



## PREPARATION OF THE 2021 INFORMAL CONSULTATION

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### I. Background

The Informal Consultation Meeting for Europe and Central Asia provides a platform on which the FAO Regional Office and Member countries can interact between sessions of the European Regional Conference and facilitates consultation, considering the limited presence of FAO at country level in the Europe and Central Asia region. Used successfully since 2010, this mechanism has been well received by all countries in the region.

The main purpose of the informal consultations has been:

- 1) to facilitate an exchange of views among all Members of the Europe and Central Asia region
- 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 review priorities in the region in preparation for the Regional Conference in 2022.

### II. Scope of Informal Consultation

The FAO programme in the Europe and Central Asia region for 2020-2021 is guided by the regional priorities for 2020-2021 endorsed by the 32nd FAO Regional Conference for Europe<sup>1</sup> (November 2020), based on which three Regional Initiatives are the key programmatic umbrella for the implementation of the work programme in the region. Food security and nutrition, gender and climate change have been embedded in the three initiatives as cross-cutting issues.

The Regional Initiatives act as programmatic umbrellas and support the implementation of FAO Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), contributing to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs). The review of regional priorities and preliminary results of the 2020-21 biennium as well as country needs manifested in the UNSDCF/CPFs will guide the future scope of FAO's Regional Initiatives in the context of achieving the SDGs within a decade.

The 42nd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) will be held virtually in September 2021 and will focus on technical issues related to *Transforming food systems to address and prevent all forms of malnutrition in the Europe and Central Asia region*. The ECA Session will be an integral element of the preparation to the ERC 2022, and will discuss technical issues for decision.

The discussion and results of the Informal Consultation and the ECA Session will inform on the revised regional priorities for 2022-2025<sup>2</sup> for the 33rd ERC in 2022 and will guide the workplanning in the region for the biennium 2022-2023. The Informal Consultation offers further opportunities to discuss priority

<sup>1</sup> ERC/20/REP – Report, 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe <http://www.fao.org/3/ne289en/ne289en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> ERC/20/5 WA7 - The future of food systems in Europe and Central Asia – 2022-2025 and beyond  
<http://www.fao.org/3/ne075en/ne075en.pdf>

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.

### III. Modality

The suggested dates of the Informal Consultation are 17-20 May 2021 or 24-27 May 2021.

The 2021 Informal Consultation is going to be held virtually considering the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the virtual environment does not favour a one-day event, but at the same time provides opportunity for shorter focused discussions, the Informal Consultation will be organized in four morning sessions (between 9 a.m. and 12 a.m. CET), from Monday to Thursday.

After the Kick-off meeting, we are planning to organize discussions in two different formats: 1) we present a country case study typical and specific for each regional priority in order to reflect the main focus of the respective priority area through a tangible example; 2) we organize three technical sessions focusing on a specific technical topic to highlight some of the areas of emphasis under the regional priorities. On the closing day of the event, we invite Senior Officials of the Member Countries to extend FAO's mandate for the revised regional priorities for 2022-2025.

Members will be notified in advance about the exact dates and times of the sessions, along with the draft agenda and related background papers.

### IV. The agenda

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9.00-10.30	<b>Kick off Meeting</b>  Welcome and the objectives  FAO new Strategic Framework  Implementation of Work Programme 2020-2021	<b>Country case studies</b>  Country case study 1 Under Priority 1  Country case study 2 Under Priority 2	<b>Country case studies</b>  Country case study 3 Under Priority 3  Country case study 4 Under Priority 4	<b>Senior Officials Meeting</b>  Presentation of discussions on priorities
10.30-10.40				
10.40-11.40	<b>Technical Item</b>  1 - e.g. Digitalization and innovation (tbd)	<b>Technical Item</b>  2 - e.g. One Health (tbd)	<b>Technical Item</b>  3 - e.g. Nature-based solutions (tbd)	<b>Closure</b>

The ExCom is invited to:

- review the modality and draft agenda for the Informal Consultation 2021 and provide comments, as appropriate.