



D.3.3.1

Toolkit summarizing how supporting women's leadership can contribute to the forestry sector progress

June 2026

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**Interreg
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1. Introduction

Despite countless measures to empower women and help them take leadership positions, their representation in such positions across the globe is not satisfying. The forestry sector is not different.

Women face specific career challenges at different stages of their lives due to gender-related roles and expectations. The Fem2forests project addresses these challenges. With this toolkit, the project aims to support women's career development in the forestry sector.

The toolkit was developed based on the experiences and lessons learned from the Fem2forests project. Also experiences and results from Fem4Forest project were integrated. The toolkit was tested in pilot activities involving women professionals from the forestry sector. Their feedback helped improve the tools and contributed to the final version of the toolkit.

The main goal of this toolkit is to help women in forestry better understand their knowledge, skills, and potential, strengthen their competencies, present themselves with confidence, and successfully integrate into their workplace and professional environment.

The modules are practical and interactive. They encourage participants to reflect on their own attitudes, experiences, and career situations while helping them identify and pursue their professional goals.

The toolkit is flexible and can be adapted to different target groups and needs. Individual modules or combinations of modules can be delivered in any order. The content, format, and number of participants can also be adjusted to meet the requirements of different organisations and companies.

2. Structure and Overview of the Modules

The modules are designed to be delivered online. Online training offers several advantages. It requires fewer resources, especially in terms of time, making it easier for both participants and decision-makers in organisations and companies to take part and support the programme. Each module is designed to last three hours.

Another advantage of the online format is that it allows women from different regions to participate, regardless of geographical distance. Bringing together women with diverse backgrounds, from different regions or even different countries, as

demonstrated during the Fem2Forests implementation of the modules, and from different professional fields creates valuable learning opportunities for everyone. Participants can share a wide range of perspectives and experiences, promoting mutual learning and the exchange of ideas across regions and borders.

2.1. Thematic overview of the modules

Modul 1: Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a person's belief that they can successfully accomplish a specific task and is closely linked to our self-perception.

In this workshop, we'll explore how strengthening this mindset can boost confidence, motivation, and success in both personal and professional life.

Modul 2: Successful and Impactful Communication

Express your ideas clearly, connect authentically with others, and inspire action through effective communication. Discover practical tools and strategies to make your message resonate and achieve lasting results.

Modul 3: Leadership Skills 1

You will have the opportunity to discover your own leadership personality. Starting self-assessment, you will explore self-confidence, efficiency, and motivation.

Modul 4: Leadership Skills 2

You will acquire knowledge about the dimensions of leadership. You will learn about the leadership cycle and engage intensively with the topic of leadership.

3. Targetgroup

- The modules are designed for women in the forestry sector who are aiming for a leadership position, want to advance their careers, or would like to explore their own potential and develop their leadership skills.
- They can also support decision-makers and HR professionals in designing training and career development programmes for women in their companies or organisations.
- In addition, the modules can be integrated into existing women's career development programmes.

4. Methods

Each module combines short theoretical input, self-reflection activities, and breakout sessions. The main focus is on the participants' experiences, learning from each other, and open discussion.

The participants are the experts in their own situations and professional contexts. They know their own challenges, strengths, and development needs best. The theoretical input is intended to support reflection, provide useful concepts and tools, and encourage meaningful group discussions.

It is recommended to use a participant-centred and process-oriented approach. Facilitators should create space for dialogue, reflection, and the exchange of experiences rather than focusing only on delivering content.

The goal is not to complete every planned activity or cover all the material, but to respond to the participants' needs and interests and adapt the programme accordingly. This creates a more relevant and valuable learning experience for everyone.

4.1. Modul 1: Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief that you can successfully achieve a goal or complete a task. It influences how we think, act, and respond to challenges. In this workshop, participants will explore the concept of self-efficacy and learn how strengthening it can increase confidence, motivation, and success in both their personal and professional lives.

Learning objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- understand what self-efficacy is and why it is important
- recognise factors that influence their own self-efficacy
- reflect on their strengths, experiences, and beliefs
- identify practical ways to strengthen their self-confidence

Topics and Programme for Module 1

The PowerPoint presentation accompanying this module can be found in Annex 1

Welcome and Introduction	
Theoretical Input 1	• What is self-efficacy / The concept of self-efficacy • Factors influencing self-efficacy
Self-reflection	• When have I felt particularly successful recently • And why?
Theoretical Input 2	• General vs. specific/context-specific self-efficacy
Interactive Break Out Session	• How can you recognise self-efficacy? • What are the characteristics?
Theoretical Input 3	• Characteristics of self-efficacy
Theoretical Input 4	• Self-efficacy and Leadership • Self-efficacy and successful Teams • Self-efficacy and beliefs
Self-reflection	• In what areas do I doubt my effectiveness, despite having the necessary objective skills? • Which beliefs are holding me back in my professional development?
Interactive Break Out Session	• In general, what do you think are the typical beliefs that prevent women in particular from aspiring to leadership roles?
Theoretical Input 5	• Identifying and challenging beliefs • Possible methods, interventions and activities to strengthen self-efficacy
Participant feedback, evaluation and conclusion	

4.2. Modul 2: Successful and Impactful Communication

Strong communication helps to share ideas, to build meaningful connections and to inspire others. In the module practical techniques to communicate with confidence and create lasting impact are presented and experienced.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- express ideas clearly and confidently
- build authentic connections through effective communication
- use practical tools and strategies to make communication effective

Topics and Programme for Module 2

The PowerPoint presentation accompanying this module can be found in Annex 2

Welcome and Introduction	
Theoretical Input 1	• What is communication? - Basics • Cohn rules
Self-reflection	• Reflecting on one's own communication behaviour
Theoretical Input 2	• The three pillars of communication in the context of leadership: → Speaking / making announcements → Listening → Asking questions
	• Send messages / make announcements → Sending messages → Giving feedback → Giving orders and instructions
Interactive Break Out Session	• A situation in which manager communicated particularly well • A situation in which this did not work out at all
Theoretical Input 3	• Listening → Active listening → Round-robin" discussions → Creating the right conditions (time, space, openness)
Theoretical Input 4	• Asking questions → Questioning techniques (circular, open-ended questions...)
Interactive Break Out Session	• Elements of successful communication in leadership – What makes a leader a good communicator?
Theoretical Input 5	• When does communication work?
Participant feedback, evaluation and conclusion	

4.3. Modul 3: Leadership Skills 1

The module focuses on various aspects of leadership. Respective Leadership personality is explored through self-assessment.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- identify the own leadership personality
- recognize strengths and areas for improvement
- understand how self-awareness contributes to effective leadership

Topics and Programme for Module 3

The PowerPoint presentation accompanying this module can be found in Annex 3

Welcome and Introduction	
Theoretical Input 1	• Networking in theory and practice
Self-reflection	• Which networks do I use? • Which networks should I pay more attention to in future?
Theoretical Input 2	• Definition of Leadership vs Management • Distinguishing Between Role and Function • Definition and Characteristics of Leadership
Interactive Break Out Session	• What does leadership mean? • What makes a good leader? • How can I recognise good leadership?
Theoretical Input 3	• Competences – definition • Types of competence
Interactive Break Out Session	• What skills does a manager in the forestry sector need? • Which skills are (in the forestry sector) more commonly attributed to women and to men?
Theoretical Input 4	• Principles of Effective Leadership • skills needed for Effective Leadership
Self-reflection	• Complete the 'Competence Flower' as homework
Participant feedback, evaluation and conclusion	

4.4. Modul 4 : Leadership Skills 2

In this module, the key dimensions of leadership are explored and a deeper understanding of effective leadership is developed. The leadership cycle is presented as well as the systemic approach.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- understand the main dimensions of leadership
- explain and use the leadership cycle
- consider and use different leadership concepts

Topics and Programme for Module 4

The PowerPoint presentation accompanying this module can be found in Annex 4

Welcome and Introduction	
Presentation	• Presentation of "Homework" of Modul 3: "Come up with at least five reasons why you are, or can be, a good leader"
Theoretical Input 1	• The four pillars of leadership • The leadership cycle
Interactive Break Out Session	• What leadership challenges have I faced so far? • What was easy? • What was difficult? • What advice, tips and tricks do you have for successfully carrying out this task?
Theoretical Input 2	• Effective Delegation
Theoretical Input 3	• Systemic triangle • Leadership tasks within the systemic triangle
Theoretical Input 4	• What makes good leadership easy
Review	• A brief review of the topics covered in the modules
Reflection	• What has changed as a result of the workshops (behaviour, attitudes, mindset, knowledge, feelings...)
Participant feedback, evaluation and conclusion	

5. Impact of the modules in participants' feedback

All participants reported positive feedback on the leadership modules. They highlighted that the variety of methods and the transnational exchange were particularly enriching. The theoretical inputs were considered very useful and, above all, practical and applicable in daily work.

Each module was rated as helpful or very helpful by 83% to 100% of the participants. Overall, the feedback shows that the participants clearly benefited from the leadership modules.

5.1. Feedback from participants

I especially liked the idea of the small breakout rooms for sharing experiences. I found this approach very inclusive, as it gave everyone the opportunity to speak, including shy participants who may feel less comfortable expressing themselves in a larger group. I also really appreciated the self-reflection worksheet. It brought back many memories and thoughts that daily life sometimes makes feel distant or unclear. Working through it made me feel better and allowed me to reconnect with those experiences in a meaningful way.

In general, I found this topic particularly important for the younger generation of professionals, and especially for women. I believe that a good leader should truly understand the people they work with — not only as professionals, but also as individuals. From this first workshop, I got the impression that the participants will gain exactly these kinds of skills: how to become strong and determined leaders, while also remaining inclusive, understanding, and supportive toward the people they work with.

Thank you for today's very informative workshop. It was my pleasure to be part of it. You made me introspect my own forestry career path, which was not always an easy one, but I think it made me stronger and a better person overall. Thank you for recalling those memories 😊

I would like to sincerely thank you for the training – I found it both very interesting and highly useful. I truly appreciated the opportunity to participate.

I would like to thank you very much for today's workshop. I enjoyed it very much.

6. Accelerating Women's Leadership in the Forestry Sector

Increasing women's leadership in the forestry sector is not only a question of equality but also an opportunity for innovation, better decision-making, and sustainable development. Although more women are entering forestry-related professions, they remain underrepresented in leadership positions. This section highlights the benefits, challenges, opportunities, and key recommendations for promoting women's leadership in the forestry sector.

6.1. Benefits of Women's Leadership

Supporting women's career development creates new opportunities for organisations and the forestry sector as a whole. Research shows that gender diverse teams achieve better results because they bring different perspectives, experiences, and problem-solving approaches. Organisations with balanced leadership often have a better working environment, higher employee satisfaction and are more attractive employers.

Gender equality in leadership also expands the pool of qualified employees. Diverse leadership teams are linked to stronger organisational performance and improved innovation.

6.2. Challenges

Women in forestry continue to face barriers such as gender stereotypes, limited access to leadership opportunities and organisational cultures that were traditionally shaped by male career paths. Achieving gender equality requires recognising that women and men may have different experiences and support needs due to different socialisation processes. Equal opportunities therefore require targeted measures on the structural level rather than identical approaches.

6.3. Opportunities

Organisations can create lasting change by reviewing their strategies, structures, and workplace culture. A supportive environment where both women and men understand and value gender equality is essential for women's career development. Raising

awareness among all employees helps build acceptance and encourages inclusive leadership practices.

Practical training programmes can further support this process by encouraging participants to reflect on their own attitudes towards gender equality and apply inclusive leadership principles in their daily work. These programmes should be flexible and adapted to the specific needs, context, and size of each organisation.

6.4. Recommendations

To accelerate women's leadership in the forestry sector, organisations, decisionmakers and policymakers should:

- Develop clear gender equality strategies with measurable goals and regular monitoring.
- Create transparent recruitment, promotion, and leadership development processes.
- Offer mentoring, coaching, and networking opportunities for women.
- Raise awareness of gender equality among all employees, including men, through practical training and dialogue.
- Review organisational structures and workplace culture to identify and remove barriers to women's career progression.
- Promote flexible working arrangements that support work-life balance for all employees.
- Encourage leaders to actively support diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunities.
- Adapt leadership development programmes to the needs of different organisations and ensure that learning is practical and directly applicable to everyday work.

6.5. Conclusion

Accelerating women's leadership in forestry requires long-term commitment from organisations, leaders, and policymakers. By creating equality oriented strategies, supportive workplace cultures and targeted development opportunities, the forestry sector can benefit from a larger talent pool, stronger leadership, improved organisational performance and a more sustainable future.