

# BACKGROUND PAPER

## **Thematic Group on CAP Strategic Plans: Monitoring Committees**

30 August 2023



## Introduction

This short background paper for the CAP Implementation Contact Point (CAPI CP) Thematic Group on CAP Strategic Plans: Monitoring Committees introduces the topic, drawing on the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, CAP regulations and the outcomes of discussions in the recent CAPI-CP Thematic Group on CSP: Towards Implementation.

## 1. European Code of Conduct on partnership

As with other EU funds in shared management with Member States, the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy is underpinned and guided by [the European code of conduct on partnership](#) (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014).

Since 2014, the application of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership has strengthened, expanded and articulated in much greater detail the consultation procedures for working with stakeholders.

The Code of Conduct expects the management of EU funding to involve stakeholders, including civil society. It serves as the legal framework and informs how stakeholder involvement needs to take place (transparently) at each stage of the programming process. The Code of Conduct is designed to promote and help ensure a more positive and widespread implementation of formal stakeholder consultation. It provides a framework for selecting partners and (their) representativeness, obtaining information, making all voices heard, providing capacity building, networking, and the dissemination of good practices.

From a CAP perspective, the motivation for and benefits of such formal strengthening through the Code of Conduct include that whenever such consultation takes place genuinely and effectively the CAP Implementation will in turn be more effective. As a result, such decision-making processes, although they ultimately remain the sole responsibility of the public partners, should be more knowledgeable and transparent with stakeholders better informed and empowered and the policies better understood and used.

## 2. CAP Regulations

During the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans, the partnership principle is mainly (although not exclusively) embodied by the Monitoring Committees. These provide the main arena for consultation and informed debate on all aspects of implementation, with responsibility for monitoring the CAP Strategic Plan shared between the Monitoring Committee and National Managing Authorities. Where appropriate, Member States and their regions should be able to establish and compose regional monitoring committees that are coordinated with arrangements at the national level.



Requirements for the establishment and operation of Monitoring Committees are set down within [EU Regulation 2021/2115](#) (principally Articles 123, 124, 132 & 140). The competencies of the Monitoring Committees are summarised in the sections below:

- The National Monitoring Committee is responsible for the monitoring of the effectiveness of the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan. To that end, its responsibilities should be specified.
- Each Monitoring Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure, which shall include provisions on: coordination with regional monitoring committees (where appropriate), the prevention of conflicts of interest, and the application of the principle of transparency.
- Monitoring Committees shall meet at least once a year and shall review all issues that affect the CAP Strategic Plan progress towards achieving its targets.
- Each Member State shall publish the rules of procedure and the opinions of the Monitoring Committee.
- Each Member State shall decide the composition of the Monitoring Committee and shall ensure a balanced representation of the relevant public authorities and intermediate bodies and of representatives of the partners.
- Each member of the Monitoring Committee shall have a vote.
- Each Member State shall publish the list of the members of the Monitoring Committee online.

Monitoring Committees shall examine:

- progress in CAP Strategic Plan implementation and in achieving the milestones and targets;
- any issues that affect the performance of the CAP Strategic Plan and the actions taken to address those issues, including progress towards simplification and reduction of administrative burden for final beneficiaries;
- the elements of the ex-ante assessment listed in Article 58(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and the strategy document referred to in Article 59(1) of that Regulation;
- progress made in carrying out evaluations, syntheses of evaluations and any follow-up given to findings;
- relevant information related to the performance of the CAP Strategic Plan supplied by the national CAP network;
- the implementation of communication and visibility actions;
- administrative capacity building for public authorities and farmers and other beneficiaries, where relevant.

Monitoring committees shall give their opinion on:

- the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations;
- the annual performance reports;
- the evaluation plan and amendments thereof;



- any proposal by the managing authority for an amendment of the CAP Strategic Plan.

### 3. Outcomes of the CAPI CP Thematic Group, CAP Strategic Plans: Towards Implementation

During the TG's deliberations members reflected on key conditioning factors for the mobilisation of an effective Monitoring Committee for CAP Strategic plans.

TG members reinforced the need for Monitoring Committees to have real purpose accompanied by their clear understanding, suggesting that it was essential that there is sufficient recognition on the part of Government that the Monitoring Committee is a partner, who is there to work alongside the Managing Authority as the vehicle for ensuring that the CSP is implemented appropriately.

Members also suggested there should also be significant opportunities for the Monitoring Committee to play a much greater role in the evaluation of the CSP.

Members considered the operational aspects of Monitoring Committees, citing that the preparations for and timings of any meeting are essential. The preparation of documents was also deemed to be crucial, with committee members being allowed ample time for review, with clear deadlines for inputs. TG members acknowledged that whilst timings will vary, the focus should be on ensuring that such processes are of value. For example:

- documents setting out clearly what needs to be considered;
- judging the level of information needed for a meeting on the detail required, including adopting a language that is tailored to the needs of Members;
- a clear feedback loop, with transparency around how Members have responded e.g. example, track changes;
- ensure that organisations (e.g. NGOs) have the capacity to contribute timely and effectively.

### 4. Key issues considered by TG members included:

*The right time to involve the Monitoring Committee in the preparation of amendments to the CSP.*

Managing Authorities should involve Monitoring Committees well before any formal engagement with the European Commission. Members also felt that Managing Authorities should use the National Network to help the Monitoring Committee to gather inputs and make everybody aware of what is intended to be submitted to the European Commission.



### *Discussions at Monitoring Committee meeting*

Not all members need to agree everything that is discussed at a Monitoring Committee meeting. Indeed, it may be useful for Monitoring Committees to work with National Networks to bring a wider set of stakeholders together in a more informal setting to enable more in-depth discussions on aspects of CSP implementation.

Committee Members themselves should embrace opportunities for issues to be discussed in more detail between Monitoring Committee meetings if that allows for a more robust debate on key issues and enable a more efficient running of the Monitoring Committee meeting itself.

### *Monitoring Committee size and membership*

There is no 'set' way of establishing the size of a Monitoring Committee, some member states have expanded the size of their MC and explicitly included stakeholders with a particular interest in pillar one. Others have taken the opportunity to expand membership to reflect the priorities of the CSP's, e.g. forestry, whilst some have decreased the size of the Monitoring Committee (compared to the previous programming period) to ensure that it remains focused on the needs of the CSP.

Irrespective of size, Monitoring Committee membership will be key, it will be crucial that Member States ensure that the membership is established in an open, transparent way, for example, by utilising an Expression of Interest process to become a member. Any membership process should also consider the spatial dimension as well as the thematic dimensions associated with membership whilst ensuring that the process of selection is publicly available.

### *The role of regions, scope for EU wide guidance for Monitoring Committees*

It was also accepted that there should be opportunities for regions to have their own regional Monitoring Committees to support and enhance CSP implementation.

Members further suggested that Monitoring Committees (regional or national) should adopt a common approach and operate according to a set of minimum standards that are harmonised across the EU. Members were agreed that the production of guidance to support the establishment and operation of MCs (and its effective application) would be welcome.



**Disclaimer**

*This document has been developed as part of the work carried out by the CAP Implementation Contact Point under the EU CAP Network to support the activities of the Thematic Group (TG) on CAP Strategic Plans: Monitoring Committees. The information and views set out in this document do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.*

