

European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)**37/3 Meeting of the Executive Committee
20 September 2018**

Agenda item 4 – Background note
Informal Consultation, Budapest, Hungary, May 2019
Concept and proposed agenda items

Background

Within the Europe and Central Asia Region, FAO has a limited presence at country level, therefore informal consultations provide a valuable platform for interaction between the FAO Regional Office and member countries in the period between the sessions of the European Regional Conference. Implemented successfully since 2010, this mechanism, which also offers opportunities for exchanges with partners, has been well received by both programme and donor countries in the Region.

The main purpose of the informal consultations has been:

- 1) To review priorities in the Region in preparation for the Regional Conference
- 2) To inform and update the member countries of the Region on the implementation of FAO's programme of work in the Region
- 3) To facilitate an exchange of views and provide a discussion platform for all members of the European and Central Asia Region

Scope of Informal Consultation

The 31st FAO Regional Conference for Europe, May 2018, reviewed the achievements made by FAO in the Europe and Central Asia region in 2016-17 as well as priorities for FAO's work in the region in the 2018–2019 biennium. In order to better address these regional priorities, the review took into account shifts in trends and developments, as well as the lessons learned in 2016–2017. To this end, the ongoing two Regional Initiatives have been revised, and a third Regional Initiative on Sustainable natural resource management has been approved for 2018–2019. Food security and nutrition as well as gender have been embedded in the three initiatives as cross-cutting issues, e.g. through nutrition-sensitive agriculture and social protection.¹ Since then, Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) are being updated to increase focus and enhance impact of FAO's work at country level and respond to the national SDG plans. The review of the preliminary results achieved during the 2018-19 biennium and of the regional priorities, will guide the future scope of FAO's Regional Initiatives in the context of achieving the SDGs within a decade.

The 41st Session of the European Commission on Agriculture will be held in Budapest in September/October 2019 and will focus on technical issues related to plant health in

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mq752e.pdf>. C. Priorities for FAO's work in the Europe and Central Asia region, para. 21-24

consideration that the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) is foreseen to be proclaimed for 2020. The ECA session will be an integral element of the preparation to the ERC 2020, and will discuss technical issues for decision. The results of the Informal Consultation and the ECA Session will inform the agenda for the ERC 2020.

The informal consultation further offer opportunities to discuss priority themes and initiatives for the region, such as the International Decade for Family Farming (2019-2028) , the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) and progress made in achieving relevant SDGs

Agenda items proposed

Agenda item	Session format
Implementation of FAO's work in the region in 2018-2019, with a focus on the Regional Initiatives' contribution to SDGs - key challenges and opportunities	Plenary
Draft Annotated Agenda for the 41 st ECA Draft provisional annotated agenda for the 32nd ERC	Plenary
Cooperation among the Regional Technical Commissions in order to increase their contribution to the Regional Priorities	Plenary
Review of the progress in the Region during the 2018-19 biennium in line with SDGs, Climate Change Agreement and ICN2 and priorities for 2020-21 and beyond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievements and planned work related to one specific technical area to be highlighted under each respective Regional Initiative in order to have more focused debate. 	Working groups
Implications of the ongoing UN reform for a repositioned United Nations development system at country level	Working groups
Decentralization process in FAO in light of the UN reform for a repositioned United Nations development system	Panel discussion
Review of the progress on supporting countries in SDG nationalization and monitoring in the region	Working groups
Future Scope of Regional Initiatives and Country programmes to increase progress on SDGs, with a focus on SDG2	Panel discussion



Partnership for sustainable development	Panel discussion