

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP

ORGANIC FARMING

THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP ON ORGANIC FARMING,

Having regard to Commission Decision setting up the group¹

Having regard to the standard rules of procedure of expert groups²,

HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RULES OF PROCEDURE:

Point 1

Operation of the group

The group shall act at the request of the Chair from DG Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), in compliance with the Commission's horizontal rules on expert groups³ ('the horizontal rules').

Point 2

Convening a meeting

1. Meetings of the group are convened by the Chair, with the agreement of DG AGRI either on its own initiative, or at the request of a simple majority of members after DG AGRI has given its agreement.
2. Joint meetings of the group with other groups may be convened to discuss matters falling within their respective areas of responsibility.
3. In principle, meetings of the group shall be held on Commission premises or virtually, depending on the circumstances.

Point 3

Agenda

1. The secretariat shall draw up the agenda under the responsibility of the Chair and send it to the members of the group.
2. The agenda shall be adopted by the group at the start of the meeting.

¹ Commission Decision 2013/767/EU of 16 December 2013 and Commission Decision (EU) 2021/1112 of 25 June 2021 amending Decision 2013/767/EU as regards the extension of the mandate of the member organisations of the civil dialogue groups dealing with matters covered by the common agricultural policy [OJ L 239/24 of 7 July 2021].

² C(2016) 3301, Annex 3.

³ C(2016) 3301.

Point 4

Documentation to be sent to group members

1. The secretariat shall send the invitation to the meeting and the draft agenda to the group members no later than 14 calendar days before the date of the meeting.
2. The secretariat shall send documents on which the group is consulted to the group members no later than 14 calendar days before the date of the meeting.
3. In urgent or exceptional cases, the time limits for sending the documentation mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2 may be reduced to 5 and 2 calendar days respectively before the date of the meeting.

Point 5

Opinions of the group

The group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus.

Point 6

Sub-groups

1. DG AGRI may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by DG AGRI. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the the horizontal rules and shall report to the main Civil Dialogue Group. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.
2. The members of the sub-groups that are not members of the main group shall be selected via a public call for applications, in compliance with the horizontal rules⁴.

Point 7

Invited experts

DG AGRI may invite experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda to take part in the work of the group or working groups on an *ad hoc* basis.

Point 8

Observers

1. Organisations may be granted an observer status, in compliance with the horizontal rules, by direct invitation.
2. Organisations appointed as observers shall nominate their representatives.
3. Observers and their representatives may be permitted by the Chair to take part in the discussions of the group and sub-groups and provide expertise. However, they shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations or advice of the group and its sub-groups.

⁴ C(2016) 3301, Articles 10 and 14.2.

Point 9

Written procedure

1. If necessary, the group's opinion or recommendation on a specific question may be delivered via a written procedure. To this end, the secretariat shall send the group members the document(s) on which the group is being consulted.
2. However, if a simple majority of group members asks for the question to be examined at a meeting of the group, the written procedure shall be terminated without result and the Chair shall convene a meeting of the group as soon as possible.

Point 10

Secretariat

DG AGRI shall provide secretarial support for the group and any sub-groups.

Point 11

Minutes of the meetings

Minutes on the discussion on each point on the agenda and on the opinions delivered by the group shall be meaningful and complete. Minutes shall be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the Chair.

Point 12

Attendance list

1. At each meeting, the secretariat shall draw up, under the responsibility of the Chair, an attendance list also specifying, the organisations, to which the participants belong.
2. Only the experts registered in due time before the meeting via the dedicated system - Advanced Gateway to your Meetings (AGM) - , are authorised to join the meeting.
3. In the case of online meetings, the experts who are identified in AGM receive a connection link, which should not be further shared or disseminated.
4. Consequently, only the experts registered via AGM will be included in the list of participants accompanying each meeting minutes.

Point 13

Correspondence

1. Correspondence relating to the group shall be addressed to DG AGRI for the attention of the Chair.
2. Correspondence for group members shall be sent to the e-mail address which they provide for that purpose.

3. The Commission publishes, on a dedicated website, all relevant documents such as agendas, summary record etc. only for the Member organisations of a Civil Dialogue Group.
4. The address to the website dedicated for this is <https://circabc.europa.eu/>. The Member organisations shall request the Directorate-General to have access to CIRCABC.⁵

Point 14

Transparency

1. The group and its sub-groups shall be registered on the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups').
2. As concerns the group composition, the following data shall be published on the Register of expert groups:
 - (a) the name of member organisations, the interest represented shall be disclosed;
 - (b) the name of observers.
3. DG AGRI shall make available all relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, via a link from the Register of Commission expert groups to a dedicated website: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/civil-dialogue-groups>. Access to dedicated websites shall not be submitted to user registration or any other restriction. In particular, DG AGRI shall publish the agenda and other relevant background documents in due time ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall only be possible where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001⁶.

Point 15

Access to documents

Applications for access to documents held by the group shall be handled in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001⁷.

⁵ To access this website in CIRCABC a specific user id and password is required. One single access per Member organisation shall be requested.

⁶ These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court proceedings and legal advice, inspections/investigations/audits and the institution's decision-making process.

⁷ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43).

Point 16

Deliberations

In agreement with DG AGRI the group may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations shall be public.