



## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ECA EXCOM IN RELATION TO ECA AND ERC**

*(prepared by the ECA Secretariat)*

### **Background**

During the 38/3 meeting in July 2020, the ExCom reviewed the first initial draft of the “ExCom Information Document” (EID) prepared by the ECA Secretariat (“the Secretariat”).

At the meeting, the ExCom requested that EID include an introduction paragraph on ECA, ERC and their membership (ERG/non-ERG) and establish clear procedures for engaging all members (ERG and non-ERG) to ensure they all receive the same information, at the same time, and have the same opportunities to engage.

The ExCom recommended that the Secretariat proceed with addressing the procedural questions provided by the ExCom, while additional questions would be addressed through a consultative approach during future ExCom meetings. In this document, in order to facilitate referencing, the questions have been numbered by the Secretariat. The numbers can be found to the left of each question, in brackets.

The Secretariat was requested to expand the draft EID i.a. by addressing the procedural questions and issues raised by the ExCom, and present it at the next ExCom meeting, along with the questions or issues that require further discussion.

The Secretariat has addressed some of the questions and issues brought up by the ExCom. The answers have been added to the complete list of questions and are presented for the ExCom’s review in Annex 1. The Secretariat assumes that once the answers are confirmed by the ExCom, they will form the basis for further expansion or revision of the EID.

The remaining, unanswered questions will be further considered by the Secretariat. ExCom Members are encouraged to provide suggestions, where possible, on preferred options to address the outstanding issues.

The ExCom is kindly requested to note that as the Europe Regional Group of Permanent Representatives (ERG) appears in a number of questions (e.g. questions No. 14, 20, 25, 26 and 27), the Secretariat attempted to find additional information on ERG and its working modalities. Unfortunately, no information or procedures have proven to be available. Thus, the Secretariat is seeking advice from the ExCom on the way forward with those questions.

Irrespective of the answers to the questions and issues, the Secretariat revised the draft EID, taking into account suggestions and conclusions from the 38/3 ExCom meeting. The revised draft EID is presented in Annex 2.

For clarity, proposed answers to the questions and issues in Annex 1, as well as any new or modified text in Annex 2 are presented using red font.

The ExCom is invited to:

- note, review, discuss and endorse or amend, as needed, the proposed answers to the questions and issues, as presented in Annex 1;
- note that currently no information on working modalities of ERG is publicly available, and suggest on the way forward with ERG-related questions and issues;

- agree that the agreed answers, modified as necessary to fit into the already existing text, will be used by the Secretariat in their work on the development of the draft “ExCom Information Document”;
- note, review and provide feedback on the revised draft “ExCom Information Document”, as presented in Annex 2, noting that the draft will undergo further modifications, as elements of working procedures coming from agreed answers to the questions and issues are incorporated into it.

## Annex 1

**ANSWERS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S QUESTIONS AND ISSUES ON ITS  
ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO ECA AND ERC****1. Introduction**

This paper was prepared using comments and issues that were submitted by ExCom in May 2020 to guide the development of the "ExCom Information Document" describing procedures and practices used by the ExCom and the Secretariat to fulfil ExCom's mandate in relation to ECA and ERC.

Proposed answers to the questions have been presented using red font, for ease of reference. Dashes ("---") have been inserted where no answer has been provided by the Secretariat.

**2. Proposed answers to questions and issues****Role and responsibilities in relation to ECA – Rules of Procedures**

- **Background of the amendments and requirements, paragraph 4.** It is stated 'ECA governance is entrusted to its Executive Committee, which acts on behalf of the Commission during the inter-sessional period'

(1) Question – explain what is meant by 'governance' in the context of the intersessional responsibilities of ECA.

Answer: ---

Note from the Secretariat:

There are many definitions or descriptions of *governance*. Examples include:

- governance comprises all of the processes of governing – whether undertaken by the government of a state, by a market or by a network – over a social system (family, tribe, formal or informal organization, a territory or across territories) and whether through the laws, norms, power or language of an organized society (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governance>);
- the act or process of governing or overseeing the control and direction of something (such as a country or an organization) (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/governance#synonyms>);
- establishment of policies, and continuous monitoring of their proper implementation, by the members of the governing body of an organization. It includes the mechanisms required to balance the powers of the members (with the associated accountability), and their primary duty of enhancing the prosperity and viability of the organization (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/governance.html>);
- the way that organizations or countries are managed at the highest level, and the systems for doing this (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/governance>);
- exercise of power or authority by political leaders for the well-being of their country's citizens or subjects (<https://tamayaosbc.wordpress.com/2014/08/21/what-is-governance/>);
- governance is defined as the decisions and actions of the people who run a school, nation, city or business (<https://www.yourdictionary.com/governance>).

It seems that none of these definitions is likely to apply to ExCom directly.

With reference to ExCom's governance, the RoP of ECA specifies that ExCom "shall" conduct some activities "in particular", and requires that "any decisions taken (...) shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission at its next session" (Rule III.3). RoP does not specify whether decisions that may be taken by ExCom, including those that "shall be taken in particular", take effect prior to their confirmation by ECA at its next session.

(2) Question – clarify the role and responsibilities of ExCom during the ECA session

Answer: The role and responsibilities of the ExCom during the ECA sessions is limited, as the ExCom acts on behalf of ECA *between* its sessions (RoP of ECA, Rule III.3). Nevertheless, RoP of ECA provides for an ExCom meeting whenever ECA holds a session (regular or special). ExCom meeting held when a regular session takes place usually focuses on the introduction of the new ExCom Members and the endorsement of the ExCom's work plan for the upcoming biennium. Such agenda might be difficult to apply in a meeting held when ECA holds a special session, as in that case elections do not take place (Rule II.1, Rule III.1) and the ExCom's work plan has already been adopted.

- **Rule II, Officers, point 2.** It is stated 'the Chairperson, or in his absence a Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at the sessions of the Commission and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Commission'

(3) Correction – replace 'his' with 'his / her' for gender inclusivity.

Answer: This is well noted, and can be corrected whenever the RoP is amended.

(4) Question – clarify what is meant by 'exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Commission', including providing examples.

Answer: The quote relates to the Chairperson of ECA and his/her competences during the ECA session. The core function of the Chairperson during the Session is presiding at the session. Examples of the "other functions" include, but are not limited to:

- convening, as needed, focus groups for discussing individual items on the agenda of an ECA session, in order to propose solutions for endorsement by ECA,
- conducting consultations with Members' representatives,
- co-operating and exchanging information with other FAO groups or bodies on issues relevant for ECA.

- **Rule III, Executive Committee, point 2.** It is stated '...and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Executive Committee'

(5) Question – clarify what is meant by 'exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Executive Committee', including providing examples.

Answer: The competencies given to the Vice-Chairpersons when presiding over the meetings of the ExCom are meant to copy the competencies of the Chairperson and are exactly the same as those.

- **Rule III, Executive Committee, point 3.** clarify / provide further details –

- (6) Provide detail on the role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee as the 'Executive Body of ECA'.

Answer: The ExCom, as the executive body of ECA, oversees the implementation by FAO of decisions taken by ECA. This is achieved through presenting to the ExCom updates on the implementation of REU's work programme, separately for individual issues or for Regional Initiatives.

- (7) Explain how the Executive Committee submits ‘proposals concerning the general orientation of the Commissions activities and its programme of work’

Answer: With this provision the ExCom is empowered to consider directions for a strategic framework for the work of ECA on development of agriculture in the region. Once agreed by the ExCom, these directions should be submitted to ECA for consideration and possible adoption.

- (8) Regarding the responsibility of the Executive Committee to ‘investigate particular problems’ – define what is meant by ‘problem’, who can raise a problem, how an investigation should be conducted and by whom, and how problems are to be resolved – including structure, governance and decision making responsibilities.

Answer: The phrase “investigate particular problems” has been used in Rule III.3 of the RoP of ECA with the purpose to distinguish from “general orientation of the Commission’s activities”, with the intention to be understood as consideration of issues relating to FAO’s activities in the area of agriculture in the region, not being overall regional strategies or policies.

No rules limit the rights of the Members of the region to raise issues for consideration by ECA or by the ExCom, so it may be assumed that “particular problems” may be raised by each individual Member or a group of Members, and may be submitted through the Secretariat, the Director-General or ExCom Members.

Investigation: ExCom may request the ECA Secretariat to collect data on relevant activities carried out in the region, including from the Members, and to present a report.

Decision making responsibilities: ---

Decision making: Preferably, ExCom should take decisions by consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, decisions are taken by a majority of votes cast (RoP of ECA, Rule VI.2). ExCom informs all Members, through the Director-General, of any decisions taken (RoP of ECA, Rule III.3). In practice, this can be achieved through publication of the minutes of the ExCom meetings on the ECA website, with a notification to Members. Decisions taken by the ExCom are subject to confirmation by the Commission at its next session (RoP of ECA, Rule III.3).

- (9) Clarify how the Executive Committee is to ‘ensure implementation of the programme approved by the Commission’.

Answer: This issue seems to be related to question (6). The oversight over the implementation of decisions taken by ECA is achieved by presenting to the ExCom updates on the implementation of REU’s work programme, separately for individual issues or Regional Initiatives. Should such need be identified, ExCom may request that certain activities be conducted by REU or under its oversight, and that the results of these activities be reported back to ExCom.

- (10) Explain, in detail, how the Executive Committee is to ‘periodically inform all Members of the Commission, through the Director-General, of any decisions taken’ – specifically how the Chairperson / Vice-Chairpersons engages with the DG, and how the Committee engages with Members, both ERG and Central Asia (non ERG) Members.

Answer: All decisions taken by ExCom are recorded in the minutes of the meetings, which are publicly available on ECA’s website. The Secretariat notifies ExCom Members about the publication. It is the responsibility of the ExCom to notify all Members of the Commission.

- (11) **Rule III, Executive Committee, point 4.** provide details of the ‘subsidiary bodies’ established by the Commission and their roles and responsibilities, and how the Executive Committee engages with these subsidiary bodies.

Answer: RoP of ECA allows for the establishment of ECA’s subsidiary bodies, in reply to specific needs. Once established, those subsidiary bodies should work in line with their Terms of Reference, following the applicable provisions of the RoP of ECA. Within the ExCom’s mandate for governance between ECA sessions, information exchange and consultations may take place, as needed, between the ExCom and the Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies, including their participation in the ExCom’s meetings. ExCom Members may participate in meetings of the subsidiary bodies, in advisory capacity.

Currently, there are no subsidiary bodies established by ECA.

- (12) **Rule III, Executive Committee, point 5.** define what is meant by ‘special problems’ (compared to previously mentioned ‘problems’).

Answer: Phrase “special problems” is used in Rule III.5 with the same meaning as “particular problems” in Rule III.3.

- **Rule V, Agenda, point 1.** clarify / provide further details:

- (13) Explain in detail the process by which the Chairperson engages with the DG to agree the agenda.

Answer: Development of the agenda for an ECA session is conducted using participatory approach. It starts with a collection of proposals for the main technical theme of the Session. The proposals may be submitted by Members of the region or by REU, in response to a call opened by the ECA Secretariat in the year preceding the ECA session. Along with the invitation for the call, the Secretariat presents a list of topics which were on the agenda of previous sessions of ECA and ERC.

Submissions are expected to contain the proposed main technical theme for the ECA session, along with its brief description/justification. The Secretariat collects the submissions (should a specific deadline be established?), and presents them for internal technical review within REU. The submissions and the outcome of this review is presented to the ExCom. The ExCom reviews the submissions and the results of their technical analysis, and assigns priorities to the proposals. The topic selected as the recommended main technical theme for the upcoming ECA session is assigned the highest priority (priority 1), while other topics are assigned lower priorities (priority 2, 3, etc.). The list of proposed topics, with the priorities assigned, is attached to the minutes of the ExCom meeting. The ECA Chairperson should formally present the list to the Director-General (ADG-RR), seeking agreement on the recommendation.

Once the main technical theme is agreed, the Director-General (through the ECA Secretariat) drafts the agenda of the session and presents it to the ExCom. The ExCom reviews the draft agenda and may provide comments or endorse the agenda. If the draft agenda is reviewed at an ExCom meeting, the outcome of the review is recorded in the minutes of the meeting, and the draft agenda is attached. If the draft agenda is reviewed in a written procedure between meetings, the outcome of the review is recorded in the minutes of the next meeting. The ECA Chairperson should formally notify the Director-General about the Excom’s comments or endorsement of the provisional agenda.

- (14) Specifically, does the Executive Committee create the list of potential agenda items, and if so how, shortlist the agenda items prior to engaging the DG, engage ERG and Central Asia Members on the ECA agenda, and if so how and at what stages?

Answer: The agenda for an ECA session is not prepared by ExCom, but by the Director-General, in agreement with the ECA Chairperson, as explained in question (13). Once the draft agenda is made available to the ExCom, the ECA Chairperson may decide to consult it with the Members of the region. For that, the draft agenda would need to be made available to the ExCom well in advance of the ExCom meeting, in order to allow sufficient time for the consultation. The ECA Secretariat can draft, finalize and send any relevant messages to the Members, on behalf of and as requested by the ECA Chairperson. The Secretariat may also collect comments submitted in the consultation, and compile them, if so requested by the ECA Chairperson.

- (15) The text states ‘proposals of the Executive Committee’ - which suggests it is the role of the Executive Committee to propose the agenda?

Answer: Drafting of the agenda is the task of the Director-General, not the ExCom. The proposals mentioned in Rule V.1 relate to the ExCom’s recommendation on the main technical theme for an ECA session.

- (16) **Rule V, Agenda, point 3.** clarify how ‘any Member of the Commission may request the Director-General, at least three months before the opening of the session, to include specific items in the provisional agenda’, specifically the role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee as the Governing Body of ECA and the Committee with responsibility for engaging with the DG, including who has final say on the specific item / final agenda?

Answer: In practice, at the end of each ECA session, the approximate date of the next regular session is announced. The exact date is communicated to the Members at least 60 days before the session (Rule IV.3). Requests for inclusion of specific items in the agenda, submitted no later than three months before the opening of the session, are considered by ADG-RR and decisions on their inclusion are taken. All these requests are presented to ExCom when the draft agenda of the ECA session is presented for consideration and endorsement, along with a brief justification for ADG-RR’s decisions on their inclusion in the agenda or rejection. Relevant information should be provided if no requests were submitted. Should ExCom disagree with decisions taken by the ADG-RR, this should be recorded in the meeting minutes and the ECA Chairperson should notify ADG-RR, with reasons for Excom’s disagreement. Final decision should be agreed by ADG-RR and the ECA Chairperson. Further clarifications may be sought from submitters, as necessary, to facilitate the agreement.

### Roles and responsibilities in relation to ERC – Rules of Procedures

- **Rule II, Sessions, point 3.** It is stated ‘The European Commission on Agriculture will hold separate meetings to ensure technical preparations for the technical segment of sessions of the Regional Conference’.

(17) Question – provide clarification and further details on who convenes these meetings, when they take place, who will attend, and how the outcomes of these technical discussions feed in to the content of the ERC, taking particular account of the role of the Executive Committee as the Governing Body of ECA during the intersessional period.

Answer: These are the consultations that the Secretariat has with the ExCom, discussing the topics of the ERC.

- **Rule IV, Agenda and Documents, point 1.** It is stated ‘At least six months prior to the proposed date for the Regional Conference, the Regional Representative of the Organization in the region, after consultation with the Chairperson and the Vice Chairpersons, the elected rapporteur, and the Executive Committee of the European Commission on Agriculture, shall



send a communication to the Members of the Regional Conference. The communication shall contain a brief outline of the programmes of the Organization of interest to the region and of the outcome of the previous session of the Regional Conference and invite Members to review suggestions made concerning the organization of the next session of the Regional Conference, with particular reference to a draft agenda of the session’.

(18) Question – Explain in detail the process, role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee in the consultation process by which the communication is formed, including the finalisation of the text.

Answer: **The same as question (17). The consultation takes place at the ExCom meetings. The communication to the Members is also done through the Informal Consultations organized by REU.**

### **Roles and responsibilities in relation to MYPOW**

- **Background and overall objectives of the Regional Conference, point 3.** It is stated ‘The technical commissions of the region review technical aspects and issues of importance in the areas of agriculture (European Commission on Agriculture - ECA), forestry (European Forestry Commission - EFC) and fisheries (European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission - EIFAAC, and Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission - CACFish). The commissions review technical aspects and issues of importance to the region and their recommendations complement and inform discussions during the ERC on the Programme of Work, its strategic focus and the Regional Initiatives’.

(19) Question – Provide a detailed description of the process, role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee in the identification of technical aspects and issues of importance in the region, how the Executive Committee carries out its review, how recommendations are prepared and presented in order to compliment and inform discussions at the ERC.

Answer: **ECA reviews technical aspects and issues of importance in the area of agriculture, selecting one specific area (the main technical theme) for each session. The roles and responsibilities of ExCom in the selection of the theme have been described elsewhere. The review of the relevant technical aspects is carried out by ECA at a session. The basis for the review is provided by the ECA Secretariat through technical background papers. Conclusions of each ECA session are included in a session report, which is presented to the Regional Conference for review and endorsement. The meeting document, to which the ECA session report is an attachment, is developed by the ERC Secretariat.**

- **Background and overall objectives of the Regional Conference, point 4.** ‘The results of discussions and recommendations stemming from the ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish are to be used as a basis for preparation of the topics of the ERC for policy discussion and adoption as well as preparation of the priorities for the region’.

(20) Question – Explain how this actually works in practice, detailing the step-by-step synchronisation of the ECA and ERC work areas to allow this to take place, how the technical inputs are prepared, considered, discussed and included, with specific reference to the role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee as the Governing Body of ECA during intersessional periods, including how the Executive Committee communicates with the membership of the Commission, through ERG and with Central Asia members.

Answer: **The same as in question (17). The results from the Commissions are to be taken into consideration when discussing the technical topics of the ERC.**



- **Results, A. Priority setting, organisational structure, and budget planning – Activities:** ‘Review the decisions and recommendations from relevant technical commissions and meetings in the region and incorporate their findings in the ERC Report as appropriate’.

(21) Question – How is this done, in practice, taking account of the specific role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee of ECA? Define the term ‘review’ in this context.

Answer: **Members of ERC review decisions and recommendations made at ECA sessions. ECA session report is presented to ERC for review and endorsement. Apart from this, normally there are no ExCom-related points at ERC sessions.**

- **Results, A. Priority setting, organisational structure, and budget planning – Working methods:** ‘Collaboration among Members in the region through the ERC Chairperson, the Secretariat and the Executive Committees of the ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish during the intersessional period’ and ‘Regular contacts and informal consultations, as appropriate, among Members and between the ERC Chairperson and the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative, including informal coordination meetings between the secretariats of the regional technical commissions (especially ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish), to foster dialogue during the intersessional period’.

(22) Question – Explain the process by which this happens in practice.

Answer: **As the text indicates, this is to stimulate dialogue between the ExComs of the Commissions. There is no formal way or prescription how this should be done, so it is left to the Chairpersons to collaborate, as appropriate.**

- **Results, B. Monitoring of, and advice on, policy and regulatory matters – Indicators and targets:** ‘ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish advice on regional aspects of global policy and regulatory matters considered when defining the ERC session agenda’.

(23) Question – Explain the process by which this happens in practice.

Answer: **Action for the ERC to follow the advice from the Commissions made in their reports.**

- **Results, B. Monitoring of, and advice on, policy and regulatory matters – Working methods:** ‘Collaboration among Members in the region through the ERC Chairperson, the Secretariat and the Executive Committees of the ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish during the intersessional period’.

(24) Question – Explain the process by which this happens in practice.

Answer: ---

- **Results, B. Work planning and working methods – activities:** ‘Consult with Members on agenda and format of the ERC through the Executive Committees of the ECA and the Europe Regional Group of Permanent Representatives (ERG)’.

(25) Question – Explain the process by which this happens in practice. Outline how the consultation should take place in detail, including consultation with Central Asia members.

Answer: **This is done by the ERC Secretariat at ExCom meetings and at ERG, as the activity indicates.**

- **Results, B. Work planning and working methods – Working methods:** ‘Consultations among Members, through the ERC Chairperson and Executive Committees of the ECA and the ERG for continuity between biennial meetings with support from the secretariat’.

(26) Question – Explain the process by which this happens in practice. Why are the non-ERG not included in the consultations?

Answer: ---

- **Results, B. Work planning and working methods – Working methods:** ‘informal meetings of the ERG Chairperson and senior members of the secretariat, facilitated by the Independent Chairperson of the Council’.

(27) Question – Explain the process by which this happens in practice. Also, should the Chairperson and vice-Chairpersons of ECA attend the regular informal meetings with the ICC?

Answer: ---

#### General requests:

- (28) Set out the agreed procedure for approving the minutes of each meeting of the Executive Committee, as proposed during the April meeting.

Answer: **The procedure was agreed at the July 2020 ExCom meeting.**

- (29) Set out the process by which the Chairperson / Vice-Chairpersons will inform the ERG and Central Asia Members of the agenda and outcomes following each meeting of the Executive Committee.

Answer: **The draft agenda for each ExCom meeting is regularly agreed between the Secretariat and the ECA Chairperson, from the early stages of its formulation. The Chairperson may invite Members of the region to submit proposals of additional points for the agenda. The Secretariat is ready to support the Chairperson in sending any related correspondence. Furthermore, meeting agendas follow the workplan and meeting schedule, which is endorsed by the ExCom in the beginning of the biennium, and may be modified, as needed. Members of the region may be invited by the Chairperson to submit proposals of agenda items for inclusion in the ExCom’s work plan, throughout the biennium.**

**At the July 2020 meeting, the ExCom agreed that the Secretariat would notify the ExCom Members only about the posting of the minutes of the meetings. Communicating the outcomes of the meetings to other Members of the region remains to be decided by the ECA Chairperson. The Secretariat is available to support the Chairperson in this communication, as needed.**

- (30) Correct the Report of the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the ECA which wrongly states that ‘The Commission elected Mr Paul Kiernan (Ireland) as a Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Ms Zora Weberova (Slovakia) as a First Vice-Chairperson and Mr Marios Georgiades (Cyprus) as a Second Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee...’ the referenced were elected Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of ECA, not the Executive Committee. This should be corrected on all existing and future reports.

Answer: **The mistake in the ECA Session report has been noted. It is to be noted however that the report captures correctly the statements as per the ECA background documents and as per the announcements made by the Chairperson at the ECA Session (checked on the video recording). Due to lack of clarity on whether formally the text of an adopted ECA session report can be modified, the Secretariat has raised this issue to the responsible FAO levels, for guidance. Irrespective of the guidance received, correct names of functions will be used in the reports of future ECA sessions.**

- (31) Clearly set out the procedures to be followed by ERG and non-ERG members who wish to nominate a representative for the Chairperson / Vice-Chairpersons of ECA or membership of the Executive Committee roles, including how the existing Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of ECA should inform the ERG and Central Asia members.

Answer: **In 2019 it was agreed between the ECA Secretariat and the ECA Chairperson that the Chairperson would coordinate the process of the submission of nominations, and will notify the**

Secretariat about the nominees. The Secretariat is available to support any communications between the Chairperson and the Members of the region.

The Secretariat should check whether the nominees meet the requirements specified by the RoP of ECA (Rule III.1), and make the list of nominees available to the Members of ECA by posting it on the ECA website at least 60 days prior to the ECA Session. The list of nominees should contain information on the numbers of years and terms served in the ExCom by each nominee.

- (32) Clarify the necessary arrangements for holding the meeting of the Executive Committee at the same time as ECA, i.e. specify that nominated members should attend ECA and be available to meet after the session concludes, and any elected members not in attendance should be available to join by virtual means to facilitate the first meeting of the Executive Committee.

Answer: According to the RoP of ECA, “the Commission shall elect a Chairperson, a first Vice-Chairperson and a second Vice-Chairperson from among the representatives” (Rule II.1). The representatives are nominated by Members of the Commission and they “should, as far as possible, participate in the sessions of the Commission in a continuing capacity” (Rule I.2). “Elections shall take place at the end of a regular session” (Rule II.1, Rule III.1) and “the Executive Committee shall meet whenever the Commission holds a session” (Rule III.3).

Thus, the newly elected membership of the ExCom should meet at the end of the ECA Session, or soon after its closure. Quorum will be required for the meeting to take place. Representatives, who were elected as Members of ExCom, but were unable to attend the Session, should be invited to join the meeting through online channels.

The Secretariat should ensure the availability of a room for the meeting. Where any of the nominees are not present at a Session, online connection and relevant equipment should be available for use in the meeting room in order to enable remote participation.

The agenda for the meeting should be agreed in advance by the outgoing ExCom, at its last meeting or through a written online procedure. All nominees should be notified about the time, place and the agenda of the meeting in advance, and invited to confirm their attendance in the meeting, should they be elected.

- (33) State the role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee, if any, in engaging with FAO technical committees (COAG, CCP, COFU and COFO) and Council Committees (Programme and Finance) and CFS.

Answer: ---

- (34) State the role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee, if any, in engaging with other Regional Groups.

Answer: ---

## Annex 2

**ECA EXCOM INFORMATION DOCUMENT<sup>1</sup>***(draft)**(last revised 2020-09-10)***1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to describe and clarify the arrangements and working modalities relating to the Executive Committee of the European Commission on Agriculture (hereinafter: ExCom) so that it can serve as a reference document, aiming at assisting current and future ExCom Members in fulfilling their mandate, as well as the ECA Secretariat in providing support to the ExCom activities.

The document should also serve transparency purposes, providing information on working procedures relating to the ExCom to the Members of the Europe and Central Asia region.

**2. Supporting documents**

The basis for the work of the ExCom are the following documents:

- Rules of Procedure of the Regional Conference for Europe (RoP of ERC)<sup>2</sup>
- Rules of Procedure of the European Commission on Agriculture (RoP of ECA)<sup>3</sup>
- Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the ERC.<sup>4</sup>

**3. Abbreviations**

In this document, the following abbreviations have been used, with the following meaning:

ADG - FAO Assistant Director General

CACFish - Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission

ECA - European Commission on Agriculture

ECA Secretariat - Secretariat of ECA

EFC - European Forestry Commission

EIFAAC - European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission

ERC - Regional Conference for Europe

ERG - Europe Regional Group of Permanent Representatives

ExCom - Executive Committee of ECA

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

REU - FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

RoP - Rules of Procedure

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<sup>1</sup> This document was endorsed by ExCom in ..... 2020 at the 38/x meeting. This document and its updated versions are posted on the ExCom website (<http://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/executive-committee/en/>) by ECA Secretariat.

<sup>2</sup> RoP of ERC: <http://www.fao.org/3/mj470e/mj470e.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> RoP of ECA: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu352e.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> MYPOW 2020-2023 of the ERC (draft): <http://www.fao.org/3/nc231en/nc231en.pdf>

RPL - Regional Programme Leader

RR - Regional Representative

## 4. Working modalities relating to ExCom

### 4.1 The ECA Secretariat

The ExCom performs its tasks with the support of the ECA Secretariat. The ECA Secretary is appointed by ADG/RR for Europe and Central Asia from among REU technical officers. The Secretary is supported by an assistant.

The ECA Secretariat provides administrative support for the work of ExCom, especially in terms of:

- coordination with the ECA Chairperson on the dates and locations for the meetings;
- preparation of meetings, meeting documents and meeting minutes;
- keeping the repository of all ExCom documents.

### 4.2 Composition of ExCom

The composition and structure of the ExCom is determined by the RoP of ECA:

*“Rule III. Executive Committee*

- 1) *The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chairperson, the two Vice- Chairpersons of the Commission as ex officio members and six other members elected by the Commission from among the representatives.”*

### 4.3 ExCom Elections

#### 3.3.1 The time of elections

The RoP of ECA determines the time for the elections of the ExCom membership:

*“Rule III. Executive Committee*

- 1) (...) *Elections shall take place at the end of a regular session.”*

#### 3.3.2 Nominations

The RoP of ECA provides for the maximum time of service of ExCom members and for ensuring balance between the renewal and continuity of the memberships:

*“Rule III. Executive Committee*

- 1) (...) *The term of office of the elected members shall be for a period of two years and they shall be eligible for re-election for up to two additional two-year terms. (...) In order to ensure both rotation of members and continuity of service, when electing members of the Executive Committee, due consideration shall be given to the desirability of replacing no more than four members at the same time, and avoiding that the overall term of office of an individual, irrespective of the nature of his/her mandate, should exceed eight years.”*

Additionally to the provisions of the RoP of ECA, in 2019 it was agreed between the ECA Secretariat and the ECA Chairperson that the Chairperson would coordinate the process of the submission of nominations, and will notify the ECA Secretariat about the nominees. The ECA Secretariat should check whether the nominees meet the requirements specified by the RoP of ECA, and make the list of nominees available to the Members of ECA by posting it on the ECA website<sup>5</sup> at least 60 days prior to the ECA Session. The list of nominees should contain information on the number of years and terms served in ExCom by each nominee.

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<sup>5</sup> The European Commission on Agriculture: <http://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/en/>

### 3.3.3 Other election procedures

The RoP of ECA provides for the following voting procedures applicable for the election of the membership of the ExCom.

*“Rule VI. Voting and procedure*

- 1) Each Member of the Commission shall have one vote.*
- 2) Decisions of the Commission shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast.*
- 3) Any Member of the Commission may request a roll-call vote, in which case the vote of each Member shall be recorded.*
- 4) The Commission may decide to vote by secret ballot.*
- 5) Election shall be decided by secret ballot, except that in the case of an election in which there are not more candidates than vacancies, the Chairperson may submit to the Commission that the appointment be decided by clear general consent.*
- 6) Formal proposals concerning items of the agenda and amendments to such proposals shall be submitted in writing to the Chairperson who shall provide for circulation of these texts to the representatives.*
- 7) In addition, the provisions of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization<sup>6</sup> shall apply mutatis mutandis.”*

## **4.4 Roles and responsibilities of the ExCom**

In the roles and responsibilities of the ExCom the key part is the input of the ExCom into the preparation of the technical content for the sessions of ECA and ERC.

Another important activity of the ExCom is the review of the implementation of REU’s work plan in Europe and Central Asia.

### 3.4.1 Responsibilities of the ExCom in ECA and ERC preparations

#### **3.4.1.1 Introduction**

##### **3.4.1.1.1 Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)**

ERC is an official forum where Ministers of Agriculture and other high officials from all Member States in FAO’s Europe and Central Asia region meet to debate challenges related to food and agriculture, thus promoting regional coherence.

ERC session is held once every two years, in years when the global FAO Conference does not meet in regular session.

##### **3.4.1.1.2 European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)**

ECA serves as a technical preparatory meeting for ERC. Membership is open to all Member Countries in FAO’s Europe and Central Asia region.

ECA meets every two years, between sessions of the Regional Conference for Europe.

##### **3.4.1.2 ExCom’s responsibilities**

The scope of ExCom’s roles and responsibilities is determined by relevant provisions in the following documents.

RoP of ERC:

*“Rule II. Sessions*

- (...) 3. Any number of separate meetings may be held during each session of the Regional Conference. The European Commission on Agriculture will hold separate meetings to ensure technical preparations*

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<sup>6</sup> Basic Texts of FAO, General Rules of the Organization, Rule XII. Quorum and Voting Arrangements at Meetings of Conference and Council, page 28-34: <http://www.fao.org/3/K8024E/K8024E.pdf>

*for the technical segment of sessions of the Regional Conference. There will be also a policy segment, under such conditions as the Regional Conference may establish.”*

#### RoP of ECA:

##### *“Rule III. Executive Committee*

*(...) 3. The Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Commission between sessions of the Commission, of which it is the executive body. In particular, it shall submit to the Commission proposals concerning the general orientation of the Commission's activities and its programme of work; it shall investigate particular problems and help to ensure implementation of the programme approved by the Commission.”*

#### REU MYPOW 2020-2023 (draft):

- “- collaboration among Members in the region through the ERC Chairperson, the secretariat and the Executive Committees of the ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish during the intersessional period;*
- regular contacts and informal consultations, as appropriate, among Members and between the ERC Chairperson and the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative, including informal coordination meetings between the secretariats of the regional technical commissions (especially ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish), to foster dialogue during the intersessional period;*
- ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish advice on regional aspects of global policy and regulatory matters considered when defining the ERC session agenda.*
- collaboration among Members in the region through the ERC Chairperson, the secretariat and the Executive Committees of the ECA, EFC, EIFAAC and CACFish during the intersessional period.*
- consult with Members on agenda and format of the ERC through the Executive Committees of the ECA and the Europe Regional Group of Permanent Representatives (ERG);*
- consultations among Members, through the ERC Chairperson and Executive Committees of the ECA and the ERG for continuity between biennial meetings with support from the secretariat”*

As per the above documents, the role of ECA in relation to the technical work of FAO in the region is its coordination, planning and identification of priorities, through the Sessions of ECA and ERC, where ECA serves as the preparatory body for technical discussions and decision-making at ERC. The entire process of preparation of the technical content for the sessions is time-consuming, by its nature, so it cannot be fully conducted during the ECA session. For that reason, large part of this work is delegated to the ExCom, which ‘*acts on behalf of the Commission between sessions of the Commission*’.

More specifically, within the ExCom work on the technical aspects of ECA and ERC, the scope of its tasks covers the identification of the main technical theme and other topics for the agenda of the ECA session.

#### 3.4.2 Preparations for ECA sessions

ECA sessions take place in Budapest every two years, usually at the end of September or beginning of October.

As recommended by the ECA Assessment conducted in 2017, each ECA session should have a main technical theme.

Identification of the main technical theme and endorsement of the draft annotated agenda for ECA sessions are the responsibility off the ExCom, as prescribed by the RoP of ECA:



*“Rule V. Agenda*

*1) The Director-General, in agreement with the Chairperson of the Commission, after having examined all proposals of the Executive Committee, shall prepare a provisional agenda for each session.”*

When identifying the main technical theme for an ECA Session, the ExCom usually takes into account the FAO’s main theme of the biennium, identified by the Conference.

Within the process of the preparation of the ECA Sessions, the ECA Secretariat, in cooperation with the REU management and the ERC Secretariat, develops proposals of the main technical theme for the coming Session. The proposals are discussed by the ExCom during the May/June or September meeting in the year preceding the ECA session.

Once the ExCom decides on the main technical theme, the ECA Secretariat develops the draft annotated agenda, including in it the main technical theme, along with standing ordinal items (adoption of the agenda, election of the rapporteurs, elections of the ExCom, etc.) and items relating to the cross-cutting issues on the FAO’s work plan in the region, such as gender issues. This draft agenda is presented to the ExCom at their meeting in October-November, for review and comments. It may be presented to the ExCom again in January-February, if so decided by the ExCom. After all comments have been addressed, the ExCom endorses the draft agenda. The endorsed agenda is the basis for the preparation of technical background documents that will support the discussions on the main technical theme and other technical themes at the ECA session.

The draft annotated agenda for the ECA Session, endorsed by the ExCom, along with an update on the preparation of background documents for the Session, is presented by the ECA Secretariat to the Members of the region at the Informal Consultation, which takes place in the year of the ECA session, usually in May. At the Consultation, Members are invited to review the agenda and provide comments on the content of the individual agenda items.

The comments received during the informal Consultation are presented to the ExCom for review at the June ExCom meeting, and the ExCom decides on how the comments should be addressed.

#### 3.4.3 Preparations for ERC sessions

The ExCom is regularly updated at their meetings by the ERC Secretariat on the progress and current state of preparations for the ERC sessions. The ExCom is invited to note the updates. The ExCom Members may also provide comments on the preparations, or request additional related information.

The background papers for ERC sessions are made available directly to the Members of the region, according to the provisions of the RoP of ERC.

#### 3.4.4 Review of the implementation of the REU’s work plan in the region

Throughout their term, the ExCom is requested to review updates on the implementation of selected topics on REU’s work plan. These updates are presented by relevant REU’s technical officers. The ExCom is invited to review and discuss the updates and provide recommendations, as needed, on further implementation of the work plan.

## 4.5 Meetings

### 3.5.1 Work plans

The Excom conducts its activities primarily during meetings, which take place approximately three to four times a year. The ExCom meetings may be held in face-to-face mode, virtually, or mixed modality may be used.

ExCom meetings take place in accordance with the work plan and meeting schedule.

The work plan lists the items foreseen to be discussed during the term of the ExCom, along with the approximate dates for their consideration.

The meeting schedule lists the planned meetings of the ExCom, along with the main topics to be discussed at each meeting.

The work plan and meeting schedule should be endorsed by the ExCom at the first meeting after the election, which takes place when ECA holds a session.

The work plan and meeting schedule may be modified as needed. Any amendments must be endorsed by the ExCom. The endorsed meeting schedule constitutes the basis for the development of the agendas for the ExCom meetings.

The specific dates for the ExCom meetings are agreed between the ECA Secretariat and the ECA Chairperson, taking into account the availability of participants.

**The ExCom work plan and its updates are made publicly available on the ExCom website.**

### 3.5.2 Participation in meetings

The ExCom meetings provide a platform of cooperation between the Members of the region and the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU).

Apart from the ExCom members, the meetings should be regularly attended by the ECA Secretariat and the ERC Secretariat, and may be attended by the members of the REU management (ADG/RR, Deputy RR, RPL), as needed. Where technical items are presented for the review by the ExCom, relevant technical officers of REU presenting them are invited to attend the meeting (or part of it) by the ECA Secretariat.

The RoP of ECA do not allow observers at the ExCom meetings. Neither do they allow for ad-hoc replacement of an absent Member by a different person at a single meeting.

### 3.5.3 Meeting documents

The documents for the ExCom meetings may be developed by the ECA Secretariat, ERC Secretariat, ExCom Members, or by REU officers. Usually, a meeting document is developed for each agenda point.

All documents are put in a standardized format by the ECA Secretariat. Where Power Point presentations are used, these are developed by the relevant speakers. **Speakers are encouraged to share their presentations with the Secretariat prior to the meeting.**

Each meeting document is identified by its unique number, e.g. ECA\_ExCom\_38/1-3, where:

- 'ECA\_ExCom' - is a constant element, which identifies the document as the document of the ECA Executive Committee;
- '38/1' - is the number of the meeting in the current biennium; '38' is the respective code for the biennium, while '1' (or 2, 3, etc.) is the serial number of the meeting;
- '3' - is the number of the document for the particular meeting.

**The template for a meeting document is presented in Annex 1.**

The ECA Secretariat makes the meeting documents available to the participants by posting on the ExCom website.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, meeting documents are attached to meeting invitations sent to participants.

Meeting documents should be made available to the meeting participants at least seven days prior to the meeting.

#### 3.5.4 Invitations to the meetings

Once the date of a meeting is agreed, the meeting invitations are developed by the ECA Secretariat.

The invitations are sent on behalf of the ECA Secretary to all ExCom Members, to the ERC Secretariat, to the REU Management, and to invited experts, as appropriate, at least 7 days prior to the meeting. All available meeting documents (in .pdf format) are attached to the invitations.

All participants are requested to confirm their participation in the meeting, as soon as they receive the invitations.

#### 3.5.5 The conduct of the meetings

RoP of ECA:

*“Rule III. Executive Committee*

*2) The Chairperson of the Commission shall preside over the Executive Committee. In her/his absence, or in the event that the Chairperson is unable to exercise her/his functions for the remainder of the term, a Vice-Chairperson shall preside at the meetings of the Executive Committee and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Executive Committee.”*

After the opening of the meeting the ExCom adopts the meeting agenda.

Rapporteurs are not selected for the ExCom meetings.

#### 3.5.5 Minutes of the meetings

##### 3.5.5.1 Contents of the minutes

Minutes are the written record of the ExCom meeting. The minutes shall be terse, factual and structured, following the sequence of the adopted agenda of the meeting. The minutes should include the following:

- place and date of the meeting;
- relevant discussion points and statements;
- decisions made by the ExCom;
- required actions to be taken after the meeting is concluded;
- annexes, including at least the list of participants and the adopted agenda.

The minutes shall not be transcripts of the discussions nor shall they be considered a detailed report of the meeting. The minutes should reflect the debate at the meeting and contain specific action points for the Members and/or for the ECA Secretariat, as the case may be.

The process of preparation of the minutes, including taking notes at the meeting, drafting the minutes, sending the draft for comments, revising the draft based on the comments, submission for approval, and posting, is conducted by the ECA Secretariat.

Templates for annexes to meeting minutes are presented in:

- Annex 2 - list of participants;

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<sup>7</sup> The ECA Executive Committee: <http://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/executive-committee/en/>

- Annex 3 - meeting agenda.

### 3.5.5.2 Adoption of the minutes

Following an ExCom meeting:

- within five working days ECA Secretariat prepares the first draft of the minutes, considering internal reviews, where appropriate, and shares the draft with the ExCom Members via online channels;
- within four working days the ExCom Members provide their comments;
- within three working days ECA Secretariat reviews all received comments, revises the draft minutes accordingly and shares the revised draft minutes with the ECA Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons for approval;
- the Chairperson may decide to circulate the draft to ExCom Members, for confirmation; the minutes should be approved by ExCom within two working days;
- once approved, within one working day the minutes are published on the ECA website<sup>8</sup> by ECA Secretariat.

The minutes should be posted no later than 15 working days after the meeting. ECA Secretariat should notify ExCom Members about the posting of the minutes, including the link to the relevant website.<sup>8</sup>

## 5. Other items

To be added

## 6. Final provisions

Any amendments to this document may be agreed by the ExCom as needed.

This document and its updated versions shall be posted on the ExCom website<sup>8</sup> by the ECA Secretariat.

## 7. ...

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<sup>8</sup> The ECA Executive Committee: <http://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/executive-committee/en/>

**Annex 1**



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia  
ECA ExCom Meeting XX/Y, Xxxxxx 20XX, Agenda point Z

ECA\_ExCom/XX/Y-Z

**TITLE OF THE MEETING PAPER**

*(prepared by .....)*

**Background**

.....

.....

ExCom is invited to:

- .....;
- .....;
- .....;
- .....

**Annex 2****EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE****3.../... MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Day Month Year

FAO HQ, Rome, Italy / Online meeting

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

	<b>Role</b>	<b>Country/Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Present/Absent</b>
1.	ECA Chairperson		Mr/Ms Xxxxx XXXXXXXXXXXXX	Present/Absent
2.	ECA 1st Vice-Chairperson			
3.	ECA 2nd Vice-Chairperson			
4.	ExCom Member			
5.	ExCom Member			
6.	ExCom Member			
7.	ExCom Member			
8.	ExCom Member			
9.	ExCom Member			
10.		FAO REU		
11.		FAO REU		
12.		FAO REU		
13.		FAO REU		
14.		FAO REU		

**Annex 3****EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE****3.../... MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Day Month Year

FAO HQ, Rome, Italy / Online meeting

**MEETING AGENDA**

No.	Agenda Item Title	Document No./Link	Presenter
	Opening of the meeting	-	XXXXXXXXXX
	Welcome to the participants	-	
1.	Adoption of the agenda		
2.	(...)		
3.	(...)		
4.	(...)		
5.	(...)		
... .	(...)		
	Close of the meeting	-	