

CAP Strategic Plans: Monitoring Committees


Thematic Group - 2nd meeting

The **2nd meeting of the Thematic Group (TG)** enabled members to share their experiences and consider, among other topics, how NNs and other groups can support the effective setting up and operation of MCs.

Welcome messages and introduction to the day

 **James Taylor, CAPI CP** reported back from **the four informal group sessions** held between TG meetings.

During those discussions, members said that ed MCs should be able to meaningfully scrutinise and inform decision-making, including having capacity for informal exchanges between MC members. They also suggested that mapping MA influence on MC membership would be beneficial to better understand governance implications and contribute to providing a useful baseline to develop decision-making in CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs). Feedback was regarded as an essential part of strengthening relationships and the NNs were seen as central to effective stakeholder engagement by the MCs. Members underlined the potential for NNs to build capacity within the MC, including supporting engagement between the wider stakeholder community and MC members. Participants also stressed the importance of good governance, including the need for harmonisation between regional and national jurisdictions.

 **Alex Papakonstantinou, CAPI CP** presented **key findings** from an EU CAP Network MA Survey on the setting up and functioning of MCs. It was clear that MAs are doing a great deal to support the effective participation of stakeholders in decision-making, including:

- Early preparation of meetings, including sending material in advance, preparatory meetings, and providing a budget for capacity building or Travel & Subsistence.
- Provision of networking opportunities – e.g. field trips, working groups, workshops, and the involvement of non-MC members during ‘in-between’ meetings.
- Supporting online meetings, using online tools/voting or platforms.
- Training for MC members as well as animating and facilitating contributions.
- Ensuring a balanced membership (e.g. of gender and of diversity).
- Provision of clear MC responsibilities.

Event Information

Date: 25 January 2024

Location: Virtual meeting

Organisers: CAP Implementation Contact Point (CAPI CP)

Participants: 36 individuals from 18 Member States across a range of organisations including Managing Authorities (MAs), Paying Agencies, **National Networks** (NNs), researchers, NGOs, producers and the European Commission.

Outcomes: Exchange of experiences on the establishment and operation of Monitoring Committees (MCs) and suggestions to improve their effective operation.

Web page: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/2nd-meeting-thematic-group-cap-strategic-plans-monitoring-committees_en

Respondents acknowledged that undertaking many of these tasks would be challenging, particularly given the limitations of time and resources required by MAs to support the MC’s work. Key questions included how to:

- Strengthen the contribution of NNs in the operation of MCs.
- Ensure that MC input into decision-making is meaningful.
- Balance the political and technical issues associated with CSP implementation.

Group discussions, reflections and suggestions from TG members



Members were split into **three parallel groups**, to discuss three key questions:

- How can NNs strengthen the operation of MCs?
- How can MCs influence CSP Implementation more effectively?
- What should a well-integrated and coherent approach to achieving the effective operation of MCs in regionalised countries look like?



A panel of TG members composed of **Edel Meenan (MA, Ireland)**, **Andrea Goracci (Coldiretti, Italy)**, **Christian Gaebel (German Farmers Association & the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations - COPA, Germany)**, **Massimiliano Piattella (NN, Italy)** and **Tatiana Nemcová (Birdlife Europe, Slovakia)** then debated the key points emerging from the group discussions and suggested how the MCs could operate more effectively.

Key points

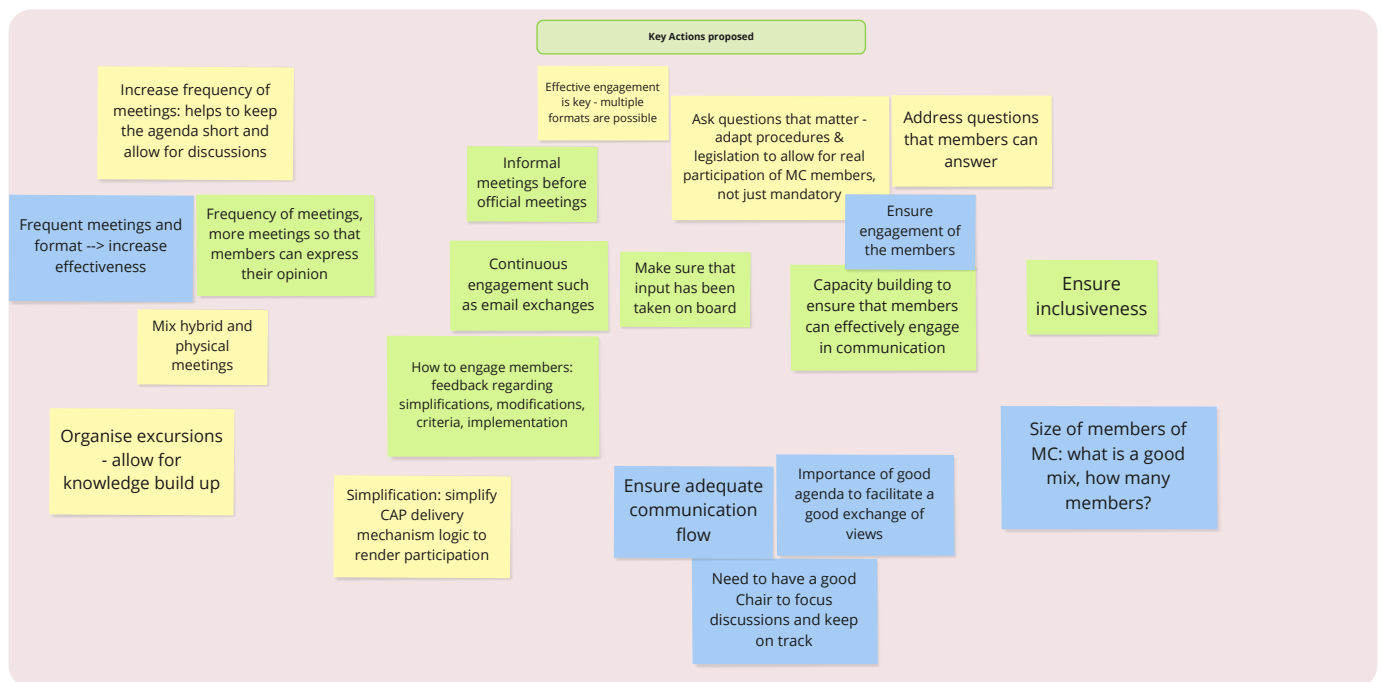


It was clear that there was a big difference between Member States. Some MAs struggled to keep their members engaged and active in the MCs. For other MS it was clear that having a strong bond between the MA and the members ensured effective MC operation.

Members recognised that NNs had significant potential to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders can contribute to CSP implementation meaningfully. However, it was acknowledged that success relies on effective communication between the MA, MC and NN. There is significant scope for NNs to provide information, reports, documentation, and analysis to support decision making, while also indirectly representing the interests of non-MC members.

In furthering the effective influencing of CSP implementation, Member States have established various ways to gather feedback from stakeholders, e.g. asking MC members to propose amendments or inviting them to set up working groups to discuss technical aspects. Members acknowledged that this relied on ensuring that necessary information was available, on time and in a form comprehensible to members. Members emphasised the need for continuity of feedback, with the MA informing the MC on how decisions came about, based on the MCs' comments.

Members also discussed the integration of regional MCs within national arrangements, including the need for clarity on roles and co-operation between regions. Members recommended enhancing the role of the NN as it can help the MA to coordinate activities with the regions, for example, in designing and amending interventions. A clear demarcation of the roles and responsibilities of the national and regional MAs was regarded as fundamental to ensuring that the NN can also support that process, for example by enabling communication and co-ordination between the MCs and the MAs at all levels.



2nd Meeting of the Thematic Group on CAP Strategic Plans: Monitoring Committees - Miroboard of the plenary discussion



Panellists then offered their own **suggestions for the effective operation of MCs**. The main points included:

The necessity of finding a **balanced representation and ensuring that environmental NGOs have a voice in the MC**. This will allow the importance of environment and climate in the CSPs to be reflected.

- **Feedback** should be improved including from the MC to the MA and vice versa.
- NNs have an important role to play in bringing stakeholders together, for example, field visits can enable **informal exchanges** to allow members to build up a rapport and to discuss things that cannot always be discussed formally.
- MAs need to be **credible, committed and transparent**, giving feedback and ensuring the timely involvement of stakeholders in decision-making.
- MC members should be aware of their role and well prepared for their work in the MC. They should also be properly **supported by the MA** in this regard, for example through provision of a repository for sharing documents or through ongoing two-way communication.
- Establish **subject-specific working groups** so all stakeholders can be involved and informed about aspects of CSP implementation.

Small breakout groups of TG members then discussed further suggestions and 'top tips' for the effective setting up and operation of MCs. **Additional suggestions/points from TG members included:**

- Increase the **frequency of meetings** and ensure that such **meetings are focused, with clear objectives and sufficient space for discussion**.
- **Mix hybrid and physical meetings** to allow MC members different opportunities to participate.
- There are various ways to **engage with stakeholders meaningfully** ahead of the regular meetings to **ensure effective participation**. These include: organising **working groups/informal meetings** to discuss specific proposals or ideas in advance of formal consideration by the MC; and, organising excursions that enable MC members to **build up a rapport and enhance knowledge** of the subject matter.
- Redefine the MC's role so it can **adapt procedures to enable 'real' participation** and ask questions that matter.

- **Use the MC to support simplification** – in terms of addressing and bridging the MA's administrative needs and the approaches by the farmers responsible for implementing the interventions.
- Ensure that the MC **understands, appreciates and engages with the intervention logic** across the CSP so that it can more easily **adapt and adjust approaches during the CSP's lifetime** (analysis, needs, interventions, outputs, results and impacts).
- Achieve **effective communication flows between members and the MA**. (Members acknowledged that it may be necessary to strike the right balance to ensure that workloads/capacities are not overwhelmed).

Final remarks



Flavio Riccardo Conti, DG AGRI, thanked everyone for their participation and inputs. Flavio reinforced the importance attached to this TG and its synergies with the work of the European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECoPP). DG AGRI is keen to build on the very useful inputs provided through this TG to help them promote and strengthen the partnership principle further.

One possible concrete action – to be further explored by Commission services – is the development of an EU level toolkit that could support MAs in implementing the code of conduct.

