



CAP Strategic Plans Subgroup

1st meeting - 24 May 2023
 DG AGRI Auditorium, Brussels

Welcome and introduction

Antonia Gamez-Moreno (DG AGRI, Unit D1 Rural Areas and Networks) as Chair welcomed members of **1st meeting of the CAP Strategic Plans Subgroup**. Antonia explained the significance of this CSPs Subgroup to the EU CAP Network's core task of supporting CSPs implementation. She confirmed that Subgroup actions would be member-led and members become ambassadors for their Member States. As a critical mass for CSPs expertise, the Subgroup will help network national issues, ideas, experiences, and knowledge, with aims to work together to aid CSPs implementation. DG AGRI's role in the Subgroup will centre on supporting members by providing information, identifying capacity building needs, sharing good practices, and facilitating knowledge transfer. This Subgroup's meeting agenda had objectives to: provide an overview on CSPs; present the governance structure and explain the role of the Subgroup; provide an update on relevant activities of the EU CAP Network linked to CSPs implementation; explore and discuss the future activities of the Subgroup; and explore and discuss networking activities for the exchange of knowledge and good practices in the implementation of the CSPs.

CAP Strategic Plans (2023-2027). Overview of key elements and Implementation.

An overview of the CSP key elements and implementation was presented by DG AGRI representatives **Ricard Ramon I Sumoy** (DG AGRI, Unit A1 Policy Perspectives) and **Flavio Conti** (DG AGRI, Unit C1 CAP Strategic Plan Coordination). This expanded on information from the recent EU CAP Network Assembly. This overview noted how CAP contributes to the European Green Deal by balancing CAP's specific objectives across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Policy novelties for the new CAP and how they are taken up in the Plans were identified as relevant areas for attention by the Subgroup. These included realising new CSPs ambitions for social conditionality, redistribution of income, payment convergence, young farmers, and gender equality. Climate and environment interventions reflect considerable CSPs commitments to greening CAP funding across direct payments, producer organisations, and rural development. CSPs coordinate their integrated CAP support via a single national framework covering the full programming lifecycle of planning, implementation, performance reporting, and evaluation.

Initial milestones in this process are the first CSPs implementation reports and an upcoming assessment by the Commission about CSPs' contribution to each of the CAP specific objectives.

Subgroup members' expertise was invited to help optimise CSPs lifecycles by informing CAP decision-making on topics such as design of complementary CSPs intervention tools, monitoring, and learning. Effective outreach communication is another area within the Subgroup mandate. Communication helps to engage stakeholders in facilitating timely take up of voluntary support available through the CSPs. The importance of data was reinforced with examples being spotlighted such as the CAP result indicator (R.6) tracking redistribution performance of direct payments. Protein and leguminous crops are other strategic and geopolitical agri-food priorities to address strategic autonomy underlined for the Subgroup members.



Information was provided regarding the planned financial allocations through the CSPs. Targeted environment and climate funding for voluntary practices going beyond the conditionality and investments will receive 32% of total public CAP funding. Income support payments also safeguard environmental standards through GAECs. The targeted funding aims to encourage practices that go beyond conditionality including via annual eco-schemes and multi-

annual agri-environment and climate commitments. Addressing issues related to soils, pesticides' reduction, nutrients management, grasslands, landscape and biodiversity, are common features of the current eco-schemes, complementing support through the agri-environmental multi annual commitments. Effective CSPs implementation will require focused efforts in these areas and others, such as organics and renewable energy, to ensure CSPs ambitions and results.

Social conditionality was highlighted as another new CAP tool with significant potential for Member States application and networking. Generational renewal, gender equality, and cooperation funding from CAP also offers other opportunities.

CSP amendment procedures were explained. All amendments are country-specific, evidence-based, and maintain or reinforce the CSP's original ambitions.

A summary of developments with CAP control systems noted increased subsidiarity for performance assurance. More information for the Subgroup about CAP control systems is foreseen.

EU CAP Network activities

Information about current and planned activities of the EU CAP network was introduced with a reminder from the Chair about the new CAP networking objective for accompanying Member States in the implementation of CSPs.

This was followed by a presentation on EU CAP Network Activities by [David Lamb](#), Team Leader of the CAP Implementation Contact Point (CAPI CP) which emphasised the importance of the Subgroup membership in helping to determine CAPI CP annual activities (July 2023 - July 2024), such as in thematic works.

The Subgroup's position in the overall governance structure for the EU CAP Network was described. Complementarity between actions by the different components of the EU CAP Network is being coordinated to facilitate added value synergies. This includes content for a range of thematic events, new digital publications, and other web-based information or capacity building tools.



Summary of Mentimeter survey results

Results from a survey of Subgroup members earlier in the morning identified important priorities for CSPs. Farm income and competitiveness, knowledge exchange, climate and environment were considered the most important. Expectations of Subgroup members were also polled in the morning and this showed strong interest in networking to exchanges ideas, experiences, knowledge, and good practices. Subgroup members were encouraged to use this feedback in the meeting's interactive session that followed.

Interactive session 1: "Needs & expectations"

The interactive session was facilitated by the CAPI CP to help identify and collate Subgroup members' suggestions about their expectations and needs regarding networking and CSPs implementation. This would help determine topic options and working methods for the Subgroup. A broad range of topics and approaches were identified including the following:

Topics:

- › Economic, social, and environmental sustainability with a focus on quality results over mere numbers.
- › Eco schemes and precision farming as recurring themes during certain meetings.
- › Involving farmers in implementation and capacity building regarding CAP and amendments.
- › Exchanging solutions and best practices on implementation of eco-schemes and green architecture.
- › Maintaining an overview of all intervention logics within the CSP, including the amendments process and technical assistance.
- › Ensuring smooth knowledge flow for farmers and fostering innovation.
- › Future of the CAP and its linkage to other policies and Directorates-General.
- › Evaluating CAP targets and the effectiveness of the delivery model.
- › Emphasising the added value rather than budget allocation.
- › Communicating effectively with farmers and addressing their concerns as implementers.

Working methods:

- › Maintaining thematic subgroups with experts while keeping a broad view.
- › Involving researchers in the discussions.
- › Thematic chat within the Subgroup.
- › Organising thematic workshops in addition to the regular Brussels meetings.
- › Ensuring the right people present the right topics.

- › Enhancing regular information exchange, not limited to the Subgroup, through digital meetings or forums with experts' discussion, creating a platform for topics exchanges
- › Encouraging discussions and knowledge sharing among CSPs Managing Authorities.
- › Establishing a library for best practices/ Sharing and exchanging best practices.
- › Maximising the use of existing tools and platforms.
- › Include the voices of farmers.
- › Ensuring engagement without duplicating efforts.
- › Facilitating information flow between subgroups and thematic groups
- › Establishing a timeline for meetings to allow proper preparation.

Setting up the governance

Tatjana Borbas (DG AGRI, Unit D1 Rural areas and networks) informed the meeting about the EU CAP Network Governance structure. This raised awareness among the Subgroup members about the Assembly, Steering Group, and other Subgroups as well as the legal basis from Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/1864 of 5 October 2022 on setting out the organisational structure and operation of the European CAP network and repealing Implementing Decision 2014/825/EU.

Subgroup outputs inform the Steering Group and Assembly. The Subgroup's main tasks in this role were presented as: contributing to improving the quality of the implementation of the CSPs; identifying common issues and opportunities in the implementation of various CSPs interventions and needs for the EU CAP network support (capacity building events and other means of support); fostering exchange of knowledge and good practices in CSPs implementation; providing input for the work programme of the EU CAP network, in particular of the CAPI CP; and following up the support provided by the EU CAP network.

Links and differences between Civil Dialogue Groups and the EU CAP Network's governance bodies were clarified with the latter involving a wider range of stakeholders, such as CSPs Managing Authorities (MA), Paying Agencies (PA), Advisory services, Research bodies, National Networks, NGOs.

Subgroup membership is based on the voluntary commitment; all members of the EU CAP Network Assembly were invited to nominate their representatives in the Subgroup. The CSP Subgroup's maximum number of members is 96 and membership is currently 85.

Details and background about the Steering Group membership were also provided.

The nominations from the Subgroup for membership of the EU CAP Network's Steering Group (SG) were also discussed and agreed with participants.

A Q&A session noted that membership of the SG would include additional representatives from the SoIKE (EU CAP Network's Subgroup on Innovation and knowledge exchange). Membership is

not interchangeable within an organisation, while replacement for meetings is always possible.



Interactive session 2: “How we foster greater collaboration across the EU CAP Network”

In a second interactive session that was facilitated by the CAPI CP, participants were asked to think of the CAP Strategic Plans as the perfect recipe and to identify three essential ingredients for success of the CSP. They were also asked how collaboration may contribute to the effective implementation of the CSPs.

Outcomes from the sessions raised a rich mix of key points such as:

Ingredients for success:

- › Informal meetings to foster openness and sharing, building strong relationships among participants, exchanging good practices, and establishing common goals.
- › It is essential to be aware of the Member States' perspectives.
- › Engaging in discussions with farmers and conducting field visits.
- › Encourage external speakers to contribute to the discussions.
- › Foster an open-minded and interactive environment.
- › Use a peer-to-peer approach for information exchange.
- › Timely planning of meetings and adequate preparation.
- › Foster informal exchanges such as dinners or pre-meeting interactions.
- › Explore the use of digital platforms for continuous contact.

How to work together:

- › Emphasise the importance of networking, adopting a bottom-up approach that goes beyond the 'EU bubble' and engages with stakeholders in the field.
- › Ensuring information is accessible to end-users, including

farmers, in a transparent manner.

- › Learning from both successes and mistakes and building bridges with institutions are crucial elements.
- › Clear and well-prepared information shared in advance
- › Developing contacts and ensuring comprehensible communication
- › Using demonstrations, reports, and good practices to showcase how actions are implemented at the national level.
- › Maintaining a clear focus on the scope and content of discussions.

Summary of the group discussions

A summary of the meeting's working groups told how the first interactive session provided valuable insights into the topics and approaches. It highlighted the need for collaboration, information sharing, and effective communication to drive meaningful discussions and progress within the Subgroup. The second session highlighted the importance of open communication, knowledge exchange, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders in order to address the identified topics effectively.

CSPs Subgroup discussions proposed alternative options for meeting arrangements and suggested possibilities for informal networking in-between meetings. This can include participation in the EU CAP Network's thematic work, e.g. the new Thematic Group for Eco-schemes planned in Autumn 2023. The EU CAP Network's multi-lingual website was also highlighted for its possibility as a platform for sharing information about CSPs implementation. CSPs Subgroup members were asked to help provide good practice cases featuring CAP-funded projects and/or CAP implementation processes that can be shared by the CAPI CP. More advance notice for future meetings of the Subgroup was requested.

Next steps

The Chair thanked CSP Subgroup members and summed up the meeting referring to the opportunity for increasing membership of the CSPs Subgroup to cover all EU countries. Key topics identified by the Subgroup for its ongoing attention were reviewed, including eco-schemes and CAP's green architecture, knowledge development and exchange, maintaining a comprehensive overview of the CAP, and the CAP's future post 2027, CSP linkages with other policies, sustainable development contributions from CSPs, and MA capacity building in CSP systems. Concluding points provided and discussed dates known for upcoming governance meetings of the EU CAP Network.

