

2nd meeting of the Thematic Group on CSPs: Towards Implementation

The second meeting of the Thematic Group (TG) enabled members to exchange on the role of partnership working in three previously identified topics: Monitoring committees, regionalised countries & opportunities across the two CAP funds within CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs). Members also considered how peer exchanges and learning between Member States (MS) could be applied. They further identified future opportunities for thematic work on CSP implementation.

Feedback on discussions between meetings.

Members had previously agreed that three above topics be discussed informally before the 2nd meeting of the TG. To that end, three members volunteered to moderate these discussions and provided feedback to the wider group during the 2nd meeting.



Gerry Lawson (European Agroforestry Federation) indicated that it was too early to understand how schemes that cut across both pillars are working. Early

suggestions are that there has been low uptake of the eco-schemes in some Member States and that whilst the measures have been broadly well received several problematic issues were raised such as lack of simplification, and time required to understand the interactions with conditionality and EAFRD interventions. It was clear that producers are comparing approaches between Member States.

Clément Mongabure (French Regional Managing Authorities) summarised the role of the regions suggesting there was significant diversity of approaches

between Member States in terms of meaningful involvement of regions in the governance of their CSPs and the ability of regions to influence implementation of interventions.



Sofia Björnsson (Federation of Swedish Farmers) indicated that the Monitoring Committees (MC) discussion highlighted the significant obligations placed

upon MCs by the regulations and the need for these to be recognised with clear guidelines to support their effective implementation. Uncertainties about the exact role of MCs and of their members was also highlighted, e.g. CSP amendments, regional dynamics and risk management.

Event Information

Date: 25 May 2023

Location: Virtual meeting

Organisers: CAP Implementation Contact Point

Participants: 38 individuals from 14 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: [2nd Meeting of the Thematic Group on CAP Strategic Plans: Towards Implementation](#)

Group Discussions 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 of discussions** provided TG members with an opportunity to focus on elaborating on the feedback on the three topics previously discussed.

Emerging themes included:

Recognition that Member States had various approaches to engaging with farmers on the introduction of new interventions under both CSP funds, for example: organising expert discussions; Q&A sessions, dissemination. It was acknowledged that the implementation of interventions across CSP funds was sometimes difficult for land managers to understand, including their interaction with new conditionality requirements. In some cases administrations also found it difficult to explain the technical requirements clearly. It was suggested that there may not be enough capacity or knowledge across government to achieve the desired outcomes effectively. The roll out of eco-schemes/AECS were cited as particularly problematic, with members suggesting that further information initiatives for stakeholders and agricultural advisors would be useful to ensure that everyone fully understands how measures such as these are to be implemented on the ground. Without a strong and well-informed adviser network there was a concern that farmers would enter the most basic eco-schemes, at the expense of those that could deliver more for the environment.



Great importance was attached to MCs and the formal role they play in enabling the effective implementation of interventions across both funds under CSPs. It was acknowledged that it was essential that MC members understand the role and function of the committee. A successful MC would rely on members being involved and included in a true partnership of equals that are motivated and engaged.

For regions within MS it is essential that they are involved, represented, coordinated and connected at the different levels of governance in the implementation of the CAP, including with national MCs (e.g. through an association such as [Regions de France](#)). Regional MCs may have a focus more oriented on interventions under the EAFRD whilst the focus of the national MC may be on both CSP funds (EAGF & EAFRD).

National Networks can harmonise the contributions across the regions and clarify issues around monitoring and implementation for each region within a national framework.

National coordination bodies for [AKIS](#) (Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Systems) may also have a role to play in terms of anticipating stakeholder needs, connecting institutions and feeding into the governance of the CSP.



The **second round of discussions** explored the key practical issues and the actions that can be undertaken through network engagement to support CSP implementation.

MCs should have a clear and inclusive role and be used more effectively and more creatively to enable greater participation. There should be systems to share good practices and raise the bar in the performance of MCs. There are significant opportunities for the development of online platforms for MS to exchange directly with stakeholders on topics that need to be discussed or communicated.

Managing Authorities should work more closely with other stakeholders (e.g. farmers' organisations, remote communities) where there are specific issues that need to be addressed.

Timing, capacity and complexity are key constraints for all concerned, resulting in a lack of understanding and some confusion about what is expected in the implementation of CSPs. National Networks will also require the appropriate amount of capacity and expertise to support MCs and CSP implementation effectively.

Reflections from TG Members

A panel of TG members comprised of **Sofia Bjornsson (Federation of Swedish Farmers)**, **Kees Anker (Dutch National Network)**, **Martin Leitner (Austrian Managing Authority)** and **Tatiana Nemcova (Birdlife Europe)** then reflected on the key messages from earlier discussions:

Potential of advisory services; the value of investing efforts to help clearly explain CSP interventions and make the best use of CAP support; and proactively helping regions not to feel left behind in the new CAP.

- Regular networking can help MS stay updated with useful lessons, share developments and benchmark their own approaches and achievements.
- Getting the governance of the MCs right (alongside effective networking) is key to increasing engagement and building capacity to ensure a sense of community around CSP implementation.
- The production of guidance to support the establishment and operation of MCs (and its effective application) would be welcome. **Flavio Conti, DG AGRI** explained the relevance of the [European code of conduct on partnership](#) and it being applied to aid the success of MC governance.
- Managing authorities and MCs can share good practices to help explain effective approaches to CSP implementation.
- Promoting the use of 'ambassadors' as role models can also help incentivise CAP success stories.
- There is a need to ensure that interventions across CSPs are programmed and co-ordinated coherently with National Networks who are well placed to share learning and good practices about this.
- Programming and implementing complementary support and funding actions in CAP Strategic Plans (e.g. farm advisors explaining how CAP beneficiaries could optimise combinations of CAP support) can be a useful aim for CSP MCs as this can help CSP create synergies and savings from efficiencies or reduced duplication risks.

Next steps

Members were invited to suggest topics that could form the focus of future thematic work on CSP implementation; whilst responses were wide ranging (including, simplification, AKIS, smart villages, CLLD, green architecture), there was a clear focus on eco-schemes and governance.

