

Call for interest

Would you like to contribute to the EU CAP Network activities as a coordinating expert for the EU CAP Network Support Facility for Innovation & Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI?

The EU CAP Network Support Facility for Innovation & Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI (EIP-AGRI Support Facility) is looking for **coordinating experts** for [EU CAP Network Focus Groups](#), and for **coordinating experts** for a number of workshops and seminars. The Focus Groups and events will cover a range of topics (see below). If you are interested then please [complete this application form](#) and submit your Europass CV.

The deadline for applications is Friday 19 July 2024, 23:59 hrs Brussels time.

Please note that you will need to apply separately for each specific topic. For those who applied to the call for experts that was published in 2022 or 2023, you will need to apply again to be sure that your CV will be taken into consideration. Your application will only be considered for EU CAP Network Focus Groups and events that will be held between July 2024 and July 2025. The EIP-AGRI Support Facility may invite you to supply further information if needed, but there is no guarantee that you will be contacted. The final selection of coordinating experts will not be limited to the list resulting from this call.

Applicants for coordinating experts of Focus Groups are also invited to **apply for the call for Focus Group experts** that will be published on 22 July 2024. [The call text will be published on the Focus Group webpage.](#)

Topics

The activities for coordinating experts cover a wide range of topics related to agricultural productivity and sustainability and EU rural areas. In particular, topics foreseen for activities in 2024-2025 include:

Three new Focus Groups

- Production of protein crops under climate change
- Local perennial plant genetic resources in view of climate change and biodiversity loss
- Alternative solutions for livestock product differentiation



Networking events (workshop, seminar)

- Workshop on 'Circular bioeconomy – valorisation of by-products', 80-100 participants, planned in January - March 2025
- Seminar on 'Robotics and Artificial Intelligence in farming and forestry', 150-200 participants, planned in January - March 2025
- Workshop on 'Innovation in logistics and position of farmers in a supply chain', 80-100 participants, planned in April - June 2025
- Seminar on 'Demonstration farms', 150-200 participants, planned in April - June 2025

Please find more information on these networking events in [Annex 2](#).

Tasks

Coordinating experts should have a very good EU-wide knowledge of the topic for which they are applying. They are contracted by the EIP-AGRI Support Facility, and they will be required to draft documents in English on their topics of expertise. The text should be easy to read and clear for non-expert professionals. They should also be able to communicate and interact clearly in English. They will work with experts from different backgrounds and contribute to designing interactive meetings. They will also be required to draft the final report within the agreed timeframe.

More information on the tasks of coordinating experts in [Annex 1](#).

Application and selection criteria

All applicants will be required to [complete the application form](#), providing their contact details, areas of expertise and motivation, and illustrating their experience in the specific topics they are applying for with adequate references.

For **coordinating experts** – we will be looking at their experience in:

- EU-wide knowledge of the topic for which they are applying;
- Writing texts in English for a professional, non-specialist audience;
- Working as part of a team – selected experts will be required to cooperate with the permanent staff of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility and representatives of the European Commission, and they therefore need to demonstrate excellent capacity for teamwork;
- Very good command of the English language, since this will be the working language throughout preparations and during the event itself;
- Preparing the programme for events which allow participants to effectively share their knowledge, such as EU CAP Network workshops and seminars and [Focus Groups](#);



- Interacting with experts from different backgrounds, such as farmers, foresters, advisors, people working in agribusiness, officials from public administrations and researchers;
- Reflecting a range of views in a discussion paper and / or in a concise final report
- Delivering the final report on time.

All application forms that have been fully completed and submitted before the **deadline of 19 July 2024, 23:59 hrs Brussels time** will be reviewed and evaluated, based on the criteria listed above.

Remuneration

Selected experts will be remunerated per service contract, for workshops and seminars. The remuneration for the Focus Groups will be done in two service contracts linked to each of the Focus Group meetings. The amount will be specified in the contract and will depend on the event. Travel and accommodation incurred by the experts in the context of the assignment will be covered by the EIP-AGRI Support Facility.



Annex 1: Examples of possible tasks for coordinating experts (Focus Groups and workshops / seminars)

EU CAP Network workshops and seminars

Contributing to preparations for the event:

- Developing the concept and roadmap;
- Developing the programme, including identifying specific examples and speakers;
- Developing questions for discussions, e.g. in breakout groups;
- Drafting preliminary information for participants.

Participating in the overall facilitation of the event:

- Coordinating with the facilitation team to ensure that the results are properly collected;
- Moderating plenary sessions and facilitating breakout sessions if needed;
- Contributing to the facilitation process of the interactive sessions (coordinating expert).

Contributing to reporting:

- Drafting short web articles to be published via several communication channels;
- Drafting the final report;
- Contributing to the evaluation of the workshop or seminar.

All of these tasks will be done in collaboration with other EU CAP Network support units and European Commission staff involved in the event.

EU CAP Network Focus Groups

Generally, the coordinating expert contributes to the preparation of the Focus Group meetings, including preparing the roadmap (deliverable 1), drafting the agenda, drafting the discussion document, proposing the location and the field visits. These tasks are carried out in close cooperation and coordination with the members of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility and DG AGRI involved in the event. The coordinating expert will provide a supportive role to the meetings and will contribute to the final report of the Focus Group.

1. Tasks during the preparation of the first meeting;

- **Focus Group Charter deliverable 2:** Starting paper (also known as discussion paper) for the first Focus Group meeting, clearly identifying points of discussion for this first meeting. This paper will be based on the list of minimum topics for the Focus Group received from DG AGRI. These topics are to be further elaborated by the coordinating expert and formalised in the discussion paper(s).



- **Focus Group Charter deliverable 3:** The coordinating expert, with the support of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility and in agreement with DG AGRI, prepares the draft agenda for the first Focus Group meeting.
2. **Tasks during the first meeting of the Focus Group:**
 - Together with DG AGRI and the EIP-AGRI Support Facility, facilitate the meeting process, and guide the discussions towards achieving the required outputs. Ensure that all participants are able to contribute fully to the process and outputs, together with DG AGRI and the EIP-AGRI Support Facility staff.
 - Ensure that meeting results are properly documented.
 3. **Tasks after the first meeting of the Focus Group:**
 - **Focus Group Charter deliverable 4:** Collect and analyse the ‘Mini Papers’ provided by members of the Focus Group.
 - **Focus Group Charter deliverable 5:** Contribute to the meeting’s minutes, which are subject to approval by DG AGRI, and are sent for commenting to all participants of the meeting within two weeks after the meeting date.
 4. **Tasks during the preparation of the second meeting;**
 - **Focus Group Charter deliverable 3:** The coordinating expert, with the support of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility and in agreement with DG AGRI, prepares the draft agenda for the second Focus Group meeting.
 - **Focus Group Charter deliverable 4:** Finalise the collection and analysis of the ‘Mini Papers’ provided by members of the Focus Group.
 5. **Tasks during the second meeting of the Focus Group:**
 - Together with DG AGRI and the EIP-AGRI Support Facility, facilitate the meeting process and guide the discussions towards achieving the required outputs.
 - Ensure that all participants are able to contribute fully towards the process and outputs, together with DG AGRI and the EIP-AGRI Support Facility staff.
 - Ensure that meeting results are properly documented.
 6. **Tasks after the second meeting of the Focus Group:**
 - **Focus Group Charter deliverable 5:** Contribute to the meeting’s minutes, which are subject to approval by DG AGRI, and sent for commenting to all participants of the meeting within two weeks of the meeting date.
 - **Focus Group Charter deliverable 6:** Contribute to the report that includes all the meeting results, and that is circulated to the members of the Focus Group after approval from DG AGRI has been received. This document includes deliverables 1-5, 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.
 - **Focus Group Charter deliverable 7:** Draft the final outcome report which should pay particular attention to formulating specific issues that could be taken up by EIP-AGRI Operational Groups. It also summarises the gathered knowledge and best practices (following the established template and the



objectives of the Focus Group) and lists its sources – lessons learnt, audio-visual material, further recommendations, ideas for dissemination etc.

[See Focus Group Charter](#)

Annex 2: Networking activities and events

1. Focus Groups

The **Focus Group on ‘Production of protein crops under climate change’** will address the SO2 (to increase competitiveness) of the CAP. Innovative solutions to introduce new or improved protein crops in the EU and to valorise protein crops in the value chain would help to diversify cropping systems, reduce European reliance on imported plant protein and create significant value in rural regions. The FG would also aim at new sources of protein to ensure nutritional quality while preserving environmental and economic sustainability. The benefits of cultivating protein crops will be explored in relationship to the impact on soil health, the environment and on climate change mitigation, and it will provide some solutions for adaptation to climate change. Thus, this FG will also contribute to the SO4 (environmental care) and SO5 (to preserve landscapes and biodiversity) of the CAP. The FG will take into account the results of previous EIP-AGRI / EU CAP Network events and relevant projects and build upon them.

The Focus Group on ‘Local perennial plant genetic resources in view of climate change and biodiversity loss’ addresses the SO6 (preserve landscapes and biodiversity) as well as the SO4 (contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation) of the CAP. The Focus Group will promote the use of locally adapted, under-utilised perennial crop varieties. It aims to gather insights on the potential impact on biodiversity in view of climate change, and identify the challenges that farmers and rural businesses face in adopting knowledge and innovations in their practices when preserving and using local varieties.

The Focus Group on ‘Alternative solutions for livestock product differentiation’ will address the SO2 of the CAP, and will deal with competitiveness and resilience in sustainable livestock systems, including challenges, good practices and innovative solutions in different domains of the entire value chain. Nowadays, there is a growing consumer demand for "clean, ecological and ethical" products, linked to public awareness of environmental and social challenges as well as health risks. This is driven by increasing awareness of environmental sustainability, health risks and animal welfare concerns. There is a new market trend driven by consumer demand for local, fresh, seasonal and organic products. Although these types of products are receiving increasing attention, they face some difficulties in their development on the market. To respond to these trends, the livestock sector must find alternative strategies for product differentiation that can open new markets and foster innovative business models.



By developing alternative strategies for product differentiation, it is possible to combine the two sides of the same coin: differentiated products, based on improved and/or alternative production systems, which build a diversified market to respond to new consumer demands and derive value from them. The latter will link this networking activity as contributing to the SO4 and SO9. It also contributes to the CCO which has, among others, the goal to bridge research and practice and offer a platform to exchange knowledge, connect and foster the collaboration between CAP-funded OG projects and Horizon-funded multi-actor research projects and thematic networks.

2. Workshops and seminars

Workshop on ‘Circular bioeconomy – valorisation of by-products’. This networking event within the SO8 of the CAP will explore novel technologies and innovations to elaborate and produce high value products or novel products from residues and waste, and methods of nutrient recycling, with the scope limited to residues from forestry. This will contribute to a more efficient use of resources, where residues and waste are minimised and converted into high value products.

This workshop also contributes to the SO1 and SO3 of the CAP, linked to increasing farm income from forests and to improving the position of farmers in the value chain. In addition, it contributes to the CCO (Cross-Cutting Objective) of the CAP which has, among others, the goal to bridge research and practice in giving a platform to exchange knowledge, connect and foster the collaboration between CAP-funded Operational Group projects and Horizon-funded multi-actor research projects and thematic networks.

The **workshop on ‘Innovation in logistics to improve the position of farmers in a supply chain’** will respond to SO3 of the CAP and cover innovations at individual farms, producer groups and cooperatives. Increasing the innovation rate in terms of logistic structures, including handling, transport, storage, drying, etc., but also in primary food processing and packaging would help farming products to become more competitive and to gain new market channels. Cooperating farmers are often more economically and technically capable to invest in logistical innovations and face lower risks.

The demand for regional food in Europe is increasing for various reasons, whether related to consumer behaviour, health, rural and urban economic development, economic and environmental resilience, reduction of carbon footprint, or farm sustainability. This growing demand for local products is an opportunity for small and medium-sized companies and farms to become more competitive and to gain new local market channels by adoption innovations. New, innovative and viable business models for local food supply that empower local and small business and emphasise diversity and resilience need to be developed. More specifically, there is a need for social innovations and digital technologies that optimise logistics, storage and distribution, and that reduce waste.



This workshop also contributes to the CCO of the CAP, which has, among others, the goal to bridge research and practice in giving a platform to exchange knowledge, connect and foster the collaboration between CAP-funded OG projects and Horizon-funded multi-actor research projects and thematic networks that optimise logistics, storage and distribution, and that reduce waste.

The **seminar on ‘Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in farming and forestry’** will take on the angle of competitiveness, farm modernisation, uptake of new technologies, as tackled by SO2 of the CAP. Robotics and AI are driving a wave of competitiveness and modernisation in farming and forestry. AI can analyse data from sensors to optimise irrigation, fertilisation and pest control, help optimise resource use, predict yields, and automate tasks, boosting efficiency and productivity. For instance, robots can tirelessly handle weeding and harvesting, allowing farmers to focus on higher-value activities. However, challenges remain. The high upfront costs of these technologies can limit adoption by smaller farms. Additionally, the reliance on AI algorithms requires that fairness is ensured and potential biases in decision making are addressed. Sharing successful projects, lessons learnt, and even failures could be highly beneficial. While expertise exists in applying AI to agriculture, there is a need to discuss its use in forestry. This networking event will also contribute to the SO7, as robotics and artificial intelligence may have a positive impact on generational renewal in farming and forestry. The seminar on Robotics and Artificial Intelligence in farming and forestry has the potential to indirectly contribute to the SO5 of the CAP, as robotics and AI can greatly enhance the efficiency of resource use. It also contributes to the CCO of the CAP, which has, among others, the goal to bridge research and practice in giving a platform to exchange knowledge, connect and foster the collaboration between CAP-funded OG projects and Horizon-funded multi-actor research projects and thematic networks.

Seminar ‘Demonstration farms’. This networking event reflects the CCO of the CAP, highlighting the importance of fostering knowledge exchange between demo farms, EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and relevant Horizon Europe projects. It creates opportunities for these farms and projects to learn from each other. Sharing experiences on topics such as disseminating activities, raising awareness, and even overcoming failures, would provide valuable insights.



