



## The ECA Executive Committee Information Document (March 2024)

### I. Background

1. The purpose of this document is to describe and clarify the arrangements and working modalities relating to the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) so that it can serve as a reference document, aiming at ExCom members in fulfilling their mandate, as well as the ECA Secretariat in providing support to the ExCom activities.
2. The document does not replace or bypass the Rules of Procedures for the European Commission on Agriculture.
3. It is a living document, which will be updated as required to provide information on the working modalities of the ExCom.
4. 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>1</sup>
  - Rules of Procedure of the European Commission on Agriculture (RoP of ECA)<sup>2</sup>
  - Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the ERC.<sup>3</sup>

### II. Working modalities relating to the ExCom

#### 2.1 The ECA Secretariat (ECAS)

5. The ECA Secretariat (ECAS), hosted by REU, supports the ExCom in its work.<sup>4</sup> The work of the Secretariat is overseen by the ADG-RR. Its Secretary is appointed by the FAO Director General upon suggestion by ADG-RR. The Secretary is supported by the staff in the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in their technical and operational functions.
6. 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 of the meetings;
  - preparation of meetings, meeting documents, and meeting minutes;
  - supporting efficient communication on ECA-related matters between the ECA Chairperson and the Members of the Region;
  - keeping the repository of all ExCom documents.

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<sup>1</sup> RoP of ERC: <http://www.fao.org/3/mj470e/mj470e.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> RoP of ECA: <https://www.fao.org/3/nn060en/nn060en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> MYPOW 2022-2025 of the ERC: <https://www.fao.org/3/ni195en/ni195en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Review of the Assessment of the ECA: <http://www.fao.org/3/mu351e/mu351e.pdf>

## 2.2 Composition and elections of the ExCom

7. As outlined in the RoP the ExCom 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.<sup>5</sup>
8. Elections shall take place at the end of each regular ECA session.
9. The responsibility for the nomination of the ECA officers is with its members. The ECAS facilitates in communication with the members nominations and reaches out prior to the next ECA session obtaining interest for nominations. The example of the invitation to submitting nominations of candidates for positions in the ExCom is presented in Appendix 1, the form for submitting nominations in Appendix 2. Following the expression of interest of candidates. The Secretariat makes the list of eligible nominees available to the Members of the ECA prior to the Session.

## 2.3 Roles and responsibilities of the ExCom

10. The role and responsibility of the ExCom is outlined in the RoP and it functions as executive bureau of the ECA during the inter-session period.<sup>6</sup>
11. Main tasks of the ExCom:
  - submits proposals concerning the general orientation of the Commission's activities and its programme of work to the Commission;
  - investigates particular problems and helps ensure the implementation of the programme approved by the Commission.<sup>7</sup>
  - oversees the preparation of the sessions of ERC, ECA and Informal Consultation
  - reviews the implementation of REU's work plan in Europe and Central Asia. the ExCom is requested to review updates on the implementation of selected topics on REU's work plan. These updates are presented at ExCom meetings by relevant REU's technical officers.
12. The ExCom has a specific role beyond its technical mandate as a regional commission in facilitating the overall work in the region and serves as the preparatory body for technical discussions and decision-making at ERC.<sup>8</sup> Among them are:
  - reviews and provides recommendations on proposals for the main technical theme for the sessions of ERC,
  - provides advice and feedback on the ERC agenda,
  - reviews regularly the progress and current state of preparations for the ERC sessions in its ExCom meetings.

## 2.4 Preparation of the ECA Sessions and identification of the topic and agenda

13. ECA sessions take place every two years, usually in the second semester of the year without a session of the ERC. In exceptional circumstances, where a session of ECA cannot be held as a physical meeting, it may be conducted in virtual/hybrid modality in line with the modalities applied by FAO for virtual/hybrid meetings.

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<sup>5</sup> ECA RoP, III.1.

<sup>6</sup> Review of the assessment of the ECA: <http://www.fao.org/3/mu351e/mu351e.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> ECA RoP, III.3

<sup>8</sup> ECA RoP, III.3; ERC RoP, II.3.; REU MYPOW 2022-25, 10. b, c, 12. b, 15.c, 19.a; 20.a

14. As recommended by the ECA Assessment conducted in 2017, each ECA session should have a main technical theme. The technical theme of the session should be of interest to the entire membership, to be tackled from different perspectives, e.g. on-going initiatives, innovation, technologies, policies, management capacity development needs and opportunities, etc.<sup>9</sup> Whenever relevant and appropriate, the ECA theme should align with the biennial theme selected by the FAO Conference, addressing it from the perspective of ECA mandate, to avoid duplication of debates.
15. Identification of the main technical theme and preparation of the draft annotated agenda for an ECA session are joint responsibilities of the ExCom and the ADG-RR, as prescribed by the RoP of ECA.<sup>10</sup>
16. Proposals for the main technical theme for an ECA Session are collected through an open call operated by the ECA Secretariat, in order to obtain information on topics of interest from the Members of the region. The call should be accompanied by relevant guidance on the selection of topics for ECA sessions and by the list of topics covered at previous ECA and ERC sessions.
17. The ExCom identifies the main technical theme of each ECA session, along with subtopics to be discussed during the session.
18. Once the main technical theme is agreed, the ECA Secretariat drafts the annotated agenda in collaboration with technical expertise in REU and HQ for the session and presents it to the ExCom for review and comments.
19. In order to facilitate the consultation process, the draft topics for the agenda shall be brought to the attention of the Members of the region through the European Regional Group and the traditional Informal Consultation meeting organized usually in the year of the Session of ECA.
20. The ExCom is regularly updated by the ECA Secretary on the progress and current state of preparations for ECA sessions.

## 2.5 ExCom Meetings and preparation of minutes

21. 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 hybrid modality may be used. ExCom meetings take place in accordance with the work plan and meeting schedule<sup>11</sup>.
22. The dates for ExCom meetings are proposed by the ECAS in close consultation with the Chair of the ExCom and its members..
23. The meeting invitations sent to the participants at least seven days prior the meeting. Apart from the ExCom members and the Secretariat, the meetings may be attended by the members of the REU management (ADG-RR, Deputy RRs) and technical officers, as needed.
24. The preparation of background documents for the ExCom meetings is facilitated by the ECAS, and makes the document available to the ExCom members by email and posting on the ExCom website at least seven days prior the meeting.

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<sup>9</sup> Review of the assessment of the ECA: <http://www.fao.org/3/mu351e/mu351e.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> ECA RoP, V.1

<sup>11</sup> ECA ExCom Workplan and meeting schedule:

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1d286b2e-50b7-4a9d-bef0-5e858e1b31e1/content>

25. The Chairperson or in the absence of the Chair one of the two Vice Chairs facilitates the meetings.<sup>12</sup>
26. Where a decision should be made, ExCom members should take every effort to reach consensus. Should reaching consensus not be possible, the ExCom may decide to vote or to refer to the Commission for decision. Where the ExCom decides to vote, decisions are taken by a majority of the votes cast.<sup>13</sup>
27. Minutes are the written records 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 the list of participants, the adopted agenda and documents revised by the ExCom during the meeting.
28. 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 and annex 3.
29. Following an ExCom meeting, the ECAS prepares draft minutes for review by the Chair and the ExCom members. The minutes should be finalized and published on the ExCom website<sup>14</sup> by the ECA Secretariat within two weeks after the meeting of the Ex Com.
30. ECA Secretariat notifies Members of the region and the ExCom about the posting of the minutes, including the link to the relevant website.

## 2.6. ExCom Workplan

31. The work plan lists items foreseen to be discussed during the term of the ExCom, along with 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 their first meeting after the election, and are publicly available on the ExCom website.<sup>15</sup>
32. 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 agendas for the ExCom meetings.

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<sup>12</sup> ECA RoP, III.2.

<sup>13</sup> Rule VI.2 of the RoP of ECA

<sup>14</sup> ECA ExCom website: <https://www.fao.org/europe/about-us/regional-commissions/european-commission-on-agriculture/executive-committee-of-the-european-commission-on-agriculture/en>

<sup>15</sup> The ECA Executive Committee website: <http://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/executive-committee/en/>

### **III. Final provisions**

33. Any updates to this document shall be presented to the ExCom.
34. This document and its updated versions shall be posted on the ExCom website by the ECA Secretariat.
35. In this document, the following abbreviations have been used, with the following meaning:
  - ADG-RR - FAO Assistant Director-General, Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia
  - CACFish - Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission
  - ECA - European Commission on Agriculture
  - ECAS - Secretariat of the ECA
  - EFC - European Forestry Commission
  - EIFAAC - European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission
  - ERC - Regional Conference for Europe
  - ExCom - Executive Committee of the ECA
  - FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
  - REU - FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
  - RoP - Rules of Procedure
  - RPL – Regional Programme Leader

Annex 1 – Template for ExCom meeting documents



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

ECA ExCom Meeting XX/Y

ECA\_ExCom/XX/Y-...

**TITLE OF THE MEETING PAPER**

*(prepared by .....*)

**I. Background**

.....

**II. ....**

.....

The ExCom is invited to:

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

## Annex 2 – Template for a list of participants of an ExCom meeting (as annex to the meeting minutes)

**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.	ECA Secretariat	FAO REU		
11.	ECA Secretariat	FAO REU		
12.		FAO REU		
13.		FAO REU		
14.		FAO REU		

## Annex 3 – Template for an agenda of an ExCom meeting (as annex to the meeting minutes)

**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	-	ECA Chairperson
1.	Adoption of the agenda		
2.	(...)		
3.	(...)		
4.	(...)		
5.	(...)		
... .	(...)		
	Close of the meeting	-	

Appendix 1 – Example of invitation to submitting nominations of candidates for positions in the ExCom

**THIS MESSAGE IS SENT ON BEHALF OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF  
FAO, REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**

Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you that the **Forty-third Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)** will be held in **Budapest, Hungary on .....** Logistical arrangements for the Session will be announced in due time.

At the end of the Session, there will be **elections** of the ECA Chairperson, the first and the second Vice-Chairpersons, and six other members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Commission between sessions of the Commission, of which it is the executive body.

Hereby, all respective Members of the Europe and Central Asia region are kindly invited to consider nominating their candidates for the above-mentioned positions. The official nominations shall be sent to the ECA Secretariat ([ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org)) **by 30 June ...**

Current membership of the Executive Committee and the Rules of Procedure of the ECA are available at <http://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/executive-committee/en/>.

When submitting nominations, **you are kindly requested to use the submission form attached to this invitation.** Please note that one country can nominate one person only.

For any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the ECA Secretariat:  
[ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org)

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Assistant Director-General  
Regional Representative  
FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

## Appendix 2 – The submission form for nominations for positions in the ExCom

**Call for nominations of candidates for the Chairperson of ECA, the first and the second Vice-Chairpersons of ECA and six other members of the Executive Committee of ECA****SUBMISSION FORM <sup>16</sup>***(to be submitted to the ECA Secretariat by 30 June 20xx)*

<b>Name of the submitting country:</b>	
<b>The contact person in the submitting country</b>	
Name and surname:	
Institution:	
Current position:	
E-mail address:	

<b>The nominated candidate</b>	
Name and surname:	
Institution:	
Current position:	
E-mail address:	
<b>The candidate is nominated for the following ECA function (please check one):</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson of the ECA	<input type="checkbox"/> First Vice-Chairperson of the ECA
<input type="checkbox"/> Second Vice-Chairperson of the ECA	<input type="checkbox"/> Other member of the Executive Committee

<sup>16</sup> This form should be submitted to the ERC-ECA Secretariat ([ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org)) by 30 June 20xx. In order to minimize the risk of the submission getting lost, the subject line of the message should read “ECA Elections – a nomination from <name of the submitting country>”

Appendix 3 – Example of invitation to submitting proposals for the main technical theme of a session of the ECA

**THIS MESSAGE IS SENT ON BEHALF OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FAO  
AND OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ECA**

Dear Members of the European Commission on Agriculture,

The Secretariat of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) has the pleasure and honour to thank for your participation in the Forty-third Session of the ECA and would like to kindly invite you to provide your input into the **preparation of the Forty-fourth Session of the ECA**, which is tentatively planned to be held in Budapest, Hungary, on xx-xx XXXXXXXXXXXX 2025.

The technical content is key for the Sessions of the ECA. As recommended by the Assessment of the ECA conducted in 2017 (<https://www.fao.org/3/bt620e/bt620e.pdf>), “each ECA session should focus on one technical theme, of interest to the entire membership, to be tackled from different perspectives, e.g. ongoing initiatives, innovation, technologies, policies, management capacity development needs and opportunities, etc.”. Moreover, “whenever relevant and appropriate, the ECA theme should align with the biennial theme selected by the FAO Conference”.

The ECA Assessment Report further recommends that “the fine-tuning of the theme would require a robust consultation process with all institutional owners of the ECA”.

In this context, **Members of the ECA are hereby kindly invited to analyze the needs of their country and of the region that fall into the scope of the current FAO biennial theme and propose a main technical theme for the next Session of the ECA**, considering the recommendations of the 2017 ECA Assessment.

The Secretariat of ECA kindly reminds that the FAO biennial theme for the years 2022-2023, adopted by the Forty-second FAO Conference, is “(tbd)”.

Members are also kindly invited to note that Sessions of the ECA look at their main themes from different perspectives, which are indicated in sub-topics under the overarching main theme.

For reference, Members may kindly find attached the list of themes covered in the past Sessions of the Regional Conference for Europe and the European Commission on Agriculture.

Members of the ECA are kindly **invited to submit their proposals for the main technical theme for the Forty-fourth Session of the ECA by 15 July 2024** to the ECA Secretariat ([ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org)). Members are further invited to **propose sub-topics describing different perspectives for discussing the main theme** (two to four sub-topics for each proposed main theme).

**For the submissions, please use the submission form attached to this invitation. Please use a separate form for each proposed theme.**

The Secretariat of ECA further informs that all submitted proposals will be reviewed by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and by the Executive Committee of the ECA. The Executive Committee will select one or more preferred proposals, for which they will seek agreement with the FAO Assistant Director General - Regional Representative. Once agreed, this proposal will become the main technical theme for the Forty-fourth Session of the ECA and along with the sub-topics, will form the basis for the preparation of its technical background documents.

For any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the ECA Secretariat ([ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org)).

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Director-General  
Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia

Chairperson of the ECA

## Appendix 4 – The submission form for proposals for the main technical theme of a session of the ECA

**Call for proposals for the technical theme of the Forty-fourth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (planned location, date)<sup>17</sup>****Submission form<sup>18</sup>**

<b>Name of the submitting country:</b>	
<b>Contact details</b>	
Name and surname:	
Institution:	
Position:	
E-mail address:	

<b>Proposed technical theme:</b>	
Description/justification:	
<b>Proposed sub-topics (2 to 4):</b>	
<b>Sub-topic 1:</b>	
Description/justification:	
<b>Sub-topic 2:</b>	
Description/justification:	
<b>Sub-topic 3:</b>	
Description/justification:	
<b>Sub-topic 4:</b>	
Description/justification:	

<sup>17</sup> Submitters are kindly requested to note that “each ECA session should focus on one **technical theme, of interest to the entire membership, to be tackled from different perspectives**, e.g. ongoing initiatives, innovation, technologies, policies, management capacity development needs and opportunities, etc.” Moreover, “whenever relevant and appropriate, **the ECA theme should align with the biennial theme selected by the FAO Conference**”. (Assessment of the ECA (2017) (<https://www.fao.org/3/bt620e/bt620e.pdf>))

<sup>18</sup> This form should be submitted to the ERC-ECA Secretariat ([ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org)) by (end date of the call); the subject of the message should be “ECA 44 technical theme - <name of the country>”