

European CAP Network Conference 'EIP-AGRI Operational Groups: Innovation in practice'

AGENDA

Update 18 December 2023

6-8 May 2024

Estoril, Portugal

Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI



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The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) was launched in 2012 by the European Commission. Since then, Member States (MS) have kept investing in innovation for agriculture and rural areas through EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects (OGs), financed by the Rural Development Programmes. This has resulted in an abundance of solutions and knowledge to overcome challenges and seize opportunities that practitioners in agriculture, forestry and rural areas are facing.

For the CAP programming period 2014-2022, 3 200 OG projects were planned. By December 2023, over 3 400 projects have been reported in the EC's database, and more projects are expected to be reported by the end of 2025 (i.e. the end of funding and reporting for the period 2014-2022). This is a milestone to celebrate, but also an achievement to learn from and build upon for the time ahead.

In the CAP 2023-2027, OGs continue to be a key tool for innovation and knowledge exchange. The scope of their projects now goes beyond 'agricultural productivity and sustainability', as OG projects may relate to all nine CAP specific objectives, as well as the cross-cutting one. Setting up and fostering transnational and cross-border OGs is a novelty and an opportunity to further develop and scale up results obtained by OGs from the programming period 2014-2022. So is the obligation for MS to offer innovation support for preparing and implementing OG projects.

To celebrate and showcase these achievements, foster networking and knowledge exchange, support the next generation of OG projects and incentivise transnational / cross-border Operational Groups, the EU CAP Network support unit for Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI is organising the **conference 'EIP-AGRI Operational Groups: Innovation in practice'**. This event will take place from **6 to 8 May 2024** in Estoril (Portugal). This conference will be a two-and-a-half-day event with up to 450 participants. It will be organised in combination with the **'EIP-AGRI Innovation Awards'**. The awards ceremony will be integrated in the conference programme.

The **main objective** of the conference is twofold: to highlight the successful implementation of the EIP-AGRI through Operational Group projects as one of its main building blocks, and to learn from this experience for the implementation of projects under the CAP 2023-2027.

The **specific objectives** of the conference are to:

1. Spotlight and celebrate the achievements of over 3 400 OG projects in the EU;
2. Exchange and learn from the experiences of OG projects and boost possibilities to share promising knowledge and innovations developed by OGs;
3. Discuss the possibilities, including funding opportunities, to further use and upscale OG outcomes in practice;
4. Discuss challenges and identify good practices that can support the preparation and implementation of OG projects under the CAP 2023-2027;
5. Foster further networking and cooperation for innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas, including the creation of transnational / cross-border OGs.

[You can find all information on the event webpage.](#)



Draft agenda outline

Update 18 December 2023

The working language will be English. No interpretation will be available.

All timings are in local time (Greenwich Mean Time – GMT)

Timing	Day 0: Monday 6 May 2024
	Arrival of participants in Estoril, Portugal
Afternoon (precise time TBC)	Field visits to EIP-AGRI Operational Groups will be organised by the Portuguese CAP Network, in collaboration with the EU CAP Network support unit for Innovation and Knowledge exchange EIP-AGRI. Project topics will be communicated at a later time.
Day 1: Tuesday 7 May 2024	
8.00 – 8.45	Arrival at the venue (Centro de Congressos do Estoril, Portugal) and registration for Day 1
9.00 – 9.40	Welcome and opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Introduction to the conference by the main moderator › Welcome by the Portuguese Minister of Agriculture and Food (TBC) › Opening of the conference with a welcome address by the Commissioner for Agriculture – <i>Janusz Wojciechowski, European Commission</i>
9.40 – 11.00	Setting the scene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Inspirational speech – the bigger picture › High-level panel reflecting on the role of grassroots-based innovation for the future of agriculture › Interactive presentation 'EIP-AGRI and its Operational Group projects'
11.00 – 15.30	Spotlighting and celebrating 3 400+ Operational Group projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Innovation exhibition: Space for Operational Groups and other relevant participants to share their projects, results and initiatives › In parallel, networking activities will be organised <p>Lunch and coffee will be provided to all participants (timing TBD)</p>
15.30 – 17.30	Ceremony 'EIP-AGRI Innovation Awards' The awards ceremony will recognise and reward outstanding Operational Group projects which have developed innovative



	outcomes. There are six award categories and a seventh award will be given to the 'public favourite'.
17.30	End of Day 1
19.30 – 22.00	<i>Networking dinner</i>

Day 2: Wednesday 8 May 2024	
8.15 – 9.00	Arrival at the venue and registration for Day 2
9.00 – 9.10	Welcome to Day 2 and highlights from Day 1
9.10 – 9.40	Lessons learnt from the past
9.40 – 14.50	<p>Preparing the next generation of Operational Groups – parallel interactive discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Introduction in plenary › Keynote presentations focusing on various types of challenges, solutions and identified good practices <p>Parallel discussions on various topics – examples of questions to be addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Starting from an innovative idea: developing it into an Operational Group project proposal</u> How are grassroots innovative ideas being captured? How are the needs and opportunities experienced by farmers and foresters turned into a project idea? How are project partnerships built with the right partners, with complementary expertise? How are OG project proposals prepared? How are advisors / innovation support services helping to develop individual projects? 2. <u>Facilitating: ensuring a smooth-running Operational Group project</u> What keeps project partners together? How can trust be increased, communication optimised, and the administrative burden lowered? What needs to be included in the partnership agreement? Is there a need for a process and communication facilitator? 3. <u>Involving farmers and foresters from start to finish: ensuring that end-users are benefitting</u> What can attract farmers and foresters to become partners in an Operational Group project? What are their expectations and what benefits can they gain from taking part? Additionally, how can Operational Groups involve farmers and foresters who are not partners in the project to incentivise the uptake of project results?



	<p>4. <u>Creating an enabling environment to support Operational Groups throughout the project</u></p> <p>How are Managing Authorities, National CAP Networks and Paying Agencies supporting OGs in different stages of the project? What are key issues to take into account?</p> <p>5. <u>Sharing results for better uptake by practice, during and beyond the lifespan of the project</u></p> <p>How are OGs made visible? How are OGs organising their communication and dissemination activities? How is the knowledge they generate taken up by farmers, foresters, in advice and training? What happens after an Operational Group is finished: do former partners keep collaborating, what happens to the results and to identified needs for further research? How are OGs supporting more sustainable farming or acting for nature? How to take promising innovative solutions to the market?</p> <p>6. <u>Inspiring Operational Groups to collaborate with other innovative projects</u></p> <p>What are the opportunities and support needs for Operational Groups to network and exchange knowledge with other Operational Groups or innovative projects at national and transnational level (such as Horizon Europe multi-actor projects)?</p> <p>7. <u>Fostering transnational Operational Groups</u></p> <p>What are the needs to foster transnational, including cross-border Operational Groups? What are the steps that are needed to establish transnational Operational Groups? What could these Operational Group projects possibly look like?</p> <p>Harvesting in plenary</p> <p>Lunch will be provided to all participants (timing TBD)</p>
14.50 – 15.50	<p>Reflection on lessons learnt for the next generation of Operational Groups</p> <p>A panel of relevant actors and experts will be reflecting on the main outcomes and highlights from the conference.</p>
15.50 – 16.00	<p>Closing words – by DG AGRI</p>
16.00	<p>Closing of the conference</p>

