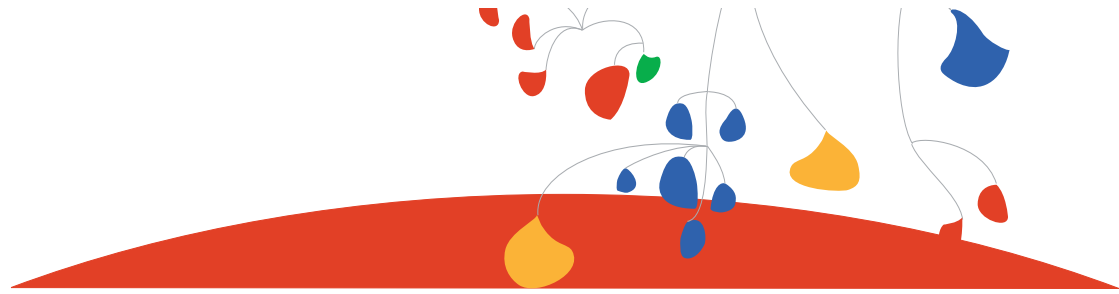




AMIS Agricultural Market
Information System



AGRICULTURAL MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEM

THIRD SESSION OF THE AMIS RAPID RESPONSE FORUM

Canberra, Australia

Thursday, 6 March 2014

Process for electing the AMIS Chair

PURPOSE

To suggest some simple guiding principles for the election of the AMIS chair that could explain how this may work under the current AMIS Rules of Procedure (ROP), and encourage stability and continuity when the chair changes.

KEY ISSUES

At the February 2013 AMIS Rapid Response Forum (RRF) meeting, participants raised the issues of the length of the AMIS chairing term; the need for rules for electing the chair, and the need for a succession plan. AMIS participants saw value in continuity between chairs and in having a clear process and common understanding for choosing successive chairs.

The ROP do not indicate how or when the election of the chair should occur, only that the chair should be elected from among the AMIS participating countries, for a period of one year:

4. Chair: the participants in AMIS elect a Chair country from among the countries participating in AMIS to preside over meetings of the [RRF] and the [Global Food Market] Information Group (IG). The Chair country is elected for one year.

Some areas where it may help to clarify the usual practice or agree to some guiding principles for best practice include:

- To date the process has been relatively informal and resulted in only one country being nominated, and hence elected unopposed. There is no precedent for how the chair would be elected if there were more than one nomination, or if there were no nominations, or if the nominees received equal support.
- Where the chair is selected from nominations on the day of the election (historically, the day of the RRF meeting), this precludes voting by AMIS participating countries who cannot attend the RRF meeting. Some AMIS participants have suggested that advance notice of nominations is preferable.

- Some AMIS participants have questioned whether the chairing term of one year is too short. This might reduce the efficiency with which AMIS participants oversee initiatives lasting more than one year. On the other hand, increasing the length of the term might give fewer countries the chance to chair AMIS. Currently there is nothing to prevent an incumbent chair from nominating for re-election for a second year (as acknowledged at Attachment A). If participants wished to change this, the ROP may need modification.

SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES FOR ELECTING THE AMIS CHAIR

The attached suggested principles about the election of the chair attempt to resolve most of these issues, and largely confirm existing practice to date. They are intended to be in keeping with the informal nature of the RRF and so are not meant to bind participants. As they are consistent with the ROP, there is no need to alter the ROP.

It is proposed that these principles be discussed at the March 2014 RRF meeting, and if adopted, put to immediate use in electing the next AMIS chair.

PROPOSED OUTCOME

AMIS participants agree to the guiding principles for transition between AMIS chairs, Attachment A.

ATTACHMENT A

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SMOOTH TRANSITION BETWEEN AMIS CHAIRS

Eligibility for nomination

1. An AMIS participating country may nominate to chair for successive terms (for up to three years).
2. Rotation or balance over the years between chairs from different regions or economic groupings would be encouraged.
3. The international organisations involved in AMIS are observers at the election.
4. Nominations should be announced no later than three weeks before the annual RRF meeting, such as by writing to the AMIS Secretariat, or when the agenda item comes around. Early announcement is preferable because it helps participants prepare for the vote.
5. AMIS participating countries may self-nominate for chair or be nominated by another AMIS participating country (but if they are nominated by another participant they are not bound to accept it).

Decision by consensus

1. As a G20 initiative, AMIS participants will make efforts to elect the new chair by consensus.
2. In the case that discussion does not produce a consensus, a ballot could be held.

Voting

1. Each AMIS participating country has one vote, and the incumbent chair does not have an additional (casting) vote typical of more formal voting methods.
2. The vote could be by show of hands (equally, other voting methods would be possible, for example, secret ballot).
3. In the case that there are more than two candidates nominated and discussion does not produce a consensus, a succession of ballots could be held, with the candidates attracting the least votes withdrawing after each round, until there is only one candidate.

4. AMIS participating countries could vote by sending a representative to the RRF meeting, or by written advice to the AMIS Secretariat where nominations are received before the meeting.

Transition to new chair

1. The election of the AMIS chair would usually be a last standing item on the agenda of the annual RRF meeting, and the result recorded in the chair's summary of the RRF meeting.
2. The AMIS participating country elected should advise the AMIS Secretariat as soon as possible after the election the individual who will hold the position.
3. The elected chair takes over at the October IG meeting following the RRF meeting at which they are elected, and continues for one year.
4. In the interim period between the election and assuming chair responsibilities, the outgoing chair, the incoming chair and the AMIS Secretariat should work closely together to ensure a smooth handover, such as consultation on agendas and significant RRF work.