



D1.1 FLIARA Conceptual Framework

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DELIVERABLE INFORMATION	1
Table of Contents	2
List of tables	4
List of figures	4
List of Box Graphics	4
Acronyms and Abbreviations	5
Preface	6
Executive summary	7
Part One: Setting the scene for the conceptual framework	7
Part Two: Six Perspectives Grounding the Framework.....	10
Part Three: The Framework	11
Part One: Setting the Scene	14
1 Introduction (section A).....	14
1.1 The FLIARA Conceptual Framework	14
1.2 Methodological Process	15
1.3 Structure of the Conceptual Framework.....	15
Introduction (Section B)	16
1.4 Objective.....	16
1.5 The Context for Female-Led Innovations in Rural Areas.....	16
1.6 Challenges for Gender Equality in Rural Areas	18
1.7 Overall Rationale of the FLIARA Framework.....	22
Part Two: Six Conceptual Perspectives	28
2.1 Key Insights from the Six Perspectives	28
Part Three: The FLIARA Conceptual Framework	33
3 Proposed Framework	33
3.1 Resilience	33



3.2 Potential of Female-Led Innovations	35
3.3 Sustainability.....	39
3.4 Policy Context for FLIARA	42
3.5 Issues of Governance Impacting Rural and Agricultural Women.....	45
3.6 Utilising the FLIARA Conceptual Framework	46
3.7 Hypotheses on Leveraging Female-Led Innovations.....	48
3.8 Conclusion	53
References:	55
Appendix A: Concept Notes.....	58
Part Four: Concept Notes.....	58
Overview	58
Key perspectives and Concept Notes	59
Appendix B: Glossary of Terms and Key Definitions.....	119



LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Five Forms of Scaling

Table 2: Four Elements of the Rural Action Plan and their linkage to FLIARA.

Table 3: Partner co-creation FLIARA concept notes

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Gender as a Social-Cultural Construct

Figure 2: FLIARA Conceptual Perspectives

Figure 3: Hindering Factors and Opportunities for Women-Led Innovations in Rural Areas.

Figure 4: Understanding Contributions of Female-Led Innovations to Gender Equality and Rural Sustainability.

Figure 5: Promise of Female-Led Innovations to Enhance Sustainability, Gender Equality and Justice.

Figure 6: The FLIARA Framework Works to Understand how Female-Led Innovations Can Initiate Progress towards Gender Equality and Sustainability in Rural Areas.

Figure 7: Hypotheses on Leverage Points for Improving Gender Equality.

LIST OF BOX GRAPHICS

Box 1: Glossary of Terms: Defining Rural

Box 2: Glossary of Terms: Defining Gender

Box 3: Glossary of Terms: Defining Resilience

Box 4: Glossary of Terms: Defining Sustainability

Box 5: Glossary of Terms: Defining Innovation

Box 6: Glossary of Terms: Defining a Policy Framework

Box 7: FLIARA Working Definition for Female-Led Innovations in Rural Areas.



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FLIARA	Female-Led Innovation in Agriculture and Rural Areas
D	Deliverable
GA	General Assembly
WP	Work Package
GoT	Glossary of Terms
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

PROJECT PARTNERS	
Galway	NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND GALWAY
TU Delft	TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITEIT DELFT
TEAGASC	TEAGASC - AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
UNICAL	UNIVERSITA DELLA CALABRIA
LWL	LONGFORD WOMEN S LINK CLG
UTU	TURUN YLIOPISTO
UL	UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
CE	CONSULTA EUROPA PROJECTS AND INNOVATION SL
HNEE	HOCHSCHULE FUR NACHHALTIGE ENTWICKLUNG EBERSWALDE
ELARD	ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE LEADER POURLE DEVELOPPEMENT RURAL
UOULU	OULUN YLIOPISTO
ECOLISE	RESEAU EUROPEEN POUR DES INITIATIVES COMMUNAUTAIRES SUR LES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE
MENDELU	MENDELOVA UNIVERZITA V BRNE
LNU	LINNEUNIVERSITETET
HLK	HOGSKOLAN FOR LARANDE OCH KOMMUNIKATION I JONKOPING - HLK SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION



PREFACE

The FLIARA (Female-led Innovation in Agriculture and Rural Areas) project aims to create a European-wide ecosystem, which supports women-led innovative practices in farming and rural areas. The project supports rural women by creating an improved ecosystem for innovation, which will highlight their successes, serve as a source of information and inspiration, link them to important players in the field, increase their visibility in institutional decision-making contexts at the national and international levels, and help them develop their capacity and skills so they can continue leading or begin leading innovative practices. Understanding how women engage in innovative sustainable practices on farms and in rural areas will be crucial to opening up new opportunities for rural women throughout the EU. To fill these knowledge gaps a comprehensive co-created conceptual framework has been developed. Deliverable 1.1 is divided into four parts to clearly depict the role of the conceptual framework throughout the life of the FLIARA project. The four parts include:

Part One: situates the conceptual framework within the broader contexts of the FLIARA project, outlining the key facets of the project, such as, why we need a conceptual framework, before addressing the context for women-led innovations in rural areas.

Part Two: introduces the six perspectives that were collectively selected to ground the Conceptual Framework.

Part Three: identifies the various strategies to be employed during the life of the FLIARA project to examine and also to promote female-led innovations in rural areas for gender equality and sustainable rural development.

Part Four: reflects on the process and production of 30 concept notes. To meet the project objectives and its multi-actor approach, a co-creative and collaborative approach was adopted to develop concept notes that informed the conceptual framework and the Knowledge Review (D1.2). The individual concepts notes form Appendix A. A Glossary of Terms (GoT) was collated and is referenced within the document. It has its own place in Appendix B.

The document commences with the following Executive Summary, which consists of key take home messages from each of the four parts of the document.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE FOR THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Part one of this deliverable (divided into two parts) situates the conceptual framework within the broader contexts of the FLIARA project, outlining the key facets of the project, such as, why we need a conceptual framework, before addressing the context for women-led innovations in rural areas.

Some of the key messages from this Section are as follows:

- **The importance of conceptualising the issue.** The conceptual framework can act as a set of guidelines for the FLIARA project, setting boundaries, directing analysis, and identifying key aspects missing from current gender innovation thinking.
- **Female-led innovations can improve gender equality, but also advance rural development and sustainability.** The difficulties of establishing gender equality can be overcome through increased female participation in innovative processes, which can also provide resources to rural developments that are often controlled by men. If the opinions and solutions expressed by half of the people are not properly acknowledged or operationalized, sustainable and equal rural development cannot occur.
- **Rural women experience various kinds of disadvantages in opportunities as compared to urban women and rural men.** These disadvantages link to political, economic, technological, and socio-cultural factors. Political factors include the lack of recognition and poor implementation of policies enabling women's rights, discriminative political stability, and the lack of political participation and representation of rural women. Economic factors relate to the gender wage gap; undervalued and low-paid work in the informal economy, unequal job and education opportunities, and lack of recognition of the contributions of women. Technological factors link to lack of access to technology for women, gender bias in technology design, and limited access to finance. Socio-cultural factors include social norms limiting women's agency, lack of attention to structural social barriers for women's empowerment, lack of attention to women's rights, patriarchal values and gender roles, and cultural prejudices.
- **Policies exist that target gender equality, but the overall goal of equality is yet to be achieved.** For example, the EU has various gender sensitive policies in place including aspects of the Common Agricultural Policy and the LEADER Programme, but gender equality is not yet achieved.
- **The pathway to gender equality needs to be built on equity to balance the opportunities available for women and men.** Given the existing inequalities in rural innovation, affirmative governance should provide



additional opportunities and advantages to women until women can 'level the playing field' in relation to innovation. Thus, affirmative governance could ideally contribute to changing power dynamics that have previously marginalised, excluded and even discriminated women.

- **Affirmative policies can support female-led innovations.** The FLIARA framework believes that a strong policy and governance framework can support innovations led by women. However, policies can also give people, including female inventors, structure and security. They are not just about promoting ideas. Furthermore, although being outlawed in theory, patriarchal concepts have a long history in judicial systems and are still present today.
- **A post-structuralist feminist understanding of gender is needed to account for imbalances, biases and injustices in society undermining women's opportunities.** Biological sex was previously equated with gender in studies, however such a binary equation cannot account for the multifaceted mechanisms that support patriarchal hierarchies. FLIARA understands gender to refer to socio-cultural processes that shape identities, behaviours, values, norms, knowledge's etc. In this way, FLIARA examines how society 'does gender' (practices, values, norms, roles) and how 'gender is done' by others (policy makers, bankers, rules, and regulations). Positioning gender as a social construct allows FLIARA to investigate social relations, context, power dynamics and women's own agency within the framework of rural innovative ecosystems (Figure 1).

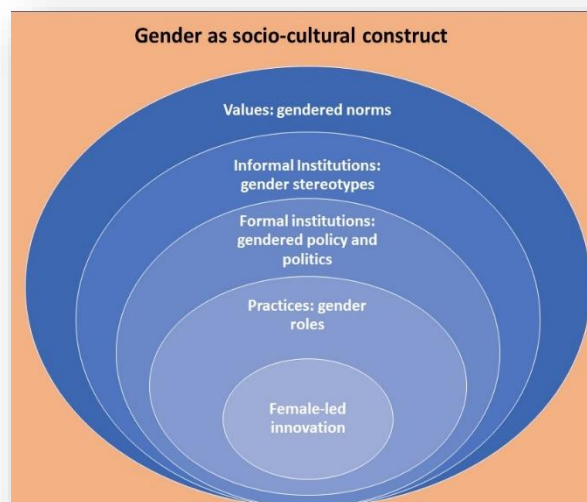


Figure 1: Gender as a Social-Cultural Construct

- **Female-led innovations constitute a distinct type of innovation** that may be technological, political, social and/or link to markets. The distinctive feature of female-led innovations links to gender and to the common disadvantages shaping the lives of rural female innovators and other rural women. We consider that female-led innovations: 1) can advance gender equality, (even when they do not address equality explicitly), 2) offer a plausible pathway for social change that



is more ethical than a pathway discriminating female-led innovations, 3) are political by definition, if not through their political agenda, then through the performativity embedded in female-led innovations, and 4) may be individual or collective, but also innovations led by individual women are also linked to collective agency by women, and 5) should normatively be promoted by policy support to advance more ethical and equal social change.

- **Female-led innovation journeys** include a series of steps. The innovation journey starts from aspirations related to enhancing rural lives, or responding to existing sustainability challenges and/or to emerging diverse crises. Innovations may also be motivated by individual careers and family well-being considerations. Future visions of sustainability of rural women are imperative to reimagine sustainability and equality in rural areas. While visioning sustainability, the FLIARA conceptualisation of sustainability includes economic, environmental, social, cultural, and institutional dimensions without conceptual restrictions.
- **Diverse motivations for female-led innovations.** FLIARA recognises that all women-led innovations do not necessarily target gender equality or even sustainability. Incorporating such innovations within FLIARA's empirical focus enables a better understanding of the motivations and realities of rural women.
- **Female-led innovations can be enabled by rural innovation ecosystems,** which include resources, actors, governance, and support for female innovators that are located at different levels including individual, family, farm, community, rural region, state, and EU. Rural innovation ecosystems are embedded within gender relations, roles, stereotypes, and constructs that diverge across societies and cultures. Therefore, the FLIARA framework recognises that sometimes patriarchal gender relations are defining rural innovation ecosystems or parts of them in a way that actually blocks female-led innovations.
- **Spotlighting rural innovative women will strengthen collective female agency, create capacity, and improve innovation ecosystems** that promote female-led inventions. Developing new and bolstering existing networks that may assist and empower rural women and increase their capacity for innovation will be the main focus of FLIARA's capacity development efforts, which will be contained within a favorable innovation ecosystem.
- **The rural sustainability challenges are often a result of certain historical pathways,** which may compromise gender equality, and also be resilient against change. Thus, a resilience perspective in FLIARA is recognised both as negative and positive. Positive resilience within the FLIARA framework links the individual resilience of women innovators, as well as collective female agency, both of which can be drivers for female-led innovations. However, the view that women can do everything can also be problematic in a sense that it does not recognise unpaid domestic work and voluntary work, which may be needed to live up to an ideal and help innovations to materialize. Thus, at an individual level women-led innovations may also relate to a fairer distribution of work and new ways to balance multiple roles.



PART TWO: SIX PERSPECTIVES GROUNDING THE FRAMEWORK

Part two outlines the key perspectives underpinning the FLIARA project and how they were selected following a co-creation process involving all members of the FLIARA consortium.

These six perspectives include the following:

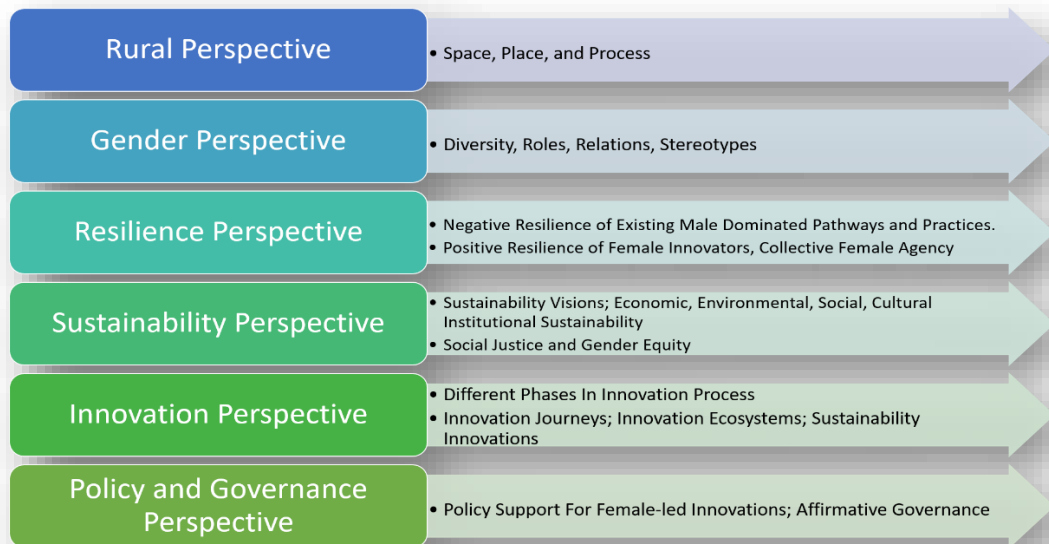


Figure2: FLIARA Conceptual Perspectives

1. Rural Areas as Spaces and Places are not ahistorical, apolitical nor can they be considered as static points in time. Rather, rural areas have specific histories, development pathways that have implications for gender equality and sustainability today and tomorrow. Rural women cannot be categorised into one group since they have a variety of needs, opportunities, networks, and access to resources. They also experience various forms of stereotypes and easily accepted positions.

2. Gender Perspective considers that female-led innovations are situated within multiple socio-cultural constructs. Especially, our framework proposes that policy, innovation ecosystems, visions of sustainability and equality, gender roles, stereotypes, and related norms can be reconstructed in order to enable transformations towards sustainability and equality in rural areas.

3. Resilience Perspective helps to understand dynamics of change and stability in and around female-led innovations. Resilience is generally understood as the ability of a system, organisation, individual or an enterprise to maintain its core functions and processes in the face of disturbance. Any resilience assessment needs to ask resilience of what to what and for whom. The whom is interesting as it points to power relations



and the inherently political nature of resilience. As such, resilience can be both positive and negative.

4. Sustainability Perspective considers that sustainability challenges in rural areas and particularly faced by rural women can be economic, social, cultural, environmental, and institutional. FLIARA will identify comprehensive diversity of future visions of sustainability of diverse rural women.

5. Innovation Perspective highlights three key issues. Firstly, the FLIARA framework recognises that female-led innovation journeys include a series of steps. The innovation journey starts from aspirations related to enhancing rural lives, or responding to existing sustainability challenges and also to emerging diverse crises. Secondly, the framework considers that female-led innovations evolve and are developed within innovation ecosystems, which may provide support in the form of resources, expertise, knowledge, and networks for female innovators. Thirdly, the idea of scaling female-led innovations is an important aspect of the framework. Scaling implies different forms by which female-led innovations can diffuse across society.

6. Policy and Governance Perspective posits that an effective policy and governance framework can facilitate female-led innovations. Yet, policies are not only about boosting innovations but may also provide structure and security to people, including female innovators. Furthermore, legal frameworks have a long history of patriarchal principles, which in the EU context mostly have been abolished at least in principle, but not in practice. On the positive side, affirmative actions to enhance gender equality, feministic governance, and policy benchmarking are available tools that can be used in policy to enhance gender equality.

PART THREE: THE FRAMEWORK

The FLIARA project framework includes various strategies to examine but also to promote female-led innovations in rural areas for gender equality and sustainable rural development. Female innovators have diverse starting points and are embedded within innovation ecosystems, policy and governance systems, and are also influenced by wider socio-cultural gendered roles, stereotypes, values and priorities. These may be hindering or promoting female-led innovations. FLIARA addresses these situations in varying ways to enhance opportunities for female-led innovations. WP 2 will employ future studies to identify sustainability visions of rural women and a set of plausible innovations needed to reach those visions. WP 3 case studies will examine sets of female-led innovation journeys to learn from good practices and obstacles for such innovations. WP 4 seeks to further enhance supportive aspects of innovation ecosystems by seeking to build communities of practice at local, national, and European level to support female-led innovations. WP 5 will consider how policy benchmarking of key measures to enhance opportunities for rural women can improve existing policies, and addresses potentials of affirmative actions, feminist governance and gender mainstreaming. WP 6 uses a wide range of communication tools to spotlight diverse rural



women and unmask the positive stories and roles these women play in advancing change towards sustainability and gender equality.

The framework comprehends how gender equality and sustainability can be improved in rural regions through female-led innovations. The starting point is the variety of rural women's realities, which might differ between geographic regions as well as within them due to particular possibilities and problems for varied women. The framework aims to advance knowledge on how gender equality and rural sustainability might evolve. Therefore, it is necessary to resolve the conflict between change and stability and the framework will do this by utilising the idea of resilience.

Resilience as negative characteristics may block female-led innovations. Resilience is often considered as a positive characteristic of an individual, enterprise, organization, region, or a system. Resilience can help to cope with disturbances and pressures and thus it is a key characteristic of an examined unit to endure in the midst of changes and also crises. As a result, **sustainable development** can benefit from resilient sociocultural systems. However, we contend the notion that resilience might be just as harmful as persistence in preventing beneficial change. Such negative resilience is pertinent in the context of gender equality because it may prevent changes that might otherwise lead to sustainability and gender equality while simultaneously benefiting other actors who would otherwise prevent change. Maladaptation and toxic resilience are two types of weakening resilience that we identify.

Conditions that are worse than those that the initial solutions were attempting to solve are the result of maladaptation. First, women devote a lot of time and unpaid labor in **social innovation or innovation development** with the best of intentions, but as the quantity of time and unpaid labor increases, little to no improvement in the women's circumstances results. **This is an example of maladaptation.** The second example relates to the promise of women-only networks, which may improve female collective agency but can serve as a maladaptive means to create "feminised ghettos" with low-value companies or less-valued social innovations, thereby reiterating women's inferiority. A third example is the prevailing neoliberal thinking that everybody should be "an architect of one's own fortune". While such discourse can be empowering, it also masks structural inequalities behind responsibility placed on individuals to achieve well-being and happiness. The term "**toxic resilience**" describes situations in which the current socio-cultural system of ideas and behaviors is resistant to efforts to change it in the direction of greater equality, as well as the persistence of undesirable habits and entrenched hierarchies. The fact that it helps those who gain from the status quo and women's subjugation may reinforce toxic resilience.

Based on this framework we identified hypotheses on eight leverage points in and around female-led innovations.

- **Performing against the patriarchal normal:** the concept of performativity stresses that acting differently and demonstrating the potential of alternative ways of doing things can question, challenge, act against, and even change the existing norms by acts that reconstruct matters underpinning gender equity.



- **Tweaking policy and governance:** Governance and policy solutions can provide opportunities, incentives, and support for female innovators. For example, affirmative governance involves government directives or voluntary programmes that can identify and promote disadvantaged groups and overcome discrimination.
- **Collective female agency:** Female-led innovations offer spaces and initiatives around which to build collective agency, and thus offer opportunities for females to come together and plan for and enact change for equality and sustainability. Collective female agency refers to idea that women are stronger together than alone.
- **Scattered representation in innovation ecosystems:** When females occupy diverse roles in innovation ecosystem it is less likely that other women face discrimination and that their ideas and efforts are undermined due to gender.
- **Reimagining sustainability and equality:** promoting the co-creation of alternative imaginaries of sustainability and equality can potentially act as agent of change, by altering the existing cultural catalogue and imagination. Female-led innovations can play a central role in such reimagining of equality and sustainability in rural areas.
- **Multiple outdated structures and processes to support rural women:** Gender equality is often challenged by uncertain and volatile support mechanisms for women. Examples relate to constant availability of childcare services, availability of farm relief at all times, and availability of access to other resources and expertise that help work in farms and agriculture. Therefore, multiple and overlapping support mechanisms for gender equality can ensure that support is available also in times of crises and difficulty.
- **Females in decision-making:** Increasing women's opportunities to participate in decisions concerning their lives is not only an objective linked to gender equality, but women's participation also increases and diversifies knowledge and expertise available and can thus also contribute to rural sustainability. Female-led innovations can play crucial roles in advancing opportunities for women to take part in decisions concerning their lives.
- **Scaling female-led innovations:** learning about the bottle necks, good practices, promising ways to diffuse and scale innovations and policy and governance practice can reveal important insights on how promising but isolated practices can be mainstreamed across society to initiate transformative change for equality and sustainability in rural areas.

Part Four: focuses on the creation of 30 concept notes and the process. A co-creative and collaborative method was used to create concept notes that influenced the conceptual framework and the Knowledge Review (D1.2) in order to satisfy the project's objectives and multi-actor approach. The specific concept notes are found in Appendix A. There is a glossary of terms (GoT) that was compiled and is referred to in the text. It has a separate section in Appendix B.



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Part One has been divided into two sections: **Section A**, outlines why the FLIARA project requires a conceptual framework, before going on to discuss how it will be utilised within the implementation of the project. The methodological process followed to create the conceptual framework is also outlined before detailing the structure of the framework. **Section B** of the Introduction works from the understanding that female-led innovations may support sustainability and gender equality in rural areas. To allow this premise to fully materialise, Section B examines the context for female-led innovations in addition to the existing challenges for gender equality and rural sustainability.

1 INTRODUCTION (SECTION A)

This deliverable outlines an overarching heuristic framework to function as a basis for the work in the FLIARA project funded by the European Commission Horizon Europe programme. The purpose of the FLIARA conceptual framework is to understand how female-led innovations can contribute to gender equality and sustainability in rural areas, and what hinders such processes. The conceptual framework underpinning FLIARA provides a basis for understanding how the current innovation ecosystem supports, but also how it places limitations on women-led innovation in farming and rural areas. There are many ways to conceptualise innovation ecosystems, however for the purposes of FLIARA, a specific co-designed conceptual framework has been developed to meet the project objectives and its multi-actor approach. This framework draws on the transdisciplinary and multi-actor project partnerships, which have co-created a conceptual framework that encompasses knowledge from research and practice and goes beyond the state-of-the-art.

1.1 THE FLIARA CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1.2 WHY DOES FLIARA NEED A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK?

As a starting point, the FLIARA project set out to develop a conceptual framework as part of the Grant Agreement and original project proposal. This framework acts as a guideline to set boundaries, direct analysis and identify gaps in existing thinking. A conceptual framework therefore serves as a road map, assisting in visualising the elements of the project and how to put them into action. It in turn lists the crucial variables for the work carried out and shows us the potential connections between them. A strong conceptual framework can be useful for the following reasons:

- **Managing Complexity:** The world of today is complicated. Concepts that are relevant to modern rural settings and the issues they face can aid in our understanding of this complexity.
- **Renew our Thoughts:** Concepts can direct our thinking and rethinking, enabling us to see the world from fresh angles. They may inspire us to consider new ideas and get a deeper understanding of problems.



- **Frame Problems:** Concepts can aid in reframing problems in novel ways and offer a justification for connecting to a specific objective. Connecting with new interest groups outside of people who are typically involved may be aided by this.
- **Link to A Bigger Picture:** Concepts can assist in repositioning problems within a larger policy agenda. This can aid in developing a stronger agenda that makes the case for tackling problems more thoroughly.

1.2 METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

The FLIARA project exhibits a multi-actor strategy through the project's work package deliverables as well as in the design and execution of those work packages. When creating the project's conceptual framework in WP1, a multi-actor approach was used. Each partner was involved and engaged in a step-by-step approach to establish a clear direction for the project. The steps of the WP1 methodological process were as follows:

- An initial stimulus paper was developed by the University of Galway based on the project's proposal.
- This stimulus paper was expanded by the OULU team and a full paper was presented to the project partners for review.
- Each project partner commented on the stimulus paper adding in key concepts they felt were relevant to the project.
- Six important, in-depth concepts were identified which now lay the foundations for the FLIARA conceptual framework.
- Each partner was invited to create a '**light touch**' **concept note** in and around the concept which they felt was relevant and important to the project.
- Following analysis via the University of Galway, six project partners were invited to combine certain light touch concepts, which in turn created a more in-depth concept segment or concept notes.
- In the final process, the University of Galway and OULU combined all concepts to create the FLIARA conceptual framework.
- As an addition to the WP1 deliverable D1.1, each partner was invited to edit further their light touch concept notes, which are now added as Appendix A in this deliverable.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The elements of the innovation ecosystem constructed in FLIARA will deconstruct the pathway(s) that enabled women to lead innovative initiatives in both agriculture and in rural areas, which includes both the challenges they faced, but also how they overcame these challenges to become successful innovative farm and rural women. The innovation ecosystem and capacity also sits within the gender norms and relations that exist in society. More specifically FLIARA's initial position on the innovation ecosystem is underpinned by a number of concepts, including rural, gender, resilience, sustainability, innovation and policy and governance.



All of the project participants were able to participate to the FLIARA conceptual framework's formulation thanks to the multi-actor design strategy. As a result of the collection of the concept notes, six significant, in-depth concepts that act as the foundation of the FLIARA project have formed (Figure 2). The basis of the FLIARA conceptual framework is based on the following ideas:

- The FLIARA project is firmly situated within a **rural** space and context.
- Women are the key players/stakeholders within this rural space that we wish to explore and **gender** equality is what the project is aiming for.
- The concept of **resilience** is essential as it represents the resilience, courage and flexibility of rural and agricultural women, but also the dominated pathways they have had to overcome.
- Rural and agricultural women can contribute to all aspects of **sustainability** to ensure the development and holistic sustainability of rural areas.
- Processes of **innovation** is what women can engage in to ensure sustainable rural areas and agricultural livelihoods.
- We need to influence **policy and governance** structures to ensure we achieve all of the above.

INTRODUCTION (SECTION B)

1.4 OBJECTIVE

The FLIARA conceptual framework's goal is to comprehend how female-led innovations might promote gender equality and sustainability in rural areas, as well as what obstacles stand in the way of such efforts. This is important for many reasons. Firstly, as noted in 1.6 below rural women face various challenges and gender equality is not yet achieved. For enhancing gender equality in rural areas, female-led innovations can play crucial roles. Rural and agricultural innovations led by women can increase the potential for women's agency, include women in innovation processes shaping rural lives, and lead to more equal outcomes in terms of economic, political, socio-cultural opportunities. Secondly, rural areas face challenges regarding sustainable development, which range from population decline to environmental impacts and access to land. Women, and female-led innovations can play important roles in achieving sustainable rural development. Thus, even though FLIARA focuses on female-led innovations, it targets rural sustainability in general, in addition to the goal of gender equality.

1.5 THE CONTEXT FOR FEMALE-LED INNOVATIONS IN RURAL AREAS

1.5.1 DEFINING THE RURAL

The rural as a space and place or 'rural landscape' has had many definitions and interpretations (Paniagua, 2019). While the "rural landscape" could be defined as a geographical concept with clearly definable limits on a map or as a social construct consisting of a group of people who share a common interest or way of life, its definition



has been the subject of a lengthy debate (Woods, 2011). The rural landscape is usually characterised by a lower population density, use of space for primary activities, less developed infrastructure, and tends to depend on the city for job opportunities and services. Rural areas are not uniformly defined, however they are frequently linked to agriculture, resource-based industries, and slower paced lifestyles. Some of the essential traits that aid in defining rural areas are:

- **Population Density:** Compared to metropolitan areas, rural areas have a lower population density. Usually, there are fewer inhabitants per square kilometre or square mile.
- **Land Use:** Natural sceneries and a sizable amount of agricultural land are frequently seen in rural locations. They might include farms, pastures, woodlands, and open areas.
- **Economic Activities:** Rural communities frequently engage in economic activities like forestry, mining, fishing, and agriculture. Small-scale businesses, tourism, cottage industries, and locally focused services can also be a part of rural economies.
- **Infrastructure:** Compared to urban regions, rural areas typically have less developed infrastructure. Transportation, healthcare, education, and other public services may be harder to access or have additional restrictions.
- **Community and Lifestyle:** Communities in rural locations are frequently tight-knit, where residents get to know one another and participate in local activities. Rural lifestyles may differ from metropolitan lifestyles in that they place more of an emphasis on traditional values, a connection to nature, a slower-paced atmosphere and community living which may include common management, collective activities, mutual help and higher interdependence.
- **Distance from Urban Centres:** Typically, major cities or metropolitan centres are far away from rural areas. This geographical distance may have an impact on how easily people may access services, jobs, and amenities.

1.5.2 RURAL WOMEN

Rural women can be considered as a social group within rural areas, who often share similarities in opportunities and challenges. Section 1.6 outlines a set of challenges encountered by rural women. The main flaws in development discourses, however, are the presumptions that "women" are somehow a homogenous group that is affected or not by economic policies, and the failure to acknowledge the enabling and constraining differences between women (e.g. regarding class, race, ideology, social relations, culture, history, rural vs. urban context, etc.) (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Instead of such simplifications, underlying power relations should be recognized and addressed in order to understand what truly transformative policy agendas and practices would look like (Cornwall and Rivas, 2015). Such power-relations are relevant also to female-led innovations in agriculture and rural areas.

Rural women face various challenges compared to rural men or urban women. Increased female engagement in innovation processes can help address the challenges of equality,



but also bring additional resources to innovation developments that are often dominated by men. Furthermore, moving towards sustainable and equal rural development cannot take place if the views and solutions held by half of the population are not properly recognized or operationalized. Also, actual contributions by women, linked for example to reproductive affective and material labour, often remain unrecognised. Rural innovation processes may also be subjected to so called Matilda effect, where women's contributions remain hidden despite significant contributions (See Concept Note 7).

1.6 CHALLENGES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN RURAL AREAS

In developing the FLIARA conceptual framework, it is essential as a starting point to consider the issues facing women in rural areas, but also how to address these issues. Broadly speaking, these include: limited access to resources, gender-based discrimination, unequal access to education and training, limited access to farm land, unpaid care work, inadequate infrastructure and services (social and public) and issues around climate change and environmental pressures.

PESTE analysis is a strategic tool used in business and organization management to analyse and evaluate the external factors that can impact a company or industry. The acronym PESTE stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Environmental factors. With the case of female-led innovation in rural area, FLIARA recognises that women-led innovations emerge from certain contexts, which may support or motivate innovations. Innovations often seek to improve existing situations. Therefore, understanding existing challenges for rural women is important to understand the context from which female-led innovations emanate. This is very much a problem-based view. Yet, we also recognise that sometimes innovations are motivated, not by existing challenges for gender equality and sustainability, but also by aims to improve the basis for well-being. Below, we outline some key challenges along the PESTE categories for women in rural areas (See Concept Note: 23).

1.6.1 POLITICAL FACTORS

➤ **Government Policy - Women's rights**

While the EU strives for gender equality in the policies it adopts, the diversity among the members and the tensions between national sovereignty and supranational political framework create disparities between the rights that women have in the EU countries. Telling examples are the right to abortion, which varies significantly among the member states, but also rights of the LGBTQ community.

➤ **Political Stability - The Rise of the Right Wing**

Political stability, depending on the political orientation of the dominating parties, may reduce women's rights in the respective countries, hence limiting and rolling back the possibility for political innovation with a gender equality dimension.



➤ **Women's Political Participation and Representation**

From a rural development perspective, women's political participation is a key element for gender equality and enhancing local democracy, according to Jelena Drenjanin (Spokesperson for Gender Equality, declaration from 2020). However, the data shows that women continue to be under-represented in politics and public life, in the European Parliament, but also in national parliaments, governments and local assemblies, with the political parties and media playing an important role in ensuring or hindering their access (European Parliament). Unsurprisingly then, the disparities between the member states of the EU can be partly read along a line of political orientation of the party in power: Hungary scores the lowest in the EU with 12.6% women in the National Parliament, compared to a general EU average of 32.2%, and the highest representation of 49.6% in Sweden. Structural and societal barriers continue to hinder women from seeking office and from fulfilling their mandates or accessing leadership positions once they are elected, as well as specific barriers that can affect different groups of women on account of their age, class, ethnic background, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. Connected to different cultural, economic, and political contexts and electoral systems these barriers thus vary within the member countries.

1.6.2 ECONOMIC FACTORS

➤ **The Gender Wage Gap and Income Disparities**

In rural areas and from an agricultural perspective, women typically earn less than men for the same work, and often have fewer opportunities to earn income outside of agriculture. This can result in income disparities and limited financial resources for rural women. Women in the EU continue to earn less than men, with an average gender pay gap of 12.7% in 2021 (Eurostat, 2021). This gap is higher in rural areas and in agriculture, where women face greater discrimination in terms of wages and access to employment opportunities.

➤ **Women's Roles in the Informal Economy**

The informal economy is a significant source of employment and income in rural areas, and women often play a crucial role in this sector. However, informal work is often undervalued, low-paying, and lacks social protections such as healthcare and pension benefits.

➤ **Women and Employment**

Rural women are globally less likely to participate in the labour market than men or urban women, and they are more likely to be unemployed.



➤ **Value Chain**

Women often play an important role in the agricultural value chain or in rural businesses, from production to processing and marketing. However, they may not receive the same recognition or compensation as men for their contributions.

1.6.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

Rural women often experience marginality around lack of access to various opportunities, for example, financial capital for business development. Marginality has been defined as “an involuntary position and condition of an individual or group at the margins of social, political, economic, ecological, and biophysical systems, that prevent them from access to resources, assets, services, restraining freedom of choice, preventing the development of capabilities, and eventually causing extreme poverty” (Gatzweiler et al., 2011, p. 3). Socio-cultural aspects linked to rural women include:

➤ **Social Norms**

Across many cultures, locations, and communities, social norms for rural women might range greatly. Traditional beliefs, conventions, religious practices, socioeconomic conditions, and the broader social context are some of the influences on these norms. It's crucial to remember that these conventions are not commonplace and might vary greatly, especially within rural communities. According to the FAO (2017) challenges for rural women include: social norms that limit women's agency, lack of education, and lack of legal and financial entitlements.

➤ **Lack of Attention to Structural Barriers**

Many development discourses fail to adequately address the structural obstacles that rural women encounter. Structural obstacles are the institutional, social, and economic constraints that consistently disfavour and limit possibilities for particular demographic groups, particularly rural women. These obstacles have their roots in unfair power allocation, unequal resource distribution, and discriminatory norms and practices. Development initiatives frequently fall short of addressing the root causes of gender inequality and exacerbate existing inequities by ignoring or minimising these structural hurdles. “We hear talk about women's economic empowerment and about ‘lifting’ communities by investing in women, with scant consideration of the structural barriers to women's individual self-actualization, let alone their collective mobilization” (Cornwall and Rivas 2015, p. 400).

➤ **Lack of Attention to Women's Rights:**

Discussions of development frequently pay little attention to women's rights. Although there has been progress in recognising the value of gender equality and women's empowerment, there are still large gaps in how women's rights are effectively addressed and prioritized within development frameworks. The pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development may be hampered by this neglect. A recent analysis on the Swedish



government discourse on social innovation reveals the prevalence of the simplified, silver bullet approach and has found that “Social change and gender equality are hence made intelligible within an economic logic, equating social change with doing business and gender equality with making profit”, and that “gender equality is articulated as a tool for [economic] growth and not as an issue of rights, justice or power” (Lauri, 2021, p. 39).

➤ **Patriarchal Values and Roles**

Traditional gender roles, manifested for example in the dominance of men in political bodies, or men’s influence over women and control of their decisions, for example not allowing women to work outside the home. This is evidenced in the fact that only 31.6% of farm managers’ in the EU27 (in 2020) is female, who farm 17.5% of the utilised agricultural area and who produce 14.9% of the standard output (EUROSTAT, 2023). Farm indicators by age and sex of the manager, economic size of the farm, utilised agricultural area and NUTS2 region. In many rural regions these shares of females are even much lower.

➤ **Cultural Prejudices**

Prejudices may include skepticism about female-led innovations and their benefits, social and cultural boundaries regarding women in business, perceptions that a woman’s place is at home, not in business and in the public sphere. Persisting neglect of women’s potential roles in rural development may lead to difficulties in engaging women in innovation initiatives.

1.6.4 TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS

Technological factors that can affect women's participation in rural innovations include:

➤ **The Accessibility of Technology for Women**

In some rural areas, women may have limited access to technology due to infrastructure challenges (e.g. insufficient broadband internet connectivity) or social norms that limit their use, which can limit their ability to access information, connect with markets, and adopt more sustainable and efficient farming practices. Precision agriculture technologies, such as GPS-guided equipment and drones, may for example help farmers optimise their use of inputs and increase their yields. However, these technologies may require specialised skills and training, which may be more difficult for women to access due to gendered social norms or limited access to education.

➤ **Gender Bias in Technology Design**

Technology solutions can be designed with unconscious gender biases that can make them less accessible or less effective for women. For example, precision agriculture tools may be designed for larger-scale farming operations, which can exclude smallholder women farmers.



➤ **Access to Finance**

Women in rural areas may have limited access to finance, which can make it difficult to invest in technology. This can be due to gender-based discrimination in access to credit or a lack of collateral, which can limit women's ability to access loans.

➤ **Technology as a Driver of Change**

Technology can be a powerful driver of change in rural areas, but it can also reinforce existing gender inequalities. For example, the adoption of labor-saving technologies can free up women's time for other activities, but it can also reinforce traditional gender roles that assign women to domestic and caring work.

1.6.5 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Women's involvement in rural and agricultural inventions is significantly influenced by environmental conditions. These elements have the potential to influence the possibilities, limitations, and decision-making procedures that influence women's participation in agricultural practices and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies.

➤ **Access To Resources**

Women's participation in agriculture and innovation may be hampered by their lack of access to resources like land, water, credit, and technology. Cultural traditions, unfair inheritance rules, and unequal resource distribution can make it difficult for women to acquire and manage these resources.

➤ **Knowledge and Information Gaps**

Women's ability to learn about cutting-edge agricultural methods and technology may be hampered by unequal access to information, training, and extension services. These disparities are made even worse by the absence of gender-responsive and tailored extension programmes.

➤ **Natural Resource Management and Climate Change**

Women living in rural regions have particular difficulties as a result of climate change's effects on agriculture. It may be more challenging for women to innovate as rainfall patterns change, extreme weather events occur more frequently, and the environment is degraded.

1.7 OVERALL RATIONALE OF THE FLIARA FRAMEWORK

1.7.1 GENERAL FLIARA STANCE: FROM GENDER EQUALITY TO EQUITY AND BACK TO EQUALITY



Given the existing inequalities in rural innovation, **affirmative governance**, which seeks to change power dynamics that have previously marginalised, excluded and even discriminated women, should provide additional opportunities and advantages to women until, women can 'level the playing field' in relation to innovation. Current **different starting points for males and females** regarding rural innovation means that social justice for genders cannot be achieved by focusing on equality. Instead focus needs to be on **gender equity** considering that each person, and diverse genders, have different circumstances and histories that affect their well-being and underpin their possibilities to innovate. Thus, affirmative governance is needed to allocate more resources and opportunities for female than men to reach equality in innovation processes. Therefore, pathways to equality is built on equity (Crabtree, 2023). However, considering equity as the final objective may not be feasible, because after all, women and men should have equal opportunities to pursue their lives and well-being. However, current gendered biases across society undermining women's opportunities necessitate combining affirmative measures with active policies to achieve equality between genders.

1.7.2 SITUATING FEMALE-LED INNOVATION WITHIN DIVERSE FORMS OF INNOVATIONS

Innovation refers usually to something new and is associated strongly with technological and market innovations. Other forms of innovation include political innovation and social innovation. All these have links to ideas on who the innovators actually are: technology developers, market actors, politically active people and movements, or civil society actors. Females are obviously included in each category. What then makes female-led innovation special?

Social innovation literature can provide insights on the question on what makes female-led innovation a distinct form of innovation. Social innovation often occurs where markets and policy fail to satisfy demands of people, and include necessarily civil society engagement. Banerjee et al. (2023) propose collective management and people centered social innovation as an ethical approach to re-institutionalise social change in order to respect diversity and understand the dynamics of power.

There are various take home messages from Banerjee et al. (Ibid). Firstly, to cope with biases in power by re-institutionalisation based on collectivisation by female-led innovations is an interesting one. Rural women are often in disadvantaged situations, and female-led innovation could help the innovator but also other rural women to improve their situations. Thus, while there certainly are individual female innovators, their example and their often-pioneering activities have benefits beyond economy of the innovators. Therefore, even individual female-led innovations link to collective female agency. In addition, female-led innovations are not apolitical. Even if they would not explicitly criticise patriarchal values, they often exemplify empowering roles women can employ. Secondly, the argument that social innovations are an ethical approach to social change, links to hopes that people should steer social change in addition to states and market actors. With the case of female-led innovation and unjust power dynamics, it is a



normative imperative that the often-disadvantaged half of the society should have an equal role in shaping the social change.

Based on the above, we note that female-led innovations: 1) can advance gender equality (even if not all female-led innovations address equality explicitly), 2) offer a plausible pathway for social change that is more ethical than a pathway discriminating female-led innovations, 3) are political by definition, if not through their political agenda, then through the performativity embedded in female-led innovations, and 4) are linking individual innovations and collective processes in varying ways, but even individual female-led innovations contribute to collective female agency, and 5) should normatively be targeted by policy support to advance more ethical and more equal social change.

This leads us to suggest that female-led innovations are a distinct category of innovations that may be technological, political, social or / and link to markets. The distinctive feature of female-led innovations links to societal gendered structures and common disadvantages shaping the lives of rural female innovators and other rural women.

1.7.3 GENDER, RURAL AND INNOVATIONS FRAME THE EMPIRICAL FOCUS OF FLIARA

FLIARA framework takes as a starting point that **gendered assumptions and gendered structural barriers** can negatively impact women's potential to participate in, lead or get recognition for innovations in agriculture and rural areas. To unpack these processes and associated gendered social relations a **post-structuralist feminist understanding of gender** is necessary. In earlier studies gender was used as an equivalent to sex, however such a binary equation is not able to capture the multidimensional processes that reinforce patriarchal structures. FLIARA understands **gender to refer to socio-cultural processes** that shape behaviours, values, norms, knowledge etc. In this way, FLIARA can examine how gender equality is promoted or compromised by prevailing socio-cultural practices, values, norms, and roles, and **how 'gender is done'** by others (policy makers, bankers, rules and regulations). Positioning gender as a social construct allows FLIARA to investigate social relations, context, power dynamics and women's own agency within the framework of rural innovative ecosystems. This processual approach can act as a **transformative response to gender equality**. FLIARA applies an **intersectional lens** to capture diverse experiences of inequality that are shaped by interwoven factors that build upon and extend beyond the gender element.

As a social construct it becomes evident that **gender has a spatial and temporal dimension**; gender constructs will vary with considerable diversity across and within countries and regions and also change over time as the landscape of socialisation (e.g. growing up in certain culture with certain values) transforms. FLIARA focuses on **rural areas** as spaces, places, and processes, which have also a gender dimension. **Rural agriculture and farming** are also explicit focus points of FLIARA. Therefore, female-led innovations as examined in FLIARA will cover innovations at farms, related to agriculture, but also linked to wider ideas of rural as special kind of place. Furthermore, policy and governance issues are also distinct for rural setting including European policies and



programmes, such as the Common Agricultural Policy and the LEADER programme that have to “do” gender in particular ways.

Many of the female-led innovations examined by FLIARA will link to **women’s entrepreneurship**, but also rural social innovation and institutional (e.g. formal and informal rules of the game) innovation linking to policies, and gender roles, norms and stereotypes will be covered. Understanding the position of women in agriculture and rural innovations and promoting women’s empowerment is an issue also affecting (and affected by) men. Therefore, FLIARA is open to capturing the **diverse notions of masculinity** even if practical FLIARA fieldwork focuses on women.

1.7.4 CHALLENGES FOR ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY

FLIARA framework starts with a recognition that rural areas include **sustainability challenges** regarding economic, social, cultural, environmental, and institutional dimensions. Gender equity is a key aspect of sustainability. Generally, **gender equity has three elements: recognition** of female’s knowledge, norms, and values, **fair distribution** of benefits and costs between women and men, and the **opportunities for women to participate** in decisions concerning their own lives. FLIARA will examine how the three elements of gender equity are interlinked with dimensions of sustainability.

The rural sustainability challenges are often a result of certain **historical pathways**, which may compromise gender equity, and also be **resilient against change**. Thus, a resilience perspective in FLIARA is recognised both as negative and positive. Positive resilience within the FLIARA framework links the **individual resilience of women innovators**, as well as collective female agency, both of which can be drivers for female-led innovations. However, the view that women can do everything can also be problematic in a sense that it does not recognise **unpaid domestic work and voluntary work**, which may be needed to live up to an ideal and help innovations to materialise. Thus, at an individual level female-led innovations may also relate to a fairer distribution of work and new ways **to balance multiple female roles**.

FLIARA recognises that **all female-led innovations do not necessarily target gender equality or even sustainability**. Incorporating such innovations within FLIARA’s empirical focus enables us to better understand motivations and realities of rural females.

FLIARA framework seeks to be inclusive to ensure it captures **diverse female-led innovations, but also** challenges that they are seeking to address. Female-led innovations can be enabled by **rural innovation ecosystems**, which include resources, actors, governance, and support for female innovators that are located at different levels including individual, family, farm, community, rural region, state, and EU. Rural innovation ecosystems are embedded within **gender relations, roles, stereotypes**, and constructs that diverge across societies and cultures. Therefore, the FLIARA framework recognises that sometimes **patriarchal gender relations** are defining rural innovation ecosystems or parts of them in a way that actually **blocks female-led innovations**.



1.7.5 FEMALE-LED INNOVATION JOURNEYS

The FLIARA framework recognises that **female-led innovation journeys** include a series of **steps**. The innovation journey starts from aspirations related to enhancing rural lives, or responding to existing sustainability challenges and/or to emerging diverse crises. Yet, innovations might sometimes simply be motivated by individual career and family well-being considerations, even if they eventually end up benefitting more people.

The female-led innovations are thus **motivated by current realities** in rural areas. These realities often lead to the **decision to act and** innovate and prepare for building concrete innovations. These **concrete innovations** can be economic, technological, social, cultural, environmental, or institutional, or combinations of these dimensions. Consequently, these innovations often have impacts on the contexts where they are implemented and practiced. FLIARA will look at these **impacts in terms of dimensions of sustainability, and gender equality**. The FLIARA framework will also recognise that the female-led innovations can have incremental, disruptive, sustaining, and radical implications on rural gender (in)equalities. Female-led innovations can then **diffuse through various forms of scaling**. For example, the horizontally diffused innovations can have impacts on society and its gender relations, as well as on sustainable development. **Policy can help to mainstream** female-led innovations by supportive policies, incentives, regulations, and guidance to enhance sustainability and gender equality.

1.7.6 VISIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

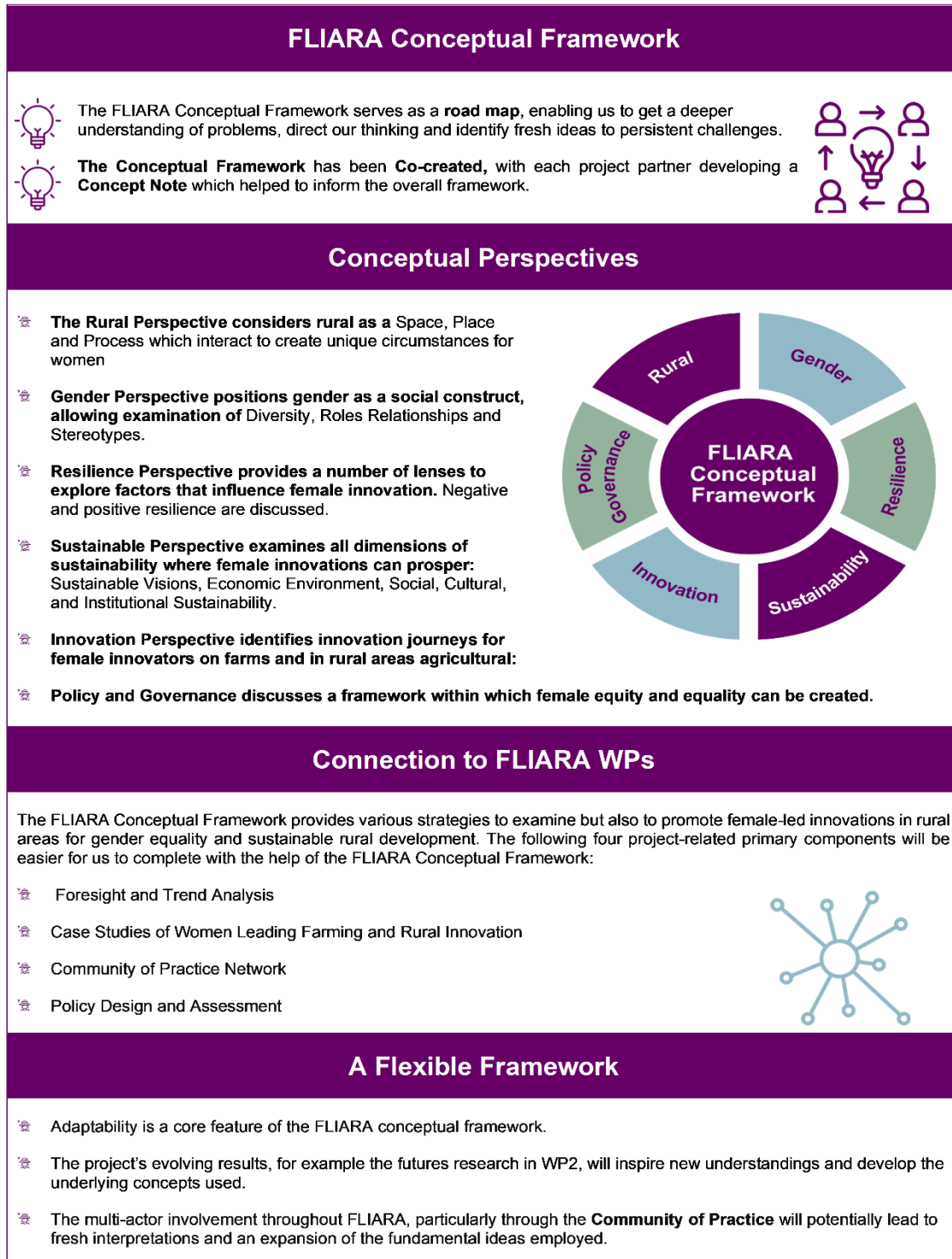
FLIARA will identify a comprehensive diversity of **future visions of sustainability** of diverse rural women. However, while visioning sustainability, the FLIARA conceptualisation of sustainability is open and includes economic, environmental, social, cultural, and institutional dimensions without conceptual restrictions. The key is to map **potential innovations** that may contribute to achieving the visions.

1.7.7 CAPACITY BUILDING AND CREATION OF OPPORTUNITIES

A communication strategy is central to the FLIARA project, which seeks especially to **spotlight rural female innovators**. Capacity building in FLIARA will center on building new and strengthening networks that can support and **empower rural women and boost their innovation capacity**, all of which will be encapsulated within a supportive innovation ecosystem. **Social networks** are key part of innovation ecosystems, as they may provide access to resources (e.g. different forms of capital) needed in innovation processes. FLIARA will build women to women networks, so called **Communities of Practice** that will enhance female innovation capacity and enable **collective female agency**. In doing so, FLIARA framework also recognises that increasing female's innovation capacity is based on the idea of equality and does not acknowledge different starting points of female and male in rural innovation processes. Therefore, FLIARA will focus not only building capacity and creating enhanced **opportunities** for women



innovators through building Communities of Practice, but also by making recommendations for policy and governance on what kind of **affirmative actions** would be needed to open-up new opportunities for female-led innovation. The Following Infographic displays the key messages for the FLIARA Conceptual Framework in graphic detail:





PART TWO: SIX CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES – BUILDING BLOCKS FOR FLIARA FRAMEWORK

2.1 KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE SIX PERSPECTIVES

2.1.1 RURAL PERSPECTIVE

Rural areas have specific histories and development pathways that have implications of gender equality and sustainability. Furthermore, the actors in rural areas are not a homogenous community. In addition to differences between women and men, there are a set of different factors that influence their opportunities to pursue a good life. We acknowledge that rural women cannot be categorised into a single group since they have a variety of needs, networks, and access to resources. They are also vulnerable to a variety of stereotypes and widely accepted positions. The rural perspective highlighted a set of important understandings that are underpinning our framework. First, rural areas are constantly evolving places and spaces influenced by globalisation, de-globalisation and localisation including development of new industries and economic development. The rural is a distinct space and place diverging from urban areas and having also particular types of challenges. Demographic challenges are evident across European rural areas including for example outmigration to cities, and lack of employment and education opportunities. On the other hand, technological development regarding digital tools and solutions may overcome the tyranny of distance for rural actors. A specific issue for gender equality is that patriarchal attitudes, values, roles, and stereotypes prevail in rural areas more strongly than in the cities. These are relevant at multiple levels including individual actors, families, farms, innovation ecosystems, policy, and socio-cultural systems. Some rural studies literature have focused on considering that rural landscapes are driven by productivist, post-productivist, or multi-functionalist rural restructuring ideas. Extending on these ideas, diffusion of rural female-led innovation could plausibly lead to post-marginalised ruralities characterised by gender equality and sustainability.

Concepts like **rurality and rural areas** are frequently debatable; therefore, the FLIARA project will draw on a number of methodologies in defining rural areas. These include statistics, such as the Eurostat and NUTS categories, as well as a more theoretical stance around the rural as a social construct. In addition to these, and within the context of WP2 and WP3 a more definitive approach will be taken, which includes using urban-rural typologies. These will include three categorisations, namely, a rural village, remote rural areas and rural areas close to a city.

BOX 1: GoT: Defining Rural



2.1.2 GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Our framework combines two lines of gender research: the empiricist line and the social constructivist/poststructuralist lines. The empiricist line consists of mapping inequalities between women and men, of which rural areas are ripe. However, these inequalities are most often based on discriminatory, **gendered** social practices that can be changed, and which are the focus of a poststructuralist investigation. The concept of gender as socially constructed is fruitful in showing first, the myriad ways in which gender structures social life, and second, how gendered social structures, practices and representations imply certain gender orders that subordinate women to men. Making such arrangements visible through research has made it possible to challenge and change them. Gender research is thus inherently political (See Concept Note 6).

FLIARA adds to this research by focusing especially on female-led innovation. The question of what pertinent societal and cultural issues need to be rebuilt in order to improve gender equality therefore becomes crucial. Our framework focuses on female-led innovation, yet recognises that such innovations are positioned and threatened by multiple socio-cultural constructs. Especially, our framework proposes that policy, innovation ecosystems, visions of sustainability and equality, gender roles, stereotypes, and related norms can be reconstructed to enable transformations towards sustainability and equality in rural areas.

FLIARA understands gender to refer to socio-cultural processes that shape identities, behaviours, values, norms, knowledge's etc. In this way, FLIARA examines how society 'does gender' (practices, values, norms, roles) and how 'gender is done' by others (policy makers, bankers, rules, and regulations). Positioning gender as a social construct allows FLIARA to investigate social relations, context, power dynamics and women's own agency within the framework of rural innovative ecosystems

BOX 2: GoT: Defining Gender

2.1.3 RESILIENCE PERSPECTIVE

The FLIARA framework seeks to understand the potential contributions of female-led innovations on gender equality and rural sustainability. As such, the question is about change, and also stability, and their interplay. For this purpose, FLIARA employs the concept of resilience, which is generally understood as the ability of a system, organization, individual or an enterprise to maintain its core functions and processes in the face of disturbance. Any resilience assessment needs to ask resilience of what, to what, and for whom. The 'for whom' is interesting as it points to power relations and inherently political nature of resilience. As such, resilience can be both positive and negative. It can be positive when for example, the female innovators and their businesses are resilient against discriminatory practices in society. Resilience can be negative for example when prevailing societal constructions are resilient against change



driven by female-led innovations. In that case, resilience maintains prevailing power relations and status quo and works for those who benefit from existing situation. While any resilience assessments need to be explicit on the units of analysis and questions of resilience of what to what and for whom, FLIARA considers resilience as a background, meta level concept, that can explain some positive and negative features linked to possibilities for female-led innovations to create change towards equality and sustainability (See Concept Note 18).

BOX 3: GoT: Defining Resilience

The ability of people, communities, systems, or organisations to adapt, recover from, and flourish in the face of adversity, shocks, or obstacles is referred to as **resilience**. It encompasses the capacity to adapt, endure setbacks, and keep up functionality or wellbeing when faced with stress or change. Building resources, capacities, and methods to efficiently respond and adapt to difficulties rather than preventing or avoiding them is what resilience is all about.

2.1.4 SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE

The sustainability perspective starts with a recognition that rural areas include sustainability challenges regarding economic, social, cultural, environmental, and institutional dimensions. FLIARA will identify a comprehensive diversity of future visions of sustainability of diverse rural women. However, while visioning sustainability, the FLIARA conceptualisation of sustainability is open and includes economic, environmental, social, cultural, and institutional dimensions without conceptual restrictions. The key is to map also potential innovations that may contribute to achieving the visions. Gender equality is a key aspect of sustainability. Generally, gender equality has three elements: recognition of women's knowledge, norms, and values, fair distribution of benefits and costs between women and men, and the opportunities for women to participate in decisions concerning their own lives. FLIARA will examine how the three elements of gender equality are interlinked with dimensions of sustainability.

Sustainability refers to the concept of meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves balancing environmental, social, and economic considerations to ensure long-term well-being and the preservation of natural resources.

BOX 4: GoT: Defining Sustainability



2.1.5 INNOVATION PERSPECTIVE

The FLIARA framework adopts three key aspects from the innovation perspective. Firstly, it recognises that female innovation journey includes a series of steps, with the journey starting from aspirations related to enhancing rural lives, or responding to existing sustainability challenges and/or to emerging diverse crises. Yet, innovations might sometimes simply be motivated by individual career and family well-being considerations, even if they eventually end up benefitting more people. Secondly, the framework considers that female-led innovations evolve and are developed within innovation ecosystems, which may provide support in form of resources, expertise, knowledge, and networks for female innovators. Yet, it is also recognised that rural innovation ecosystems may be resilient against female-led innovation processes. Thirdly, the idea of scaling female-led innovations is an important aspect of the framework. Scaling implies different forms by which female-led innovations can diffuse across society. The framework identifies five forms of scaling: scaling-up (changing policies to better support female-led innovations), scaling-down (policy support to change on the ground innovation practices), scaling-out (horizontal diffusion of female-led innovations across society), scaling-in (changing practices and values within specific organisations) and scaling-deep (changing overall values and habits in society).

Innovation within the FLIARA project is female innovation, which constitute a distinct type of innovation that may be technological, political, social and/or link to markets. The distinctive feature of female-led innovations links to gender and to the common disadvantages shaping the lives of rural female innovators and other rural women.

BOX 5: GoT: Defining Innovation



2.1.6 POLICY AND GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

The FLIARA framework also considers the policy perspective. An effective policy and governance framework can facilitate female-led innovations. Yet, policies are not only about boosting innovations but may also provide structure and security to people, including female innovators. Furthermore, legal frameworks have a long history of patriarchal principles, which in the EU context mostly have been abolished in principle, but not in practice. On the positive side, the idea of gender mainstreaming may boost female-led innovations. Gender mainstreaming implies the consideration of gender in all decisions. Other promising tools for developing policy to enhance gender equality include affirmative action, feminist governance, and policy benchmarking.

A policy framework within the context of the FLIARA project relates to a system of rules, principles, and activities that direct the creation and application of laws intended to advance gender equality and address gender-based prejudice and inequities. Such frameworks offer a thorough method for integrating gender considerations into numerous policy fields.

BOX 6: GoT: Defining a Policy Framework



PART THREE: THE FLIARA CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

The FLIARA team propose a framework to understand how female-led innovations can enhance gender equality and sustainability in rural areas. The starting point is the diverse realities of rural women that may vary across geographical locations, but also within regions due to unique challenges and opportunities for diverse women (See Introduction Section B). The framework seeks to contribute to understanding how change towards gender equality and rural sustainability can take place. Therefore, the tension between change and stability needs to be addressed. In doing this, the FLIARA team chose to utilise the concept of resilience. Resilience may be understood positively, as the ability of individuals, families, farms, enterprises, innovation ecosystems, geographical location, and overall socio-political systems to face disturbances, such as globalisation, out migration, environmental challenges, policy drivers, and even discriminatory activities. On the other hand, it may be understood as negative resilience which may block changes towards gender equality and sustainability. Thus, our framework understands resilience as both positive and negative characteristics of different units. In this section, we outline plausible ways by which negative resilience may hinder change towards equality and sustainability, and also briefly consider roles of positive resilience.

3.1 RESILIENCE

3.1.1 NEGATIVE RESILIENCE

We identify two forms of negative resilience: maladaptation and toxic resilience. Maladaptation refers to a situation where exposure, vulnerability and sensitivity to disruptions increase as a result of action taken instead of increasing positive development and positive resilience. Furthermore, maladaptation results in conditions that are worse than those which the original strategies were trying to address (Schipper, 2020). Examples of maladaptation are firstly that women invest extensive amounts of voluntary work to innovation development, or on social innovation with high hopes, however, as the time and unpaid work increases it leads to little or zero improvement of the women's situations. A second example is linked to the promise of women-only networks, which may enhance collective agency by women, but may also function as maladaptive ways of constituting 'feminized ghettos' with low-value businesses, or less-valued social innovations, thus reinforcing women's subordination. The third example of maladaptation is linked to the Mathilda effect: women may invest extensive amounts of time for important but uncredited work. For example, it is likely that many women will participate in innovation without being in leadership positions. However, such hidden unnoticed roles in innovation development are important, but do not credit female work in sufficient extent.

The second negative form of resilience is toxic resilience. Toxic resilience links to resistant toxic masculinity undermining women's roles and identities in society. Toxic



resilience refers to situations where prevailing socio-cultural system of beliefs and practices is resilient towards efforts to transform it towards more equality. Toxic resilience may be reinforced in that it benefits those benefitting from the status quo and women's subordination. Toxic resilience may work at different levels. At the family level, gendered roles and tasks are relevant for equality. At the farm level, as a result of gender stereotypes and biases, women's opportunities and influence in farming may be limited. Societal expectations often position women as support workers rather than decision-makers or leaders, making it difficult for them to access resources, training, or leadership positions on the farm. At the level of innovation ecosystems, valued roles and positions may be difficult for women to get. At the societal level, value systems and cultural ways of doing and thinking may be resilient to change.

3.1.2 POSITIVE RESILIENCE

Positive resilience is more commonly used in the literature. In terms of female-led innovations, positive resilience links for example to collective action by and for women, such as collective female agency to encourage positive resilience to innovation through acquiring and sharing knowledge and developing social capital between local rural women and outsider support agencies. According to Oxfam's research on women's collective action in agricultural markets, women who join organisations enjoy significant economic benefits. Group members are typically more productive, and their products are of higher quality, resulting in a higher average income. Being a group member also improves access to credit and market information, and training and the use of improved technology provided by groups have helped to increase quality and productivity. Positive resilience may be also a characteristic of individual female innovators. It has been found that the three dimensions of resilience (toughness, resourcefulness, and optimism) predict entrepreneurial success, but resourcefulness is the most important indicator of an entrepreneur's success (Ayala and Manazano, 2014).

At the level of innovation ecosystems five aspects have been found to improve adaptiveness and resilience: diversity, connectivity, polycentricity, redundancy and directionality (Könnölä et al., 2021). In the context of innovation ecosystem enhancing the capacity of female-led innovations, these aspects relate for example to diverse sources of resources, capacities and skills, connectivity within the ecosystem, and networks to external actors. Such networks are not hierarchical but have a polycentric structure. Redundancy means that the same function of the ecosystem can be carried out in multiple ways and by multiple actors. Directionality refers to the normative objectives of the ecosystem. Thus, here the normative goals are gender equality and rural sustainability.

On the scale of rural social-ecological systems and their resilience, for example towards disturbances like outmigration, economic trends, globalisation, digitalisation, and human-environment conflicts, characteristics of resilience have been identified. Apart from the aspects applied by Könnölä et al. (2021), Biggs et al. (2012) found that the resilience of social-ecological systems can be enhanced by managing slow variables and feedbacks, fostering an understanding of complex adaptive systems, encouraging learning and



experimentation, and broadening participation. In the case of rural resilience (Heijman et al., 2007), the aspects used by Biggs et al. (2012) link to understanding complexity of rural places and spaces and ways by which gender equality and sustainability are constructed and realised in those places and spaces. Experimenting and learning is important and FLIARA will tackle this by seeking to learn from female innovators and their experiences. Participation can link to opportunities of females to take part in the decisions affecting their lives.

To conclude, resilience is a multifaceted concept, and instead of doing strict resilience analysis the FLIARA framework recognises resilience, both positive and negative, as a kind of undercurrent that often explain dynamics between change and stability at different levels.

3.2 POTENTIAL OF FEMALE-LED INNOVATIONS

3.2.1 PROMISE OF FEMALE-LED INNOVATIONS AND THEIR UP-SCALING

Whilst women-led innovation (Box 1) has the potential not only to enhance gender equality in rural areas, but also to contribute to building more sustainable ruralities, more understanding is needed on how this may be achieved. Women-led innovations are likely to confront some challenges including structural biases undermining women's opportunities to innovate, gendered mindsets and stereotypes that do not recognise women's roles in innovation development, and gendered biases in innovation ecosystems influencing access and availability of support, funding, resources, expertise and networks for women innovators. On the other side, female-led innovations can have benefits outside individual innovators (see Figure 2).

Box 7. FLIARA Working Definition for Female-Led Innovations in Rural Areas.

Women-led innovations refer to innovation processes, that are led or significantly influenced by women and that emerge from rural contexts, leading to novel practices, values, products, services, and governance arrangements that can contribute to all dimensions of sustainable rural development including advances in gender equality.

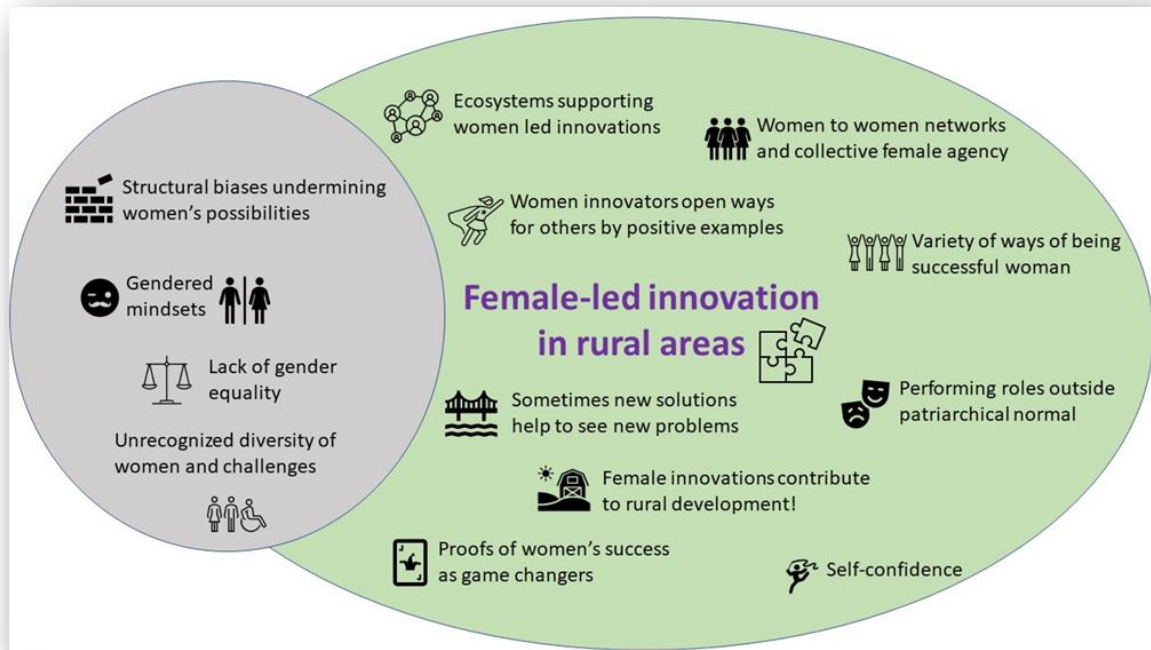


Figure 3. Hindering factors (in grey background) and opportunities for women-led innovations in rural areas (in green background).

A key aspect in the definition of female-led innovation is that they are considered as processes where novelty is created to improve existing situations. The innovation processes include a set of steps that are often present in women-led innovation processes. We call such processes as **innovation journeys**.

3.2.2 INNOVATION JOURNEYS

Step 1 in the innovation journeys are motivators for the innovation. The innovation journey starts from aspirations related to enhancing rural lives, or responding to existing sustainability challenges and/or to emerging crises. Additionally, individual professional and family concerns may serve as a catalyst for innovations, yet end up benefitting more people. The female-led innovations are thus motivated by current realities in rural areas.

Step 2 is about decisions to act, and preparatory activities, such as networking and seeking resources and building skillsets and expertise. In short, this implies a connection to and the development of an innovation ecosystem that is supportive towards specific innovations. It has been proposed that there is a need for **1)** a gender-transformative innovation ecosystem framework to unlock the potential of women on all levels, **2)** an inclusive systems thinking/action research lens to regularly monitor, evaluate, measure, and adapt as needed to enhance women entrepreneurs' integration, and **3)** designing place-based, contextual solutions and supports that acknowledge women entrepreneurs as a heterogeneous group (Braun, 2022). According to **World Economic Forum (2023)**,



gender equality in innovation ecosystems can be enhanced by equitable access to jobs of the future, various forms of capital, inclusive approach to different phases of innovation process, and partnerships for gender inclusion.

Step 3 is about concretisation of innovations. These concrete innovations can be economic, technological, social, cultural, environmental, or institutional, or combinations of these dimensions.

Step 4 is about impacts of the innovations on the contexts where they are implemented and practiced. Impacts include development towards realization of various dimensions of sustainability, and gender equality. The FLIARA framework will also recognise that women-led innovations can have incremental, disruptive, sustaining, and radical implications on rural gender (in)equalities. **Incremental innovations** are gradual continuous improvements to gender equality within the region or niche. **Sustaining innovations** are significant improvement that helps to sustain gender equality in specific rural region or niche. **Radical innovations** are breakthrough innovations fundamentally questioning the patriarchal 'normal', but due that facing resistance and blocked by negative resilience. **Disruptive innovation** are novel norms, governance arrangements or on the ground practices that are quickly mainstreamed changing the rural context towards gender equality. **Female-led innovations** can lead to positive impacts on rural sustainabilities understood as prosperous, connected, strong and resilient rural areas along with EU Rural Vision, and on gender equality in rural areas.

Step 5 is about scaling up the good practices to create wider level change. Once the women-led innovations have been successful in enhancing rural lives, they can be scaled-up. Women-led innovations can diffuse through various forms of scaling (Table 1). For example, the horizontally diffused innovations can have impacts on society and its gender relations, as well as on sustainable development. Policy can help mainstream women-led innovations by supportive policies, incentives, regulations, and guidance to enhance sustainability and gender equality (Figure 3).



Table 1. Five Forms of Scaling.

Forms of scaling	Definitions from social innovation literature (Moore et al. 2015; Sánchez Rodríguez et al. 2021).
Scaling-Up	Initiating changes in laws, policies, institutions, or norms based on promising lower-level practices.
Scaling-Out	Geographically replicating or broadening the range or scope of good practices
Scaling-Down	Resource allocation for example by policy to support implementation of promising practices at local level.
Scaling-In	Ensuring that organizations have the capacity to deliver the type and number of good practices.
Scaling-Deep	Change in society at the level of values to enable uptake of good practices.

Figure 4 provides a view on how female-led innovations can lead to positive impacts on sustainability and gender equality and overcome marginalizing structures and existing challenges for gender equality:

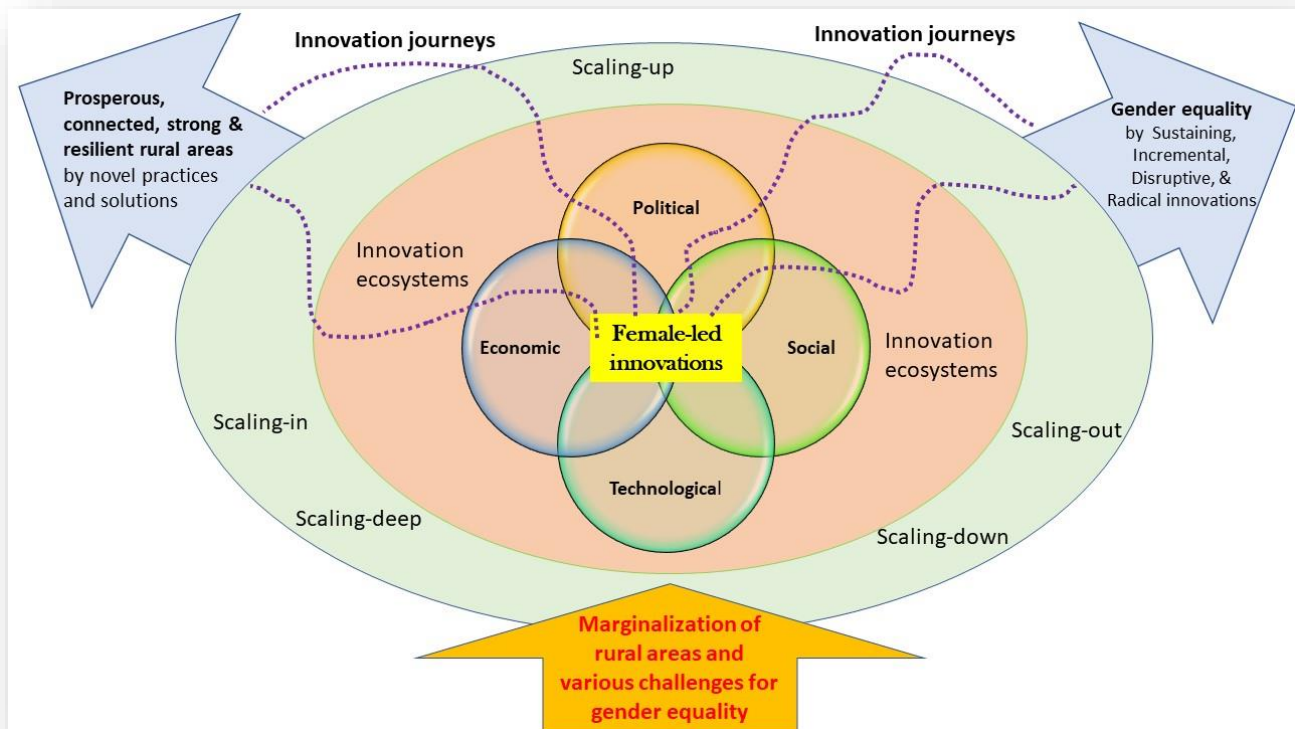


Figure 4: Understanding Contributions of Female-Led Innovations to Gender Equality and Rural Sustainability.

3.3 SUSTAINABILITY

3.3.1 IDEAL SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS AND FEMALE-LED INNOVATIONS

Ideally the innovation processes can initiate or support a **sustainability transition**. A radical shift toward a sustainable society as a solution to a variety of enduring issues modern societies are facing is known as a sustainability transition (Grin et al., 2010). Sustainability innovations are then processes that (seek to) advance sustainability in rural areas. Sustainability can be advanced regarding five dimensions of sustainability: environmental, economic, social, cultural, and institutional.

Institutional sustainability links to ways of making decisions about the future, namely, what kind of possibilities rural actors have in affecting on decisions affecting their future, and are the governance arrangements inclusive towards and flexible in recognizing rural actors' perspectives in decision-making. As such, the institutional dimension of sustainability links to future decision-making and capacity of rural actors to participate in decision-making affecting on the four other dimensions of sustainability. The institutional dimension of sustainability is addressed for example by the United Nation's Sustainable



Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) title: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels). Environmental sustainability links to ecological impacts, the economic dimension is about sustaining material wellbeing, the social dimension is about relationships and cultural sustainability about rural ways of lives. Cultural sustainability can be thought as maintaining ways of lives, identities, and set of norms and beliefs for the next generations. The intergenerational aspect is important for all dimensions of sustainability.

Gender equality is a key aspect of sustainability. In essence, gender equality is a human rights issue. The Council of Europe (2016, p. 11) establishes gender equality as a “principle of human rights and women’s human rights as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights... and a sine qua non of democracy”. The definitions of gender equality include both formal equality, which means that women and men should have the same opportunities, and substantive equality which refers to equality in outcome, such as equal distribution of power and resources (Ahl, 2018). On the other hand, gender equality can be thought through the concept of justice, which has three elements: 1) recognition of women’s knowledge, perspectives, identities, norms, and values, 2) fair distribution of benefits and costs between women and men, and 3) the opportunities for women to participate in decisions concerning their own lives (See Fraser, 1998). Therefore, these definitions intersect, but the Justice Theory brings the additional dimension of recognition into the discussion.

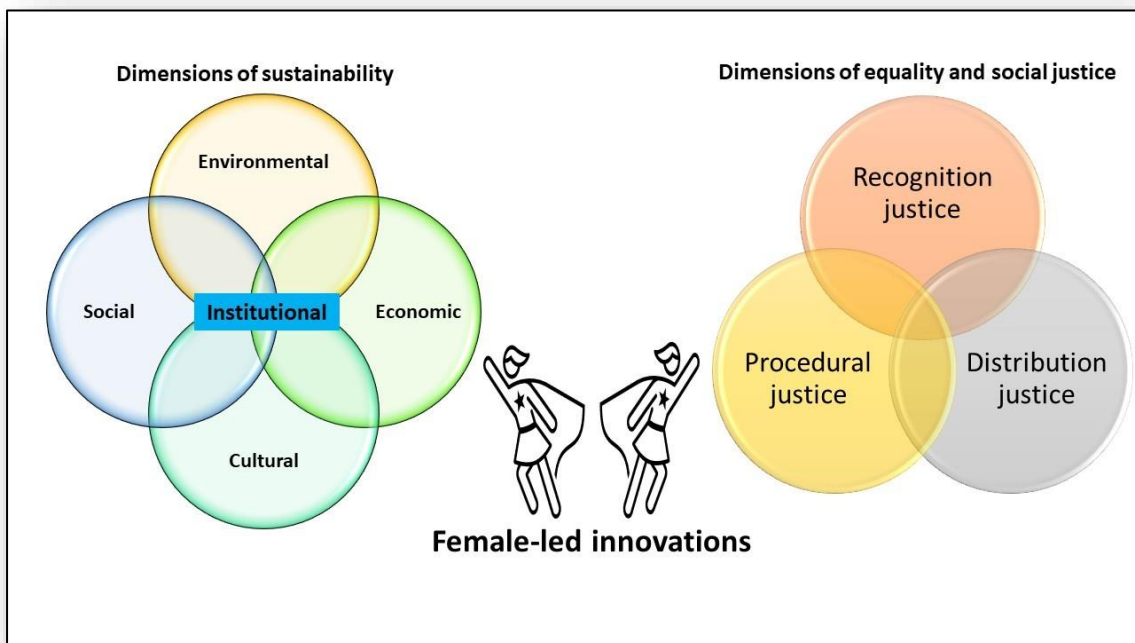


Figure 5: Promise of Female-Led Innovations to Enhance Sustainability, Gender Equality and Justice



3.3.2 WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT FEMALE-LED INNOVATIONS?

Innovation usually refers to something new and is strongly associated with **technological and market innovations**. Other forms of innovation include **political innovation and social innovation**. All these are linked to ideas on who the innovators actually are: **technology developers, market actors, politically active people and movements, or civil society actors**. Women are obviously included in each category. What then makes female-led innovation special?

The social innovation literature provides insights on why women-led innovation is a distinct form of innovation. Social innovation often occurs where markets and policy fail to satisfy the demands of people, and necessarily include civil society engagement. Banerjee et al. (2023) propose collective action and people centred social innovation as an ethical approach to re-institutionalise social change in order to respect diversity and understand dynamics of power.

There are various take home messages from Banerjee et al. (2023). Firstly, to cope with biases in power by re-institutionalisation based on collectivisation by female-led innovations is an interesting one. Rural women are often in a disadvantaged situation, and women-led innovation could help the innovator but also other rural women to improve their situations through self or mutual empowerment. Thus, innovations by women, often pioneering, may set an example and have benefits beyond the economic situation of the innovators. Individual female-led innovations thus link to collective female agency. In addition, female-led innovations are not apolitical. Even if not explicitly criticising patriarchal values, they often exemplify empowering roles for women. Secondly, the argument that social innovations are ethical approaches to social change, links to opportunities that people/citizens/civil society could significantly steer social change in addition to state and market actors. With the case of women-led innovation and unjust power dynamics, it is normatively imperative that the often-disadvantaged half of the society should have an equal role in shaping social change.

This leads us to suggest that female-led innovations are a distinct category of innovations that may be technological, political, social, and/or linked to markets/economy. The distinctive feature of female-led innovations links to embeddedness in, as well as their potential to change existing societal gendered structures and common disadvantages shaping the lives of rural female innovators and other rural women.

3.3.3 FEMALE-LED INNOVATIONS AND VIRTUOUS RESILIENCE

Resilience is a term closely related to sustainability and has gained interdisciplinary and even public momentum during the last decade. Positive resilience links for example to collective action by and for women. Collective female agency can encourage positive resilience to innovation through acquiring and sharing knowledge and developing social capital between local rural women and outsider support agencies. According to Oxfam's research on women's collective action in agricultural markets, women who join organisations enjoy significant economic benefits. Group members are typically more



productive, and their products are of higher quality, resulting in a higher average income. Being a group member also improves access to credit and market information, and training and the use of improved technology provided by groups have helped to increase quality and productivity. Positive resilience may be also characteristics of individual female innovators. It has been found that the three psychological dimensions of resilience (toughness, resourcefulness, and optimism) predict entrepreneurial success, but resourcefulness is the most important indicator of an entrepreneur's success (Ayala and Manazano 2014).

In conclusion, female-led innovations can be both boosted by the resilience of the female innovators, and female-led innovations can be also sources of collective female resilience.

3.4 POLICY CONTEXT FOR FLIARA

Policies have been developed to counteract against rural and gender issues outlined above. Gender equality is an established policy objective both in the EU and globally. A gender inclusive approach, however, is not just about achieving policy objectives, but about including and empowering people who can contribute innovative ideas and smart solutions to many key environmental and economic issues faced in EU agriculture and rural areas more generally. The FLIARA project is firmly anchored in EU and UN policies for rural development and gender equality as explained below.

3.4.1 THE EUROPEAN VISION FOR RURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE LINK TO FLIARA

The European Commission recognises that Europe's rural areas provide us with our food, homes, jobs, and essential ecosystems services, and represent a vibrant tapestry of life and landscapes. To ensure that rural areas continue to play these essential roles, a European Commission communication sets out a Long-Term Vision for the EU's rural areas up to 2040. It identifies areas of action towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas and communities. A Rural Pact and an EU Rural Action Plan with tangible flagships and new tools will help achieve the goals of this vision.

The Rural Action Plan (https://rural-vision.europa.eu/index_en) will:

- Foster territorial cohesion and create new opportunities to attract innovative businesses;
- Provide access to quality jobs;
- Promote new and improved skills;
- Ensure better infrastructure and services;
- Leverage the role of sustainable agriculture and diversified economic activities.

The Rural Action Plan seeks to promote more resilient, prosperous, connected, and stronger rural areas in Europe (Table 2).



Table 2. Four elements of the Rural Action Plan and their linkage to FLIARA.

Rural Vision Elements	Explanation	Linkage to the FLIARA Framework
Stronger Rural Areas	Innovative solutions for the provisions of services should be developed, making the most of the possibilities offered by digital tools and encouraging strongly social innovation.	Innovation and social innovation are capitalized. Digital tools are recognised as potential to overcome the tyranny of distance.
Resilient Rural Areas	The green and digital transitions should be fair and take the needs of all rural members into account, including those from disadvantaged groups to strengthen the social resilience of rural areas. Making rural areas more socially resilient requires tapping into the full breadth of talents and diversity in our society.	FLIARA considers rural women as often disadvantaged in connection to urban females, and also rural men. Therefore, building social resilience by using an explicit gender perspective is needed. Unlocking female innovative potential can contribute significantly to rural sustainability.
Prosperous Rural Areas	Rural areas can become more prosperous by diversifying economic activities to new sectors with positive effects on employment, and improving the value added of farming, agri-food, forestry, and other bioeconomy activities.	FLIARA considers that female-led innovations can enhance rural economies and make them more sustainable for example in farms and agriculture, and in rural areas more generally.
Connected Rural Areas	Maintaining or improving public transport services and connections, as well as deepening digital infrastructures, are essential to ensure better-connected EU rural areas.	FLIARA seeks actively to build and enhance existing communities of practice and female-female networks and thus enhances connectedness of rural areas.

Source: https://rural-vision.europa.eu/action-plan_en



3.4.2 GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPEAN RURAL AREAS

The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** are a major policy driver to enhance sustainability also in rural areas. SDG 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>). A gender inclusive approach, however, is not just about achieving policy objectives, but about including and empowering people who can contribute innovative ideas and smart solutions to many key environmental and economic issues faced in European agriculture and rural areas.

In order to create gender-balanced pathways that allow current and future innovators to participate in the rural value chain, a better understanding of women's roles in rural value chains, as identified in WP1, will be combined with an understanding of the main barriers preventing women from participating in value chains, as identified in WP3. This "shift" in thinking and practice will be made possible by developing more effective policy and governance frameworks, as well as knowledge and innovation systems that have an impact on women in farming and rural areas in various regions throughout the EU, through a participatory scenario-building process involving four Community of Practice Networking Events, as described in WP4. This newly acquired information and comprehension will also guide the development of a long-term policy engagement plan that can break down roadblocks and provide targeted services and supports at the appropriate step of the pathway to assist women-led innovations and change current patriarchal norms (WP6). Other EU goals, such as those in the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Gender Equality Strategy, will be strengthened by this. It will also help advance gender inclusivity in agricultural and rural society in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender parity in the future in a wide variety of contexts and regions if key stakeholders from both inside and outside the project consortium participate in this contemporary process.

3.4.3 THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Council of Europe (2016, p. 11) establishes gender equality as a human rights issue, including both formal equality, which means that women and men should have the same opportunities, and substantive equality which refers to equality in outcome, such as equal distribution of power and resources (Ahl, 2018). Any roadblocks for equal opportunities must be removed, and it also recognises that women and men have different starting points and that affirmative action, redistribution of power and resources, and structural change are necessary.

At the European Union, there are also policies specifically targeting gender equality. The Gender Directive (EP & CEU, 2006) and its Gender Equality Strategy (EC, 2020), have rescaled gender to be of EU importance:

"In the field of research and innovation, the Commission will introduce new measures to strengthen gender equality in Horizon Europe, such as the possibility to require a gender equality plan from applicants and an initiative to increase the number of women-led technology start-ups. Funding for gender and intersectional research will also be made



available..... There will also be funding opportunities to increase women's entrepreneurship knowledge and participation in decision-making and to invest in basic services' development in rural areas under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)(EC, 2020, p. 17).

Gender equality and increasing the participation of women in farming are currently part of the objectives for the CAP Strategic Plans. EU countries must assess these issues and address the identified challenges. Through the CAP specific objectives, the LEADER Programme and Local Action Groups (LAGs) are required to promote gender equality and encourage the participation of women in rural development and agriculture. This means that they must ensure that women have equal opportunities to participate in the programme, and that their specific needs and challenges are taken into account in the design and implementation of the programme. The LEADER Programme aims to promote social inclusion and economic development in rural areas, and this includes addressing the specific challenges faced by women in these areas. The programme encourages the active participation of women in local decision-making processes and supports the development of projects that promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

3.5 ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE IMPACTING RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL WOMEN

The empowerment and well-being of women are significantly impacted by the governance systems and procedures in rural communities. Women's involvement in rural governance, representation in local governments, how decentralization affects women's empowerment, and how local dynamics in rural areas interact with global norms are all issues that impact rural and farming women and in turn impact their ability to engage in innovations. Obstacles, chances, and tactics for boosting women's participation and impact in rural governance systems have been previously explored by Shortall and Wield (1999) and Larsen and Larsson (2017), identifying such issues as:

- **Access to Resources:** It can be difficult for rural and agricultural women to obtain basic resources including land, financing, and agricultural inputs. Their productivity, economic empowerment, and capacity to engage in farming operations can all be hampered by a lack of access to these resources.
- **Decision-making and participation:** In rural areas, women's representation and participation in local, regional, and national decision-making processes are frequently constrained. Because of this exclusion, policies and practices may not effectively take into account the interests and goals of women.
- **Gender stereotypes and cultural norms:** Rural communities' pervasive traditional gender roles and prejudices can exacerbate inequality and limit women's prospects for leadership and decision-making in agriculture. Their autonomy, voice, and range of motion may be constrained by cultural norms and expectations.
- **Social and institutional support:** For rural and agricultural women, adequate social and institutional support networks are essential. Their well-being may



suffer, and their capacity to engage in agricultural activities may be constrained, if they have insufficient access to social, childcare, and healthcare services.

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Rural women must have access to chances for capacity-building and training if they are to further their entrepreneurial potential. A barrier to the professional growth of women in agriculture can be the absence of specialised training programmes designed to meet their unique demands.
- **Rural infrastructure and services:** For rural and agricultural women, infrastructure gaps in areas like transportation, communication, and market access can be extremely difficult. Their capacity to engage in agricultural operations, market their goods, and receive information may be hampered by limited access to these services.

3.6 UTILISING THE FLIARA CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The FLIARA conceptual framework includes various strategies to examine but also to promote female-led innovations in rural areas for gender equality and sustainable rural development. Female innovators have diverse starting points and are embedded within innovation ecosystems, policy, and governance systems, and are also influenced by wider socio-cultural gendered roles, stereotypes, values and priorities. These may be hindering or promoting female-led innovations. FLIARA addresses these situations in varying ways to enhance opportunities for female-led innovations.

- The framework considers that the overall background and individual realities of women innovators are embedded in society. We recognize that female innovators operate within an innovation ecosystem that can either support or hinder female-led innovation processes. At best, the innovation ecosystem offers access to resources, knowledge, and skills while at worst it is discriminatory against female-led innovations. **FLIARA WP 4** seeks to further enhance supportive aspects of innovation ecosystems by seeking to build a Community of Practice at local, national, and EU level to support female-led innovations. This is done by building Community of Practice networks providing access to expertise, peer support, knowledge, and possibly also resources available for rural women (FLIARA WP 4).
- These innovation ecosystems are located within specific policy and governance frameworks that shape the innovation ecosystems for example by offering affirmative policies to empower rural women. FLIARA WP 5 will consider how policy benchmarking of key measures to enhance opportunities for rural women can improve existing policies. FLIARA will also address potentials of affirmative actions, feminist governance, and gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming implies the consideration of gender in all decisions. **FLIARA WP 6** uses a wide range of communication tools to spotlight diverse rural women and unmask the positive stories and roles these women play in advancing change towards sustainability and gender equality. In particular, FLIARA will focus on plausible and constructive female-led innovations in European rural areas.
- A communication strategy is central to the FLIARA project, which seeks especially to spotlight rural women innovators. Capacity building in FLIARA will



centre on building new and strengthening networks that can support and empower rural women and boost their innovation capacity, all of which will be encapsulated within a supportive innovation ecosystem. Social networks are a key part of innovation ecosystems, as they may provide access to resources (e.g. different forms of capital) needed in innovation processes. FLIARA will build women-to-women networks, through its **Community of Practice**, that will enhance female innovation capacity and enable collective female agency. In doing so, the FLIARA framework also recognises that existing practices often neglect the fact that men and women have different starting points. Therefore, FLIARA will focus not only on building capacity and creating enhanced opportunities for women innovators through building a Community of Practice, but also by making recommendations for policy and governance on what kind of affirmative actions would be needed to open-up new opportunities for female-led innovation.

- FLIARA uses the **future studies methods (WP 2) and case studies (WP 3)** to understand how female-led innovations can contribute to rural sustainability and gender equality. The future studies will identify sustainability visions of rural women and plausible innovations needed to reach those visions. FLIARA case studies will examine female-led innovation journeys to learn from good practices and obstacles for such innovations. In addition, FLIARA recognises that female-led innovations can be diffused through various forms of scaling. The results of FLIARA will be communicated widely across society and targeted for specific actors to promote diffusion of good practices in and around female-led innovations.

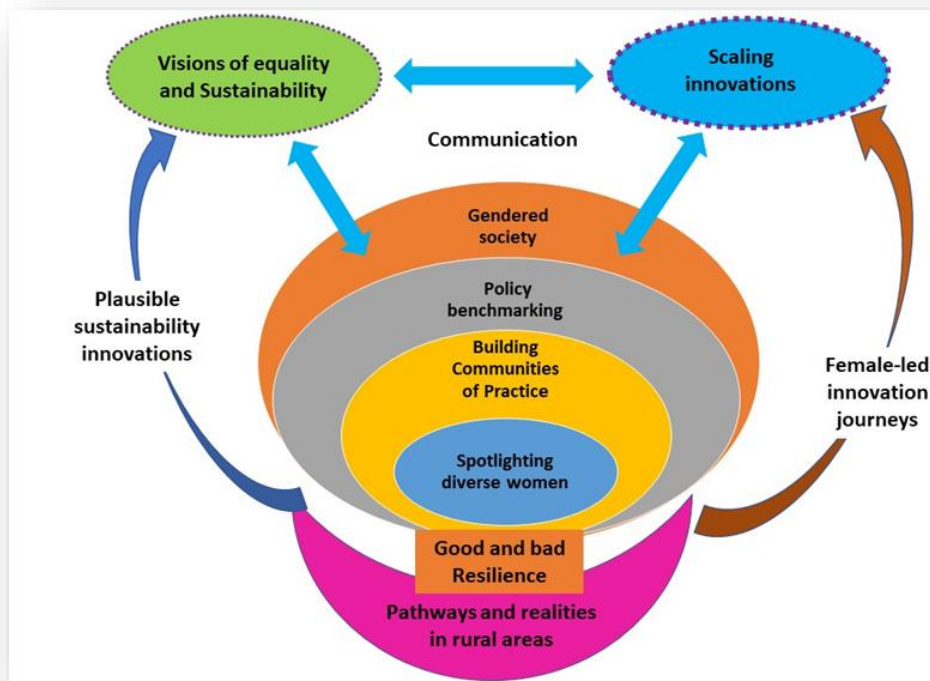


Figure 6: The FLIARA framework works to understand how female-led innovations can initiate progress towards gender equality and sustainability in rural areas.



3.6.1: A FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK

The conceptual **framework's adaptability** is a major feature. While the FLIARA conceptual framework was established within the first six months of the three-year project, it is equally important to adapt it as the project moves along. In reality, we expect that the project's results will inspire new understandings and develop the underlying concepts used, therefore although it is critical to build a conceptual framework early on, it's also crucial to modify it as the project progresses. The FLIARA results itself may lead to fresh interpretations and an expansion of the fundamental ideas employed. In particular, as further insights emerge from WP2 as foresight and trend analysis emerge and in turn from WP3 as partners develop case studies around women-led innovations in farming and in rural areas.

3.7 HYPOTHESES ON LEVERAGING FEMALE-LED INNOVATIONS

Leverage points have gained attention in the systems-oriented literature tuned towards finding solutions to difficult problems, such as gender equality and sustainability. In systems thinking a leverage point is a place in a system's structure where a solution element can be applied. Furthermore, in systems thinking finding a root cause for a problem is important, because lasting and more fundamental change can be created if addressing the root causes instead of symptoms of the problem.

Next, we identify eight hypotheses on leverage points for improving gender equality and rural sustainability informed by our framework linked to female-led innovations (Figure 5).

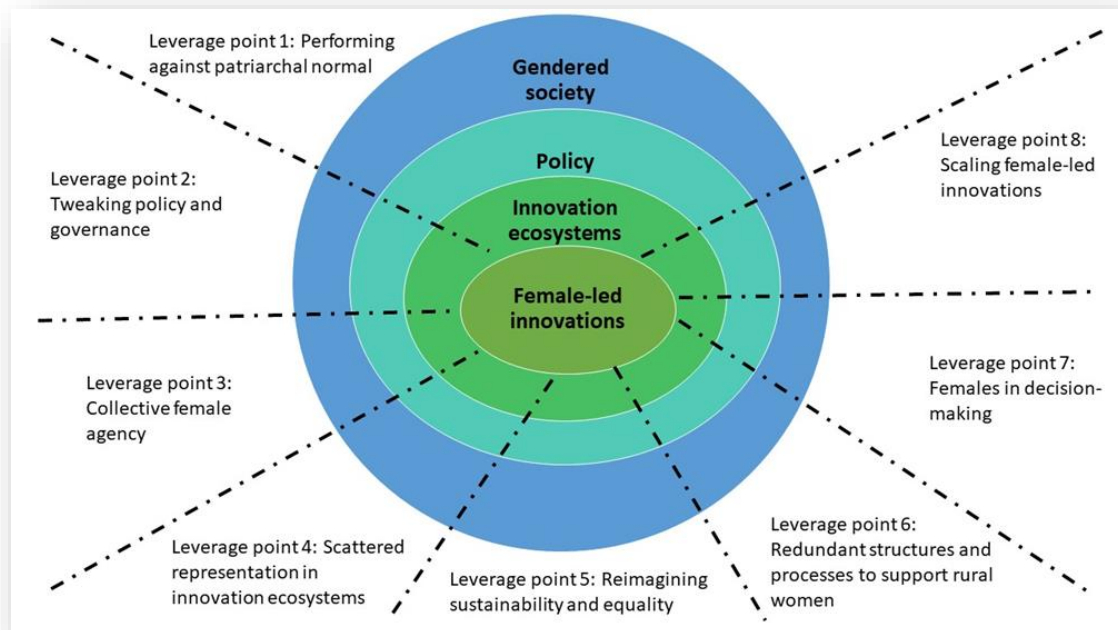


Figure 7: Hypotheses on Leverage Points for Improving Gender Equality

3.7.1 LEVERAGE POINT 1: PERFORMING AGAINST PATRIARCHAL NORMS

One of the key root causes for the lack of gender equality especially in rural areas are prevailing patriarchal values and gender roles (e.g. Meyers, 2002). Patriarchal norms, consisting of culturally constructed practices, stereotypes, roles, and expectations towards women may undermine women's opportunities. Female-led innovations can help change and even break these constructions by showcasing successful activities that are often not considered as linked to the female realm. The idea of performativity is important here. Butler's (1990) Gender Performance Theory, affirms that gender is an identity constituted and instituted through a repetition of acts, as part of processes that construct social reality via language, gestures, and symbolic social signs. The concept of performativity stresses that acting differently and demonstrating the potential of alternative ways of doing things can question, challenge, act against, and even change the existing norms by acts that reconstruct matters underpinning gender equality. The potential of performativity to induce change can be viewed as a bottom-up practice, where individual women, female collectives and female innovators initiate change by showing that things can be done differently. Examples of female-led innovations can show the benefits of women-led innovations and change attitudes towards women engaged in innovative activities.



3.7.2 LEVERAGE POINT 2: TRANSFORMING POLICY AND GOVERNANCE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

One of the key challenges for enhancing gender equality is that the existing institutions (rules of the game, North 1990) do not provide equal opportunities for men and women to act and innovate. Policy and governance have implications for everyday practices by providing formal rules of the game and guiding people's behaviour in certain direction. Therefore, governance changes can play a significant role in transforming rural realities towards equality and sustainability. The governance concept is used to widen the scope of governmental policies, and governance operates at multiple levels. Governance solutions can provide opportunities, incentives, and support for female innovators. For example, affirmative governance involves government directives or voluntary programmes that can identify and promote disadvantaged groups and overcome discrimination. The idea is that affirmative governance is needed to provide equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups, like women, and so contribute to more just world by enhancing potential to act in policy, economy, innovation development, social life in more just way (See Concept Note 30).

Another example is feminist governance, which refer to the institutions and tools developed within political institutions to advance the inclusion of a gender perspective in policy making, while providing institutional continuity and stability to gender equality policy making (Elomaki and Kantola, 2022). A feminist governance framework encompasses institutions (e.g., gender equality bodies) and policy-making tools (e.g., gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting) within political institutions to promote policy making that takes gender into account. Therefore, governance can shape the playground for female innovators and rural women in general. Changing governance is a top-down approach to enhance equality and sustainability. It starts with changing the rules of the game assuming that those rules enable a more equal world. Here, (women-led) innovations transforming the relevant political decision-making institutions (Sørensen, 2016) can change the rules of the game and enable equality, sustainability, and also subsequent female-led innovations in the future.

3.7.3 LEVERAGE POINT 3: COLLECTIVE FEMALE AGENCY

Change for equality and sustainability is seldom initiated by individual efforts. Instead, innovations, including female-led innovations are often co-produced or co-created by multiple actors (Voorberg et al., 2014). Cornwall (2016) notes that when women are able to come together and organize themselves to make demands, build constituencies and alliances, they are more likely both to succeed in making changes for other women and also experience for themselves the empowering effects of mobilization. Therefore, collective female agency can play an important role in female empowerment. Female-led innovations offer spaces and initiatives around which to build collective agency, and thus offer opportunities for women to come together and plan for and enact change for equality and sustainability. Collective female agency refers to the idea that women are



stronger together than alone. Women-to-women networks and collaborations can provide enhanced opportunities to produce change.

3.7.4 LEVERAGE POINT 4: SCATTERED REPRESENTATION IN INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

Biased innovation ecosystems that are not supportive of women-led initiatives may hinder women-initiated innovations. For example, women innovators often have to make an extra effort to convince others of their qualifications, talents and achievements, and female role models in innovation ecosystems are often lacking (Cerchlan et al., 2022). Leverage point 4 builds on the idea of innovation ecosystems, where various roles are needed to make the ecosystem function. The scattered representation by women in diverse roles of innovation ecosystems also links to the central idea that diversity enhances resilience. In this case enabling women to take diverse roles in innovation ecosystems, such as intermediaries, knowledge and solution providers, co-creators, innovators, adapters, funders (Butzin and Terstriep, 2018), or Ecosystem Leader, Supplier, Assembler, Complementor, Expert, Champion, Entrepreneur, Sponsor and Regulator (Dedehayir et al., 2020) can act as a leverage point to enhance equality and sustainability. When women occupy diverse roles in innovation ecosystem it is less likely that other women face discrimination and that their ideas and efforts are undermined due to gender.

3.7.5 LEVERAGE POINT 5: REIMAGINING SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUALITY

One of the root causes of inequality between men and women are the often invisible and hidden discourses of masculinity (Smith and Kimmel, 2005). Thus, new imaginaries of equality and sustainability, including new imaginaries of masculinity and femininity can function as means of change. Beck et al. (2021) consider how sociotechnical imaginaries can contribute to understanding transformations to sustainability. Beck et al. (2021) illuminates how collective visions of desirable (or resisted) environmental futures limit or enable political imagination and the search for alternative transformative practices, and note that taken-for-granted assumptions often shut down potentially promising imaginations. In terms of gender equality and rural sustainability imaginaries held and co-created by subordinate actors may inform alternative views on what equality and sustainability actually are and should be. Therefore, imaginaries of sustainability and equality can inform changes in practice and policy. However, mainstreaming novel imaginaries may counter resistance from those benefitting from prevailing imaginaries, and may be neglected as irrelevant. Nevertheless, promoting co-creation of alternative imaginaries of sustainability and equality can potentially act as agent of change, by altering the existing cultural catalogue and imagination. Female-led innovations can play a central role in such reimagination of equality and sustainability in rural areas.



3.7.6 LEVERAGE POINT 6: REDUNDANT STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT RURAL WOMEN

Multiple and outdated structures and processes to support rural women: Gender equality is often challenged by uncertain and volatile support mechanisms for women. Examples relate to constant availability of social and public services, availability of farm relief at all times, and availability of access to other resources and expertise that help work in agriculture and rural areas. Therefore, multiple and overlapping support mechanisms for gender equality can ensure that support is available also in times of crises and difficulty. In the resilience literature, redundancy of a system to provide key functions has been considered a key aspect for increasing resilience (Biggs et al., 2012). In terms of rural women, redundancy in rural socio-political systems to provide essential support for female work and innovation is important. Furthermore, redundancy concerns women's access to funding to initiate projects and developments. For example, the LEADER Programme is important for many rural women, but should not be the only available source of project funding.

3.7.7 LEVERAGE POINT 7: WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Women are still underrepresented in various political bodies at multiple levels from local to global. The underrepresentation is a problem even though it is widely recognised that opportunities to participate in decisions concerning women's own lives is a key aspect of equality (e.g. SDG 5). The participation aspect is often considered in terms of party-based political decision-making. While party politics is important, other forums of decision making may be neglected. For example, agricultural interest groups and farmers associations and organisations are often heavily male dominated, even to the extent that women in those associations are exceptions. Yet, these organisations impact the lives of rural women. Decision-making takes place also at the family level, where traditional patriarchal gendered roles may hinder women's opportunities to participate in the decisions concerning their lives. Increasing women's opportunities to participate in decisions concerning their lives is not only an objective linked to gender equality, but women's participation also increases and diversifies knowledge and expertise available and can thus contribute to rural sustainability, in addition to gender equality. Female-led innovations can play crucial roles in advancing opportunities for women to take part in decisions concerning their lives.

3.7.8 LEVERAGE POINT 8: SCALING FEMALE-LED INNOVATIONS

Promising innovations usually enhance equality and sustainability in certain niches or specific localities, yet fail to initiate wider transformative change. Therefore, it becomes important to consider how promising innovations and practices can be diffused. The literature on social innovations has identified five forms of scaling: scaling-up, scaling-down, scaling-out, scaling-in and scaling-deep. To understand how scaling can take place, learning about complex socio-cultural and political systems where the innovations may or may not be diffused is important. Learning can be based on real world



“experiments” and experiences on the key issues facilitating or hindering diffusion of promising female-led innovations. The resilience literature has placed importance on learning and understanding complex adaptive systems (Biggs et al., 2012). In terms of female-led innovation, learning from bottle necks, good practices, promising ways to diffuse and scale innovations and policy and governance practice can reveal important insights on how promising but isolated practices can be mainstreamed across society to initiate transformative change for equality and sustainability in rural areas.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The FLIARA framework took as a starting point that gendered assumptions and gendered structural barriers negatively impact women’s potential to participate in, lead, or get recognition for innovations in agriculture and rural areas. To unpack these processes and associated gendered social relations a post-structuralist feminist understanding of gender is necessary. In earlier studies gender was used as equivalent to sex, however such a binary equation is not able to capture the multidimensional processes that reinforce patriarchal structures. FLIARA understands gender to refer to socio-cultural processes that shape behaviours, values, norms, knowledge’s etc. In this way, the FLIARA framework sets the basis for examining how gender equality is promoted or compromised by prevailing socio-cultural practices, values, norms, and roles, and how ‘gender is done’ by others (policy makers, bankers, rules and regulations). Positioning gender as a social construct allows FLIARA to investigate social relations, context, power dynamics and women’s own agency within the framework of rural innovative ecosystems. This processual approach can act as a transformative response towards gender equality. FLIARA applies an intersectional lens to capture diverse experiences of inequality that are shaped by interwoven factors that build upon and extend beyond the gender element.

As a social construct it becomes evident that gender has a spatial and temporal dimension; gender constructs vary with considerable diversity across and within countries and regions and also change over time as the landscape of socialisation (e.g. growing up in certain culture with certain values) transforms. FLIARA focuses on rural areas as spaces, places, and processes, which also have gender dimensions. Rural agriculture and farming are also explicit focus points of FLIARA. Therefore, women-led innovations as examined in FLIARA will cover innovations at farms, related to agriculture, but also linked to wider ideas of rural communities and rurality as a distinct kind of place. Furthermore, policy and governance issues are distinct for rural settings including the EU policies and programmes, such as Common Agricultural Policy and LEADER programme that “do” gender in particular ways.

The FLIARA project will focus on female-led innovations that link to women’s entrepreneurship, but it will also cover social and institutional (e.g. formal and informal rules of the game) innovations linking to transformation of policies, and gender roles, norms, and stereotypes. Understanding the position of women in agriculture and rural innovations and promoting women’s empowerment is an issue also affecting, and



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affected by men. Therefore, FLIARA will capture diverse notions of masculinity even if the practical FLIARA fieldwork focuses on women.

Therefore, FLIARA takes on with the challenge of catalysing positive change through supporting female-led innovations. The identified eight leverage points provide important knowledge for policy makers and innovators, as well as other interested actors, on how to boost gender equality and rural sustainability through supporting female-led innovations.



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APPENDIX A: CONCEPT NOTES

PART FOUR: CONCEPT NOTES

OVERVIEW

All FLIARA partners were invited to participate in the review of the initial stimulus paper produced on the back of the project proposal. A co-creation process resulted in a large number of concepts being thematically divided into six key conceptual perspectives which act as a roadmap for the FLIARA project. The six conceptual perspectives are outlined in the above document, with each section identifying additional concepts that partners also felt were relevant to organise and understand issues pertinent to FLIARA. The additional concepts have been edited further by each partner and now make up a series of concept notes.

In total, 30 'light touch' concepts were developed and co-created by FLIARA partners as illustrated in Table 1 and are illuminated by (some or all) of the following information:

- Concept Context,
- Application,
- Methodological Implications,
- Concept Critique
- Concept and Policy
- Relevance to the FLIARA Project



KEY PERSPECTIVES AND CONCEPT NOTES

Key Perspective	Concept Notes
Rural Perspective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural Development 2. Rural and Urban Divide 3. Rural Place & Space (Globalisation/De-Globalisation) 4. Rural Restructuring, Differentiation, Development
Gender Perspective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Gender and Social Constructs 6. Gender Equality 7. Gender and The Matilda Effect 8. Gender and Communication 9. Gender and Social Networks 10. Gender and Antifeminism 11. Gender Support & Training 12. Gender and Digital 13. Gender Conflict & Work Life 14. Gender and Extension Advisory 15. Gender Intersectionality
Resilience Perspective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. 'Adaptive Cycles' and Relational Resilience 17. Positive/Negative Resilience & Entrepreneurship
Sustainability Perspective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Sustainability Dimensions 19. Transformation (Long Term Sustainability)
Innovation Perspective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Innovation Process 21. Innovation Ambassadors 22. Network Innovation 23. PESTE Innovation 24. Women and AKIS 25. Women and Co-Innovation 26. Women and LEADER Support
Policy and Governance Perspective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Government Frameworks 28. Policy Frameworks 29. Legal Frameworks 30. Affirmative Action/Positive Discrimination

Table 1: Partner Co-Creation FLIARA Concept Notes



CONCEPT NOTES: RURAL PERSPECTIVE

CONCEPT NOTE 1: RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development refers to the process of improving the economic, social, and environmental conditions in rural areas. Some common strategies include improving agricultural productivity, promoting small business development, expanding access to infrastructure and services, supporting education and training programs, and implementing environmental conservation initiatives (Scoones, 2015). As such, for regional development to be sustainable, the specific location of the community must be considered (The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, 2023). This means considering the prevailing geographical, demographic, and economic conditions.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The role of agriculture in rural development is linked to its potential in increasing productivity and efficiency since that can significantly affect the economy, food production, and food security (Van Der Ploeg et al., 2000). This involves a multifunctional farming environment which brings forth new quality products services and makes cost reduction to meet the needs of farm businesses and society. Overall, rural development has been used to create sustainable and inclusive growth in rural areas, while ensuring that rural communities have the resources they need to thrive and prosper. The focus is understanding how regions with distinct characteristics work and how policy might support wealth-generating activities (Müller, 2016). However, some remaining gaps cover the role of institutions, the importance of context, the role of networks, and the impact of policy.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Since rural development can take many different forms, depending on the specific needs and priorities of a particular community, there is a risk that each form is given different attention (Scoones, 2015). For example, there is much criticism towards rural development being viewed as an economic or agricultural process (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001). Instead, rural development should integrate social, cultural, and environmental aspects. Context-specific, participatory, and marginalized rural development is needed. There is a clear need to move rural development towards promoting the diversification of rural development measures and initiatives (Scoones, 2015).

CONCEPT AND POLICY

Rural development programmes can promote gender equality in rural areas by giving women farmers access to new knowledge, technologies, markets, and decision-making opportunities (Černič Istenič, 2015). However, several challenges can hinder the effectiveness of rural development programmes in promoting gender equality. These include limited access to land, credit, farmer(ing) organisations, decision-making



procedures; gender stereotypes; and cultural norms that limit women's engagement in agriculture. Thus, rural development programmes must be tailored to the requirements and challenges of women farmers and rural women.

RELEVANCE TO FLIARA PROJECT

One of the key objectives of the FLIARA project is the development and sustainability of rural areas. Rural development is a multifaceted process that aims to improve rural areas' social, cultural, economic, and environmental conditions. In WP3 of the FLIARA Project, we will identify and highlight the sustainable innovations in which rural European women are engaged. These innovations will provide examples of how women can contribute to the development of rural areas. In addition, they will encourage other women to follow in their footsteps and develop their rural communities and villages.

Overall, researchers stress the importance of addressing power relations in rural development, particularly in terms of gender, race, and social class (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001). It is widely acknowledged that women are indispensable to rural development, especially those involved in agriculture and natural resource management (Kingiri, 2013). Therefore, to promote sustainable agrarian development, gender issues and the promotion of equality between men and women must be prioritised. By empowering marginalised groups, for example, rural development policies and practices must be designed to resolve these power relations and advance greater equity and social justice (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001).

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CONCEPT NOTE 2: RURAL AND URBAN DIVIDE

There are a number of definitions of rural. For example, legal status, the share of the population engaged in primary industries, statistical definition (according to the number of inhabitants in municipalities), unavailability of infrastructural facilities, functional importance (non-central settlements, dependent on a centre), sociological approach (places where people feel they are in the countryside) can be mentioned. The European Union uses the population density indicator.

Woods (2011) examines the complexity of conceptualising the rural and alludes to the notion that the understanding of the concept of the countryside is ever evolving. The scientific approach is also complicated by the emotional understanding of the countryside in the sense of a rural idyll. Currently, urban and rural ways of life are converging, and the blurring of boundaries is intensifying towards the emergence of a rural-urban continuum (Halfacree, 2009). More important than the limit between the city and the countryside is the differentiation of the countryside. Each rural type (suburbanised, intermediate, peripheral) has a specific spectrum of problems.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

A typical research dilemma, within a geographical perspective is a city-hinterland dichotomy. Sociology focuses primarily on differences between urban and rural lifestyles. Finding a unified definition is not only implausible on a European scale, but frequently not even on a national one. Consequently, different definitions are used in investigations based on the research focus, scientific discipline, geographical scope, and database existence.

There is also a distinction between examining individual rural communities and examining entire rural regions, including small cities. The practical deployment of various European, national, and regional rural support programmes is crucial. Longstanding confusion has existed between rural and agricultural support. In a number of states, agricultural ministries continue to prioritise rural development assistance. In regional development strategies, rural assistance frequently contributes to the social cohesion of less developed, problematic, or peripheral regions. The LEADER programme provides substantial support for community-led local development on a European scale.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

The main transformation is the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy in post-socialist countries. However, this transformation occurred during a more significant change from a productive (material, Fordist) to a post-productive (post-material, post-Fordist) society. Even in the countryside, structural changes are taking place from a space for agricultural production to a space for consumption within the framework of areas such as tourism and housing. Different types of countryside have different prerequisites for this transformation. The countryside with intensive agriculture, for example, is less attractive for tourism development than the mountain countryside where organic agriculture is being developed. Such an approach can reflect imagination



about the prosperity of rural micro regions. Issues, such as climate change, which manifests differently in the European countryside, food security, the energy crisis and the Green Deal, influence the entire system. It is therefore necessary to revise the more or less static understanding of the countryside to the analysis of its dynamics.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Cases will be based on rural regions focused on national and regional criteria, as the initiative is not required to resolve city-countryside relations. The focus of research should be rural and human. For this purpose, local enterprises (primary production, small industries, handicrafts, and services) are ideal. Typical examples include microbusinesses with fewer than ten employees and annual sales of less than two million euros, as well as larger enterprises whose management resides in the specified rural area and engages with local communities. Localization is required for innovation and women's participation analyses. However, our analysis should exclude larger rural organisations with urban administration.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

As part of the FLIARA project, we will focus on developing a rural family. The traditional rural family has been for years an agricultural enterprise at the same time. The strongly patriarchal concept resulted, among other things, from property rights, where the eldest son always inherited the estate. However, under the pressure of the diminishing importance of family farms in favour of big business, the diminishing importance of agriculture in the rural labour market, and also in line with the democratisation of society, the patriarchal system began to erode. Its content also changed from the subordination of women to the persistence of the traditional division of labour. This process was rapid and even shocking in the countries where collectivisation took place.

Currently, women have their income and are strengthening their rights in public administration, non-governmental organisations, and business. On the other hand, women's independence is also reflected in the increased divorce rate, increased number of unmarried cohabitations, children out of marriage. These aspects are no longer perceived as a stigma in society but have negative social consequences. As one of the results, in rural areas, demands for services that used to be held by the family are increasing: e.g., higher needs for kindergartens and homes for the elderly.

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CONCEPT NOTE 3: GLOBALISATION/DE-GLOBALISATION

The rural as a space and place or 'rural landscape' has had many definitions and interpretations (Paniagua, 2019). While the "rural landscape" could be defined as a geographical concept with clearly definable limits on a map or as a social construct consisting of a group of people who share a common interest or way of life it has been the subject of a lengthy debate (Cloke, 2006). Regardless, rural landscapes hold a special position in most cultures; for many, they symbolise carefree lives filled with harmony and unity in tranquil settings.

It has been widely acknowledged that we live in a globalizing world, a technologically-driven process resulting in more homogenous and interconnected societies (Rennen and Martens, 2003). Globalisation refers to the exchange of worldviews, values, norms, and practices between nations. Its benefits include improved communication, broader markets, reduced pricing, and more job opportunities, but its drawbacks include environmental difficulties, cultural authenticity loss, and inequality (Oyekola, 2018).

As such, de-globalisation is a reaction to individuals feeling powerless to shape their lives. It has emerged in response to the paradoxes and pressures of globalisation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As a result, it provides new avenues, such as protecting local cultures and domestic industries by challenging the 'West's discursive dominance (Behera, 2021). While a retreat into de-globalisation may increase income equality in some nations, it will reduce the incomes of the impoverished and the wealthy and increase the number of people living in poverty (Hillebrand, 2010).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The concept of a changing rural space and place as a result of a rural-urban divide and globalisation is exemplified by government initiatives that have altered agriculture and rural areas, creating new spatial links based on demographic changes and uneven/even concentration of services, such as heavy tourism in traditional rural settlements. For instance, post-productivist policies have encouraged farm diversification and counter-urbanization, with people descending to the countryside seeking service sector jobs and a better lifestyle in the idyllic rural countryside (Halfacree, 1997). The weakening of traditional businesses like agriculture and the emergence of new industries like the service sector has had a push-pull impact on rural populations, encouraging migration between urban and rural areas (Woods, 2005). A significant understanding of how rural communities have changed due to globalisation/de-globalisation is illustrated by Jensen's (2009: 149) assertion that "mobility and migration hold the key to the future of the countryside." If disregarded by policy or practice in rural areas, these new interactions may promote inequality due to a change in rural "internal authority".

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

To fully understand changing rural communities through the rural, urban divide of mobility and migration, it will be necessary for the FLIARA project to investigate who the female innovators are within rural communities to avoid any inequalities and assess how they have counterbalance resilience through globalisation and de-globalisation to inform future policy.



RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

The relevance of a changing rural space and place through the rural-urban divide and the effect of globalisation/de-globalisation on the FLIARA project is relevant through the following WPs:

WP2: Assessing if key actors envision challenges regarding changing rural communities or globalisation/deglobalisation and how they envision these challenges once removed.

WP3: Include and investigate key actors within case studies to identify thematic differences that may support future innovations.

WP4: Exploring women farmers or entrepreneurs within the context of the FLIARA Community of Practice Network and Events and encourage and inspire innovation practitioners.

WP5: Insight into the significance of changing rural communities due to the rural-urban divide and globalisation/deglobalisation for rural female innovations could aid in developing inclusive and equitable policies.

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CONCEPT NOTE 4: RURAL RESTRUCTURING AND DIFFERENTIATION

Rural restructuring has made rural communities in industrialised countries increasingly multifunctional, defined by a combination of production, consumption, and/or conservation values. From the perspective of rural differentiation and development, rural production and geographical location, rural areas close to urban agglomerations have the advantages of manufacturing developments. In contrast, while some rural areas have good resources that can focus on developing agriculture or tourism, some rural areas need to have development advantages. Therefore, the differences between rural production levels and lifestyles have shaped various types of rural development with different industries as carriers of wealth.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Shucksmith and Herman's (2002) research in the EU demonstrated that if an agricultural policy is to effectively help rural participants within changing rural communities navigate shifting policies such as the post-productivist transition, it must be led by an awareness of different motivations and perceived possibilities. For example, the literature also emphasizes essential components such as the masculine farming identity, farming behaviour, and the patrilineal family structure. On the other hand, it pays limited attention to family interactions and linked lives (Glover and Reay, 2015). It is essential to understand the family dynamics and relationships that can affect decision-making such as complicated gendered dimensions within farming roles. For example, this may explain why, despite CAP's assistance and encouragement, older farmers need help or are unwilling to let go of the family farm or to hand on the family farm to a female member (Conway et al., 2021).

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Much of the rural literature illustrates how the agricultural and rural landscape is policy-driven through either productivist, post-productivist, or multi-functional rural restructuring, which has shaped the rural landscape. However, there have been misgivings to understand how to operationalize policy within this changing rural landscape. Ciaian et al. (2010) for instance, emphasized the significance of policy to the success of family farms, highlighting how it can substantially restrict farm exits and encourage part-time farming.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Shucksmith and Herman's (2002) longitudinal study of farming behaviour in the EU argues that if agricultural policy wants to assist farmers in navigating changing policies, it must be guided by an understanding of farmers', motivations, and perceived options. This might explain why, even though CAP has supported and encouraged farmers to pass farm management on to the next generation, older farmers still need help incorporating these measures and relinquishing their farming identity (Conway et al., 2021). As Woods (2005) argues, policymakers must comprehend how rural restructuring has impacted those who live and work in rural areas. Nevertheless, there is limited research on rural restructuring and how modern rural communities can affect the



temporal and spatial connections to place, such as social networks or the traditional patrilineal family structure.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

The effect of restructuring through modernisation however, has displaced tasks previously performed by farm women and children and reconfigured gender roles on farms. Ní Fhlatharta and Farrell (2017) demonstrate how female innovators can be viewed as development drivers in rural regions, bringing about positive changes in enterprise and employment creation, internal investment, and the positive impact of gender relations on the traditional patriarchal rural society. However, these female innovators are geographically excluded from sectoral enterprise support that their urban counterparts can access which requires further investigation.

The relevance of the restructuring (differentiation and development) concept to FLIARA is evident in WP2, where we try to understand how rural restructuring has impacted the lives of rural dwellers in rural areas. The project will also examine female innovators who have challenged the patriarchal psyche and are now drivers of change to aid in the envisioning, innovation and assessment process. WP3 will identify women engaged in innovative practices on farms and in rural areas and through these we can also explore the changing family dynamic in agriculture.

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CONCEPT NOTES: GENDER PERSPECTIVE

CONCEPT NOTE 5: GENDER AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS

The term gender, from Latin *genus* (meaning “kind”, “type”, or “sort”), was introduced to differentiate biological sex from socially constructed sex. Feminists found it useful since they noted that biological differences between men and women were far too often used to legitimate social arrangements that discriminated women (Oakley, 2015). Talking about gender as socially constructed made it possible to question such arrangements. The term gender refers to socially constructed sex, i.e. social practices and representations associated with femininity or masculinity. The term invites the study of gendered arrangements, that is, not just women and men. Anything can be gendered – spaces, assumptions, customs, values, norms, roles, stereotypes, professions, policy and so on (Ahl, 2007). Gender is a processual concept in that gender is “done”, or performed (West and Zimmerman, 1987). If one takes care of children, for example, one does femininity, in most cultures. Gender is done differently in time and place, so a study of gender must always be situated (Harding, 1986). Gender is a relational construct since femininity is understood in relation to masculinity, and vice versa – they are constructed as each other’s opposites.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

The concept is imbued with some challenges:

- Researchers and everyday language use gender in the same binary sense as sex. Since sex in English can signify sexual intercourse, it's a language issue. Other languages use their comparable words for (biological), preserving ‘gender’s analytical capacity.
- The sex/gender distinction assumes that there is a divide between that which is constant (nature, the body) and that which is variable (culture). Post-structuralist theory claims that the body should properly be regarded as socially constructed, just as much as all the meanings people attach to it.
- Explaining women's subordination with the gender order is constructive but limited. Gender research is heteronormative and colour blind (Hooks, 2000), favouring white, middle-class, heterosexual women, according to feminists. The subordination of black women to white women has been minimised due to non-gender-based distinctions.
- Political issues arise. If one assumes gender is constructed and that nothing necessarily unites women, representing women as a group is challenging. Some feminists argue that it is vital to speak from an oppressed group as a unified group while advocating for women's rights, hence they oppose the concept of gender as socially constructed.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The weaknesses identified in concept critique may be dealt with as follows:

- Discussing sex and gender at the start of any research or publication and using the terminology correctly and consistently solves the word problem.



- Never assume that specific features, attitudes, desires, dispositions, and so on are associated with a given sex. For instance, supporting women-led inventions does not inevitably create a fairer and more gender-equal world because "women are by nature caring, democratic and ethical."
- When researching gender, use an intersectional approach and explore different classifications that rank people (Holvino, 2010). Gender is performed, thus other distinctions are too. Within social norms, one "does" ethnicity, class, creed, etc.
- Iris Young advocates using gender as seriality to address women's representation. She argues that being woman unifies all women, even if nothing else does. Others may label them as such, and the labels will affect their lives (Young, 1995). Thus, women and men are categories, not identities.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

- Studying constructions of gender and their social effects is a basic interest of FLIARA
- FLIARA selects those who identify themselves as, and are identified by others, as women, as case studies. These will in most cases be biological women.
- Beyond this, FLIARA studies gendered assumptions, representations, social practices, and social structures in relation to innovation, rurality, policy and any other concept or context relevant for FLIARA

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CONCEPT NOTE 6: GENDER EQUALITY

In essence, gender equality is a human rights issue. The Council of Europe (2016: 11) establishes gender equality as a “principle of human rights and women’s human rights as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights... and a sine qua non of democracy”. The definitions of gender equality in the cited text include both formal equality, which means that women and men should have the same opportunities, and substantive equality which refers to equality in outcome, such as equal distribution of power and resources (Ahl, 2018).

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Formal and substantive gender equality are associated with liberal and socialist feminism respectively (Calás and Smircich, 2006). Liberal feminism is based on liberal political thought which says that what makes a person human is her (or his) ability to think rationally, so it assumed that there are no sex differences with any necessary social consequences. Thus, women’s subordination is due to institutional inequality, such as lack of suffrage, or unequal access to education. The theory assumes that men and women will have equal opportunities if discrimination is eliminated, which give women opportunities to improve their position, if they so wish.

Socialist feminism notes that while liberal feminism challenges gender inequalities, it also accepts other social arrangements such as managerial hierarchies, land ownership, the division of work and family, and so on. So even if women are given equal opportunities, they must adapt to existing social structures. Since these often privilege men, individual action will not result in gender equality. Instead, structures must be changed, anything considered “feminine”, such as childcare, must be valued higher, and redistribution of resources and power are necessary. The conception of gender equality is substantive equality. Socialist feminism further notes that a consequence of liberal feminism, and in particular its contemporary cousin post feminism which assumes that all structural roadblocks for women’s achievements are now gone (Gill, 2007), is that the individual woman is blamed for any gender inequalities because she just did not work hard enough.

FLIARA considers both forms of gender equality – formal and substantive. It holds that any roadblocks for equal opportunities must be removed, and it also recognises that women and men have different starting points and that affirmative action, redistribution of power and resources, and structural change are necessary. This conception of gender equality is in accordance with that of the Council of Europe (2016). The term gender equity is sometimes used in place of gender equality. It acknowledges differences between men and women’s conditions or preferences and notes that gender equality may require unequal treatment.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Gender equality can be studied and measured in many different ways. Among the many theoretical frameworks available, Joan Acker’s is perhaps the most cited and could fruitfully be adapted for FLIARA. Detailing a process view of gender, Acker (1990:146)



distinguishes between: 1. The production of gender divisions, including allocation of power and resources; 2. Symbols and images that “explain, reinforce, or sometimes oppose those divisions”; 3. Gendered patterns of interaction between people; 4. Gendered components of individual identity; 5. Gendered patterns in fundamental, ongoing processes of creating and conceptualising social structure.

Step one is essential to discussing gender inequality. It involves tracking and measuring "objective" things like wage or earnings differentials, distribution of men and women in decision-making bodies, access to property ownership, division of unpaid labour, finance, parental leave and day care use, etc. Men and women can be compared, but other relevant categories, such as various categories of men or women, rural or urban women, or changes over time, may also be significant. However, to be able to say that gender equality is achieved a standard is necessary, which reminds us that gender equality is actually a socially constructed phenomenon.

Steps 2-5 consist of studying gendered patterns of basically anything. Anything can be gendered – spaces, assumptions, customs, identities, values, norms, roles, stereotypes, professions, policy and so on. The material used for analysis could be text, both written and spoken, from interviews, media, literature, policy texts, marketing material, journals and so on. So, any qualitative research method may be applicable

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

FLIARA aims to study gendering processes of relevance for the different contexts involved, which may differ between contexts. FLIARA also aims at studying some common processes, and develop some common measures, so that the results can be compared across contexts. As such the Gender Equality concept is relevant to the objectives of WP 2 and WP3 to envision and identify possibilities and obstacles to be removed to allow women’s contribution to sustainability innovations.

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CONCEPT NOTE 7: GENDER AND THE MATILDA EFFECT

In the 1990s, a historian from the US published her work about the 'Matilda Effect'. The phenomenon is named after the US women's rights activist and sociologist Matilda J. Gage. In 1870, she wrote a pamphlet titled 'Women as Inventors'. This paper condemned the widespread idea that women lacked inventive spirit and scientific talent: "Such statements are ignorant. Yet tradition, history and experience give evidence that women had these abilities," (Gage, 1870). About a hundred years later, the historian Margaret Rossiter found this pamphlet and has since written several books on the achievements of forgotten women scientists. In 1993, Rossiter published the essay 'The Matilda Effect in Science', which refers to Gage and the phenomenon of ignored women scientists. Rossiter has studied many cases of women scholars and found that even highly relevant personalities were ignored. The scientific community denied any recognition of her achievements or, in whatever way, the scientific community lost sight of these female scientists.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

History of sciences focused on the question of where this lack of consideration of the work of women scientists came from. Women scientists usually held assistant positions or worked as office support staff; in general, they were taken less seriously than their male colleagues. Women were not allowed to apply for the position of a reader or dean. Moreover, they were expected to fulfil their role as spouses and mothers, which was difficult to combine with groundbreaking scientific analyses. Another factor for their invisibility was the fact that many women collaborated with their husbands, who were also scientists. This way, women often did important work, but the achievements were attributed only to their husbands or colleagues (Rossiter 1993).

In 1999, the European Council adopted a Resolution on Women and Science in which the question of the under-representation of women in the field of scientific and technical research was recognised. The Resolution also recognised that the gender mainstreaming of research policy is not limited to promotion of women as research workers but should also ensure that research meets the needs of all citizens and contributes to the understanding of gender-relevant application in a general information context. Lost Women of Science is a website and podcast series that tells the remarkable stories of groundbreaking women who never got the full recognition they deserved – until now. Katie Hafner is a journalist and executive producer of this project. She aims to provide recognition to those who deserve it but never receive it. The database of 'Lost Women of Science' shows hundreds of female scientists who fell victim to the Matilda Effect

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The Matilda Effect is related to two other phenomena which need further reflection:

- a) Science is always teamwork! Scientific breakthroughs, innovation, and research processes, in general, are always the result of teamwork, not only in the multi-actor or multi-disciplinary context (both promoted explicitly by the European Commission) but also in mono-disciplinary units. Further investigation and recommendation are needed to ensure that nobody contributing substantially will be overlooked when it comes to the publication and public recognition.
- b) The Great Man phenomenon is still omnipresent! The general communication highlighting that one extraordinary man is subject to recognition has been the leading model in science and innovation for a long time. What are the driving forces,



underlying social or behavioural patterns that let men and women believe in the merits of a single person/man rather than acknowledging the success of a group of high performers sharing work and responsibilities according to their competencies and capabilities?

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

For the project's communication and dissemination activities, the FLIARA consortium could agree on basic principles. This will ensure that each FLIARA member will:

1. Implement the principles against the Matilda Effect consequently and – by doing so
2. Promote these principles widely in other research, teaching and learning contexts when working with colleagues or external stakeholders. Spreading the principles against the Matilda Effect into work areas and projects lacking gender balance and/or more male-dominated research and innovation settings will be as important as their consequent application in FLIARA communication and dissemination.

Principle 1: Follow more female researchers and activists on Twitter (and other social media) than men in order to contribute to working against the Matilda Effect in social media following/fellowship. Twitter has been male-dominated, with 64% men in 2023 (www.statista.com). The Great-Man-Principle has been widely spread even in social media of the 21st century.

Principle 2: Be critical before you follow a man on social media when you do not know him personally and are convinced about his integrity. The 'Me-Too' campaign highlighted that it is not unusual for male VIPs to risk losing gender-related integrity when holding a social/power position. This has been seen among Hollywood celebrities, members of churches or sports clubs in a leading/uncontrolled position, university deans/chairs, CEOs of private enterprises etc.

Principle 3: When individuals or working groups plan the development of a scientific paper or any other material, take some time and reflect about authorship, co-authorship and other forms of recognition of all involved. Ask yourself a question like these: Do we overlook anybody, such as data collectors, data providers, process facilitators, matchmakers, research assistants etc? Then, introduce systematic 'stock-taking routines' in your project or unit: How to ensure all persons are involved and recognised? Such practices will help to shed light on female researchers and other contributors and reduce the Matilda Effect in EU research and innovation in the long term.

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CONCEPT NOTE 8: GENDER AND COMMUNICATION

Gender and Communication is an interdisciplinary field that examines the ways in which gender shapes communication practices, and how communication practices, in turn, reproduce gendered identities, social structures, and power relations. It includes a broad spectrum of topics, including gendered language use, nonverbal communication, media representations of gender, and the intersections of gender with other social categories such as race, sexuality, and class. This concept emerged as a field of study in the 1970s and 1980s, when scholars began to explore how gender shapes communication practices and how communication practices reproduce gendered identities and power relations. It originated from several fields, including sociology, psychology, linguistics, and communication studies.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Gender and Communication has been applied in various contexts:

- In research, the concept has contributed to better understand how communication practices reinforce gender norms and stereotypes, as well as how individuals navigate and combat these norms. This knowledge can be used to inform policies aimed at promoting gender equality, such as gender mainstreaming initiatives in organisations or campaigns to challenge gendered language use in public discourse.
- In policy contexts, Gender and Communication has been used to inform policies and actions aimed at promoting gender equality and social justice, such as gender-sensitive budgeting or policies promoting women's political participation. Moreover, Gender and Communication perspectives have been also used to inform in areas such as education, healthcare, and media regulation.
- In practice contexts, Gender and Communication has been used to develop communication strategies that also promote gender equality and social justice, such as inclusive language use in advertising, or training programs.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

There are some methodological implications and issues in operationalising the concept of Gender and Communication. One challenge is determining how to measure gender and communication variables. Gender is a complex and multifaceted construct. Although researchers may use various methods (such as surveys, interviews and content analysis) to gather data on gendered communication practices, they may struggle with issues related to sampling, measurement, and interpretation.

Another challenge is accounting for the dynamic and context-dependent nature of gendered communication practices, which may vary depending on cultural and social contexts. Furthermore, researchers may need to carefully consider how to account for intersectional identities and power dynamics in their analysis, drawing on insights from critical race theory and intersectionality frameworks (Crenshaw, 1991).



Research in Gender and Communication may also face ethical challenges, particularly when studying sensitive topics such as gender-based violence or discrimination.

Finally, Gender and Communication might also face some other limitations or weaknesses. For example, the concept may underemphasise the intersectional nature of gendered communication practices and the ways in which they intersect with other social identities such as race, class, and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1991). On the other hand, some critiques argue that this concept has been overly focused on interpersonal communication and has overlooked the role of broader social structures and institutions in shaping gendered communication practices (Connell, 1987).

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

Gender and Communication is very relevant for WP6. Essentially, the concept highlights the importance of recognising and understanding how gender shapes communication practices and power relations. By incorporating this perspective into the dissemination activity, it is possible to ensure that the project and its outputs are communicated effectively, taking into account the ways in which gender shapes their communication practices, expectations, and experiences.

For example, by incorporating a Gender and Communication perspective into the design and implementation of the Community of Practice Networking Events, it is possible to ensure that the voices of women are heard and that their contributions are valued and respected. Additionally, a Gender and Communication perspective can help to ensure that the dissemination activity is inclusive and accessible to all stakeholders, regardless of their gender identity or expression.

For the development of the dissemination and exploitation plan it is possible to design a plan that is both effective and inclusive by considering the ways in which gender shapes communication practices and expectations. This also applies to the design of the Campaign of Visibility, where the implementation of this perspective might help to ensure a campaign that is accessible and meaningful to a diverse range of stakeholders.

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CONCEPT NOTE 9: GENDER AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social networks enable information and resource exchanges that facilitate social support and can be transferred to other forms of capital (such as financial, human, physical, and natural capitals) that can promote livelihood, security and enhance adaptive capacity through livelihood diversification and adoption of new innovations. Linking social networks to resilience thinking might also help explain how women adjust to change, including pressures and shocks.

Social networks are built on and generate trust and social capital. Therefore, the impact of social capital within social networks for women in male-dominated occupation spaces and in rural areas where gender norms are prevalent needs to be considered within the wider entrepreneurial and innovation process.

Interpersonal expectations are also necessary to comprehend the meaning structure of Social Networks (Fuhse, 2009). A social network's meaning is tightly tied to its transactions and can serve as a cultural conduit for players to communicate. Social meaning solidifies and alters as transactions occur in social networks. Their symbols, scripts, and schemes shape their culture, which is mostly an intersubjective comprehension of their social networks. Taking account of how women are or are not engaged in networks may also uncover how discriminatory practices that privileged male actors were socially constructed. It may also reveal how women positioned themselves within these networks, the interplay of agency and the overall impact of empowerment.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Fuhse (Ibid) contends that the advantages of empirical research on the 'meaning structure of Social Networks' will focus on the mechanisms that link all levels and participant ties, pairing data on their cultural forms in transactions and actor attributes. Examining how the meaning of these Social Networks solidifies and changes over time and how they can limit network transactions is also essential (Fuhse, Ibid).

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Methodological issues to understanding the 'meaning of Social Networks' for the FLIARA project, neither the researcher nor the other people in the network can see with their own eyes what this subjective meaning is.

Therefore, subjective meaning must be clarified within quantitative and qualitative interviews (Fuhse, Ibid). If effective, the outcome will provide researchers with a roadmap for understanding the "meaning structure of social networks" and how rural women can ultimately be motivated within their innovation journeys.

CONCEPT AND POLICY

The innovation and entrepreneurial process for women is complex, and women face different barriers to men as their social pathways and success are affected by other variables such as institutional and societal norms and values. It requires synergistic



combinations of local and expert knowledge capacity to build social networks and extract value from those networks, and it requires personal motivation and resilience to achieve success. While gender mainstreaming is a key objective of EU rural policies, more targeted policies are also needed to secure entrepreneurial social spaces of innovation for women in rural areas.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

Social Networking as a light-touch concept through the 'meaning of social networks could be relevant to the FLIARA project in WP4 and the creation of the Community of Practice Network. Examining key actors' interpersonal expectations through their cultural blueprints, roles, and social identities through personal innovation journeys' can enable knowledge sharing, networking opportunities and knowledge transfer for women interested in leading future innovations by understanding cultural forms in transactions and actor attributes and also,

This understanding could also give insight into the FLIARA project for 'Capacity-building' to encourage and develop skills, instincts, talents, procedures, and resources so that female-led innovations beyond the Community of Practice Networks at WP4 to survive, adapt, and thrive by understanding how to enable knowledge transfer and continue to inspire innovation practitioners.

The objective of WP5 is to make effective policy recommendations for female innovators. Understanding the significance of Social Networks for rural female innovations through cultural corridors could aid in developing inclusive and equitable policies through affirmative governance within the innovation process.

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CONCEPT NOTE 10: GENDER AND ANTIFEMINISM

In recent years, far-right, religious, and conservative actors have fought liberal and left-wing ideals and emancipatory movements on gender, sexuality, and reproductive rights. 'Anti-Gender' crusades were waged around the world, and deeply impacted societies and politics, while these discourses were adopted by the secular far-right. A “state antifeminism” is also emerging, affecting efforts to address the needs of women and advance gender equality. Blais (2012) identifies a number of tendencies or forms of anti-feminism, such as conservative, religious (primarily Christian) and nationalist antifeminism, as well as “post-feminism”, liberal antifeminism, and masculinism.

Anti-feminism is a backlash and a counter-attack in response to the real or imagined threat that feminists and emancipated women are supposed to represent for the legitimacy and stability of patriarchy, or to men’s identity and interest. Post-feminism is ambivalent and implies gender equality is basically accomplished. Feminism is considered outdated; however, some feminist principles are accepted (Jordan, 2016).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Research shows that anti-feminism is not incidental to reactionary anti-democratic politics, but instead a constitutive element of political movements that seek to naturalize inequality and legally enforce conformity with conservative social norms. Several prominent patterns have emerged: the core significance of social hierarchy and biological essentialism to anti-feminist conservative thought; the polarizing demonization of feminists by religious conservatives and populist nationalists; the appropriation of rights discourses and advocacy tactics by anti-feminist campaigns; and the strategic importance of law and legal language as a terrain of rights contestation.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Faludi’s (1991) work popularised the term “backlash,” defining it as the “cultural counterreaction” to feminism, offering an understanding of “backlash” including any media messaging contrary to feminism. “Resistance” in some accounts includes processes that preserve the status quo such as institutional inertia and lack of support in the form of non-engagement, understaffing, under budgeting, insufficient gender training and so on (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014). Neither of these definitions highlight the active opposition central to the notion of resistance, and both are too broad in including any cultural or institutional expressions of gender inequality.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

While types of antifeminism and backlash can be described in numerous ways, there are typical tactics, which recur across issues and historical periods (Lombardo and Mergaert 2013):

- Denial of the problem or the legitimacy of the case for change.
- Disavowal: Refusal to recognise responsibility to address the problem or the change process for this problem.



- Inaction: Refusal to implement a change initiative.
- Appeasement: Efforts to placate or pacify those advocating for change in order to limit its impact.
- Appropriation: Simulating change while covertly undermining it.
- Co-option: Using the language of progressive frameworks and goals (equality; rights; justice and so on) to maintain unequal structures and practices.
- Repression: The reversal or dismantling of a change initiative once implementation has begun.
- Violence: The use of violence, harassment and abuse against subordinate groups (Flood, Dragiewicz, and Pease 2020)

RELEVANCE TO FLIARA PROJECT

Conservative governments/institutions and their civil society allies are increasingly undermining and challenging international women's rights and gender equality initiatives. Taking into account the ideologies, discourses, and strategies of contemporary anti-feminism in global and local contexts might be relevant to FLIARA objectives and research, especially when working with stakeholders and in capacity building initiatives. Understanding the character and dynamics of resistance and backlash is vital for preventing and reducing them. As a result, the Gender and Anti-feminism concept is relevant to the objectives of WP2 and WP3, which are to envision and identify opportunities and barriers that must be removed to enable women to contribute to sustainability innovations. Furthermore, so that findings from different settings may be compared, FLIARA plans to investigate some universal processes and provide universal metrics. Therefore, the goals of WP2 and WP3 are pertinent to the Gender and Anti-feminism concept, which is to imagine and identify possibilities and barriers that must be removed to enable women to participate in innovations in sustainability.

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CONCEPT NOTE 11: SUPPORT AND TRAINING

While there are several positive policy frameworks and initiatives in place to support women entrepreneurs in Ireland, there is still a large inequality gap between female and male entrepreneurs both in terms of the ratio of female to male entrepreneurs and income inequality. The emergence of the global Covid 19 pandemic only served to widen the gender pay gap and increase the inequality of access which women entrepreneurs already experienced in securing finance (Eurochambers Network, 2021, p. 2).

In addition to this, with the movement to a working-from-home model that was necessary during the pandemic, female entrepreneurs took up the majority of the unsalaried care work in addition to their paid work, with 47.5% of women entrepreneurs doing both (Eurochambers, 2021, p. 6). This further exasperated the inequality gap. Research carried out by the DEW project (Digital Entrepreneurship for Women, 2022) demonstrated that the top three respondent-ranked skills for female entrepreneurs (n=206) were:

- Self-Awareness. Motivation, Planning and Management and Financial Literacy.
- On further exploration, participants elaborated on specific skills and qualities which were then categorised as follows:
- Personal Skills, Business Activity, Interaction and Communication, Obstacles and Planning

CONCEPT APPLICATION

As a practitioner of adult education and training with specific expertise in the area of female entrepreneurship, LWL has delivered a number of programmes in this area. Academic research coupled with input from local enterprise agencies highlighted specific gaps in supports for female entrepreneurs. A key support was mentoring, which was addressed by LWL's Midlands Female Entrepreneurship Mentoring (FEM) Programme along with gender-specific Start Your Own Business Programme. The latter emerged from the evaluation of the FEM project in 2013, and since then LWL have delivered a bespoke programme to a number of groups, namely the WISE group, established in 2018. Key recommendations from practitioner evaluations and own insights include:

Supports/Training: Our evaluations show that female entrepreneurs need gender-specific training and support. Persistent barriers include access to finance, work-life balance and prioritising of care.

Networking/Peer Learning: Female entrepreneurs need peer learning and networking to go from aspirational to fledgling stages. The LWL experience suggests gender-specific SYOB and mentoring are needed to develop female-led companies.

As women remain underrepresented as entrepreneurs, efforts to promote and train them must continue. Rural areas are particularly in need of these supports. In Ireland, female entrepreneurs have access to a comparatively limited number of specialised supports.



Nationally and internationally recognised for their positive impact are the Competitive Start Funds and Going for Growth programme.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our experience as a practitioner as opposed to an academic, indicates that it can be difficult to operationalise the concept without the involvement of providers and NGOs working in the area. Participants on our programmes and initiatives are more likely to provide feedback and identify needs as part of those structured programmes as opposed to participating in academic research. A key element of our evaluation in the FEM programme was the importance of having our programmes based within a women's NGO which had the understanding of sex-based discrimination and more importantly, the supports and training to address this.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Our experience also indicates that there are those who do not feel it is necessary to establish training and supports specifically for female entrepreneurs. These have been a small minority in our work to date, so this is not a generalisation. A small number of respondents indicated over the years that they did not wish to be seen as 'other' and felt their enterprise did not require any supports by virtue of it being female-lead.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

The core objective of FLIARA is to ensure that women are embedded in, and supported by, a more effective innovation ecosystem which: spotlights their achievements; provides them with a source of inspiration and knowledge; networks them with key actors engaged in innovation; heightens their visibility within national and international institutional decision-making contexts; increases capacity and improves skills to empower them to continue leading or start leading innovative practices in farming and rural areas. Exploring the concept of Gender Support and Training will inform WP4 and 5 by investigating: the specific training needs for female entrepreneurs; what rural perspectives need to be incorporated and what is the interagency (local, national, EU) perspective.

References:

Enterprise Ireland (2020) National Action Plan for Women in Business: Fuelling Growth through Diversity.

Eurochambres Women Network (2021) Women Entrepreneurship and the pandemic: challenges and solutions 1 year on.

Longford Women's Link/DEW Partners (2021) The Digital Entrepreneurship for Women Transnational and Cross-sectoral Survey Analysis, <https://www.dewproject.eu/assessment.php?lang=EN>.

Stephens, S., Cunningham, I. (2021) "Female entrepreneurs in a time of crisis: evidence from Ireland", *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 106-120.

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CONCEPT NOTE 12: GENDER AND DIGITAL

Two thirds of Irish women entrepreneurs (67%) adapted their business models in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (Eurochambers, 2022). The epidemic prompted many female entrepreneurs to participate more actively with their online presence which strengthened client relationships and established new ones during lockdowns. Irish female entrepreneurs also used the pandemic to ponder and plan for their businesses. This reflection time helped to refocus on brand and service to maintain and attract clients (Stephens et al., 2021). Research carried out by the DEW project in 2022 demonstrated that the top four respondent-ranked skills for female entrepreneurs (n=206) were: **Self-Awareness; Motivation; Planning and Management and Financial Literacy.**

Digital skills ranked 6th out of 20 skills presented (aligned with the EntreComp Framework). Almost two-thirds (62%) of respondents felt that technology had always been essential to their business with 14% believing it essential since the pandemic. Smartphones are the dominant technology (40%) and the importance of high-quality broadband was also highlighted. The time and ability required to adopt new digital technologies was also a factor. Finally, one fifth of respondents reported digital skills as being amongst the most challenging obstacle to digital transformation.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

In general female entrepreneurs demonstrated strong resilience and resourcefulness in response to the Covid 19 pandemic (Stephens et al., 2021). However, the Eurochambers Ireland report found that while over 52% of female entrepreneurs felt they had the skills to adapt their business to an online setting in response to the pandemic, nearly 47% did not feel they had the adequate skills or training to do so. This indicates a need for increased targeted training opportunities available to women entrepreneurs to support them in building and retaining long term sustainability.

In recent research female entrepreneurs identified gaps in training opportunities focusing on digital skills, networking and relationship building, (Ibid). Many female entrepreneurs stated they did not feel they had the digital skills needed to respond to the Covid 19 crisis. In addition to this, female entrepreneurs expressed a need to form communities of practice in which they can learn skills in relationship building and networking, (Stephens, et al., 2021).

CONCEPT AND POLICY

The Irish Department of Enterprise has a particular role in the promotion of digital hubs, as evidence by various consultations on the smart specialisation strategy. There has been a marked increase in the number of digital hubs in rural communities and while there are positives to be taken from this, the lack of supporting infrastructure means that the barriers of transport, early years care etc. in rural areas remain for women. Ancillary supports are still required for remote working/entrepreneurship.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our experience as a practitioner as opposed to an academic, indicates that the digital concept is multi-faceted. It incorporates basic business tools, for example, websites and social media development, but also includes leadership and management aspects, namely, managing digital teams/remote working. Therefore, it can be difficult to



operationalise in research without very specific parameters. One aspect of our work in relation to digital skills and entrepreneurship is reaching an understanding of what constitutes female digital entrepreneurship. The DEW project defined female entrepreneurship as any attempt at new business or venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organisation, or the expansion of business, by any woman, or team of women, or an established female-led business. There is no official definition of digital entrepreneurship in Ireland, but policy frameworks are regularly based on the definition set out by the European Commission and the OECD (2021), as any entrepreneur who creates a digital business or adopts digital technologies for an existing business.

While the inequality gap faced by women entrepreneurs is being addressed at a policy level and in training provision, rural women entrepreneurs continue to be left behind. Indeed, there is no mention of rural based entrepreneurs in the National Action Plan for Women in Business 2020, (Enterprise Ireland, 2020). As previously mentioned in the section of this report on Targeted Supports for Female Entrepreneurs, there are a number of formal training and financial supports available for women entrepreneurs. Two of the most successful of these being: The Going for Growth initiative which supports women who have been an owner manager for two years to grow their businesses. The Competitive Start Fund which supports entrepreneurs to accelerate the growth of their start-up company to achieve success in a global market. However, the supports available for women entrepreneurs based in rural regions which take into account the specific challenges of the rural context are severely limited, but include, 1. The ACORNS programme, 2. The EMPOWER programme and 3. The Rural Femmes Project. While there is positive impact with these three programmes, there is a need for many more targeted supports. The breadth of challenges women in business face is compounded by the challenges of a rural setting. There is therefore a need for a radical increase in supports offered to rural based female entrepreneurs.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

The core objective of FLIARA is to ensure that women are embedded in, and supported by, a more effective innovation ecosystem. Exploring the concept of Gender Support and Training will inform WP5 in particular, by investigating, the specific training needs for female digital entrepreneurs and the rural perspectives that need to be incorporated. These include, accessibility, broadband and considering broadband as an equality issue.

References:

Enterprise Ireland (2020) National Action Plan for Women in Business: Fuelling Growth through Diversity

Eurochambers Women Network (2021) Women Entrepreneurship and the pandemic: challenges and solutions 1 year on

Longford Women's Link/DEW Partners (2021) The Digital Entrepreneurship for Women Transnational and Cross-sectoral Survey Analysis, <https://www.dewproject.eu/assessment.php?lang=EN>

Stephens, S., Cunningham, I., (2021) "Female entrepreneurs in a time of crisis: evidence from Ireland", *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 106-120.

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CONCEPT NOTE 13: GENDER CONFLICT AND WORK LIFE

The gender conflict theory posits that gender is best understood as a means by which men attempt to keep their power and privileges at the cost of women's well-being. While particular gender roles may have been suitable in a more historical setting, conflict theorists argue that these roles have persisted because the dominant group strives to maintain their power and status. Social issues arise from the exploitation or oppression of one group by a dominant group, as per conflict theory. These include the unequal distribution of domestic and care responsibilities between men and women. It also recognizes that the division of labour in the household and in paid work is influenced by gender norms and expectations, which can create challenges for individuals in balancing their work and personal lives. It is widely acknowledged that women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of care work and that this can limit their opportunities for not only paid work but for career advancement (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Gender conflict and work life is important to consider, but from a broader perspective, over and above work-related aspects, such as workload, job autonomy, job security. Additional considerations should include personal factors, namely family demands, social support, health status. The collection of such sensitive and subjective data however can result in biases such as social desirability. In carrying out gender conflict research, issues such as limited resources and time constraints need to be considered in addition to the exclusion of sub-target groups or important variables. Privacy and confidentiality concerns are also highly significant as are sample selection and how work-life conflict could vary over time.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Some of the critiques of gender conflict and work life include: a lack of consensus or a lack of a universally accepted definition, which can lead to inconsistencies in the concept. There may also be a gender bias in considering the concept, which can result in women's experiences being assumed, these assumptions could lie in the idea that traditional roles are still a constraint when in reality those might not be the general topic or the primary one. There is also a limited scope when considering gender conflict, particularly as some economic or cultural factors are not included and aspects such as discrimination and stigma could be overlooked.

CONCEPT AND POLICY

Current policies, like parental leave or flexible working hours, may attempt to address the work-life conflict, but they fail to address underlying issues such as the wage gap, insufficient or affordable childcare and the glass ceiling. Even, portraying work and life as dichotomies is a common phenomenon that can limit how the two influence each other, and vice versa.



RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

The relevance of Gender Conflict and Work Life to FLIARA relates to the third work package in the FLIARA project. This work package aims to deepen our understanding of the pathways to success and the challenges facing female-led sustainability innovation in farming and rural areas based on the following. In considering gender conflict and work-life during the FLIARA project we can explore how women are more often than not responsible for managing family responsibilities and may face unique challenges in achieving work-life balance. For example, women can experience discrimination or stigmatization in the workplace if they prioritize family responsibilities over work, or if they seek flexible work arrangements. Additionally, there is still a need for more comprehensive and intersectional analyses that consider other factors such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. The rural context of the FLIARA project also adds additional issues around limited access to childcare, transportation, and other support services. Rural women may face a different set of conflicts in comparison to women in urban areas.

References:

West, C., and Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender and society*, 1(2), 125-151.



CONCEPT NOTE 14: GENDER AND EXTENSION

Agricultural extension consulting services are essential for providing farmers, including women, with agricultural knowledge, technologies, and practices. To advance gender equality, empower women in rural regions, increase agricultural output, and improve food security, women must be included in agricultural extension initiatives. Extension advisory in gender refers to the process of integrating a gender perspective into agricultural extension programmes and services to ensure that they meet the specific needs and priorities of both women and men farmers. The inclusion of the gender perspective tackles the specific barriers and challenges women farmers might encounter. Extension services can also help clarify how gender roles and relations create opportunities or obstacles to improving agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods (GFRAS, 2016).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

In exploring gender and extension advisory services we can also consider the gender-specific barriers and opportunities for women's participation in agriculture programmes and services. Research has yielded insights on topics such as productivity, decision-making and empowerment. By advancing gender equality and tackling gender-based barriers, agricultural extension programmes have the ability to empower women. These services can improve women's status, voice, and agency in agricultural communities by involving them in extension operations, giving them decision-making positions, and promoting their participation in farmers' groups and cooperatives. How effective extension advisory services can be impacted by much funds are allocated to the inclusion of women into agricultural programmes and the institutional commitment.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

From a gender perspective, the idea is to support agricultural extension sensitive to women farmers' needs. It emphasizes the significance of addressing the opportunities and constraints that are unique to gender in agricultural extension, encouraging women's engagement. So, this concept is important for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture and rural development. The concept addresses the lack of gender perspective in agricultural extension services. It acknowledges that women farmers confront significant difficulties and limitations that are frequently overlooked by traditional extension services.

Reference:

GFRAS (2016) The New Extensionist Learning Kit. Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services.

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CONCEPT NOTE 15: GENDER INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a concept that recognizes the complexity and interconnectedness of social identities and how they condition the embodied experiences of individuals from different social categories in different power relations. As an analytical framework it reveals how a person's multiple, frequently overlapping social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. Race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, disability, weight, and appearance are considered. Intersectionality demonstrates how racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, ageism, and classism interact to create unique experiences of discrimination and marginalisation (Hancock, 2016 and Nash, 2018).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Originating in critical race studies and associated with black feminism, intersectionality has been applied by feminist researchers to reveal how intersecting systems of oppression/privilege generate violence at the structural, political, and representational level against multiple categories of persons. Overall, intersectionality seeks to promote a more inclusive understanding of social justice by recognizing the complexity of human identity and experience, and the ways in which different forms of oppression are interconnected. Previously referred in EU anti-discrimination law as "multiple discrimination", intersectionality, when applied critically, has the potential to continue to reveal the obscured workings of the matrix of oppression in the embodied experience of various social categories, and expose the relationship between othering and unequal power relations in everyday life, thus being a useful tool when looking to provide policy input.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

A very relevant methodological implication of implementing the concept of intersectionality within the FLIARA framework is its expansion to include the rural/urban divide among the possible axes for constructing privilege/oppression. That is, beyond the factors and categories already employed in the theoretical and practical applications of intersectionality, the unequal political, representation and structural power relations (including economic) between the urban and rural women, while varying in the countries represented in this project, will be taken into account through this project implementation.

One possible limitation in operationalizing this concept is the divergence between self-identification and exogenous social categorization. While certain categories can be visible (as it is often the case with race/immigrant/indigenous), others such as religion, sexual orientation, etc. are not necessarily present in general social interactions. Another difficulty in applying this concept will be to link the individual experiences of the women and other stakeholders included in the research (WP3) with the collective experiences of the different intersecting social categories across the heterogeneous EU (and national) contexts. An important implication here is that innovations will have to be understood and analysed in a contextualized and intersectional fashion, while at the same time



employing the critical and analytical tools which allow us to extrapolate from this data in order to create coherent and relevant policy input at the EU level

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

While intersectionality has contributed significantly to social justice movements, it also has some limitations. These include: 'Essentialism': There is a risk of essentialism in intersectionality, which can reduce people to the sum of their socio-demographic descriptors, rather than recognizing their individuality and complexity. This can also lead to a focus on identity politics, rather than broader social issues as it makes it difficult to relate individual experiences with collective struggles. Another is a 'Lack of consensus', which has created a significant debate on the theoretical definition as well as methodological application of intersectionality. This makes it complicated to employ intersectionality in (action-)research and requires a clear and coherent methodological framework for its application.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

Intersectionality is relevant for FLIARA in the research stage of the project, as well as the practical one of creating a community of practice and providing policy input, both as an analytical concept as well as a practice, respectively. Within the research stage of the project, intersectionality will be used: (1) to expand and clarify the theoretical framework in terms of what diversity is understood to mean in relation gender, and which are the axes of domination hindering (or enabling) women's innovations (WP1) and (2) as a research methodology, helping ensure the selection of a wide array of respondents and ambassadors in accordance with the intersectional perspective in order to generate relevant and representative data of the women's experiences (WP3).

As applied practice within the second stage of the project, intersectionality will serve to ensure the diversity of women engaged within the community of practice development. Explicitly, an intersectional stance towards the selection of ambassadors of women innovation will certify representation of European women beyond the white, Christian, middle class, heterosexual category, and include non-white, non-Cristian, LGBTIQ+ women with different economic backgrounds, including precarious ones. Moreover, this representation of European women's diversity at this stage will also be actively reflected when designing policy input, as this will also rely on various interactions with the diverse women involved in the community of practice (through focus groups and other activities).

References:

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CONCEPT NOTES: RESILIENCE PERSPECTIVE

CONCEPT NOTE 16: ADAPTIVE CYCLES' AND RELATIONAL RESILIENCE

The notion of resilience was originally conceived in relation to ecological systems and their adaptive capacity (Holling, 2001), to describe the ability of natural systems to persist in the face of significant natural disturbances such as fires or floods (Robinson and Carson, 2015). As such, “ecological resilience refers to a system’s capacity to reorganize under change to reach a new equilibrium whilst retaining the same essential functions” (Robinson and Carson 2015: 1). Scholars extended the resilience concept to include the impact of human activities on the natural environment.

CONCEPT BACKGROUND

If we accept that resilience is about enhancing the ability of a system to respond to change, the key question then becomes resilience to what, and resilience for whom? Whose resilience should be privileged? Who determines whether a system can be described as resilient? Is change necessary in order to develop resilience? What is the timescale over which resilience might be assessed? Resilience is temporally and spatially contingent, wherein individuals / institutions / regions etc. will not be resilient per se, in that they are dependent on a range of ecological, economic and contextual factors, all of which will influence the potential for resilience of those involved (Darnhofer et al. 2010). From this perspective, “resilience is not a ‘thing’... [but] rather, resilience is the emergent result of ever-changing patterns of relations that are material, social, cultural” (Darnhofer et al. 2016: 118).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Authors have used various approaches in order to apply the resilience concept, such as the resilience model of the adaptive cycle with its four phases that repeatedly emerge (Holling et al., 2002). In a similar vein, Darnhofer (2014: 461) argues that resilience can be understood as three “capabilities”: buffer capability, adaptive capability and transformative capability. To alter farming or rural business, actors must be enabled. Buffer capability is “persistence”; the ability to continue farming after difficulty or disruption. To survive, a system must adapt to internal or external stresses. In this situation, the firm has not fundamentally altered, but it has been able (or enabled, such as through policy or regulatory support) to adapt to new circumstances. Transformative capability, on the other hand, changes farming and rural value chains in reaction to a crisis. Crises often involve major change, which is not necessarily bad.

The different understandings of the resilience concept share the idea that ‘resilience’ or ‘social-ecological resilience’ is a ‘system property’ (Hodobod and Eakin, 2015). Distinct systems can be individual farms (Darnhofer, 2014), a country’s organic farming sector or the national or global food system (Hodobod and Eakin, 2015). Food system resilience



examines defined complex systems and asks questions such as how systems change over time driven by emerging challenges (Hodbod and Eakin, 2015).

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

The application of one of the resilience concepts needs: a) a clear definition of the unit of investigation (what/which process is to be studied as being more or less resilient?), and b) a reference or button-line is needed in order to be able to say what happens if below threshold/not resilient). The resilient analysis always includes a dynamic perspective which requires either a status-quo analysis at a minimum of two points in time, or a dynamic analysis which is ongoing over a set period.

RELEVANCE TO FLIARA PROJECT

FLIARA will focus on women in farming and rural areas. Most likely, the FLIARA analysis will focus on 'socio-agricultural resilience'. It will be crucial to define properly the unit that is to be examined. The 'unit' can be the farm, a rural business, its associated value chain, a village or a geographical or administrative area. Probably, the analysis of farmers' resilience will be extended beyond the setting of the farm or the rural business and include networks of empowered or hampering relations embedded in the (regional) contexts examined. In any case, we might want to take into account Darnhofer (2010: 214) who argues that we should abandon notions of equilibrium within a social context and 'expect the unexpected', taking unpredictability and change as a starting point for resilience thinking and the application of one of the resilience concepts.

References:

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CONCEPT NOTE 17: POSITIVE/NEGATIVE RESILIENCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Walker et al. (2004) define resilience as the capacity of a system to absorb perturbation and reorganise in the face of change while retaining essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedback. While the term resilience can be positive, it can also be negative depending on the environment, for example, male-dominated value systems towards equality for female innovators in traditional rural areas. Nevertheless, resilience is the capacity to resist, contend with, recover from, and succeed in the face of adversity (Masten and Powel, 2003).

While resilience can typically pertain to organisational and employee resilience, tenacity, and recovery in the face of adversity and in the context of business, resilience can also refer to an organisation's capacity to survive, adapt, and develop in the face of turbulence. In a world propelled by competition, globalisation, and digitisation, businesses must continuously adapt their activities and cultivate innovation capacities (Fey and Kock, 2022). Developing resilience is even more critical for founders/owner-managers of small and medium-sized enterprises than large corporations because they are more susceptible to unique challenges. Typically, SMEs have a weakened cash flow and fewer equity reserves and need more resources and skills to pursue long-term strategies that promote resilience (Thun and Hoeffner, 2011).

Newman and Dale (2005) argue that the capacity for collective action and collaborative solutions has never been so essential to human civilisation; social networks play a crucial role in our ability to adapt to unforeseen change. To develop more robust and proactive responses to environmental challenges and to enhance resilience, female innovators in rural areas must have a greater understanding of social networks' positive and negative aspects to build proactive resilience. In many cases, this may require the deliberate development of bridging and social capital to create vertical integration between communities and links to power brokers and strengthen globally linked networks in new and different ways (Newman and Dale, 2005)

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Research carried out by Ayala and Manzano (2014) examined whether there is a correlation between resilience dimensions and the success of established enterprises in the Spanish tourism industry and whether there are gender-specific differences. The findings indicated that the three dimensions of resilience (toughness, resourcefulness, and optimism) predict entrepreneurial success, but resourcefulness is the most important indicator of an entrepreneur's success. This applies to both men and women. However, men and women differed in their ability to predict the entrepreneurial success of hardy and optimistic individuals. For women, optimism has a more significant impact on the success of their businesses than for men. Resilience is a dynamic adaptation process that enables entrepreneurs to continue looking towards the future despite harsh market conditions and destabilising events they must constantly confront. Resilience is the capacity of an entrepreneur to surmount particularly difficult situations. This capacity for



adaptation and "bouncing back" from adversity depends on an individual's resources and interaction with their environment (Windle et al., 2011).

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Methodologically, it will be difficult to measure the innovation capacity of rural female innovators through resilience, as it may not necessarily align with local epistemologies. Nonetheless, there is space for improvement in comprehending how divergent conceptions and dimensions of generic innovation capacity can play out over time in response to particular risks or shocks and/or as specific innovations unfold and spread. In addition to contributing to a new field of study by investigating the advantages of entrepreneurial resilience for female innovation.

RELEVANCE TO FLIARA PROJECT

The relevance of the FLIARA project is to encourage positive resilience through innovation and entrepreneurial behaviour for women in rural areas. Entrepreneurs can develop skills for coping with various situations with optimism and courage through programmes that train them to solve complex problems under conditions of uncertainty and the search for creative solutions for adapting to change. This may be especially significant for establishing within the Community of Practice Networks. Although it is impossible to predict innovation, we can cultivate it by providing environments that foster its development. However, Entrepreneurship Resilience to identify grown strategies for female innovation and female collection action to adapt and foresee change can overcome negative resilience for female innovators in rural areas and relevant to the FLIARA WPs.

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SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE

CONCEPT NOTE 18: SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS

Sustainability was organised into dimensions quite early (e.g. Brundtland 1987), with emphasis in the environmental and social dimensions, as in many other specifications. Economic sustainability often refers to the possibility of carrying out business operations over time without destroying other forms of capital and (possibly) maintaining economic growth (Spangenberg, 2005). Environmental sustainability is related to the maintenance of the nature capital which makes provision of ecosystem services and exploitation of biomass possible and reminder of the limited carrying capacity of nature. Social sustainability is a wide construct and covers e.g., nutrition, health, regional development and social justice aspects (Janker et al., 2019). Different activities should be legal, acceptable and fair to be sustainable. Cultural sustainability is sometimes covered by the social dimension, but genuinely it refers to maintenance and exploitation of cultural capital. Overall, sustainable development should imply progress in all dimensions simultaneously (Brundtland, 1987).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Environmental sustainability has dominated the research and policy applications. The early formulations focused on intergenerational aspects and incorporated economic, environmental and social dimensions as well as the limits of growth (Brundtland 1987). Along with the emergence of climate change and, later on, biodiversity concerns, the environmental dimension has dominated up to an extent sometimes omitting the other ones. A wide array of 'sustainability policies' have been adopted, including adoption of Agenda 2030 goals by the United Nations (2015), the European green Deal Strategy (2019) and many national guidelines and policies. Large firms have especially adopted sustainability policies that emphasise environmental and social dimensions. For sustainability practitioners, such as the intentional communities who are members of the Global Ecovillage Network Europe, the aim is to integrate the four dimensions into a holistic practice. While certain sets of practices are identified for each dimension (gender equality for social sustainability, circular economy for economic sustainability etc.), their implementation is concomitant and looks at how the practices also intersect.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Operationalisation of sustainability dimensions is complex. One logical approach is to employ the capital stocks (economic, environmental, human/social, cultural) and try to observe their changes, ownerships, uses and outputs. However, observing that sustainability concept was introduced due to sustainability problems, one approach could be to identify sustainability problems in various contexts and dimensions and observe, if these could be resolved or resettled. Many empirical studies on the sustainability dimensions have adopted various methods (modelling, surveys, life cycle assessments, time series analyses) to track the evolution of some relevant indicators in a rather loose 'sustainability framework' as, for example, Doughnut Economics (Raworth, 2017) or



SDG by the United Nations (2015). Sustainability studies most often focus on some specific environmental, economic or societal system; concomitantly systems analysis in various forms can provide relevant frameworks for the studies.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Agenda 2030 adopted 17 sustainability goals (United Nations, 2015). These pave an avenue for an illusion that one can pick some of these and 'be sustainable' without the need to observe trade-offs of the underlying dimensions. Planetary boundaries have been introduced as quantitative operationalisations of sustainability at the highest level of abstraction, but they deal mostly with environmental topics. Attempts to have exact indicators for the sustainability and its dimensions at the lower levels have been complicated, as the sustainability challenges vary strongly across contexts and different indicators suggest different things (Liu and Zhang, 2013).

CONCEPT AND POLICY

Due to manufacturing of sustainability concepts and frameworks, using the sustainability dimensions in policy design and implementation is challenging. Translating e.g. planetary boundaries into specific contexts and sectors is an overwhelming task to be done. Context-sensitive methods produce partial views. Many policy statements are abstract in the vision or target domain and include a portfolio of measures that promote sustainability journeys but lack a coordinated methodology.

RELEVANCE TO FLIARA PROJECT

Within the FLIARA project, gender perspective is relevant in all four sustainability dimensions, but endogenously included only in social sustainability. Due to fluid conceptual basis and numerous specifications of the concept, some general framework (e.g. four dimensions) and context specific approach may be useful.

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CONCEPT NOTE 19: TRANSFORMATION (LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY)

Transformation in long-term sustainability thinking emerged as a response to current patterns of development that are not sustainable and will lead to environmental degradation, social inequality, and economic instability. Transformation for long-term sustainability means a radical change in social, economic and environmental systems to ensure the well-being of current and future generations (Haug, 2018).

Transformation is the fundamental, systemic and long-term changes required to achieve a more sustainable and equitable society. This means changes in values, behaviours, social norms, governance structures, economic systems, and technological innovations that enable us to live within planetary boundaries and address social inequalities. (Leach et al., 2012). Long-term sustainability refers to the capacity of a system to maintain its functions and characteristics over a long period of time without degrading or losing its capacity to perform essential ecological, economic, and social functions. (Wiek et al., 2011: 142)

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Some key aspects related to transformation for long term sustainability include the need for a systemic change, which includes addressing the root causes of unsustainable practices rather than just treating the systems. Some key considerations regarding the intersection of transformation for sustainability and gender include, gender mainstreaming, which involves addressing the inequalities in all aspects of sustainability efforts. Transformation for long-term sustainability should also prioritise the empowerment of women, by providing women with equal access to resources, opportunities and decision making.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

In critiquing transformation for long-term sustainability there is a need to consider the complexity of the topic, which is wide and complex, making its operationalization and practicality difficult for short-term projects. The concept can also exclude vulnerable groups and concentrate on groups with greater access to decision-making processes and resources, excluding vulnerable groups (such as women in rural areas).

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Timeframe: To assess transformation or change, years or even decades are needed. As a result, the longer impact of the project can only be assessed years after the same has finished. Thus, limiting the analysis.

Oversimplification: Sustainability is a complex concept due to its multifaceted nature. Achieving sustainability involves a general approach that considers the interconnection between social and ecological systems. Conceptualizing the same for a delimited project on time will lead to gaps.



Interdisciplinary approach: Linked and contrary to the oversimplification, including a sustainability viewpoint implies the inclusion of disciplines from different fields and combining approaches that will enrich the analysis and tackle factors that are often overlooked.

Context specific: Environmental, social and economic change varies depending on the context, whether it is local or regional. The approaches to assess transformation need to be tailored to the specificities of each location, making it sometimes difficult to scale up or compare. Nonetheless, this can result also in a richer debate.

RELEVANCE OF TRANSFORMATION TO FLIARA PROJECT

The benefits of a sustainable gender perspective for the FLIARA Project:

Sustainable transformation research or debates sometimes fail to include a gender perspective, ignoring the positive contribution gender studies make to achieve an inclusive and equitable future. Were FLIARA to include this perspective, the outcomes of such research would bring novel results.

The benefits of including rural realities: At the same time, not only gender, but including the specifics of rural narratives in transformation analysis also will result in very positive outcomes for FLIARA and policy-makers, since it will shed light on shadowed dynamics that can lead to substantial change.

Intersectionality: Talking about transformation, means talking about different disciplines and realities. Putting transformation as a pivotal concept will force the inclusion of a wide range of concepts and disciplines, enriching the outcomes of FLIARA.

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INNOVATION PERSPECTIVE

CONCEPT NOTE 20: INNOVATION PROCESS

A common idea is that innovations proceed in a series of steps starting from motivation to innovation, leading to concrete innovations and finally to their potential diffusion. Market and economic innovation processes typically include idea generation and mobilization, screening and advocacy, experimentation, commercialization, and diffusion and implementation (Desouza et al., 2009). The technological innovation process usually starts with the initial recognition of the technical feasibility and the assessment of potential market demands. This may lead to idea formulation, problem-solving, solution (solution through invention; solution through adoption), development (identify issues and scale up) and utilisation and diffusion (implementation and use) of the innovation (Meissner and Kotsemir, 2016.). Social innovation processes typically consist of: generating new ideas by understanding societal needs and by identifying potential solutions to them; developing, prototyping, and piloting the ideas into innovations; assessing, scaling up, and diffusing good ideas, and learning, adapting and evolving.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

For example, in social innovation literature social innovations and their impacts have been evaluated through distinguishing nine key dimensions of the innovation process: 1) a trigger for innovation, consisting of collective and individual needs; 2) the way actors perceive the context where they operate; 3) ideas, values and willingness of actors to start innovation processes; 4) preparatory activities grounding social innovation creation; 5) reconfiguring governance, attitudes and knowledge as concrete innovations; 6) procedures and practices required to concretize the social innovation; 7) outputs; 8) impacts of outputs, and 9) learning processes (feedback loops).

In FLIARA we simplify this model and propose that female-led innovation processes include 1) triggers/motivators for innovations; 2) preparatory activities; 3) concrete innovations; 4) impacts of innovations and 5) diffusion of innovations through different forms of scaling.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Matters of gender equality, power and social justice have not traditionally been key areas of interest in innovation processes. For example, gender and other socio-cultural dimensions have largely been neglected in energy innovation processes. Furthermore, Ranga and Etzkowitz (2010:1) point out that although “issues pertaining to women’s access, participation, advancement and reward” have begun to receive more attention also in the areas of innovation, technology and entrepreneurship, there is lack of knowledge about changes that are happening and mechanisms behind them. These fields have traditionally been “characterized either by gender-blindness or male dominance”, which has impacted research and knowledge production regarding innovation processes (ibid).



Social innovations are perceived to have potential to address complex societal challenges and thus research on them has increased in the recent years. However, several relevant aspects still remain to be explored, such as the impact of gendered norms and patterns on the transition from social exclusion to social inclusion, which is often strived for in social innovation processes. (Lindberg et al., 2016.)

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

The FLIARA framework recognizes that female-led innovation journeys in rural areas include a series of steps. The innovation journey starts from aspirations related to enhancing rural lives or from responding to existing sustainability challenges and/or to emerging diverse crises. Yet, innovations might sometimes simply be motivated by individual career and family well-being considerations, even if they end up benefitting the respective rural communities more broadly.

The female-led innovations are thus motivated by current realities in rural areas. These realities may lead to a decision to act and innovate, and eventually result in building concrete solutions. The concrete innovations can be economic, technological, social, cultural, environmental, or institutional, or include combinations of these dimensions. Innovations often have impacts on the contexts where they are implemented and practiced. FLIARA will look at these impacts in terms of dimensions of sustainability and gender equality.

FLIARA framework will also recognize that the female-led innovations can have incremental, disruptive, sustaining, and radical implications on rural gender (in)equalities. Female-led innovations can also diffuse through various forms of scaling. For example, the horizontally diffused innovations can have impacts on society and its gender relations, as well as on sustainable development.

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CONCEPT NOTE 21: INNOVATION AMBASSADORS

The concept of innovation ambassadors is a relatively new approach that has emerged in response to the growing recognition of the importance of innovation in today's economy. While there is no single disciplinary origin of this concept, it draws on ideas from several fields, including innovation management, organizational behaviour, and leadership. The concept of innovation ambassadors can be defined as individuals or teams who are designated to promote and facilitate innovation within an organization or community. These ambassadors serve as champions of innovation, inspiring and encouraging others to think creatively and take risks. They are responsible for identifying new opportunities for innovation, facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing, and driving the implementation of innovative projects and initiatives.

In a gender perspective, innovation ambassadors can be defined as individuals or teams who are designated to promote gender diversity and equity in innovation. They serve as advocates for gender equality in innovation, inspiring and encouraging women to participate and take leadership roles in innovation. They are responsible for identifying and addressing gender bias and barriers in innovation, facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing among diverse groups, and driving the implementation of gender-sensitive innovative projects and initiatives. While women-led social innovations have shown promise in addressing gender inequality in rural areas and contributing to rural development, they are unlikely to resolve all challenges on their own. Thus, these social innovations should be seen as part of an ongoing, cyclical process towards sustainability, with subsequent initiatives building upon previous progress. Further research is needed to apply and test the proposed framework using a larger number of case studies and to explore the diverse feminist literature in examining social innovations for gender equity.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The concept of innovation ambassadors has been applied in policy in various ways, with the goal of fostering a culture of innovation and driving economic growth. Governments and public institutions have established innovation policies and strategies that involve the appointment of innovation ambassadors to drive innovation in their respective sectors. The European Commission has established an Innovation Union Policy, which includes the appointment of Innovation Ambassadors. These ambassadors work to promote the development of innovation ecosystems across Europe and encourage the collaboration between industry, academia, and government.

The Swedish government has established an Innovation Council, which is composed of innovation ambassadors from various sectors. The council works to develop policies and initiatives to promote innovation across the country. Technology companies have been at the forefront of using innovation ambassadors to drive innovation. For example, Microsoft has established an Innovation Ambassador program, where employees are encouraged to develop innovative solutions and share them with their colleagues. The program helps to foster a culture of innovation within the organization and has resulted in the development of several successful products. Non-profit organizations have also



embraced the concept of innovation ambassadors to drive social innovation. For example, staff members are encouraged to develop innovative solutions to improve the organization's operations and services. Government agencies have also established innovation ambassador programs to drive innovation in public services. Universities have established innovation ambassador programs to promote entrepreneurship and innovation among students and faculty.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

WP3: The concept is relevant to the selection of Innovation Ambassadors as it provides a framework for identifying and nurturing local innovation talent and resources. The Innovation Ambassadors should be selected based on their knowledge and experience in a particular field or industry, as well as their ability to collaborate and communicate effectively with other stakeholders. It is essential that the Innovation Ambassadors have a deep understanding of the needs and challenges facing their local communities and the potential for innovation to address these issues.

WP4: The concept is highly relevant to the establishment and growth of Community of Practice Networks. By involving female innovators to take a central position as Innovation Ambassadors in the Community of Practice Network, it is possible to create a platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration among individuals who are deeply committed to driving innovation and economic development in their communities. Innovation Ambassadors can serve as catalysts for the establishment of Community of Practice Networks, by identifying key stakeholders and connecting them with one another. They can also play a critical role in promoting the value and benefits of Community of Practice Networks, and in encouraging other individuals and organizations.

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CONCEPT NOTE 22: NETWORK INNOVATION

The concept of *network innovation* emerged in the late 1990's and early 2000's as a result of a growing interest in the relationship between innovation and the structure of interorganisational networks. It is an interdisciplinary concept that draws on fields like management, sociology, economics, and innovation studies.

The origins of the concept can be found in the literature on social network analysis, which focuses on the study of relationships between individuals and organisations. Scholars such as Powell (1994), who emphasised the role of networks in facilitating innovation and learning and the importance of weak ties between people or organisations in shaping social outcomes, expanded on the concept.

Network innovation is the process by which innovations emerge and spread across interorganisational networks. It entails the creation of new ideas as well as the formation of relationships and collaborations among organisations that allow for the diffusion and adoption of these ideas. The concept emphasizes the significance of network structure, relationships, and dynamics in shaping the outcomes of innovation.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The concept of network innovation has been applied in policy and practice in various ways, promoting collaboration and networking among stakeholders: policies and initiatives such as the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) and the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) have been established to promote collaboration and networking among stakeholder in these fields.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

One of the main weaknesses of the concept is that it can be difficult to put into operation and measure in empirical research. Furthermore, as Baraldi et al. (2012) suggest, more attention should be given to the contextual factors that shape innovation in networks, including the role of power dynamics, culture, and social norms. On the other hand, Mendoza and Mentzakis (2014) argue that there is also a risk of overemphasizing the role of network structures and underestimating the relevance of individual actors, agency, and power dynamics in shaping innovation processes.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The concept of network innovations is a relatively new concept, and as such, there are several methodological implications involved in operationalizing this concept in research:

- 1. Complexity:** Network innovations involve the collaboration and coordination of multiple actors, which makes the innovation process more complex. This complexity makes it difficult to study network innovations using traditional research methods.
- 2. Multi-level Analysis:** Network innovations involve interactions between actors at different levels, including individuals, organizations, and networks. Therefore, research on network innovations needs to take into account these different levels of analysis.
- 3. Dynamic Nature:** The innovation process in networks is dynamic and constantly evolving.



RELEVANCE TO FLIARA PROJECT

WP6: T6.4: Dissemination of Knowledge and Results. The Community of Practice Networking Events, which aim to bring together actors from different sectors (such as policy makers, researchers, farmers, and innovation support service) may help to create new connections and promote a culture of innovation. This can lead to the emergence of new ideas, business opportunities, and partnerships that can drive sustainable development in rural areas. Here, the *network innovation* concept can provide a valuable framework for understanding and enhancing the impact of this activity, by highlighting the role of networks in promoting innovation and collaboration in rural areas, which will occur in T6.3: 'Creating Synergies with Existing initiatives with relevant EU-funded projects'.

WP4: The concept of network innovation is highly relevant in establishing the FLIARA Community of Practice Network as it provides a framework for identifying and understanding the critical elements necessary for innovation to occur. The concept can guide the selection of network members, the development of shared goals and objectives, and the design of effective communication and coordination mechanisms. Furthermore, network innovation can help overcome barriers to innovation, such as limited resources, lack of access to knowledge, and insufficient capacity.

WP5: The concept of innovation networks can be relevant in our policy design and assessment as it can provide a framework for understanding the complex and dynamic relationships between various actors and institutions involved in innovation processes. By analyzing the structure and characteristics of innovation networks, we can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the innovation ecosystem and develop targeted policy interventions to boost women-led innovation in farming and rural areas. In addition, the concept can be useful in assessing the effectiveness of existing policies and programs.

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CONCEPT NOTE 23: PESTE INNOVATION

PESTE analysis is a strategic tool used in business and organizational management to analyze and evaluate the external environmental factors that can impact a company or industry. The acronym PESTE stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Environmental factors. The origins of PESTE analysis can be traced back to the field of strategic management and its disciplinary roots in economics, sociology, and political science. The concept of analyzing external factors affecting a business was first introduced by Igor Ansoff in the 1960s, who proposed the use of a framework called the environmental turbulence model. However, the PESTE acronym and its specific focus on the five external factors were not introduced until later. Since then, various authors have contributed to the development and popularization of PESTE analysis as a strategic management tool (Porter, 1980).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

PESTE as a multidimensional and multidisciplinary analysis methodology has been applied primarily in strategic planning and management. As such, as a tool of applied research designed primarily for commercial organizations, PESTE analysis is the first stage of analysis when preparing for a decision anticipating innovation opportunities within a company. In this application, the objective when using PESTE is to strengthen the position on markets at all levels (from local to global), by increasing the competitiveness (Samusenko et al., 2020). In research, PESTE has been employed to integrate the three pillars of sustainability (environment, society, and economy) when researching new technologies, products, business models, or services.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Using dynamic performance indicators and sequential steps in its application, PESTE is generally used in the initial stages of an innovation project, namely the initial scientific and technical activities needed for an optimal planning and implementation. The three steps are: determining the limits of the environment to be analysed, defining a list of factors in each of the five areas and using them in order to evaluate the innovation opportunities according to three parameters. The three parameters are: nature of the influence of the factor (positive or negative), assess the strength of the influence of the studied factor and the degree of certainty of the factor in the process of implementation of innovation (Samusenko et al., 2020).

CONCEPT AND POLICY

Rural women continue to face serious disadvantages (Sachs 2018) compared not only to rural men, but also to urban women, and this “asymmetry” is not properly considered in the implementation of rural development strategies, programmes, and projects (European Parliament 2019).



CONCEPT CRITIQUE

- Lack of prioritization: PESTE analysis does not provide guidance on how to prioritize or weight external factors in terms of their significance or impact.
- Lack of depth: PESTE analysis provides a broad overview of external factors, but may not provide in-depth analysis or insight into specific factors.
- Time sensitivity: PESTE analysis is a snapshot of the external environment at a particular point in time, and may not account for changes in the external environment over time.
- Over-simplification: PESTE analysis can oversimplify complex issues by grouping external factors into broad categories, which may not capture the nuance or complexity of certain factors.
- Potential bias: The analysis may be biased based on the assumptions and perspectives of the analyst, which can limit the objectivity of the results.

Moreover, PESTE is not applicable for the analysis of systemic/structural factors - such as capitalism or patriarchy. As such, it is a tool of analysis which naturalises existing structures and proposes alternatives for innovations compatible with these existing structures (eg. economic growth - specific to capitalism, but not compatible with sustainable development within planetary boundaries).

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

WP1: The conceptual framework utilises the PESTE tool in developing the conceptual framework and understanding current gender issues.

WP2: PESTE analysis can be used in the co-creation of causal maps to identify the external factors that affect sustainability innovations. By incorporating PESTE analysis into the co-creation process, we can gain a deeper understanding of the external factors that may impact the sustainability innovations, and how these factors may interact with one another and with internal factors. Incorporating PESTE analysis can help us to identify opportunities and challenges, as well as potential solutions and strategies for addressing sustainability innovations.

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CONCEPT NOTE 24: WOMEN AND AKIS

Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) is a concept, which has rapidly evolved in last two decades, has changed its name and scope, linking now to EU policy. The primary aim of AKIS is to ensure that ‘knowledge is shared between everyone who uses and produces it, and that people are connected’ (EIP AGRI, 2021). There are two main dimensions of AKIS debates:

- 1) Contemporary agriculture reflects the importance of traditional actors (e.g. advisory services) in innovation, but also technology developers, NGOs, other non-specialised in agricultural services actors, etc. (Sutherland and Labarthe, 2022).
- 2) Changes in the way science envisages agricultural innovations, with growing focus on all dimensions of sustainability (addressing environmental issues, growing focus on social and non-technological innovation, etc.). As a result, farm advisors are expected to play new roles and become innovation brokers, influencers, or facilitators of innovation processes (Fieldsend et. Al., 2020).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The concept is most recently widely applied in research and post-2020 CAP preparation as ‘the collection of all people and organisations (together with associated processes and regulations) that generate, share and use knowledge and innovation (AgriLink, 2022). Regarding women’s role in AKIS, in European legislation, gender mainstreaming has been entitled in Articles 2 and 3 of the Amsterdam Treaty and ‘places an obligation on the Community to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between men and women in all its activities (European Commission, 2019). While men and women farmers share many responsibilities, they often have different production models, and needs relating to farming activities.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Critical weakness in methodological AKIS thinking is the implicit assumption that traditional actors (e.g. advisory services) continue to play central roles across the range of on-farm Innovation and adoption process (Sutherland and Labarthe, 2022). In a traditional perspective, AKIS is considered as a tool for enhancing productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural sector by “linear process” of innovation transfer (Knickel et al., 2009) and related to what have been defined by rural sociologists as the “modernization” paradigm of agriculture (Van der Ploeg et al., 2000).

CONCEPT AND POLICY

At the macro level, in 2007, EC introduced a legislation, which required member states to establish or maintain an AKIS, in order to ensure that farmers have access to knowledge and services related to cross compliance standards of EU farm support payments (Sutherland and Labarthe, 2022). In post-2020 CAP Preparation, European member states have been specifically required to include strategies for AKIS in their national strategic plans for the CAP 2023-2027. Some funding programmes, such as the EIP-AGRI, encourages the use of innovation brokers and its success of ‘innovation



process' depends primarily on inclusion of complementary forms of knowledge in the core partnership or through diverse AKIS members.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

AKIS has great relevance of the concept for **WP3** detecting the “innovative woman” – recognising how knowledge is produced, how it is shared and who uses it. Gender perspective in this concept (Women and AKIS) is so far mainly focused on successfulness of EU and national policies in addressing gender equality, less on different needs among women and men farmers regarding knowledge and advice. For example, key barriers to women's economic participation and visibility in agriculture are associated with access to land, education, and organisations (Dunne, et al., 2021).

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CONCEPT NOTE 25: WOMEN AND CO-INNOVATION

In 2012, the European Commission (EC) launched the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) as a tool for 'speeding up' innovation in agriculture, forestry and related sectors across the European Union (EU). The methodological foundation of the EC's EIP-AGRI concept is the Multi-Actor Approach (MAA) and its idea of co-creation on equal levels with all partners. The full set of various types of knowledge for multi-actor co-creation and co-innovation includes scientific but also practice-related knowledge including tacit knowledge, which is difficult to harvest and disseminate. The innovations generated in multi-actor projects tend to deliver solutions, which are well adapted to circumstances and which are easier to implement than classical innovation developed in laboratories and tested under research settings. Hence, the participatory process is favourable to speeding up the introduction, dissemination, and acceptance of the new ideas (FAO, 2013).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The Multi-Actor Model has been applied widely in EIP-AGRI projects on the national (Operational Groups) and on European level (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe). The underlying methodological requirements apply to thousands of projects and ten-thousands of beneficiary organisations, which receive(d) funding under the EIP-AGRI. Due to the novelty of the concept and the introduction of associated terms, it is important to agree on a common understanding when applying the 'Interactive Innovation Approach (IAA)' or 'Co-innovation'. The term 'Co-innovation' the one more commonly used internationally.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In real life settings, co-innovation is often not the most efficient way for the development of innovative products or solutions. However, the expectation is that it is more effective in the long-term (impact). 'Classic' innovation processes require the involvement of end-user for testing. This can be realised through co-innovation. However, often developers of the novel products or services apply 'classic' structures for this kind of collaboration and stick to hierarchies in their communication and data collection. This way, they would not meet the requirements of collaboration and communication on equal levels with their end-users as requested by the multi-actor approach. Just to note, classic innovation processes can also fail and use resources inefficiently and ineffectively.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

The methodological approach of multi-actor co-innovation is one specific branch of innovation related methods. It is not better nor worse than classic innovation. Instead, it is important to assess the given context of where which type of innovation takes place and when which method is the most appropriate to solve the particular research questions or sustainability challenge. Both innovation approaches (co-innovation and classic) refer to all types of innovation processes, technical, organisational and social. However, the co-innovation approach will be always strongly associated with social aspects (soft skills, learning and communication processes).



CONCEPT AND POLICY

Local-level policy implementers (e.g., managing, granting and paying authorities) find it very challenging to finance these kinds of projects, which apply the IAA and might not deliver measurable output and impact. For that reason, it took a long time for many Member States to offer the funding measures for Operational Groups. Many administrative hurdles are still in place. Moreover, the projectification of long-term collaboration for innovation is a contradiction in itself.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

There are two dimensions of relevance for FLIARA:

- 1) FLIARA's performance steering its own IAA within the consortium.
- 2) FLIARA's analyses of gender roles when other projects implement more or less well the IIA, and based on these insights, the cooperation with other Multi-Actor-Projects from the Horizon Family in order to contribute to strengthening the AKIS.

For 1) FLIARA is one of the numerous EU-funded research and innovation projects, which have to implement the multi-actor model and the associated co-innovation (interactive innovation) approach. In the case of FLIARA, the co-innovation methods applied in practice will have to steer the cooperation on equal levels between the research and education partner (in excess) with the involved non-academic partners. Continuous critical review and reflection of the working processes among consortium partners will be needed to ensure the application of the IIA among consortium partners. Co-creation methods applied for the cooperation of research partners from different disciplines alone does not include meeting the requirements of the Multi-Actor model and the IAA.

For 2) The following hypothesis is based on random observations only. For that reason, it requires verification or falsification – maybe, done in FLIARA or in another study.

Observation: Male participants in MA projects tend to delegate the organisational and communication work to female colleagues. **Hypothesis:** Many male researchers or other innovation process leaders avoid taking the responsibility and the lead for the implementation of the interactive innovation approach in practice. If this hypothesis is true, what follows? Is the IIA taken less seriously than innovation processes with a technical focus by a large number of researchers, technicians or entrepreneurs? What would this mean for the spreading of co-innovation and the related expectation from policy to speed up innovation through it?

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CONCEPT NOTE 26: WOMEN AND LEADER SUPPORT

Improving the gender balance: through CAP specific objectives, the LEADER programme and Local Action Groups (LAGs) are required to promote gender equality and encourage the participation of women in rural development and agriculture. This means that they must ensure that women have equal opportunities to participate in the program, and that their specific needs and challenges are taken into account in the design and implementation of the program. For example, LAGs can give priority to projects that have a strong gender focus, provide funding and support to women entrepreneurs and innovators, and promote networking and collaboration among women in rural areas.

Under the LEADER program, projects can be funded that focus on improving access to technology and promoting gender equality in the use of technology in agriculture and rural areas. For example, LEADER funding can be used to support the development of rural broadband infrastructure, which can help ensure that women in agriculture and other businesses in rural areas have access to information and market opportunities online. LEADER can also support training and education initiatives that help women farmers learn how to use new technologies, such as precision agriculture tools or farm management software. This can include gender-sensitive training programs that take into account the specific needs and constraints of women.

Another important aspect of the LEADER program is its focus on promoting networking and collaboration among local communities. By bringing together women in rural areas and other stakeholders, the program can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices related to the use of technology in agriculture. This can help women in rural areas build social capital and strengthen their capacity to innovate and adapt to changing market conditions. Cooperation actions under the LEADER program can also play an important role in promoting the use of technology in rural areas and agriculture from a gender perspective.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

LEADER Measures can include:

- **Providing funding opportunities:** The LEADER program provides funding opportunities for projects that aim to support sustainable rural development and agriculture. Women entrepreneurs and innovators are encouraged to apply for funding to support their projects.
- **Offering training and support:** The program provides training and support to women entrepreneurs and innovators to help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. This includes training on entrepreneurship, marketing, and financial management.
- **Incorporating a gender perspective:** The LEADER program ensures that a gender perspective is incorporated into all aspects of its work, including project selection, evaluation, and monitoring. This means that projects are evaluated not only on their economic viability but also on their potential to promote gender equality.
- **Encouraging women's participation in decision-making:** The program encourages women's participation in decision-making processes, including



participation on Local Action Groups (LAGs) that make decisions about which projects to fund.

- **Raising awareness:** The program raises awareness about the importance of gender equality and the benefits of women's participation in rural development and agriculture through various campaigns and events.
- **Recognizing and celebrating women's achievements:** The program recognizes and celebrates the achievements of women in rural development and agriculture through various awards and recognition programs.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

In terms of recognizing and supporting female-led innovations, ELARD plays a role in advocating for gender equality and promoting the participation of women in rural development. Here are some examples of how ELARD recognizes and supports female-led innovations:

- Inclusion of gender equality in ELARD's strategic objectives: ELARD's strategic objectives include promoting gender equality in rural development and encouraging the participation of women in decision-making processes.
- Recognition of successful female-led projects: ELARD recognizes successful projects that are led by women or have a significant impact on women in rural areas. For example, ELARD has highlighted projects that focus on women's entrepreneurship, women's leadership, and women's access to education and training.
- Advocacy for gender-sensitive policies: ELARD advocates for policies that are sensitive to gender issues and promote the participation of women in rural development. ELARD participates in policy dialogue with the European Commission and other stakeholders to ensure that gender equality is integrated into rural development policies and programs.

The inclusion of ELARD as a FLIARA partner will allow the inclusion of key aspects of the LEADER programme to be considered within the case study development in WP3 and also the Community of Practice in WP4

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CONCEPT NOTES: GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

CONCEPT NOTE 27: GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORKS

Achieving gender equality is a complex, transversal and multidimensional task. Despite increasing political commitment and awareness, its effective realisation remains challenged by many factors, including cultural barriers and stereotypes, and insufficient institutional capacity.

Recent insights focus on feminist governance as a broad concept used to discuss feminist institutions, organising, advocacy networks, and policy-making tools at the national and transnational levels (Shin 2016). Feminist governance frameworks refer e.g., gender equality bodies) and *policy-making tools* within political institutions to promote policy making that takes gender into account. The effectiveness of feminist governance is shaped not only by the institutional conditions, but also by actors, who work in these institutions and use these tools.

Therefore, feminist governance refers to the institutions and tools developed within political institutions to advance the inclusion of a gender perspective in policy making, while providing institutional continuity and stability to gender equality policy making (Elomaki and Kantola, 2022). Gender mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to institutional activities, from policy development to research, advocacy, and resource allocation (True and Mintrom 2001).

CONCEPT APPLICATION

Gender equality is both a goal in itself in the 2030 Agenda (SDG 5) and a cross-cutting catalyst for accelerating progress in nearly every other SDG, from tackling poverty and malnutrition, to improving children's education and health and supporting more sustainable consumption patterns (UN Women, 2018). Gender mainstreaming is a powerful strategy to guide the whole-of-government process of promoting gender equality. The 2030 Agenda encourages governments to align their national strategies with the overall implementation of the SDGs, including through the design of dedicated national action plans with gender-sensitive considerations.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Feminism itself is a contested term, which can be filled with multiple meanings. A related critique has been directed at gender mainstreaming, which is often implemented by actors that have little awareness of gender questions (Verloo 2001). Crises and the mechanisms to manage them often entrench the power of particular economic and gender orders and constrain the possibilities and space for contestation and critique (Griffin 2015), also making feminist governance vulnerable. Research shows that gender-focused bodies and gender mainstreaming have been sidelined at times of economic crisis (Guerrina, 2017) and gender perspectives have only been accepted in instrumental and diluted forms that dismiss feminist critique of dominant economic ideas and policies.



CONCEPT AND POLICY

Government bureaucracies, parliaments and international organisations are increasingly adopting feminist principles such as promoting norms of gender equality, applying a gender lens to policies and consulting with grassroots organisations. Such norms are reinforced through transnational monitoring, reporting and ranking of gender equality policy implementation and through pressure exerted by women's movements outside the state. Institution-building remains precarious and there is wide variation in the degree to which feminist governance has been mainstreamed within governance institutions, in how it is incorporated into day-to-day operations, and even in what 'mainstreaming' means in practice across varying institutional locations. However, there is a gap between policy and practice.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

- **WP2**, to analyse and support the role of women in the innovations demanded for sustainable farm and rural futures in a gender perspective
- **WP5**, to draw insight and achieve gender equality, policies, programmes, and projects that can integrate gender mainstreaming at all phases, designing more effective policy and governance frameworks and knowledge and innovation systems and aid the Campaign of Visibility in **WP6**.

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CONCEPT NOTE 28: POLICY FRAMEWORKS

This concept of policy framework is not mentioned in the paper itself. So, it appears to be more of an outsider's view that establishes that policy is not working, but it does not show insight under the hood of what can be improved to make it run. Williams (2023, p. 18) also sees that 'Spatial planning provides a vision and policy framework for development.' This framework includes the following five tools: 1) Visionary, 2) Strategic, 3) Framework Setting, 4) Capacity Building and 5) Regulatory.

Framework setting as a tool includes that planning 'contains policies, proposals and other criteria that provide a non-binding reference for other plans' (Williams, 2023, p. 18). So, planning provides a policy framework, but within that framework, framework setting is a distinct tool. This is related to the fact that in the UK there is a specific tool the 'National planning policy framework' (MHCLG, 2021) and so the term policy framework is used for one of the tools. This illustrates the complexities of the concept. However, the tools distinguished by Williams can play a role in the project's work.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The term policy framework can also be considered to be a frame of reference. In a rather old Dictionary of Sociology, 'frame of reference' is defined as follows:

'A universe of discourse (...); a connected set of "facts" and "axioms" in reference to which members of a group do their thinking, their defining of situations, their conceiving of personal and group roles in such situations, and their communicating of such thoughts and attitudes.' (Eliot, 1944, p. 123)

Gender can be considered as a 'primary frame' (Ridgeway, 2009, p. 145) of reference in society. Next to relatively enduring frames of reference, there are more fluid ones that can be changed more easily by performing actions. Processes of naming and framing play an important role in programming actions and policies for change. Rein and Schön (1993) illustrate the importance of naming and framing by referring to *The Feminine Mystique* by Friedan (1963): "Female subserviency" both named the phenomenon she found so troubling and carries with it the remedy of "female liberation".' (Rein and Schön, 1993, p. 153).

So, the naming and framing of situations in relation to female-led initiatives in agriculture and rural areas, may be a way to organise a programme for change that is to develop a policy framework that is beneficial to these initiatives. However, there is a difference between framing and a policy framework.

An example is a comparative analysis of organic farming in Austria, Italy and Spain by Darnhofer et al. (2019). Although there is the same policy framework of the Common Agricultural Policy in place, there are distinctions in the national framing of organic farming explaining differences in the uptake of organic farming within the same policy framework.



CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Main weakness of the concept is that it is rarely used in a conceptual sense. It is used to indicate that policy frameworks must change, but it is not that much used as a concept to define how a policy framework works. What are the elements of a policy framework? How can these be analysed?

Another weakness is that a specific tool in national spatial planning in the UK is called policy framework. This is a specific document, for a specific type of policies and does not include the whole policy framework (it also does not include a gender perspective (although the aim for 'healthy, inclusive and safe places' (MHCLG, 2021, p. 27) may be used to back-up policies that are gender inclusive). So, it may be better to use a different concept if the aim is to achieve conceptual clarity. However, if a certain vagueness of meaning is the aim, the concept of policy framework can be an excellent choice.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

The concept of policy framework can be used in FLIARA for example as one of the categories to be benchmarked in an exercise for policymakers. It is openness provides opportunities for us to define what we will address under this heading. Furthermore, it may appeal to the people we like to address for benchmarking.

We must, based on literature and frameworks used for policy analysis define the criteria to assess this policy framework in relation to the FLIARA objectives.

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CONCEPT NOTE 29: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

The main emphasis of the discipline of law is what should be the norm and how different, seemingly conflicting principles, must be harmonised in specific cases. After all, there are many legal principles and there is a need of balancing these. The legal framework is so a system resulting in legal doctrine. Legal doctrine “...aims to give a systematic exposition of the principles, rules and concepts governing a particular legal field or institution and analyses the relationship between these principles, rules and concepts with a view to solving unclarities and gaps in the existing law.” (Smits, 2017)

Within the pure core of legal scrutiny, there is not much emphasis on the law in action. Courts only speak about cases they get offered to decide on and this is not a representative sample of practice. The way how behaviour and societies are structured is based on laws and other formal norms. There is here a wide variety of adjacent social scholarly approaches (including legal anthropology) to study legal practices. Specific to these fields is that they are typically quite small. Many of the practices are under-researched as for both lawyers and many social scientists it is over the edge of their domain of interests. So, the law provides information on what the legal framework is, and social-science disciplines such as sociology or law, provide insights into the way how this legal framework structures behaviour.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The concept of legal framework has also been used to analyse contracting practices of authorities in the European Union, including obligations to have gender equality plans or comparable documents as a precondition to qualify as a potential contract party (Sarter et al. 2023). While, research in legal doctrine provides insight into how different legal principles is brought together and applied in a specific context. Such research can be of relevance to indicate whether certain proposals to support female-led innovations may meet the legal framework. In this example it is about the position of these innovations in relation to government contracting, but which instruments can also apply to non-government contracting practices.

The concept of legal framework in itself has no major weaknesses, the weakness relates to what approach is needed for FLIARA. The whole set-up of the consortium, the objectives and the description of action do not prescribe an action towards the development of the legal framework. The framework is a context for the research and may function as a norm to judge current practices. An important weakness is the gap between norms and reality. Studying legal doctrine will not reveal insights into the extent to which this gap exists and the initiatives that address it. This gender gap may be input for the benchmark.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Throughout history, the legal framework has not been positive for female initiatives. Often the independence of females has been restricted by the law. Current institutions have been fed by older legal frameworks that restricted female-led initiatives. The question is whether current legal frameworks may have to develop further in a direction to support female-led initiatives when needed. There are all kinds of equal opportunity frameworks developed that aim to support this aim. Here, there is a larger emphasis on equal opportunity policies for large enterprises, than for farms (although in most regions the gender presence in large companies is more balanced than in the formal farm holdings).



The history of how corporate legal personality has developed is a topic of relevant societal interest. It was already the topic of the PhD of Max Weber (1889) and the legal framework that allows transferring of rights of people to corporations and its relationship with the question of what obligations come with that may be of relevance for the study of female-led initiatives and the rural context in which there is a tension between natural persons and companies. A very specific form within this is the family enterprise, such as a family farm, in which, historically, females only after the demise of the 'family father' could become independent in leading it (Weber, 1889: 45; Bull, 2004). Although the formal legal framework has changed, practice lags behind: the female share of farmland holdings in the EU is higher at ages above 65 years than at younger generations (i.e., 22% of land held by farmers over 65 is held by females and only 17% of land held by farmers under 40 is held by females (based on EUROSTAT, 2023).

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

- There are many legal scholars who have studied the gender perspective in relation to legal frameworks.
- Legal frameworks exist for domains as gender equality, land and property markets, business law, and family law, which may be all relevant for both gender and rural perspectives.
- There is often a large gap between current legal frameworks (safeguarding equal rights and opportunities) and the facts on the ground.
- The legal framework formulates so a set of formal and established norms that can be used as frame of reference to categorise practices.

The overall objective of **WP5** is to design more effective policy and governance frameworks, using insight developed in legal frameworks could boost women-led innovation in rural areas.

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CONCEPT NOTE 30: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Originating in the United States in the 1960s, the practice and policy of affirmative action revolved around an active effort to improve educational and employment opportunities for minority groups, including women. Affirmative action involves government directives or voluntary programmes that can identify and promote disadvantaged groups and overcome discrimination. The concept embraces the notion that just removing existing obstacles is not enough to change the position of those that are disadvantaged. In our case, women, specific steps are needed to alter the inequality that exists (Herring and Henderson, 2011).

Burzynska and Contreras (2020: 729) define affirmative action as a “generic term for policies aimed at encouraging and supporting under-represented groups within a workplace”. This definition, however, is narrow in its scope and fails to identify under-representation in other areas of society, such as education, governance structures, and other aspects of society and business. The key objective is to improve representation in fields where members of those groups have been historically or currently underrepresented due to institutionalized forms of discrimination and oppression (Sabbagh, 2011); in the case of the FLIARA project, women.

CONCEPT APPLICATION

The advantage of considering affirmative action within a conceptual framework lies in the possibilities it allows for rural women with the area of innovation and entrepreneurship. Historically, entrepreneurial activities are dominated by men, although women are carving out a space for themselves within innovation and business. In a rural context, however, women are lagging behind their male counterparts in business start-ups and entrepreneurship. As such, allowing additional advantages, such as starter grants, scholarships, or targeted programmes for women considering innovation, can have a positive outcome and a longer-term benefit for the broader rural areas.

Research by the European Commission on international perspectives of Affirmative action, identified Affirmative action as an effective and legitimate strategy for addressing past issues of inequality and unequal access for specific groups and for bringing about change in the private and voluntary sector (Archibong and Sharps, 2013). Although the term affirmative action had varied connotations depending on national contexts, there was an overwhelming consensus that it is also a compelling and legitimate strategy and acknowledged as a valuable tool for creating a workforce that is more reflective of and responsive to the needs of local communities.

CONCEPT CRITIQUE

Affirmative action is often criticised and is politically shunned for being ineffective in targeting those who need it most or failing to reduce levels of inequality. Critique of the concept also lies around the very definition of affirmative action, which can undermine the reform's legitimacy and diminish its impact by limiting the kind of reforms that are 'allowed' and alienating those targeted.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

To fully understand the factors and societal variables involved in closing the gender gap, more in-depth qualitative research like that conducted by Alemu et al. (2022) is



necessary. Their study suggests further investigation into why the unadjusted and adjusted probabilities of implementing affirmative action legislation did not close the difference in wages, educational attainment, or managerial positions for single women with low levels of educational attainment in the workforce. Together, these results suggest that policymakers should involve stakeholders in the continuous revision of affirmative action policy in order to close the gender gap in governmental organisations.

As such affirmative action can be viewed as policies that attempt to right inequality and injustices; therefore, it should not be confused with employment equality, where all people should be treated equally, including women. However, the methodological implications of affirmative action are different in that it allows for policies that provide an advantage to those that have been unjustly treated. One consideration here is within the boundaries of the thirty-year-old LEADER programme and target calls for women-led innovations that could potentially provide women with that initial advantage they require for entrepreneurship.

RELEVANCE TO THE FLIARA PROJECT

The relevance of this concept to FLIARA is evident in **WP5** to draw insight and achieve gender equality, policies, programmes, and projects that can integrate gender mainstreaming at all phases and aid the Campaign of Visibility in **WP6**. This includes planning, implementing, and continuously assessing initiatives. While affirmative action through inclusive innovation will also consider the diversity of both the actors and the activities, it will also need a complete understanding of the different types of innovators and the most important structural factors (like social expectations, cultural norms, regulations, politics, place, religion, etc.) that affect their activities within ecosystems (Vorley et al., 2022).

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APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND KEY DEFINITIONS

FLIARA Glossary of Terms and Key Definitions

The FLIARA project glossary of terms and key definitions (Appendix B) will promote a common understanding and act as a reference for terms and phrases that are utilised throughout the FLIARA project. The glossary and key definitions have been devised as part of the co-creation process of the conceptual framework and concept note (Appendix B).

Term	Definition
Actor	A partner who participates in project activities is referred to as an actor . The project partners and team members involved in developing, co-creating, and implementing the project tasks, deliverables, and innovations make up the FLIARA actors.
Adaptive Cycle	In the framework of promoting resilience and sustainable development, adaptive cycles refer to the dynamic and cyclical process of change and adaptation. An adaptive cycle can involve growth (a period of development), conservation (system stabilises), release (system experiences a shock or disturbance) and reorganisation, (system seeks new ways of functioning).
Affirmative Action	Affirmative Action seeks to identify policies and measures that will remove roadblocks that marginalise women and actively promote additional opportunities and advantages until women can “level the playing field” in relation to innovation.
AKIS	Agricultural Knowledge Innovation Systems refers to the coordination and interaction of individuals, groups, and organizations that use, create, and advance knowledge and innovation in the disciplines of agriculture and closely related ones. Farmers, advisers, researchers, (farmer) organizations, retailers, media, services, and ministries are the key participants in the AKIS because they all produce and require knowledge. By improving knowledge transfers among AKIS participants and fortifying ties between research and practice, the goal is to establish a regional or national innovation ecosystem.



Anti-Feminism	Anti-feminism is the opposition to or analyse of feminist ideals, objectives, and practices. The idea of gender equality, the necessity of tackling gender-based discrimination, and the campaigning for women's rights may be contested or rejected by antifeminist individuals or organisations.
Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	The CAP is the European Union agricultural policy, established under Article 33 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.
Community of Practice (CoP)	Communities of practice bring stakeholders with different knowledge perspectives together to strengthen their capacity to work and learn creatively together while harnessing the collective knowledge to deliver integrated policy work and overcome silo mentalities.
Co-creation	A collaborative process in which numerous stakeholders actively contribute to the generation, sharing, and application of knowledge is referred to as co-creation . It combines many viewpoints, areas of knowledge, and life experiences to generate fresh perceptions, comprehensions, and answers. It can help to dissolve barriers between practice, policy, and the scientific community so that society as a whole can address problems like gender inequality.
Co-innovation	Co-innovation is the collaborative effort of multiple stakeholders to share and create new and improved knowledge, expertise and/or design. It involves sharing resources, knowledge and expertise to foster and lever creativity, accelerate the innovation process to achieve mutual benefits.
De-globalisation	De-globalisation is a response to people's feelings of helplessness in directing their life. It has emerged in response to concerns of economic dependence, environmental sustainability and increasing homogeneity. In response, there is a greater emphasis on regional and local economic development opening up opportunities to promote domestic industries for production and consumption.
Digitalisation	Digitalisation is the process of continuously integrating digital technologies and digital data into all aspects of society and the economy. With its European Digital Strategy 2020–2025, the European



	Commission is spearheading the transition to a healthy planet and a new digital world, which is one of its top goals.
Digital Entrepreneurship	Digital entrepreneurship embraces all new ventures and the transformation of existing businesses by creating and using novel digital technologies. Digital enterprises are characterised by a high intensity of utilisation of novel digital technologies (particularly social media, big data analytics, mobile and cloud solutions) to improve business operations, invent new business models, sharpen business intelligence, and engage with customers and stakeholders.
Digital Game Changers	Digital game changers are innovative technologies that profoundly alter a variety of societal spheres (economic, social, environmental, and cultural).
EIP-AGRI	European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability is a European policy tool for participatory innovation for agriculture and rural development. EIP-AGRI works to increase the agricultural industry's productivity, efficiency and sustainability of agriculture. EIP-AGRI offers a great platform for projects involving several actors, such as the involvement of female business owners and female farmers.
Female Entrepreneurship	Within the context of the FLIARA project, entrepreneurship is the term used to describe the act of a woman beginning, expanding, and managing a business or initiative. It requires that women take the initiative, generate fresh ideas, and assume the risks associated with starting and running their own enterprises. In the EU, women can take part in a wide range of activities that are classified as entrepreneurship, such as founding new businesses, managing those that already exist, or working for themselves.
Extension Advisory	Extension advisory services also known as agricultural extension services, offer farmers, rural communities, and other stakeholders in agriculture and rural livelihoods useful information, training, and support. Extension advisory services' main objective is to raise agricultural production, sustainability, and profitability while fostering rural development and enhancing the well-being of rural inhabitants.
Female Led Innovation	Female or women-led innovative practices, values, goods, services, and governance structures that are led or significantly influenced by women and emerge from rural contexts can support some or all aspects



	of sustainable rural development, including advancements in gender equality.
Gendered Communication	Gendered communication has the potential for unequal treatment, representation or opportunities that different genders may face in different modes of communication. It can manifest through intentional or unintentional forms through language, stereotypes and/or different levels of access to various platforms.
Gender and Social Constructs	FLIARA understands gender to refer to socio-cultural processes that shape identities, behaviours, values, norms, knowledge's etc. In this way, FLIARA examines how society 'does gender' (practices, values, norms, roles) and how 'gender is done' by others (policy makers, bankers, rules, and regulations). Positioning gender as a social construct allows FLIARA to investigate social relations, context, power dynamics and women's own agency within the framework of rural innovative ecosystems.
Gender Conflict Theory	Gender conflict theory looks into power dynamics, social conflicts, and gender-based oppression and discrimination-based conflicts. The emphasis of this theory, often referred to as feminist conflict theory or the feminist perspective on conflict, is on the gender dynamics that affect social interactions, institutions, and systems, as well as how these dynamics affect social inequality.
Gender Equality	Equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for all people, regardless of gender, is referred to as gender equality . It entails making sure that everyone, regardless of gender, has equal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making authority in all spheres of life, including politics, employment, education, and social engagement.
Gender Mainstreaming	Gender mainstreaming is both a concept and an approach whereby a gender perspective should be incorporated into all policies, programmes, and activities across all societal levels and sectors. In the design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of programmes, it involves taking into account the various needs, experiences, and contributions of women, men, and multiple gender identities.
Gender Norms	Gender Norms are standards and expectations to which women and men generally conform, within a range that defines a particular society, culture and community at that point in time. Such norms can change over



	time and cultures but for women can often reflect traditional and stereotypical beliefs about femininity.
Gender Support and Training	Gender support and training initiatives are supported to advance gender equality, dispel gender norms, and address gender-based prejudice and inequality. They are designed to give people and organizations the information, abilities, and resources needed to advance gender equality in a variety of settings.
Globalisation	Globalisation refers to the phenomenon of the opening up of economies and borders. It results from the increase in trade and capital movements, the movement of people and ideas and the spread of information, knowledge and technology. Globalisation is the source of many opportunities for the European Union (EU), such as lower prices and greater choice for consumers. However, due to competition from low-wage countries, it can also have downsides, including job loss and downward pressures on wages and working conditions, as well as the relocation of jobs outside of the EU (off-shoring).
Governance Frameworks	Governance framework in relation to women relates to resolving gender imbalances, advancing gender equality and including gender perspectives into governance processes and institutions. Such frameworks can serve as a roadmap for the creation and execution of laws, plans and programmes to improve gender equality.
Innovation	Innovation within the FLIARA project is female innovation, which constitute a distinct type of innovation that may be technological, political, social and/or link to markets. The distinctive feature of female-led innovations links to gender and to the common disadvantages shaping the lives of rural female innovators and other rural women. We consider that female-led innovations: 1) can advance gender equality, even when they do not address equality explicitly), 2) offer a plausible pathway for social change that is more ethical than a pathway discriminating female-led innovations, 3) are political by definition, if not through their political agenda, then through the performativity embedded in female-led innovations, and 4) may be individual or collective, but also innovations led by individual women are linked to collective agency by women, and 5) should normatively be promoted by policy support to advance more ethical and more equal social change.
Innovation Ambassadors	The concept of innovation ambassadors can be defined as individuals or teams who are designated to promote and facilitate innovation within an organization or community. These ambassadors serve as champions



	<p>of innovation, inspiring and encouraging others to think creatively and take risks. They are responsible for identifying new opportunities for innovation, facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing, and driving the implementation of innovative projects and initiatives.</p>
Innovation Ecosystems	<p>An innovation ecosystem, within the context of the FLIARA project is the term used to describe the interconnected network of people, groups, institutions, and resources that work together to promote innovation and entrepreneurship that can support and empower rural women and boost their innovation capacity.</p>
Innovation Processes	<p>A common idea is that innovations proceed in a series of steps starting from motivation to innovate, leading to concrete innovations and finally to their potential diffusion. In FLIARA we propose that female-led innovation processes include 1) triggers / motivators for innovations; 2) preparatory activities; 3) concrete innovations; 4) impacts of innovations and 5) diffusion of innovations through different forms of scaling</p>
Intersectionality	<p>Intersectionality is a concept that recognizes the complexity and interconnectedness of social identities (such as but not limited to gender, race, sexual orientation, economic situation etc.) and how they condition the embodied experiences of individuals from different social categories in different power relations.</p>
LEADER	<p>A project of the European Union's rural development policy is the LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) programme. By encouraging sustainable and integrated local development techniques, it seeks to strengthen rural communities. Local Action Groups (LAGs), which bring together members from the public, private, and civil society sectors at the local level, are used to implement LEADER. Innovative projects that help the social, economic, and environmental advancement of rural communities can get money and support from the programme.</p>
Long-term Sustainability	<p>The ability of a system, organization, or community to maintain its economic, social, and environmental well-being over a prolonged period without causing resource depletion, harming others, or jeopardizing the requirements of future generations is referred to as long-term sustainability. To secure a resilient and successful future, it entails implementing practices and initiatives that balance economic growth, social fairness, and environmental stewardship.</p>



Multi-Actor Approach	<p>A multi-actor approach aims to make innovation fully demand-driven, involving all the relevant actors, with complementary expertise, along the whole process cycle, from the participation in the planning of work and experiments, their execution, up until the dissemination of results and a possible demonstration phase. The relevant actors are those that share a complex problem, which requires new knowledge and practice and include actors from different societal sectors such as researchers, entrepreneurs, educators, government workers, NGO representatives as well as farmers/farmer groups, advisors, enterprises, etc. Through MAA, actors can negotiate about goals, decision-making, and activities, co-creating results and enabling their ownership (FarmBook).</p>
Network Innovation	<p>Network innovation is the process by which innovations emerge and spread across, individuals, communities and inter-organisational networks. The concept emphasises the significance of network structure, relationships, and dynamics in shaping the outcomes of innovation. Taking a gender perspective on network innovation involves examining how gender impacts the structure of networks, membership, information flow, and the distribution of benefits. Lack of representation, unequal power dynamics, and gender bias are a few examples of how women may be disadvantaged while trying to enter and participate in innovation networks.</p>
New Entrants	<p>New entrants can be understood strictly as those who enter farming without a farming background. RURALIZATION aligns with the EIP-AGRI Focus Group² approach to acknowledge there are many types of new entrants to farming and grey areas exist in between complete new entrants and direct farm successors (RURALIZATION).</p>
PESTE Analysis	<p>PESTE analysis is a strategic tool used in business and organizational management to analyse and evaluate the external environmental factors that can impact a company or industry. The acronym PESTE stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Environmental factors. FLIARA recognizes that each of these elements can have a positive or negative interaction with female led innovation in rural areas.</p>
Policy Framework	<p>A policy framework within the context of the FLIARA project relates to a system of rules, principles, and activities that direct the creation and application of laws intended to advance gender equality and address gender-based prejudice and inequities. Such frameworks offer a thorough method for integrating gender considerations into numerous policy fields.</p>



Resilience	The ability of people, communities, systems, or organizations to adapt, recover from, and flourish in the face of adversity, shocks, or obstacles is referred to as resilience . It encompasses the capacity to adapt, endure setbacks, and keep up functionality or wellbeing when faced with stress or change. Building resources, capacities, and methods to efficiently respond and adapt to difficulties rather than preventing or avoiding them is what resilience is all about.
Relational Resilience	Relational resilience is the capacity of people to uphold and enhance healthy connections in the face of stress, adversity, and obstacles. It includes people as well as families, communities, and social networks. It highlights the value of wholesome relationships as a source of comfort, connection, and steadfastness during trying times. Relational resilience acknowledges that social ties and relationships are important for fostering wellbeing and supporting the capacity to adapt and thrive.
Rural Area	Concepts like rurality and rural areas are frequently debatable; therefore, the FLIARA project will draw on a number of methodologies in defining rural areas. These include statistics, such as the Eurostat and NUTS categories, as well as a more theoretical stance around the rural as a social construct. In addition to these, and within the context of WP2 and WP3 a more definitive approach will be taken, which includes using urban-rural typologies. These will include three categorisations, namely, a rural village, remote rural areas and rural areas close to a city.
Rural Development	Rural development is the process of enhancing the economic, social, and environmental well-being of rural areas. It involves putting strategies, policies, and initiatives into action with the intention of solving the special difficulties and chances that rural communities face. Rural development aims to improve rural populations' quality of life, foster sustainable economic growth, and ensure fair distribution of opportunities and resources. The development of rural areas is most successful as a 'bottom-up'
Rural Development Programmes	Through a variety of programs and initiatives, governments, international organizations, local communities, and individuals all endeavour to promote the economic, social, and environmental development of rural areas. Rural communities can prosper sustainably while addressing specific problems and opportunities they face with the use of structured and unstructured programmes. Although a bottom-up approach to rural development is effective, creating and implementing successful rural



	development programmes depends on collaboration and facilitation among governments, NGOs, and local stakeholders.
Social Networks	Social networks refer to the connections and bonds formed between individuals and groups in rural areas. These networks provide opportunities for teamwork, collaboration, social interaction, and the exchange of resources and expertise. These networks have a significant positive impact on rural women, business growth, and innovation transferability.
Stakeholders	Stakeholders are people or organisations that will benefit from, be impacted by, or have a legitimate interest (or stake) in the project at some point in time; they are not required to be active in the project's co-creation.
Sustainability	Sustainability refers to the concept of meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves balancing environmental, social, and economic considerations to ensure long-term well-being and the preservation of natural resources.
Sustainable Development	Sustainable development aims to satisfy the requirements of the present generation without sacrificing the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs. It entails establishing a balance between economic growth, environmental protection, social and cultural advancement and institutional considerations. These factors are understood to be connected and can work together to improve sustainable development.
Economic Sustainability	Fostering long-term economic growth that is socially and environmentally conscious is a key component of economic sustainability . It places a focus on economic development that does not jeopardize the welfare of future generations. Economic sustainability calls for ethical commerce, fair trade, the development of jobs, and the promotion of economic opportunities that improve societal well-being in general.
Environmental Sustainability	Environmental sustainability stresses the preservation and prudent use of ecosystems and natural resources. It entails minimizing resource depletion, cutting down on waste and pollution, supporting biodiversity preservation, and lessening the effects of climate change.
Social Sustainability	Social Sustainability stresses the importance of building diverse, equal, and thriving communities. It involves advancing human rights, social fairness, and equal access to opportunities and resources. Addressing



	social injustices, advancing healthcare and education, making sure basic needs are satisfied, encouraging social cohesiveness, and valuing cultural variety are all components of socially sustainable activities.
Cultural Sustainability	Cultural sustainability promotes a community's identity and well-being and refers to the preservation and promotion of cultural variety, heritage, and customs. In order to achieve sustainable development, it acknowledges the significance of cultural expressions, customs, languages and the arts.
Institutional Sustainability	Institutional sustainability relates to the ways and types of options rural actors have in decisions affecting their future, as well as whether or not the governance arrangements are inclusive of and accommodating of rural actors' perspectives in decision-making.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	The United Nations enacted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 as a global call to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee that by the year 2030, everyone will experience peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs provide direction for nations, organizations, and people as they work toward sustainable development. The FLIARA project, aim to via its concentration on gender will have a clear focus on advancing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality.
The Matilda Effect	The systematic underrepresentation and undervaluation of women's accomplishments and contributions in the domains of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) is known as the ' Matilda effect. '



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