

RULES INNOVATION AWARD FOR WOMEN FARMERS

Women at the forefront of Sustainable Rural Areas

This edition will mark the 7th biennial European Innovation Award for Women Farmers. It was first introduced back in 2010 to improve the visibility of women involved in farming and forestry in order to act as a catalyst for women entrepreneurship. It aims at acknowledging the many innovative approaches taken by women farmers towards agriculture, forestry and diversification throughout the EU.

Since its inception, the political and practical landscape of European agriculture continues to evolve. Political initiatives such as the European Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Long Term Vision for Rural Areas are shaping policy at European level. Whilst factors such as climate change and the war in Ukraine is adding increasing pressures on Farmers and their Families.

The agricultural and forestry sector needs now more than ever, innovative, and entrepreneurial people in order to stay competitive and increase sustainability. Women farmers are key players in achieving this goal. According to Eurostat data from 2016, women represent 42% of the European Union's agricultural workforce, but only 30% assume managerial positions.

Despite significantly contributing to rural development, forestry and farming, women farmers are still overlooked and their influence within the workforce often goes unnoticed. Over the years, the initiatives and businesses presented by these women demonstrate their capacity in finding new solutions to the challenges faced in rural areas. The recognition, support and dissemination of positive initiatives is essential for the sector to be able to meet increasing societal expectations, climate and political challenges.

The seventh edition of Copa-Cogeca's Innovation Award for Women Farmers will be entitled "Women at the forefront of Sustainable Rural Areas". Whilst we talk about the need for a transformation towards more sustainable food systems, it's not possible to reach sustainable targets without looking at the three pillars: economic, environmental, and social. For that reason, for the 2023 edition Copa-Cogeca wishes to showcase the innovative and novel solutions implemented by women that are supporting the three pillars of sustainability. Whether that be on the farm, in their business decisions or to the benefit of the wider local community.

CHAPTER I: GENERAL TERMS

ARTICLE 1

GENERAL TERMS

The aim of this Award is to promote the important role that women play in European rural areas and to identify the innovative activities women undertake in farming and/or forestry.

CHAPTER II: THE AWARD

ARTICLE 2

NATURE OF THE AWARD

1. The award winner shall receive a prize of €10,000 to be given by the sponsoring organisation. In addition, the Jury may also grant an award for special achievement with a prize of €5,000.
2. The award winner shall receive a certificate and a trophy reflecting the objectives of the award.
3. The award winner shall benefit from publicity and communication about the Award, which shall be widely promoted at EU level by Copa-Cogeca and at Member State level by Copa-Cogeca members.
4. The award winner shall be presented and promoted as an example of innovation and best practice for the activities of women in farming and/or forestry.
5. The award winner shall also have her project presented on the Copa-Cogeca website and on the dedicated website for the award.

ARTICLE 3

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. The applicant must be a woman farmer who is a member of a Copa or Cogeca organisation.
2. The applicant must be responsible for the entrepreneurial initiative (manager or owner).
3. The application must be submitted in accordance with Articles 3 to 5.
4. Participants must comply and accept the conditions stipulated in the Award rules.
5. The Award shall be granted according to the following **non-cumulative criteria**¹:
 - 5.1. Examples innovative solutions, considering impact on economic, social and environmental level
 - 5.2. Innovation transfer
 - 5.3. The sustainability of innovation, in particular longevity and replicability of the business model
 - 5.4. New communication methods and tools.

¹ **Examples of certain types of activities that may be eligible for the Award:** projects promoting female entrepreneurship on or off the farm; advisory services on good commercial practices for agricultural or forestry products aiming for a more efficient use of resources; offering new products or new ways of drawing value from local resources; providing new services; using new production or processing methods; searching for new markets or new customers; or seeking new forms of partnership and organisation.

Economic value created. Entries may refer to: • development and/or improvement of sustainable food production processes that add value to primary production and contribute to human nutrition and well-being;

ARTICLE 4

EXAMPLES INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS, CONSIDERING IMPACT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LEVEL

Innovation may include working methods, organisational and strategic approaches and new forms of technology that contribute to supporting sustainable practices.

The sustainable practices should take into account the three pillars of sustainability: economic, environmental and social.

Economic sustainability may refer to, but not limited to financial viability; added value to business or organisation; ability to re-invest and examples of maximising performance.

Environmental sustainability may refer to, but not limited efficient use of resources; reducing impact on environment practices to support food security or animal health and welfare management.

Social sustainability may refer to, but not limited employment opportunities; activities or community led initiatives; processes or integration of gender equality to the business or organisation; strategies that lead to positive social change.

ARTICLE 5

INNOVATION TRANSFER

Innovation must not be limited to one single farm but should have a potential impact or effect on all holdings in the same production sector or region, or on the area's relations with the outside world.

In this context, innovation not only refers to those aspects which affect the farm itself, but also to the whole value chain, including machinery, the packaging of products, channels of distribution and export methods for agricultural or forestry products.

ARTICLE 6

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE INNOVATION

The innovation must be economically and socially viable and whilst supporting the agriculture sector reducing its impact on the environment.

It must also have a certain longevity and should stand the test of time in order to have an impact, instead of appearing and disappearing in a short space of time.

The innovation should also promote the maintenance and creation of jobs in rural areas, entrepreneurship and new business models.

ARTICLE 7

NEW COMMUNICATION METHODS AND TOOLS

New communication methods and tools are used to improve farm or forestry education for children and adults and/or improve consumers' knowledge of farm or forestry production methods, or of the nutritional value of agricultural products. Conveying how farmers are at the forefront of innovation regarding solutions to tackle climate change.

CHAPTER III: THE APPLICATION

ARTICLE 8

DOCUMENTS

1. The application form as well as all other relevant documentation and information shall be made available on Agri-Info.
2. The candidate must prepare and send her application(s) with the following documents completed **in English**:
 - 2.1. Application form
 - 2.2. Declaration of endorsement from a Copa-Cogeca member organisation
 - 2.3. Any other documentation that the candidate feels would promote/support her candidacy.
3. Audio visual material may be submitted in the candidate's mother tongue, accompanied by a transcript if language isn't English.

ARTICLE 9

RECEPTION OF APPLICATIONS

1. Applications can be submitted by e-mail, registered post or online via jotform.
2. Documents received after the deadline shall not be accepted.
3. Applications sent by post must have the following statement clearly visible on the envelope: **"Application of (name of the applicant) for the Innovation Award for Women Farmers"** and **"Do not open"**.
4. Applications sent by registered post must be sent to Copa-Cogeca headquarters (rue de Trèves 61, 1040, Brussels, Belgium).
5. If the application is sent by registered post, the postmark accompanied by the acknowledgement of receipt dated and signed by the Copa-Cogeca Secretariat shall serve as proof of the date of submission of the proposal.
6. If the application is sent by e-mail (to general.affairs@copa-cogeca.eu) the "Read Receipt" shall serve as proof of the proposal's submission.
7. If the application is submitted online the "Your submission has been received" email shall serve as proof of the proposal's submission.

8. Faxes, incomplete applications, hand-delivered applications, applications sent in several parts and/or applications received in languages other than English shall not be accepted.

CHAPTER IV: THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

ARTICLE 10

COMPOSITION

The Organising Committee shall be composed of:

1. A Chairperson who should be the Director of General Affairs of Copa-Cogeca
2. A member of the Secretariat of Copa-Cogeca, who should be the Policy Advisor in charge of the Women's Committee of Copa-Cogeca
3. Two members of the Women's Committee
4. A member of the Policy Coordination Committee (POCC/CCC) of Copa-Cogeca.

ARTICLE 11

ROLE

1. The Organising Committee shall carry out a preliminary examination of all received applications and select those that respect the criteria, according to Articles 3 to 9.
2. The Organising Committee shall establish a list of all eligible applications based on the eligibility criteria.
3. The Organising Committee shall establish a shortlist of the five best applications, taken from the list of eligible applications.
4. The Organising Committee, in its role to assist the Jury with decision-making, reserves the right to verify the achievements indicated in the candidates' applications.
5. The Organising Committee shall be responsible for organising the award ceremony with the support of Copa-Cogeca's Secretariat.

ARTICLE 12

PROCEDURE

1. All applications received shall be prepared by the Copa-Cogeca Secretariat, and evaluated during a meeting of the Organising Committee.
2. All the members of the Organising Committee must be present in the meeting or must delegate the competence to someone from the same organisation.
3. All applications received that do not comply with the rules set out in Articles 3 to 9 (e.g. not using the correct participation form, not including the declaration of endorsement, not written in English, or not respecting the procedure) shall be considered invalid and therefore shall not be eligible for the Award.

4. None of the documentation (including photos, maps or other) pertaining to the applications received shall be returned to the senders.

ARTICLE 13

DELIBERATION

1. The Organising Committee shall evaluate the eligible applications and draw up a shortlist of the five best applications.
2. Should the Organising Committee fail to reach a unanimous decision on the shortlist of five applications, the decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote. In the event of a draw, the Chairperson shall have the deciding vote.

CHAPTER V: THE JURY

ARTICLE 14

COMPOSITION

1. The Jury shall be composed of five members. It shall include representatives of Copa-Cogeca, as well as representatives of the European Institutions and qualified persons who, as a result of their function, profession or experience in the fields of agriculture or forestry, can competently identify exemplary innovative achievements or initiatives in the EU.
2. The Jury shall be composed of:
 - 2.1 The Copa-Cogeca Secretary General
 - 2.2 The Chairperson of the Women's Committee of Copa-Cogeca
 - 2.3 A representative from the European Commission
 - 2.4 A member of the European Parliament
 - 2.5 A member of the European Economic and Social Committee.
3. The Copa-Cogeca Secretary General shall chair the Jury.
4. The Director of General Affairs, with the support of the Policy Advisor in charge of the Women's Committee, shall act as a secretariat for the Jury and assist the Jury in its evaluation, in line with the Award's criteria. Both shall participate as observers in the meetings of the Jury.

ARTICLE 15

ROLE

1. The Jury shall be entrusted to select the winner of the Award, in line with the criteria set out in Articles 3 to 7.
2. The Jury may also grant an award for special achievement to one other shortlisted project of relevant quality in line with the criteria set out in Articles 3 to 7.

ARTICLE 16

DELIBERATION

1. The Jury shall meet and analyse the shortlist of applications, before deliberating on the attribution of the Award and the possibility of granting one award for special achievement to one other project.
2. The deliberation must be made on the basis of the preliminary examination and selection carried out by the Organising Committee, as indicated in Articles 12 and 13.
3. The Jury's deliberation is not subject to appeal and is concluded by a simple majority vote. In the case of a draw, the Chairperson of the Jury shall cast the deciding vote.
4. The Jury shall be supported in its decision by the members of the Organising Committee acting as observers and without voting rights (see Article 12).

ARTICLE 17

RESULTS AND AWARD CEREMONY

1. The Chairperson of the Jury shall inform the Organising Committee of the winning project and of the award for special achievement (if applicable) in order to prepare for the official award ceremony.
2. The Chairperson of the Jury shall inform the award winner of the Jury's deliberation.
3. The award winner shall also be informed about the ceremony, the procedure for the award ceremony and any other relevant details.
4. The award winner shall keep the Jury's decision secret until the date of the ceremony. The official award ceremony shall take place in Brussels.

ARTICLE 18

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY FOR THE AWARD WINNER

1. The results of the Award shall be widely publicised.
2. Information shall be broadcast at EU level by Copa-Cogeca and at Member State level by Copa-Cogeca members, using any means of media coverage.

Relevant dates for the Award:

Launch of the Award: 17/11/22

Deadline for submitting applications: 31/03/23

Listing of eligible applications: 07/04/23

Shortlisting of the five best applications: Week of 22/05/23

Jury analysis and deliberation: 12/06/23 – 14/07/23

Communication of the jury's decision to the award winner: by 21/07/23

Award ceremony: October 2023