

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE FIRMS STEERING COMMITTEE (FSC)

1. SESSIONS

The FSC will hold Ordinary Sessions at least once every three years. Upon request by a FSC member and with the written concurrence of at least one third of the FSC members, the FSC will hold Extraordinary Sessions to discuss matters of interest to the FSC members, as defined in Articles 5.4. and 5.5 of the Partnership Arrangement. The FIRMS Secretariat will announce the date and location of the Session at least 90 days before the date on which the Session should be held.

2. AGENDA

A provisional agenda for each Session will be prepared by the FIRMS Secretariat in collaboration with the Chairperson. The first item on the provisional agenda will be the adoption of the agenda. If funds are made available to the FIRMS Partnership, the agenda will include an element entitled "handling of financial matters". The provisional agenda will be distributed with the announcement of the Session.

3. PARTNERS' REPRESENTATIVE AT MEETINGS

Each Partner will communicate to the FIRMS Secretariat the names of its Representative, alternate Representative, advisers and other members of its delegation prior to Sessions.

4. DOCUMENTATION

Relevant documents for each Session will be, if possible, distributed by the FIRMS Secretariat to all Partners at the announcement of the Session.

5. OFFICERS

As a final agenda item at each Ordinary Session the FSC will elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from among its members; they will remain in office until the election of the new Chairperson and new Vice-Chairperson at the next Session. The outgoing Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be eligible for re-election.

The Chairperson shall be responsible for the following tasks in consultation with the FIRMS Secretariat:

5.1. Arranging such intersessional activities which may be required for the effective functioning of the FSC, including *inter alia*, holding informal technical preparatory meetings, holding meetings of regional or subject groups, preparation of working papers, and communication by correspondence.

5.2. Preparing the draft agenda for the next Session (Ordinary or Extraordinary)

5.3. Monitoring progress made by FIRMS Secretariat on the implementation of decisions taken by the FSC.

6. EXPENSES

The FIRMS Secretariat will not bear the expenses incurred by delegates, including Representative and alternate Representative, attending Sessions of the FSC

7. WORKING LANGUAGE

English will be the working language of the FSC.

8. DECISION MAKING

All decisions of the FSC, including amendments to these Rules of Procedure, will be taken by consensus of all FSC members attending the Session unless this is specified differently in these Rules of Procedure.

9. REPORTS

At each Session the FSC will adopt a report of the Session that will be made publicly available by the FSC Secretariat.

10. NEW PARTNERS

10 a) Identification and communication

Potential partners may be identified by the FSC or apply directly to the FIRMS Secretariat. In both cases, potential partners should communicate formally their interest to become member of the FIRMS Partnership to the FIRMS Secretariat.

All applicant partners should provide evidence that they comply with the criteria established in the Partnership Arrangement.

10 b) Endorsement and objection

The FSC should endorse the new Partners at the Sessions of the FSC (Ordinary or Extraordinary) or, in case the potential partner is identified or applies to be a member between Sessions, by email correspondence between FSC members. Unless there is an objection from any of the FSC members within 30 days upon proposal, the applicant Partner will become a new member of the FIRMS Partnership and the FSC. In case of objection by any of the FSC members, the endorsement of the applicant Partner will be reconsidered at the next FSC Session (Ordinary or Extraordinary).

11. OBSERVERS

The FIRMS Partnership shall promote transparency in its activities and new membership.

Therefore, national institutions, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations may, upon request to the FIRMS Secretariat at least 90 days before the Session, be invited to be represented by an Observer at the FSC Sessions.

The FIRMS Secretariat will circulate the request for observer status to the FSC members who shall respond within thirty days with their concurrence or objection. A FSC member who fails to make an objection within 30 days shall be deemed to have concurred with the request for observer status. An Observer may submit memoranda and participate in the discussions, but will not participate in decision-making.