



# Diversifying AKIS in Sweden

## Policy Brief Sweden

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Image courtesy of Frida Holmquist, Skarmansmåla Farm, Sweden.



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# Diversifying AKIS in Sweden

*Women farmers and entrepreneurs working with environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable innovations are not reached by AKIS. Diversifying the focus of the knowledge and innovation systems could help support more innovation in farming and rural areas.*

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## Executive Summary

The Agriculture and Knowledge Systems (AKIS) in Sweden needs to reach a wider group of farmers, entrepreneurs and food producers. The FLIARA project shows that female innovators in farming and rural areas are a target group that currently are not aware of the support available or are not included in the policies. In particular, small-scale organic farming and food production is identified as an area in need of more support.

## The Challenge

Farmers, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders interviewed in FLIARA argued that there is a lack of support for environmental, social and economic innovations in small-scale organic farming, food production and businesses.

The FLIARA project, both from Sweden and the other partner countries, indicates that the support available is not known among farmers and therefore does not reach the female innovators in rural areas and on farms, and is believed to target only technological innovations suitable for large-scale conventional farming.

The narrow definition of agriculture and innovation in CAP and EIP-Agri in Sweden excludes most of the female innovators in the FLIARA-project from the support because they are not in primary production full time and their innovations are not deemed as radical enough.

## Policy Solutions

We propose to:

-  Market the support within AKIS through new channels to reach female innovators working within small-scale farming as part of their business models.
-  Diversify the criteria for CAP and EIP-Agri in order to support a diverse set of innovation projects not only conventional large-scale farming, but also small-scale alternative farming (e.g. organic, bio-dynamic, and regenerative) and food production.
-  Increase the financing of social innovations projects such as educational efforts aiming at teaching children and grown-up consumers about sustainable farming and food production in order to create sustainable lifestyles and sustainability wisdom.

## Supporting Evidence

One of the most important sustainability problems that was identified in the FLIARA project was inappropriate, inadequate or biased interventions, incentives and expectations by society (D2.2 Future vision manifestations). The most important category of sustainability visions was related to sustainable land, water and forest management (D2.2) and the data showed that a diverse set of rural stakeholders identified the need for more sustainability wisdom and in particular alleviate alienation from food production (D2.3). The visions of sustainable rural development included more organic farming, new crops and more sustainable land and water management.

The case studies from Sweden, and other countries, also showed that the support available in the Swedish AKIS was not widely known to the female innovators or other stakeholders.

Sources:

Kuhmonen, T. and Tembo, B. (2024), "D2.2: Future Vision Manifestations", 6 November, available at: <https://zenodo.org/records/14045244> (accessed 3 April 2025).




Sivini, S., Roos, A. and Leonardelli, I. (2024), "D.3.3: Women-led Innovations in Agriculture and Rural Areas, Lessons Learned Report and Fact Sheets on Female Innovations", 6 November, available at: <https://zenodo.org/records/14045390> (accessed 3 April 2025).



## Conclusion & Call to Action

The data from FLIARA demonstrates that AKIS does not reach farmers and entrepreneurs as widely as intended, and a diversification could address the needs of female innovators in agriculture and in rural areas, and in particular farmers and entrepreneurs in organic farming and food production.

### CALL TO ACTION:

-  Market the support in AKIS through new channels to reach other groups, including female innovators.
-  Diversify the criteria in CAP and EPI to support other types of innovations that AI and technological solutions aimed at large-scale conventional farming and food production.
-  Create appropriate interventions for small-scale organic farming and food production.

## Further Reading

AKIS implementation in Sweden: Landsbygdsnätverket. "AKIS och EIP-Agri", available at: <http://www.landsbygdsnätverket.se/akisocheipagri.4.28dc3ce718e0c90ff2710011.html> (accessed 3 April 2025).

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The Swedish Board of Agriculture: Jordbruksverket. "The Swedish Board of Agriculture - in English", available at: <https://jordbruksverket.se/languages/english/swedish-board-of-agriculture> (accessed 3 April 2025).

## 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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