

# **EU CAP Network Ad-hoc national expert group meeting 2025**

# **AGENDA**

**Update 8 May 2025**

**15 May 2025 | Online MS Teams meeting**

**Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI**



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The main role of the ad-hoc expert group meeting is to help the EU CAP Network identify key challenges, questions or needs to tackle, related to innovation, knowledge exchange and EIP-AGRI, from a specific geographical / regional perspective, and provide input to prepare the call texts of Focus Groups (FG) in **three thematic areas**:

- › Theme 1: Forestry and forest health: addressing new and emerging pests and diseases and integrating non-native and unconventional tree species
- › Theme 2: New innovative and sustainable ways to use wool and revitalise the European wool value chain
- › Theme 3: Innovative on-farm energy production systems

## A short introduction to the three upcoming Focus Groups

The **Focus Group on ‘Forestry and forest health: Addressing new and emerging pests and diseases and integrating non-native and unconventional tree species’**. The EU Forest Strategy for 2030 has several key aims, all geared towards improving the quantity and quality of EU forests, pursuing the maintenance of resilient, healthy and diverse forest that can maximise the delivery of their multiple functions. This implies increasing the resilience of forests to various threats, including pests and diseases or explore sustainable forest management practices with a balanced approach to tree species selection, considering not only productivity and resilience but also the long-term ecological consequences. Moreover, it also highlights the importance of research and innovation to improve our knowledge on forests and anticipate future threats and challenges but also identify potential opportunities. Pests, diseases, and climate change are three of the most urgent and interconnected dangers that impact forests today. Climate change affects the distribution of current forest pests and pathogens by altering the balance between host, pathogen and environment, and increases the emergence or introduction of new species.

On the other side, in relation to the trees, non-native and unconventional tree species are playing an important role in diversifying European forestry, and enhancing resilience. Moreover, they present a valuable opportunity for European forestry to adapt to changing environmental, economic and social conditions. Due to this, the presence of these species is rapidly growing across Europe. However, many of these tree species may be more sensible to certain pests and diseases due to their lack of adaptation to the new territories where they are being planted.

Considering the interconnections amongst all those factors, a holistic approach to forestry and forest health will be of interest, addressing new and emerging pests and diseases as well as integrating non-native and unconventional tree species to enhance resilience. Sharing innovative practices on management and prevention of forest pests and diseases, and cultivation of non-native and unconventional tree species will help to make our forests more resilient (economic, ecological and social). Moreover, exploring the potential and more promising opportunities by less-studied non-native and unconventional tree species can enhance the development of the forestry sector and the rural areas.

The Focus Group on ‘Forestry and forest health: Addressing new and emerging pests and diseases and integrating non-native and unconventional tree species’ will primarily



contribute to CAP SO8 'Jobs, growth and equality in rural areas: promote employment, growth, gender equality, including the participation of women in farming, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, as well as the circular bio-economy and sustainable forestry'. This Focus Group will also contribute to climate change mitigation (SO4) since the topic is closely related to climate change impacts. Related to the CCO, the Focus Group will contribute to fostering knowledge sharing and to the faster uptake of forest-related innovations.

The **Focus Group on 'New innovative and sustainable ways to use wool and revitalise the European wool value chain'**. The European wool sector is a significant sector, with a long history and a rich cultural heritage. However, the sector faces significant challenges, such as changing market conditions and the need to enhance the sustainability of wool production, minimise or recycle waste, and adopt innovative processing practices. Exploring and sharing innovative practices for wool shearing, processing and utilisation, while considering animal welfare and traceability aspects, can play an important role in improving the overall sustainability of the value chain, while building a sustainable wool production, preserving the rural cultural heritage and creating a strong connection to consumers which is essential for supporting the growth of local economies and rural development.

This Focus Group will primarily contribute to CAP SO3 'Improving farmers' position in the value chain'. It will also address the competitiveness of wool production (CAP SO2) with an emphasis on strengthening primary producers' position in the value chain. Furthermore, the Focus Group will also be promoting the jobs, growth and equality in rural areas, and the circular bioeconomy by re-valorisation of the wool, often treated as a residue in many farms, while several new uses are emerging as a by-product (e.g. as isolation or biofertiliser) in rural areas.

The **Focus Group on 'Innovative on-farm energy production systems'**. The ongoing geopolitical challenges underline the urgency of efficient and sustainable use of energy to ensure farm resilience, competitiveness and food security during times of high-priced inputs. Innovative solutions are necessary in order to overcome the energy crisis which makes food systems more vulnerable and which threatens food security. New opportunities are emerging through innovative on-farm energy systems that allow agricultural activity to coexist with renewable energy production. Technologies such as Agri-Photovoltaics (Agri-PV), wind turbines, geothermal systems, biomethane production, and biofuel solutions are transforming farms into energy-generating hubs without compromising their primary agricultural function. By integrating renewable energy production into existing farming practices, farmers can make more efficient use of their land while improving their energy self-sufficiency, increasing their farm competitiveness and enhancing the resilience of rural areas.

This Focus Group will primarily contribute to CAP SO4 'Contributing to climate change mitigation', with an important secondary contribution to supporting farm competitiveness and resilience (SO2), exploring how farmers can both contribute to, and benefit from, the integration of renewable energy sources, such as solar panels and wind turbines, at farm level, as well as reduce their reliance on fossil fuels with regards to the climate, lower their energy costs and enhance the sustainability of farming operations.



## Expected outcomes and guiding questions relevant to each of the three themes

### 1. Outcome 1 - background and major challenges

The background and major challenges that farmers, foresters and rural businesses are facing when it comes to adopting knowledge and innovation in their practices and the aims of the Focus Group in contributing to knowledge and innovation exchange.

#### **Guiding discussions for outcome 1**

- › Discuss what is the European and national context relevant to the theme.
- › Bring and discuss what the major challenges are at European and national or local level that farmers, foresters and rural businesses are facing. By ranking, define the ones to be included into the concept note of the FG.
- › Discuss what is a larger scope and alternatives in this theme and by discussion define a narrower scope that the FG should focus on to dive deeper into.

### 2. Outcome 2 - main question

A main question that the Focus Group should respond to, in its activities.

#### **Guiding discussions for outcome 2**

- › Brainstorm to suggest alternative questions and answers that the FG should seek to provide.
- › Discuss what unites the suggested question & answer alternatives and define the key answer(s) that would satisfy the FG at the end.
- › Provide the draft main question suggested for further editing.

### 3. Outcome 3 - set of main tasks

A set of main tasks planned for the Focus Group, including sharing best practices and success stories, identifying challenges, barriers and opportunities, research needs from practice, innovative ideas, etc.

#### **Guiding discussions for outcome 3**

- › Brainstorm to suggest some keywords (or pairs of keywords) from the Outcome 3 description (above) and other ideas, to create the basis for the main tasks of the FG.
- › Discuss and define, by ranking, the 3-5 priority keywords (or pairs of keywords) for the tasks to be included into the concept note of the FG.



#### 4. Outcome 4 - draft concept note (*some building blocks*)

A draft concept note for each Focus Group. The selected theme can form the basis for the future call for Focus Group experts or for networking activities.

##### **Guiding discussions for outcome 4**

- › Brainstorm to suggest EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects that experts are aware of, that are relevant to the theme and that can support the FG concept or provide a relevant meeting place with sites to visit.
- › Brainstorm to suggest Horizon Europe, Life or other important projects that experts are aware of, that are relevant to the theme and that can support the FG concept note.
- › Provide other suggestions for references that could be useful for the upcoming FG.

Further information [on the event webpage](#).



# Final agenda

Update 8 May 2025

Timing	Thursday 15 May 2025
08.50 – 09.00	Checking in to the online meeting platform
09.00 – 09.30	<b>Opening session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Opening words – <i>DG AGRI</i></li> <li>› Introduction to the EIP-AGRI concept and to the purpose of the ad-hoc expert group – <i>DG AGRI</i></li> <li>› Introduction to the Support Facility 'Innovation and Knowledge Exchange   EIP-AGRI' – <i>Sergiu Didicescu, EIP-AGRI Support Facility</i></li> </ul>
09.30 – 09.35	<b>Introduction to the breakout sessions</b>
09.35 – 11.00	<b>Three parallel breakout sessions for all three thematic areas:</b> Introduction round for the expert group members. Discussing expected outcomes 1 and 2
11.00 – 11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15 – 12.15	<b>Three parallel breakout sessions for all three thematic areas:</b> Introduction round for the expert group members. Discussing expected outcomes 3 and 4
12.15 – 12.45	<b>Final plenary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Presentation of outcomes from the three thematic areas – <i>EIP-AGRI Support Facility facilitators</i></li> <li>› Q&amp;A session</li> </ul>
12.45 – 13.00	<b>What's next and closing</b> – <i>Sergiu Didicescu, EIP-AGRI Support Facility &amp; DG AGRI representative</i>

