



European Commission on Agriculture

35/2 Meeting of the Executive Committee

10 December 2014

Espace Gabon

15- 18 hours

Minutes

Present

Chairperson: Ms Natalie Feistritzer (Austria)

Vice-Chairperson: Ms Alina Popescu (Romania)

Members: Mr Vasily Lawrovskiy (Russian Federation – absent)
Mr Damien Kelly (Ireland)
Ms Marieta Okenkova (Slovakia)
Mr Hilmi Ergin Dedeoglu (Turkey)
Mr Mirosław Drygas (Poland)
Mr Siim Tiedemann (Estonia)

REU Secretariat: Mr Vladimir Rakhmanin ADG/RR (REU) – by video
Mr Raimund Jehle, Secretary of the ECA (REU)
Mr David Sedik, Senior Agricultural Policy Officer (REU) – by video – Agenda item 5
Mr Aron Thuroczy, (REU) – by video – Agenda item 5
Ms Eleonora Dupouy, Food Safety and Consumer Protection Officer (REU) – by video
Mr Mischa Tripoli, EST – Agenda item 5
Ms Dono Abduarazakova, Senior Gender Consultant (REU) – by video – Agenda item 4
Ms Aroa Santiago Bautista, Junior Gender Consultant (REU) – by video – Agenda item 4
Ms Venera Zakirova, Partnership Officer (REU) – by video – Agenda item 4
Ms Beata Somogyi, Programme Assistant, REU – by video

Agenda:

1. Revised Work programme and Meeting Schedule for the Executive Committee (35/2 – 1)

2. Revised cost estimation for the future sessions of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) (35/2 – 2)

3. Draft agenda and dates of the 39th Session of the ECA 2015 in Budapest, Hungary (35/2 – 3)

4. Update on the proceedings of the gender network in the European Region (35/2 – 4)

5. Introduction of the Regional Initiative 2 – Agri-Food Trade and Regional Integration (35/2 – 5)

6. Informal Consultation in 2015 – Proposal and Discussion (35/2 – 6)

7. Any other business

The Chairperson welcomed the members of the Executive Committee to the second meeting after the 38th Session of the ECA and gave the floor to Mr Vladimir Rakhmanin, ADG and Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia. Mr Rakhmanin informed the participants on the following activities of REU:

- The establishment of a gender and social protection network in the Region
- The focus of work on the Regional Initiatives and on the major areas of work
- Finalization of the Medium Term Reporting
- The status of the Host Country Agreements in the countries and FAO's presence in Albania
- The prioritization process for 2016/17, with preparation for the ECA 2015, for which the informal consultations would be a starting point.

The members have adopted the proposed agenda for the meeting.

Agenda item 1: Revised Work programme and Meeting Schedule for the Executive Committee

The secretariat introduced the revised work programme of the Executive Committee.

The Members have endorsed the revised work programme and it was agreed that the document became a 'rolling programme', which can be changed along with time according to the actual activities of the Executive Committee (to avoid the work programme having need to be revised too frequently).

It was also noted that while the next Ex Com meeting scheduled for March 2015 also included as agenda item the preparation of the Informal Consultation it was highlighted that this depends on the final agreed timing of the Informal Consultation for 2015. It was mentioned that the members of the ERG needed to be consulted on the Informal Consultations for further action

Action: The ERG will be informed at the beginning of 2015, on the further developments of holding the Informal Consultations in 2015. See agenda point 6.

Agenda item 2: Revised cost estimation for the future sessions of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)

The secretariat informed that the purpose of the presented background paper under this item was to seek advice from the Members regarding the format for the paper of the actual cost proposal which would be presented at the 39th ECA session in September 2015 in Budapest. As the collection of the information on the costs was time consuming, it needed clarification which elements were to be considered during the preparation of the cost proposal.

The secretariat further informed that the costs were split in costs for the secretariat and costs for the host government. For example provision and facilities of the venue, (office space, equipment, etc), staff time of local assistance, and the organization of a field trip. The costs of FAO and the host government were considered as direct costs.

In addition, it would need to be decided if cost for travel of participants should also be added. Such costs were not direct cost, but also related to the costs from the side of the member countries participating at the meeting and thus the location of the meeting has an implication.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- A detailed proposal should be presented at the next Ex Com meeting. Should it be difficult to have already figures presented by the next Ex Com meeting, then it should be presented latest to the Ex Com meeting in May 2015.
- There was a debate whether the cost of the host country would need to be taken into consideration at all, as it was considered as a contribution of in-kind, to which the possible host governments have already committed themselves.
- There was also the question on exactly how the costs of member countries delegates' travel would be calculated. It was clarified that in this case an average travel cost of an average number of participants would be used as a basis (two participants).
- In terms of host government costs, it should also be noted that usually the government would support the low income countries in their participation.
- The document should make it clear which of the elements under the responsibility should be covered by FAO, and which by the host country.
- In case of Rome being the venue of the ECA sessions, it was noted that there will be no need to calculate the costs for the venue and offices, as FAO Headquarters already has these facilities.
- The secretariat also informed that the three locations were identified based on that FAO has offices in these locations (Rome, Budapest and Ankara).
- It was questioned if the cost estimation would only have an implication for the 40th Session of the ECA or for all future meetings of the ECA.
- It was also suggested that a different term should be used in the document rather than "poorer countries", for example "less developed".

The conclusion of the discussion was that the cost proposal should include both costs for FAO and for government participating at the meeting and the wording for the less developed countries would be adjusted. It was also agreed that any kind of comments on the wording of the document should be sent to the Secretariat via email.

Action: The secretariat should proceed with the preparation of the cost proposal based on the proposed structure, i.e. having both FAO's and the host government's costs included, as well as the travel costs for member countries' delegates to the different venues. A draft cost proposal should be presented at the next meetings of the Ex Com, latest by May 2015.

Agenda item 3: Draft agenda and dates of the 39th Session of the ECA 2015 in Budapest, Hungary

The secretariat introduced the draft agenda and timetable for the next ECA session in 2015. The Members were informed that the proposals presented in the draft agenda have been prepared by REU and SEC, in consultation with HQ departments. There are currently ten technical items on the session, but these will need to be thinned out owing to the time constraint.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- It was suggested that the topics should also focus on what should be the outcome of the discussions. What is expected from the discussions at the ECA under the selected topics.
- It was also questioned how can FAO's priorities be defined for 2016/17 if the PWB would only come out in mid-February.
- There was an agreement that the ten proposed topics should be thinned out to allow time also for debate, versus FAO only having time to introduce its activities under the items. It was discussed whether some of the topics could not be presented as an information document, rather than an item for discussion and decision.
- The suggestion of including the Post 2015 topic at the ECA was mentioned, however, it was then agreed that this item be better included in the ERC in 2016.
- Food Safety and Nutrition should also be looked at as they are also important items, thus having an item on this should be supported. It was also discussed that perhaps items 6 and 7 could be merged into one item.

The members agreed on having items 3, 5 and 9, and to consult the European Regional Group (ERG) if they would like to have nutrition as an additional standing item on the agenda. Further proposals from the secretariat could be put forward to the Ex Com meeting in March, which can then be consulted with the ERG.

Action: The secretariat would need to revise the agenda items for the 39th ECA Session based on the results of the discussion. It would present a revised version at the next Executive Committee meeting in March 2015.

Agenda item 4: Update on the proceedings of the gender network in the European Region

The Senior Gender Consultant from REU made a presentation regarding the Gender and Social Protection Network approach and the progress in its establishment.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

1. The availability of the FAO REU regional gender strategy;
2. Territorial coverage and composition of the Gender and Social Protection network;
3. Clarifications related to the regional social protection study, in particular, if analysis of the access to social services of rural dwellers will be done in comparison with urban women and men;
4. Questions were also raised related to the cross-cutting nature of gender as everyone's business and existing structures to support gender mainstreaming (the last question was not very clear due to the technical problems).

The response from the Senior Gender Consultant on the questions raised were the following:

1. The regional gender strategy will be developed in due course; and the social protection study planned as a priority under my consultancy will also come up with recommendations for FAO future strategy in this area;
2. The Gender and Social Protection network is considered as a flexible tool for the purpose of the project covering the post-soviet countries and experts but with the need, can be transformed and/or adjusted to cover other countries in the region, including countries in the EU, to facilitate transfer of knowledge and expertise, and include greater number of various stakeholders according to the needs;
3. The answer was yes;
4. The gender's cross-cutting nature does not exclude the need of specialized interventions and organizational and institutional units to facilitate mainstreaming, on the contrary, it is a must. Ideally, the regional gender strategy should address these issues. (this could be developed further but the time for the sessions exhausted).

Action:

Agenda item 5: Introduction of the Regional Initiative 2 – Agri-Food Trade and Regional Integration

The Secretariat presented the current status of the implementation of Regional Initiative 2 to the members of the Executive Committee. The presentation was done by the Delivery Manager, Mr David Sedik.

The members welcomed the presentation of the results and asked to keep the Ex Com informed.

Action: REU to keep the Ex Com members informed regarding the progress of the Regional Initiative.

Agenda item 6: Informal Consultation in 2015 – Proposal and Discussion

The Secretariat presented a draft concept for holding an Informal Consultation meeting as part of the preparation process for PWB 2016-17 and for the European Regional Conference in 2016, in Turkey, and also as a part of the inter-session consultations with the members and

offering a platform for the members not present in the ERG to discuss issues of mutual interest.

The main purpose of the informal consultation 2015 would be:

- Review of the implementation of the Regional Initiatives and the 2014-2015 PWB
- Review and define the priorities for 2016/17 in order to insert them in the workplanning process towards end of 2015
- Consultation regarding additional possible Regional Initiatives for 2016/17

During the discussion the members raised a concern regarding the timing for the current Informal Consultation due to the fact that an ECA session would be held in September 2015.

It was agreed that the secretariat would provide further information and that the issue would be subject of the discussion at the next ERG meeting to get feedback and input from the members of the Region.

Action:

The secretariat would contact the ERG Chair and request to include the item on the agenda of one of the next meetings. The Secretariat would provide further background information in this context.

Agenda item 7: Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

Closing of the Session:

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for the good preparation of background documents and their support throughout the meeting.