



RURAL WOMEN TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING

*Fresh Food
from Farm to Table*

STRATEGIC PLAN

Year of 2020-2025

NETWORK OF WOMEN FROM RURAL COMMUNITIES

PROJECT NUMBER: 2019-1-RS01-KA204-000854

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BACKGROUND

⇒ Preface

This Strategic Plan provides a living, iterative reference to guide the Network of Women from Rural Communities (NWRC).

⇒ Why did we make this Strategic Plan?

The Strategic Plan for the Network of Women from Rural Communities (NWRC) builds on existing work within the project RWSFF - Rural Women to Sustainable Food and Farming - Fresh Food from Farm to Table co-funded by Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union - for the action KA2 Strategic Partnerships in the field of Adult education (Ref.no. 2019-1-RS01-KA204-000854) and articulates a path for the next two years for achieving the NWRC's vision and mission.

The Strategic Plan, as a guide to the implementation of the Network of Women from Rural Communities (NWRC) work, was created out of the need for defining future guidelines that would enable continuity of operation, more systematic monitoring of accomplished results and better assessment of effects.

This Strategic Plan contains, apart from other existing elements, Communication Strategy and Fundraising Strategy, as well as their accompanying action plans.

The process of creating this Strategic Plan took two months, and this document presents the result of the whole process.

The Strategic Plan came out from the need to establish the following aspects of the newly formed Network: Designating internal structure; Setting priorities for the next two years; Defining clear directions; Determining targeted actions; Anchoring pathways and mechanisms of growth, expansion and sustainability; Specifying communication, promotion and visibility framework and Outlining blueprint financing and fundraising

⇒ What is the purpose of this document?

The purpose of this Network of Women from Rural Communities (NWRC) Strategic Plan is to create a strategic framework with shared goals for how members/partners will aspire to achieve the NWRC vision through collective impact.

This strategic framework contains common and shared elements to help individual members/partners work collaboratively as a Women from Rural Communities network understanding of the way NWRC as a whole will achieve performance goals while communicating how broader NWRC collectively functions.

⇒ Who supported creating this document?

This document was created as the outcome of work on the project RWSFF - Rural Women to Sustainable Food and Farming - Fresh Food from Farm to Table co-funded by Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union; Key Action: Strategic Partnerships in the Field of Adult education - KA204.

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⇒ Who worked on this document and how it came about?

Partners in the RWSFF project and founders of NWRC are four NGOs: EDUFONS – Center for Lifelong Education from Serbia, Gramigna Associazione di Volontariato from Italy, Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED) from Greece and Udruga ISTARSKO - Ekomuzej iz Vodnjana from Croatia.

The representatives and members of these four NGOs participated in the process of the Strategic plan creation and contributed to its successful finalization through their diligent work.

The document development process took two months, under the leadership of the Udruga ISTARSKO – Ekomuzej iz Vodnjana, which coordinated and monitored.

The original draft of the Strategic plan resulted from a workshop during the transnational meeting of four representatives from NGOs included in RWSFF project in Italy in half of December 2019. After that, the original draft was improved through the teamwork of these organizations - sharing an online document to work together on it, including brainstorming, discussions and substantive comments.

⇒ What is the time frame for this document?

For the Strategic Plan, the time frame is a set period of 5 years from 2020 to 2025. The Strategic Plan will be updated in the next three years.

⇒ Who adopted it and when was it adopted?

The Strategic Plan was adopted on February 26, 2020, by four partner organizations: EDUFONS (Serbia), Gramigna (Italy), ISTARSKO - Ekomuzej iz Vodnjana (Croatia) and iED (Greece). On July 26, 2021, at the Transnational Project Meeting in Vodnjan, a decision was made to extend the validity of the Strategic plan from firstly made 2 years to 5 years period.

⇒ When will it be implemented?

Its implementation will start on the **1st of January, 2020 and it will end on the 31st of December, 2025**



ABOUT THE EMERGENCE OF THE NETWORK

⇒ Preamble

The Network of Women from Rural Communities is fundamentally partnership endeavor.

The NWRC is a new construct but based on existing cooperation models. The Network is an extension of existing partnership's efforts in seeking to enhance the outcomes of empowering rural women involved in agriculture or agriculture supply chain across the geographical extent of the Network. The Network of Women from Rural Communities appreciates and celebrates the long-term partnerships that have preceded its establishment and have helped steer the Network towards this collaboration model. These long-term partnerships are surely the cornerstone and models for success.

⇒ Beginning and development of the Network

The RWSFF project partner organizations have formed this network.

In December 2019, four adult education practitioners' organizations held a transnational partnership's meeting within the RWSFF project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. During that, they set up the NWRC as a European informal network to support empowering and teaching rural women involved in agriculture or the agriculture supply chain.

Exactly the network is originated from the said project and is one of its results with a tendency to expand and continue its existence beyond the project life span.

⇒ A brief history of building-up the RWSFF project partnership

In the first place, the partnership has formed to respond to identified needs. Territorial aspect also considered - all partners belong to the region of Southern Europe, as well as the Adriatic-Ionian Region for which the EU macro-regional strategy adopted (EUSAIR).

Partners have begun their cooperation working on ERASMUS+ projects and developing together several proposals. So there is already cross-cooperation of all partners.

A shared vision of empowering rural women has tied them. The organizations recognized the same passion and commitment - the network building and providing help to rural women in a confrontation with the current challenges.

Partners worked on the RWSFF project concept (and its preconditions) from 2017 onwards. From the beginning, priority topics are empowerment of rural women and the stimulation of networking as well as the creation of an appropriate training program. The concept about Fresh Food approach was born after reviewing the relevant literature, which additionally enhanced the actuality of the project topic. Pooling the different partners' expertise made it possible to think about creating an online platform thus rounding up the idea and giving project completeness. After the launch of the Call Erasmus+ 2019, partners focused on the adult education field and developing the first outline project proposal which circulated among them.

All partners recognized significant of lifelong education as the mechanism for supporting to develop skills and social position of rural women. Each organization re-examined its capacities and capabilities, and then we considered the synergetic action of joint work. We used the needs analysis and SWOT analysis to ensure that we make the right decision and that the partnership can successfully face challenges and favorably perform the proposed project.

The partnership brings together essential complementary resources, both technical and knowledge, and allows to achieve benefits by synergies and coordinating action. The partners' expertise, capacities, motivation, experience give us enthusiasm and allow us to trust in our intentions and organizational skills.

⇒ About the founders of the network

EDUFONS – Center for Lifelong Education is NGO founded to strengthen the social community through lifelong learning, improving information flow, promoting active democratic citizenship, respecting for diversity and earning key competences. The focus is on three areas: Education, Empowerment and Development, all with social inclusion and gender equality as crosscutting issues.

EDUFONS advocates freedom, equality, and solidarity for everyone and a society in which people have control over their lives, in an economic and every other way. Activities concentrate on the empowerment of vulnerable groups, young people and women predominantly in areas that cover global challenges, including agriculture and rural development; entrepreneurship and innovation; community development; critical thinking and media literacy.

EDUFONS brings work to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal learning by promoting lifelong learning and learning methods in the education system, as well as linking within the community.

Gramigna Associazione di Volontariato Gramigna ODV is an Italian Association that offers social inclusion and Sustainable Development for disadvantaged people in social farming (refugee, migrants, people with psychiatric disorders, prisoners). It develops educational projects for people and for schools on environmental sustainability issues, rural development, and social integration.



GRAMIGNA brings the practice of social inclusion, the development of social entrepreneurship, a commitment of SDGs and the promotion of access to fresh food in the community.

Udruga "ISTARSKO –Ekomuzej iz Vodnjana" (ISTRIAN de DIGNAN - ECOMUSEUM) is a nonprofit, non-government organization established in the City of Vodnjan, in the Region of Istria. The main aim of the organization is to improve the quality of life of the local community by increasing and valorizing its resources, fostering cooperation, unity and solidarity among its members. To reach this goal the association promotes research, care, conservation and promotion of historical rural cultural heritage and traditions. Through the valorization of human work products, it strives for the creation of a recognizable cultural and touristic identity of Vodnjan as a prosperous destination, rich of local natural products.

Udruga ISTARSKO –Ekomuzej iz Vodnjana, brings a wealth of experience in the field of agriculture, education of farmers, building networks, and support to rural development (local and international).

Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED) - The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development is a research organization established in 2005, focused on the promotion of entrepreneurship for everyone. The organization's main activity is the implementation of projects under some of Europe's most influential and groundbreaking Programmes like the HORIZON 2020 and the ERASMUS+ programmes.

iED brings a wealth of experience in promoting employment and entrepreneurship, conducting research and providing innovative solutions.

Each of these organization brings:

- Results of its research related to the topic
- Qualified expertise, knowledge and capacities
- Stable strategic cooperation

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

GLOBAL CONTEXT

The World's population is rapidly growing, and more people are joining the middle class. As a result, food demand is expected to increase by as much as 98% by 2050. Agriculture already accounts for 1/3 of land use (with 40% of agricultural soil degraded), over 10% of greenhouse gas emissions, and is contributing to water scarcity globally. Modern agriculture brings out social challenges a broad range of health and safety issues and a more difficult economic environment for all but the most successful farms.

An overview of major challenges that the Food Industry has to face to solve problems such as growing population and lack of resources, stresses the significance of sustainable and healthy food. The WEF (World Economic Forum) itself has recently underlined how much food systems are relevant to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The WEF asking "How is it possible that during the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Food can be the most important sector in Europe?" (Fresh: the 4.0 Food Economy aims, April 2018).

⇒ FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Sustainable Development Goals of the UN

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" and they are all interconnected. SDGs address the global challenges we face and to leave no one behind.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The rural area of Europe (about 80% - 90% of the overall landscape) is still in the process of change. Many regions of Europe are in desperate need for economic sustainability to increase their resilience, stabilize municipalities, offer possibilities and generate employment. Although farming is of vital significance for the world's food production, small-scale family farms are disappearing at a rapid pace everywhere in Europe. As technology and intensive agricultural methods change the conditions of agricultural production, farmers need to explore other alternatives to remain in rural areas. They must adapt to this process by making the required transition from small producers to become managers armed with the latest technologies and know-how, as well as understanding the market.

In January 2019, Euromonitor International released a report about trends "The Future of the meal: mapping a new fresh food economy". Some key findings are: "Consumer interest in food, knowledge about global food trends, and desire to spend on quality experiences is growing, even as a time to shop for and prepare said food is becoming more compressed. A new "fresh food economy" is emerging, turning fresh ingredients into meals, delivered on demand. Over the next ten years, a truly radical change in urban geography is possible, as a more integrated, more local

production and distribution network emerges to support on-demand fresh-food delivery."

There are also environmental issues that matter to Europe, and the benefits of grown food to people's health, region's economy and employment.

⇒ FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

Art. 174 states that the Union should "develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion" to reduce disparities between regions and promote even and harmonious growth.

The European Cohesion Policy

The European Cohesion Policy is the main European investment policy to promote a wide array of projects designed to enhance growth, eliminate regional imbalances and contribute to meeting the targets outlined in the Europe 2020 Strategy (EU 2020).

The Cohesion Policy is made up of 11 thematic objectives, among them are the following four:

- Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (objective 6)
- Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labor mobility (objective 8)
- Promoting social inclusion, combatting poverty and any discrimination (objective 9)
- Investing in education, training and lifelong learning (objective 10)

The Europe 2020 Strategy (EU2020)

- A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

In 2010, the European Union and its Member States launched the EU2020 strategy as a ten-year roadmap. It constitutes an overall strategic framework putting forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource-efficient, greener and more competitive economy;
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

Qualified in five headline targets areas: Employment, Research and Development, Climate Change and Energy, Education, Poverty and Social Exclusion

European policy cooperation (ET 2020 framework)

- The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)



The ET 2020 framework provides opportunities to build best practices in education policy, gather and disseminate knowledge, and advance educational policy reforms at the national and regional levels. The framework is based on the lifelong learning approach and is designed to cover learning in all contexts: formal, non-formal and informal.

ET 2020 pursues the following four common EU objectives:

Make lifelong learning and mobility a reality

Improve the quality and efficiency of education and training

Promote equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship

Enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

REGIONAL CONTEXT: THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION

The Adriatic-Ionian region includes eight countries, four EU Member States: Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia; and four non-EU countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia.

The region covers a wide transnational area with more than 70 million inhabitants and has distinct physical, environmental, socio-economic and cultural characteristics. It is a place of considerable differences characterized by a strong imbalance in regional development (weak territorial cohesion), combined with ageing population and depopulation in mountain and rural areas.

This region faces many challenges, including a gap in socio-economic development. Internal migration is also an important issue in the area.

Agriculture is an important landscape determining factor, thus affecting biodiversity and attractiveness of the area. Higher employment levels are key because people need opportunities near where they live.

⇒ FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region – EUSAIR (EU macro-regional strategy)

The European Council formally endorsed the Strategy on 24 October 2014 and invited all participants to begin its implementation.

The creation of the Adriatic-Ionian region is linked to many years of successful transnational cooperation under the auspices of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII), but also within the Euroregion, which has established strong links between participating countries as well as independent regional cooperation between cities, chambers of commerce and universities.

The EUSAIR:

- Guiding idea is to create macro-regions of security, stability and prosperity for the benefit of all its inhabitants
- The key objective is to promote economic and social progress through the growth and creation of jobs as well as the territorial cohesion in the region



The Action Plan accompanying the Strategy is structured on four priority pillars: Blue Growth; Connecting the Region, Environmental Quality and Sustainable Tourism. Cooperation also takes place through two cross-cutting areas, which permeate all four pillars:

- Capacity-building - including communication, for efficient implementation and for raising public awareness and support
- Research, Innovation and Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises - to boost high-skilled employment, growth and competitiveness

The EUSAIR covers candidate and potential candidate countries and is an instrument for strengthening the process of their accession to the European Union.

As the Adriatic-Ionian Macro Region forms a bridge between Central Europe and the Mediterranean, the EUSAIR has an important geostrategic dimension.

By providing an integrated framework for achieving the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the Adriatic-Ionian region, the Strategy contributes to the achievement of the EU 2020 objectives.

The Adriatic Ionian Transnational Program - ADRION 2014-2020

ADRION aims to support the long-term development of the Adriatic-Ionian Region and to strengthen transnational cooperation between participating countries. The program covers the same geographical area and includes these eight countries as EUSAIR.

Both the ADRION Programme and EUSAIR aim at fostering cooperation, creating synergies and enhancing the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the area.

LOCAL CONTEXT – Fresh Food Access by communities' involvement

The benefits of favouring locally grown foods are many: excellent flavours, improved health, a safer food supply, knowing how domestic nutriment is produced, support for family farms, and protecting the environment.

In Fresh Food Economy, one of the most significant benefits may be that most of the money does not leave the region through the import of food, and food profit spent by local farmers stay close to home to reinvest in the local community. These make conditions for investing "profit from food" in the local economy and creating jobs.

Apart from that, agricultural new view and effective extended services for rural women and farms could prevent the transformation of farmlands for non-farm use and keep farmers and rural professions in business.



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POSITION OF RURAL WOMEN

RURAL WOMEN AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Rural women are disadvantaged, negative attitudes and prejudices are present, thus a conclusion is drawn that the problem of rural women cannot be viewed only from economic sustainability, full support should be provided to actively engage in socio-economic processes, and training for self-reliance in agricultural activity and the valorization of their work.

GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES OF RURAL WOMEN

Requesting gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as the growing response of social and economic development policies within rural areas, are globally recognized as vital attitudes of sustainable development.

Research shows that women in agriculture are especially disadvantaged, where due to traditionally set values, and roles in the family do not have equal access to resources, rights and information. Numerous and varied problems with which women in agriculture meet: they are rarely owner agricultural holdings or often unpaid for their work.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Rural women play a critical role in the rural economies of both developed and developing countries. Women in rural areas, whose survival depends mainly on natural resources and agriculture, make up more than a quarter of the world's population. In developing countries, rural women constitute nearly 43 per cent of the total workforce in agriculture. They produce and process most of the available food, which has the primary responsibility for food safety.

RURAL WOMEN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Researches point to significant gender differences expressed through less participation of women among family members and households as entrepreneurs, as well as gender inequalities visible in the form of their smaller share among holders of farms and managers and greater share among family members who participate in agricultural work on farms. Frequently women in agriculture work without individual income.

Often a woman is dependent on the husband who has the exclusive right to dispose of the farm, even if the spouse does not produce on that farm. That is why a rural woman is not at the same time a manager of this property.



EDUCATION OF RURAL WOMEN

In addition to rooted traditions that hinder women, their level of education is still such that they are in a subordinate position relative to their husband. With better access to information, know-how, training, and technology, rural women can alter food production and consumption, thus achieving land and resource sustainable utilization.

RURAL WOMEN AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Rural women play a crucial role in rural economies and societies. As a pillar of the family, they can highly contribute to the development of villages and agricultural production. Rural women have confirmed their commitment and resourcefulness in locating or arranging new access to enhance their lives, as well as those of their families and communities.

The global community is dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among them is SDG2 - zero hunger by 2030. Women can be the essential agents of change in agriculture, nutrition and rural development. Bearing in mind that 76 per cent of the extremely poor live in rural areas, secured access to productive agricultural resources to women in the village contributes to reducing global hunger and poverty, which rural women receive the key to the success of the new Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030.

CONCLUSION

From all of the above, we can conclude that there is a lot of space and needs for action in the field of improvement of the position of rural women in agricultural activity and creation of a basis for its economic and social emancipation.



MANDATE OF THE NETWORK

The Network of Women from Rural Communities (NWRC) founded to:

- support joint work of women agro-producers from different areas to learn and help each other
- provide connections and exchange ideas, initiatives, actions of regional or European agriculture, social innovations and cooperation under the aspect of agriculture and food system
- provide cross-national know-how about farm-related development, production and commercialization in different areas

THE PURPOSE of the NWRC is to harness the capacities and capabilities of all members/partners to support empowering rural women involved in agriculture or the agriculture supply chain and to serve as a strategic forum for collegial collaboration, coordination, and integration.

Taking about modern trends, the NWRC is ready to share their rich experience to contribute to empowering rural women and enhancing rural development.

VISION AND MISSION

VISION:

Together we can empower rural women through lifelong learning and connecting.

MISSION:

Our dedication is to empowering, connecting and supporting rural women through education, collaboration, opportunities and initiatives based on the needs of economic independence, dignified work and fulfilled lives, and focused on facilitating them to make positive, sustainable change and progress in their lives and communities.

NWRC AIMS



To implement and support competency-based and work-based learning

- to launch an exchange of knowledge and initiatives for empowering rural women involved in agriculture or the agriculture supply chain



To enhance the quality and effectiveness of learning mobility experiences (physical and virtual mobility)

- to support the process of networking and develop access to exchanges and mobility connecting women with women (women-to-women approach)

- to create conditions for exchanging lecturers and organizing interstate sessions of lectures for women in rural areas

- to develop models for international visits with the goal of learning and acquiring/improving skills and competencies for food production and agricultural entrepreneurship



VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN AND IMPROVE

We recognize the importance of lifelong learning as a mechanism to support the development of skills and the social position of rural women.

RESPECTING AND APPRECIATING DIVERSITY

We give respect and appreciate the uniqueness and needs of each one of the persons. We respect all differences and specific needs, potentials, abilities, affinities and attitudes of each individual.

GENDER EQUALITY

We believe that women have the same skills, rights and capacities as do men. We believe in complete gender equality in political, social and economic arenas.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We believe that all humans have the same rights and deserve to make decisions that can influence their futures. We, following the principles of Sustainable Development, encourages and respects equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

SOLIDARITY AND LOYALTY

We believe that empowering women is the key to sustainable change. We believe in the solidarity and loyalty of empowered women to support other women (Woman to Woman Approach).

PARTNERSHIPS AND COALITIONS

We believe in the power of working together, so we encourage working with a wide range of actors to understand the issues, advocate resolves, and collaborate to deliver change.



SCOPE OF WORK

The members of NWRC recognizes the transitions that occur in a fast-changing world. Therefore, they foster employability, socio-educational and personal development, as well as participation in civic and social life through improving language skills, entrepreneurial mindset, critical thinking and creativity, as well as forward-looking skills in domains that are strategic for smart economic and social progress.

1. NWRC promotes Fresh Food Access and rural women's education empowering them to participate fully as an actor for a change:

- increasing rural women knowledge about new trends "Fresh Food Economy" and agricultural entrepreneurship
- exchanging knowledge and launching initiatives to empower rural women who are involved in agriculture or the agriculture supply chain
- providing rural women with empowerment by encouraging new trends of "Fresh Food Economy" and agricultural entrepreneurship, as well as additional farm-related segments of the rural economy, contributing to generating income and employment, taking into account the adaptability of methods and technologies to meet local conditions in each member/partner's country
- developing alternative approaches for sustainable development, through rural women empowerment and their social inclusion
- supporting and encourages rural women with fewer opportunities to engage and actively participate
- supporting sustained engagement, transition, and progression of rural women who are involved in agriculture or the agriculture supply chain or who want to engage in this field and need support and assistance

2. NWRC increases networking among rural women, especially highlighting the process of networking and developing access to exchanges and mobility by connecting woman with a woman (women-to-women approach):

- develops cooperation and connectivity of rural women from European countries who are facing similar difficulties and engaging in joint work that contributes to the development of the community
- establishes a mechanism of direct contact between rural women included in the network to organize learning and transfer of good practice by virtual and physical mobility
- provides mechanisms for transnational mobility of rural women, contributing to greater connectivity and circulation of knowledge

In this way, the NWRC provides rural women jointly organizing their virtual or physical meets to exchange experience and know-how or arrange study visits. Through such cooperation, with minimal costs, models will be developed to arrange international visits with the goal of learning and acquiring/improving skills and competencies for food production and agricultural entrepreneurship. The collaborative economy is a



societal trend, who can play a significant role here: women will transfer each other their experience in agricultural production, which can generate new ideas and initiatives.

3. NWRC as the transnational network facilitates partnerships, including capacity development and training initiatives:

- creating new and increased inter-regional and cross-border cooperation in the fields of adult education and rural development
- providing mechanisms and creating conditions for transnational mobility of adult educators, contributing to greater connectivity and knowledge circulation, exchanging lecturers and organizing interstate sessions of lectures for women in rural areas
- building new cross-sector partnerships
- facilitating knowledge sharing and good practice experiences as well as encouraging the common application of practices
- promoting innovation and joint initiatives
- developing jointly working, services and support to pool essential information, and creating an appropriate set of support and tailored provision
- developing appropriate linkages that connect members/partners to ensure an efficient network
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of NWRC strategy in meeting shared objectives

The success of the Network depends both upon the success of individual self-directed partnerships in addressing the needs most important within their geographies, as well as the NWRC collective ability to address goals at even broader geographic scales.

JUSTIFYING THE CALL FOR TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

The NWRC was designed to relate and exchange among approaches of European regional economic activity, social inventions and cooperation under the aspect of agriculture and food system, to provide cross-national know-how about rural development programs, production and commercialization that take place in different areas mostly carried by civil commitment for the greater good and hence fructify region.

The NWRC emphasizes the international element - mutual learning and cooperation between members/partners from different country backgrounds to develop applicable outcomes that can be adapted and used across Europe.

The broad geographic scope of the Network is necessary to facilitate and support integration efforts and mechanisms that address large-scale issues of challenges such as creating opportunities for rural women, reducing barriers faced by women in rural areas as well as alleviating their unemployment through teaching and empowering entrepreneurial spirit.

Working collectively, members/partners across the entire Network can face complex problems that no single organization or entity can solve alone.



All of these require cooperation among different countries and transnational strategic approaches through networking and projects.

NWRC is fully committed to education, social inclusion and employment and strives that permanent learning becomes a reality.

NWRC also contributes to numerous priorities of the EU - environment care, food safety, employment, education, growth, jobs, social equity, inclusion, etc.

Co-operation within transnational networks can bring ideas to markets, and help develop new products and services.

The NWRC develops joint initiatives in the region:

- contributing to better collaboration on joint issues and bringing prosperity to the target area
- supporting food sovereignty initiatives and offering an outlook on how to meet the needs of regional circulation and enhanced cooperation between rural areas (open up new perspectives, increase the attractiveness of the regions, reduce dependence from the global flow of goods and strengthen resilience)
- promoting economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity

⇒ *Linking the NWRC with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals*

The NWRC targets direct connection with:



GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER

The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication.

"End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture."

GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development.

"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

"Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."

GOAL 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs.

"Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."

GOAL 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

To reduce inequalities, policies should be universal in principle, paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations.

"Reduce income inequality within and among countries."

GOAL 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

There needs to be a future in which cities provide opportunities for all, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more.

"Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable."

GOAL 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Responsible Production and Consumption

"Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns."

GOAL 15: LIFE ON LAND

Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss

"Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss."

Also, the cross-cutting approach of NWRC strives toward:

**GOAL 1: NO POVERTY**

Economic growth must be inclusive to provide sustainable jobs and promote equality.

"End poverty in all its forms everywhere."

GOAL 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development.

"Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages."

GOAL 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Investments in infrastructure are crucial to achieving sustainable development.

"Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation."

GOAL 13: CLIMATE ACTION

Climate change is a global challenge that affects everyone, everywhere.

"Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy."

GOAL 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

"Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

GOAL 17: PARTNERSHIPS

Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

⇒ Linking the NWRC with the Europe 2020 Strategy and ET 2020

NWRC is fully committed to Europe 2020 aims at employment, education and social inclusion and strives the achievement of the benchmarks at European level by 2020:

- 75% of the population aged 20 to 64 years to be employed
- at least 15% of adults should participate in learning
- at least 20 million people fewer at risk of poverty or social exclusion

It also places patterns according to the goals set for Climate Change and Energy as well as Research and Development.

GRASS-ROOTS FEATURES

This NWRC Strategic Plan describes some of the shared goals and objectives that could work at regional, European and international scales, yet it recognizes that the success of the NWRC depends upon the action successes of the local level or individual organization ranges.

Hopefully, NWRC will create the critical mass required to achieve transformation within local communities and bring positive effects to the systems of social inclusion, empowerment rural women and farming.

Impact of NWRC by working bottom-up:

- provides awareness of concepts and opportunities of small communities to equip with the needed tools to engage in co-operation on major issues of social inclusion and farming development by empowering rural women, offering adult education services and networking
- helps the effective functioning of the markets and an entrepreneurial mindset of rural women
- improves access to better foods on rural communities and their inhabitants

NWRC offers to increase Fresh Food Access by communities' involvement.

By increasing the amount of food purchased from local growers, NWRC can help make farming more profitable and ensure that farmland and healthy, flavorful food will be available for future generations.

The NWRC is committed to a healthy, sustainable local food system that recognizes and encourages the interdependent relationships between individual food sectors (from production to waste disposal) while improving access to nutritious, fresh foods for all citizens, promoting health, protecting our agricultural assets and natural resources, supporting the local farmers, and contributing to the economic well-being of regions.

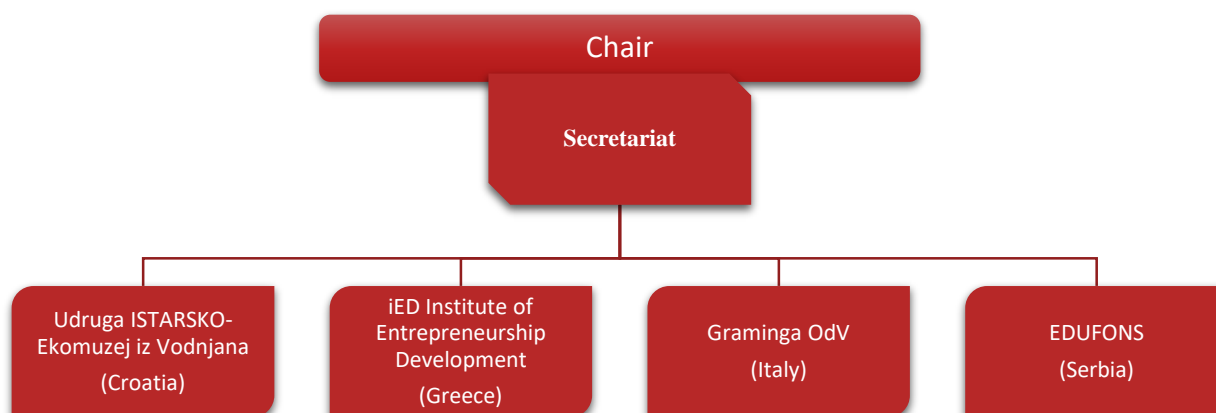
For example:

If in 4 local community in the partner region 10,000 households will be committed to spending just 10 euro per week on locally grown foods during the 28-week growing season (May through November), it would keep 2.8 million euros from food circulating here in each local communities, helping both family farms and local economy (or 8.4 million of local food euros in the region of four-partner countries).



ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

The organization structure consists of governing bodies and members.



Bodies

Chair: Chairpersonship will be by rotation among members.

Secretariat: The Secretariat will be housed by one or several member/partners' organization and will support the Chair(s) by rotation among members.

Duration/Rotations: The Chair/Secretariat will be for a two years term and rotation will be at the annual meeting of the network (one of the co-Chairs stays for a second year to support the newly elected).

The Assembly: all full members with equal voting rights.

Membership in the Network is open and based on free will.

An individual (person) has the status of the associate member while the legal entity has the status of a full member or partner.

Individually, each member/partner is a self-directed, but collaborative that connects partners and pre-existing local partnerships to the NWRC vision. Members/partners undertake work specific to the needs of their geographies and collaborators.

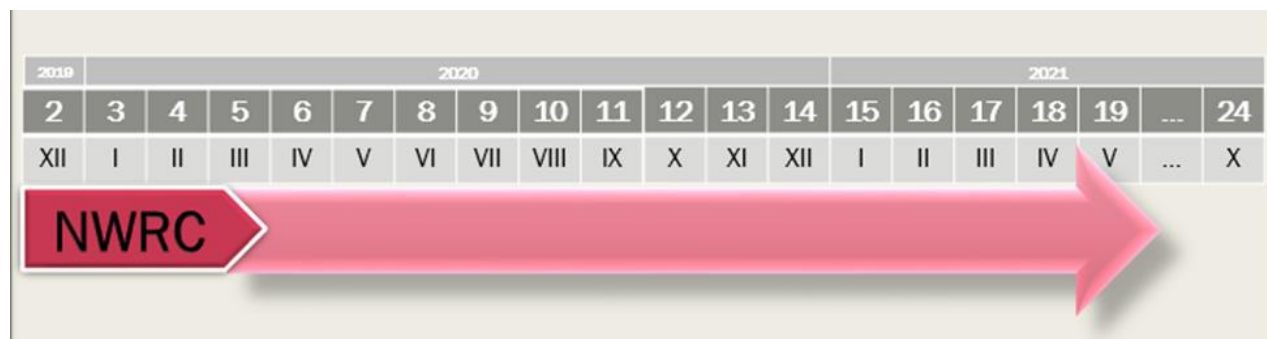
Work Plan

The annual meeting will explore a thematic area (of common interest/priority among members/partners) to bring together experience sharing and facilitate strategic thinking in a particular area.

Communications/webpage: A membership e-group and file share and/or the NWRC web space (the Community Access to Fresh Foods Platform) will be developed and updated regularly. This will provide information on events, a database of key documents and serve as the knowledge-sharing platform.

PATHWAYS AND MECHANISMS OF GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Four NGOs active in adult education in the Ionian-Adriatic region initially composes the Network of Women from Rural Communities. The Network has a trend of expansion at the national, regional and European level by the attraction of other members/partners of similar interests.



AREA ADDRESSES

- **Strategic document** to sustainability, cooperation and interaction
- **Action Plan**
(a framework to empower rural women within the collaboration, education, exchange of ideas and good practice)
- **Access to further grant funding**/improve and strengthen the coordination and use of funds
(using different funding opportunities in the region/Europe)
- **Know-how transfer and provision**
(assistance to increase skills in designing and implementing projects with cross border and transnational impact)
- **Capacity building** and **transnational networking**

INITIAL PHASE

- forming by RWSFF partner organizations

NWRC currently operates in four countries, but a crucial strategy for future growth is to work through partners to expand NWRC to new communities.

DEVELOPMENT PHASE

- developing the working mechanisms

Stage 1 – The stage of document preparation (01. December 2019 – 31. January 2020)

A1 - Preparing a Strategic document

A2 - Creating documents to set up and consolidate the Network
(Action plan and Time Management)

A3 - Establishing macro-regional financial dialogue for the ability to access to further grant funding

Related initiatives: Online database of Project Fund | Donors' Framework | Resource Center of Project Funds

Stage 2 – The stage of development (01. February 2020 – 30. April 2022)

A4 - Designing conditions for interconnecting and mobility of facilitators/educators belonging to community groups and grassroots organizations

A5 - Establishing a mechanism of direct contact between rural women and models for organizing virtual and physical mobility to acquire/increase knowledge (women-to-women approach)

A6 - Transferring knowledge and exchanging experiences

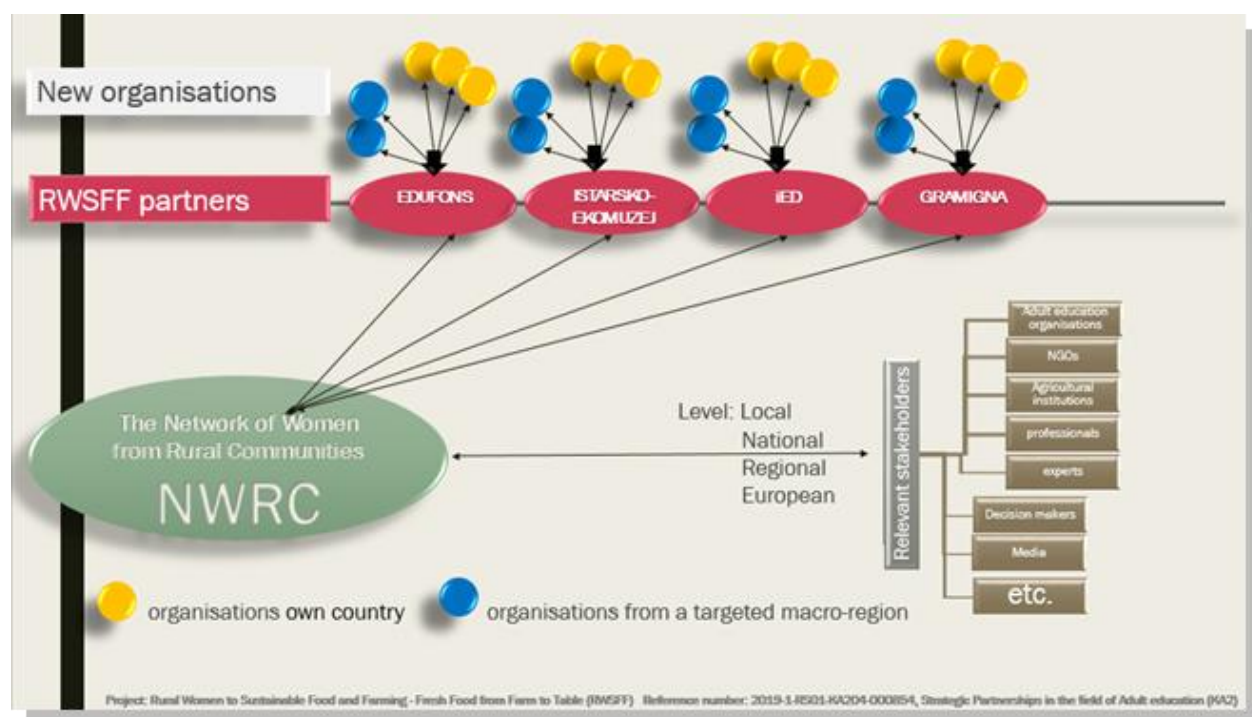
Searching significant tools for strengthening network capacities and improving administrative performance within countries and macro-region as well as for cooperation across borders.

GROWTH PHASE

- attracting other organizations with similar interests
- expanding at the national, regional and European level

A7 - Capacity-building and development of transnational network - rural women and cooperation

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION



The possibilities of cooperation are broad open, as well as involving new partners.

1. An individual (person) - an associate member status

The Network is open to:

a) All women living in rural, especially for:

- Rural women, small-scale farmers, who experience social exclusion and limited market entry due to lack of entrepreneurial skills

- Rural women, who are involved in agriculture or the agriculture supply chain

b) Experts or practitioners: facilitators, educators, specialists, professionals, researchers

2. A legal entity - a full member or partner status

The Network is open to:

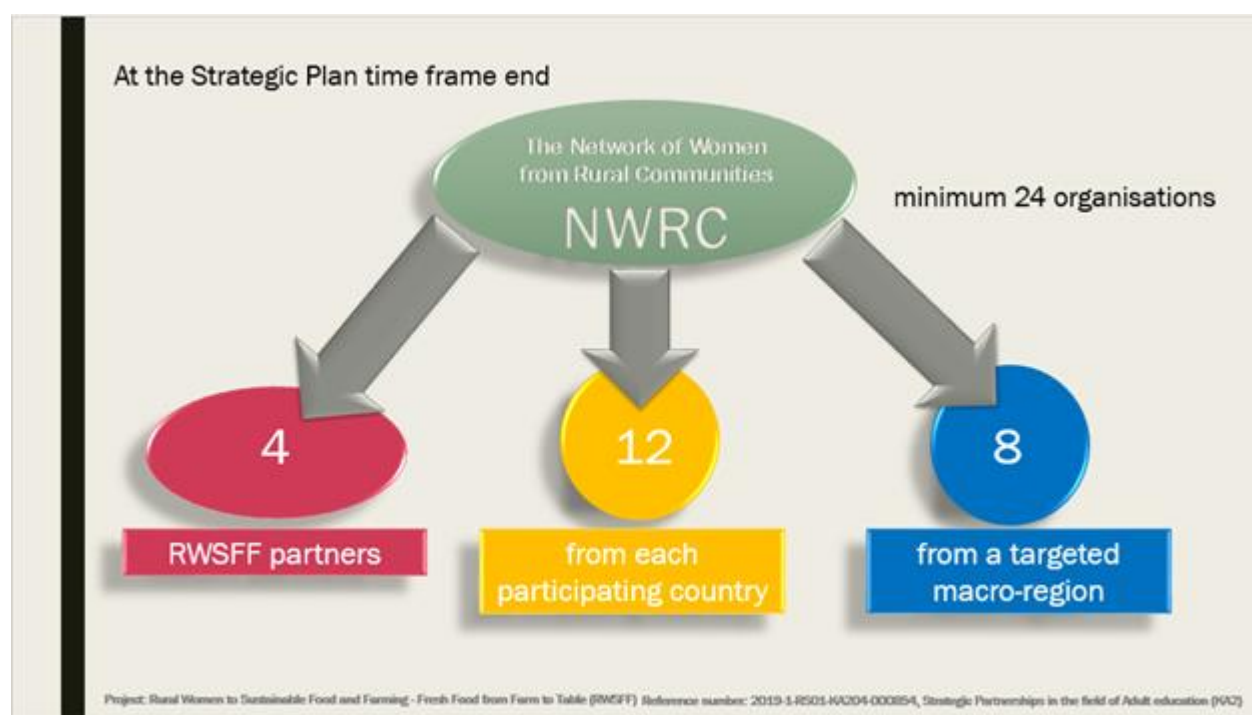
a) Adult education providers, especially those working with women in rural areas

Whether or not engaged with NWRC, they produce valuable knowledge and skills and deliver services that intertwine with NWRC goals.

b) Entities dealing with women's issues, gender equality, social inclusion or engaged in the field of agriculture:

- CSOs/NGOs, associations, cooperatives, organisations, groups, institutions, public-private partnerships, universities, public entities - public bodies and agencies, etc.

This Strategic Plan supports and does not abrogate or diminish the authorities and responsibilities of members/partners. It is anticipated members/partners will engage in those goals and objectives that are meaningful to them and align with their unique mission. Through individual partner responsibilities, authorities and accomplishments, the Network will achieve success.



This Strategic Plan encourages national and international leaders to support the Network through information, policy, funding, and recognition action.

Also, we invite all organizations and interested parties of similar interests to join us.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

- ⇒ **IDENTIFYING AND TESTING** of probable practical solutions to help rural women who are small food producers to contribute to generating income and employment:
 - activating and empowering them by networking and supporting self-initiative
 - increasing their awareness, competences and skills by learning and self-initiative
 - Connecting and enhancing cooperation between rural women
- ⇒ **UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLORING** new trends “Fresh Food Economy” and agricultural entrepreneurship with stimulating and increasing awareness of citizens about the consumption of local and quality food
- ⇒ **INITIATING AND INCREASING** awareness of new products and innovative ideas by disseminating and exploiting

Based on the NEEDS ANALYSIS, we define that NWRC focus is the economic autonomy of women in the villages and provide opportunities for women through education.

For that reason, the NWRC sets three essential pillars with two ubiquitous and permeating horizontal priorities.

Three essential pillars 3E:

⇒ EDUCATION

The primary devotion is to raise the educational and cultural level of women in the rural area through lifelong learning and provide support to rural women in acquiring and developing skills and competences (direct connection with SDG4).

Approach: among others, supporting actions to apply competency-based and work-based learning and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of learning mobility experiences (physical and virtual mobility). There particularly highlight the process of networking and developing access to exchanges and mobility connecting women with women. This aspect is found in the fact that rural women themselves must be actively involved in encouraging knowledge transfer, networking and learning from each other.

⇒ EMPOWERMENT

An educated and advanced woman can be a progressive farmer who knows what she wants and stands firmly on her feet. Then her work will not be evaluated by different criteria, she will not be considered less valuable than a man, according to an existent understanding, nor will she withdraw from the socio-political events of her village. She will be ready for all the functions that her the society was intended.

Approach: providing prospects to self-expression, empowerment, creativity and leadership by strengthening the women-led initiative and networking, including activities which have a Sustainable Development purpose – where rural women will personally and socially get something out of it.

⇒ ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Work on helping rural women to recognize the possibility of linking their potential and appropriate decisions with the requirements of the market. Understanding this connection and seeing it, they can develop ideas in a creative way and with an entrepreneurial sense. Also, running on personal development, they will increase inclusion in the community and employability (direct connection with SDG8).

Approach: enhancing entrepreneurial skills and increasing independence through production and commercialization to generate income and employment.

Two ubiquitous and permeating horizontal priorities:

⇒ SOCIAL INCLUSION

Cross-cutting endeavor for social inclusion and enhancing access for disadvantaged people, especially for persons from vulnerable categories, such as rural women, small-scale farmers who are located in less-favored areas and felt social exclusion and limited market entry due to lack of entrepreneurial skills (direct connection with SDG10).

Approach: encouraging self-empowerment, actively engage in society, make visible of obstacles and problems they face.

⇒ GENDER EQUALITY

Deep commitment to inequalities reduction in opportunities associated with the women background, experiences and expectations (direct connection with SDG5)

Approach: addressing issues in ways that respond to their priorities, interests, and needs allowing them to take part in a supported and empowered environment, particularly where the issues are personally confronting or challenging.

SWOT ANALYSIS

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
NETWORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Defined needs, aim, and roll-up objectives at Network-scale ➤ Relevant work experience in various fields ➤ Human resources, including experts in diverse areas ➤ Enthusiasm, motivation and joint ideas ➤ Membership based on the same values ➤ Good interpersonal relations, communication and mutual understanding ➤ Developed Collect information/data system ➤ Broad territorial coverage and transnational cooperation ➤ Willingness to develop and build Network capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The network is at the basic formal level ➤ Regulations and procedures are not completely defined ➤ The self-sustainability and financing system is not yet developed ➤ The network is not visible and recognized yet ➤ Results and accomplishments are not visible yet
	POSSIBILITIES	THREATS
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accessibility of media and social networks ➤ Availability of seminars, training, OER, MOOS ➤ Qualified people who are open to being involved and willing to cooperate ➤ Other interest parties and different legal entities willing to cooperate ➤ The interest of institutions on different levels (local, provincial, national, regional, EU, global) to improve the position of Rural Women ➤ Rural Women is recognized as a vulnerable group in EU documents (strategies) ➤ International programs and EU support to improve the Rural Women status ➤ International programs and EU support to lifelong learning ➤ The openness of EU funds and various international donors to finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prejudice ➤ Inaccessibility and lack of motivation of Rural Women community to change ➤ Barriers and stovepipes that inhibit cross-national collaboration and partnerships

STRATEGIC TRENDS

Based on the SWOT analysis, we determine that the Network will strive for STRATEGIC TRENDS:

1. Providing support and educational services to Rural Women
2. Fostering cooperation with stakeholders
3. Strengthening Network capacities (constant striving for sustainability)



ACTION PLAN

Realizing this Strategic Plan requires the development of an Action Plan as an implementation framework. Each Strategic Trend has a set of goals with objectives and some example tactics designed to illustrate the kinds of actions that can help achieve the Network's mission.

The framework identifies processes to advance the goals and objectives in this strategy and establishes a schedule for monitoring and evaluating program performance.

THE CORE CHALLENGES

- Interregional and European cooperation to contribute to the well-being
- promote social inclusion and rural women as a key player in economies and societies
- support female farmers
- promote trends "Fresh Food Economy", agricultural entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development
- strengthen agricultural-related segments of the economy, improve rural development contributing to creating profit and hiring
- promote a healthy, sustainable local food system, consumption of local and quality food from small producers and encourage interdependent relationships while improving access to nutritious, fresh foods for all citizens
- promote health, protect the agricultural assets and natural resources

THE MAIN TASKS

- provide cross-national transfer of know-how about programs of rural development, production and commercialization agricultural productions
- provide mobility of facilitators/educators belonging to community groups and grassroots organizations
- establish a mechanism of direct contact between rural women included in the network to organize learning and transfer of good practice by virtual and physical mobility
- provide to rural women virtual or physical meets to exchange experience and know-how or arrange study visits



1. STRATEGIC TREND: Providing support and educational services to Rural Women

STRATEGIC GOAL 1.1.: Implement an educational programme to empower rural women

INDICATORS: Reports on educational activities conducted / A set of methods, training, networking, OER and different tools

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES
1.1.1. Develop, test, adapt and implement innovative practices and ways to actively engage rural women to guarantee more equity, stability and wellbeing	<p>A course of action taken to achieve a particular purpose/example tactics</p> <p>Increase rural women's knowledge of new trends "Fresh Food Economy" and agricultural entrepreneurship. Help rural women to recognize the possibility of linking their potential and appropriate decisions with the market requirements. Organize activities for empowering rural women to generate income and employment. Create a learning program to contribute to supporting equal access to the lifelong learning opportunities of rural women, improving the efficient use of educational services, and enhancing the knowledge, skills, and competences of the users. Enable rural women to be leaders of change by calling for actions in a creative entrepreneurial way. Promote social inclusion, rural women's activity and their crucial role in rural economies and societies.</p>
1.1.2. Develop tools and methods that involve rural women in an engaging, innovative, sustainable way and multiply the effects on society	<p>Support rural women in acquiring and developing skills and competences through lifelong learning, competency-based and work-based learning. Provide prospects for self-expression, empowerment, creativity and leadership by enhancing women-led initiative and networking, including activities with a Sustainable Development purpose. Develop Online Platform Community Access to Fresh Foods with a database that can be used in real-time by adult educators and rural women, as well as other interest parties. Engage end-users in the identification, development, production, and use of tools through technical assistance, outreach, training, and education.</p>

STRATEGIC GOAL 1.2.: Develop Tangible Learning Resources

INDICATORS: Scope of tangible learning resources in the given period (2020-2025)

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES
<p>1.2.1. Develop and regularly update the NWRC web space (the Community Access to Fresh Foods Platform) to serve as the e-learning and knowledge-sharing platform</p>	<p>A course of action taken to achieve a particular purpose/example tactics</p> <p>Create a Community Access to Fresh Foods Platform freely available to the public under an open license (without the expense, registration or other limitation) design that responds to pressing social demand for continuous updating of knowledge, skills, and competences.</p> <p>Provide information and documents database, including a video library.</p> <p>Embed a learning program as a virtual space to guarantee equal access for rural women, facilitators/educators of an adult, community groups and grassroots organizations, NGOs or other interest parties to lifelong learning opportunities.</p> <p>Offer the option rural women to initiate and motivate their learning process by creating activities appropriate to their needs and share it with other rural women.</p> <p>Envision a room for exchanging of good practices to get ideas (how rural women would apply their education, successful stories, case studies of ongoing projects and recommendations, new training materials, online training from national and European practices).</p> <p>Provide information on organizations who assist individuals in locating services and programs as well as grant makers and those wishing to volunteer, contribute, and or collaborate with organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life in the rural communities.</p> <p>Promote the platform as user-friendly and an open educational resource composed of different learning tools.</p>
<p>1.2.2. Produce useful Training of Trainers Course (ToT)</p>	<p>Create Training of Trainers Course (ToT) to meet the needs of a diverse group of rural women by providing engaging and experiential learning sessions in Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Food and Farming.</p> <p>Provide teaching units which contribute to rural women's empowerment by promoting agricultural entrepreneurship, as well as additional, farm-related components of the rural economy contributing to income generation and employment.</p> <p>Create guidance tools - a set of tools for helping rural women to their empowerment.</p> <p>At the Community Access to Fresh Foods Platform, create a training desk to upload Training of Trainers Course with a set of tools to guide ToT and sections designed to improve rural women skills and competences.</p>
<p>STRATEGIC GOAL 1.3.: Encourage the effectiveness of learning mobility experiences (virtual or physical)</p> <p>INDICATORS: Characteristics and type of mechanisms established for organizing virtual and physical mobility to acquire/increase knowledge</p>	



OBJECTIVES	MEASURES
1.3.1. Develop a mechanism for building cooperation and initiating rural women mobility to implement educational activities at the EU level	<p>A course of action taken to achieve a particular purpose/example tactics</p> <p>Allow rural women to learn from each other and inspire each other (women-to-women cooperation processes)</p> <p>Identify the ways of connecting and enhancing cooperation between rural women.</p> <p>At the NWRC web space (the Community Access to Fresh Foods Platform) provide a section for making contact between rural women so that they can share experience and knowledge.</p> <p>Offer the possibilities rural women can jointly organize virtual or physical meets to exchange experience and know-how or arrange study visits.</p>
1.3.2. Develop a sustainable model of mobility and exchange adult educators	<p>Contribute to greater connectivity and circulation of knowledge.</p> <p>Create new and increased inter-regional and cross-border cooperation in the fields of adult education and rural development.</p> <p>Provide mechanisms and create conditions for transnational mobility of adult educators by exchanging lecturers and organizing interstate sessions of lectures for women in rural areas.</p>

2. STRATEGIC TREND: Fostering cooperation with stakeholders

STRATEGIC GOAL 2.1.: Increase Collaboration Opportunities

INDICATORS: Number of involved, active and new members/partners and associates in the given time frame (2020-2025)

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES
2.1.1. Complete, disseminate, and implement the NWRC Expansion Plan	<p>A course of action taken to achieve a particular purpose/example tactics</p> <p>Identify barriers and stovepipes that inhibit cross-national collaboration and partnerships and seek to reduce, break-down, or overcome them.</p> <p>Increase communication outreach to new members/partners to expand the Network and increase impact and achievements.</p> <p>Continue to pursue opportunities to expand partnerships throughout the Network, including the addition of new members/partners in NWRC — particularly them that increase the breadth, diversity, and community effectiveness (such as non-traditional partners).</p> <p>Identify new, strategic target audiences with interests that may intersect with NWRC.</p>



2.1.2. Facilitate synthesis of cooperative communication and data sharing

Promote collaborative work and research — including human dimensions — as well as the use of experience, knowledge innovations, and practices among members/partners and other interested parties; use these to inform, educate local communities, and address shared needs.
Support effectiveness among NWRC and other relevant broad scale programs in generating priorities, status and trend information.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2.2.: Popularize of Ideas and Results

INDICATORS: Number and type of actions taken / Reached target audience in the given time frame (2020-2025)

OBJECTIVES

MEASURES

A course of action taken to achieve a particular purpose/example tactics

2.2.1. Promote Fresh Food Economy and cross-national cooperation

Identify and promote good, tested practices and supporting implementation.
Compose a Guide Access to Fresh Foods with successfully stories about rural women, individual fresh food producers.
Create a “playbook” containing best practices for interest parties.
Identify, priorities, and support the implementation of cross-NWRC actions where coordinated action across several members/partners could have a multiplying effect.

2.2.2. Communicate the existence and application of NWRC, products and tools to members/partners and stakeholders

Communicate NWRC successes that show the on-the-ground impact a variety of means or convey the complexities and challenges of achieving results.
Explore ways for members/partners to maximize the benefits of performance reporting within and amongst themselves, including at the Network level; ensuring they reflect the NWRC priority and needs.
Use the NWRC website and other tools as a platform to share NWRC services and benefits such as news, products, tools, training, science, data, documents, and opensource software for teaching/learning use or research, where appropriate.
Capitalize on, coordinate, and target local/regional/national/international opportunities to discuss NWRC at existing symposia, meetings, and other forums.
Open and increase the availability of NWRC services and products and information to diverse audiences.
Identify successful inter-NWRC collaboration efforts, and then celebrate, communicate, and share them.

2.2.3. Share Lessons Learned

Gather information about lessons learned and facilitate an ongoing dialogue.
Develop a Network-level means to post and distribute Lessons Learned.
Share lessons learned across the Network and beyond.
Identify, celebrate, and share good practices and success stories.



3. STRATEGIC TREND: Strengthening Network capacities (constant striving for sustainability)

STRATEGIC GOAL 3.1.: Build Communications Capacity and Promotion Capabilities

INDICATORS: Number and type of promotion activities / Designed visibility elements

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES
	A course of action taken to achieve a particular purpose/example tactics
3.1.1. Develop and implement a communication and outreach plan	<p>Develop coordinated messaging from the Network and across the Network.</p> <p>Identify key audiences to target outreach efforts.</p> <p>Identify priority or timely messages for targeted audiences.</p> <p>Communicate in a form that is understandable, publicly accessible, engaging, and relates to what matters to end-users and society.</p> <p>Identify and use media to convey to appropriate target audiences the value and tangible successes of the Network at various scales.</p> <p>Communications capacity build upon existing communications efforts to share learning, best practices, and identify communications needs.</p> <p>Use of existing communications tools (e.g. social media, news, and websites).</p>
3.1.2. Design of visual identity	<p>Develop the visual identity to effectively communicate the purpose and successes of the Network.</p> <p>Identify gaps and needs in communications support and develop a campaign.</p> <p>Include a specific strategic effort to target key audiences in other branches to increase awareness about the Network.</p>

STRATEGIC GOAL 3.2.: Enhance Network Effectiveness

INDICATORS: Monitoring and evaluation reports on Network progress

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES
	A course of action taken to achieve a particular purpose/example tactics
3.2.1. Advance the knowledge of, support for, and engagement across the Network	<p>Increase ownership, participation, and engagement of members/partners in the work of the NWRC through the development of common approaches, sharing tools, pooling resources, and other such approaches.</p>



	<p>Identify opportunities to collaborate on activities and methods as well as explore possibilities for collaborative actions within the Network (such as jointly applying for project funds, in partnership)</p> <p>Identify opportunities that span multiple members/partners as well as those that extend to other regional collaboration networks.</p>
3.2.2. Provide Network-wide context for connecting member/partner efforts	<p>Develop general performance metrics (qualitative and quantitative) for decisive outcomes to highlight, show and demonstrate value, and measure the collective impact of those outcomes and others when needed.</p> <p>Identify the most appropriate metrics with which to measure partner inputs into Network operations and projects (e.g., financial, personnel, technical assistance, in-kind) and capture outcomes achieved indirectly by the partners/members, when feasible.</p> <p>Encourage the establishment of partner forum events that connect members/partners to local on-the-ground actions and that connect national or regional organizations to actions and initiatives at larger scales.</p>
3.2.3. Rise Network capacities and resources through continuous education	<p>Promote continual learning by sharing good, tested practices and standardized approaches. Support the development of foundational data sets at the NWRC scale that could also be rolled up to the national, regional, European and global scales.</p> <p>Identify additional strategies needed to adapt to global change that incorporates human and societal values.</p>



PUTTING STRATEGIC PLAN INTO ACTION

Members/partners are invited to collaborate and identify the best approaches to action, measurable outcomes, and needed resources to successfully implement strategies outlined in this plan.

Working groups or teams may be established to formulate the next steps and help monitor and communicate how the Network collectively is addressing specific goals and objectives.

The network will gather information on lessons learned and facilitate an ongoing dialogue with intentions to update the NWRC Strategic Plan within the next two years.

The NWRC as an entity will listen, evolve and support a diverse array of members/partners all working collectively to fulfil its vision for empowering rural women together through lifelong learning and connecting.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Monitoring of the Strategic Plan, and its aims, will be conducted by the strategic management team in the Network.

Aside from the Chair and Secretariat as well as permanent members/partners, monitoring at the operational level or any of project will be done by hired associates.

For each segment of the Strategic Plan, we define measurable and comparable indicators that provide data on work efficiency and effectiveness.

Monitoring Effectiveness

A set of transparent performance metrics that enable monitor and evaluate the progress of the Network.

Revise, as needed, the Network's organizational structure along with defined relationships, roles, and functions within the Network.

A process or framework for evaluating designs' success using shared methodologies, standards, and other approaches across the Network, collectively giving a sense of Network-level effectiveness.

Demonstrate, monitor, and evaluate the value and effectiveness of the Network.

Network Effectiveness

General definitions and performance metrics for key (qualitative and quantitative) outcomes that highlight, show, and demonstrate value.

Measure the collective impact of those outcomes and others when needed.

Sources of information for monitoring the work will be internal and external: published materials, online communications, internal reports, notes, work logs, lists, photos, video records, relevant reports and strategic documents of other institutions, civil society institutions, international associations, institutions, bodies, etc.

Methods and techniques for collecting data will be standardized statistical methods, documentation analysis, observation, interviews and focus groups, and more.

Data analysis will be conducted annually, and results will be presented in the annual report of the Network. These results will be used for promotional and educational materials, as well as for planning activities in the next year.



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

TO INCREASE THE VISIBILITY

Communication Strategy to increase the visibility of Network



This chapter defines activities which are part of the process of adopting the Strategic Plan and it refers to all the phases of designing and implementing Strategic Plan with all respect to the principle of participation.

AIM OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

To contribute to better information flow and better efficiency of the implementation of programs and project through the visibility of NWRC in public.

Ways to accomplish this aim are:

1. Increase the visibility of Network's activities on all levels, by establishing contacts and expanding
2. Build capacities of the Network's structure to manage relations with external and internal public
3. Update contact lists on a European, regional, national, provincial and a local level

STAKEHOLDERS

In the future we will make sure to provide the best quality information to all relevant actors, which NWRC plans to have cooperation with or which work in priority fields:

- 1) Rural women, small-scale farmers who are involved in agriculture or the agriculture supply chain
- 2) Experts or practitioners: facilitators, educators, specialists, professionals, researchers
- 3) Adult education providers, especially those working with women in rural areas
- 4) Entities dealing with women's issues, gender equality, social inclusion or engaged in the field of agriculture:
 - CSOs/NGOs, associations, cooperatives, organizations, groups, institutions, public-private partnerships, universities, public entities - public bodies and agencies, etc.
- 5) Government institutions and institutions of the system
- 6) Citizens
- 7) Donors

Above mentioned stakeholders, according to their interests, needs and work field, should be informed on:

- 1) Condition, occasion, status and needs of Rural Women
- 2) The purposes, activities, services and products of the Network
- 3) Value and tangible successes of the Network at various scales
- 4) Accomplished results of the Network
- 5) Convey the complexities and challenges of achieving results
- 6) NWRC successes that show the on-the-ground impact
- 7) NWRC Sharing Lessons Learned



EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The Network will provide all relevant information to its beneficiaries, formal and informal groups, institutions and citizens through the media. Media activities will take the form of participation in various programs and publishing articles on Network activities and results.

Also, promotional activities will be conducted through online media, website, organizing roundtables, forums and other types of events, fieldwork and face-to-face conversation and printed informational materials - brochures, flyers, etc.

PUBLIC RELATIONS - THROUGH VARIOUS MEDIA

Media is one of the most influential opinions makes and will be one of the communication channels used by the Network to present its results to target groups and stakeholders. Through the media, we will disseminate information which relates to and has an interest in end-users, but also in the general public.

In the process of raising awareness of the general public and building trust about the Network work, we will use examples of successful practices and we particularly single out the results achieved.

It is highly significant to achieve balance in transferring information at all levels.

According to the needs and modern trends, we will focus on creating and updating a website.

The NWRC web space (the Community Access to Fresh Foods Platform) will be developed and updated regularly. This will provide information on events, a database of key documents and serve as the e-learning and knowledge-sharing platform.

After creating a website, NWRC will update and manage its content continuously, regularly, as needed, to ensure constant availability of information about the Network's activities and results.

Promoting through social networks - creating and updating Facebook and Instagram profiles, which will ensure the continuous presence of the NWRC on the networks mentioned. Promotion through social networks, that is, developing and updating Facebook and Instagram profiles will be carried out continuously, almost weekly.

Also, the NWRC will provide information to the general public through traditional media (radio, TV program, newspaper).

Depending on the chosen communication channel and content that needs to be transferred, the information provided will meet the NWRC needs and ensure timely and full information to the stakeholders.

Preparation of printed information materials, which implies the creation, printing and distribution of information materials with appropriate content (brochures, flyers, etc.) will be performed as needed.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The network will develop transparent, timely and accessible internal communication among its members. Friendly and relaxed communication style is encouraged as long as some formal circumstances require different styles.

Any expressions or behaviors that represent a disrespect based on ethnic, national, religious, gender, sexual orientation or age are not acceptable. This is consistent with our values and the Network will insist that all members behave accordingly.

Within the NWRC, in the upcoming period, we will use the following means of internal communication:

- 1) Communication over the phone / through free online channels (Skype, WhatsApp, etc.)
- 2) Organizing online conferences
- 3) A membership e-group and file share
- 4) E-mail communication, which we will certainly develop
- 5) Face to face communication, through organizing meetings - at least once a year

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

ruralwomen.eu

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

Facebook: [@RWSFFproject](https://www.facebook.com/RWSFFproject)

Instagram: [@rwsff_project](https://www.instagram.com/rwsff_project)



COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH PLAN

Outreach efforts	Example Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Identify key audiences to target outreach efforts. ⇒ Identify priority or timely messages for targeted audiences. ⇒ Develop coordinated messaging from the Network and across the Network. ⇒ Develop appropriate tools and tactics for integrating communications across the Network. ⇒ Create a forum for regular communication across and throughout the Network. ⇒ Increase two-way communication with, outreach to, and engagement of key partners across the Network as well as new partners to expand the Network and increase impact and achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Communicate the existence and application of NWRC, products and tools to members/partners and stakeholders in a form that is understandable, publicly accessible, engaging, and relates to what matters to end-users and society. ⇒ Identify and use media to convey to appropriate target audiences the value and tangible successes of the Network at various scales. ⇒ Identify gaps and needs in communications support and develop a campaign using expert public relations/marketing firms. ⇒ Include a specific strategic effort to target key audiences in other branches to increase awareness about the Network.
Communications Capabilities within the Network to effectively communicate the purposes and successes of the Network	Communications Capacity build upon existing communications efforts to share learning, best practices, and identify communications needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Communicate NWRC successes that show the on-the-ground impact a variety of means or convey the complexities and challenges of achieving results. ⇒ Open and increase the availability of NWRC services and products and information to diverse audiences. ⇒ Sharing Lessons Learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Use the NWRC website and other tools as a platform to share NWRC services and benefits such as news, products, tools, training, science, data, documents, and opensource software for teaching/learning use or research, where appropriate. ⇒ Capitalize on, coordinate, and target local/regional/national/international opportunities to discuss NWRC at existing symposia, meetings, and other forums. ⇒ Improve use of existing communications tools (e.g., social media, news, and websites). ⇒ Foster regional communications communities of practice that build upon the strengths and expertise of NWRC and its members/partners.



FUNDRAISING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Fundraising Strategy 2020-2025 and Action plan



CURRENT POSITION

For the first two years of NWRC operational working, funding is provided from the RWSFF project - Rural Women to Sustainable Food and Farming - Fresh Food from Farm to Table co-funded by Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships in the Field of Action Adult education (Ref.no. 2019-1-RS01-KA204-000854).

The Network of Women from Rural Communities (NWRC) builds on existing work within this project and articulates a path for the next two years to achieve NWRC's vision and mission.

FUNDRAISING

Create a Network-level system for prioritizing operational needs at Network, EU and regional levels, as appropriate.

Leverage NWRC planning to be opportunistic in taking advantage of current and new funding sources.

Prepare to respond to funding and partnership opportunities that arise as a result of urgent needs that are likely to occur based on future scenario planning.

Continue to develop additional funding mechanisms to facilitate engagement.

Establish a macro-regional financial dialogue for the ability to access further grant funding.

Related initiatives: Online database of Project Fund | Donors' Framework | Resource Center of Project Funds



POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

STRATEGIC TRENDS	Activities, programs	Donor Support Programmes in the fields of
Providing support and educational services to Rural Women	<p>Enriching educational programmers, tools and methods to empower rural women</p> <p>Delivering Tangible Learning Resources</p> <p>Reinforcing the effectiveness of learning mobility experiences (virtual or physical)</p>	Education, Training, Mobility and Learning, Social Innovation, Research and Innovation, Social Inclusion, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Women's Empowerment, Rural Development, Sustainable Development and SDGs, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Food Safety, Food Sovereignty, Responsible Consumption and Production, Economic Growth, Green Economy, Decent Work, Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Networking, Territorial Cooperation, Cross-border cooperation, Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions, Trans-national cooperation, Interregional cooperation, Cooperation outside the EU
Fostering cooperation with stakeholders	<p>Improving Collaboration Opportunities</p> <p>Spreading of Ideas and Results</p>	
Strengthening Network capacities (constant striving for sustainability)	<p>Strengthening Communications Capacity and Promotion Capabilities</p> <p>Intensifying Network Effectiveness</p>	

Possible funding sources	Identified funding levels	Fundraising activities
<p>Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens, Horizon 2020, COSME, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), European Social Fund (ESF), European Globalization Adjustment Fund (EGF), EU Microfinance support), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), The European Institute for Innovation & Technology (EIT / EIT Food) Interreg: European Territorial Co-operation, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), EU pre-accession assistance for rural development (IPARD)</p> <p>Funds and Programmes of the UN: UNESCO, UNDP, UNEP, WFP, FAO, IFAD, ILO, ITU, UN Women</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Global Programs (GP)</p>	<p>Local self-government levels</p> <p>Provincial/national levels</p> <p>Regional level</p> <p>The Adriatic-Ionian region</p> <p>European level</p> <p>Global level</p> <p>Foreign donors</p> <p>Socially responsible businesses</p>	<p>Withdrawal of appropriations</p> <p>Applying for project funds</p> <p>Putting pleadings</p> <p>A formal statement by present a position</p>



FOUNDRAISING ACTIVITY PLAN FOR THE 2020/2025

Fundraising activities	2020 – 2025								Authorized level NWRC
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	
Withdrawal of appropriations from budgets of local self-governments	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Network Membership / a self-directed member/partner (individually) - Associate Member / an individual (person) - Full Member or Partner / the legal entity
Pleading to foreign embassies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Network Membership / a self-directed member/partner (individually) - Associate Member / an individual (person) - Full Member or Partner / the legal entity
Applying for project funds at provincial/national levels	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Network Membership / a self-directed member/partner (individually) - Associate Member / an individual (person) - Full Member or Partner / the legal entity
Applying for project funds at a regional level		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Chair/Secretariat Network Membership / a self-directed member/partner (individually) - Associate Member / an individual (person) - Full Member or Partner / the legal entity
Applying for project funds at a European level		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Chair/Secretariat Network Membership / a self-directed member/partner (individually) - Associate Member / an individual (person) - Full Member or Partner / the legal entity
Applying for project funds at a global level		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Chair/Secretariat Network Membership / a self-directed member/partner (individually) - Associate Member / an individual (person) - Full Member or Partner / the legal entity
Applying for project funds from foreign donors	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Chair/Secretariat Network Membership / a self-directed member/partner (individually) - Associate Member / an individual (person) - Full Member or Partner / the legal entity
Pleading to socially responsible businesses	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Chair/Secretariat Network Membership / a self-directed member/partner (individually) - Associate Member / an individual (person) - Full Member or Partner / the legal entity

LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

	SUSTAINABILITY - recommended tactics
INITIAL PHASE	Create a high-functioning organizational structure and culture for the Network.
	Develop a design of actions as an iterative, collaborative, and holistic process that provides information, tools, spatially explicit data and best practices for a shared strategy and to achieve jointly held goals among members/partners.
	Identify then deliver (through partners) goals and designs that support adaptation to both global change and EU/regional challenges, while ensuring the inclusion of all members/partners and stakeholders necessary for successful.
	Identify and obtain the resources required at the NWRC scale to inform, develop, and support to implement designs of actions.
	Expand and support the delivery of designs by providing tools and guidance to assist in their implementation.
DEVELOPMENT PHASE	Identify and promote good, tested practices for design development and supporting implementation.
	Identify and engage in Network-wide common partnerships to involve in supporting NWRC objectives.
	Facilitate alignment of partnership efforts within and amongst NWRC, including planning efforts and resources, which improves outcomes across the Network.
	Identify barriers and stovepipes that inhibit cross-national collaboration and partnerships and seek to reduce, break-down, or overcome them.
	Spread and implement the NWRC Expansion Plan to involve new members/partners.
GROWTH PHASE	Identify new and existing training and networking opportunities for the Network.
	Identify and explore opportunities for collaborative actions within the Network - that span multiple members/partners as well as those that extend to other regional collaboration networks.
	Identify shared information and resource needs at the Network-scale.
	Support effectiveness among NWRC and other relevant broad scale programs in generating priorities and information by facilitating sharing, cooperative synthesis and communication.
	Provide a Network-wide context for connecting members/partners efforts and promoting collaborative production of services/educational tools and research—including human dimensions—as well as the use of experience, knowledge innovations, and practices among members/partners and other interested parties.
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION	Continue to pursue opportunities to expand partnerships throughout the Network, including the addition of new members/partners.
	Identify opportunities that span NWRC as well as those that extend to other regional collaboration networks including opportunities to collaborate on activities and methods.
	Identify commonalities (e.g., needs and tools) and differences that require solutions and priorities', and support the implementation of cross-NWRC actions where coordinated action across several members/partners could have a multiplying effect.
	Recognize additional strategies needed to adapt to global change that incorporates human and societal values.
	Present, rejoice and proclaim good practices and success stories to interest parties.
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION	Set shared definitions and performance metrics for essential qualitative and quantitative outcomes to highlight, show, and demonstrate value.
	Find and leverage key influence points to ensure the sustainability of the Network.
	Demonstrate, monitor, and evaluate the value and effectiveness of the Network.
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION	Identify successful inter-NWRC collaboration efforts, and then celebrate, communicate, and share them.



PARTNERS



EDUFONS – Centar za celoživotno obrazovanje
(Serbia)

<https://www.facebook.com/edufons.centar/>



Udruga ISTARSKO-EKOMUZEJ IZ VODNJANA
(Croatia)

<http://www.istrian.org/hr/>



Gramigna Associazione di Volontariato
(Italy)

<https://lentamente.wixsite.com/odvgramigna>



IED - Institute of Entrepreneurship Development
(Greece)

www.ied.eu