GRASS CEILING

D6.3

GRASS CEILING MOOC

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Deliverable D6.3

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The authors would like to thank all GRASS CEILING project partners for their valuable contributions to the development of the MOOC on rural women-led innovation. The course builds directly on the collective research, expertise and project outputs generated across the consortium, reflecting a shared commitment to advancing gender-responsive innovation in rural and agricultural contexts.

Special acknowledgement is extended to the Living Labs and their leaders, as well as to the women innovators who generously contributed their experiences, case studies, interviews and practical insights. Their engagement was instrumental in grounding the MOOC in real-world contexts and ensuring its relevance, credibility and practical value for diverse audiences.

The authors also acknowledge the collaborative effort and peer exchange that shaped the pedagogical structure and quality of the course, reinforcing the MOOC as a shared legacy output of the GRASS CEILING project.

Executive Summary

This deliverable presents the GRASS CEILING Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), developed under Task 6.5 of the Horizon Europe GRASS CEILING project as a key capacity-building and legacy output. The MOOC is hosted on a dedicated Moodle platform and is freely accessible, self-paced, and open to a broad range of users, including rural women and men, policymakers, researchers, educators, NGOs, cooperatives and other stakeholders involved in agriculture and rural development.

The MOOC is structured into five modules addressing: the roles of women in rural communities; (2) gender norms and the drivers of women-led socio-ecological innovation; (3) support mechanisms for women's entrepreneurship and leadership; (4) women-led innovations in food systems; and (5) policy recommendations and tools for inclusive innovation systems. Each module follows a coherent pedagogical structure combining expert video lectures, case studies derived from the project's Living Labs, self-assessment quizzes, and complementary learning resources.

All materials used in the MOOC, including texts, graphics, videos, interviews and case studies, were produced during the GRASS CEILING project activities. No new content was developed specifically for the MOOC; instead, the course was conceived from the outset as a dissemination tool, designed to valorise and translate existing project results into an accessible learning format. The development of the MOOC was coordinated by IAMZ–CIHEAM and CIHEAM Bari through a multidisciplinary and collaborative process involving the project consortium. Partners contributed content in line with their expertise, and all modules underwent a peer-review process conducted by an external gender expert to ensure scientific quality, pedagogical coherence and a consistent gender-responsive approach.

The MOOC is embedded within the project's Online Training Academy on the GRASS CEILING website, alongside complementary project outputs such as tools, video journeys, written stories of women innovators and additional resources. Its development was supported by a pilot "train-the-trainers" session and a webinar (Deliverable 6.2) to strengthen the capacity of Living Lab leaders to promote the course and contributed to alignment with the project's wider dissemination strategy.

The dissemination of the MOOC follows a multi-channel approach, including a staggered release of modules, social media outreach, mobilisation of partner networks, academic and institutional engagement, participation in sectoral events and targeted paid campaigns. This strategy aims to ensure wide uptake of the course, with a target of reaching 3,000 learners by 2026 and 10,000 learners in the longer term, supported by the continued availability of the GRASS CEILING website beyond the project's duration.

Overall, the GRASS CEILING MOOC offers a robust, high-quality and accessible learning resource that contributes directly to advancing gender equality and empowering women-led rural innovation. By combining rigorous content, practical tools and real-world examples, the course equips learners to recognise, support and amplify women's roles in shaping more inclusive rural futures across Europe.

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01 Introduction

In addition to locally identified and specific small-scale training and knowledge transfer activities identified by and delivered in each Living Lab, an online Training Academy was developed by the GRASS CEILING project.

This academy contains a series of tools available on the project website and a MOOC, consisting of a series of core training modules, effectively sharing best practices and successful modules in women's innovation and incorporating insights from the Living Labs.

The toolkit and MOOC will be key dissemination and legacy tools for the project, delivering the core skills and learnings to wider and mass target audiences beyond the Living Labs and the project in the European Union and Associated countries.

This material was offered to relevant training institutes in the member countries.

Relevant links:

- Online Academy landing page on the GRASS CEILING website: link.
- Direct access to the MOOC: landing page, Moodle.

1.1. What is the GRASS CEILING MOOC

The GRASS CEILING MOOC is a free online course designed to empower rural women and strengthen their role in agricultural innovation and rural development across Europe.

This course combines theory, practical examples, and case studies to help learners understand, support, and promote women-led socio-ecological innovations.

Each module includes:

- Learning objectives to guide the study process.
- Lectures with theoretical insights.
- Case studies and practical examples.
- Self-assessment quizzes.
- "Lear more" sections with complementary resources.

This course is open to all: rural farmers, policymakers, researchers, cooperative members, or any person interested in gender equality in agriculture. With this online tool, GRASS CEILING offers valuable knowledge, practical tools, and inspiring examples to support women-led innovations.

1.2. What makes this MOOC valuable

The GRASS CEILING MOOC constitutes a significant added-value resource within the project's capacity-building and knowledge dissemination strategy. Its design, structure, and accessibility features collectively ensure that the course serves as a high-quality, inclusive, and widely applicable learning tool for advancing gender-responsive innovation in rural and agricultural contexts.

High-quality and comprehensive content:

The MOOC is organised into five thematically coherent modules, each addressing a distinct yet interconnected aspect of women-led socio-ecological innovation. The content encompasses conceptual foundations, analytical perspectives, practical tools, and illustrative case studies, thereby offering a robust and evidence-informed learning pathway. This comprehensive scope enables learners to acquire both theoretical understanding and practical insights that are relevant to diverse professional and territorial contexts.

Relevance to a wide and heterogeneous audience:

The course has been intentionally developed to meet the needs of a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including educators and researchers, rural actors, decision-makers, support organisations, and individuals with an interest in gender equality in the agricultural sector. Its interdisciplinary orientation and the inclusion of real-world examples enhance its applicability for practitioners seeking operational guidance, as well as for institutional actors engaged in policy development, advisory services, and territorial innovation support systems.

Strong commitment to accessibility and user-centred design:

A defining characteristic of the MOOC is its full accessibility. The course is delivered entirely online, is offered free of charge, and is open to all users without prior prerequisites, thereby lowering entry barriers and facilitating wide uptake. Its pedagogical approach combines written content, video materials, practical examples, and self-assessment exercises, accommodating different learning preferences. Furthermore, its modular and self-paced format provides users with flexibility to engage with the material according to their time constraints and professional obligations—an essential consideration for rural populations and individuals with limited availability.

Rooted in project results and collective knowledge

Another key element of the GRASS CEILING MOOC is its strong grounding in the project's knowledge base. All materials draw directly from project outputs, including research, Living Lab activities, and empirical findings, with no new content produced specifically for the MOOC. From the start, the course was conceived as a dissemination tool, translating project results into an accessible, structured learning format for diverse audiences. The development process was designed as a collaborative exercise for the consortium. Through meetings, consultations, and iterative exchanges, partners revisited project deliverables from a pedagogical perspective, transforming existing outputs into coherent learning resources while enhancing the dissemination of key findings, data, and reflections.

In summary, the GRASS CEILING MOOC delivers substantial value by providing rigorous, accessible, and contextually relevant knowledge. It constitutes a key instrument for strengthening gender-inclusive innovation ecosystems and for enhancing the visibility, skills, and agency of rural women across Europe.

1.3. Learning objectives

The objective of this online Training Academy is to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to advance gender equality and women's leadership in agriculture and rural development.

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Understand the roles and contributions of rural women in agriculture, rural economies, and community development.
2. Recognize gender norms, barriers, and enabling factors that shape women's leadership in socio-ecological innovation.
3. Identify and evaluate support mechanisms, strategies, and organizational models that foster women-led innovation in rural areas.
4. Apply practical tools and policy recommendations to strengthen inclusive and gender-responsive innovation systems.
5. Analyse and appreciate real examples of women-led innovations in food systems and rural development to inspire action and replication.

02 MOOC content

The GRASS CEILING MOOC is structured around five comprehensive modules, each addressing a key dimension of gender equality and women-led innovation in rural and agricultural contexts. Importantly, all learning materials included in the MOOC were originally produced within the scope of the GRASS CEILING project activities. No new content was created specifically for the MOOC; rather, the course systematically builds upon, curates and repurposes the project's existing deliverables, research outputs, empirical materials and communication products.

From its inception, the MOOC was conceived as a strategic dissemination and capacity-building tool, deeply rooted in the project's results. Its development aimed to translate the rich body of knowledge generated by the consortium into an accessible and pedagogically structured learning pathway, ensuring that key findings, data and reflections reach wider audiences beyond the project's immediate stakeholders.

The development process followed a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach across the consortium. Task 6.5, led by IAMZ–CIHEAM and CIHEAM Bari, coordinated the overall design, integration and quality assurance of the MOOC. Throughout this process, consortium members were actively engaged through meetings, consultations and iterative feedback exchanges that encouraged partners to revisit their project outputs from a pedagogical perspective. This collective reflection supported the identification, adaptation and alignment of existing materials with the learning objectives of each module, while preserving their original scientific and contextual integrity.

Specific partners contributed to the conceptualisation and structuring of individual modules according to their thematic expertise, scientific background and practical experience in rural development, gender studies, agricultural innovation and socio-ecological transitions. Together, this joint effort resulted in a coherent and pedagogically sound set of learning materials that combine theoretical perspectives, empirical evidence, real-life case studies and practical recommendations.

Overall, the five-module structure ensures that learners gain both foundational knowledge and actionable insights, while also reflecting the collective work of the GRASS CEILING consortium. By embedding the MOOC firmly within the project's existing outputs, the course reinforces shared ownership among partners and enhances the long-term dissemination and impact of the project's key results.

2.1. Structure of the modules

The modules within the GRASS CEILING MOOC have been designed with a strong practice-oriented focus to ensure that learners can directly connect theoretical insights with real-world applications. Each module follows a consistent structure that combines diverse learning formats and resources to support an engaging and effective learning experience.

To achieve this, every module includes:

- **Expert video presentations**, delivered by specialists in relevant fields, offering clear explanations of key concepts and practical perspectives grounded in research and field experience.
- **Real case studies**, featuring women innovators and academic contributors from the GRASS CEILING consortium across multiple European countries, as well as insights from policy experts. These cases provide concrete illustrations of women-led socio-ecological innovation in different rural contexts.
- **Self-assessment quizzes**, enabling learners to test their understanding, reflect on the content, and reinforce key messages presented throughout the module.
- **"Learn more" sections**, which offer complementary readings, tools, and external resources to support deeper exploration of the topics covered.

This structured approach ensures that each module is accessible, engaging, and directly relevant to diverse stakeholders interested in gender-responsive rural innovation.

2.2. Thematic areas covered by the training modules

Module 1: Women's Role in Agriculture, Rural Economies, and Communities

Led by Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences (LCSS), University of Zagreb and University of Pisa, this first module introduces the current and emerging roles of women in rural areas and examines the frameworks that shape and support their contributions to agricultural and rural development.

Core lectures of the module:

Introduction

1.1. Rural Women in the EU: Stylised Facts — Prof. Tomas Baležentis.

1.2. The Professional Status of Rural Women in the EU — Prof. Tihana Kovačićek.

1.3. Current Megatrends and Plausible Futures for Women's Role in Agriculture, Rural Economy and Communities — Dr. Sabrina Arcuri.

Case Study - Breaking the Grass Ceiling: A Practical Insight into Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Europe.

Quiz Module 1.

Learn more.

Module 2: Understanding Gender Norms and Drivers of Women-led Innovation

Led by Wageningen University, this module explores the motivations, constraints, and enabling factors that influence women's capacity to lead socio-ecological innovations that strengthen rural communities.

Core lectures of the module:

Introduction.

2.1. Socio-economic characteristics of rural areas: A focus on women— Prof. Bettina Bock.

2.2. Women's Innovative Ideas and Ambitions — Dr Valentina C. Materia.

2.3. Facilitators and Constraints to Women-Led Innovations in Rural Areas — Dr Valentina C. Materia.

2.3.1. Gender Norms & Division of Work — Dr Valentina C. Materia.

2.3.2. Property Ownership & Inheritance — Dr Valentina C. Materia.

2.3.3. Lack of State & Institutional Support — Dr Valentina C. Materia.

Case Study - Understanding gender norms, drivers and barriers.

Quiz Module 2.

Learn more.

Module 3: Supporting Women-led Innovation to Sustain Rural Areas

Led by Women Entrepreneurship Platform, University of Valladolid – Palencia and *Cooperativas Agro-Alimentarias de España*. Module 3 focuses on mechanisms to enhance women's entrepreneurship and leadership, including the role of cooperatives and other organisations that support innovation in rural contexts.

Core lectures of the module:

Introduction.

3.1. Policy Considerations in Support of Rural Women — Dr. Charlene Lambert.

3.2. Rural Women as Entrepreneurs — Dr. Emma Siliprandi.

3.3. Women and Innovation — Dr. Emma Siliprandi.

Case Study - Understanding what cooperatives can offer to support innovative women in agriculture.

Quiz Module 3.

Learn more.

Module 4: Innovating for Women in Food Systems

Led by Newcastle University and South East Technological University, this lesson analyses women-led innovations in agriculture, social initiatives, and rural economies, highlighting their contributions to resilience and sustainable territorial development.

Core lectures of the module:

Introduction.

4.1. Living Lab Methodology – Professor Felicity Kelliher, SETU.

4.2. The role of Living Labs in supporting innovation – Melanie Thompson-Glen, NICRE.

4.3. Lessons learned about supporting women innovators – Dr Leana Reinl, SETU.

Case Study 1 – How Living Labs Can Empower Women as Entrepreneurs in Agriculture and Rural Areas.

Case Study 2 – The *Biodistretto delle Lame*, Italy.

Quiz Module 4.

Learn more.

Module 5: Recommendations and Tools or Inclusive Innovation Systems

Led by European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL), the final module provides practical guidance, policy recommendations, and tools to strengthen innovation systems that recognise, integrate, and elevate women's roles in shaping sustainable rural futures.

Core lectures of the module:

Introduction.

5.1. Policy recommendations on inclusive transition policies for farming and rural areas — Dr. Blanca Casares.

5.2. Policy toolkit to develop and monitor inclusive agricultural and rural development policies — Dr. Blanca Casares.

Case Study 1 – Gender Benchmarking European and National Agricultural and Rural Policies.

Case Study 2 – The European Policy Forum for Women-led Innovation in agriculture and Rural Areas.

Quiz Module 5.

Learn more.

2.3. Landing page on the GRASS CEILING website

The GRASS CEILING MOOC is introduced to users through a dedicated landing page hosted on the project's main website. This page provides an accessible entry point to the course and situates it within the broader ecosystem of resources developed throughout the project. Designed to be intuitive and user-friendly, the landing page offers a clear overview of the MOOC's purpose, structure, and target audiences, while also connecting learners to complementary materials that enrich their understanding of women-led innovation in rural areas (**Figure 1**).

The landing page is embedded within a broader web architecture that showcases the diversity of outputs generated by the GRASS CEILING consortium:

Catalogue (link):

- **Tools**: This section provides access to practical tools, frameworks, and methodologies produced by the project to support stakeholders engaged in rural innovation processes. These resources complement the MOOC's learning materials by offering actionable instruments that can be applied in real-life contexts.

- **Video Journeys**: Video testimonies featuring 54 women innovators from the nine Living Labs. These stories illustrate diverse innovation pathways and territorial realities, giving visibility to women's leadership in rural transformation. Many of these video journeys are also referenced within the MOOC as illustrative case studies.
- **Stories**: Written profiles of the same 54 women innovators, expanding on their challenges, motivations, and achievements. These narratives offer rich qualitative insights that deepen learners' understanding of women-led innovation and serve as a valuable complement to both the video journeys and the MOOC content.

Training Activities (link):

- **MOOC**: This section hosts a dedicated page for the MOOC, where users can access the course description, learning objectives, enrolment link and a 'How to create your account' guide.
- **Webinar**: Page summarising the open-access webinar developed under Deliverable 6.2, which offers further capacity-building for Living Lab leaders and other stakeholders (*see* **Section 03 Pilot trainings**).

Resources (link): An extensive repository of project results, including public reports, practice abstracts, scientific publications, and additional videos. These materials enhance the MOOC's learning pathway by providing avenues for further exploration, evidence-based references, and thematic depth.

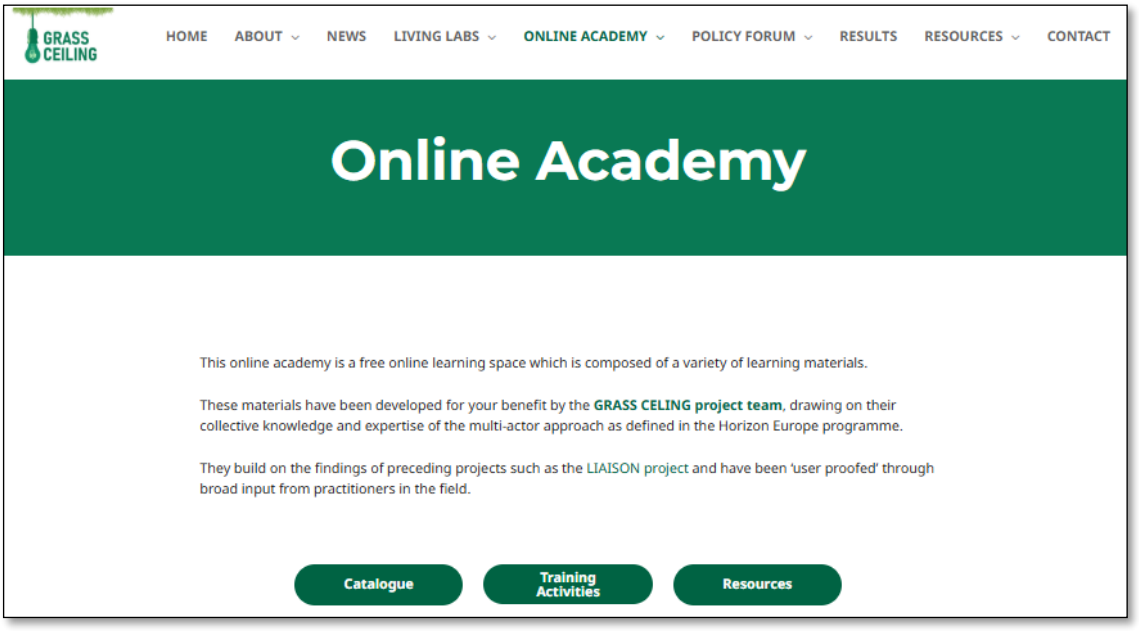

Figure 1. Online Academy landing page (link).

Overall, the MOOC landing page is strategically embedded within a rich environment of interconnected project outputs. This structure allows users not only to access the course itself but also to draw on multiple complementary materials (stories, videos, tools, reports, etc.) that reinforce and expand the knowledge acquired through the MOOC.

2.4. Moodle platform

The GRASS CEILING MOOC is hosted on a dedicated Moodle environment developed and managed directly by IAMZ–CIHEAM, rather than through subcontracting, as originally envisaged in the Description of Action. This approach allowed the consortium to ensure an inclusive, intuitive, and user-friendly learning experience, fully aligned with the project's objectives and technical requirements.

The platform provides structured access to all course modules, learning materials, and supplementary resources, enabling participants to progress at their own pace while benefiting from a coherent and well-organised digital interface. This section presents an overview of the platform's main features and navigation pathways, guiding users through the learning environment as it is experienced from the moment they enter the course.

2.4.1. Course entry and welcome section

Upon accessing the MOOC through the GRASS CEILING website, learners are directed to the Moodle landing page, where they are welcomed with a clear introduction to the course. This initial section includes:

- A *Welcome Message* outlining the purpose of the MOOC and the skills participants can expect to develop.
- An overview of the Work Programme, including a brief description of the five modules.

This introductory section ensures that participants feel oriented and confident before beginning the course (**Figure 2**).

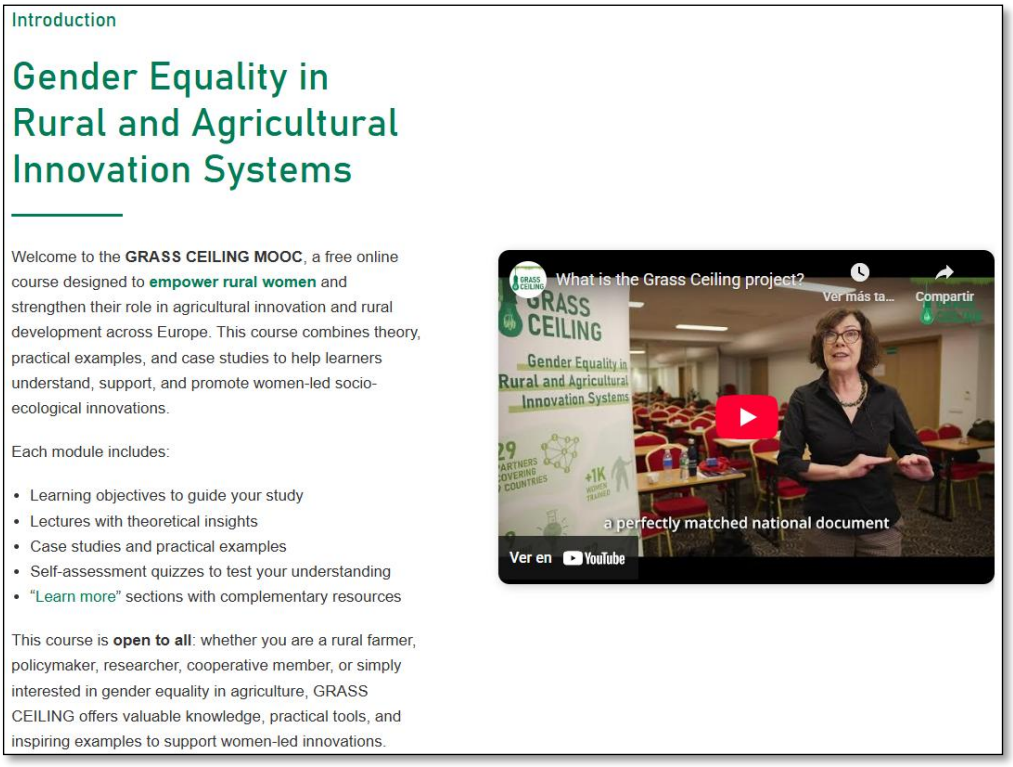

Figure 2. Introduction section of the MOOC.

2.4.2. Course structure and module navigation

The Moodle platform organises the five modules into a sequential yet flexible structure, allowing learners to choose between following the recommended order or accessing any module directly. Each module is presented in a consistent format that enhances clarity and usability:

- A **module introduction** summarising key themes and objectives.
- Expert **video presentations**, accessible via embedded media players.
- **Case studies** featuring women innovators and project partners, presented through video journeys.
- **Self-assessment quizzes** placed at the end of each module to reinforce learning and facilitate knowledge consolidation.
- **Learn More** sections linking to additional GRASS CEILING resources, including research reports, tools, publications, and external references.

This structure ensures a smooth user experience and supports diverse learning styles.

2.4.3. Multimedia integration and accessibility

Moodle's multimedia capabilities enable seamless integration of videos, images, and text-based content. The platform has been configured to prioritise:

- Easy access to videos, with controls for captions, playback speed, and full-screen viewing.
- Downloadable documents, ensuring that written content remains accessible even offline.
- Time-flexible navigation, allowing users to pause, resume, or revisit materials at any moment.

The course complies with accessibility principles by offering clear layouts, readable text formats, and content types suitable for different levels of digital literacy.

2.4.4. Assessment and progress tracking

To support learner engagement and self-evaluation, the Moodle platform provides:

- Auto-graded quizzes at the end of each module, offering instant feedback.
- A progress tracking tool, enabling participants to monitor completed and pending activities (**Figure 3**).

These features reinforce motivation and help users gauge their own learning trajectory.

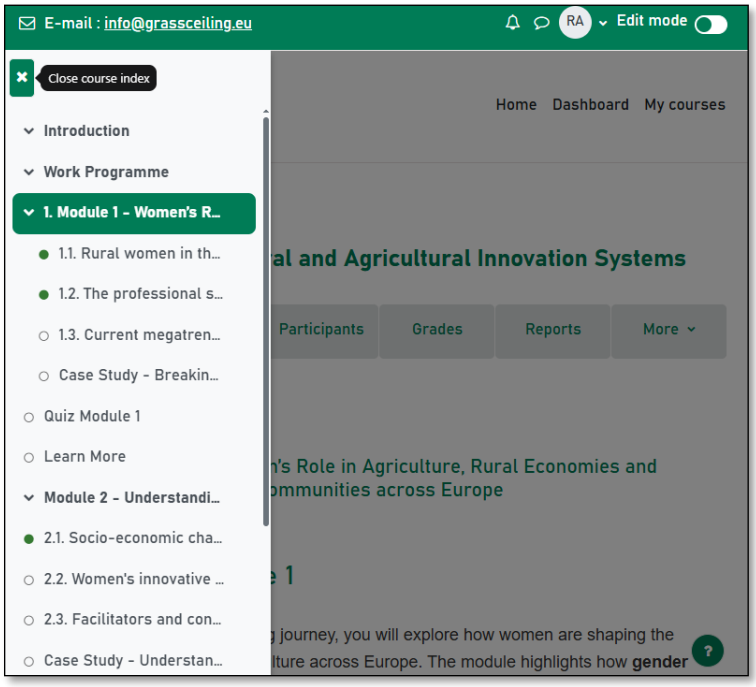

Figure 3. Progress tracking panel. Learners may mark each lesson as completed, which is then indicated by a green circle next to the lesson title within the navigation index on the left side of the screen; incomplete lessons appear with a white circle.

2.4.5. Additional resources and support

The Moodle environment also includes contact information for technical assistance when required.

This and the links in the different '*Learn More*' sections ensure that the MOOC is not only a standalone course but part of a wider ecosystem of project knowledge.

03 Pilot training

As part of the wider dissemination and capacity-building strategy of Work Package 6, the development of the GRASS CEILING MOOC was supported by two complementary pilot training / dissemination planning activities: an in-person session held during the final consortium meeting (3 December 2025) and an open-access webinar developed under Deliverable 6.2 (17 December 2025). Both activities were conceived as participatory "train-the-trainers" formats and played a central role in strengthening the capacity of key project actors to act as multipliers of the MOOC within and beyond their respective networks.

The in-person pilot training / dissemination workshop, organised during the latest consortium meeting, brought together a diverse group of participants, including Living Lab leaders, project coordinators, consortium partners, women innovators involved in the Living Labs, members of the Policy Forum and academic experts. This session provided an initial collective space to present the MOOC, discuss its objectives and structure, and reflect on its role as a dissemination and legacy tool for the project. The face-to-face setting facilitated open exchanges, peer learning and early feedback on how the MOOC could be mobilised across different territorial and institutional contexts.

Building on this experience, the webinar offered a more detailed and structured introduction to the MOOC, with a particular focus on Living Lab leaders. Lasting approximately ninety minutes, the online session included a comprehensive walkthrough of the Moodle platform, covering the five modules, their thematic focus and the range of learning tools embedded in the course. Particular emphasis was placed on highlighting the practical, accessible and flexible nature of the MOOC, enabling participants to confidently present and promote the course to diverse audiences at local, national and European levels.

Both pilot trainings incorporated a strong collaborative component. Following the presentations, participants engaged in structured brainstorming exercises aimed at identifying dissemination pathways and co-designing strategies to extend the reach of the MOOC. These discussions enabled partners to reflect on the specific needs, communication channels and opportunities within their territories, identify potential synergies across countries, and propose concrete actions to support the project's ambitious target of reaching 10,000 learners.

Beyond their immediate training objectives, the pilot sessions played a key role in fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the MOOC among consortium members and Living Lab leaders. By acknowledging their contributions to the development of the course—through case studies, interviews and thematic inputs—and by actively involving them in dissemination planning, both the in-person session and the webinar reinforced participants' engagement as ambassadors of the MOOC. Together, these pilot trainings contribute significantly to strengthening the sustainability, visibility and long-term uptake of the GRASS CEILING MOOC across diverse European rural contexts.

3.1. Expected impact of the pilot training activities

The two pilot training activities are expected to generate significant impact by strengthening the dissemination capacity of key GRASS CEILING actors, particularly the Living Lab leaders, and enabling them to act as strategic multipliers of the MOOC. Through direct engagement with the platform and its content, participants are better equipped to introduce and promote the MOOC within their professional networks, local communities, institutional settings and sectoral events. This contributes to enhancing the visibility, credibility and uptake of the course across diverse rural and agricultural contexts.

In addition, the combined pilot trainings support greater consistency and alignment in how the MOOC is communicated and presented across the consortium. By providing a shared understanding of the course's objectives, structure and pedagogical approach, these activities ensure that Living Labs and project partners convey coherent and well-informed messages when promoting the MOOC. In the medium term, this coordinated approach is expected to contribute to the project's ambition of reaching 10,000 learners, while also facilitating the integration of the MOOC into the practices of institutions and organisations active in agricultural innovation, rural development and gender equality.

3.2. Methodology of the sessions

Both the in-person pilot training session and the subsequent webinar were designed using a participatory and learner-centred methodology, combining information provision, guided exploration and collaborative reflection. The two sessions were conceived as complementary activities, ensuring continuity in content and collective learning while allowing engagement from participants who could not attend the in-person meeting.

The sessions followed three core methodological components:

- **Introductory presentation** providing an overview of the GRASS CEILING MOOC, its objectives, structure, and pedagogical foundations, and situating the course within the broader dissemination and legacy strategy of the project.
- **Live platform walkthrough**, during which participants were guided through the Moodle environment, the five modules, and the various learning tools and multimedia resources. This hands-on exploration aimed to familiarise participants with the user interface and to build confidence in navigating and presenting the course to external audiences.
- **Interactive brainstorming exercise**, aimed at collectively identifying dissemination channels, relevant stakeholder groups and tailored outreach strategies to enhance the visibility and uptake of the MOOC (**Figure 4**). The brainstorming carried out during the in-person session served as a starting point for the webinar's interactive component. To ensure continuity and inclusiveness, the ideas generated in the face-to-face meeting were documented on a shared online collaborative board, which was presented and further developed during the webinar (**Figure 5**). This approach allowed participants who had not attended the in-person session to engage with, expand upon and complement the ideas already discussed.

This mixed-method approach ensured that participants not only gained a clear understanding of the technical and pedagogical aspects of the MOOC, but also actively contributed to shaping a collective and informed dissemination strategy grounded in diverse territorial and institutional contexts.

Figure 4. Brainstorming exercise during the in-person pilot training session at the final GRASS CEILING consortium meeting, Brussels (3 December 2025).

Figure 5. Online collaborative board documenting the ideas generated during the in-person brainstorming exercise, used as the basis for the interactive discussion and further development during the webinar (link).

3.3. Integration with the dissemination strategy

The two pilot training activities form an integral component of the broader dissemination strategy outlined in Deliverable 6.7 (Update to the Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan – CDEP) and in *Section 4* of this document (*see* **Section 04** Dissemination strategy).

By equipping Living Lab leaders and other key consortium actors with the knowledge, tools and shared understanding required to act as ambassadors of the MOOC, these sessions reinforce a bottom-up and locally grounded approach to dissemination. Participants are positioned to integrate MOOC promotion into ongoing Living Lab activities, community-based initiatives, national platforms, academic environments and professional networks, thereby extending outreach beyond the project's immediate framework.

Furthermore, insights gathered during the brainstorming exercises of both sessions directly inform the refinement of the dissemination plan, ensuring that strategies remain responsive to local realities and stakeholder needs. This bidirectional flow –training leaders while learning from their contextual expertise– strengthens the coherence, relevance, and long-term effectiveness of the project's dissemination efforts.

Through this alignment, the pilot training activities contribute to maximising the MOOC's visibility, ensuring broader European uptake, and supporting the sustainability of GRASS CEILING's knowledge outputs beyond the lifetime of the project.

3.4. Key outcomes of the sessions

- In total, around 30 participants from diverse partner organizations attended one or both sessions, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the platform, its five modules, and pedagogical design.
- The sessions effectively reinforced the capacity and leadership of the nine Living Lab leaders, empowering them as strategic multipliers of the GRASS CEILING MOOC within local and regional ecosystems.
- Participants received hands-on guidance on navigating the MOOC, presenting it to diverse audiences, and leveraging its tools to foster engagement.
- The collaborative brainstorming enabled participants to identify dissemination channels, stakeholder groups, and locally adapted strategies.
- Both sessions emphasized tailoring outreach to local and regional contexts and engaging broader audiences, including students from secondary schools, higher education, and other training programmes, highlighting the importance of long-term, gender-inclusive innovation.
- The necessity to increase accessibility for non-English speakers was highlighted during both sessions. This was addressed by providing clear guidance on activating subtitles for embedded videos and uploading written versions of presentation scripts on the Moodle platform, enabling easier translation using online tools.
- Recognition and motivation: Contributions of Living Lab leaders to the MOOC were formally acknowledged. During the webinar, for collaborators unable to attend the Final Showcase, the final project video was presented to foster a sense of unity, shared achievement, and ownership.

04 Dissemination strategy

The GRASS CEILING MOOC was released using a staggered approach to **maintain momentum and visibility** throughout the final months of the project, rather than concentrating all promotion at launch. Releasing modules sequentially allows early content to be promoted while later modules are still in development, keeping learners engaged over time. This approach also provides opportunities for project members, partners and networks to amplify communications, generating interest and attracting new participants in successive phases. By pacing the release, the strategy encourages learners to return to the platform, deepening engagement and fostering a learning community.

The dissemination strategy aims to maximize engagement and reach, leveraging a staggered module release to attract at least 3,000 learners by the end of 2026 while promoting participation through social media, partner networks, academic institutions and sectoral events. Over the longer term, with the GRASS CEILING website remaining accessible for the five coming years, we expect to reach a total of 10,000 learners.

4.1. Objectives and approach

The dissemination plan aims to ensure that the MOOC reaches its intended audience and achieves engagement by raising awareness, motivating participation and facilitating access, even before the full course is available. Specifically, the strategy is guided by four key objectives:

- **Increase visibility** among women in agriculture, rural leaders, students, CSOs, and public authorities involved in rural development.
- **Encourage enrolment** by highlighting the modular structure of the course, flexible learning paths, and practical tools that learners can apply in their communities of professional work. Each module serves as a standalone opportunity to attract participants.
- **Mobilize multipliers and networks** such as project partners, universities, rural associations, and professional bodies. By activating these stakeholders and amplifiers, the strategy leverages existing connections to extend reach, promote uptake and create a supportive learning ecosystem.
- **Position the MOOC as a long-term resource** for learning, networking, and capacity building in gender equality and rural leadership.

4.2. Target audience

The dissemination strategy differentiates between **primary learners**, who are the direct beneficiaries of the MOOC, and **secondary stakeholders**, who act as amplifiers to extend reach through their networks. This dual approach ensures that promotion is both targeted and scalable, allowing the MOOC to engage diverse audiences while leveraging trusted intermediaries to drive enrolment (**Table 1**).

Primary learners (direct beneficiaries)	Secondary stakeholders (amplifiers)
Women working in agriculture, cooperatives and rural enterprises	GRASS CEILING project consortium members and partners
Early-career rural leaders and community organizers	Universities and training institutions with rural development programmes
Students (master's and PhD) studying agriculture, gender studies or rural development	EU-level platforms and networks in rural innovation and gender equality
NGOs and CSOs promoting gender equality in agriculture	Rural advisory services, mentoring schemes and women's farmer associations
Technical bodies of local and regional public authorities	Networks within the GRASS CEILING project: workshop participants, living lab participants
Rural entrepreneurs and cooperative members	

Table 1. Target audience of the MOOC dissemination campaign

4.3. Key dissemination activities

The dissemination of the GRASS CEILING MOOC was driven by a combination of digital promotion, network mobilization, academic engagement and presence at sectoral events. The strategy emphasizes a learner-centred approach, ensuring that promotion not only informs potential participants but also engages them in meaningful ways.

4.3.1. Social media outreach

Social media will serve as the primary channel for raising awareness and fostering engagement. Rather than one-off launch, the strategy employs a continuous, thematic approach, with content tailored to the specific interests of women in agriculture, rural leaders and students in related disciplines.

An **8-week social media campaign** across LinkedIn, Instagram, X (Twitter) and Facebook highlighted learning outcomes and module content, while showcasing testimonials and quotes from module experts to inspire and motivate learners (**Figures 6** and **7**).

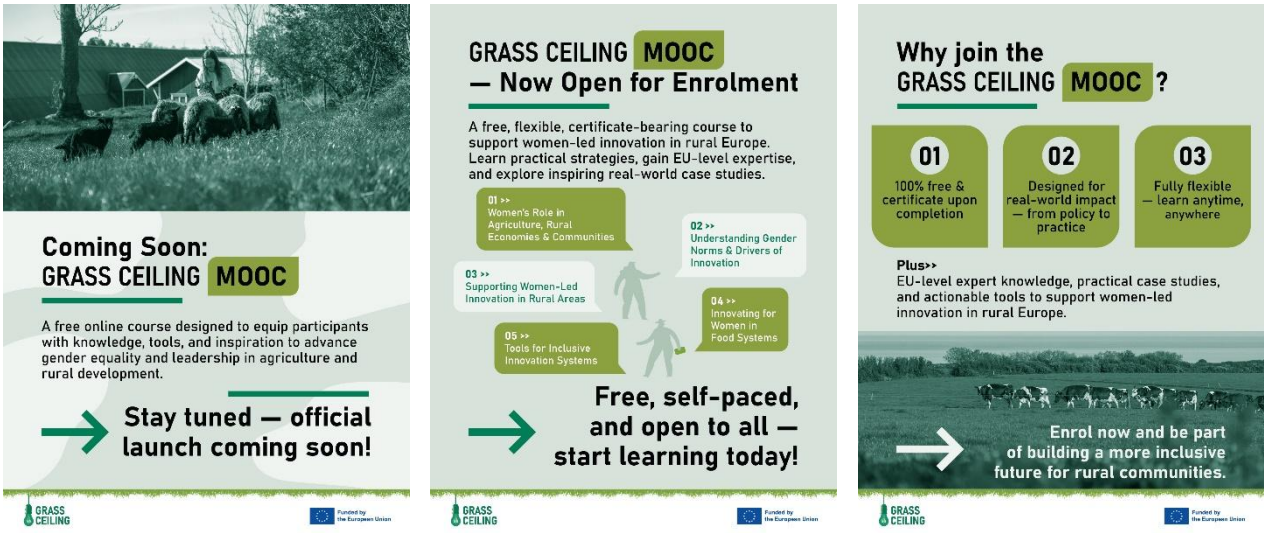

Figure 6. Visuals to announce the launch of the MOOC. From left to right: Coming Soon banner, Content Summary infographic and Three Reasons to enrol the course.

Figure 7. Visuals to announce the launch of each module. Left: Visual with the content of the module published on the public release of each module. Right: Example of a quote from module experts.

Posts were timed to align with module releases. Social media content also **leveraged sectoral groups and communities** to ensure that messages reach audiences already engaged in agriculture, gender equality and rural development. Contributions from project members on existing groups and communities across Europe are expected.

4.3.2. Webinar

The webinar engaged the nine **GRASS CEILING Living Labs leaders**, providing an in-depth introduction to the MOOC. In both sessions, participants received a detailed walkthrough of the platform and its modules, while also being equipped to promote the course through national and local events.

This participatory session not only ensured that Living Labs leaders can promote the course within their networks, but also fosters a sense of ownership among them, recognizing their contributions to the development of the course (*see* **Section 03** Pilot trainings, and Deliverable 6.2).

4.3.3. Leveraging GRASS CEILING networks

The MOOC also benefited from the amplification power of the existing GRASS CEILING consortium and partner networks. Partners, including project members, trainers and policy forum participants, were engaged as multipliers, sharing MOOC information within their own professional and community networks. This was supported by **presentations at living labs and partner meetings**, which introduced the platform, demonstrate how to navigate the modules and highlight the course's practical relevance. The methodology here involves a participatory approach, encouraging project members to **share MOOC details in national events, newsletters and mailing lists**.

To support this effort, IAMZ–CIHEAM provided a core presentation and promotional materials that project members could use or adapt for dissemination at these events, ensuring consistency and high-quality messaging across all outreach activities.

4.3.4. Academic and institutional engagement

To reach students, early-career professionals, and researchers, the MOOC was promoted through academic institutions and professional networks. These collaborations were designed not only to raise awareness but also to integrate the MOOC into existing learning pathways, positioning it as a complementary resource for formal and informal education.

Specific actions include sharing the course with other **CIHEAM Institutes** (Bari, Montpellier, Chania) and though IAMZ–CIHEAM **academic mailing lists and newsletters** to reach alumni, researchers, and professionals engaged in Mediterranean agriculture and rural development. The MOOC was also disseminated through **research centres** and **thematic EU networks**, including INRAE, EU CAP Network, and Horizon Europe projects on rural innovation. At the international and regional level, the course was shared with organizations such as **FAO** and the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Online knowledge hubs** such as Agrinatura, Rural Hub Europe and the EU CAP Network platform was also mobilized to maximize reach.

4.3.5. Promotion in in-person events

Beyond digital channels and formal partnerships, the MOOC was showcased at sectoral events, fairs and workshops. By presenting the course through flyers, the dissemination strategy leverages in-person and hybrid opportunities to engage participants directly.

For example, physical flyers were distributed at the **International Symposium** on New Models of Agri-food Development Cooperation in a Changing Geopolitical Context, organized by IAMZ–CIHEAM on 11-12 November 2025. On 27 November 2025, LCSS presented the GRASS CEILING project and the MOOC to a broader academic and practitioner audience at the 12th scientific-practical conference "*Strengthening the Competitiveness of Rural Areas: Diversity, Resilience, Smartness*" at Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy.

In addition, detailed information about the MOOC was shared during the **final consortium meeting** in Brussels (*see* **Section 03** Pilot trainings), organized by Copa-Cogeca on 3 December 2025, and flyers were also distributed during the GRASS CEILING **Final Showcase Event** at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels on 4 December 2025, where the MOOC was promoted among project stakeholders.

4.3.6. Paid campaigns

The strategy complemented organic outreach with targeted digital advertising. **Paid campaigns on META** were used to expand reach to audiences beyond the immediate consortium and partner network during Month36, followed by the upload of the course to a publicly accessible international repository (Keystone), ensuring its visibility and accessibility for a broad global audience.