

CAP Implementation Contact Point

1st meeting of the Thematic Group on CSPs: Towards Implementation

The first meeting of the Thematic Group (TG) enabled members to share their insights on networking and engagement in the design of CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs). Members also explored approaches to networking, engagement and governance in CAP implementation.

Introduction: Working in Partnership



Betty-Ann Bryce (OECD) set the scene for members with an inspiring presentation that articulated the **benefits of collaboration and partnership working** in policy development and implementation. Benefits from successful integrated collaboration (both within the public sector and between the public sector and others) were seen to include the ability to:

- Address complex issues through multiple types of inputs from a diverse range of expertise and resources.
- Limit risks of duplication or waste / increase scope to identify and fill gaps / improve efficiency and reduce fragmentation.
- Achieve critical mass, economies of scale, and synergies for increased overall potential.
- Build social capital for the longer term by helping/showing stakeholders how to help themselves.
- Recognise and understand common goals as well as your position relative to other positions.
- Building resilience and being able to effectively adapt to new priorities/changed circumstances.



Flavio Conti (DG AGRI) added that rules on CSP consultation had alongside the aims of [code of conduct](#) aided the promotion of collaboration and partnership working in the CAP. Monitoring Committees will embed these principles in their operations guiding the oversight of CSP implementation.

Event Information

Date: 14 March 2023

Location: Virtual meeting

Organisers: CAP Implementation Contact Point

Participants: 51 individuals from 21 Member States from a range of interests including Managing Authorities (MAs), Paying Agencies, National Networks, researchers, NGOs, producers, and the European Commission.

Outcomes: Exchange of experiences on partnership working and collaboration in the design and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Web page: [1st Meeting of the Thematic Group on CSPs: Towards Implementation](#)

Group Discussion Highlights



Members were split into three groups over two discussion rounds with selected TG members offering their perspectives to stimulate discussion in each round. The first round explored **approaches to networking and engagement contributed to the design of CSPs**.

The second round focused on exploring models of **networking and engagement in CAP implementation**.

On CSP design, TG members reported that there was a great deal of interest from stakeholders in the potential content of CSPs, possibly reflecting the fact the CSP encompasses both EAGF and EAFRD. Being able to effectively reach out to stakeholders online has helped to increase reach and levels of engagement in CSP design.

Some members stressed that, ideally, engagement on design should commence at the same time as proposals emerge from the EU institutions. It was acknowledged that demands on MAs for developing CSPs had been significant and so may have at times limited their ability to reach out and engage effectively with stakeholders.

Everyone agreed that communication, when effective, was a major success factor in helping people understand the consultation process itself and why they should be involved; and in demonstrating that their views were genuinely being taken into account. Avoiding an overly specialised vocabulary can help consultation processes.



Group dynamics were also highlighted. Larger groups offer greater consistency as well as involvement and reduced risk of bilateral adversarial exchanges. Smaller groups allow more focused discussion about discrete issues. Irrespective of group size, members felt it vital that design and application of any approach had to be fit for purpose in terms of being able to add value to the design and implementation of the CAP.



Members agreed that whilst approaches to stakeholder participation across Member States (MS) were diverse, stakeholder involvement was crucial for ensuring the successful implementation of policy, with funding through the CAP enabling an increased degree of stakeholder ownership of the policy agenda.

Broader and deeper stakeholder participation in CSP implementation with greater transparency at all stages will help everyone understand each other's perspectives and clarify mutual interests. It also helps show people that they can achieve more by working together than they could do by working alone.

Reflections from TG Members

A panel of TG members comprised of **Sofia Bjornsson** (Swedish producer), **Kees Anker** (Dutch National Network), **Thomas Neudorfer** (Austrian Managing Authority), **Clément Mongabure** (French Regional Managing Authorities) and **Tatiana Nemcova** (Birdlife Europe) then reflected on the key points and themes emerging from the group discussions.



Panel members welcomed the efforts to ensure transparency of CSP programming, e.g. publishing of Observation letters and the series of 'at a glance' summary fiches for each approved CSP by the European Commission. TG members were clear that there was a collective responsibility to continue sharing and networking about CSPs and their implementation, including between MS.

The regional dimension was recognised by many. Members acknowledged that gaining regional perspectives required consultation with and coordination of stakeholders at all levels if national approaches are to be effective. Regional options for Monitoring Committee inputs were highlighted as a possibility.

Members of the Monitoring Committees overseeing implementation of the CAP at national level in MS are key to the success of ensuring integrated shared approaches to CSPs. Monitoring Committees should be inclusive and transparent to enable balanced viewpoints and enable members to influence outcomes in a meaningful way.



Panel members reinforced the importance of adopting a holistic approach, looking at opportunities across the two funds within each CSP to achieve the desired objectives. Engaging with stakeholders to better understand the possibilities and to tease out complexities will be key to ensuring that interventions under any given theme are fit for purpose on the ground. The design and implementation of eco-schemes and agri-environment schemes was cited as examples of instruments that would benefit from strong engagement.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) processes are vital to CSP implementation and understanding about CSP. M&E could be improved through more stakeholder engagement, e.g. what does the CAP's new results-based delivery model mean in practice for beneficiaries and decision-makers? Panellists also highlighted the importance of data, not just for M&E, but also to support outcomes for business, society and environment.

Next steps

The second and final meeting of the TG will be held on 25/05/2023. Members agreed that three topics (Eco-schemes/Agri-environment, Role of Regions, and Monitoring Committees) could be usefully discussed informally before the next meeting of the TG.