussion with them in meeting 2).

A.5.7 Additional innovation resources created, adapted, or shared

Created & Shared
Shared
Adapted

A6 Annex 6. Living Lab Spain

A.6.1 Lab description

The Living Lab (LL) of Spain is focusing on innovative agri-food initiatives led by women in uninhabited rural territories in the north of the country. The main reason why this topic has been chosen is related to the wide-ranging opportunities offered by the agricultural and livestock sectors as key elements in territorial development, food production, and economic and social revitalisation. The associative and cooperative agri-food movement and the creation of networks are also fundamental characteristics of this LL. In this sense, work is being carried out in mountainous areas, where extensive livestock farming is developed. On the other hand, work is also being carried out in plateau areas where extensive agriculture (herbaceous crops), intensive agriculture (horticultural crops and vineyards) and some types of livestock are relevant. In both territories, the case studies are been focusing on innovative and differentiated agri-food initiatives, mostly managed by young and qualified women, that are environmentally friendly and that could integrate both primary production and the transformation of these inputs.

A.6.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

- **Innovator selection and recruitment:** The selection process to recruit the eight women participating in the Grass Ceiling project has been as follows. The two co-leads (Valladolid University and Agri-food Cooperatives of Spain) announced, through their communication channels, a call for expression of interest from women innovators in the agri-food sector, to support training/knowledge sharing in the LL. The women who responded to this call were informed about the project's features, its objectives, and the tasks they were expected to perform.

- **LL participant (innovator) composition:** The LL involves a total of eight women: four farmers (dryland crops, irrigated horticultural crops, and vineyards) and four livestock breeders (free-range chicken eggs, semi-extensive sheep farming, confined pig farming, and extensive beef cattle farming). Their ages range from 33 to 60 years, and half of them have university degrees, while all of them have completed numerous agricultural training courses. It is important to emphasize

that these women are in a very advanced stage of their innovative process and most of them are members of some cooperative.

- **Stakeholder engagement:** There are representatives from various fields: central and regional public administration (agriculture and livestock, equality, digitization and rural development), local action groups, cooperatives, sectoral and women's associations, agricultural producer organisations, financial sector, media and researchers. This group of stakeholders is dynamic and may vary depending on the topic to be discussed in each of the meetings. The selection was made through the network of contacts of the two co-leads.

A.6.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme, focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 6.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Spain, year 1.

Table A. 6.1: Living Lab Spain – Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2) to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi-actors provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed 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).
Stakeholder engagement ▪ Agri-food Cooperatives Castilla y León ▪ Sustainable agriculture association (all agricultural unions represented) ▪ Sheep producers association ▪ National agrarian Administration ▪ Regional agrarian and equality Administration, Aragón ▪ Local action group ▪ Agrarian Innovation Research Centre ▪ Agrarian innovation and rural women researcher (University)
Individual Lab activities ▪ The LL took place in person, (two participated online due to distance constraints) ▪ The methodology and dynamics to achieve the objectives were as follows: - Each participant defined what they understood by agricultural innovation. Keywords were collected in a diagram using the Mentimeter app.

- Discussion 1: Is women's leadership role increasing in the agricultural sector? In groups of four people (two women and two stakeholders) with a moderator, several questions were answered using post-it notes. Each group presented their opinions, and a conceptual map was created. Participants voted on the most relevant responses.
- Discussion 2: What needs to be done to increase the visibility of women in the agricultural sector? Same dynamic as the previous discussion.
- Roundtable discussion exclusively with the women to understand the characteristics of their farms from different perspectives. A personal profile sheet was created for each woman.

Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- An innovation concept was agreed upon: "We define innovation in the agricultural sector as a change in any area (economic, environmental, and/or social) that aims to improve, adapt to new demands, and seek solutions. The goal is to generate value to increase the well-being of people, satisfy needs, ensure sustainable profitability in farms, and place significant importance on alliances and cooperation. This does not imply breaking with the past and tradition but rather progressing and adapting to the present and future."
- The traditional role of women in the agricultural sector is being surpassed, however, there are still numerous challenges that both women themselves and society as a whole must face.
- The role of women in the agricultural sector is becoming increasingly visible. However, there is still significant room for improvement in this regard.
- The overall perception of the meeting has been very positive. The women feel highly engaged in the project and believe that valuable results can be achieved to improve the position of women in the countryside.
- The participation of stakeholders has also been beneficial in achieving the intended conclusions, and their support has appropriately complemented the discourse of the innovative women.

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023

Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2) to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participants engaged 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.

Individual Lab activities

- The aims of Meeting 2 were as mentioned above. The methodology and dynamics to achieve the objectives were as follows;
- Each woman shared the main characteristics of her innovative process through a form that addressed the following topics: what the innovation consists of; reasons for initiating it; individuals or organisations contacted; support received; barriers encountered; and how she believes the Grass Ceiling project can support her innovation.
- A brainstorming activity related to implementing a possible group innovation between all participants of the Spanish living lab.
- A roundtable was conducted in which each woman spoke about an example of best practices in their respective sectors.

Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- All the women are in a very advanced stage of their innovative process, and some of them are considering introducing other innovations to their farmers.

- The innovations being carried out by these women are related to improvements in the production processes of their respective farms and also emphasize the need for social innovations that support the visibility of women in the sector, create work networks, and facilitate the acquisition of training and information. The main motivation driving them to innovate is primarily related to achieving greater economic benefits but also mention other motivations related to improving their farms in terms of efficiency, time savings, well-being, and sustainability.
- Regarding the barriers that women face in their innovation process, they mention personal, professional, and sometimes gender-related factors. Given that women bear the majority of reproductive and care work, they note that they do not have enough time to dedicate to other tasks, such as researching innovations or participating in representative and leadership roles.
- All the women agree that Grass Ceiling can help them raise visibility about the role of women in the agricultural sector, exchange ideas with other women, create networks, and connect with expert agents. In this regard, they propose, as a group innovative action, the establishment of a permanent working group to continue discussing all the issues that concern them and to maintain mutual support beyond 2025.
- The examples of best practices presented by the women highlight the need to undertake innovative actions that align with market demands and are sustainable. To achieve this, training and professionalization are indispensable.

Meeting 3: Reframe - January 2024
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2) to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors will engage in training in problem prioritization and produce an actionable problem statement (POV).
Stakeholder engagement: ▪ Agri-food Cooperatives Castilla y León ▪ Sustainable agriculture association (all agricultural unions represented) ▪ National agrarian Administration ▪ Regional agrarian and equality Administration. Aragón ▪ Regional agrarian Administration (CAP). Castilla y León ▪ Local action group ▪ Wine regulatory council ▪ Extensive crops farmer (male) ▪ Livestock farmer (male)
Individual Lab activities The LL took place in person, but one woman participated online again due to distance constraints. ▪ The aims of Meeting 3 were as mentioned above. The methodology and dynamics to achieve the objectives were as follows; - Dynamic 1: Four mixed groups were formed to analyse the main individual and collective barriers faced by women. - Dynamic 2: A role-playing game was conducted, placing women and men farmers on one side and external agents on the other. Based on the problems that women perceived as most significant, possible action measures were proposed. External agents provided input on their viability or whether similar measures were already being implemented in any territory. -
Outcomes of meeting 3 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators: ▪ The main barriers regarding the women's innovation process are related to four issues,

limitations in rural areas, personal problems, agrarian problems, and regulatory barriers. The bureaucratic aspects, which take up much of the women's time, were one of the most discussed topics.

- The proposed action measures are related to continuing education, especially in digitization, increasing the visibility of their work and experiences of female role models, creating networks of mutual support, improving the living conditions in rural areas, strengthening the support role of associations and cooperatives, promoting their representation in political and decision-making bodies and simplifying administrative procedures.
- The overall perception of the meeting has been very positive among all participants, who are beginning to see results and preliminary conclusions arising from the work being done in the Grass Ceiling project during this first year.

A.6.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	12th June 2023	I	Complete	Valladolid University-UVa (Palencia Campus) UVa and Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain
2	16th Oct 2023	O	Complete	Online UVa and Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain
3	13 Dec 2023	I	Complete	Valladolid University-UVa (Palencia Campus) UVa and Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain
4	Feb 2024	O	Complete	Online UVa and Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain
5	May 2024	I	Date TBC	Valladolid University-UVa (Palencia Campus) UVa and Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain
6	Oct 2024	I	Date TBC	Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain (Castilla y León Federation) UVa and Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain

A.6.5 Key Living Lab Insights

- The women, farmers and livestock keepers, participating in the Spanish living lab are in a very advanced stage of their innovative process. Therefore, until now, efforts have been focused more specifically on identifying the main barriers that hinder this process and proposing solutions to help overcome them.
- The women's perception of their participation in Grass Ceiling is very positive. They feel highly engaged in the project and believe that valuable results can be achieved to improve the position of women in the countryside. Stakeholders are also playing a relevant role.
    - The strengths of the Living Lab are manifested as a space for discussion and dialogue among women and stakeholders, providing an opportunity to create networks of mutual support, giving voice and visibility to women, facilitating relationships with participants from other Living Labs, and serving as an ideal entity to offer training activities.

A.6.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

Learning Insight 1: The 'Review meetings' of the project allow us to take inspiration from other LL actions.

Action 1: Adapt and use the reflection tool for the mentoring talks and invite men farmers to participate in the meetings as stakeholders (both developed in meeting 3).

Learning Insight 2: After the reflections carried out in the three meetings of 2023 and the results obtained, women demand the implementation of several action measures within the Living Lab.

Action 2: In 2024, several training actions will be implemented on topics proposed by women, with the aim of minimizing some of the main barriers they face.

A.6.7 Additional innovation resources created, adapted, or shared

Created & Shared
▪ Template "Sharing my innovation" ▪ Dynamic about a role-playing game "Proposal of generic support strategies"
Shared
Adapted

A7 Annex 7. Living Lab the Netherlands

A.7.1 Lab description

The Dutch lab is based in an urbanised rural region, where urban expansions threaten the future of rural areas. However, this offers opportunities for green, recreational, and ecological services and nature and landscape conservation for agriculture. Farm women lead on more ecological agriculture but fail to be recognised in the mainstream. Rural women contribute to maintaining village halls, civic transport initiatives and care cooperatives. This Lab works to identify the specific socio-ecological innovation needs of farm women and rural women in an urbanising countryside, and the opportunities to combine their efforts to ensure the future of agriculture and the viability of rural areas.

A.7.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

We aimed for the most diverse possible composition of LL participants, consisting of women across both the agricultural and rural sectors in different stages of business ownership and the realisation of innovative ideas. All participants are interested in playing a role in current agricultural transitions, improving the connection between the agricultural sector and the rest of society, and experimenting with alternative business models and products. Sustainability emerges as an important theme across all the innovation ideas of the participants. In addition, the demographic and background of the participants also varies, from younger and inexperienced to older and almost meeting the necessary network and prerequisites for establishing their innovation.

No AKIS stakeholders were invited to the first LL meeting to ensure relationship-building between participants and the co-leads. This worked out well, as the first meeting was characterised by a very open and trustworthy atmosphere where participants and co-leads got to know each other. After the third LL meeting, a family-systematic coach and a women innovator who has established a ‘successful’ innovation on her farm were invited to the meetings. Each session emphasised the trajectory of the participants, which was prioritised over stakeholder engagement, as this seemed necessary for the initial innovation stages. Nevertheless, the AKIS stakeholders provided valuable contributions to the participants' innovation journeys.

A.7.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme, focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 7.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Netherlands, year 1.

Table A.7.1: Living Lab the Netherlands – Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi-actors provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed 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).
Stakeholder engagement No stakeholders were involved in LL1
Individual Lab activities ▪ Lego exercise, in which participants were asked to create something out of Lego that represented their view of the role of women within the agricultural/rural sector. ▪ To close, participants were asked to define the overall first goal of the project and pitch it to the others.
Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators It was a very solution-orientated outcome, with participants and co-leads sharing contacts and information. ▪ There was a recognition amongst the group that a lot could be changed in the sector, but also a feeling that the change is happening now and that these women were part of it. There was a very inspiring and supportive atmosphere amongst the participants. It was also emotional for many to share their own experiences. ▪ Several women expressed that they appreciated the LL being over three years in duration as it gives them time to develop something without it needing to be hurried. ▪ A WhatsApp group was created for participants and co-leads to share information and support.

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. 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.
Stakeholder engagement ▪ Yolanda del Prado shared insights into being a female entrepreneur and how she established her own business, including how she brainstormed initial ideas and shared marketing advice.
Individual Lab activities Meeting 2 mostly followed the Living Lab methodology above. ▪ Time was allocated for the women to update one another on their progress and to give feedback or ideas to any obstacles they had faced also potential contacts to assist with individual projects were exchanged amongst the group. Everyone seemed invested in supporting one another and all the participants reflected on their position within the process and how the LL assisted them. There was no competitiveness. ▪ One project was taken as an example for the empathy map. Understanding this activity was not easy for the innovators, so a significant amount of time was spent on this activity to make them more comfortable applying it to their projects. ▪ Closing the day included looking forward to how the whole process is designed and taking through the different stages again to reinforce the importance of completing a thorough empathy map.
Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ To identify inspiring best practices. ▪ To understand and complete the empathy map using one innovator as an example. ▪ Studying the innovation process and (RIKON) identifying individual motivations of potential customers. ▪ Respecting one another and having a vested interest in how all the projects are developing as a whole group; establishing a supportive and empathetic group.

Meeting 3: Reframe - January 2024
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors will engage in training in problem prioritization and produce an actionable problem statement (POV).
Stakeholder engagement Anne Marie van Oldeniel-Boerhof, a family systematic coach, held a session of 2 hours with participants and co-leads. The session with the family systematic coach provided highly valuable insights into the personal situation of each participant. This was special because it touched everyone, in particular 2 participants. One deliberately brought in her story whereas the other very aptly complemented based on her experience. It was emotional and certainly for the first one 'tough' I think, but also connecting. It also nicely indicated how much safety there is and how much-shared experience: family dynamics in one's own family or indirectly through that of the partner.
Individual Lab activities ▪ The family systematic coach session ▪ Exchange of POV's among participants in pairs.
Outcomes of meeting 3 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ It was identified amongst the women that revenue is important but should not outweigh the other factors to drive innovation. ▪ The women struggled to understand how POV related to their innovation journey and were frustrated. Not being able to trust the innovation process and their personal growth seemed to hinder some participants in broadening their view of possible target groups

and their needs and in approaching these target groups. Some participants faced setbacks in receiving support from their partners and family members for their innovation journey.

- Insight into family dynamics and how much influence the dynamics of a multigenerational company have. Awareness of the need to take responsibility for your role in your family, which is within your means, was an important takeaway from the coaching session.
- Perhaps also a certain effort to work on an 'innovation' in such a focused way, with all kinds of preliminary work and certainly approaching and questioning strangers evokes fear.

A.4.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	16.06.23	In person	Completed	Den Bosch, LTO
2	22.09.23	In person	Completed	Wageningen University, WUR
3	03.11.23	In person	Completed	Zwolle, LTO
4	02.02.24	In person	Completed	De Mortel
5	26.04.24	In person	Planned	Utrecht
6	11.10.24	In person	Planned	The Hauge

A.7.5 Key Living Lab Insights

- Developing a POV proved difficult for participants as they found it hard to differentiate between the different tools and understand the added value of each tool. Moreover, participants found it hard to think of alternative target groups for their products and to expand their views on this.
- Something that stood out each session was the mutual support, information exchange, attentive listening and helpful feedback happening among the participants within the sessions and outside, by using WhatsApp and LinkedIn.
- Participants seemingly had expectations of themselves that they didn't meet, as if they felt like they had to reach certain goals/expectations. Each meeting, they started by saying they hadn't done so much, while in reality, they had taken many steps. Trusting the process was key but proved difficult for them.

A.7.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

Learning Insight 1: The programme is difficult to give confidently without more training for the trainer.

Action 1: I bought a book on Design thinking to get some more background; and we decide to be less strict about applying the exact concept; if PoV does not work, we use 'problems' more generally for developing ideas in the ideating phase.

Learning Insight 2: The participants have a lot of relevant knowledge too

Action 2: We invited one of the participants to tell us about marketing.

A.7.7 Additional innovation resources created, adapted or shared

Created & Shared
Maybe the insights a family dynamic coach can generate in the importance of the personal environment of the innovators and how to deal with it. It is not a tool but rather advice for co-leads to consider.
Shared
Adapted

A8 Annex 8. Living Lab Italy

A.8.1 Lab description

The Italian LL is mostly operating within the territory of the Bio-district "delle Lame", in the Puglia region, focusing on agro-ecological transition practices and challenges. It connects selected women innovators with a diversified group of local multi-level actors including mainstream and more gender-sensitive initiatives, institutional and innovative grassroots organisations. It will also establish connections with promising national dynamics in terms of legislation and support for women's entrepreneurship and labour in farming and rural territories.

The LL will capitalise on an emerging wave and will for change reported locally in many rural women's and women farmers' roles, which are gradually switching from figureheads or invisible farmers' wives or sisters to active participants in the sector's governance and farm decision-making, resilient innovators in the diversification of farm and rural activities and, in some cases, important players behind regional key value chains' good performance as well as committed supporters of organic and sustainable agriculture and social innovation. The LL will work for their professional needs to effectively navigate through procedural, financial, and technical complexities. It will build on their innovation pathways, outcomes and flaws and learn from their stories to strengthen promising change trends with support from local institutions, administrations and stakeholders.

A.8.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

- **Innovator selection and recruitment:** LL participants were selected within the framework of Bio-Distretto delle Lame in Puglia (Southern Italy) where various agricultural businesses, cultural, social and tourist enterprises, public administrations, associations, and individuals are committed to pursuing a participatory integrated development model based on organic values and practices. The bio-district, being itself a 'living laboratory', was identified as an innovative, logistically and relationally convenient context to ensure operational effectiveness and sustainability of LL activities thanks to geographical proximity, the support of the bio-district's governance structure, and the dense networking among its members. Such a choice was also judged interesting to improve the contextualisation and interpretation of LL-related research work. LL innovators identification was a stepwise process including an introductory meeting with the

bio-district's governance structure to present the project, preliminary contacts with potentially interested women, a public event, and then finalisation of LL participants and Service Provider Agreements.

- **LL participant (innovator) composition:** The Italian LL is composed of **three agricultural producers**, one dealing with olives processing and organic extra-virgin oil production, one with lavender and other MAP production and essential oils extraction and selling, and one with eggs production and direct selling. In addition, **three entrepreneurs in cultural activities**, one working for a municipal public theatre, one co-managing a local book store and co-organising book/reading events, and one working for a cooperative active in the fields of tourism, environment and art. Lastly, **two social workers**, one managing a small food processing lab in the framework of a therapeutic community for addictions, one focusing on labour market inclusion of youth with disabilities.

- **AKIS stakeholder engagement for the Italian Living Lab:** The LL involves various stakeholders, including representatives from the Bio-District, local authorities, consultants, researchers, business developers, digital facilitators, experts in local development, entrepreneurs, and women's empowerment activists. These stakeholders have been chosen based on their years of involvement in the innovation ecosystem in the agriculture-agrifood sector in the Apulia region, their participation in gender-related innovation issues, and their importance in analyzing national/regional agriculture and rural contexts.

A.8.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 8.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Italy, year 1.

Table A.8.1: Living Lab Italy– Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi-actors provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed how data on women's work on farms and rural development is gathered (WP1) – does this reflect reality? What additional data is needed? Outcomes may inform the innovation process (meeting 2-9).
Stakeholder engagement During the first Italian LL meeting, it was decided not to invite any stakeholders to establish an informal environment and foster greater exchange and integration among the innovators participating in the

project.

Individual Lab activities

In the first LL meeting, following the proposed methodology, a group dynamic was established among participants and between participants and co-leads. The discussion was mainly aimed at allowing the women to get to know each other, the project's rationale and activities, and the two co-leads. A workshop on participants' role as rural entrepreneurs was conducted through discussions and the Lego Serious Play methodology.

Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators:

- Sharing of participants' entrepreneurial and innovation stories and their paths.
- Acknowledging and strengthening the perception of themselves as innovators in the agricultural and rural context facilitated by the Lego Serious Play Tool.
- Identification of the main barriers that women perceive as limiting women-led innovation (examples: home care responsibilities, women's work value and stereotypes, organisational difficulties, scarce data and myth-building).

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023

Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs.
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.

Stakeholder engagement:

A part of the LL was dedicated to the meeting between participants and stakeholders. The women innovators introduced themselves to the stakeholders, describing their activities. The stakeholders presented their activities in turn. An exchange of contacts and support possibilities followed. The process was managed with informal conversations in a circle, followed by a coffee break where networking continued. Almost all the invited stakeholders attended the meeting, except for the representatives of the Innovation and Creativity Centre of the University of Bari, due to concurrent commitments. In particular, the following participated:

- **Annamaria Annichiarico (Tecnopolis)** https://www.tecnopolispst.it/, General Director of Tecnopolis, a Science and Technology Park, operating in close collaboration with the University of Bari. Tecnopolis manages technological, logistical and real services characterized by laboratories, research and development centres, institutions and innovative companies.
- **Elvira Tarsitano (Abap);** https://infoabap.it/, General director and trainer. ABAP is a non-profit scientific-cultural association and post-graduate training body (masters, specialization and refresher courses) recognized by the Puglia Region. It deals with sustainable development, environmental education, communication and legislation, food safety, marine resources, biostatistics, and rural and urban development.
- **Valeria Patruno (ARTI);** https://www.arti.puglia.it/ ARTI-Regional Agency for Technology and Innovation supports the regional government in the design and management of economic

development, innovation, education, training and employment policies. ARTI creates, develops and disseminates knowledge, acting as a knowledge hub: a place that allows sharing, collaboration, learning and creativity.

- **Barbara De Ruggieri (EIT FOOD HUB, University of Bari);** https://www.eitfood.eu/in-

your-area/italy, Project manager. EIT Food is a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) that connects diverse partners from leading companies, universities and research centres across Europe. It drives food innovation to transform the food system. (https://culture.ec.europa.eu/node/1182)

- **Mottola (Punto di Impresa Digitale - Camera di Commercio di Bari);** https://www.ba.camcom.it/bari/pid-punto-impresa-digitale Digital promoters at the Chamber of Commerce of Bari. The Local Points for enterprise digitalization are service structures situated at the Chambers of Commerce. Their purpose is to spread awareness and knowledge regarding digital culture and practices among SMEs from all economic sectors. These points constitute a physical network that is further complemented by a virtual network using various digital tools like specialized websites, forums, and communities.
- **Gianna Avellis (Italian RSA);** https://italianrsa.org/ , Researcher expert in development projects in the ICT sector at InnovaPuglia S.p.A, an in-house company under the control of the Puglia Region. She manages interventions aimed at the growth of the regional ICT sector and the diffusion of ICT in the production processes of SMEs. She is the founder of Italian RSA, an association that promotes the interests of researchers in all roles and at all stages of their careers.

- **Gaetano Bonasia** (Biodistretto delle Lame). https://www.distrettobiolame.it/

Individual Lab activities

- Meeting 2 mostly followed the Living Lab methodology above.
- Innovation training was delivered to the participants to cover the definition and types of innovation, as well as an introduction to innovative ecosystems.
- Stakeholders' introduction and sharing of participants' experiences and initiatives promoting networking and possible future collaboration.
- First exploration of training needs.
- Stakeholders and women innovators collaborating on building up the Empathy map of two kinds of users of the Biodistrict delle Lame (its members - that are rural enterprises - and the citizens).

Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- Establishment of a common terminology and understanding of innovation through training and discussions on basic knowledge, definitions, obstacles, and innovation ecosystems.
- Networking opportunities and sharing between stakeholders and women innovators.
- Foster team building between stakeholders and women innovators throughout the filling in of the Empathy map.
- Training on the use of the Empathy map to better identify the users of their innovation.

Meeting 3: Reframe - January 2024

Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs.
Women innovators redefine empathy maps and personas they produced, integrating the information obtained from observation and interviewing. They engaged in training in problem prioritization and produced an actionable problem statement (POV).

Stakeholder engagement
During LL meeting 3, it was decided not to invite stakeholders to dedicate the entire day to support participants in working on exploring and re-framing tools. Building on LL meeting 2 preliminary exchanges, stakeholder contact sheets were drafted and distributed in meeting 3 to participants to create connections

for supporting the individual innovation journey.
Individual Lab activities Meeting 3 mostly followed the Living Lab methodology. ▪ The meeting was above all a laboratory in which the participants worked, with the guidance of facilitators, on redefining their empathy maps, and persona maps and exchanging information based on preliminary observation activities. ▪ Each work activity, in small groups, was preceded by a moment of training focused on the corresponding innovation phase (explore, reframe), to recover the overall vision of the process, and allow divergence and convergence by integrating information from one phase to the other. ▪ Women innovators shared and redefined empathy and persona maps, splitting into groups of two. Each group was facilitated by organisers who assisted participants in their reflection. The work ended with sharing and reflecting on the results obtained. ▪ In the reframe phase, the women innovators were trained on the statement of POV through the sharing of practical examples from participants' personas, reinforcing the techniques of observation and empathy towards their user's needs.
Outcomes of meeting 3 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ Defining Empathy maps and Persona maps to better identify the users of participants' innovation and their needs ▪ Reinforcement of observation and empathy techniques to understand the user's needs. ▪ Training on the definition of an actionable problem statement (POV)

A.8.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	20 June 2023	I	Complete	Location: Azienda Agricola Cuonzo (Palombaio, Apulia), Hosts (co-leads): CIHEAM Bari, Legacoop Puglia
2	9 Oct 2023	I	Complete	Location: Associazione C.A.S.A. "Don Tonino Bello" Ruvo di Puglia (BA) Hosts (co-leads): CIHEAM Bari, Legacoop Puglia
3	31 Jan 2024	I	Complete	Location: CIHEAM Bari, Hosts (co-leads): CIHEAM Bari, Legacoop Puglia
4	6 Apr 2024	I	Complete	TBC, CIHEAM Bari, Legacoop Puglia
5	June 2024	I	Date TBC	TBC, CIHEAM Bari, Legacoop Puglia
6	Oct 2024	I	Date TBC	TBC, CIHEAM Bari, Legacoop Puglia

A.8.5 Key Living Lab Insights

- Identification of shared barriers (e.g. organisational, economic, and cultural) that may hinder the innovation process and their path as innovators in rural and agricultural areas through the sharing of experiences, successes, and difficulties.
- Through the LL program participants are learning about and placing themselves into an innovation theoretical framework in which, they feel, their innovation process and current experiences make more sense, and which can guide them in future actions.
- Need to strengthen awareness of themselves as innovators recognised by the context and the community and improve the focus on their goal as innovators.

A.8.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

- **Learning Insight 1:** Identification of shared barriers (e.g. organisational, economic and cultural) that may hinder the innovation process and their path as innovators in rural and agricultural areas through the sharing of experiences, successes and difficulties.
- **Action 1:** During the first year of the project, the women project participants (after meeting 2) were provided with information and contacts of the project stakeholders to have a direct connection with them and to be promptly informed about the opportunities they offer to support innovation and support to the innovation journey.
- **Learning Insight 2:** Through the LL program participants are learning about (and placing themselves) into an innovation theoretical framework in which, they feel, their innovation process and current experiences make more sense and which can guide them in future actions.
- **Action 2:** In year 1, innovation training was made available to female innovators to align the participants' knowledge, provide innovation-related terminology and support the development of future innovations. During year 2 of the project, further specific training will be made available to support skills and knowledge that will emerge during the development of the innovation process.

A.8.6 Additional innovation resources created, adapted or shared

Created & Shared
Shared
Adapted

A9 Annex 9. Living Lab Norway

A.9.1 Lab description

In Norway, even though the interest in becoming an entrepreneur or an innovator is more or less the same among women and men, only 30% of persons becoming innovators are women, and the women's share is steadily reduced in the direction toward "lasting business going well and in growth". Women (rural, farming and fishing) have played leading roles in local food innovation in Norway and the Trøndelag region, by selling produce and innovative products at small-scale outlets such as farmers' markets. With shifting supply chains requiring larger producers to supply supermarkets, women's role in the region has become less prominent. The Norwegian Living Lab (LL) looks at the innovation-related needs of rural women, to strengthen their role in local food innovation, as this is a field of innovation that has shown to be of high interest to women in rural areas. The 'Local Food Innovations' LL is based on the different experiences and accumulated knowledge among active women innovators of different ages, roles and stages of the enterprise, strengthening the innovation processes of women within local food innovation and more generally. Aided through addressing and developing measures to overcome various challenges and barriers to be identified by the living lab members themselves. In addition, stakeholders supporting sustainable women's innovation in rural areas will be involved in the living lab processes.

A.9.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

- The Trøndelag LL participants are all in one way or another involved in local food production. Through food, beverages, travel, and tourism they contribute to the vibrancy of rural communities. Our original mandate, as per the initial Grass Ceiling application submitted to the EU/Horizon program, was for Trøndelag/Norway to have a marine focus, particularly on women in fisheries and marine industries. Despite searching across the region as well as seeking the advice of a research organisation that works deep into marine innovation and engineering, we could not locate any women innovators in fisheries or marine industries.

- The recruitment was done by phoning potential participants directly. As Oi! (a company within Trøndelag) is collaborating with the majority of the local food producers in Trøndelag, it was easy to identify potential candidates.

- We pursued a varied sample, with women from different parts of the region, with different productions, and at different ages and at different stages of the

innovation process. Some women said yes to being part of the LL immediately. The recruitment conversations (on the phone) were quite brief, explaining the project and what we hope to get out of it. Several women said they had a lot to share regarding being women entrepreneurs in the local food business.

- Nine women said no to participating in the LL (was not sure if the business would live in the months ahead, did not have time, did not see the business challenges as gender-related, but rather systemically related, thought it would be 'a talking project', recently dissolved the business), and two women never responded to calls and e-mails about participation.

- When we first started recruiting, we did not yet know about the participant stipend the women would be receiving. Oi! Trøndersk Mat og Drikke offered at that point the women approx €50 for digital LL, and 100 for LL meetings in person. Two women said they didn't think this was enough, because we would be taking them away from an entire day of work and that they really ought to be compensated for the true cost of a lost working day. When we heard from the project that the participants would be getting 226 euro several women were pleased. The two women who had commented on this earlier said it was a better stipend, but still not at the true cost of a working day lost.

- We rounded up 12 stakeholders fairly quickly to enrol as 'supporters' for the LL and the three years the project would be ongoing. However, it was a bit confusing the messages we got from Grass Ceiling centrally about how these stakeholders were to be 'used.' Firstly, they were interviewed as part of the data collection, but in the further selection of which stakeholders we would like to recruit for the LL meetings we have recruited stakeholders that could come and give talks and workshops about the content/tasks of each LL specifically. The stakeholders that have come to LL have presented material that has been directly tied to the content/tasks of that lab, rather than us co-leads doing it, as we have limited experience in those arenas.

- In the coming two years, will continue to find stakeholders who can 'flesh out' the various stages of the innovation process, while also trying to find stakeholders that can inspire and educate on other matters of interest to the participants. We recruit stakeholders based on the network we have and know of and try as far as we can to get these stakeholders to come 'for free', which does limit the kinds of stakeholders we could get. We have also had our LL participants express what kind of stakeholders they would for example, how to use social media, how to do sales, or as one LL participant expressed, she'd like a certain famous hotelier to come talk to them.

- We have to recruit these stakeholders based on the fact that they know the Oi! company and also that they believe in the GC project enough to 'do it for free.

As co-leads, we will admit we feel a slight pressure to come up with as many good/engaging/interesting/known stakeholders as possible.

A.9.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 9.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Norway, year 1.

Table A.9.1: Living Lab Norway – Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi-actors provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed 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).
Stakeholder engagement ▪ Aud Kvalvik, Innovation Norway Home (innovasjonnorge.no): Aud Kvalvik is the regional manager of the government-funded innovation bureau called Innovation Norway. Her main focus is on the development of travel, food and tourism, and she shared her experiences working with women innovators and provided advice and tips on how to work with and get funding from Innovation Norway.
Individual Lab activities ▪ Meeting 1 was mostly delivered as per the Living Lab methodology above. ▪ Focus group interview with the women innovators (to make use of the time and that everyone was gathered at Ruralis. Several of the innovators have to travel quite far). ▪ We did the stakeholder mapping after the first LL, as part of the mentoring talks with each participant.
Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ The women didn't see themselves as innovators, but during the first LL, they understood why they are and may now 'own' the term. ▪ The women reiterated confidentiality for the group to be able to share freely. ▪ The women were excited about potential collaborations with each other's businesses. ▪ The women shared freely of their experiences (the first LL also entailed the focus group discussion). ▪ The women expressed gratitude and excitement for being included in the 3-year LL commitment. ▪ In the 1-2-1 meetings, the women expressed which stakeholders they were interested in.

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors exchange knowledge, learning, ideas and best practice insights. They engaged 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.
Stakeholder engagement ▪ Heidi Totsås, Proneo (participated digitally) – about the innovation process. Proneo | Bistand ved utvikling og oppstart av din bedrift Proneo is a regional innovation bureau that works specifically with entrepreneurs. ▪ Peder Johannessen, Synlighet AS (social media/marketing agency) – about digital strategies. Synlighet - digitalbyrået som gir deg farten du trenger | Synlighet AS
Individual Lab activities ▪ The WP3 suggestions included both individual and collective tasks, related to the innovation process. We chose to not include the individual task, and we made the collective task quite short (30 minutes, including the introduction of the task). ▪ Short presentation round (as one of the participants, Jenny, attended for the first time) ▪ Briefly about the meeting in Brussels (Showcase) and Kari's participation. ▪ Briefly about Grass Ceiling's position and communication work at the EU level. ▪ Focus group interview part 2 (the questions we did not have time for in LL1). ▪ Group exercise: innovation (but this was part of the structured content)
Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ The women swiftly and creatively performed the group exercise (in two different groups) and had more or less the same innovation (healthy food product). ▪ The women got to understand more of their role as part of a bigger project in the EU and appreciated seeing the connections to their work. ▪ The meeting was held in the same place as the first LL and the women showed more ease in both the venue and each other. ▪ The women understand they will undergo an innovation process from 'scratch' in this project, even if they have taken innovation training previously.

Meeting 3: Reframe - January 2024
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors will engage in training in problem prioritization and produce an actionable problem statement (POV).
Stakeholder engagement Kristin Langnes, SISU (a female entrepreneur and entrepreneurship supervisor). Lecture about consumers – explaining and exemplifying the topic further. The importance of knowing your customers and the customer segment. Hjelp med å starte egen bedrift? - SISU Business
Individual Lab activities ▪ Persona map and Empathy map exercises (did not do this in LL2). ▪ Explaining POV as homework before next LL. ▪ This meeting was held online.
Outcomes of meeting 3 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ The women were allotted time in the lab to do the exercises that lay the foundation for being able to do POV, and while many of them had done similar exercises before ('who is the customer') nobody had done it in this way. Because they were given time in the lab to do it, they did it, expressed surprise and gratitude for what they found, and also expressed that they understood how important this exercise was.

- This step, doing persona maps and empathy maps to do POV, is a crucial step in the path forward and the ability to continue to build on this concept for their business/new products.
- Doing a digital meeting seemed to work well, especially as winter weather might have made it challenging for participants to attend in person.
- 1-2-1 sessions will be completed in February 2024.

A.9.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	13.06.23	I	Complete	Ruralis Office, Ruralis/Oi!
2	21.09.23	I	Complete	Ruralis Office, Ruralis/Oi!
3	04.12.23	O	Complete	Online via Teams, Ruralis/Oi!
4	03.04.24	I	Complete	TBA
5	June 2024	TBA	Planned	TBA
6	Oct 2024	TBA	Date TBC	TBA

A.9.5 Key Living Lab Insights

- Women want to come together in 'cohorts' and share ideas and experiences and were grateful and excited to be included in the project. However, the LL must PROVIDE: many of the women already have successful businesses and so our LL has to provide to them at the level they are at.
- For the above reason we have discussed that ideally the 8 women recruited to the LL could have been at a much earlier stage of innovation/having ideas but not yet in motion.
- In order to provide, we are working to recruit stakeholders to present for each LL; they will provide valuable and interesting training, as well as grow the network for the LL participants.

A.9.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

- **Learning Insight 1:** The labs go better 'than you would think' because the women come together and have the day off from work to be together, eat well (pastries and lunch), socialize, learn and be creative. So, while we provide the framework we can also step out of the way.
- **Action 1:** We have to provide stakeholders and presenters in our LLs to 'up' the game for our innovators, because they are quite far along in their innovation journeys.
- **Learning Insight 2**: The 'prompts' about tasks and exercises given to us about content for the LLs do not always seem appropriate or like they would flow with our participants, so a learning insight is that we have to trust that we are planning the right content for our LLs and participants and adjust the tasks and exercises to match their needs.
- **Action 2:** As a result of the Living Labs, the participants get invited to local food innovations put on by the Oi! company, as appropriate (the women got invited to a local food network the Oi! company is creating in the region)

A.9.7 Additional innovation resources created, adapted, or shared

Created & Shared
Shared
Adapted
Translated empathy map and persona map.

A10 Annex 10. Living Lab Lithuania

A.10.1 Lab description

The LL aims to enhance the recognition of women's contributions to improving agriculture and rural regions. The insights gained will be used to create improved strategies and choices for farming and rural areas. This will also shape the actions and policies of European Union countries.

The Lithuanian Living Lab seeks to explore the innovation requirements of women managing small farms and rural women developing initiatives to strengthen the social capital in rural areas. The Living Lab has the following objectives:

- The LL will create a system to support and enhance women innovators. This system helps women innovators build their identities and collaborate to create new knowledge and transform gender norms and stereotypes.
- The LL will enhance the capacity of rural women to innovate for change by building the knowledge and skills needed to pursue and embed green innovations and by providing tools to assist women innovators in future green innovation advances.
- The LL will facilitate knowledge creation through women-led innovation processes, favour exchanges across initiatives, derive new knowledge and practical tools for women, and support organisations and policymakers at the national and EU levels.
- Build stronger connections and improve the sharing of ideas among women innovators in rural and farming settings by creating customised solutions through collaboration and the exchange of practices within and between these labs.

A.10.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

The Lithuanian LL participants represent different farming types. From organic fruit, and dairy with processing into cheese production, aquaculture, apiculture, organic vegetables, cattle and poultry, cereal, pressing various oils, providing training, very small vegetable and flower production and grape and other berries.

Women differed not only in the type of farming they did but also in the way their farms were managed. This explains the different experiences of women farmers in the innovation process. The main reasons for participation were, seeking knowledge, sharing experiences, searching for ideas, and contacts, planning activities, searching for innovations that would contribute to the growth of the farm, and promoting and/or publicising the farm and/or the products.

Due to the women's common goals and different backgrounds, the first women's meetings were very productive. The women actively support each other through social platforms, consult each other on farming issues and have found ideas for joint business initiatives.

During the first meeting, we tried to make the women innovators more familiar with the project, its objectives, and the project partners in Lithuania. Therefore, the first meeting was attended by two experts from the project implementing organisations and one expert related to on-farm innovations. In the follow-up laboratory meetings, we are looking for stakeholders who would meet the necessary needs to achieve women's objectives in on-farm innovation.

Based on the individual needs of the women LL participants, as expressed through the LL meetings and the mentor meeting, we coordinated women's meetings with stakeholders. Until the LL meeting 3, there was a meeting with experts Prof. Dr. Egle Jotautienė and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Antanas Juostas from Vytautas Magnus University on 8 December 2023 (the topic: capturing digital technologies in agriculture). On the 18th of December 2023, a meeting was organised with experts to discuss the peculiarities of the US market, selling on the Amazon platform and other related topics with Karolis Anužis, Attaché of Agriculture and Commerce at the diplomatic representation of the Republic of Lithuania in Washington, USA, Simonas Šimelionis, Founder of the digital FRKS, Linas Klimavičius, a partner at Point One International LTD; Thibauld Quirion, Digital business manager at brand and business incubator, Rūta Švobienė, Head of Indirect Taxation.

By the third meeting, we had engaged various stakeholders, both to broaden women's knowledge of agricultural policy in the region and to respond to the concrete concerns of women innovators.

A.10.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 10.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Lithuania, year 1.

Table A.10.1: Living Lab Lithuania – Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi-actors provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed 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).
Stakeholder engagement ▪ Three expert presentations were presented before the activities foreseen in LL: ▪ Kristina Šermukšnytė-Alešiūnienė, CEO of Agrifood Lithuania DIH presented activities/areas of expertise; ▪ Dr Tomas Baležentis, LSMC Principal Researcher introduced the Grass Ceiling project team and the project itself and presented the situation of women in agriculture in the EU ▪ Linas Didžiulevičius, representative of the ART21 Agri-Food Technological Innovation Workshop presented the company's activities and the areas of expertise.
Individual Lab activities The first meeting of the LL aimed to introduce women to the GRASS Ceiling project, the project partners, and the situation of women farmers in agriculture in EU countries. Therefore, before starting the activities of meeting 1 according to the LL 1 Template, the academic co-lead presented the LL concept, the objectives, the meetings to be held in three years, the activities to be carried out, and what LLs are about in the partner countries, etc.
Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ Women have a clear understanding of the project and their role in it. ▪ The concept of a female innovator was discussed and defined. ▪ The contribution of women to agriculture and the extent to which it is visible is discussed. ▪ Solutions that can increase the visibility of women innovators in the sector were discussed.

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors exchange knowledge, learning, ideas and best practice insights. Participants engaged in training to identify problems/challenges and or opportunities. This included 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 participants will use the living Lab to progress toward their innovative goals.
Stakeholder engagement: ▪ Vidmantas Janulevičius, President of the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists ▪ Dr Andy Zynga, CEO of EIT Food ▪ Kristina Šermukšnytė-Alešiūnienė, AgriFood Lietuva DIH CEO ▪ Julia Nielson, Deputy Director, OECD Directorate for Trade and Agriculture ▪ Vytenis Tomkus, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of

Lithuania; Augustas Alešiūnas, AgTech Business Angel & Owner of ART21.
Individual Lab activities The 2nd LL meeting was divided into 2 parts and was conducted over 2 days. ▪ On the 1st day, women participated in the Agri-Food Forum 2023. During the Forum we dedicated 2 hours for discussion in person of the prepared homework assignments (discussion of 2 examples of innovations that inspire you and that you could share at the meeting). To make the work easier during the online meeting (the second part of the LL meeting, templates for empathy and persona mapping were prepared in Lithuanian and distributed to the women). Afterwards, women could choose which expert presentations to listen to according to their individual needs, following the Forum programme. ▪ On the 2nd day of the LL meeting 2, the meeting was conducted in an online format, mostly following the Living Lab methodology. During the meeting, adapted slides about the Explore phase of innovation implementation process were presented (in Lithuanian).
Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ Women innovators had the opportunity to meet high-level experts who presented on a range of topical issues related to agriculture and innovation. ▪ The examples of innovation discussed allowed us to identify the barriers to the introduction of a particular innovation on small farms. ▪ The training related to phase Explore of the innovation process allowed women to rethink and validate the instruments used in their practice when implementing innovations.

Meeting 3: Reframe - January 2024
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators redefine empathy maps and personas they produced, integrating the information obtained from observation and interviewing. They engaged in training in problem prioritization and produced an actionable problem statement (POV).
Stakeholder engagement ▪ Aušra Vaidotienė is the Chairperson of the Kėdainiai District Local Action Group, Chairperson of the Josvainiai Women's Club “Aušra” ▪ Jolanta Kamaitienė is the Senior Project Manager at Lrytas.lt (one of Lithuania's largest news portals).
Individual Lab activities ▪ Jolanta Kamaitienė joined the meeting as an invited expert (online). Her presentation focused on various advertising channels, their accessibility, and popularity. This was followed by an active Q&A session where Jolanta addressed questions and provided specific to the LL participant question recommendations. ▪ The meeting took place at Josva House bakery run by “Aušra” women community. Community's chairwoman Aušra Vaidotienė provided insights into community's activities and gave a tour of the guest house.
Outcomes of meeting 3 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators During the meeting, training sessions on the Reframe phase of the innovation process took place. Participants delved into the use of innovation tools such as empathy, persona mapping, and creating a Point of View statement. Engaging discussions centred around understanding consumer needs and exploring ways to increase the attractiveness and accessibility of local food products. The participants discussed the idea of vending machines, a concept already present in other European countries but considered a novelty in Lithuania, especially when it comes to the short supply chains. The meeting also addressed/debated product/service pricing issues, the importance of certificates in

marketing (when and which ones are needed), the priorities and benefits of a national brand quality label, the use of artificial intelligence, and the use of the Canva programme in business.

A.10.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	12th June 2023	I	Complete	Karalienės Barboros Al. 2, Birštonas/ LCSS and AgriFood Lithuania
2	14th and 16th of Nov 2023	I/O	Complete	Vilniaus rotušė, Didžioji st. 31, Vilnius/ LCSS and AgriFood Lithuania
3	29th of Jan 2024	I	Complete	Ariogalos st. 4, Josvainiai, Kėdainių district/ LCSS and AgriFood Lithuania
4	Winter/Spring 2024	TBC	Date TBC	TBC
5	Summer 2024	TBC	Date TBC	TBC
6	Autumn 2024	TBC	Date TBC	TBC

A.10.5 Key Living Lab Insights

- Women innovators benefit from the Lithuanian LL meetings because of their different innovation backgrounds, their diversity of generations and competencies, and their willingness to exchange knowledge.
- Feedback from participants in the first year confirms that the LL environment is valuable, where women get to know each other better and find common ideas for collaboration.
- Lithuanian LL participants have considerable experience in various projects and competitions and have been nominated for business achievements. Therefore, women understand and appreciate the positive aspects of the visibility of the project in the public environment for business development.
- Women innovators need additional support and skills development to enable them, to define innovation objectives, and identify stakeholders who can help them to achieve their objectives.

A.10.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

- **Learning Insight 1**: Recognising the LL participant as an innovator, understanding women's contribution to the agricultural sector, appreciating equal opportunities in the agricultural sector. Identification of women's strengths/opportunities.
- **Action 1:** Self-understanding as an innovator, goal setting, identification of strengths as an innovator/ identification of LL as a platform for learning and knowledge sharing.
- **Learning Insight 2**: Understanding the process of innovation in farm activities, evaluation of own farm activities.
- **Action 2:** Identification and search of target experts for women innovators to broaden women's opportunities and choices for the implementation of innovations on their farms.

A.10.7 Additional innovation resources created, adapted or shared

Created & Shared
Shared
Adapted
The training videos were presented to women with the possibility of viewing the material with Lithuanian subtitles. The training material (PowerPoint slides) was translated into Lithuanian.

A11 Annex 11. Living Lab Scotland

A.11.1 Lab description

The Scottish Living Lab is based in the crofting areas of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Crofting is a land tenure system of small-scale food producers unique to this geographical area. It was developed in the 19th Century and has a track record of maintaining populations and economic activity in remote rural areas. Crofting supports local food production while also protecting cultural heritage and the natural environment.

The women innovators in the lab are located across the Highlands area including the Islands, each area providing its unique challenges when it comes to innovation and growing a business. The lab is augmented by a diverse range of stakeholders, all contributing to supporting the women on their entrepreneurial journey.

Through working with rural women, the goals of the Lab are to:

- Understand the innovation requirements of rural women crofters and use this to shape future delivery of innovation support.
- Enhance rural women's innovation capability and visibility in their community.
- Support the development of the innovative ecosystem in Crofting areas.
- Develop tools, resources, and inspirational case studies to support rural women's innovation journey.

The Scottish Lab is co-led by the Scottish Crofting Federation and will draw on the specialist crofting knowledge and support within that organisation.

A.11.2 Lab participant selection and recruitment, and AKIS stakeholder engagement in year 1

- **Innovator Selection**: The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) led the selection process, developing and distributing an advertisement for the project with an application process through a simple expression of interest. Approximately 28 applications were received and a panel of SCF representatives short-listed 10 participants based on location, suitability for the project and previous engagement with SCF programmes. From these 10 short-listed applicants, 8 innovators were selected based on availability and interest in full participation in the 3-year project programme.

- **Participant composition**: The selection process accounted for geographical location, to ensure participants were spread across the crofting areas and islands as representative of the range of experiences for crofters in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. A particular group with specific overlapping interests did not naturally emerge through the selection process, therefore co-leads felt a diverse range of interests would be beneficial, with the one point of similarity across all participants being that they are crofters. All of the participants are in the pre-or start-up phases of their individual business and/or innovation diversification ideas.

- **Stakeholder engagement**: Stakeholder recruitment was undertaken alongside the recruitment of the lab participants.

- co-leads from SCF and Newcastle University identified key stakeholder groups based locally in the Highlands and Islands region, with a focus on groups/individuals with specific knowledge about crofting and/or the business support ecosystem.
- The Scottish Government was an key engaged stakeholder from the pre-award stage in the Grass Ceiling bid development process and was a driving contributor in the wider stakeholder identification process, particularly through the Women in Agriculture programme.
- A digital flier and personalised email were sent to each of the 16 stakeholder organisations identified at project inception, inviting them to register interest and attend the first Scotland Living Lab in person.
- After this initial invitation, 11 stakeholder organisations were invited to the first Living Lab meeting, with 8 attending.

A.11.3 Individual Lab programme

Each Lab has designed and delivered a unique Lab programme focused on the rural female innovators at the heart of their Labs. Table 11.1 provides details of the Lab programme for Living Lab Scotland, year 1.

Table A.11.1: Living Lab Scotland – Year 1

Meeting 1: Introduction – June 2023
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Participant welcome, knowledge sharing and multi-actor stakeholder engagement. Following introductions and multi-actor expertise mapping exercise, women innovators and multi-actors provide insights into the other work packages – for example, in meeting 1 we: ▪ explored perspectives on what and who an innovator is. ▪ brainstormed 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).
Stakeholder engagement ▪ Newcastle University - Sally Shortall

- Scottish Government - Lucy Sumison, Fiona Leslie
- Scottish Crofting Federation Board - Yvonne White
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise - Claire Munroe https://www.hie.co.uk/nih
- Impact Hub Inverness – Polly Chapman Polly.chapman@impacthub.net
- NatureScot - Maria dela Torre https://www.nature.scot/.
- SAC, part of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). Plus, FAS, Farm Advisory Service – Siobhan MacDonald
- Crofting Commission – Mairi MacKenzie www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk
- Wester-Ross Biosphere – Kathleen Steventon

Individual Lab activities

Meeting 1 was mostly delivered as per the Living Lab methodology above.

- 'Sparkling Moment' icebreaker created positivity amoung the group.
- 'Lego Serious Play' as utilised across the project methodology.
- Discussed challenges of young women breaking into traditional rural crofting communities.
- Brief presentations and Q&A with stakeholder organisations in attendance.

Outcomes of meeting 1 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- Participants received Living Lab binders with slides/activities from the first meeting and future activities planning. Stakeholder and participant network set up – contacts list and WhatsApp group.
- Innovator personal business ideas were discussed and participants were given tools to progress ideas.
- The women found great benefits in networking between themselves and requested more time to be built into future labs for this type of activity.
- 1:1 sessions focused on the participant's business idea, discussing options and honing on one particular idea. We then started the business planning process – each participant left the 1:1 with a list of actions to take their idea forward.

Meeting 2: Explore - October 2023

Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs.
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.

Stakeholder engagement:

- Newcastle University—Sally Shortall
- Scottish Crofting Federation—Donna Smith (CEO); Yvonne White (Board Member)

Individual Lab activities

Meeting 2 mostly followed the Living Lab methodology outlined above:

- Reflections on the Living Lab process thus far, utilising a Spidergram tool.
- Participants shared examples of innovative businesses that inspired them for the insights activity. A lot of similarities in the choice of sustainable business emerged along with a good mix of local and global insights.
- Participants had a lively Ideas generation session to choose one idea to use as a working example through the Living Lab. Good collaboration resulted in a unanimous decision on

the choice of business/innovation to pursue (Community Hub). ▪ An update on the Brussels showcase enabled the women to hear inspiring stories from participants in the other Labs. ▪ Persona and Empathy mapping activities—the persona mapping was particularly well received by participants, who were keen to use the exercise outside of the Lab activities.
Outcomes of meeting 2 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators ▪ Lab 2 brought up some further questions for the stakeholders which were compiled and circulated to stakeholders for answers after the meeting. ▪ Training needs were identified – Social media and Not for profit business options ▪ Networking – the discussion around the Brussels showcase highlighted opportunities the women are keen to explore between labs. They would like bio's/contacts for the women in other labs to explore cross-lab networking. ▪ On-going use of Spidergrams as a reflection tool – helpful for comparing the individual's journey and giving a specific time to reflect on how they are feeling. ▪ Several of the participants have adjusted their innovation ideas, following on from the previous Lab and 1:1 sessions. ▪ Co-leads agreed to set up a Google Drive folder to share resources with participants for the remainder of the project ▪ The Scottish lab 1:1 sessions are in the form of bespoke business support for each woman. To maximise the benefit participants felt they would benefit from time after the lab to reflect on what they had learned for their business idea and therefore going forward 1:1's would be evenly spaced between labs rather than immediately after as had been the case for Lab 1. This also provides an opportunity for ongoing regular contact.

Meeting 3: Reframe – January 2024
Guidance from Living Lab Methodology (Annex 2), to help ensure consistency of approach in all 9 Labs. Women innovators and multi-actors will engage in training in problem prioritization and produce an actionable problem statement (POV).
Stakeholder engagement: ▪ Newcastle University - Sally Shortall ▪ Scottish Government - Lucy Sumsion ▪ Impact Hub Inverness – Polly Chapman Polly.chapman@impacthub.net ▪ NatureScot - Maria dela Torre https://www.nature.scot/. ▪ SAC, part of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). Plus FAS, Farm Advisory Service – Siobhan MacDonald ▪ Soil Association - Ana Allemand ▪ Tuminds - Emma Gibb (https://tuminds.com/)
Individual Lab activities ▪ Meeting 3 (online) followed the Living Lab methodology outlined above without the POV statement and prioritization exercises as the primary co-lead was not available due to illness. These will be integrated into Lab 4. Instead, the online lab focused on reflections on the Living Lab process thus far and stakeholder engagement through a Q&A and a training session about social media content and engagement. ▪ Participants provided individual updates on their business/innovation ideas Spidergram reflections were collected in real-time to frame an overall reflection discussion. A group Spidergram was produced which stimulated lively discussion about the perceptions of the women, especially around confidence and time.

- Discussion with stakeholders allowed for direct questions with stakeholder organisations in attendance, with representation from SAC/FAS and the Scottish Government particularly useful for crofting questions that continue to arise.
- The presentation from Emma Gibb of Tuminds addressed participant intrest in social media engagement, providing examples and a Q&A opportunity.
- 1:1's are scheduled for mid-February 2024.

Outcomes of meeting 3 and 1-2-1 sessions with rural innovators

- Agreement to cover the content missed as part of the next in-person living lab.
- Participants expressed a preference for in-person Living Lab meetings going forward as they value the added benefits of taking time away from their business/croft to dedicate to developing their skills and ideas, as well as valuing the opportunity to network with the other participants outside the specific activities.
- The possibility of arranging on-site visits to some crofts and examples of community hubs was discussed with interest. Funding for this will be explored with the Grass Ceiling project
- The social media session was very well received, and participants expressed an interest in having further 'best practice' and/or training-related stakeholder engagement.
- AKIS stakeholder engagement: the online format for the Q&A session worked well, especially as many of the stakeholders are geographically distanced and cannot make the time commitment to attend the labs each time. We will look at how this can be integrated with future labs to maximise exposure and relationship-building with stakeholders.
- There is a need to build time into the labs not only for reflection but also for the discussions and action planning that emerges from this.

A.11.4 Meetings completed in 2023 and planned for 2024

Meeting	Date	Online (O) In person (I)	Status	Meeting Location & Host
1	29th Jun 2023	I	Complete	Macphail Centre, Ullapool
2	5th Oct 2023	I	Complete	Macphail Centre, Ullapool
3	8th Dec 2023	O	Complete	Online
4	14th Mar 2024	I	Complete	Macphail Centre, Ullapool
5	27th Jun 2024	I	Planning	Macphail Centre, Ullapool
6	TBC Oct 2024	I	Planning	Macphail Centre, Ullapool

A.11.5 Key Living Lab Insights

- Crofting brings a unique set of issues for participants to work within and all are experiencing barriers to innovation at both individual and business levels. The lab is providing not only skills enhancement and confidence building but also developing participants' network of stakeholder relationships to support in addressing these issues in future.

- Participants have a diverse range of innovations/business ideas but all share small-scale/community-based/environmental themes. Using land and natural resources for innovation. Notably, all participants have multiple ideas and activities that they bring to and take away from the living lab.

- Participants have benefited from meeting in person in a neutral space where they can share ideas and contacts. Meeting in person is preferred to online, and participants are keen to arrive in advance of meetings to see each other outside of the project context. A WhatsApp group has been useful for retaining that connection outside of in-person meetings.

A.11.6 Key Co-lead Learning and Actions

- **Learning Insight 1:** Creating a safe space with a trusted group of people to share ideas and learnings is essential to the success of the Living Lab and enormously beneficial to the participants.

- **Action 1:** A part of the trusted space creation is dependent on in-person interaction and activities. Through partnership with the Scottish Government, the co-leads in Scotland aim to ensure all of the remaining Living Lab meetings take place in person.

- **Learning Insight 2:** Many of the participants are very innovative in how they approach their business/community engagement/activities but do not recognise this predisposition as ‘innovative’.

- **Action 2:** Provide the framework and tools for participants to understand their inclination to innovation and build on that experience to further take advantage of resources and approaches to develop their ideas.

A.11.7 Additional innovation resources created, adapted or shared

Created & Shared
▪ Participant reflection tool (meeting 1)
Shared
▪ Sparkling moment activity
Adapted
▪ The Persona mapping activity