



Unlocking the Potential of Rural Women through Inclusive CAP

Policy Brief Romania

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Unlocking the potential of rural women through inclusive CAP measures

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"Targeted support for non-agricultural innovation and rural women is not optional—it is essential for truly inclusive rural development."

Executive Summary

Romania's current CAP Strategic Plan (2023–2027) misses a critical opportunity to support rural women and diversify rural economies. Two significant interventions—support for non-agricultural enterprises and cooperation in value chains—were removed in the most recent revision. Although LEADER is presented as a delivery mechanism, the programme's budget remains unchanged, putting unrealistic expectations on Local Action Groups (LAGs).

This policy brief recommends rebalancing Romania's CAP to better serve non-agricultural development and female innovators. It outlines actionable solutions: reallocating funding, targeting women specifically in CAP measures, promoting cross-sectoral investment, and reducing access barriers. These are vital steps for sustainable and inclusive rural futures.

The Challenge

Romania's current CAP Strategic Plan (2023–2027) misses a critical opportunity to support rural women and diversify rural economies. Two significant interventions—support for non-agricultural enterprises and cooperation in value chains—were removed in the most recent revision. Although LEADER is presented as a delivery mechanism, the programme's budget remains unchanged, putting unrealistic expectations on Local Action Groups (LAGs).

This policy brief recommends rebalancing Romania's CAP to better serve non-agricultural development and female innovators. It outlines actionable solutions: reallocating funding, targeting women specifically in CAP measures, promoting cross-sectoral investment, and reducing access barriers. These are vital steps for sustainable and inclusive rural futures.

Policy Solutions

- 🏠 Increase LEADER budget allocation to allow LAGs to effectively support non-agricultural and women-led local development needs.
- 🏠 Create specific CAP interventions targeting women entrepreneurs in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.
- 🏠 Eliminate access barriers by strengthening women's financial literacy, grant-writing skills, and business development capacities through tailored training and mentoring.
- 🏠 Systematically collect and use gender-disaggregated data in all CAP policy and funding measures.
- 🏠 Promote cross-sectoral funding mechanisms that recognize and support the complex, multifunctional character of women-led innovations in rural areas.
- 🏠 Implement lump sum funding mechanisms to simplify administrative procedures for both beneficiaries and managing authorities, especially important for small-scale women entrepreneurs.

Practical Tips

- 👤 Engage with women's organizations and LAGs to co-create and design inclusive interventions.
- 👤 Encourage the use of participatory budgeting to reflect gendered needs in rural development strategies.
- 👤 Develop and promote capacity-building programmes tailored for women in business planning, project management, and accessing EU funds.
- 👤 Promote visibility and awareness campaigns for existing funding opportunities aimed at women-led rural innovation.
- 👤 Include women entrepreneurs as evaluators or advisors in shaping local and national CAP-related measures.

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Supporting Evidence & Best Practices

FLIARA Case Studies (D4.3) show that women innovate by leveraging local resources to enhance rural multifunctionality, protect cultural heritage, and strengthen community cohesion. Women lead social enterprises, environmental innovations, and adopt circular economy principles that address urgent local needs while empowering marginalized groups.

Italy: The CAP 2023–2027 includes as a priority the support of women entrepreneurs in diversification interventions, alongside youth, and this is reflected in the beneficiary selection criteria.

Slovenia: CAP Strategic Plan 2023–2027 allocates additional selection points for young women farmers establishing businesses.

These examples show how targeted CAP measures can successfully stimulate innovation and equality when funding criteria are gender-responsive.



Conclusion & Call to Action

To ensure resilient and inclusive rural economies, Romania must reinforce its CAP Strategy by meaningfully integrating gender equality and non-agricultural development. This requires:

- 👤 Adequate financial reallocation toward LEADER and targeted support for women-led enterprises;
- 👤 Simplified access to funding;
- 👤 Recognition of the multifaceted value of women's rural innovations.
- 👤 Local Action Groups need clear

mandates and increased budgets to fulfill their community development role.

- 👤 Managing Authorities should adapt selection criteria to prioritize women and multifunctional rural innovation.

Failing to act now will risk exacerbating gender gaps and undermine rural sustainability. A future-proof CAP must be inclusive, diversified, and community-driven—with women as central actors in shaping that future.

Further Reading

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

D4.3 Initial Benchmarking Report: <https://zenodo.org/communities/fliara>

About FLIARA

The project is on a mission to create a more sustainable future by highlighting the role of women in agriculture and rural areas. FLIARA will boost understanding of the needs and challenges facing women leading innovative environmental and rural development practices in EU farming and rural areas.

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Female-Led Innovation in Agriculture and Rural Areas

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