



PR1 Inspirational package

Center for Not-for-Profit Law

Rural Women's Empowerment
through Green Social
Entrepreneurship in ROMANIA



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Rural Women's Empowerment through Green Social Entrepreneurship - WE-GREEN

Project no. 2021-1-RO01-KA220-ADU-000026954

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WEGREEN Inspirational package**

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview on Romanian rural women's green social entrepreneurship, including an analysis of the national context, detailed insights on the specific needs of rural women in Romania and the challenges they face, the educators' skills and competencies for green transition. The research and the drafting of this report are part of an Erasmus+ co-founded project, named Rural Women's Empowerment through Green Social Entrepreneurship - WE-GREEN (project no. 2021-1-RO01-KA220-ADU-000026954).

Project summary

Rural Women's Empowerment through Green Social Entrepreneurship (WE-GREEN) proposed to foster social green entrepreneurship among women in rural communities through education in the form of practical local programs. The project aimed at bridging the "gap" in the educational system between the need for new green skills and entrepreneurial skills and the lack of adequate educational content for the development of such skills, through an innovative training course for teachers in delivering green social entrepreneurship education, utilizing blended learning methodology.

The specific objectives of the project were:

- a) Building awareness in rural areas about women and green entrepreneurship as vehicles of the empowerment of local communities
- b) Building the capacities of formal & non-formal educators in a rural area on green social entrepreneurship for women;
- c) Design & implementation of local programmes aiming at empowering women in rural area through green social entrepreneurship.
- d) Develop guidelines for stakeholders at local, national and European level about needed measures for building an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship in the rural area

The WE GREEN project foresaw four Project Results. The first result (PR1. Inspirational package) implied the development of a sound and updated knowledge base repository on rural women's green social entrepreneurship, necessary for the preparation of the upcoming activities. This repository includes reports at the national and EU level on specific the needs of rural women and the exact problems they face, preventing their integration in the labour market and fostering green social entrepreneurship and a collection of best practices related to green social entrepreneurship for women in rural areas.

The second result (PR2. Development of the capacity building programme for formal and non-formal educators working with women in a rural area) foresaw the organisations of a training programme for formal and non-formal educators working with women in a rural area. For delivering the training programme, a comprehensive interactive online tool was developed, which serve both the delivery of the capacity building programme for formal and non-formal educators and made available useful information for the development of green social entrepreneurial skills in rural areas. The activity involved both the development of the capacity building programme and information material for formal and non-formal educators, along with the basic tool that was utilized for their delivery (online platform).

A third project activity (PR3. Implementing Capacity building programme at the transnational and local level) implied the delivery of the capacity building programme for formal and non-formal educators supporting women in rural areas with the upskilling path in green social entrepreneurship. The results involved the training of trainers that deliver the training sessions, following a 3-day transnational webinar. The capacities of 40 formal & non-formal educators of rural women/ social entrepreneurship/ green skills in the 4 implementing countries (Romania, Cyprus, Slovenia and Serbia) were developed in terms of implementing the developed capacity building programme in green social entrepreneurship.

Finally, the forth project results (PR4. Guide for Stakeholders. Elaboration of a guide for stakeholders at local, national and European level with recommendations about building an enabling environment for women's green social entrepreneurship in the rural area) includes the drafting of a toolkit on local policies and best practices for the inclusion of rural women at the local level having education and training as the main vehicle. In this toolkit the key success factors in each case, the specific skills and competencies necessary for the successful implementation of this practice are highlighted, as well as dos and don'ts for future reference.

Scope and objectives of the research

The research presented in this national report for Romania contributes to the first project result, aimed at developing a sound and updated knowledge base repository on rural women's green social entrepreneurship, necessary for the preparation of the upcoming activities. Two specific objectives guided the research: 1) to identify the exact needs and challenges for upskilling and reskilling to be part of green transition that women living in the rural areas face in all participating countries (Romania, Slovenia, Cyprus and Serbia and at EU level) and 2) to identify good practices on empowering rural women for green economy at the local level, having entrepreneurial spirit and training in their core.

The focus of the research at both national and EU level was on **defining the needs of women living in rural areas** and the **respective skills and competencies** that educators (formal and non-formal) working with them should have to effectively support them in the green transition. A common research protocol (including guidelines, common tools and templates to conduct concise research, combining both desk and field research components) was applied by researchers in all participating countries (Romania, Slovenia, Cyprus and Serbia)

During the data collection process and data analysis, all needs, challenges and skills were developed from the point of view of the local context in terms of: organisations and stakeholders involved (local Authorities, NGOs active at local level etc.), local competitive advantages (mainly related with the labour market and the economic activities) and social challenges. Moreover, horizontal and crosscutting needs and also support areas were identified.

Methodology

Main concepts

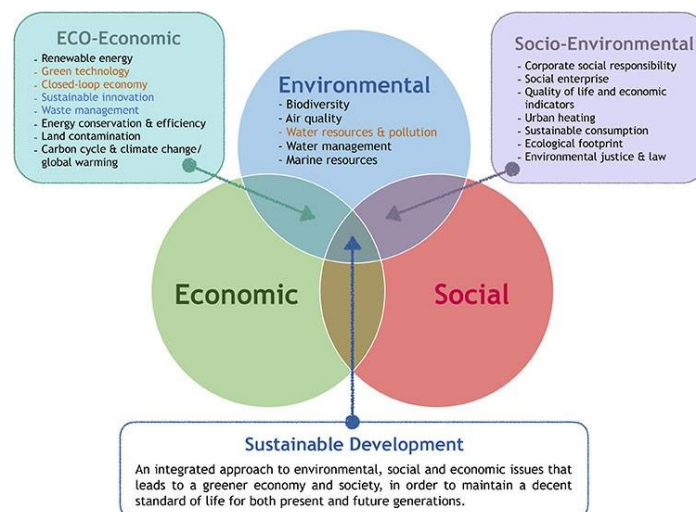
Several concepts guided the research, including the data collection process and the data analysis, at both national level and EU level. In order to set the conceptual stage of the research report, these concepts are briefly presented and described below.

Green entrepreneurship can be defined from two perspectives related to the 1) output (products and services) or 2) process (or production) of an economic activity¹. From the *output* perspective, entrepreneurs provide green and environmentally friendly products and services (e.g. waste management). From the *process* perspective, green entrepreneurs can provide their products or services through an environmentally friendly process or with the help of clean technologies (e.g. eco-tourism). Green entrepreneurship could be a new business paradigm because green entrepreneurs have wider motivations than just launching eco-friendly products and services for a niche market².

Green entrepreneurs provide the hotbed for starting and sustaining a green economy by providing green products and services, introducing greener production techniques, boosting demand for green products and services, and creating green jobs.

Green social entrepreneurship refers to a special subset of entrepreneurship that aims at creating and implementing solutions to environmental problems and to promote social change so that the environment is not harmed.³

Similar concepts on green entrepreneurship are eco-entrepreneurship, ecopreneurship, environmental entrepreneurship, sustainable entrepreneurship, ecological entrepreneurship, enviropreneurship or sustainopreneurship.



¹ International Labour Organisation. 2014. Green entrepreneurship: Creating green jobs through sustainable enterprise development

² Kirkwood J, Walton S (2010) What motivates ecopreneurs to start businesses? Int J Entrep Behav Res 16(3):204–228

³ Saari U.A., Joensuu-Salo S. (2019) Green Entrepreneurship. In: Leal Filho W., Azul A., Brandli L., Özuyar P., Wall T. (eds) Responsible Consumption and Production. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71062-4_6-1

A **green business** is a business that address environmental and social issues. This type of business has several main characteristics⁴. A green business incorporates principles of sustainability into its business decisions and actively monitors them. The staff is paid a fair wage for the work they do and ensure that they are able to maintain a good work-life balance. Moreover, a green business distributes benefits equitably across the value chain. The social benefits of the business (e.g., by employing marginalised groups) are maximised and some businesses set up foundations to assist with this - but a sustainable business doesn't confine its social activities just to charitable donations – it looks for every opportunity to increase the social benefits of the business in its day-to-day operations.

Production-wise, green business supply environmentally-friendly and/or local products and services that replace demand for non-green or imported products and services. In addition, such a business can help its community to become more sustainable (e.g., by reducing energy use or water use, or reducing waste or pollution). The green enterprises also make efforts to reduce resource use (energy, water, materials), and replenish, enhance, or substitute an environmental resource that is used by the business (e.g., replanting trees, enhancing soil fertility, using renewable energy). Overall, a green business makes an enduring commitment to environmental principles in its business operations, which will often be detailed in a publicly available and regularly updated Sustainability or Environmental Policy.

Green skills are the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society⁵. Green skills are those skills needed to reduce environmental impacts and support economic restructuring with the purpose of attaining cleaner, more climate resilient and efficient economies that preserve environmental sustainability and provide decent work conditions.⁶



Green jobs represent the “work (...) that contributes substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. (...) that helps to protect ecosystems and biodiversity, reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies, decarbonize the economy, and

⁴ Global Green Growth Institute. 2014. GUIDE TO GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KIRIBATI, <http://gggi.org/site/assets/uploads/2019/04/GGGI-Guide-to-Green-Entrepreneurship-in-Kiribati-Chapter-2-What-is-Green-Entrepreneurship-1.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.unido.org/stories/what-are-green-skills>

⁶ <https://www.greenskillsresources.com/>

minimize or altogether avoid the generation of all forms of waste and pollution.” (UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC, 2008).

Methods

The main research activities and methods to be implemented were common to all countries in the consortium, as stated in the project’s research guidelines. The research approach was one of mixed methods, including desk research, field research (in-depth interviews and focus groups) and the collection of best practices.

Desk Research

The desk research aimed to help the consortium gain a deeper insight into the current state of affairs regarding the green and social entrepreneurship targeting women in rural areas and the women’s empowerment for green skills challenges they face in each partner country. Several specific objectives guided the desk research in each country:

- a) to deeply understand the roots of the green social entrepreneurship of rural women,
- b) to explore the experiences of the project target groups in terms of providing training on green social skills for women in rural areas
- c) to identify their needs and gaps in order to develop a targeted training tools providing practical guidelines on green social skills for rural women
- d) to identify relevant good practices on empowering rural women at the local level, having entrepreneurial spirit and training in their core.

Desk research took place in two phases. In the beginning of the planned research work, the researchers collected background information to present the current state of affairs in Romania on the topic under investigation. The initial conclusions and findings of the desk research were the validated through field research, including the focus groups and the interviews. In the second phase, the public policies in the social and green women entrepreneurship in rural areas were analysed and best practices in this area were described and presented.

In order to reach the aforementioned objectives, a number of relevant aspects and topics were analysed at national level, including: the national context and legal framework, research findings and data on women social entrepreneurship in Romanian rural areas and on green entrepreneurship in rural areas, EU and national policies, strategies and resources, as well as existing good practices.

As a general note, the sources identified had to meet two important criteria: 1) to be relevant for the national context and 2) if they correspond to framework publications or policy recommendations, preferably the **date of publication to not be older than 2010**. Also, authors, contributors or coordinating teams behind the publication of the item should be identifiable.

The desk research in Romanian included the following types of sources: 1) relevant data and resources (reports, policy documents, previous surveys and research on rural women, rural women entrepreneurs, rural social entrepreneurship etc.) regarding the empowerment of women in rural areas and promotion of green and social entrepreneurship targeting women; 2) statistical data regarding: entrepreneurship in rural areas, women entrepreneurship in rural areas, social entrepreneurship in rural areas, green entrepreneurship in rural areas, participants at training programmes on green skills, women social entrepreneurship etc. and 3) analysis of public policy on

social economy, rural development and green transition/ Green Deal areas, empowerment of women in rural areas and promotion of green and social entrepreneurship targeting women

Field Research

The second phase of the research was the field research, which aimed at: 1) identifying the specific needs of rural women and the exact problems they face, preventing their integration in the labour market and fostering green social entrepreneurship in all participating countries (Romania, Slovenia, Cyprus and Serbia and at EU level); 2) establishing the challenges in supporting the empowerment of women in rural areas; 3) analysing the implementation of green skills and social green skills in training curricula for rural women empowerment and 4) identifying good practices on empowering rural women at the local level, having entrepreneurial spirit and training in their core.

Primary data collection included interviews and focus groups in the 4 implementing countries with professionals and stakeholders supporting rural women entrepreneurship and green skills development. In Romania, 5 in-depth interviews were carried with educators (formal and non-formal) working with women in rural areas and 1 focus-group was organised with 4 representatives of NGOs and other organisations supporting the empowerment of women in rural areas.

In-depth interviews with educators

The in-depth interviews took place both online (4 interviews) and face-to-face (1 interview), using identical questions in each participating country, to ensure that cross-country and cross-cultural comparisons are achievable. The in-depth interviews were held in Romanian, to ensure participants comprehension. Each discussion was recorded with the participants' approval and them summarised to facilitate the analysis of the information obtained.

The 5 participants were formal and non-formal educators working with rural women in Romania, in different regions of the country (the Danube Delta, Transylvania, the Centre region, the West region and also in the Southern region). The activities implemented in the Romanian rural areas by the 5 respondents were very diverse: entrepreneurial social and green initiatives for women, financed by local action groups in the Danube Delta (Europe's largest wetland), ecotourism organised in guesthouses managed by women in rural Transylvania, the start-up of various social enterprises in rural areas in the West, the establishment of traditional workshops and a traditional restaurant which employs women from the village or immediate community and community development activities targeting circular economy initiatives and sustainable development.

The discussions aimed to identify the specific country context and actual needs of rural women and the best practices in Romania related with the empowerment of women in rural areas. The main topics included in the interview guide were: gaps for rural women in development of social or green business; gaps for educators in covering the requirements of rural women; aspects of training curricula – topics included; there are topics related to social or green dimension of a business; there are topics related to green skills or digital skills; skills and competences targeted by training programmes; potential of rural areas (what kind of development could be) and what is done; green skills/ green businesses; barriers related to gender in entrepreneurship (if women can be entrepreneurs); green social entrepreneurship (eco-social entrepreneurship); local competitive advantages (mainly related with the labour market and the economic activities); challenges in rural women integration in the labour market; challenges in fostering green social entrepreneurship in rural areas and specific skills and

competences of formal and non-formal educators working with women in the rural area that need to be enhanced and fostered.

Focus group at national level

The focus group in Romania had 4 participants, representatives of NGOs and other organisations supporting the empowerment of women in rural areas and took place online, using identical questions with the other countries involved to ensure that cross-country and cross-cultural comparisons are achievable. The focus group was held in Romanian, to ensure participants comprehension. The 4 participants in the focus group in Romania also represented various organisations, with different activities related to green and/or social entrepreneurship:

- 1) an organization working in the area of sustainable development, including formal and non-formal education
- 2) an organisation whose main area of interest is that of climate change, with extensive experience in sustainable development, education, environment and social entrepreneurship, participating in the analysis of some social economy projects that also had a green component
- 3) the representative of several informal groups in the field of agriculture, food production and distribution, who has carried out its activity in the green area in the last 15 years, through projects related to environmental protection and agriculture, as well as in the sphere of the rights of agricultural workers, but also in social entrepreneurship in the rural environment, by facilitating entrepreneurial projects in rural communities, especially dedicated to disadvantaged social groups.
- 4) an organisation with extensive experience in research, ecological villages and green public policies.

The discussion focused on several dimensions: the types of support provided to entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship in rural areas, barriers related to gender in entrepreneurship (if women can be entrepreneurs), green skills/ green businesses, green social entrepreneurship (eco-social entrepreneurship), local competitive advantages (mainly related with the labour market and the economic activities), challenges in fostering green or social green entrepreneurship in rural areas, challenges in empowerment of rural women, challenges in rural women integration in the labour market and interventions/ programmes dedicated to promote green and social entrepreneurship targeting women in rural areas.

Best practices

Two best practices related with green social entrepreneurship for women in rural areas were selected from Romania. The cases were drafted according to the template provided in the framework of the project and collected information on the name of the practice, website, country, region, rural or urban area, start date, sector of activity concerned, details of the activity (the social business: its aim(s), how is it structured/management, target group/beneficiaries, etc.; the green dimension of the social business), services and products, green skills needed, trends and potential benefits from this good practice and how the good practice could be used/ transferred.

Romania's national context on green rural entrepreneurship

Rural entrepreneurship

Romania has 10296393 (46%) of its population in rural areas, of which 49% are women and 51% men. The rural population has registered a decrease of 447374 people between 2010 and 2021. The decline in population over the last 11 years has been more pronounced for the female population, with the figure being almost double that for men. Thus, the number of women in rural areas has decreased by 297772 persons and the number of men by 149602 (Table 1).

Table 1. Rural population evolution by sex between 2010 - 2021

Urban-rural	Sex	2010	2014	2015	2019	2020	2021	Difference 2021-2010
Urban	Total	10942040	10752617	10703051	10463886	10474555	10296393	-645647
	Males	5233346	5148467	5118061	4988571	4990761	4890129	-343217
	Females	5708694	5604150	5584990	5475315	5483794	5406264	-302430
Rural	Total	9352643	9200472	9172491	8961987	8879784	8905269	-447374
	Males	4647063	4600512	4591324	4517925	4483041	4497461	-149602
	Females	4705580	4599960	4581167	4444062	4396743	4407808	-297772

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo data base, indicator POP105A

The average age of the rural population has increased with 1.3 years between 2012 and 2020. In 2020, the average age of rural population was 42.4 years old, with a difference of 2.3 years between men (40.8 years old) and women (44.1 years old). There are not significant differences between rural and urban areas (Table 2).

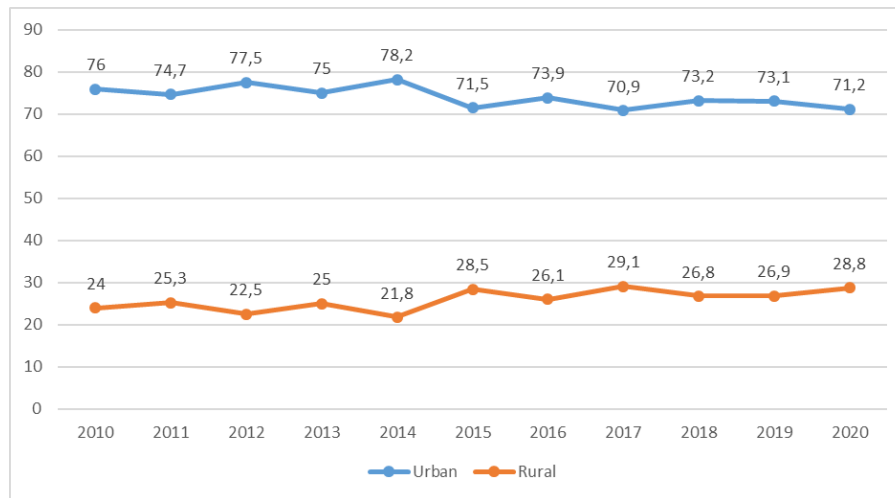
Table 2. The average age of population by degree of urbanisation and sex

Urban-rural	Sex	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Urban	Total	40,4	40,7	41	41,2	41,5	41,7	41,9	42	42,1
	Males	38,9	39,2	39,4	39,6	39,8	40	40,2	40,3	40,4
	Females	41,8	42,2	42,5	42,7	43	43,2	43,4	43,5	43,7
Rural	Total	41,1	41,3	41,5	41,6	41,8	41,9	42,1	42,2	42,4
	Males	39,4	39,6	39,7	39,9	40,1	40,2	40,4	40,6	40,8
	Females	42,9	43	43,2	43,3	43,5	43,6	43,8	43,9	44,1

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo data base, indicator POP109A

The percentage of newly created enterprises in rural areas increased slightly between 2012 and 2020, from 24% to 28.8%. It is still a huge gap (42%) between urban and rural areas related to the development of new enterprises (Figure 1). The increase in the number of newly created enterprises in rural areas is also largely due to the European funds that have been dedicated to the creation of businesses in rural areas.

Figure 1. Distribution of newly created active enterprises by the degree of urbanisation



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo data base, indicator INT111L

The number of the population employed in economic activities in rural areas decreased in the period 2010 – 2021 with 936.772 persons. 25% of the population employed in rural areas is in agriculture, forestry and fishing and 19% in industry (Table 3).

Table 3. Population employed by economic activities in rural areas

	2010	2015	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	4108187	3872894	3919819	3896749	3818520	3171465
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2537756	2003089	1762708	1683314	1589197	812019
Extractive industry	38661	29202	27846	27168	28732	29311
Manufacturing industry	461445	548936	649299	630260	590083	603009
Production and supply of electricity and thermal energy, gas, hot water and air conditioning	22371	21422	20110	16722	16520	21878
Water distribution; sanitation, waste management, decontamination activities	22106	26954	31918	39241	42711	51942
Construction	247079	277478	340904	371502	395297	413219
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	238984	290842	352299	362650	377787	419245
Transport and storage	110509	146543	161069	179093	197768	210801
Hotels and restaurants	33930	42653	66178	65237	61499	58610
Information and communications	9311	23444	29006	24002	19409	20823
Financial intermediation and insurance	9882	9185	10401	10412	11581	17718
Real estate transactions	2686	2393	1794	2359	2692	2746

	2010	2015	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	4108187	3872894	3919819	3896749	3818520	3171465
Professional, scientific and technical activities	14391	22401	25046	23975	23866	24908
Administrative service activities and support service activities	47001	73966	71705	85117	84339	78502
Public administration and defence; social insurance from the public system	110370	110101	108039	107740	114082	120672
Education	88573	91742	90273	92191	92802	99606
Health and social assistance	72258	78444	92123	96588	97623	114281
Performance, cultural and recreational activities	6647	11770	11329	13677	13663	12636
Other activities of the national economy	34229	62329	67772	65501	58868	59539

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo data base, indicator AMG110P

The employment rate in Romanian rural areas is quite low – 42.7% in 2021, despite an increase of 6.7% between 2010 and 2021. The gap in employment rate between urban and rural areas in Romania is more than 10% (53% in urban areas and 42.7% in rural ones). The employment rate in rural areas is very low at people between 15 and 24 years old – 24.8%. During 2010 – 2021 period, significant increases in the employment rate are recorded in the age category 25 – 54 years-old (from 57.5% to 68.4%) and 55-64 years old (from 29.7% to 42%) (Table 4).

Table 4. Employment rate by age in rural areas

	2010	2015	2019	2020	2021
Total	<u>36</u>	<u>37.3</u>	<u>40.6</u>	<u>40.5</u>	42.7
15 - 24 years old	<u>21.8</u>	<u>22.2</u>	<u>24.5</u>	<u>24.1</u>	24.8
25 - 54 years old	<u>57.5</u>	<u>60.2</u>	<u>65.2</u>	<u>64.8</u>	68.4
55 - 64 years old	<u>29.7</u>	<u>30.5</u>	<u>36.9</u>	<u>38.8</u>	42

Source: National Institute of Statistics. Tempo data base. indicator AMG158B

In Romanian rural areas the percent of employees increase in the last 12 years from 35.9% in 2010 to 55.3% in 2021. A significant decrease is registered in case of self-employed people (from 37.9% to 15.5 %) or unpaid family worker (from 25.5% to 5.5 %) between 2010 and 2021.

Table 5. Population employed by labour market status in rural areas

Labour market status	2010	2015	2019	2020	2021
Employee	35.9	43.4	51.5	51.8	55.3
Business owner	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9
Self employed	37.9	31.4	27.5	26.1	15.5
Unpaid family worker	25.5	18.8	15.1	14.2	5.5

Source: National Institute of Statistics. Tempo data base. indicator AMG1102

In Romania social economy entities have existed since the 19th century when the first cooperatives were registered. Their evolution was deeply affected by the communist regime which took control of

their activities (in the case of cooperatives and mutual societies) or banned them (in the case of associations and foundations). (Lambriu & Petrescu, 2021) After the fall of the communist regime, the most important development, both quantitative (number of entities and employees, income) and qualitative (activities carried out, services offered) was registered by associations and foundations. Mutual societies experienced a decline in activity in the case of employee mutuals because the number of large employers where they were active was reduced. In the case of pensioners' mutuals, after an initial period of decline, there was a diversification of activities, with many medical and social services starting to be offered in addition to financial services (credit).

The cooperatives experienced a major decline in activity as a result of the negative image among the population associating them with the forced cooperativisation of the agricultural sector during the communist era. Unfortunately, data on these entities are not available from public sources. The advent of the social economy law in 2015 brought with it the obligation for social economy entities to register in the National Register of Social Enterprises in order to obtain the status of social enterprise. The number of those who have registered is not very high, especially as there are no financial incentives or other benefits for them. Many of those registered were newly established in projects financed from European funds.

According to the last available data from the National Register of Social Enterprises (October 2022), there are 2782 social enterprises in Romania. Most of them (89%) are limited liability companies that accomplish the criteria of a social enterprise from Law 219/ 2015 on social economy. 10% of social enterprises are associations and foundations. The Law 219/ 2015 introduces also the social insertion enterprise, a form of work integration social enterprise for people from vulnerable groups. Their number increases from 10 in 2018 to 193 in 2022 (Table 6).

Table 6. Social enterprises registered in Romania

Type of social enterprises	March 2018	November 2018	March 2020	October 2021	May 2022	October 2022
Limited liability companies	37	42	54	2122	2333	2482
Associations and foundations	54	59	66	255	275	285
Mutuals	6	7	7	6	6	6
Cooperatives	6	7	7	9	9	9
Total	103	115	134	2392	2623	2782
Out of which – Social insertion enterprises	10	12	17	113	186	193

Source: National Register of Social Enterprises, Romanian PES,

<https://www.anofm.ro/index.html?agentie=&categ=9&subcateg=1&idpostare=21973>

Legal framework

The social economy sector is regulated in Romania by the Law 219/2015. This law provides recognition as a social enterprise or social insertion enterprise to various types of entities (regardless of their legal form) that meet a number of criteria and comply with the principles of social economy. The principles of social economy stipulated by Law 219/2015 are (article 4): priority given to the individual and social objectives compared to the increase of profit; solidarity and collective responsibility; convergence between the associated members' interests and the general interest and/or the interests of a community; democratic control of members over their activities; voluntary and free nature of

association in forms of organization specific to the social economy; distinct legal personality, management autonomy and independence from public authorities; allocating most of the financial profit/ surplus to achieve the objectives of the general interest, of a community or for the non-economic personal interest of members.

The criteria stated in Art. 80 foresee that a social enterprise: acts for the social purpose and/or in the general interest of the community; allocates a minimum of 90 % of the achieved profit/ surplus to the social purpose and the statutory reserve; commits to transmit the remaining assets from the liquidation to one or several social enterprises and applies the principle of social equity towards employees, ensuring fair payment levels, between which there can be no differences exceeding the ratio of 1 to 8.

In addition to the above criteria, an insertion social enterprise should have at least 30% of its staff or cooperative members belonging to the vulnerable group, or the aggregate working time of employees from vulnerable groups must represent at least 30% of the total working time of all employees and should aim to combat exclusion, discrimination and unemployment through the socio-professional integration of disadvantaged persons (Article 10).

Each entity which can be considered a social enterprise shall be organized and operate on the basis of its own legislation:

- Associations and foundations - Government Ordinance [No 26/2000](#) on associations and foundations;
- Grade I cooperative societies - Law [No 1/2005](#) on the organization and functioning of a cooperation;
- Agricultural cooperatives – Law No. 21/2019 for the amendment and completion of the Law on agricultural cooperation No. 566/2004;
- Credit unions - Government Emergency Ordinance [No 99/2006](#) on credit institutions and capital adequacy;
- Employees' mutual aid funds - Law [No 122/1996](#) on the legal regime of employees' mutual aid funds and their unions;
- Pensioners' mutual aid funds - Law [No 540/2002](#) on pensioners' mutual aid funds;
- Limited liability companies – Law No. 31/1990 of companies;

The legal framework that supports social economy entities is not well developed in Romania, mainly because it is considered an instrument for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups on the labour market. However, the public procurement law (Law 98/ 2016) has provisions related to reserved contracts (article 56) and procurement with social and green clauses (articles 157 and 187) that can benefit social enterprises (Petrescu et al., 2021).

For green public procurement, a separate order is adopted (Order No. 1068/1652/2018) approving the Green Procurement Guide which includes minimum environmental protection requirements for certain groups of products and services to be requested in the tender documents. Although at European level environmental criteria for procurement are developed for 20 groups of products and services (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/eu_gpp_criteria_en.htm) at the national level the guide provides criteria only for 6 categories: 1) copy paper and graph paper, 2) indoor and outdoor furniture, furniture refurbishment/reconditioning services and end-of-life furniture stock collection and reuse services, 3) food and catering services, 4) transport vehicles, 5) cleaning products and services and 6) office IT equipment.

Green economy policy framework

In 2018, Romania adopted the National Strategy for Green Jobs 2018 – 2025 which proposes to ensure sustainable employment by stimulating and exploiting the green job potential of competitive sectors. This Strategy has three main objectives:

1. To stimulate entrepreneurship and green job creation with a focus on sectors of increased competitiveness identified in the National Competitiveness Strategy 2014 - 2020 and the National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2014 - 2020
2. To develop the skills of the workforce to ensure quality employment in competitive, green jobs sectors.
3. To strengthen cooperation with relevant actors and dialogue with social partners in sectors with potential for green jobs.

Some of the main actions considered under the first objective aim to strengthen the entrepreneurial initiatives for creating green jobs, develop small and medium enterprises in rural areas and promote sustainable tourism. The measures dedicated to rural areas propose to reduce non-performing agriculture through the implementation of new technologies and the creation of green jobs, but also to develop the non-agricultural sector which is poorly represented in rural areas. They include also the restoration and preservation of heritage cultural heritage, promoting sustainable tourism and investing in renewable energy sources.

The second objective is dedicated to the development of the skills of the workforce and includes among their main actions: the training and development of green skills; encouraging lifelong learning and vocational training in sectors agricultural and forestry sectors; developing waste management skills; promote improved levels of clean technologies and low-emission energy or zero-carbon energy; increase participation in vocational and technical education and lifelong learning programmes. A green economy (waste management, biodiversity, green energy, green agriculture, sustainable tourism, emission control and other areas) requires the development of workforce skills: digital skills and specific green skills. This also implies the development of training providers offers. The third objective includes actions that aim to facilitate the cooperation between actors in rural development for the development of green jobs.

In 2022, the National Strategy for Circular Economy⁷ was approved. It aims to ensure Romania's transition from a linear to a circular economic model, in line with the European Union Action Plan for the Circular Economy. According to the evidence and analysis in the Strategy, the sectors with the greatest potential for improving the circular economy are: agriculture and forestry; automotive; construction; consumer goods such as food and beverages; packaging (glass, paper, plastics, etc.); textiles; electrical and electronic equipment. The main objectives of this Strategy are:

1. Give priority to local production over imported products and materials;
2. Strengthening economic competitiveness and the workforce;
3. Responsible and sustainable supply of raw materials;
4. Priority promotion of innovation and research in the circular economy;

⁷ <https://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/strategia-nationala-privind-economia-circulara-13409762>

5. Preservation, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;
6. Waste prevention and sustainable waste management;
7. Promoting responsible consumption and environmental education;
8. Protection of ecosystems and citizens' health.

These strategic documents set out measures for the development of the green economy, including in rural areas, but do not include references to social economy entities/ social enterprises and their role in this process. Although there are examples of effective involvement of social enterprises in the green economy (green energy - Energy Cooperative or Green Energy Cluster; circular economy – Workshops without Borders, Oil Rights, Paper Mill, Ophori), their role is less visible to policy makers or the population.

Green social entrepreneurship (eco-social entrepreneurship)

The educators that participated in the interviews and the national focus group in Romania portrayed an important potential of the rural areas for entrepreneurship in general. and for green social entrepreneurship in particular. Women's green and social entrepreneurial activities can be regarded from two perspective – one. of younger women. who have always lived in rural areas. and some were educated in the city and could return to their villages to capitalize on their newly acquired skills / knowledge at home and secondly. from the perspective of the women who migrated to the village from urban areas.

Moreover. entrepreneurial activities involving social and green directions can take very different forms, from traditional activities (in many cases considered green or ecological). to utilitarian business that can also develop community resilience (like gardening. or repairs). The first direction. that of more traditional occupations tends to be the prerogative of rural women that during their lives stayed longer in households and thus developed specific skills. which would have great exploitation potential.

An example of customary occupation that could be transformed in a green social business is the valorisation of wild edible plants. with all the related process of picking. processing. marketing. This kind of activity emphasizes a type of knowledge of nature. transmitted from generation to generation in the rural environment. specific to women that approach the sacred side of nature. Other similar activities can involve traditional cooking. the preparation of canned products or other products prepared according to traditional recipes (like pasta. matured cheese. or local products. which could be promoted in urban networks - for example. the croissant and milk or yogurt in schools could be produced locally. in women's cooperatives or small businesses).

In the services area, one can notice a lot of interest from urban families. who want to get more in touch with the rural environment, so demonstration farms would also be appropriate to facilitate contact with animals. or to experience life in the country. In this sense. small agritourism guesthouses can be opened for the public. traditional leisure activities can be organised or mini museums that exhibit local objects. Another idea with great potential would be organising handicraft workshops. rural arts. or workshops in specific rural activities (carpet weaving. blacksmithing) – where there should be more structure to allow direct participation from tourists.

The second direction. that of utilitarian social or green businesses has a greater potential to be implemented by women that migrate from the cities in the rural areas and try to make use of their skills. For example. respondents think that it would be worth developing in the countryside types of

businesses related to cleaning, because the skills of rural women could also be used in this sense - e.g. an association of several women who could go to the nearby town to provide cleaning services. The lack of services from the state in rural areas is - in the opinion of one respondent - a double-edged sword. This lack creates a vacuum and negatively affects living conditions, but at the same time it leaves some empty places, where women could be active - they could organise an after school, organize tutoring classes, cosmetic centres, shops, funeral houses, construction services etc.

Based on the experience of the organization in the area of climate change she is a part of, one respondent points out that there is a significant potential in rural areas in terms of climate resilience. Rural and small urban areas have a specific type of knowledge and skills that have a very important role beyond the cultural role. These specific knowledge and skills can serve them in resilience to climate change and shocks to come. The respondent explains that, through practical skills - also found in women from these environments, they can ensure their own survival. Although essential for survival, these skills are not realized, exploited and assumed by the inhabitants of the villages. No one talks to them about the importance, the power of the set of knowledge they have in the current context, including in the development of this type of green social entrepreneurship.

Specific needs of rural women in Romania and the challenges they face

Rural women's challenges in Romania

A common agreement among the persons involved in the research in Romania is that the challenges faced by women in general are a cross-cutting topic in all fields, to which is added the specific filter of rural women. In Romanian society, there are usually gender imbalances and less participation in decision-making. In rural areas one can also observe structural problems, greater gender discrimination, even less access to various facilities, lack of employment opportunities, lower access to services - education, health, transport, etc., lack of basic digital skills (e. g. using a computer, communicating through email, using a reservation platform for touristic activities etc.). All of these further reinforce the obstacles rural women face compared to urban women.

An aspect worth pointing out is the fact that rural women are very aware of the lack of opportunities for them, and thus, what motivates them to become entrepreneurs is, often, the lack of employment options. However, this is challenged by the lack of access to education and information on both entrepreneurship and ecological sustainability, corroborated with the lack of clarity and information about the opportunities for small producers in various areas. The opportunities in question are also the ones regarding potential funding opportunities which are surrounded by their own set of challenges – European funded projects sometimes inspire fear of the unknown, especially in the context in which the Romanian mass media popularized numerous cases of people who accessed such funds and came under the scrutiny of the criminal authorities.

Several respondents also proposed a systemic perspective, at the level of society. In Romania, the countryside is seen as something retrograde, an environment where those who do not assert themselves in the urban environment usually end up. Respondents believe that there is a general level of discouragement and disregard for the countryside, both in discourse and in the imagination of people, including the inhabitants of the villages, who themselves make things move very hard. Although living in the countryside can be an opportunity, starting from the quality of life, the residents here see life in this environment as something retrograde overall. Therefore, in the interviewees' opinion, our collective imagination and mentality, the collective perception when defining the countryside, is in the first place a challenge.

Retrograde thinking also refers directly to women and their ability to carry out an entrepreneurial activity - many are not allowed to go to work, so even less to open a business, because the man is the one who has the role of provider in the household. Several anecdotic examples were given in this respect during the field research by most of the respondents. When it comes to female entrepreneurship in rural areas, respondents agree that the success of female entrepreneurs depends to a large extent on the family environment (favourable or not), which can be encouraging or not for the women's endeavours, for the education they can access, as well as for their will to succeed in advancing, despite the obstacles. Entrepreneurship becomes even more difficult in such a context.

In completion to the systemic perspective, addressing specifically the social or green entrepreneurial initiatives, it is worth mentioning that many social entrepreneurship programs or projects are facilitated by institutionalized groups, by people from diverse backgrounds who have access to information from multiple sources. The moment when that institutional support is withdrawn is a very sensitive moment, and many social entrepreneurship units become vulnerable without that support, risking to disappear in a short time. In such a case, the empowerment of women actually happens only

up to a certain point. which is not enough for them to become self-reliant and for the social entrepreneurship structures to continue to function and fulfil the goals set at the beginning of the project.

In connection to this lack of continued support for social enterprises in general and for women's empowerment in particular. comes the challenges of ensuring the market for the products and services provided by the green and social enterprises. One of the great challenges of the social economy is the creation of the market. and the green component makes things even more challenging. The lack of cooperation at local level aggravates this challenge and. connected to the retrograde perspective that rural areas lack in opportunities for development. the few initiatives that are developed remain unintegrated in a network.

Rural women's needs in developing social green businesses

To develop social green business. rural women need a wide range of skills to be developed. along with targeted empowerment programs. In the first place. there lays the need for rural women to acquire general entrepreneurial skills. completed by specialized trainings on financial and managerial matters. Specifically. women need to learn first-hand how to plan their business. how manage the finances separately from the personal budget and how to establish prices and costs in order to ensure a balance between offering a fair price and obtaining profits.

Case studies. learning trips and presentation of real examples with which they can relate could be really useful in fostering both the understanding and the actual implementation of the theoretical aspects on entrepreneurship. Community facilitators could have a defining role in advancing women's knowledge and could also foster connexions between different business that can collaborate and draw mutual advantages from one another. Women could use better abilities to identify and use in their advantage the specifics of the area they live in.

An improvement in knowledge and a better understanding of what a business implies could also tackle a second important need of rural women – that of improving self-confidence and courage in taking on an entrepreneurial activity. An improvement in the women's attitude could help a lot in overcome the lack in knowledge.

Competences on the legislative/legal side are also needed and should be developed. because without them it is very difficult for entrepreneurs to deal with the dialogue with the authorities. especially in the case of controls. but also in the day-to-day activities. Moreover. marketing and PR abilities are also of the essence. given that in rural areas it is very difficult to find highly specialized service providers.

Coming back to the specificities of green social business. women in rural areas also need to better understand green and ecological concepts. in order to develop a sustainability-oriented attitude. There is a great need for women to know and understand the technicalities of a green or ecological business. as just wishing for a green business is not enough.

Challenges in fostering green or social green entrepreneurship in rural areas

An important transversal matter highlighted by respondents on fostering green social entrepreneurship in rural areas is that the concept is not significantly related to the current concept of ecological sustainability or sustainable development. but rather it is related to some peasant traditions that were themselves ecological. or green. In most cases. women in rural areas in Romania

do what they have been taught, without realizing that their actions, or that their products are sustainable or could be marketed as such.

Beyond conceptual challenges, infrastructure (in some areas) and access to funding are other important challenges. For example, in some rural areas, women (and sometimes neither their families) are not the owners of the lands or buildings they could use in developing a business and thus efforts are needed for them to be able to actually start the activity.

In regard to funding, women lack both the skills and the courage to access the public funds available to them, fearing that they could be tricked or that they could jeopardize the family's wellbeing by engaging in activities perceived as high-risk. This fear is also fed by an overall attitude of distrust in entrepreneurial activities in general, in developing a legal person to conduct activities, all concepts that are seen to be too complicated and complex. When it comes to green initiatives, one could also observe a general distrust that such perspectives would be of relevance for their local needs and opportunities.

Another challenge in fostering green or social green entrepreneurship in rural areas is that women often do not see themselves as capable enough or empowered enough to start-up a local business, given the aforementioned lacks in knowledge or self-trust. Among our respondents, none could point towards a successful initiative dedicated to empowering rural women to develop entrepreneurial activities in their areas, being social, green or not.

Educators' skills and competencies for green transition

Training programs' curricula to foster social green entrepreneurship in rural areas

In the opinion of the Romanian respondents, the training programs available for women in rural areas aimed to foster social green entrepreneurship initiatives are rather modest and focused mostly on general subjects, covering in a very low degree the actual needs of the women. For example, in the Danube Delta area, the majority of the trainings available are centred on various occupations (like housekeeping or waiters), for which the demand in the area is not very high.

In some cases, external support for developing green entrepreneurship initiatives came through various European or local funded programs. For example, one of the respondents points to the Erasmus Plus Program, which works on green skills, climate change and everything related to the green economy being a priority of this program. Also, at national level in Romania there is a program named The Woman Entrepreneur, dedicated to the SMEs established by women.

In the regions where different NGOs are active and take the role of community facilitators or mentors, the specific needs are met by specific training or mentorship activities on the operation of a private legal person or a limited liability business or specific trainings on entrepreneurship in general or social entrepreneurship in particular (e.g. basic elements of entrepreneurship, what it means to be an entrepreneur, what are the forms/documents to fill in and follow, elements of circular economy etc.).

Trainings on green or ecological concepts, to be applied in starting-up a business or in an already running business are organised seldomly, with none of the respondents being able to name a particular program. In general, most of the entrepreneurship trainings include in their curricula a module on sustainability, however keeping the information at a very basic level (what does it mean, what are the elements of sustainability etc.). Moreover, elements of digitalisation are also included in some of the trainings, but they often lack contextualisation and adaptation to the real situation in the rural areas.

Green skills are ultimately related to sustainability, circular economy and climate change and thus participants (men and women) should be trained and educated in these concepts, to be able to integrate these elements in their day-to-day businesses and activities. Other important green skills can also be related to technology, technological skills and communication processes between women and between women and others.

New training programs could have a greater orientation towards the development of local, personal, family initiatives that combine elements of social entrepreneurship, green entrepreneurship (types, forms, rationale etc.), business plan development, risk management, business management case studies, real examples etc. The adaption to the local context and to the needs of the rural women is paramount for any training program, which needs to be designed in such a way that participants can see themselves implementing in real life the hypothetical situation that they see and discuss.

Respondents believe that training programs where women are positively discriminated would be appropriate in the Romanian context, with the mention that their relevance must be ensured. In some respondent's experience, programs for the rural environment are poorly conceived, being designed by professionals outside the area, without considering the reality on the ground. An important point to consider in this type of action is that the design of such program should also consider the impact

and the lessons learned after the implementation of similar positive discrimination programs for other categories (for example those for the Roma).

Consequently, for these programs to yield the benefits expected from them, the implementors could engage the whole community and the local authorities, in order to help reduce the mentality that women are not suited to be entrepreneurs. Equally important is the networking component, of being part of a community of practice, which increases the level of motivation. In addition, a participant notes, an emotional, psychological or therapeutic support component must be added, essential for people who need a boost in self-confidence.

Specific skills and competences of formal and non-formal educators working with women in the rural area that need to be enhanced and fostered

The interviews and the focus group allowed the research team in Romania to extract several specific skills and competences of formal and non-formal educators working with women in the rural area that need to be enhanced and fostered. Overall, the respondents believe that formal and non-formal educators could have better results if they act as community facilitators, that document and understand the community and community life and are able to engage people, authorities and other stakeholders.

Formal and non-formal educators should also be very prepared in the areas they offer training, including green competencies and knowledge, legal knowledge, social economy etc. It is essential that educators understand what the concepts of green, sustainable mean, so that information can then be passed on to the community. In the same sense, an important aspect is that they should be able to adapt and model their language, behaviour and attitude depending on their target group, to be able to present complex concepts to the people of interest, so that they understand in practice what the activities entail.

Besides knowledge and information, educators would need to also tackle aspects of attitude, self-trust and empowerment, to work on women's self-esteem, on expression, on positioning. These are all matters that act as barriers or challenges in women's initiatives in business development. Specific modules should be designed aimed at the attitude of women and their social-psychological-emotional development.

Best practices related with green social entrepreneurship for women in rural areas in Romania

Asociația Moara de Hârtie / The Paper Mill Association

Name of the practice	The Paper Mill Association
Website	https://www.moaradehartie.ro/en/
Country	Romania
Region	Sud-Muntenia
Rural or urban area	Rural
Start Date	2009 - The Paper Mill Association 2011 – Book-related Crafts Workshop-Museum 2014 – The Comana Crafts Village / Satul Meșteșugurilor 2020 – The Mill Hill Kitchen / Bucătăria Dealul Morii
Sector of activity concerned	Sustainable community development through cultural heritage valorisation
Description – please describe the social business: its aim(s). how is it structured/ management. target group/ beneficiaries. etc. – please describe the green dimension of the social business	<p>The Paper Mill Association runs several activities for the sustainable development of the Comana community (Giurgiu county. very close to Bucharest) through cultural heritage valorisation. The associations' mission is that of being a focal point of synergy between people. crafts and art by: 1) offering a direct experience through the Comana Paper Mill and Crafts Village Complex that is open to visitors every week-end. from April to October; 2) education and training. in form of practical workshops with children and adults. on topics related to creativity and crafts. offered throughout the whole year and 3) manufacturing handmade objects in the spirit of the old crafts. conceived to be relevant and appreciated in the 21st century.</p> <p>For the above-mentioned activities. the Paper Mill Association employs 16 people from Comana. The association is managed by a young couple that build the whole ensemble from scratch.</p> <p>The Crafts Village Complex consists of 10 creative workshops based on old crafts. that used to be practiced in the Romanian traditional village: weaving at the hand loom. reed mace processing. blacksmith. pottery and ceramics. woodwork. traditional kitchen. traditional mill and bakery. as well as book-related crafts: hand-made paper. letterpress printing and bookbinding.</p> <p>In 2011. the Paper Mill Association inaugurated a small Workshop-Museum. a place unique in Romania. dedicated to old book-related crafts. More than 30.000 children and adults visited the Workshop-</p>

	<p>Museum and participated in educational and creative workshops of handmade paper, letterpress printing and bookbinding.</p> <p>Remarking the enthusiasm of both children and adults in direct contact with activities inspired by old crafts, in 2014 the Paper Mill Association decided to open a new way and to also build in Comana a small village dedicated to Romanian traditional crafts.</p> <p>In 2020, the association managed to start-up and authorize the Dealul Morii Kitchen as a social enterprise, equipped it with new equipment so that it could function and be useful to the community. The Kitchen offers free of charge meals to vulnerable families in the community and catering services to paying customers.</p>
<p>Services and products</p> <p>– please describe the services and/ or products provided</p>	<p>The Paper Mill Association offers various services and products, all created in their different areas of activity.</p> <p>To preserve children's enthusiasm for learning, 12 practical workshops are organized surcharge in the Paper Mill Ensemble - Crafts Village:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The handmade paper workshop - where children discover how paper was made at the mill for hundreds of years and make their own sheet of paper by hand. 2. The manual printing workshop – where children learn interesting information about letterpress printing in Europe and Romania and will print a memory for themselves. 3. The bookbinding workshop – where participants have the opportunity to find out interesting information about the structure of a book and will create their own notebook. 4. The coin minting workshop – offers children the opportunity to mint their own coin, but also to find out information about coins and the field of numismatic. 5. The warp weaving workshop – where children get closer to the ancient craft of warp weaving and also get change to create an object on their own. 6. The sewing workshop – provides children information about the traditional Romanian stitches and allows them to partake in such an activity. 7. The rush dolls workshop – where children discover how people lived in ancient times and how they used the surrounding plants and they will make their own rush doll. 8. The rush weaving workshop – provides children with the opportunity to see how mats are woven at the rush weaving workshop and to also weave a mini-mat.

	<p>9. The ceramic modelling workshop – where children have the opportunity to express themselves through art and take home their own creation.</p> <p>10. The ceramic painting workshop – where children learn the story of ceramic objects and have the opportunity to personalize them by painting them with traditional motifs.</p> <p>11. The woodworking workshop - proposes a space where children have the chance to listen to and share stories about nature and wood and are invited to create a wooden object by themselves or in a team.</p> <p>12. The milling workshop – offers the opportunity for the children to be closer to the world of cereals in a friendly, playful, but at the same time educational foray.</p> <p>Both adults and children can visit the Paper Mill Workshop-Museum, which houses the largest collection of historical printing and bookbinding equipment in Romania.</p> <p>Depending on the schedule of the association's team, visitors can also participate in interactive demonstrations of handmade paper, rush dolls, ceramics, coining, woodworking.</p> <p>Visitors can also dine at the Dealul Morii Kitchen or organize various events surcharge.</p>
Green skills needed	<p>The Paper Mill Association through its activities in the area of cultural heritage and community development employs various green skills aimed to develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society.</p> <p>The generic green skills used are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quantification and monitoring (waste, energy, water) – Management systems (waste, energy, water) – Procurement and selection – Material use and impact quantification – Impact and use minimization – Impact assessment – Risk management
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Good Practice (500 words max)	<p>The activity of the Paper Mill Association can be regarded as green entrepreneurship both from the output perspective (through the products and services offered) and from the process perspective, related to its economic activity.</p> <p>The Paper Mill Association provides green and environmentally friendly products and services (products in the workshops, the natural ingredients food in the Kitchen etc.). Also, the Association provides its products and services of preserving cultural heritage through an environmentally friendly process and with the help of</p>

	<p>clean technologies (the ancient technologies used in the workshops).</p> <p>The social purpose of the activities makes the Paper Mill Association a green social enterprise. in which the managers have wider motivations than just launching eco-friendly products and services for a niche market. but also aim to promote social change so that the environment is not harmed.</p>
<p>How this Good Practice could be used/ transferred (500 words max)</p>	<p>The Paper Mill Association illustrates several of the characteristics of a sound green social business. that addressed both environmental and social issues. by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Incorporating principles of sustainability into its business decisions and actively monitoring them; – Offering a fair wage to its employees (most of them vulnerable persons from the community) for the work they do; – Maximizing the social benefits of the business (by employing marginalized groups. by offering part of the services and products free of charge. by activating the community resources). – Suppling environmentally-friendly local products and services.

Mihai Eminescu Trust Foundation - the Whole Village Project

Name of the practice	Mihai Eminescu Trust Foundation - the Whole Village Project
Website	https://www.mihaieminescutrust.ro/en/the-village-on-its-own/
Country	Romania
Region	Transylvania
Rural or urban area	Rural
Start Date	2000 - Mihai Eminescu Trust Foundation & the Whole Village Project
Sector of activity concerned	Sustainable community development through cultural and natural heritage valorisation.
Description – please describe the social business: its aim(s). how is it structured/ management. target group/ beneficiaries. etc. – please describe the green dimension of the social business	<p>The Mihai Eminescu Trust Foundation (MET) runs the Whole Village Project. which was built on three pillars: community development. cultural and natural heritage and growth of the local community.</p> <p>The community development pillar includes community projects aimed at the common good. in areas such as the rehabilitation and improvement of public spaces and public utility objectives. One of MET's selection criteria for these projects is the support and contribution of local actors for the benefit of the whole community. Individual initiatives are also supported. in the sense that they perform rehabilitation works. and MET contributes with the necessary materials. and thus strengthening the responsibility of locals for heritage.</p> <p>The cultural and natural heritage is highlighted by addressing both the civil and the religious heritage of the communities where MET activates. by implementing environmental projects and by works of reconvertng of civil patrimony. The civil heritage refers to the houses of the locals. which are important for the development of the community in the future. The religious heritage refers to the restoration of places of worship. parish houses. churches and fortification walls. Also. restoration and functionalization of household annexes (sheds) – is a distinct category from that of "housing". due to its special architectural value and their importance in the traditional household as a whole. Environmental projects usually aim to the protection of the natural heritage. the conservation of the cultural landscape. with a significant impact on local communities. the local economy and the academic environment. Finally. the reconversion of civil patrimony includes restoration and arrangement projects of the MET offices in Sibiu. Sighișoara. Viscri and Florești.</p>

Through its entire activity, MET seeks to create opportunities for the development of the local economy, by developing responsible cultural tourism and supporting local entrepreneurs. The first category includes projects focused on promoting responsible tourism and arranging traditional guest houses. The tourism activity is based on local agricultural products, improves the quality of life of the locals and maintains the authenticity of the cultural landscape. Local entrepreneurs benefit of support for the establishment, authorization, endowment, arrangement, operation and promotion of small businesses, in order to improve agricultural and craft activities.

These activities are organized in a nested framework that includes two social enterprises (Experience Transylvania and ProMET) and individual entrepreneurial initiatives of responsible tourism developed by locals with MET's support.

Experience Transylvania and ProMET (The Mălâncrav Orchard) are limited liability companies that belong to the MET foundation, which were set up so that the resulting profit could be used as co-financing for the projects that the MET team manages to attract through various national and international programs.

Experience Transylvania is a social business that offers tourists the chance to help maintain a traditional lifestyle that is in danger of perishing, but which also contributes to the well-being of the community and the development of the local economy. The enterprise coordinates a network of houses in seven villages in Transylvania: Alma Vii, Biertan, Criș, Florești, Mălâncrav, Viscri, but also in Maramureș and Câmpulung. These old houses in the villages were restored by MET craftsmen and they are an example for the villagers who want to open their houses for guests. The traditional guest houses are managed by families from villages who have participated in training courses in this field of activity.

ProMET (The Mălâncrav Orchard) is the first ecologically certified orchard in Romania, being proud of its unique resources: over 215 species of plants, 100 species of birds and 30 species of mammals. The orchard, in which old varieties of apple trees, pear trees, plum trees and walnut trees grow, has 108 hectares and dates from the 15th century. The orchard was abandoned after 1990, reaching the brink of extinction. MET rented the entire area of the orchard from the State Domains Agency, rebuilt the collection of fruit trees and rehabilitated its administrative building. An ecological technology of tree cultivation and fruit processing was introduced, the orchard obtaining ecological certification.

	<p>Besides the coordinated efforts of the two social enterprises, MET encourages and supports locals to open or manage a guest house. In each village, they encourage locals to open or manage a guest house and to highlight what they already have: a traditional house inherited from their grandparents, a consolidated and closed barn, former stables or even the house in which they live, where they can offer rooms for rent. It is a business that the locals can develop with their own family all year round or only during the summer months. Renovation work on the house, stable or barn must be done with traditional materials. It doesn't matter if the walls are not perfectly straight, if the beams are smoked or the floor is not polished. For tourists it is more important to feel the history and personality of the house, the warm, human atmosphere.</p>
Services and products – please describe the services and/ or products provided	<p>In a nutshell, the main activities developed by MET in the framework of the Whole Village project can be summarized as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement, revitalization and consolidation of the community through meetings with locals, strategic planning, individual counselling, professional qualifications for locals, personal development courses, support of local initiatives, volunteer actions, educational workshops, empowerment of vulnerable groups; - Rehabilitation, restoration and revitalization of cultural heritage: houses, household buildings, public buildings, places of worship, fortified churches, crafts, traditions and customs, traditional techniques and practices; - Protecting the environment: non-formal ecological education, green actions, planting on degraded lands; - Supporting agriculture: maintaining traditional agricultural techniques, promoting agricultural products, maintaining traditional varieties, establishing school orchards; - Supporting craftsmen: encouraging local / social entrepreneurship, supporting small rural enterprises, setting up social enterprises, creating opportunities for business development; - Developing sustainable and responsible cultural tourism, by promoting the cultural and natural heritage, traditional guest houses, ecological products and the unique experience of the authentic country lifestyle, cultural events, traditional local gastronomy, hiking trails;
Green skills needed	<p>The Mihai Eminescu Trust Foundation, through its activities in the area of cultural heritage and community development employs</p>

	<p>various green skills aimed to develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society. The generic green skills used are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quantification and monitoring (waste. energy. water) – Management systems (waste. energy. water) – Procurement and selection – Material use and impact quantification – Impact and use minimization – Impact assessment – Risk management
<p>Trends and Potential Benefits from this Good Practice (500 words max)</p>	<p>The innovative character of The Whole Village concept is given by the integrated and multidisciplinary approach. The projects implemented by MET integrate cultural heritage and landscape. entrepreneurship based on local crafts. traditional and organic agriculture. environmental protection. education of adults and children. local know-how and practices. The transdisciplinary approach generates an improved quality of life. ownership and responsibility for heritage protection. stronger local capacity in project management and more local jobs.</p> <p>The impact is the revitalization of village communities and their sustainable development through tangible and intangible heritage protection.</p> <p>The activity of the MET Foundation can be regarded as green entrepreneurship both from the output perspective (through the products and services offered) and from the process perspective. related to its economic activity.</p> <p>The MET Foundation provides green and environmentally friendly products and services (responsible tourism. ecological products of the orchard. supporting local entrepreneurship). Also. the MET provides its products and services of preserving cultural heritage through an environmentally friendly process and with the help of clean technologies (the production activities valorising the orchard's products. the renovation activities using traditional and natural materials only etc.).</p> <p>The social purpose of the activities includes the MET Foundation among the green social enterprises. in which the managers have wider motivations than just launching eco-friendly products and services for a niche market. but also aim to promote social change so that the environment is not harmed.</p>
<p>How this Good Practice could be used/ transferred (500 words max)</p>	<p>These social businesses managed by MET offer tourists the chance to help maintain a traditional lifestyle that is in danger of perishing. but which also contributes to the well-being of the community and the development of the local economy. Responsible cultural</p>

tourism helps the inhabitants of a village to highlight the cultural, material and intangible heritage existing in their locality.

When tourists book a house, buy local products or try the local gastronomy, they support the authenticity of Transylvania, whose inhabitants continue to live as they have always done. Tourists who arrive at the Foundation's guest houses are guided to craftsmen, carters, bakers, bricklayers or blacksmiths from the village who offer them pleasant traditional experiences and different ways of spending time.

In addition, the orchard provides the villagers with permanent or seasonal jobs. The orchard hosts a plant nursery with old Transylvanian varieties of fruit trees, which are on the verge of extinction, providing a base of seedlings and grafts for farmers and contributing to the support of traditional agriculture.

The MET Foundation illustrates several of the characteristics of a sound green social business, that addressed both environmental and social issues, by:

- Incorporating principles of sustainability into its business decisions and actively monitoring them;
- Maximizing the social benefits of the business (by employing marginalized groups, by offering part of the services and products free of charge, by activating the community resources).
- Supplying environmentally-friendly local products and services.
- Helping communities to become more sustainable
- Making efforts to reduce resource use
- Making an enduring commitment to environmental principles in its business operations.

Annex 1 - Data collection instruments

In-depth interview with educators – guide

Introduction

My name is and represent (partner organization).
..... (partner organization) is implementing the project Rural Women's Empowerment through Green Social Entrepreneurship (WE-GREEN) that proposes to foster social green entrepreneurship among women in rural communities through education in the form of practical local programs. The first result of the project is a research on specific needs of rural women and the exact problems they face. preventing their integration in the labour market and fostering green social entrepreneurship and a collection of best practices related to green social entrepreneurship for women in rural areas.

Thank you for taking part at our research! Your responses will be confidential and only used in the research.

Introductory questions

1. Let's know each other – please provide us some information about you - age. education. region. position on the labour market
2. Please provide some info regarding the status and type of the organization you work for (NGO. School for adults. secondary education etc.) as well as your role and position (years of experience. years in the particular position/ organization).
3. Briefly describe the main challenges you have faced as an educator supporting rural women.

Main questions

4. From your experience what is the potential of rural areas? What kind of business could be developed? What was done? What should be done?
5. How can you describe the entrepreneurship in rural areas? What are the new trends in rural entrepreneurship?
6. From your experience. what are the main challenges rural women face preventing their integration in the labour market?
7. In your opinion. what are the challenges rural women face in developing a business? In rural areas are there gender stereotypes related to entrepreneurship? If yes. what kind of gender stereotypes?
8. How can you describe the social entrepreneurship in rural areas? What type of business were developed? In what areas?
9. What are the challenges in fostering green social entrepreneurship in rural areas?
10. Are rural women interested in green social entrepreneurship area? What are the challenges that rural women face in developing a green social entrepreneurship? Could you provide more details?
11. In your view. are rural women encouraged to become entrepreneurs? If not. what are the main reasons? Are you aware of any best practice at national level?

12. What skills rural women need to develop a business? What are the skills needed for a green social business?
13. In your opinion the present training programmes dedicated to rural women empowerment respond to their needs for business development? If yes, please provide some more details. What should be improved?
14. What are the skills and competences targeted by the training programmes dedicated to rural women empowerment?
15. What are the topics of the training programmes dedicated to rural women empowerment? Do they include green skills or social entrepreneurship topics? Can you explain more?
16. Are there trainings that include green skills topics? What kind of green skills are addressed in these trainings? Can you provide some more information? What are topics should be included?
17. What specific skills and competences of formal and non-formal educators working with women in the rural area that need to be enhanced and fostered?

Focus group at national level guide

Introduction

My name is and represent (partner organization).
..... (partner organization) is implementing the project Rural Women's Empowerment through Green Social Entrepreneurship (WE-GREEN) that proposes to foster social green entrepreneurship among women in rural communities through education in the form of practical local programs. The first result of the project is a research on specific needs of rural women and the exact problems they face. preventing their integration in the labour market and fostering green social entrepreneurship and a collection of best practices related to green social entrepreneurship for women in rural areas.

Thank you for taking part at our research! Your responses will be confidential and only used in the research.

Introductory questions

1. Let's know each other – please provide us some information about you - age. education. region. position on the labour market
2. Please provide some info regarding the status and type of the organization you work for (e.g. NGO. informal group. research institution) as well as your role and position (years of experience. years in the particular position/organization etc.).
3. Briefly present the main projects/ activities your organisation implements for rural women.
4. What are the main challenges faced by supporting rural women? You could refer to the experience (if any) of your organization.

Main questions

5. From your experience what is the potential of rural areas? What kind of business could be developed? What was done? What should be done?
6. How can you describe the entrepreneurship in rural areas? What are the new trends in rural entrepreneurship?
7. How can you describe the social entrepreneurship in rural areas? What type of business were developed? In what areas?
8. How can you describe the women entrepreneurship in rural areas? In your opinion. what are the challenges rural women face in developing a business? In rural areas are there gender stereotypes related to entrepreneurship? If yes. what kind of gender stereotypes?
9. What skills rural women need to develop a business? What are the skills needed for a green social business?
10. What type of support for rural entrepreneurship development is provided at national level? What should be improved? What kind of support is needed?
11. What type of support is provided for rural women entrepreneurship? What should be improved? What kind of support is needed?

12. What type of support is provided for social entrepreneurship? What should be improved?
What kind of support is needed?
13. What type of support is provided for green entrepreneurship? What should be improved?
What kind of support is needed?
14. What are the challenges in fostering green social entrepreneurship in rural areas?
15. Are rural women interested in green social entrepreneurship area? What are the challenges that rural women face in developing a green social entrepreneurship? Could you provide more details?
16. In your opinion the present training programmes dedicated to rural women empowerment respond to their needs for business development? If yes, please provide some more details. What should be improved?
17. What are the skills and competences targeted by the training programmes dedicated to rural women empowerment?
18. What are the topics of the training programmes dedicated to rural women empowerment? Do they include green skills or social entrepreneurship topics? Can you explain more?
19. Are there trainings that include green skills topics? What kind of green skills are addressed in these trainings? Can you provide some more information? What are topics should be included?
20. What interventions/ programmes dedicated to promote green and social entrepreneurship targeting women in rural areas do you know? Can you provide some more details about them?

Best practice template on green social entrepreneurship for women in rural areas at national level

Name of the practice	
Website	
Country	
Region	
Rural or urban area	
Start Date	
Sector of activity concerned	
Description – please describe the social business: its aim(s). how is it structured/ management. target group/beneficiaries. etc. – please describe the green dimension of the social business	
Services and products – please describe the services and/or products provided	
Green skills needed	
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Good Practice (500 words max)	
How this Good Practice could be used/ transferred (500 words max)	



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