

DIGITAL COMPETENCES FOR WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS TO INCREASE THEIR ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPLOYABILITY. TOWARDS INCLUSION THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP BRIDGING THE GAP

IO1. BRIDGING THE GAP PLATFORM

Task 1. Definition of training itinerary

Methodological Guidelines

Dramblys

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Glossary

Case study: in the field of social research methodology, a case study is understood as an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units. A unit connotes a spatially bounded phenomenon observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time (Gerring, 2004).

Within the framework of the Bridging the Gap project, we will consider that the unit to be studied for our case studies in each of the partner countries will be: a given programme, project or initiative (that has already been implemented and its results have been observed and evaluated) that includes the education and training of rural women to provide them with digital tools, competences and skills for their personal and/or professional empowerment and autonomy.

Competence: Ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development). Ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

Comment: competence is not limited to cognitive elements (involving the use of theory, concepts or tacit knowledge); it also encompasses functional aspects (including technical skills) as well as interpersonal attributes (e.g. social or organisational skills) and ethical values. (Source: Cedefop; European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2008.)

Digital Competence: Following the definitions given by the European Commission, Digital competence can be defined as the confident, critical and creative use of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to achieve goals related to work, employability, learning, communication, leisure, inclusion and/or participation in society. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.

Digital literacy: It refers to the skills required to achieve digital competence, the confident and critical use of information and communication technology (ICT) for work, leisure, learning and communication. Digital literacy is underpinned by basic technical use of computers and the Internet.

Entrepreneurship: Capacity and willingness to develop, organise and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit.

Acting upon opportunities and ideas and transforming them into value for others, which can be financial, cultural, or social.

The European Union through the Joint Research Centre, and in partnership with DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, has developed **EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework**. The framework describes entrepreneurship as a transversal competence, which can be applied by citizens to all spheres of life from nurturing personal development, to actively participating in society, to (re)entering the job market as an employee or as a self-employed person, and to starting up ventures (cultural, social or commercial).

Gender Gap: Gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits.

Rural women entrepreneur: "Women from rural areas who accept a challenging role to meet their personal needs and become economically sufficient. They take an active interest in the decision-making, risk-taking and day-to-day management and seeks to generate value, through the creation of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets." (Definition created from different OECD and EU publication).

Skill: Ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. (Source: Cedefop; European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2008.)

1. Introduction

This document contains **some methodological notes** that will guide the analysis activities on ICT skill and competences gap among our target group (rural women). The conclusions obtained will allow us to define the competences and skills that will be the base to build the Bridging the Gap training pathway.

A methodological guide is a theoretical and practical document that contains the main definitions of the project, the context in which it takes place as well as a clear and concrete definition of the target group. This document should serve to clarify the key words, to choose the methodology to be used and to justify such research techniques.

Therefore, the main objective of this document is to provide some guidelines to implement the analysis and research activities that allow us identifying the ICT competences and skills gap and building a learning itinerary to provide rural women with these missing competences using the most effective learning methodologies for that.

The following paragraphs present a number of relevant issues related to both the Bridging the Gap project and the analysis methodology. During this analysis of training/learning opportunities it is important to consider what the objectives and outcomes of the project are, and how in-depth analysis such as that suggested here can contribute to achieving them.

2. Bridging the Gap Project

In order to understand better the following contains a brief introduction to the project, aimed to provide a framework for the project's general objectives and outcomes.

2.1. What is the context for this project?

The target group for this Project are rural women. This is because women from rural areas suffer a multiple discrimination. This multiple discrimination is due to the fact that, because of their characteristics, they suffer more than one discrimination: for being women, for living in the rural environment, and because of the existence of a greater digital gap. This type of discrimination is called 'intersectional discrimination' which is defined as 'discrimination that takes place on the basis of several personal grounds or characteristics/identities, which operate and interact with each other at the same time in such a way as to be inseparable' (European Institute for Gender Equality)

So this multiple discrimination is due to:

1. A bigger digital gap: The term 'digital gap' or 'digital divide' refers to the 'gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard both to their opportunities to access information and communication technologies (ICT) and to their use of the internet for a wide variety of activities '(OCDE, 2011) In the case of the rural areas on the European Union the studies show that the digital gap is translated into slower internet speeds, augmented prices, and less technological choices (European Parliament, 2015)
2. The rural/urban gap: This gap is referred to the 'different levels of economic development and social life between the urban and rural areas, presenting the latest disadvantages, with a negative effect on those who choose to remain in them' (Eurofound, 2019)

Today, European rural environments have to deal with three major challenges:

- Low economic diversification - loss of the weight of agriculture as an activity;
- High rates of unemployment - especially among young people and women; and
- Depopulation and ageing of the population, as young people tend to move to big cities to study and work.

These challenges end up affecting the quality of life of the inhabitants of rural areas, which suffers from unequal opportunities.

3. The gender gap: It is defined as 'Gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits' (European Institute for Gender Equality). For measuring the degree of gender gap in the European Union, the European Institute for Gender Equality elaborates each year the Gender Equality Index, which shows the progress in the achievement of the gender equality inside the EU, in terms of economy, power, health or time. The results of this Index for 2020 were of 67.9 points, with inequalities as 14,1% in gender pay gap or 11,7% in gender employment gap (Eurostat, 2019). Divided into areas, the results are shown on the image below:



FIGURE 1. GENDER EQUALITY INDEX. SOURCE: EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

These results mean that at this step, for being totally gender equal the EU will need another 60 more years, so urgent measures are needed in all Member countries.

In this context, women from rural areas suffer at least these three types of discrimination. This situation makes them the collective more vulnerable, which results into:

1. They have higher unemployment rates (11,4% - EUROSTAT 2018);
2. The activity and employment rates of rural women remain lower than those for rural men and the difference in employment rates between men and women in a rural environment is about 13% (Employment indicators 2020 - EU)
3. Traditionally they still take care of tasks (housekeeping, family, help on family farms, etc.) that are considered informal.

In addition, only 35% of women in Europe are in charge of family farms (compared to 65% of men).

2.2. Definition of Rural Female Entrepreneurship

In the framework of Bridging the Gap project, we will define Rural Female Entrepreneurship as “woman from rural areas who accepts challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically self-sufficient. She takes an active interest in decision-making, risk-taking and day-to-day management and seeks to generate value, through the creation of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or market.” (Definition created from different OECD and EU publication)

2.3. How can Bridging The Gap change the situation?

Considering the context drafted in the previous section, the issues to address and the definition of Rural Female Entrepreneurship, Bridging the gap goal is aimed to narrow the gaps identified and empower women with a geographic basis, allowing to achieve their (women) economic autonomy an increasing their entrepreneurial skills and employment opportunities.

Thus, Digital Competences are vital, because they are key to promote a sustainable entrepreneurship. As defined in the Glossary, Digital Competences are ‘the safe, critical and creative use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to achieve goals related to work, employability, learning, communication, leisure, inclusion and/or participation in society. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet’ (European Commission). Due to their huge importance, the European Union has defined a framework, The Digital Competence Framework 2.0, which divides its key components

into 5 areas, that are (adaptation from the European Commission's science and knowledge service):

1. Information and data literacy: To articulate information needs, to locate, retrieve, manage, and organise digital data, information and content. To judge the relevance of the source and its content.
2. Communication and collaboration: To interact, communicate and collaborate through digital technologies while being aware of cultural and generational diversity. To participate in society through public and private digital services. To manage one's digital identity and reputation.
3. Digital content creation: To create and edit digital content. To improve and integrate information and content. To know how to give understandable instructions for a computer system.
4. Safety: To protect devices, content, personal data and privacy in digital environments. To protect physical and psychological health, and to be aware of digital technologies for social well-being and social inclusion. To be aware of the environmental impact of digital technologies and their use.
5. Problem solving: To identify problems and to resolve them in digital environments. To use digital tools to innovate processes and products. To keep up-to-date with the digital evolution.

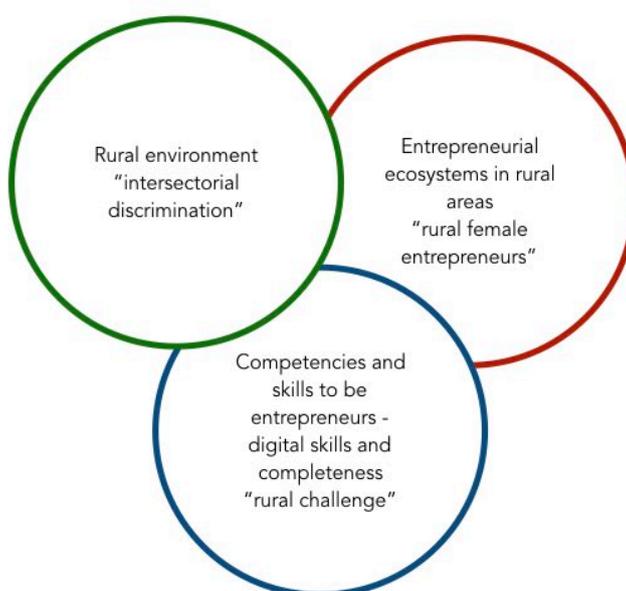
One of the main gaps in the entrepreneurial pathway of our target collective is the lack of knowledge and competencies on ICT tools, together with a poor access to technological infrastructure. The 'Bridging the Gap' training itinerary will be built on the basis of these 5 competences, in order to ensure that rural females are able to improve all the transversal competences needed to increase their autonomy and to empower themselves.

3. Research objectives

As stated before, this analysis is the first step to define the Bridging the gap training itinerary. In order to detect the existing training needs and gaps of rural females on digital skills and competences the partnership will analyse some issues in each participant countries that help us to define the training pathway.

Thus, our analysis will aim at

- A. Analysing the rural areas to have a picture about the current context of rural environments;
- B. Assessing the support to the development of entrepreneurial competences, with special regards to the rural women; and
- C. Identifying the gaps and needs of the rural females regarding entrepreneurship and digital competences.



Thus, we will analyse the following areas to topics:

1. The existing "inter sectorial discrimination" in the rural areas (as defined in the section 2.1.);
2. The existing policies to support Entrepreneurship in rural areas, especially those programmes focused on rural women;
3. The current situation digital competences in the framework of rural female entrepreneurs;

4. The available resources to train rural female entrepreneurs, with special interest on those focused on the development of digital skills and competencies for entrepreneurship;
5. The different actors that work in the promotion and development of the digital skills and competences to be entrepreneur (for rural females);
6. The digital skills and competencies to support the entrepreneurial activity of the rural females.

4. Research methodology

The research to be carried out within the framework of this analysis will be based on a mixed methodology: qualitative methods and desk research. In the following paragraphs we will present the different methodological components that we will incorporate to our research in order to support the elaboration of a set of conclusions that facilitate the definition of training itinerary.

4.1. Geographical coverage

The project is intended to have a European coverage, mainly on the countries of the partners, which are Italy, Romania, Greece, Luxembourg, Cyprus and Spain. That is why the Desk research and the qualitative analysis is going to be made in those countries, and the subsequent analysis of the data and creation of the model based on the information obtained, focusing on rural women entrepreneurship and how this relevant issue is being implemented in Europe.

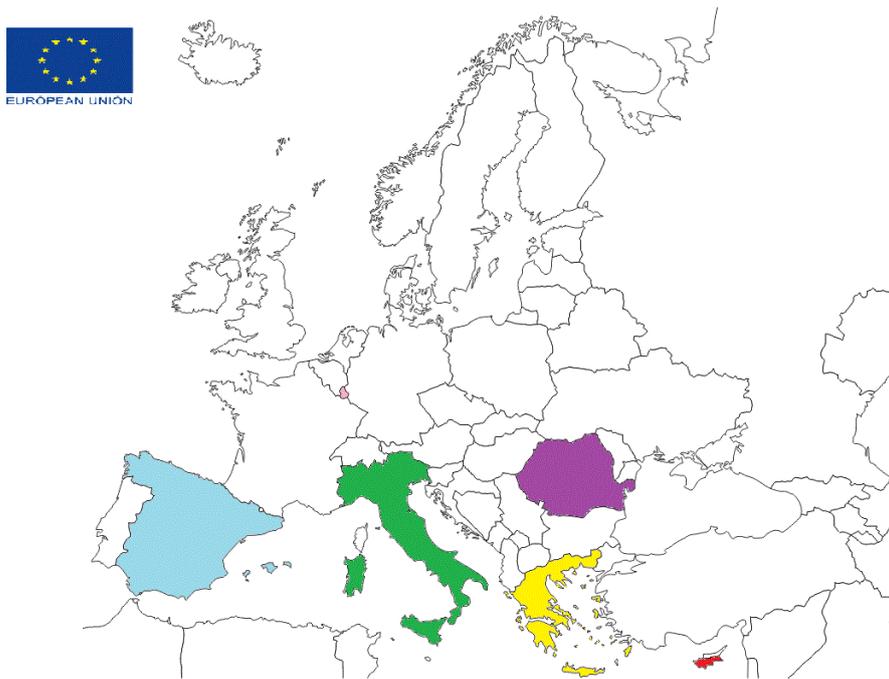


FIGURE 2. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF TASK 1

4.2. Data collection

The research to be carried out within the framework of this research will be based on the mixed methodology: qualitative methodology and desk- research.

In the following paragraphs we will describe the different methodologies that will guide the research. At this point, it is important that the reader/researcher understand that the two methodological pathways complement each other. Thus, the diverse methods of analysis do not follow a simple timeline, but rather cross over during the period of analysis. The data from the secondary sources will help us to improve the development of the qualitative tools of analysis (they will enrich the dialogue with new themes and elements not contemplated at the time of making these methodological guidelines) and the results obtained from the primary sources will lead us to know more updated and more specific secondary sources.

4.2.1. Desk Research

First of all, in order to gain and investigate the background knowledge of the subject and to extract the best practices on the training in social/alternative funding we will conduct the analysis of secondary resources (desk research).

Desk research (or collection of secondary data) involves the summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing research rather than primary research, where data is collected from, for example, research subjects or experiments.

The main methodology in socio-economic secondary research is the systematic review, commonly using meta-analytic statistical techniques, although other methods of synthesis, like realist reviews and meta-narrative reviews, have been developed in recent years. Such secondary research uses the primary research of others usually in the form of research publications and reports.

Sometimes secondary research is required in the preliminary stages of research to determine what is known already and what new data is required, or to define the research design. In other cases, it may be the only research technique used.

A key performance area in secondary research is the full citation of original sources, usually in the form of a complete listing or annotated listing. Secondary sources could include previous research reports, newspapers, magazines and journal contents, governmental and NGO statistics, internet, multimedia files and whatever other contrasted sources that we can find to analyse and illustrate our analysis topic.

Within the framework of Bridging the Gap project, the desk research will focus on the following topics/areas: giving a panorama of the tendencies in intervention of enterprising women in the different partner countries, by mainly:

- Digital gap, gender gap and territorial gap (rural/urban gap) in the rural areas in partners' countries;
- Female entrepreneurship in rural areas;
- Digital competence level of rural women;
- Available learning/training to promote the entrepreneurial competencies and skills addressed to rural women;
- Available learning/training to boost the digital competencies and skills of rural females to be entrepreneur;

During the desk research, we will also identify two case studies (see Annex III) per country (twelve in total) of private or public learning/training initiatives to promote the policies or initiatives in line with digital competences of training for rural women entrepreneurs. In the case that these initiatives will be inexistent, we will incorporate to our analysis learning/training initiatives that promote digital competences of entrepreneurs in general.

Finally, we will use the data obtained in desk research to support the development of qualitative analysis (open interviews and focus groups). Nevertheless, we should consider the results obtained in the desk research to enrich the primary sources analysis (interviews and focus group). The results of the desk research will be incorporated to the reports and contribute to define the training itinerary.

4.2.2. Qualitative Analysis

The main objective of the qualitative research is to obtain direct information from our target group and experts. That is, the use of primary sources to feed our analysis and help develop a set of realistic conclusions based on this information. In addition, we can approach the analysis from different (and complementary) points of view.

Thus, we will base our research in two different qualitative methods:

- Open or in-depth interviews, and

- Focus groups

Open or in-depth interviews

These types of interviews are personal, in which there are no fixed questions, but the interviewer acts more as a moderator or guide in an unstructured way, in order to follow a conversation that is designed to analyse in depth a topic and understand that way which are the underlying motivation or feelings about it of the interviewed person. To develop the interviews, we propose to use the following methodology:

Life story interview (First-person narratives)

'Life story interviewing is a qualitative research method for gathering information on the subjective essence of one person's entire life that is transferable across disciplines' (Atkinson, 2011: 123)

These interviews are normally conducted in three stages. Following Atkinson (2001), 'first is the planning or preinterview stage, which includes preparing for the interview and, especially, understanding why and how a life story can be beneficial. Second is the process of doing the interview itself, guiding a person through the telling of his or her life story while recording it on audio- or videotape. Third are the processes of transcribing and interpreting the interview material' (p: 131)

During the actual interview stage, the interviewee is encouraged to speak freely about his or her life experiences in relation to the topic at hand. To this end, 'the interviewer does not ask direct question about motives, reasons, causes and the like; instead he leaves it up to the informant to refer to such issues if he comes to it as a part of the narrative' (Sarantakos, 2005: 280-281) Therefore, the interviewer's role is not to interfere and ask questions, but rather to make comments that encourage the narrator to continue and guide him/her to the topic of study, so that, as a collaborator in an open process, the researcher/guide never really has control over the story being told.

It should be noted that, unlike structured interviews, the life history interview is a highly contextualized and personalized approach to collecting qualitative information about human experience and requires many spontaneous and individual judgments by the interviewer while the interview is in progress (Atkinson, 2002: 132)

Each partner organisation will develop a total of 6 interviews, involving the following profiles:

These interviews are going to be targeted to two profiles:

Number	Profile	What do we like to obtain - participants' feedback
4	Rural women entrepreneurs who have been involved in a entrepreneurial process	The objective is to obtain information about training/ learning on entrepreneurship received; how they perceive the digital skills in the entrepreneurship process; the level of digital skills and competencies and training needs and gap on digital skills and training desired and expected.
2	Trainers or facilitators who work in training activities for rural females and entrepreneurship (important if they has experience in training to develop digital skills	The objective is obtain information about the existing training and learning, specially those that they use in their training activities; the effectiveness of the training; how rural females accept the training and take part in the training activities and the gaps and needs in the training activities - training focused in the promotion of digital skills and competencies for entrepreneurship.

Please find in the Annex II information and resources that help you to develop the interviews (including some orientations for developing them).

Focus groups

A focus group is a 'way of collecting qualitative data which involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion focused around a particular topic or some of them. The informal group discussion is usually based on a series of questions and the researcher generally acts as a moderator facilitator for the group, rather than an interviewer: by posing the questions, keeping the discussion flowing, and enabling group members to participate fully. [...] The moderator does not ask questions of each focus group participant in turn, but, rather, facilitates group discussion, actively encouraging group members to interact with each other' (Wilkinson & Silverman, 2004: 177-178). It is thus a 'loosely constructed discussion with a group of people brought together for the purpose of the study, guided by the researcher and addressed as a group' (Sarantakos, 2005: 195)

According to Sarantakos (2005), the process to be followed normally in focus groups is: first, the selection of people with a particular interest, expertise or position in the community; second, the

formation of the group by bringing these people together in the same venue; third, the introduction of the discussion topic by the researcher, who acts as a facilitator and arbitrator; fourth, guiding the discussion so as to address the research topic; fifth, encouraging discussion among the members of the group rather than between them and the researcher; and sixth, observing and recording the discussion' (p. 196)

The purpose of this research method is to 'give information about group processes, spontaneous feelings, reasons and explanations for attitudes and behaviours' (Sarantakos, 2005: 198)

This method may present some limitations, such as participants hiding their true opinions, the dominance of the discussion by some members or the lack of participation by others. To reduce these limitations, the facilitator may 'need to encourage quiet participants, to discourage talkative ones, and to handle any 'interactionally difficult' occasions' (Wilkinson & Silverman, 2004: 179).

In the framework of the Bridging the gap analysis activities, each partners will develop two focus group.

First focus group

The first focus group will involve **rural female entrepreneurs** with businesses that makes use of some ICT tools, as for instance social networks or webpages; and **teachers or trainers** with experience in training adult women in rural areas in ICTs-related content. This focus group is thought to be for about 6-8 people, in a balanced way.

The table below shows what we expect to learn from each profile:

Profile	What we want to obtain from them
Rural women entrepreneurs supported by ICTs	What training needs they originally had in terms of digital skills, as it may be the same as the women that haven't undertaken yet can face; how they were trained, in case they were; how they realized the potential of social networks; and what they missed in that process. Also, it would be interesting to find out current needs they may have, as the project could be also targeted to a broader target of women, with some experience using ICT tools but that are still very basic knowledges.
Teachers or trainers in entrepreneurship for rural females (with special relevance of digital skills)	Extract information from their experience so that they can identify what levels of digital literacy are usually found in their students, and which areas are the ones with most deficiencies.

Second focus group

This 'focus group' is going to be different from the first one. In this one, the approach to be taken is to conduct a **group dynamic with six or seven rural women that haven't undertaken yet or are in the early stages of their business projects**, with directed activities and presentations of cases or challenges they have to manage, for which the stories of life obtained before on the interviews of the women could be used.

Number	Profile	What we want to find out
6/7	Rural women that haven't undertaken yet or are in the early stages of their business projects	The objective of this discussion group is to see what they need at that initial moment of starting a business (in terms of present difficulties) in relation to the use of ICT, and the group questions/dynamics should be directed to the construction of the seven modules.

It is important to have in mind that those women may not have any knowledge about Digital Skills, therefore the focus group cannot be conducted via direct questions, but by practical activities and problem-solving, that is why all the activities that are going to be developed in this group dynamics must have the final objective of extracting to what extent they understand the importance of the ICT at the time of undertaking, and which are the actual needs and difficulties that we find from them; as well as to confirm the need for the project and the results obtained on the previous stages.

Please find in the Annex III information and resources that help you to develop the focus groups (including some orientations for developing them).

4.2.3. Collecting data

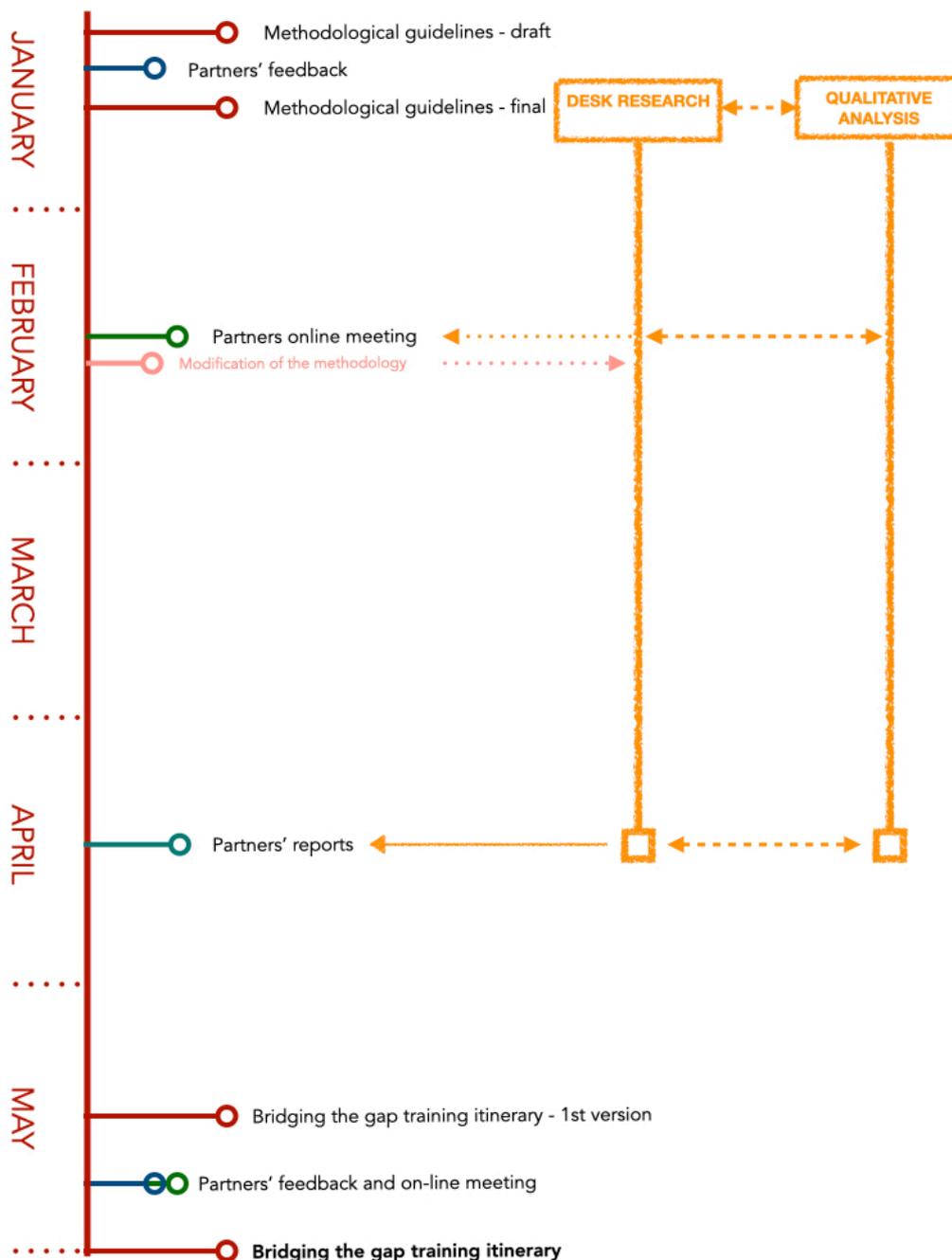
In order to send the different data collected in both analysis (desk research and qualitative methodologies) to the coordination of this task, we will provide partners with some guidelines and templates to elaborate reports with the results.

- **Desk research:** with the data obtained in the desk research, partners will elaborate a reports according to the structure and requirements contained in the section 5 (5. Partners' reports) of this document;

- **Qualitative analysis:** partners will summarise the interviews and focus group according to the templates provided in the ANNEX III and IV.

4.3. Work-plan

This section contains the work plan to implement the task 1 intended to define the training itinerary. As commented in the previous section, the analysis activities don't follow a regular timeline because the two main methodological approaches complement each other during the



research activities. Said that, we would like to appeal to the researcher to follow the work plan we propose below. Here you can find a scheme that explains the work distribution and relations among the different tasks:

The schedule to be followed is still in process of discussion. The provisional dates for the completion of Task 1 are as follows:

Task	Deadline	Responsible partner
Methodological background for analysis. First Draft	January 11th, th 2021	Dramblys
Partners feedback on the first draft	January 18th, 2021	All partners
Methodological background for analysis. Final version	January 25th, 2021	Dramblys
Starting desk research	<i>January 25th, 2021</i>	All partners
1 Open or in-depth interview + 1 focus group	<i>February 18th 2021</i>	All partners
Partners' meeting (online) to discuss the results of desk research	<i>February 18th 2021</i>	All partners
If agree in the meeting - modification of methodological guidelines	<i>February 18th 2021</i>	Dramblys
Continuing with desk research and interviews and focus group	—	All partners
Partners reports	<i>April 15th 2021</i>	All partners
Bringing the Gap training itinerary - 1st version	<i>May 7th 2021</i>	Dramblys
Partners feedback on the first draft	<i>May 18th 2021</i>	All partners
Partners' meeting (online) to discuss the first draft	<i>May 18th 2021</i>	All partners
Bringing the Gap training itinerary	<i>May 31th 2021</i>	Dramblys

5. Partners' reports

In this section you will find some orientations that help you develop your partner's reports.

5.1. Style requirements

In order to facilitate the compilation of the reports at the later stage, we would like to ask the partners to elaborate their reports according to the following requirements:

- New Times Roman: 12, 1,5 space.
- Approximately 15- 20 pages (excluding tables and figures, and references).
- Please, indicate the sources of any material (pictures, data, etc.) used in the report.
- Please, use footnotes to indicate the quotes of existing texts.
- For explicit quotes please use "italic" and quote the reference.
- Please, use new sources not older than 2000. It doesn't mean that cannot use and include in your analysis older references, but they must be relevant and exclusive.
- Please, use verified and contrasted sources. Make sure that they are coming from a reliable source.

5.2. Structure of reports:

In order to obtain the information in a homogeneous way, please, use this structure for your reports:

Introduction. Brief introduction to research activities including dates of the research (from/to), main sources used, limits or problems encountered (Max. 1.000 character).

1. **General (brief)** description about rural female entrepreneurs in your country: - (max. 5.000 characters).
 - Brief introduction to country rural areas (population, employment and unemployment, sector activities and programmed to support the rural development)
 - Draft profile of the rural females in your country (age average, level of studies, economic activity, etc.)

- How's the situation of the gaps explained before on the country (digital, urban/rural, gender gaps)

2. Entrepreneurship ecosystem in the rural areas: description of rural entrepreneurship ecosystem in your country: main characteristics, actors and rural female role in these ecosystems (max. 3.000 characters)

3. Rural female entrepreneurs. Digital competences to support entrepreneurship: description of rural female entrepreneurs according to their skills and competences for both general entrepreneurial processes and digital competencies and skills to be entrepreneur (max. 3.000 characters)

4. Training and learning on entrepreneurship in rural areas: a brief description of existing training and learning in rural areas, with specific regards to those activities addressed to women. (max. 4.000 characters) Please, focus your analysis in the following topics:

- Needs and gaps addressed by training activities
- Type of training - informal, formal or non formal;
- Delivery of training: face to face, distance training, learning, blended ...
- Duration of training activities: Average of hours of training activities
- Main subjects/topics included in training/learning activities
- Training providers and promoters

5. Training and learning on entrepreneurship in rural areas - specific for women: a brief description of existing training and learning in rural areas, with specific regards to those activities addressed to women. (max. 4.000 characters) Please, focus your analysis in the following topics:

- Type of training - informal, formal or non formal;
- Delivery of training: face to face, distance training, learning, blended ...
- Duration of training activities: Average of hours of training activities
- Main subjects/topics included in training/learning activities
- Training providers and promoters

6. Training and learning to develop digital competences and skills in rural areas: a brief description of existing training and learning in rural areas. We will observe those training specific

addressed to rural women and those digital training focus on entrepreneurial processes (max. 4.000 characters) Please, focus your analysis in the following topics:

- Type of training - informal, formal or non formal;
- Delivery of training: face to face, distance training, learning, blended ...
- Duration of training activities: Average of hours of training activities;
- Main subjects/topics included in training/learning activities;
- Training providers and promoters; and
- Involvement of rural women in the training.

7. Case of study: Each partner will identify (at least) two case of study addressed to develop the digital skills and competencies of rural females in entrepreneurial processes. See Annex I - for more details.

Conclusions/remarks (max. 2000 characters) obtained in the desk research, including recommendations for the development of the training/learning platform.

References. List of the reference that you have collected during the desk research and used to develop the report.

Annex I - Case of study

In the field of social research methodology, a **case study** is understood as an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units. A unit connotes a spatially bounded phenomenon observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time (Gerring, 2004).¹

Within the framework of the **Bridging the Gap project**, we will consider that the unit to be studied for our case studies in each of the partner countries will be: a given programme, project or initiative (that has already been implemented and its results have been observed and evaluated) that includes the education and training of rural women to provide them with digital tools, competences and skills for their personal and/or professional empowerment and autonomy.

In order to obtain a homogeneous information of each case that allows both comparing the different cases and obtaining critical information to support the definition of the training itinerary, we will gather the following information about each study case:

Identification of the initiative/ programme	<i>Please, indicate the name of the initiative or programme</i>		
Promoter(s):	<i>Who is/was the promoter? Please indicate the name of the organization/person that promotes/promoted this programme</i>		
Website:	<i>Please, include a link to the promoter website</i>		
Country:			
Active:	<i>YES/NO</i>	<i>Is the resource available?</i>	
Language (s):	<i>Please, indicate the languages in which programme is available</i>	<i>Availability (Open platform/ open resources/ etc...):</i>	<i>Please, indicate the type of resource and (if available) indicate how users can access it</i>
Type of training:	<i>Please, indicate the type of training: face to face, learning, blended</i>		
Is it the initiative addressed to rural female (exclusively)?	<i>YES/NO</i>		
If no, please indicate other groups addressed.			

¹ Gerring, J. (2004). What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for? *The American Political Science Review*, 98(2), 341-354. Retrieved December 29, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4145316>

Starting point:	<i>Please, explain the rationale behind the programme or initiative. What were the reasons to create the programme, needs addressed, collectives that participated in the creation of this program? All the required information to understand how the project was started,</i>
Objectives	<i>Please, indicate the objectives of the programme.</i>
Description	<i>Describe the initiative/programme. The type of activities that the programme offers, how many learners (and from which groups) have participated in the training; how the training is organized, etc.</i>
Training/learning methodology applied	<i>Please, indicate the pedagogical approach behind the initiative</i>
Competences developed:	<i>Please indicate the competencies and skills that trainees/learners can develop through this programme/training/learning</i>
Structured - learning/training topics covered:	<i>Please, explain briefly the structure of the training programme and the topics (subject) included.</i>
Results:	<i>What are the main results obtained? Number of learners/trainees involved in the training activities, skills improved, contribution to rural entrepreneurship, contribution to empower rural females, etc.</i>
Challenges:	<i>What have been the main challenges of the programme?</i>
Potential for Bridging the gap:	<i>What lessons that could be obtained from this programme and what we could transfer (after adaptation) to Bridging the gap project?</i>

Annex II – Open interview - guidelines and practical resources

Template to collect the participants' details

Important note: Please, fulfill one sheet per participant taking part in the semi-structured interview. This sheet will be used only for statistical purpose and to support the analysis of the interviews. Partnership will not use these details for any other purpose, and each partner will save and record these data in order to protect the privacy of the participants. Please, be aware of the national regulations about data protection and adapt the sheet and the data treatment accordingly.

INTERVIEWEE PROFILE	
Profile	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural female entrepreneur <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers or trainers in ICTs-related rural content
Organisation:	
E-mail (further contact):	
Job position:	
Experience in years	
TO BE FILLED BY INTERVIEWER	
Control data	
Hour:	Date:
Place:	

Interview guidelines

It's important that we concentrate on competences on social/alternative funding and how the collaborative training/learning could help acquire these competences in the apprenticeship model. We should focus on the following topics:

- Rural entrepreneurship
- Skills and competences to be an entrepreneur
- Training and learning activities to promote skills and competences for entrepreneurship

- Rural females and entrepreneurship
- Digital skills in the entrepreneurial process
- Gaps and needs in the development of digital skills
- Rural female empowerment through entrepreneurship
- ...

Duration

According to the general methodological guidelines for research, the duration of the semi-structured interview is between 30' to 40'.

How to develop the interview

The interview could be implemented using different methods:

1. Face to face: It will be the best method to develop the interview, because it allows the direct contact with the interviewee improving the communication process and ensuring that the interviewee is focused on the answers.

2. By phone: Alternatively, we can use phone to develop the interview. It's also a valid method especially in this type of analysis, when the interviewee lives not close to us (or he /she is in another country).

3. On-line: as in the case of the phone, we can use other on-line technologies that facilitates the face-to-face communication, as Skype, video-conference, etc.

Remember: The interview should be recorded (if the interviewee agrees).

Before starting the interview:

It's very important before starting the interview to explain about the project background, partnership and other relevant questions. It is recommended to provide this information some days before the interview.

It's important to record the interview. Please, don't forget to ask permission for doing it. Remember also (and explain it to the interviewee) that the content of the interview will not be public, except for the European Commission, and only in the case of project audit.

Hereby, we are proposing a number of questions that should help you to develop the interviews.

Interview guidelines for rural female entrepreneurs

Objective: Rural female entrepreneurs are expected to provide us with information about the training and learning on entrepreneurship and the role of digital competences and skills on this area.

Note: It is an open questionnaire, with a set of question that will guide the interview. The interviewer can change the questions or add new questions according to the needs - see the section 4.4.2. Quality analysis - Life story interview (First-person narratives) to use this resources to guide the development of the interview).

1) Introduction of the interviewee

- Name and surname
- Brief explanation about their profesional and personal background .

2) Experience as entrepreneur

- **A short review of her experience as entrepreneur** ... the reason to start the business, how she started, training received (if the case) - Personal feelings: the entrepreneurial process has been relevant at personal level? Why?
- **About the training to be entrepreneur** - where and the she received and promoted by who. Was it enough? Did she need to receive more training? Did she face unexpected problems or questions related to her business using others' experiences or own experience (not training for that)? How does the entrepreneurship affect to her personal life? Did she learn something from the process that have improved (have an impact) her private life?
- **Digital skills and competencies:** Are these competencies and skills basics for the entrepreneurial process? Was training received enough to do the best use of these competences during the entrepreneurial process?

3) Training/learning on entrepreneurship/digital skills

- **Existing training on digital skills to entrepreneurship:** Does the existing training answer to the entrepreneur needs? Does this training deal with the existing gaps? Main barriers/difficulties to access training: Is the training tailored designed for rural female? What is missing in the existing training?

- **Future training/learning tool:** Skills and competences to develop by this training/learning tool; Characteristics (training model / methodological background / etc.); Topics to be included; Target group (in addition of project direct beneficiaries – we can identify other groups that could be interested in the use of this training solution); Expectations of the new learning tool (que we can expect).

Final question

- Enumerate 5 digital competences and skills that any rural female entrepreneur should have

Interview guidelines for Trainers/facilitators on digital skills for entrepreneurs

Objective: Trainers on social/alternative funding are expected to provide us with information about the status of training on social/alternative funding.

Note: It is an open questionnaire, with a set of question that will guide the interview. The interviewer can change the questions or add new questions according to the needs - see the section 4.4.2. Quality analysis - Life story interview (First-person narratives) to use this resources to guide the development of the interview).

1) Introduction of the interviewee

- Name and surname
- Brief explanation about their professional background
- Current position (where is she/he working now and what kind of activities develops)

2) Existing training

- **Training on entrepreneurship in rural areas:** A short review of her/his experience in this type of training and working with the target group; what is the most demanded training on entrepreneurship in the rural areas?; Is there any specific training for rural females?
- Digital skills and competencies: Are digital competences and skills included in the training for entrepreneurship? How? Is this training (on digital skills) effective for target group?

3) Skills and competencies developed/promoted by existing training:

- Training needs and gaps: Does the exiting training deal with the existing needs and gaps?;

- Training – training deal with the needs of the collective? Challenges to access to this type of training -
- Access of rural females to this type of training – they take part in the training activities or not.

4) New learning/training offer on digital skills and competences addressed to rural females to be entrepreneur

- What skills and competences should be promoted by this training/learning tool
- What characteristics (training model / methodological background / etc.) should have this training
- Which topics would be covered by these training?
- How target group should be involved in this training?

Final question

- Enumerate 5 digital competences and skills that any rural female entrepreneur should have.

Annex III – Interviews - template to summarise the interviews

This annex contains two templates to summarize the results of the interviews. Please, try to include the most relevant details that you obtain during the interview and be brief and focus on the most relevant answers.

Template to summarize the interview of rural female entrepreneurs

A. Identification of interviewer			
Name			
Summary of her professional and persona background			
B. Experience as entrepreneur			
Experience as entrepreneur			
Training to be entrepreneur			
Digital skills and competencies			
C. Training/learning on entrepreneurship/digital skills			
Existing training on digital skills to entrepreneurship			
Future training/learning tool:			
Final question			
5 digital competences and skills			

Template to summarize the interview of trainers/facilitators

A. Identification of interviewer	
Name	
Summary of her/his professional and persona background	
Current position	
B. Existing training	
Training on entrepreneurship in rural areas	
Digital skills and competencies	

C. Skills and competencies developed/promoted by existing training:	
<i>Training needs and gaps</i>	
<i>Challenges to access to this training</i>	
<i>Involvement of rural females in the training activities</i>	
D. New learning/training	
<i>Skills and competences to be included</i>	
<i>Characteristics</i>	
<i>Topics covered</i>	
<i>Involvement of target group in training</i>	
Final question	
<i>5 digital competences and skills</i>	

Development of focus group

The following paragraphs contain some inputs to be discussed during the focus group. The objective of this script is to provide a guide to develop the focus group. As a focus group is an open discussion of specific profiles, the group conductor could adapt the discussion to both the needs of the moment in which it occurs and the participants' contributions. The group discussions have to be recorded, so, please, before starting ask permission to all participants to record the discussion.

Introduction

As conductor of the group, you should introduce the focus group to the participants. The first step is to welcome the participants and explain the project and the reason to be in the group. At this point, please remind the participants that you are recording the discussion (Recording is highly recommended. If the participant refuses to be recorded, we can take notes. But perhaps this (taking notes) can hide the narrative of the interview). Then, explain the main topic that they will discuss, as well as the duration of the discussion. You should ask participants if they are familiar or not with this type of discussion methodology. If not, you should explain the main rules that will guide the discussion (no prejudice, all comments are valid, etc.).

After that, kindly ask participants to introduce themselves: name and expertise area as well as other relevant data that you think might be required.

The discussion will be structured as follows:

After that, kindly ask participants to introduce themselves: name and expertise area as well as other relevant data that you think might be required.

The discussion will be structured in three blocks.

BLOCK 1. Training addressed to rural female aimed to promote entrepreneurial mindset

- Specific training needs of rural female entrepreneurs - what are the training needs of rural females for entrepreneurship.
- Most demanded training by rural female entrepreneurs.
- Training and competences on entrepreneurship – training deal with the needs of the collective.

- Barriers to access to the training activities. Involvement of rural women in training — active involvement?
- Topics covered by the training - how are the digital skills and competences included in the training?
- Use of eLearning methods and contents — is it suitable for target group,
- Development of personal skills - is it possible to develop some personal skills through this activities?

BLOCK 2. Digital skills and competences for rural female entrepreneurs

- Status of digital skills and competences on existing training - does specific training to promote digital skills exist (as specific course or training activity)?
- Main barriers/difficulties to access training.
- Specific skills and competences to be reinforced - in the area of digital skills.
- Main methodologies used in training activities.
- Good practices – examples in training on digital skills for rural female entrepreneurs

BLOCK 3. Expectations of a new learning tool

- Challenges of the development of digital skills of rural female entrepreneurs? Learning - training
- Social entrepreneurship and use of social/alternative financing – an opportunity to explore new training pathways
- Skills and competences to develop by this training/learning tool
- Characteristics (training model / methodological background / etc.)
- Topics to be included
- Target group (in addition of project direct beneficiaries – we can identify other groups that could be interested in the use of this training solution)
- Expectations of the new learning tool

Final: To finish the group please, make the following questions:

- What are the 5 digital skills and competences which any rural female entrepreneur should have?

- Considering the current situation, would an online training/learning tool be interesting/ attractive for rural female entrepreneur to develop their digital skills and competencies? What could it look like/how could it best function?
- Please, enumerate 4 (only 4) characteristics that could define the added value of the new training/learning tool?

Annex V – Focus - template to summarise the interviews

This annex contains two templates to summarize the results of the focus group. Please, try to include the most relevant details that you obtain during the focus group and be brief and focus on the most relevant answers.

Template to summarize the results of focus groups

A. Focus group n°			
BLOCK 1. Training addressed to rural female aimed to promote entrepreneurial mindset			
BLOCK 2. Digital skills and competences for rural female entrepreneurs			
BLOCK 3. Expectations of a new learning tool			
Final questions			
<i>5 digital skills and competences</i>			
<i>Define how the new tool should be</i>			
<i>4 (only 4) characteristics that could define the added value of the new training/learning tool</i>			