

EU CAP Network Focus Group Charter

What is an EU CAP Network Focus Group?

An EU CAP Network Focus Group is a temporary group of selected experts focusing on a specific subject, creating a forum for sharing knowledge and experience. The group discusses and documents best practices and research results, exploring practical innovative solutions to challenges or opportunities identified on that subject, as well as building on knowledge gained from related valuable projects. Focus Groups catalyse the sharing and exchange of knowledge among the actors involved (researchers, farmers, advisers etc.).

The Focus Group conclusions may have implications for dissemination as well as possible further research directions that may help to solve practical problems in the sector. These may be related to production, processing, consumption, transportation or other issues.

The tangible output is focused on practical knowledge and where to get it, as well as ideas for Operational Group projects.

A Focus Group is moderated by DG AGRI and the EIP-AGRI Support Facility. A coordinating expert from the EIP-AGRI Support Facility drafts a starting paper and final report and coordinates the content-related work of the Focus Group experts.

The final report of every Focus Group is published on the EU CAP Network website.

Objectives of an EU CAP Network Focus Group

- › Assess the current state of practice related to the Focus Group topic, outlining challenges and opportunities,
- › Take stock of the existing research in this field, summarising possible solutions to the challenges outlined,
- › Identify needs from practice and propose directions for further research,
- › Propose priorities for innovative actions by suggesting potential EIP-AGRI Operational Groups or other project formats to explore opportunities and test solutions, including ways to disseminate the practical knowledge gathered.

Terms of reference

- › A Focus Group runs for approximately one year and meets (in person) twice.
- › Meetings of the Focus Groups may be combined with a field visit.



Experts

- › Experts of a Focus Group are chosen in a transparent process through an open call based on documented expertise relevant for the work of the Focus Group.
- › Additionally, geographical balance and an adequate proportion of fields of expertise and professional activity are taken into account for the composition of the Focus Group.
- › Experts of the Focus Group engage in the work of the Focus Group without any financial compensation, however, their travel and accommodation costs will be covered.
- › Each expert shall attend and actively contribute during the Focus Group meetings.
- › Experts may be asked to prepare documents for the meetings and/or attend an online meeting to further improve, complete, or focus the outputs of the group.
- › When an expert of a Focus Group becomes unable to contribute to the tasks of the Focus Group in an efficient manner (e.g. will be unable to attend one or more meetings), DG AGRI reserves the right to replace that expert with another one from the same professional category.

Selection of EU CAP Network Focus Group experts

EU CAP Network Focus Group experts will be selected from the applicants who have successfully completed the online application following the open call for expression of interest, published by DG AGRI.

The applications are scored independently by at least 3 evaluators in terms of relevant expertise, motivation, extent of the professional capacity (-ies), and any other criteria specified in the call. Consequently, the evaluators draw up lists per professional capacity, based on the scores (i.e. a list of scientists, a list of farmers, etc.).

When composing each Focus Group, these lists are used as the point of departure. Each Focus Group typically consists of 5-6 scientists, 5-6 farmers, 5-6 advisers and 2-4 other relevant actors (such as agri-business, NGOs), depending on the specific questions to be addressed in order to strike a balance among the different professional capacities within each group. In that sense, the individual lists are used to fill these quotas. Finally, a limited number of changes can be introduced in the final composition of the Focus Group, taking the geographical balance into account.

Focus Group experts participate in the Focus Group in their personal capacity and do not represent organisations or other entities.

EIP-AGRI Support Facility team

Each EU CAP Network Focus Group is supported by the designated EIP-AGRI Support Facility team members and outsourced expertise. The EIP-AGRI Support Facility facilitates the Focus Group, including deliverables as described below. Designated by



DG AGRI, the other entity, as service provider, is responsible for all issues related to the logistics of the meetings, travel and accommodation of the Focus Group experts.

The EIP-AGRI Support Facility prepares the Focus Group meetings, including agenda, discussion paper, proposals for a location and field visits, working closely and coordinating with DG AGRI and collaborating with the other entity as mentioned above.

Deliverables

The EIP-AGRI Support Facility establishes a road map (deliverable 1) with actions for the Focus Group, including dissemination plans for the call for experts and for the final report.

DG AGRI provides a list of initial topics to each of the Focus Groups. The EIP-AGRI Support Facility team expands on these ideas and formalises them in a discussion paper (deliverable 2). The discussion paper clearly identifies points of discussion for the first meeting of the Focus Group. The discussion paper not only outlines the topic at hand and provides the analysis, but it also provides the first inputs for the discussions by formulating needs, mapping existing or new solutions and asking questions to the group. The discussion paper is distributed to experts of the Focus Group at least 15 working days before the first meeting. The experts are expected to comment on all discussion points/selected points, according to their fields of expertise.

The EIP-AGRI Support Facility prepares the draft agenda for the meeting (deliverable 3). For the first meetings of any Focus Group, venues and dates are set by the EIP-AGRI Support Facility in agreement with DG AGRI. For the second meeting, the proposals for the venue and field visits are discussed within the Focus Group. The actual organisation of the meeting content is the responsibility of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility, in coordination with DG AGRI.

In the first meeting of the Focus Group, a round table is organised where experts in addition to introducing themselves, identify potential topics for further discussion by the group.

The discussions are based on the points listed in the discussion paper as well as on other points taken up from the round table.

The EIP-AGRI Support Facility and DG AGRI will draw conclusions on individual points/discussion points, in agreement and with the experts of the Focus Group and will set a clear task list with a timeframe for the run up to the next meeting. In this context, members may volunteer or may be requested to draft 'mini-papers' (deliverable 4). These documents will provide a deeper analysis of a specific issue (going beyond what was set out in the discussion paper) as well as a list of research needs and ideas for future Operational Group projects.



In each meeting, the EIP-AGRI Support Facility is responsible for taking minutes of the meeting (deliverable 5). The minutes, which are subject to approval by DG AGRI, are sent for comments to all participants of the meeting within two weeks of the meeting date.

The EIP-AGRI Support Facility prepares a document - part 1 of the final report - this includes the results from the first meeting (deliverable 6) and after agreement with DG AGRI, it is circulated to the members of the Focus Group. This document includes deliverables 1-5, where applicable the project and best practice info sheets and, depending on the maturity of the discussions of the Focus Group, it provides a synthesis of the work done so far. Where applicable, it outlines the next steps of the Focus Group's work. After the second meeting of the Focus Group, a final report (deliverable 7) formulating specific issues that could be taken up by Operational Groups. It also summarises the gathered knowledge and best practices (following a template and the 4 objectives of the Focus Group) and lists its sources, lessons learnt, audio-visual material, further recommendations, ideas for dissemination, etc. The final report is distributed for comments to the Focus Group experts no later than 4 weeks after the second meeting of the Focus Group. The report is published after approval by DG AGRI.

