



## Intellectual Output n.3

# POLICY AND EDUCATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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## 1. Background

European CAP and Rural Development policies provide for part of the funding to be used by Member States to promote sustainable climate and environmental practices. The growing demand for food produced concerning rural welfare and the environment has already stimulated many European farmers to change the management of their farms.

The trend towards intensification and industrialization in agriculture and animal husbandry in restricted areas raises new environmental issues. The considerations that emerged at the European level regarding protection highlight how sustainability and welfare in the agricultural sector will increasingly have to be considered in the production system's design and management.

In rural areas, the natural environment is subject to multiple pressures caused by urbanization, economic activity, including transport, tourism, etc.

As part of a communication and knowledge transfer strategy, this IO3, in which the policy recommendations are the latest stage, aims to provide useful information and guidance to policymakers (at all levels, from local to transnational) in order to facilitate the creation or strategic support of sustainable initiatives, actions, entrepreneurial projects that contribute to integrate sustainable well-being in rural areas.

This IO3 output, initially intended to be a practical guide on how to support the promotion of entrepreneurial initiatives that produce effects in terms of improving integrated rural welfare, was defined towards the use of the research framework for the collection of data in the field for the developments of students' research projects to depict policy recommendations with concrete proposals on how to improve rural well-being, education of young farmers, and community development aligned with the main European CAP policies. The preliminary version of the actual document was discussed, integrated, and validated at the International Project Ending Event in Brussels on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 (see Annex 2).

## 2. The research action approach in SWEDA project towards the policy recommendations

The overall SWEDA project concepts was organized towards three main Intellectual Outcomes within 3 main steps bridging to the final policy recommendation in IO3 (see figure 1). More in specific IO3 adopted the following methodological steps:

- IO3-A1: development of a research framework for the collection of data in the field through a research action approach (see Annex I);
- IO3-A2: Student mentoring for project implementation at local and international level through a research action approach;
- IO3-A3: Case study analysis;

- IO3-A4: Production of policy recommendations.

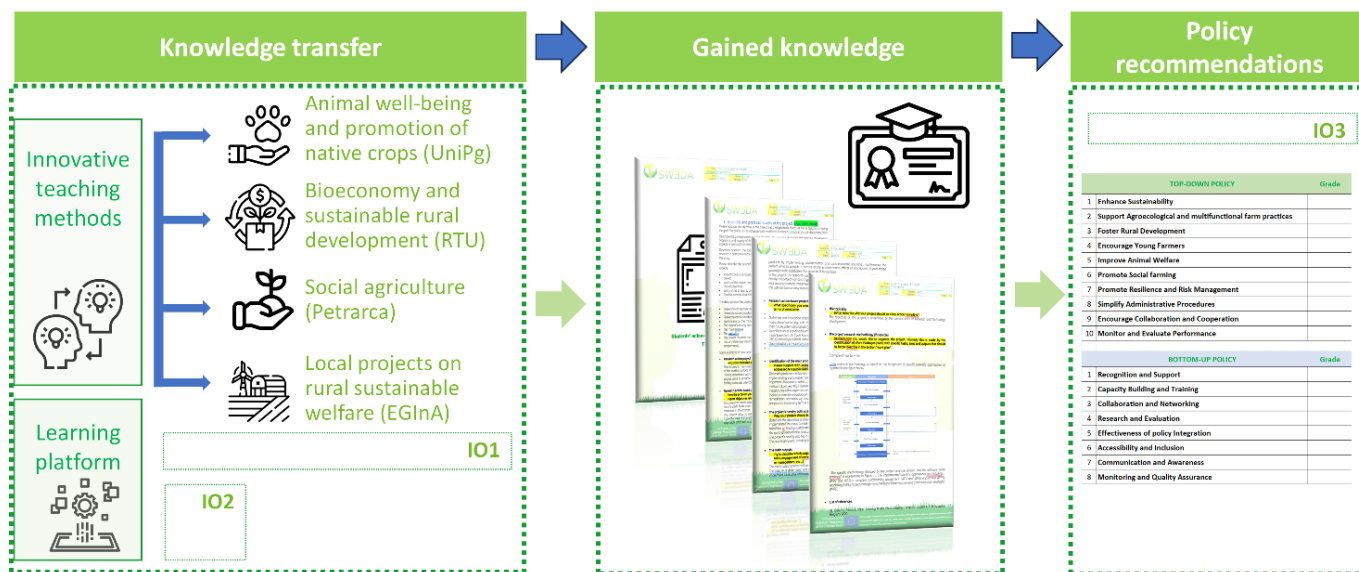


Fig. 2. SWEDA concept: education towards policy recommendations.

The main objective of IO3 specifically addressed to:

- Develop a plan for the implementation of an action-research in which students engaged in the implementation of the planned projects will be involved through the training activities offered by the SWEDA master course;
- Ensuring the transfer of knowledge between all those involved in the experimentation, including interested companies and local authorities for territorial development;
- Sharing of experiences at local and transnational level;
- Generational exchange and development of soft skills, essential to enter the labour market in a more relaxed way;
- Emotional support and personality development of students who will be able to see the notions they learned during the master course immediately applied
- Development of employment opportunities, sustainable growth and integrated policy planning;
- Analysis of the projects elaborated by students, as well as the data collected through the research-action activities;
- Analysis of the main outcome emerged from previous development, with concrete proposals on how to improve rural wellbeing, according to ever higher quality standards aligned with the ongoing CAP.

### 3. Local best practices from the research action approach triggering local policy

#### 3.1. Proposed student projects

Within the proposed action research, five main student's projects were supported using the project template described in Annex I.

Below is reported the list of the project and a brief abstract for each of them.

Nr.	Project	Abstract
1	<b>Environmental Training for a Sustainable Community</b>	Exchange of people visiting farms, engaging people offering recreational activities, arts, hikings etc...).
2	<b>Social gardening</b>	<p>The project consists in creating a social gardening box ("GABI"), which provides retirement homes with a gardening kit. The following kit provides the opportunity for elders to work by their own without the assistance of social workers. A kit is designed to solve such problems as lack of entertainment in retirement homes, loneliness, lack of hobbies, disrupted connection to nature. According to scientific research activities connected to nature has a positive effect on physical and mental health, that's why utilization of such kit will have the most positive results on the elders.</p> <p>The main target group of the project is elderly people, but it will have its impact on such groups as families (of the elderly people) and social workers. Scale of the impact – the project will be started on a small scale, moving to international level. The box is supposed to be sustainable and made of safe materials, it will be easy to handle and supplemented with visual and textual instructions that everybody can understand.</p> <p>The plan is to promote a series of activities in a retirement home related with nature and gardening and understanding/repropose the approach (In Italy, Germany, Latvia).</p>
3	<b>SustATFarm22</b>	The farming sector is essential in the global market for basic necessities production. At the same time, especially animal husbandry is an activity where a significant amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) is emitted. Both farmers and their customers are interested in knowing how well their farms perform regarding GHG emissions. In some countries, they



		<p>must even respect standards related to sustainable management. In this contest, Riga Technical University and Uni Kassel developed an integrated solution tool (Farm Sustainability Evaluator (FSE)), consisting of a GHG emission calculator and a multicriteria analysis evaluator. In practice, this tool is aimed at farmers who can enter data relating to their activities and consequently obtain an immediate result via the web interface of the GHG emissions produced. The calculation is conducted using specific conversion factors for each process or material inserted into the Idemat database developed by the Delft University of Technology. Moreover, the tools will analyze the input data by performing a multicriteria analysis using the TOPSIS method. This method will compare the farms' environmental, economic, and social aspects. Criteria characterize each element, and the farmers define input data. The obtained result illustrates the farm's current situation, where all parts and criteria have a general effect. The obtained result can be compared with similar farms in the industry to understand the overall situation. This tool can assess the farm's current situation and help with decision-making to improve environmental, economic, or social performance by predicting changes. After the results are obtained, an industry benchmark can be made, and whether the farm is within the benchmark can be monitored.</p>
4	<p><b>The taste of Landscape</b></p>	<p>Circular economy approach (zero waste approach) for apple processing. Supporting local farmers to maintain meadow orchards, Participation campaign for collecting apples, Processing the fruits in cooperation with local fruit press. Educational program with children at educational farm, Sale at local Christmas market.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first step was made by getting in contact with local farmers who own meadow orchards. In many cases the apples, partly of old varieties, are not harvested and used anymore. The idea was to collect the apples with agritourist clients, children, and the local community. The apples were processed by transporting them to a mobile fruit press where they became pressed and packaged. The students took home juice and pomace.</li> <li>2. The distribution of juice and waste management followed. The juice was shared among all participants of the collecting event. The juice was then sold by local farmers at their shop. The “waste” of the processing, the pomace, was fed to local farmer’s cows.</li> </ol>

		<p>3. Furthermore, some of the collected apples were used for an educational event with children. After washing apples they were pressed manually with a small juice press and the children could enjoy fresh selfmade juice.</p>
6	<p><b>Sustainable Development in Agriculture by implementing the Life Cycle Analysis integrating the social farming (SDA LCA)</b></p>	<p>Sustainable farming is the future of agriculture, which is certainly true if we wish to maintain our dietary habits while caring for the planet simultaneously. However, there are still many problems faced by sustainable farmers on a day-to-day basis. It is true for small farmers who are struggling to get by, as well as the larger ones who cannot grow or invest as planned. The majority of investments in agriculture come from farmers. Therefore, working directly with producers and responding to their needs would facilitate the development of financial products that can foster sustainable agriculture production in all sectors. The approach is to develop sustainable agriculture with a pilot scale project by collaborating with the local farmer in Latvia, analyzing the farm's current situation, finding sustainable solutions, and establishing the farm's sustainable strategies. The idea is to use Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) methodology to analyze the environmental impact of the farmer's products, considering the daily activities and livestock. As a result, farmers can develop sustainable farm and raise environmental, economic, and social accessibility.</p>

*Table 1. supported SWEDA student's projects.*

### 3.2. Potential impact on local policy

In some projects students gave an innovative example of how social activities can be implemented with limited effort and lead to a win-win situation. Policies can support such innovations by providing the frame supporting stakeholders implementing their project ideas. The farm visits showed impressive results of successfully implemented Social Farms providing added values and care for different target groups. Policies should support and enable the coaching of such initiatives i.e. by a good advisory system accompanying farms and initiatives in the process of developing social farms. The active inclusion of students like in the SWEDA pilot course, is a clear option for the future and should be implemented in the curricula of the universities.

With the information collected it was also possible to draft the targets group of the projects ideas, the specifically addressed policy tools and mechanical and eventually the addressed SDGs.

In the light of the policy recommendations definition among all the proposed projects ideas, the main identified targets groups were:

- (young) farmers;
- People with disabilities;

- Youngsters;
- Elderly people;
- Social workers;
- Families;
- Local communities;
- Municipalities.

While the main policy mechanisms and tools were addressed into the project ideas were:

- Helps to maintain rural areas and landscapes;
- Keeps the rural economy alive by promoting jobs in gardening, production, social working in long-term;
- Contributing to biodiversity;
- Increasing competitiveness;
- Improving farmers' position in the value chain;
- Contributing to climate change mitigation;
- Halting and reversing biodiversity losses;
- Responding to societal demands on food & health;
- Supporting viable farm income
- Efficient natural resource management;
- Generational renewal;
- Jobs, growth and equality in rural areas;
- Fostering knowledge & innovation;
- Efficient natural resource management;
- Generational renewal;
- Fostering knowledge & innovation

### 3.3. Local Best practices based face-to-face site visits from IO2.

The local site visits implemented at the end of each teaching module in IO2 were key steps towards finalising the student project ideas. In particular, the site visits were addressed to:

- Farms implementing social farming approach (Germany);
- Multifunctional farm (Italy);
- Biological and Biodynamic farms (Italy, Latvia and Germany).

The possibility of experiencing best practices was an added value towards the knowledge transfer of SWEDA project and source of inspiration to be integrated within the student's project proposals.



## 4. Policy recommendations

The policy recommendations are drafted by merging the SWEDA concepts' output aligned with the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in a combined top-down and bottom-up and approach. In fact CAP is one of the essential policy framework in the European Union (EU) that aims to support and regulate agriculture, rural development, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Below are summarized policy recommendations that could be connected to different level types of policy implementation associated with the top-down type of policy.

**Enhance Sustainability:** Strengthen the focus on sustainability by integrating environmental objectives in the farming activities. Encourage farmers to adopt practices that promote biodiversity conservation, soil health, water quality, and climate change mitigation. Provide financial incentives and technical support to farmers who adopt sustainable farming methods, such as agroecology, organic farming, and precision agriculture. These were aspects fully proposed in the SWEDA teaching module 1 and 2, offering student the possibility to explore aspects of the quantitative sustainability assessment in contact with existing farms in the 3 countries.

**Support Agroecological and multifunction farm practices:** Promote agroecology and multifunctional farms as a viable and sustainable farming approach. Increase funding for research, training, and knowledge transfer on agroecological multi-function farm practices, which emphasize ecological principles, biodiversity, and the reduction of inputs like pesticides and fertilizers. Encourage the diversification of crops and farming systems to enhance resilience and reduce dependency on external inputs. These aspects were proposed deeply in the module 1.

**Foster Rural Development:** Allocate sufficient funding and resources to rural development measures within the CAP. Support initiatives that promote economic diversification, job creation, and the preservation of rural communities. Invest in rural infrastructure, including renewable energy projects, broadband connectivity, and local markets and value chains development.

**Encourage Young Farmers:** Implement measures to attract and support young farmers in entering and remaining in the agricultural sector. Provide targeted financial support, access to affordable land, and business development opportunities for young farmers. Foster mentoring programs and knowledge-sharing platforms to facilitate the transfer of skills and experience from older to younger generations. This aspect was involved in SWEDA project by visiting several case studies in Italy, Latvia and Germany.

**Improve Animal Welfare:** Strengthen animal welfare standards and ensure their enforcement across EU member states. Support farmers in adopting higher welfare standards by providing financial incentives and promoting best practices. Encourage investments in animal housing systems that provide better living conditions and promote natural behaviors.

**Promote Social farming:** Promoting social can provide numerous benefits for individuals, communities, and the agricultural sector. Social farming involves using agricultural resources and practices to provide social, therapeutic, or educational services

**Promote Resilience and Risk Management:** Develop tools and mechanisms to help farmers manage and mitigate risks related to market volatility, climate change, and disease outbreaks. Enhance risk management instruments such as insurance schemes, income stabilization mechanisms, and crisis response measures. Provide support for diversification and value-adding activities to reduce dependence on single markets or products.

**Simplify Administrative Procedures:** Streamline administrative procedures within the CAP to reduce bureaucracy and ensure more effective and efficient implementation. Simplify application processes, reporting requirements, and control systems, while maintaining transparency and accountability.

**Foster Innovation and Digitalization:** Support research and innovation in agriculture, with a focus on digital technologies, data-driven decision-making, and precision farming. Facilitate the adoption of digital tools, such as farm management software, remote sensing, and automation, to improve productivity, resource efficiency, and sustainability.

**Encourage Collaboration and Cooperation:** Promote collaboration among farmers, researchers, and other stakeholders to foster knowledge exchange, innovation, and the development of joint projects. Facilitate the creation of farmer-led cooperatives and producer organizations to enhance market power, negotiate fair prices, and strengthen farmers' position in the value chain.

**Monitor and Evaluate Performance:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness and impact of CAP measures. Regularly review and adapt policies based on scientific evidence, stakeholder consultations, and the achievement of policy objectives. Foster transparency and involve relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process.

All these aspects are essential to achieve sustainable development goals, enhance environmental protection, support rural communities, and ensure a viable and resilient agricultural sector in the EU.

The implementation of the SWEDA approach emphasized the merging the wellbeing of humans with the wellbeing of animal. This aspect cold be directly connected with specific policies more addressed to integrate (new) competences or expertise at local scale meantime strengthening the role between farmers and academia. These aspects are summarized below as bottom-up type of policies.

**Recognition and Support:** Recognize new type of farming (e.g. multifunctional, social farming) as a valuable agricultural activity. Provide financial incentives, grants, and support schemes specifically designed that. Allocate a dedicated budget to fund novel farming projects and ensure their long-term sustainability.

**Capacity Building and Training:** Develop training programs and capacity-building initiatives to support farmers interested in engaging new agrofarming approaches. Provide resources

and expertise to help farmers understand these new concepts (like social and therapeutic farming), acquire relevant skills, and effectively engage with the agrofarm community eventually inclusively involve vulnerable groups or individuals.

**Collaboration and Networking:** Encourage collaboration and networking among farming initiatives, farmers, social service providers, and relevant stakeholders. Facilitate sharing best practices, knowledge, and experiences through platforms, conferences, and workshops. Foster partnerships between social farming projects and local communities, healthcare institutions, schools, and social services to maximize the impact and reach of social farming activities.

**Research and Innovation:** Promote research and evaluation of new concept of farming initiatives to better understand their social, economic, and environmental impacts. Support studies that assess the benefits of social farming for vulnerable groups, community well-being, and rural development. Use the evidence generated to inform policy decisions, improve program effectiveness, and advocate for further support for social farming.

**Effectiveness of policy Integration:** Foster cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination to ensure that social farming initiatives receive support and recognition from multiple policy domains. Encourage interdepartmental cooperation and joint funding mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of social farming projects. Integrating social farming into relevant policy areas beyond agriculture, such as health, social inclusion, education, and rural development could be essential.

**Accessibility and Inclusion:** Promote accessibility and inclusivity in farming initiatives. Ensure that people with disabilities, mental health challenges, and other vulnerable groups have equal opportunities to participate in social farming activities. Provide necessary infrastructure, support services, and accommodations to make social farming accessible to diverse populations.

**Communication and Awareness:** Increase public awareness and understanding of novel farming approaches benefits and potential. Develop communication campaigns to highlight successful innovative farming initiatives and their positive impacts on individuals, communities, and the environment. Engage with the media, schools, and local communities to promote the concept of social farming and foster support for its development.

**Monitoring and Quality Assurance:** Establish monitoring systems to ensure the quality and effectiveness of social farming activities. Define quality standards, guidelines, and best practices for novel farming projects. Implement certification or accreditation mechanisms to recognize and reward social farming initiatives that meet specific criteria related to social, environmental, and ethical standards.

## 5. Validation of the selected policy

The validation of the selected policy has been proposed during the round table in Brussel and organized by EGINA supported by RTU by using prioritization and ranking approaches based on the concepts of the Multi-Criteria Decision Aid (MCDA).

This tool helps a decision maker choose a solution when he is facing conflicting criteria and cannot decide for an agreement.

Multi-Criteria Decision Aid (MCDA) is a decision-making approach that helps individuals or groups assess and evaluate multiple criteria or factors when faced with complex decisions. MCDA provides a structured framework to systematically analyze and compare alternatives based on various criteria, facilitating more informed and rational decision-making.

In general, the MCDA considers that decisions often involve multiple objectives or criteria with different weights or importance. By considering these multiple criteria simultaneously, MCDA aims to provide a comprehensive and balanced assessment of alternatives.

The general steps in an MCDA process include:

- **Problem identification:** Clearly define the decision problem and the objectives or criteria that need to be considered.
- **Criteria selection:** Identify the relevant criteria that are essential for evaluating the alternatives. These criteria can be qualitative or quantitative.
- **Weight assignment:** Assign relative weights or importance to each criterion based on their relative significance in decision-making. This step reflects the preferences or priorities of the decision-makers.
- **Alternative assessment:** Evaluate each alternative against the chosen criteria. This can involve numerical ratings, qualitative assessments, or other appropriate evaluation methods.
- **Aggregation of criteria:** Combine the individual assessments of each criterion into an overall evaluation for each alternative. This can be done using various mathematical or statistical techniques, such as weighted sum, weighted product, or outranking methods.
- **Sensitivity analysis:** Assess the robustness of the results by testing the impact of changes in criteria weights or alternative assessments. This step helps identify the most critical criteria or potential uncertainties in the decision process.
- **Decision-making:** Based on the aggregated evaluations, make a decision or generate a ranking of alternatives that best meet the objectives and criteria of the decision problem.

MCDA methods and techniques vary; different approaches may be more suitable for specific decision contexts. Some popular MCDA methods include Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS),



Preference Ranking Organization Method for Enrichment Evaluation (PROMETHEE), and ELECTRE (ELimination Et Choix Traduisant la REalité).

Even though the MCDA provides a systematic and structured approach to handle complex decision problems with multiple criteria, enabling decision-makers to consider a broader range of factors and make more informed decisions, to stay within the time dedicated to the round table (i.e. 90 minutes), the overall MCDA approach was simplified.

The round table was organized just after the presentation of the SWEDA concept as “Education towards policy recommendations” (as presented in figure 1).

The participants were invited to start working in 3 groups (around 4-5 participants in each) predefined by the SWEDA partners.

The list of policies was already distributed before the round table, clearly define and proposed the attendees the two types of policy in line with the EU CAP in terms of top-down and bottom-up. The meaning top-down and bottom-up approaches was clarified and the summary is described in the next part of this report.

The first type refers to a decision-making approach in which higher-level authorities or central governing bodies formulate and implement policies, strategies, or directives. In this approach, decisions and policies are typically developed at an organisation's or government's top levels and then cascaded down to lower levels for implementation.

Key characteristics of top-down policy include:

- **Centralized decision-making:** The decision-making power resides with a few individuals or a central authority, who determine the policies and strategies to be implemented.
- **Hierarchical structure:** Policies and directives are communicated and enforced through hierarchical channels, with higher-level authorities providing guidance and instructions to lower-level units.
- **Limited input from lower levels:** In a top-down approach, there is often limited input or involvement from lower-level units or stakeholders in the policy formulation process. The decision-making process is driven primarily by the higher-level authorities.
- **Consistency and uniformity:** Top-down policies are designed to ensure consistency and uniformity across different units or regions. They aim to create a standardized approach to decision-making and implementation.

Advantages of top-down policy approach:

- **Efficient decision-making:** With a centralized decision-making process, top-down policies can be developed and implemented quickly and efficiently.
- **Clear direction and coordination:** Top-down policies provide a clear direction to lower-level units, enabling better coordination and alignment with the overall objectives.



- **Consistency and uniformity:** By enforcing standardized policies, top-down approaches help ensure consistency in decision-making across different units or regions.
- **alignment with strategic goals:** Top-down policies are designed to align with an organization's or government's broader strategic goals, ensuring that decisions and actions align with the desired outcomes.

#### Disadvantages and challenges of top-down policy approach:

- **Limited stakeholder involvement:** The lack of input and participation from lower-level units or stakeholders can result in a limited understanding of the local context and needs, leading to potential resistance or poor implementation.
- **Lack of flexibility and adaptability:** Top-down policies may be less adaptable to local variations or changing circumstances, as they are designed at a higher level without sufficient input from those directly affected.
- **Potential for information distortion:** As information flows from the top to the lower levels, there is a risk of misinterpretation or distortion, which can impact the effectiveness of policy implementation.
- **Reduced innovation and creativity:** Top-down approaches may discourage innovation and creativity at lower levels, as decision-making authority is concentrated at the top, limiting opportunities for bottom-up input.

Bottom-up policy refers to a decision-making approach in which policies, strategies, or initiatives are developed through the active involvement and participation of lower-level units or stakeholders. In this approach, the input and ideas from individuals or local communities form the basis for policy formulation and implementation.

#### Key characteristics of bottom-up policy include:

- **Decentralized decision-making:** Decision-making power is distributed among various levels and stakeholders, allowing for greater local autonomy and input in the policy development process.
- **Participatory approach:** Bottom-up policies emphasize the involvement and participation of individuals, communities, or relevant stakeholders in decision-making. It seeks to gather diverse perspectives and harness the collective wisdom of those directly affected by the policies.
- **Context-specific solutions:** Bottom-up policies focus on addressing local needs and specific circumstances, taking into account the unique characteristics and challenges of different regions or communities.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** Bottom-up policies are designed to be flexible and adaptable to changing conditions or emerging issues. They can be adjusted based on feedback and learning from local implementation.

#### Advantages of bottom-up policy approach:

- **Increased stakeholder ownership:** Involving lower-level units or stakeholders in the policy development process enhances their sense of ownership and commitment to implementing the policies effectively.
- **Local knowledge and expertise:** Bottom-up policies tap into the local knowledge, expertise, and understanding of on-the-ground realities. This can result in more contextually relevant and effective policy solutions.
- **Innovation and creativity:** By encouraging participation and input from diverse stakeholders, bottom-up approaches foster innovation, creativity, and the generation of novel ideas and solutions.
- **Improved implementation:** Policies developed through a bottom-up approach are more likely to be embraced by local communities and implemented effectively due to their alignment with local needs and realities.

#### Disadvantages and challenges of bottom-up policy approach:

- **Time-consuming process:** The bottom-up policy development process can be time-consuming as it involves extensive consultation, collaboration, and coordination among different stakeholders. This may result in delays in decision-making and implementation.
- **Coordination and consistency:** Ensuring coordination and consistency across different units or regions can be challenging with multiple stakeholders involved. Harmonizing diverse perspectives and interests requires careful management.
- **Potential for conflicting interests:** Bottom-up policies may need to navigate conflicting interests and priorities among different stakeholders. Balancing competing needs and reaching consensus can be complex.
- **Need for top-level support:** Effective bottom-up policies require top-level support and commitment to institutionalize and scale up successful local initiatives. Without higher-level support, grassroots efforts may remain isolated or limited in impact.

Below is reported the way how top-down and bottom-up CAP-based policies were proposed to the attendees, the same template was used during the policy round table in Brussels.

		Grade					
TOP-DOWN POLICY		1	2	3	4	5	Notes/comments
1	Enhance Sustainability						
2	Support Agroecological and multifunctional farm practices						
3	Foster Rural Development						
4	Encourage Young Farmers						
5	Improve Animal Welfare						
6	Promote Social farming						
7	Promote Resilience and Risk Management						
8	Simplify Administrative Procedures						
9	Encourage Collaboration and Cooperation						
10	Monitor and Evaluate Performance						
BOTTOM-UP POLICY		1	2	3	4	5	Notes/comments
1	Recognition and Support						
2	Capacity Building and Training						
3	Collaboration and Networking						
4	Research and Innovation						
5	Effectiveness of policy Integration						
6	Accessibility and Inclusion						
7	Communication and Awareness						
8	Monitoring and Quality Assurance						

The aim of the round table was focused on obtaining from each group:

1. The prioritization of the main policies from the given list by selecting the most relevant 5 for the top-down policy and 3 for the bottom-up;
2. the reasons that led to the final choices.

Each group nominated a group leader, not from SWEDA partners, in order to have a 3 minutes presentation to all participants before the closure of the round table by supporting specific post-it to summarize the overall selected policies. The discussion in the three groups was moderated by 3 selected moderators from SWEDA project (namely: Thomas van Elsen, Bianca Biasich and Francesco Romagnoli).

The three groups were organized as follows:

**Group 1** (moderator: Thomas van Elsen, group leader: Fabio Cossu):

- Thomas van Elsen (SWEDA project, Petrarca, European Academy of Landscape ),
- Fabio Cossu (EU Commission),
- Riccardo Paoli (SWEDA project, Riga Technical University),
- David Fongoli (GAL Valle Umbra & Sibillini),
- Evelin Cronin (ILVO Vlaanderen).

**Group 2** (moderator: Bianca Biasich, group leader: Massimiliano Mariani):

- Bianca Biasich (SWEDA project, EGINA),
- Massimiliano Mariani (Agrileisuretime),
- Bianca Maria Torquati (SWEDA project, University of Perugia),
- Lena Franke (SWEDA project, Petrarca, European Academy of Landscape),
- Giovanna Pante (Friuli Venezia Giulia Region).

**Group 3** (moderator: Francesco Romagnoli, group leader: Fabio Ciri):

- Francesco Romagnoli (SWEDA project, Riga Technical University),
- Fabio Ciri (Azienda Agricola Le Due Torri),
- Lucio Cecchini (SWEDA project, University of Perugia),
- Thomas Zoellner (FarmTech Society).

## 5.1. Group 1: main outcomes and discussion.

The table below reports the main outcomes of the discussion of the group nr. 1. In green are highlighted the selected policies (either top-down or bottom-up).

	TOP-DOWN POLICY	DESCRIPTION	NOTE FOR THE SELECTION/COMMENTS
2	<b>Support Agroecological and multifunctional farm practices</b>	Promote agroecology and multifunctional farms as a viable and sustainable farming approach. Increase funding for research, training, and knowledge transfer on agroecological multi-function farm practices, which emphasize ecological principles, biodiversity, and the reduction of inputs like pesticides and fertilizers. Encourage the diversification of crops and farming systems to enhance resilience and reduce dependency on external inputs. These aspects were proposed deeply in the module 1.	<p>This is the bedrock for more environmental sustainability and addressing risk and changes and crise (e.g., climate change).</p> <p>This can be supported with financial incentives.</p> <p>It can promote more balance into the balance of „conventional practices“ and choose by selecting farming businesses.</p> <p>Indirectly this is also connected to decline climate change and to support biodiversity in rural landscapes.</p>
4	<b>Encourage Young Farmers</b>	Implement measures to attract and support young farmers in entering and remaining in the agricultural sector. Provide targeted financial support, access to affordable land, and business development opportunities for young farmers. Foster mentoring programs and knowledge-sharing platforms to facilitate the transfer of skills and experience from older to younger generations. This aspect was involved in SWEDA project by visiting several case studies in Italy, Latvia and Germany.	<p><b>NO farmers NO farming</b> (aligned with SDG)! This is essential to reach long-term sustainability goals, which requires a stable and empowered work force.</p> <p>Avoid depopulation of the rural regions encouraging young farmers. For this reason, giving the right tools to young farmers is essential to achieve goals and develop ideas. Within this perspective is essential to share experiences and best-case practices to help build new technical knowledge, skills and capacity to make business.</p> <p>Advisory services for young farmers also become a relevant aspect that promotes the resilience of the</p>



			<p>agriculture sector accompanying them towards their growth.</p>
6	<p><b>Promote Social farming</b></p>	<p>Promoting social can provide numerous benefits for individuals, communities, and the agricultural sector. Social farming involves using agricultural resources and practices to provide social, therapeutic, or educational services</p>	<p>Social farming (SF) for young farmers is an opportunity.</p> <p>SF includes a perspective of paradigm shift; it is more than income diversification to change the whole farming approach towards more people involved, more health and better ecology.</p> <p>There is a win-win situation for strengthening SF for farmers and local communities.</p>
7	<p><b>Promote Resilience and Risk Management</b></p>	<p>Develop tools and mechanisms to help farmers manage and mitigate risks related to market volatility, climate change, and disease outbreaks. Enhance risk management instruments such as insurance schemes, income stabilization mechanisms, and crisis response measures. Provide support for diversification and value-adding activities to reduce dependence on single markets or products.</p>	<p>In order to keep farmers in the business risk management is important to support income losses, a holistic view on risk management.</p> <p>Building up resilience linked to another instrument (i.e., sustainability, policy 1) on sustainability is essential to cope against „shocks“ and foster resilience and keep farmers in the business.</p> <p>Make sure to broader this perspective not only to the financial insurance scheme. Resilience includes mental well-being and feeling appreciated for the work as a farmer.</p> <p>It is also necessary to support farmer's profit to promote the agriculture sector's resilience.</p>
8	<p><b>Simplify Administrative Procedures</b></p>	<p>Support research and innovation in agriculture, with a focus on digital technologies, data-driven decision-making, and precision farming. Facilitate the adoption of digital</p>	<p>Simplify administrative procedures can bring an improvement in also facilitating other policies.</p> <p>The rigid adminstrative procedures cause worry &amp; stress for many farmers</p>

	tools, such as farm management software, remote sensing, and automation, to improve productivity, resource efficiency, and sustainability.	(in turn decrease their resilience), making it harder to leap into alternative farming practices or business models.  Enabling more initiatives to get access to funds accessing land and then start organic and social farms.
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	BOTTOM-UP POLICY	DESCRIPTION	NOTE FOR THE SELECTION/COMMENTS
2	<b>Capacity Building and Training</b>	Develop training programs and capacity-building initiatives to support farmers interested in engaging new agrofarming approaches. Provide resources and expertise to help farmers understand these new concepts (like social and therapeutic aspects of farming) acquire relevant skills, and effectively engage with the agrofarm community eventually inclusively involve also vulnerable groups or individuals.	Related to support farmers with knowledge. Training young workers make them more responsible for their duties and will support to build of more efficient professionals.  Farmers have to change and improve their competencies to change their farming approach towards sustainability.
4	<b>Research Innovation and</b>	Promote research and evaluation of new concepts of farming initiatives to better understand their social, economic, and environmental impacts. Support studies that assess the benefits of social farming for vulnerable groups, community well-being, and rural development. Use the evidence generated to inform policy decisions, improve program effectiveness, and advocate for further support for social farming.	Helps to solve problems to have more knowledge and innovative practices.  Research is essential to promote and improve environmentally friendly farming coupled with organic and social farming.  Research should be coupled with innovation as a key aspect to provide farmers with the right tools and support to engage in innovative practices (i.e., social farming).  Research at „bottom level“ can help to solve „small-actors“ problems.

7	<b>Communication and Awareness</b>	<p>Increase public awareness and understanding of novel farming approaches, benefits and potential development. Develop communication campaigns to highlight successful innovative farming initiatives and their positive impacts on individuals, communities, and the environment. Engage with the media, schools, and local communities to promote the concept of social farming and foster support for its development.</p>	<p>This is linked as well with social farming. Social awareness can help. Acceptance and relieving pressure on farmers is essential.</p> <p>Deep story telling on benefits and potential novel farming approaches is beneficial.</p> <p>This way can change the „narrative“ about farming and explain its contribution to reaching the SDGs and/or societal goals (and thus acceptance of new strategies).</p> <p>Having a better understanding of what farmers do for the environment and their animals will help build a more positive public image, which will support farmers resilience.</p>
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*Table 3. Final outputs from the round-table discussion of Group 1.*

During the presentation, some key aspects were highlighted :

- Agriculture in the urban context (learning process for child);
- How to combine the rural domain with the need for new talent and enthusiasm, and knowledge to overpass the challenge;
- 99% farms do not want to listen to new things (e.g. weather apps);
- Problems of adoption of precision agriculture;
- Support multifunctional, multi- and inter-disciplinary agriculture paradigm;
- Over time less number of people farming and managing;
- Change the way how farmers sell the products can bring better management in the region (sometimes improve the practice);
- Controversial selection of bottom-up policies;
- Need to merge some policies;
- Do not stop the process of knowledge transfer (i.e. more project like SWEDA);
- Difficulties on integrating old traditions with new concepts like biodynamic and new life style;
- We need to deal with life and nature. Still keeping the human spirit, not a machine that can replace it.

## 5.2. Group 2: main outcomes and discussion

The table below reports the main outcomes of the discussion of the group nr. 2. In green are highlighted the selected policies (either top-down or bottom-up).

	TOP-DOWN POLICY	DESCRIPTION	NOTE FOR THE SELECTION/COMMENTS
1	<b>Enhance Sustainability</b>	Strengthen the focus on sustainability by integrating environmental objectives in farming activities. Encourage farmers to adopt practices that promote biodiversity conservation, soil health, water quality, and climate change mitigation. Provide financial incentives and technical support to farmers who adopt sustainable farming methods, such as agroecology, organic farming, and precision agriculture. These were aspects fully proposed in the SWEDA teaching module 1 and 2, offering student the possibility to explore aspects of the quantitative sustainability assessment in contact with existing farms in the 3 countries	
2	<b>Support Agroecological and multifunctional farm practices</b>	Promote agroecology and multifunctional farms as a viable and sustainable farming approach. Increase funding for research, training, and knowledge transfer on agroecological multi-function farm practices, which emphasize ecological principles, biodiversity, and the reduction of inputs like pesticides and fertilizers. Encourage the diversification of crops and farming systems to enhance resilience and reduce dependency on	

		external inputs. These aspects were proposed deeply in the module 1.	
4	<b>Encourage Young Farmers</b>	Implement measures to attract and support young farmers in entering and remaining in the agricultural sector. Provide targeted financial support, access to affordable land, and business development opportunities for young farmers. Foster mentoring programs and knowledge-sharing platforms to facilitate the transfer of skills and experience from older to younger generations. This aspect was involved in SWEDA project by visiting several case studies in Italy, Latvia and Germany.	
6	<b>Promote Social farming</b>	Promoting social can provide numerous benefits for individuals, communities, and the agricultural sector. Social farming involves using agricultural resources and practices to provide social, therapeutic, or educational services	
7	<b>Promote Resilience and Risk Management</b>	Develop tools and mechanisms to help farmers manage and mitigate risks related to market volatility, climate change, and disease outbreaks. Enhance risk management instruments such as insurance schemes, income stabilization mechanisms, and crisis response measures. Provide support for diversification and	



		value-adding activities to reduce dependence on single markets or products.	
8	<b>Simplify Administrative Procedures</b>	Support research and innovation in agriculture, with a focus on digital technologies, data-driven decision-making, and precision farming. Facilitate the adoption of digital tools, such as farm management software, remote sensing, and automation, to improve productivity, resource efficiency, and sustainability.	
9	<b>Encourage Collaboration and Cooperation</b>	Promote collaboration among farmers, researchers, and other stakeholders to foster knowledge exchange, innovation, and the development of joint projects. Facilitate the creation of farmer-led cooperatives and producer organizations to enhance market power, negotiate fair prices, and strengthen farmers' position in the value chain.	

	BOTTOM-UP POLICY	DESCRIPTION	NOTE FOR THE SELECTION/COMMENTS
1	<b>Recognition and Support</b>	Recognize new type of farming (e.g. multifunctional, social farming) as a valuable agricultural activity. Provide financial incentives, grants, and support schemes specifically designed that. Allocate a dedicated budget to fund novel farming projects and ensure their long-term sustainability.	

2	<b>Capacity Building and Training</b>	<p>Develop training programs and capacity-building initiatives to support farmers interested in engaging new agrofarming approaches. Provide resources and expertise to help farmers understand these new concepts (like social and therapeutic aspects of farming) acquire relevant skills, and effectively engage with the agrofarming community eventually inclusively involve also vulnerable groups or individuals.</p>	
3	<b>Collaboration and Networking</b>	<p>Encourage collaboration and networking among farming initiatives, farmers, social service providers, and relevant stakeholders. Facilitate the sharing of best practices, knowledge, and experiences through platforms, conferences, and workshops. Foster partnerships between social farming projects and local communities, healthcare institutions, schools, and social services to maximize the impact and reach of social farming activities.</p>	
7	<b>Communication and Awareness</b>	<p>Increase public awareness and understanding of novel farming approaches benefits and potential. Develop communication campaigns to highlight successful innovative farming initiatives and their positive impacts on individuals, communities, and the environment. Engage with the media, schools, and local communities to promote the concept of social farming and</p>	

	foster support for its development.	
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*Table 4. Final outputs from the round-table discussion of Group 2.*

The round table identified the reasons of the selection of these policy under 3 different main stream: education, farms and community.

Based on these 3 categories are reported below the summary of the reason of such selection.

MAIN POLICY STREAM	REASON OF THE SELECTION
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different point of view in education</li> <li>Crossing competencies</li> <li>Digital and technological solution integrated with conventional agriculture solutions</li> <li>Direct experience and exchange of knowledge</li> <li>Reframe the paradigm of the agriculture with young people's perspective</li> <li>Crossing competencies</li> <li>Model of wellbeing and happiness to trigger formation of young farmers</li> </ul>
<b>Farms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resilience of the agriculture sector</li> <li>Balance between agricultural competencies and administrative procedure</li> <li>New community model integrating farms (and social farms), updated regulation on the social farms</li> <li>Conventional family-based farm management with novel approach (to enhance sustainability and resilience)</li> <li>More cooperation and collaboration, strengthening farmer and stakeholders' network</li> <li>Strengthening the role of young farmers and supporting them to increase their knowledge capacity</li> </ul>

<b>Community</b>	<p><b>Change of perspective</b></p> <p><b>Fear of facing big challenges</b></p> <p><b>Create a mechanism to decrease risk of losses for young farmers</b></p>
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*Table 5. Elaboration of the reason of the selected priorities from Group 2.*

Some points were highlighted during the presentation of the results in terms of :

- Resilience;
- Balance of competencies and administrative procedures;
- Family farms are not efficient in approaching agriculture. Need of new model: network and cooperation among farmers;
- Farmers are overloaded not easy to attract young farmers. Change of point of view to engage new farmers (i.e. happiness on being farmers);
- Education:
  - Young people need a change of perspective;
  - Exchange between generation (new way of thinking agriculture)
- Biophiliiy: how to be happy in agriculture;
- Doubts:
  - What results of all these years of study and working on agriculture? Are we able to find the results? What is in the middle between top-down-bottom-up can they meet in the half way;
  - Resilience and risk management is too much generic maybe not specific for agriculture topics;
- Young farmers can have problem to experience problems (young people can give up easily);
- Prioritization from bottom-up perspective was easier to be defined.

### 5.3. Group 3: main outcomes and discussion

The table below reports the main outcomes of the discussion of the group 3. In green are highlighted the selected policies (either top-down or bottom-up).

	TOP-DOWN POLICY	DESCRIPTION	NOTE FOR THE SELECTION/COMMENTS
2	<b>Support Agroecological and multifunctional farm practices</b>	Promote agroecology and multifunctional farms as a viable and sustainable farming approach. Increase funding for research, training, and knowledge transfer on agroecological multi-function farm practices, which emphasize ecological principles, biodiversity, and the reduction of inputs like pesticides and fertilizers. Encourage the diversification of crops and farming systems to enhance resilience and reduce dependency on external inputs. These aspects were proposed deeply in the module 1.	<p>95% of farms are specialized. There is a need of support to start thinking about multifunction and diversification.</p> <p>In crise moments supporting humans by creating dialogue is important. Traditional farming with multifunction and biodynamic farming should be integrated. Consciousness of the farmer is the solution (i.e. need of a more inter- and multi-discipline dialogue).</p>
3	<b>Foster Rural Development</b>	Allocate sufficient funding and resources to rural development measures within the CAP. Support initiatives that promote economic diversification, job creation, and the preservation of rural communities. Invest in rural infrastructure, including renewable energy projects, broadband connectivity, and local markets and value chains development.	<p>We need to foster urban development (synergy). Link with consumers. There is a need to create a bridge between farmers and consumers through a more integrated social system (e.g. from farm-to-fork).</p>



4	<b>Encourage Young Farmers</b>	<p>Implement measures to attract and support young farmers in entering and remaining in the agricultural sector. Provide targeted financial support, access to affordable land, and business development opportunities for young farmers. Foster mentoring programs and knowledge-sharing platforms to facilitate the transfer of skills and experience from older to younger generations. This aspect was involved in SWEDA project by visiting several case studies in Italy, Latvia and Germany.</p>	<p>This represents a key policy for the future sustainability of the farming sector facing new challenges. This is essential to invert the tendency of the "death of the EU farming" and having new farmers.</p> <p>Farmers mean equilibrium with soil and food, without plants, as producing machines, human beings are lost! This policy will reinforce in the new farmers the perception of a new „holy“ action among the earth, human beings and the universe.</p>
6	<b>Promote Social farming</b>	<p>Promoting social can provide numerous benefits for individuals, communities, and the agricultural sector. Social farming involves using agricultural resources and practices to provide social, therapeutic, or educational services</p>	<p>In connection with the development of social farming also in urban context: this is a new opportunity for sharing experiences. It represents an opportunity for the legacy of the farmer on how to create innovative approaches and business without original owner.</p> <p>This represents a mechanism to help young urban citizens return to farming with more knowledge and capacity to manage a farm.</p>
7	<b>Promote Resilience and Risk Management</b>	<p>Develop tools and mechanisms to help farmers manage and mitigate risks related to market volatility, climate change, and disease outbreaks. Enhance risk management instruments such as insurance schemes, income</p>	<p>„If too risk you can get killed“, navigating the risk farmers become resilient.</p> <p>What happens when people from the city go to the farm? Managing risk well farmers can create resilience and crises can be a chance to bring new opportunities (e.g. put together differences).</p>

	<p>stabilization mechanisms, and crisis response measures. Provide support for diversification and value-adding activities to reduce dependence on single markets or products.</p>
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	BOTTOM-UP POLICY	DESCRIPTION	NOTE FOR THE SELECTION/COMMENTS
1	<b>Recognition and Support</b>	Recognize new type of farming (e.g. multifunctional, social farming) as a valuable agricultural activity. Provide financial incentives, grants, and support schemes specifically designed that. Allocate a dedicated budget to fund novel farming projects and ensure their long-term sustainability.	It is hard for community to get knowledge transfer with a need of support. It is important to learn how to transfer the knowledge promoting consistently the actual knowledge and understanding the complexity of the modern farm management.
3	<b>Collaboration and Networking</b>	Encourage collaboration and networking among farming initiatives, farmers, social service providers, and relevant stakeholders. Facilitate the sharing of best practices, knowledge, and experiences through platforms, conferences, and workshops. Foster partnerships between social farming projects and local communities, healthcare institutions, schools, and social services to maximize the impact and reach of social farming activities.	This is connected with policy integration. There is a need to make the integration effective from a policy point of view through modern communication and sharing skills (e.g. SWEDA project).

4	<b>Research Evaluation and</b>	<p>Promote research and evaluation of new concepts of farming initiatives to better understand their social, economic, and environmental impacts. Support studies that assess the benefits of social farming for vulnerable groups, community well-being, and rural development. Use the evidence generated to inform policy decisions, improve program effectiveness, and advocate for further support for social farming.</p>	<p>It is essential to apply the research to evaluate and make it usable for the community and people (community).</p> <p>Not loose the opportunity to develop a dialogue among sectors, thus communicating good practices to farmers and consumers is essential.</p>
7	<b>Communication and Awareness</b>	<p>Increase public awareness and understanding of novel farming approaches benefits and potential. Develop communication campaigns to highlight successful innovative farming initiatives and their positive impacts on individuals, communities, and the environment. Engage with the media, schools, and local communities to promote the concept of social farming and foster support for its development.</p>	<p>Fundamental all differences in one melting pops and trust each other.</p>

*Table 6. Final outputs from the round-table discussion of Group 3.*

During the presentation, some key aspects were highlighted :

- need for more time for social farming development projects;
- give continuity to the idea of SWEDA;

- create interaction with new projects;
- find new ways to manage the farm (not family inside the management),
- teaching new skills to farmers;
- create new generation of farmers;
- support diodynamic/bioorganic farms;
- Conventional vs Biodynamic/bioorganic farms could be an issue, they should work in an integrated and synergetic way;
- diversity could be an added value to create new tools;
- Technical staff and skills development is essential.

## 6. Conclusions

From the summary tables reported below is interesting to see how it was possible to draft a prioritization among the groups.

The three main policies with high interest among the three groups were:

- **Nr. 2: Support Agroecological and multifunctional farm practices;**
- **Nr. 4: Encourage Young Farmers;**
- **Nr. 6: promote Social farming.**

Followed by other key priorities (see tables below):

- **Nr. 7: Promote Resilience and Risk Management;**
- **Nr. 8: Simplify Administrative Procedures.**

Support multifunctional, multi- and inter-disciplinary agriculture paradigms increasing the resilience of the agriculture sector and contributing to long-term sustainability.

This choice emphasized the importance of knowledge transfer to get new professional figures with better technical and business skills, encouraging young farmers to start new activities. This is essential to trigger, foster and enhance the resilience and sustainability of the agriculture sector. It is imperative the statement “No farmers NO Agriculture”!

TOP-DOWN POLICY		Description	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1	Enhance Sustainability	Strengthen the focus on sustainability by integrating environmental objectives in farming activities. Encourage farmers to adopt practices that promote biodiversity conservation, soil health, water quality, and climate change mitigation. Provide financial incentives and technical support to farmers who adopt sustainable farming methods, such as agroecology, organic farming, and precision agriculture. These were aspects fully proposed in the SWEDA teaching module 1 and 2, offering student the possibility to explore aspects of the quantitative sustainability assessment in contact with existing farms in the 3 countries		x	
2	Support Agroecological and multifunctional farm practices	Promote agroecology and multifunctional farms as a viable and sustainable farming approach. Increase funding for research, training, and knowledge transfer on agroecological multi-function farm practices, which emphasize ecological principles, biodiversity, and the reduction of inputs like pesticides and fertilizers. Encourage the diversification of crops and farming systems to enhance resilience and reduce dependency on external inputs. These aspects were proposed deeply in the module 1.	X	X	X
3	Foster Rural Development	Allocate sufficient funding and resources to rural development measures within the CAP. Support initiatives that promote economic diversification, job creation, and the preservation of rural communities. Invest in rural infrastructure, including renewable energy projects, broadband connectivity, and local markets and value chains development.			X
4	Encourage Young Farmers	Implement measures to attract and support young farmers in entering and remaining in the agricultural sector. Provide targeted financial support, access to affordable land, and business development opportunities for young farmers. Foster mentoring programs and knowledge-sharing platforms to facilitate the transfer of skills and experience from older to younger generations. This aspect was involved in SWEDA project by visiting several case studies in Italy, Latvia and Germany.	X	X	X
5	Improve Animal Welfare	Strengthen and enforce animal welfare standards across EU member states. Support farmers in adopting higher welfare standards by providing financial incentives and promoting best practices. Encourage investments in animal housing systems that provide better living conditions and promote natural behaviours.			
6	Promote Social farming	Promoting social can provide numerous benefits for individuals, communities, and the agricultural sector. Social farming involves using agricultural resources and practices to provide social, therapeutic, or educational services	X	X	X
7	Promote Resilience and Risk Management	Develop tools and mechanisms to help farmers manage and mitigate risks related to market volatility, climate change, and disease outbreaks. Enhance risk management instruments such as insurance schemes, income stabilization mechanisms, and crisis response measures. Provide support for diversification and value-adding activities to reduce dependence on single markets or products.	X	x	X
8	Simplify Administrative Procedures	Support research and innovation in agriculture, with a focus on digital technologies, data-driven decision-making, and precision farming. Facilitate the adoption of digital tools, such as farm management software, remote sensing, and automation, to improve productivity, resource efficiency, and sustainability.	X	x	
9	Encourage Collaboration and Cooperation	Promote collaboration among farmers, researchers, and other stakeholders to foster knowledge exchange, innovation, and the development of joint projects. Facilitate the creation of farmer-led cooperatives and producer organizations to enhance market power, negotiate fair prices, and strengthen farmers' position in the value chain.		x	
10	Monitor and Evaluate Performance	Establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness and impact of CAP measures. Regularly review and adopt policies based on scientific evidence, stakeholder consultations, and the achievement of policy objectives. Foster transparency and involve relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process.			

	Very strong priority (all 3 groups identified as main priority)
	Very good priority (2 groups identified as main and one a secondary priority)
	Relevant priority (2 groups identified as main amin priority)

**Table 7. Summary table of prioritisation for top-down policy.**

The homogeneity for the bottom-up key policy was more controversial, nevertheless were found one main policy from all the 3 groups (i.e. **Nr. 7: Communication and Awareness**) and four in which at least 2 groups identify a key priority, namely:

- **Nr. 1: Recognition and Support;**
- **Nr. 2: Capacity Building and Training;**



- **Nr. 3: Collaboration and Networking;**
- **Nr. 4: Research and Innovation.**

The discussion in the round table in connection with SWEDA approach: vocational training is missing for agriculture and needs to be implemented and developed with the agricultural community, and connecting with the urban community is essential. This needs both large-scale and multiple practical aspects.

BOTTOM-UP POLICY		Description	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1	<b>Recognition and Support</b>	Recognize new type of farming (e.g. multifunctional, social farming) as a valuable agricultural activity. Provide financial incentives, grants, and support schemes specifically designed that. Allocate a dedicated budget to fund novel farming projects and ensure their long-term sustainability.		x	X
2	<b>Capacity Building and Training</b>	Develop training programs and capacity-building initiatives to support farmers interested in engaging new agrofarming approaches. Provide resources and expertise to help farmers understand these new concepts (like social and therapeutic aspects of farming) acquire relevant skills, and effectively engage with the agrofarm community eventually inclusively involve also vulnerable groups or individuals.	X	x	
3	<b>Collaboration and Networking</b>	Encourage collaboration and networking among farming initiatives, farmers, social service providers, and relevant stakeholders. Facilitate the sharing of best practices, knowledge, and experiences through platforms, conferences, and workshops. Foster partnerships between social farming projects and local communities, healthcare institutions, schools, and social services to maximize the impact and reach of social farming activities.		X	X
4	<b>Research and Innovation</b>	Promote research and evaluation of new concepts of farming initiatives to better understand their social, economic, and environmental impacts. Support studies that assess the benefits of social farming for vulnerable groups, community well-being, and rural development. Use the evidence generated to inform policy decisions, improve program effectiveness, and advocate for further support for social farming.	X		X
5	<b>Effectiveness of policy Integration</b>	Foster cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination to ensure that social farming initiatives receive support and recognition from multiple policy domains. Encourage interdepartmental cooperation and joint funding mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of social farming projects. Integrating social farming into relevant policy areas beyond agriculture, such as health, social inclusion, education, and rural development could be essential.			
6	<b>Accessibility and Inclusion</b>	Promote accessibility and inclusivity in farming initiatives. Ensure that people with disabilities, mental health challenges, and other vulnerable groups have equal opportunities to participate in social farming activities. Provide necessary infrastructure, support services, and accommodations to make social farming accessible to diverse populations.			
7	<b>Communication and Awareness</b>	Increase public awareness and understanding of novel farming approaches benefits and potential. Develop communication campaigns to highlight successful innovative farming initiatives and their positive impacts on individuals, communities, and the environment. Engage with the media, schools, and local communities to promote the concept of social farming and foster support for its development.	X	X	x
8	<b>Monitoring and Quality Assurance</b>	Establish monitoring systems to ensure the quality and effectiveness of social farming activities. Define quality standards, guidelines, and best practices for novel farming projects. Implement certification or accreditation mechanisms to recognize and reward social farming initiatives that meet specific criteria related to social, environmental, and ethical standards.			

	Very strong priority (all 3 groups identified as main priority)
	Very good priority (2 groups identified as main and one a secondary priority)
	Relevant priority (2 groups identified as main amin priority)

**Table 8. Summary table of prioritisation for bottom-up policy.**

# ANNEX 1: Students' action research-based template for data collection and project development

## Project idea developers

<<Name Surname>>, <<University>>, <<email@email.com>>

## Project title and acronym

Please report the name of the project and the acronym.

Some examples:

- Example 1:  
Sustainable peatlands strategies for restoration of peat extraction sites (Peat4Res)
- Example 2:  
Strengthening Climate Resilience of Peri-Urban Areas by Promoting Nature Based Solutions for Agriculture Sector (ResPoNS4Agri)

## Project summary (max 300 words)

Report the project summary (max 300 words)

## Scientific and practical novelty of the project (max 3000 words)

Please indicates the objective of the project and the hypothesis (if any), as well as tasks for achieving the goal. The goal is to link with potential investments in scientific, practical, or multi-disciplinary fields.

Describes the current situation in the research area, the main challenges and priorities, the necessity, originality, and novelty of the project in the context of the research/practical fields, including other aspects in terms of interdisciplinarity or multidisciplinary.

Describes research methodology and research approach. If the project involves experiments or research in relation to humans and animals, the project applicant also describes the ethical aspects of the study.

Please describe the scientific and practical novelty of the project focusing on the following main aspects:

- scientific quality & novelty, credibility, and practical novelty of the proposed action research-based project
- quality of the chosen research strategy and methodological solutions, and conformity to achieving the set objectives.
- ability of the project to create new knowledge and/or technological knowledge
- Possible contribution with other stakeholders (if any), description of the possible co-operation

The description of the project should be organized in the following sections:

- Research action project backgrounds;
- Research action-based project's main objectives;

- Research action-based project's specific objectives;
- Identification of the main problem facing the project;
- The project's novelty both scientific (if any) and practical;
- The main outputs;
- The topicality;
- The project research methodology (if possible);
- List of references (recommended if the project could be further extended in project funding programmes).

Some examples of how to write this section are reported below in *italic font*.

- **Research action project background**

- **why your proposed problem is relevant?**

*Peat is used in many fields, from energy sources to fertilizer substrates. Peat bogs account for 3% of the earth's surface [1] and are in temperate zones... However, there are downsides to peat mining associated with its relevant greenhouse gas emissions and ecosystem disruptions. The project aims to propose the most sustainable strategies for restoring peat extraction sites and finding substrate alternatives...*

- **Research action-based project's main objectives**

- **how the problem you addressed in the project could be solved, so what are the objectives?**

- **report objectives related to specific policy frameworks, roadmaps, or targets**

*This research's main objective is to investigate and understand the optimal ways to exploit and restore peat fields once closed, considering the transition towards alternative growing media materials in the market.*

*The project aims to assess the potential effect on the downstream peat-based within the implementation of peatland restoration strategies. The project wants to provide a consistent approach and tool to understand how to sustainably replace high amounts of peat-based products by implementing environmental and socio-economic solutions.... Furthermore, the project aims to provide a picture of the environmental effects of alternatives to peat-based growing media substrates that must be fit for purpose.*

*In the project, the research working team would like to cooperate with in order to evaluate .... Finally, the project wants to trigger potential further restoration strategies also beyond the project end, moving towards implementing both biodiversity and carbon reduction policies in line with the Latvian bioeconomy strategy 2030 [5].*

- **Research action-based project's specific objectives**

- **What specifically you would like to do in the project? Identify specific objectives also in terms of milestones**

- ...
- *Definition and evaluation of potential alternatives to peat-based products growing media in the horticultural sector (e.g., coir, wood fibre, bark and green compost, wood and rice all fibres) and their future potential availability.*
- *Identification of sustainable environmental, economic, and social criteria for the construction of a tool based on Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment (LCSA) implementing Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) towards peatlands remediation and management strategies.*
- *Quantification, in monetary and environmental terms, of peatlands as ecosystem services.*
- ...

- **Identification of the main problem facing the project**

- **Please support with evidences (i.e. from scientific literature or other literature sources addressed to a public audience) the identification of the problem**

*The main problem is related to the previously described unsolved and controversial situation... Implementing sustainable management or recovery strategies of peatlands must still face the important European market .... In fact the volume of peat in the sector of horticulture is about 16 million m<sup>3</sup> per year [13]. However, replacing peat is difficult because alternatives developed by the industry are either expensive or have limited availability...*

*Indeed, a consistent evaluation of all these aspects in terms of product alternatives and after-use remediation scenarios by implementing an optimization tool within a Life Cycle Thinking perspective in the long term is lacking.*

- **The project's novelty both scientific (if any) and practical**

- **Why your project should be better than others?**

*Based on the identified problems the novelty of this project is to provide a consistent method, implemented in a tool, to ease the transition to sustainable peatland management during the transition on finding sustainable solutions within the market plant growing media and provide the optimal remediation peat bog after after-use scenarios...*

*The project's novelty also lies in the fact that ...*

*The practical novelty is mainly focused on creating/developing/proposing ....*

- **The main outputs**

- **Try to describe which output you are intending to provide at the end of your projects (e.g. tools, engagement of community, integration of the outcomes/results in planning activity or management, etc ...)**

*The main output project will be tool based on the concept of ...*

*The tool, in a systematic and quantitative way, will evaluate how optimally and sustainably implement innovative technologies ...*

- **The topicality**

- **Better describe why your project should be a key action nowadays?**

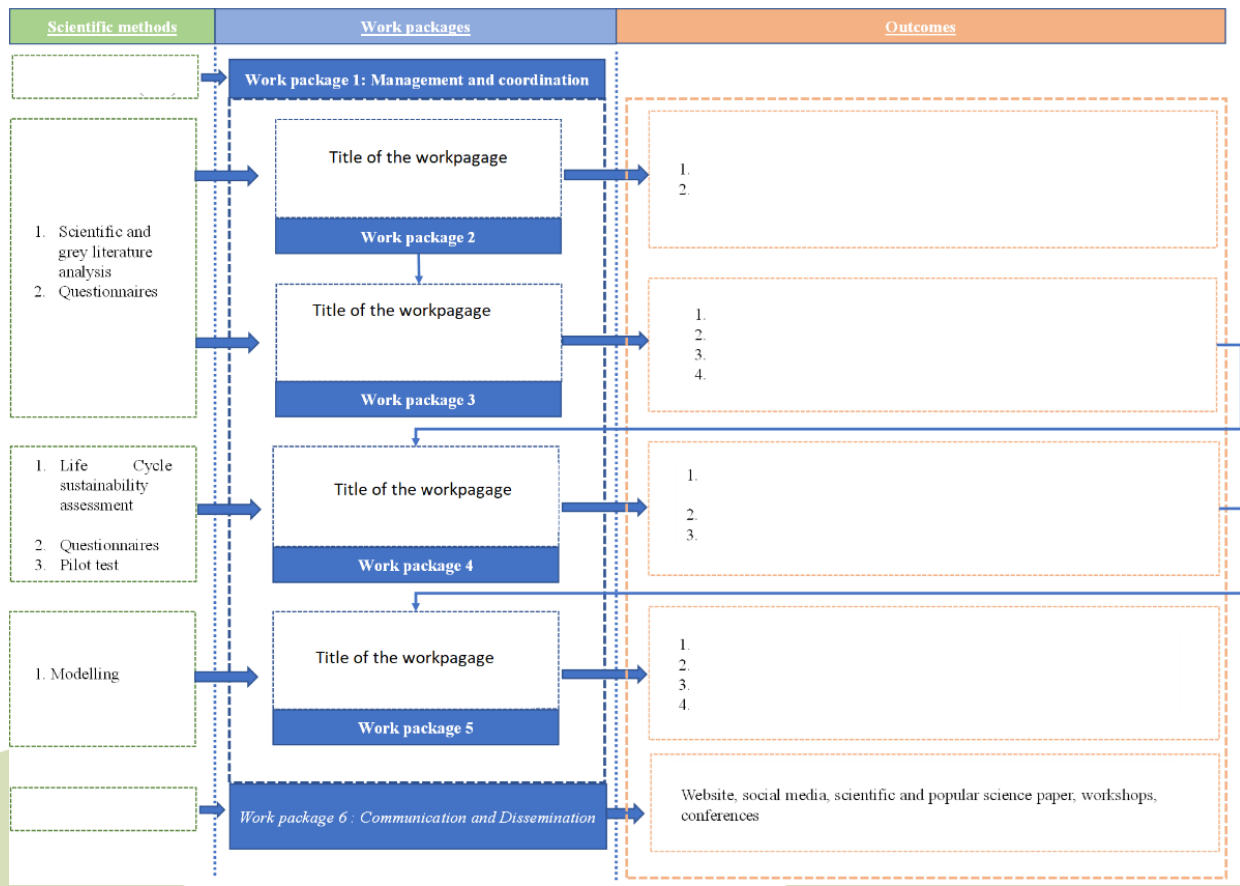
*The topicality of this project is underlined by the current state of research and technology development...*

- **The project research methodology (if possible)**

- **Basically, how you would like to organize the project. Normally this is made by the identification of Work Packages (WPs) with specific tasks, aims and outputs that should be better describe in the section "work plan"**

*Example of how to write:*

*...The research methodology is based on the integration of specific scientific approaches as reported in the figure below*



...The specific methodology followed by the project and the division into the different “work package” is represented in Figure 1 ... The implemented scientific approaches are including ... (WP2 and WP3), a complete sustainability assessment (WP4 and WP5), a pilot test (WP4); modelling (WP5); Project management (WP1) and Dissemination and Communication strategies (WP6).

....

- **List of references.**

- [1]. Growing Media Europe. Growing Media Environmental Footprint Guideline V1.0. Brussels, Belgium. 2020.
- [2]. Järveoja J., Laht J., Maddison M., et al. Mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions from an abandoned Baltic peat extraction area by growing reed canary grass: life-cycle assessment. Regional Environmental Change 2012: 13: 781-795.
- [3]. ....

## Impact (max 2000 words)

The project implementers should describes the expected results and acquired knowledges according to the purpose and tasks of the research and their impact on their knowledge or other fields like socio-economic or policy implementation.



It could be relevant to properly planned the of the results of the project to have a larger impact on a communities (either social, scientific or professional) and to create the background for the creation (or co-creations) of possible cooperations, ensuring the sustainability of the acquired knowledge and results beyond the project ends even enabling the preparation of new projects. If possible make a list specific plans for publishing too (publications to different target groups, publishing data, attending / organizing events in accordance the results expected.

Please describe the impact of the project putting a focus on the following main aspects:

- foreseeable transfer of the obtained results and project outputs at different scale and stakeholders (i.e. public, private, community, etc ...
- Potential knowledge and skills transfer in further activities and scientific/practical capacity development;
- Potential funds gathering as development possibilities, including investments in preparing of new projects or idea development in research and innovations support programmes or knowledge transfer/exchange;
- Outcomes (including knowledge) significant for specific sectors, national economy, and society development;
- sustainability of the obtained results beyond the project's end with a proper plan of distribution thereof, including publications and informing of the society

### a. Socio-economic impact and publicity of the results

In this section, the project developers should describe the use of research results (eventually after the end of the project) in cooperation with state and local government authorities (e.g. policy planning or drafting of policy recommendation based on results), entrepreneurs (e.g. new technologies, new concepts, new tools, new inclusive approaches), NGOs (e.g. recommendations) and other potential users of the project results.

Describes an approach to effectively informing the public through project outcomes, identified target groups for publicity measures, planned publicity events (for example, popular science articles, information campaigns, public discussions, etc.).

Please describe the socio-economic impact assessment related to the project. You should follow (whatever possible) the structure proposed hereafter by looking at specific aspects like:

- **Target groups** identification (look example from Social LCA and co-creation event on module 2 unit 2);



- **Specific indicators** used to assess your impact and/or benefits like:
  - **wellbeing indicators from BES** (Benessere Equo e Sostenibile), see references:
    - “An indicator of well-being for Italian Agriculture, Authors: M. Monda, G. Gabrieli, M. Mazziotta, 2020”  
<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/rea/article/download/13097/12357/>
    - “How the nexus of water/food/energy can be seen with the perspective of people well being and the Italian BES framework, Authors Riccardini Fabiola, De Rosa Dalila, 2016”;  
<https://www.istat.it/it/files//2021/10/BES-Report-2020.pdf>
  - **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs);
  - Others ...
- **Specific addressed policy/roadmaps**, like:
  - Common Agricultural Policy, [https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-glance\\_en](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-glance_en)
  - European sustainability competence framework, <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128040>
  - National Agriculture Development Program(s)
    - <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P169021>
    - ...
  - Priority directions at European, National, Local scales
- **Scale of the impact**  
- **Local or international?**
- **Specific policy mechanisms/tools**, on which the project outcome will have an impacts ([https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/new-cap-2023-27/key-policy-objectives-new-cap\\_en](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/new-cap-2023-27/key-policy-objectives-new-cap_en)), like
  - Supporting viable farm income
  - Increasing competitiveness
  - Improving farmers’ position in the value chain;
  - Contributing to climate change mitigation;
  - Efficient natural resource management;

- Halting and reversing biodiversity loss;
- Generational renewal;
- Jobs, growth and equality in rural areas;
- Responding to societal demands on food & health;
- Fostering knowledge & innovation

- **Policy recommendation and national priority policy directions**

- **You should be able to highlight in the project proposal what/how/why certain policy are addressed in the proposal?**

- **At the end of the project implementation you should be able to propose tailored policy recommendations in line with your expected impact (e.g. national, local, European)**

Some examples on what to write in section 2.1:

Example 1

*...Project directly contributes to the thematic priorities “Strengthening the security of energy supply, development of the energy sector, energy efficiency, sustainable transport” and “Climate change, nature protection and the environment”. Furthermore, the project proposal is also in line with priorities defined in the national economic transformation plan: “Shifting the focus from technological innovation to innovative governance and active public participation in policy making and important decision-making processes*

*The use of projects research’s results is planned in collaboration with DH companies of Latvia and non-governmental organizations*

*The development of the DH resilience assessment platform could bring significant technological, community, and societal impacts on making thermal energy distribution networks more reliable and resilient, indeed increasing efficiency and economic savings*

Example 2

*... The project topics correspond to several scientific priority directions in terms of:*

- *Climate change, nature protection and environment – the project context represent a key milestone towards the conversion to net-zero carbon emissions. When sustainably managed lands are efficient ecosystem services representing important carbon stores and sinks. This is in line with the guidelines launched on the UNFCCC COP-26 to make a consistent roadmap to peatland management. Furthermore, the project contributes to the sustainable development strategies in the European Union [22] included with the Latvian bioeconomy strategy 2030 [5].*
- *Knowledge culture and innovation for economic sustainability are linked to the main output that the project aims to achieve by creating a methodology and tool that will provide practical and viable solutions considering the main pillars of sustainability management. The restoration technologies and management strategies will be integrated with modelling GHG emissions, biodiversity losses and human health effects, including sustainable business models and potential restoration and management solutions.*
- *Stakeholders in the peat industry, remediation peatland experts, policymakers and planners, and scientists are the potential users of the project outcomes*

## b. Project's (scientific or practical) results & the dissemination plan

Describes plans for effective dissemination of scientific results and technological/conceptual know-how of the project. If possible describe the creation of co-operation and synergies with different stakeholders in different fields, ensuring the sustainability of acquired knowledge, as well as participation in the preparation of new projects using the results of this project. If possible, list and report in a table specific plans for publications).

### - Make a list of the expected results which should be in line with the work plan later presented

Examples of writing:

- ...
- *To construct a life cycle sustainability assessment model which will produce a benchmarking framework ...*
- *To create a database that the targets groups could use ....*
- *To assess short-term and long-term remediation strategies and the sustainability of alternatives ...*
- ...

### - Describe how you would like to organize your dissemination and stakeholders engagement plan

Examples of writing:

*...The plan for effective dissemination of the results, the creation of scientific cooperation, and the sustainable application of the acquired knowledge are reported in the next table ...*

*...This study will also create a basis for future project application development for future funding programs to further studies...*

*...Information transfer and knowledge dissemination are an important part of the project...*

*... the sustainability of the results will also be guaranteed beyond the project's finalization...*

*... an dissemination and stakeholders engagement plan will be developed ...*

## c. Contribution to the capacity building of the project's team, including students

### - Please describe how the project members will have a benefit from the project implementation

Examples of writing:

*...The project will increase the knowledge capacity of the students involved ...*

*The possibility to interface with specific stakeholder could also enable employment opportunities...*

*... Students could apply the know-how from the SWEDA module in real application ...*

## Project implementation and risks (max 3000 words)

In this section should be described the project team, and the distribution of tasks throughout the project and qualification of project team members according to the project purpose.

### Project team

Please describe the competence of the project teams (short bio of each member)

### Project plan

Please carefully describe the project implementation defining:

#### 1. GANTT chart

Example:

WP	Months of project implementation																																					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36		
1.	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
2.																																						
3.																																						
4.																																						
5.																																						

#### 2. Work plan

In this section, the project submitter details the work plan according to the purpose of the project and the execution of tasks, highlighting the stages of the work

The work plan should be written with reference to the GANTT chart and in line with: the project objectives, the research outputs, the expected results and the methodology as described in section 1.

Example on how to write (please bear in mind that the WP description are just an example you can use your own WP definition based on your ideas)

...The project work plan is organized into five work packages (WP) to achieve the project objectives. The WPs are subdivided in tasks, following the project's logical concept based on the identified scientific and practical objectives. This distribution of tasks allows for efficient knowledge exchange between all the partners, improving the quality of the project outputs and provide the interface to het involved external stakeholders (**describe how**) ....

... According to the GANTT chart the work packages are described hereafter:

#### WP1 Management and Coordination

... Objective of the WP1 is to guarantee a smooth communication between all involved project members,, to bring timely delivery of milestones, to discuss different project implementation issues and ensure justified use of budget ...

#### WP2. Peatlands state-of-art

Task 2.1 ...

Task 2.2 ...

Task 2.3 ...

#### WP3. Restoration and remediation strategies



Task 3.1 ...

Task 3.2 ...

Task 3.3 ...

#### **WP4. Sustainability assessment**

Task 4.1 ...

Task 4.2 ...

Task 4.3 ...

#### **WP5. Tool development**

Task 5.1 ...

Task 5.2 ...

Task 5.3 ...

#### **WP6. Project result dissemination and communication plan**

Task 6.1 ...

Task 6.2 ...

Task 6.3 ...

### **Risk management**

The project developer should describe the way how the project implementation will be monitored in reference to the expected cooperation and/or synergies.

It could be good to develop a risk assessment plan for eliminating possible risks or reducing the negative effect (see Table below), by identifying several types of risks, such as financial risks, implementation risks, risks of achieving results, etc. The risk can be high, moderate, or low, and the effects can be high, medium or low. The section on risk prevention and mitigation measures describes planned measures that reduce the likelihood of a risk occurrence or its impact on the project.

Table 4. Project risk plan. L = low, M=medium, H= high; P =probability; I=impact

Risk assessment					
No.	Risk	Risk description	Assessment		Risk prevention/reduction measures
			P	I	
1.	Financial	Lack of financial resources	L	M	...
		....	L	H	...
		...	L	H	...
2.	Implementation	Low quality of the project outputs including publications	L	M	...
		Technological risks	L	L	....
		Human resources	M	M	...
		Organizational structure	L	M	...
3.	Achievement of results and monitoring indicators	Activity Planning	L	M	...
4.	Project management	Organisational Management	L	M	....
		...	L	M	...

## Budget

Please try to estimate the budget of your project (eventually including personnel costs, travels, events, ...) in line with the GANTT and project expected objectives and outcomes. Below is proposed a simple structure as reference.

	Cost description	Year 1 [€]	Year 2 [€]	Year 3 [€]
1	Personnel costs			
2	Travel expenses			
3	Amortization expenses			
4	Purchasing and delivery expenses for equipment, instruments and materials			
5	External service expenses (catering, printing, etc...)			
6	Dissemination/informational event expenses (conferences, workshops, ...)			
7	Indirect costs (e.g. 10 % of the total direct costs)			
	<b>TOTAL</b>			

## ANNEX 2: Policy round table – Ending SWEDA project Event in Brussels, 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2023

### Round table event agenda and description



SWEDA

SWEDA INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE

8 June 2023 – 9.30/12.30

Regione Umbria - Brussels Office  
Rond Point Schuman, 14.B - 1040 Bruxelles – Floor 7

#### ABOUT THE PROJECT

SWEDA – Sustainable Wellbeing Entrepreneurship for Diversification in Agriculture is an Erasmus+ KA2 project that supported the development and piloting of a blended and interdisciplinary EU Higher Education course on Social, Animal and Environmental integrated well-being in rural areas.

The course provides theoretical knowledge and practical tools for the sustainable exploitation of resources in rural areas and the planning of local entrepreneurial initiatives based on farms' multifunctionality, circular economy, well-being and social inclusion.

#### EU ROUND TABLE

Thanks to the implementation of the project activities, partners have collected qualitative and quantitative data on the impact of the SWEDA model for integrated well-being in agriculture, which have been finally compiled in a set of educational and policy recommendations.

We have invited a pool of experts and representatives from EU authorities and networks in order to share the main finding of the SWEDA project, validate the recommendations and identify priority areas for further collaboration and innovation in the field.

#### PROGRAMME

9:00-9:30	Registration of participants
9:30-9:50	Keynote speech by Fabio Cossu, Unit B2 – Research and Innovation, DG AGRI, European Commission
9:50-10:10	Introduction to SWEDA project objectives and results <i>Biancamaria Torquati, Professor at University of Perugia</i>
10:10-10:30	Presentation of educational and policy recommendations <i>Francesco Romagnoli, Professor at Riga Technical University</i>
10:30-11:50	Round Table: Impact of Green Transformation on VET and HE <i>Moderates Altheo Valentini, General manager of EGInA</i>
11:50-12:00	Conclusive remarks <i>Thomas Van Elsen, Professor at University of Kassel</i>
12:00-12:30	Networking lunch



PETRARCA



RIGA TECHNICAL



egina

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### Round table event: invited participants

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