

## **RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE RURAL PACT COORDINATION GROUP**

THE RURAL PACT COORDINATION GROUP ('the group'),

Having regard to the creation of the group by Directorate-General Agriculture and Rural Development ('DG AGRI') and Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy ('DG REGIO')

HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RULES OF PROCEDURE:

### *Point 1*

#### **Operation of the group**

The group shall act according to the mandate defined by DG AGRI and DG REGIO, in compliance with its terms of reference.

### *Point 2*

#### **Convening a meeting**

1. Meetings of the group are convened by the Rural Pact Support Office, on behalf of the Chair and with the agreement of DG AGRI and DG REGIO.
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 premises designated by the Commission or virtually, depending on the circumstances.

### *Point 3*

#### **Agenda**

1. The secretariat shall draw up the agenda with the support of the Rural Pact Support Office, 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.

### *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 preferably no later than ten calendar days before the date of the meeting.
2. The secretariat shall send documents on which the group is expected to exchange to the group members preferably no later than ten 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 five calendar days before the date of the meeting.

#### *Point 5*

### **Opinions of the group**

1. As far as possible, the group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus.
2. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by simple majority of the members. The members that have voted against or abstained shall have the right to have a document summarising the reasons for their position annexed to the opinions, recommendations or reports.

#### *Point 6*

### **Sub-groups**

1. DG AGRI and DG REGIO may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by DG AGRI and DG REGIO. The participation to the sub-groups shall be open to all members of the Rural Pact Coordination Group. Sub-groups on specific topics can be organised, including mirroring topics that were proposed by other entities such as the Rural Observatory. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the the present rules of procedure and the terms of reference of the group and shall report to the group. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.

#### *Point 7*

### **Invited experts**

DG AGRI and DG REGIO or the (sub-) group itself 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 sub-groups on an *ad hoc* basis.

#### *Point 8*

### **Observers**

1. Individuals, organisations and public entities different from the entities represented by the member of the group may be granted an observer status by direct invitation.
2. Organisations and public entities 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 have voting rights and shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations or advice of the group and its sub-groups.

*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 and DG REGIO shall provide secretarial support for the group and any sub-groups with the support of the Rural Pact Support Office (RPSO).

*Point 11*

**Minutes of the meetings**

Minutes on the meeting shall reflect the content of the discussion and the decisions taken. Minutes shall be drafted by the Rural Pact Support Office and approved by DG AGRI, DG REGIO and the members of the group.

*Point 12*

**Attendance list**

At each meeting, the secretariat shall draw up, under the responsibility of the Chair, an attendance list also specifying, where appropriate, the organisations, Member States' authorities or EU institutions and bodies to which the participants belong<sup>1</sup>.

*Point 14*

**Correspondence**

1. Correspondence relating to the group shall be addressed to DG AGRI and DG REGIO, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the representatives of organisations, Member States' authorities or EU institutions and bodies may be included only subject to their prior freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous consent, in compliance with Article 3(15) and Article 7 of Regulation 2018/1725.

*Point 15*

**Transparency**

1. As concerns the group composition, the following data may be published on a dedicated website:
  - (a) the name of Member States' authorities;
  - (b) the name of other public entities, including EU institutions and bodies;
  - (c) the name of individuals appointed to represent a common interest; the interest represented shall be disclosed;
  - (d) the name of member organisations; the interest represented shall be disclosed;
  - (e) the name of observers.
2. DG AGRI and DG REGIO shall make available all relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, on a dedicated website, where this information can be found. Access to dedicated websites shall not be submitted to user registration or any other restriction. In particular, DG AGRI and DG REGIO 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° 1049/2001<sup>2</sup>.

*Point 16*

**Access to documents**

Applications for access to documents held by the group shall be handled in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001<sup>3</sup>.

*Point 17*

**Deliberations**

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

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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).