



Global Donor Platform
for Rural Development

Global Donor Platform for Rural Development Board Meeting

30 November 2020

Participants

1. **Co-chairs:** David Hegwood (USAID), Paul van de Logt (The Netherlands), Conrad Rein (EC)
2. **Board Members:** Ammad Bahalim (BMGF), Fabrizio Moscatelli (BMGF), Oriane Barthélemy (MEFA France), Marco Platzer (IADC Italy), Federica de Gaetano (IADC Italy), Paolo Enrico Sertoli (IADC Italy), Ron Hartman (IFAD), Sanna-Liisa Taivalmaa (MFA Finland), Tristan Armstrong (DFAT), Ueli Mauderli (SDC), Martin Fregene (AfDB), Karen Johnson (FCDO), Boris Buechler (GIZ), Sung Lee (USAID)
3. **Guests:** Jim Woodhill, Mandakini Devasher (Independent Consultants)
4. **Platform Secretariat:** Maurizio Navarra, Sylvia Otieno, Roberta Croce
5. **Apologies:** Iris Krebber (FCDO), Maurizio Bonavia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Italy), Chris Penrose-Buckley (FCDO), Willem Wefers Bettink (IFAD), Atsuko Toda (AfDB), Bernhard Worm (BMZ)

Agenda

1. Introduction and welcome
2. Process leading to the development and launching of the Strategic Plan
3. Key messages from the Consultant Team
4. Initial reactions
5. Performance and achievement
6. Membership and funding
7. Purpose and objective
8. Future focus
9. Future operations
10. Development of Strategic Plan

Agenda Point	Overview, Discussions, Decisions, and Agreements
1. Process leading to the development and launching of the Strategic Plan	Secretariat gave a brief explanation of the process leading to the development of the new Strategic Plan and the key milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Board meeting should focus on the proposed recommendations, for comments and approval.2. After the Board meeting, the stocktaking report will be reshared with the Board for any additional comment and final endorsement of the proposed recommendations.3. Only after the Board has finished reviewing the report, will it be circulated to the broader Platform membership.4. The drafting of the Strategic Plan will start in parallel and a first version will be presented to the Board in January 2021.5. After review by the Board, the Plan will be shared with the Platform membership and a discussion/presentation will be organized prior to the launch.
2. Key messages from the Consultant team	The Consultant team presented key messages from the Stocktaking report particularly highlighting the following areas:



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The methodology used and analysis framework • Key messages • Contradictions and dilemmas that hinder the Platform’s potential • Value-added of the Platform • Performance • Governance and membership • Future directions <p>(Presentation to be shared with these minutes)</p>
<p>3. Initial reactions</p>	<p>USAID highlighted two prominent issues: Firstly, how the Platform works and is organized, particularly with regards to the thematic working groups. Secondly, membership, and he recalled that during the 2019 AGA, members generally had different views on the Platform’s membership, but one commonality was that the more inclusive the Platform’s membership is, the more it can appeal to other donor organizations.</p> <p>EC noted the renewed definition of “advocacy” into “strategic influencing”. He stressed that while the donor focus of the Platform should not change, it is also important to reach out to other types of organizations, to strengthen the Platform. Finally, with regards to membership, there is a need to increase the Platform’s membership, but the Board composition should only be limited to paying members.</p> <p>The Netherlands highlighted three main points. Firstly, the need to think about and preserve the Platform’s value, especially in enabling networking and coordination amongst donor organizations. Secondly, the Platform does not necessarily have to promote its own brand, but it should be clear that it plays a role in building alliances that translate into clear activities - for example, the recent COVID-19 task force. Finally, they are open to having a structure of inner and outer circle within the Platform’s membership, as the Platform might lose its unique identity and role if its membership is broadened excessively.</p> <p>IADC noted that membership capacity and better engagement of each member is fundamental to reach the Platform’s objectives.</p> <p>DFAT pointed out that the strategic influence/engagement and membership are critical and interlinked. Membership is largely dependent on the degree of success in strategic influencing.</p> <p>MFA Finland emphasized the need for the Platform to be more agile in the context of a rapidly changing landscape. The recommendation for the Platform to find new ways of working is important. MFA Finland also sought clarification on what the term “strategic influence/approach” meant concretely in practice and how to put it into practice. Finally, she also inquired about the proposed recommendation to promote high-level engagement in the Platform, asking how high this level needs to be, and how to get there.</p> <p>IFAD noted that they are glad that there is still support for the Platform. Strategic Planning is critical to outline the Platform’s future value proposition. Secondly, there is a need to concretely define what high-level engagement means, how it can be better achieved, and potential results. Thirdly, there is a lot of ongoing discussions (partly provoked by COVID-19) around how agriculture and rural development systems come together more effectively. Looking into how the Platform can contribute to this discussion will be valuable. Lastly, it would be good for the Strategic Plan to reflect on administrative issues given time and resource constraints.</p>



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	<p>SDC noted that there is an impression that the Platform is not moving forward, given that some of the proposed recommendations are similar to those of previous years. The thematic working group recommendations from the last 2019 AGA can help the Consultant team rethink some of the proposed recommendations. Also stressed the importance of linking more with the country-level.</p> <p>BMGF noted that one overarching point that needs clarification is around what is meant by strategic influencing, specifically how that will be technically implemented, as well as the target audience. They also inquired about the thinking and rationale behind the inclusion of the term ‘food systems’ in the mission statement.</p> <p>AfDB also stressed the importance of clearly defining “strategic influencing” and what it means in practice, as this is where the Platform has the potential for a positive change. Also stressed on the need for looking into how to best share some of the knowledge/information generated from different Platform’s activities.</p>
<p>4. Performance and achievement</p>	<p>Recommendations 1.1. and 1.2: The team will take into consideration BMGF’S comments on the thinking and rationale behind the use of the term “food systems” – whether food systems deserve to be mentioned in the vision and mission of the Platform.</p> <p>Recommendation 2.1: Members generally support the use of the term “strategic influencing”, but the team needs to define it more explicitly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IADC inquired about the difference between strategic influencing and advocacy in practical terms. <p>Recommendation 2.2: Members broadly agree that the engagement of senior management is instrumental for the Platform’s viability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Netherlands sought clarification on the level of seniority that should be targeted and noted that this recommendation is instrumental in pushing the Platform forward. This recommendation should be phrased more operationally. • FCDO in line with MFA Finland’s comments stressed the need of reflecting agility and responsiveness in the high-level recommendations.
<p>5. Membership and funding</p>	<p>USAID noted that there will always be a core membership group within the Platform. However, he also pointed out that this does not necessarily mean that paying members are more committed than non-paying members. Some potential non-paying members may not be able to pay, due to internal administrative reasons, rather than lack of interest and willingness to join the Platform. The proposed membership and funding recommendations make sense, but the Platform needs to be realistic and practical going forward. The Platform should be flexible when it comes to the membership issue.</p> <p>MEFA France inquired whether the Board will still have the final say with regards to new membership requests. In response, Jim Woodhill stated that even though this has not been explained explicitly in the recommendations, it was assumed that it will remain the same.</p> <p>The Netherlands supports the proposal to keep only donors as the core group. This does not include only bilateral agencies, but also multilateral organizations that operate as donors, e.g. international financial institutions like the World Bank and IFAD. The services offered should also be very clear so that the Platform can have a clear proposition for donors to contribute. Board is not an instrument to direct the funding, but it is an instrument to direct the Platform. The proposition to raise paying membership seems premature at this stage – it is important for the Platform to target value rather</p>



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	<p>numbers. The Platform should also encourage paying members to contribute with supplementary funds to support specific activities.</p> <p>EC added that the proposed membership categories are clear. There is a need to have a difference between members and non-paying members.</p> <p>USAID in response to MEFA France’s question also noted that the Board will always have to decide on any new membership request received. With regards to multilateral organizations, the Platform Board can handle this on a need-basis in the future, based on membership requests. There is a need to have some sort of guidelines, but the Platform should not be so rigid about it.</p>
<p>6. Purpose and objectives</p>	<p>The Netherlands stated that they agree with the proposed purpose, objectives, and focus. Due to limited capacity, the Strategic Plan should be more operational and targeted at how to better promote donor coordination to make donors more responsive to upcoming challenges.</p> <p>Recommendation 4.1 and 4.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IADC sought clarification about the difference between 4.1 and 4.2. In response, Jim Woodhill explained that the current Platform Charter is outdated. This is purely a practical and administrative issue rather than a fundamental one. This can be done after the endorsement of the new Strategic Plan. <p>Recommendation 4.3: Need to make the proposed result-oriented plan clearer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEFA France inquired about the difference between advocacy and strategic influencing. Also sought clarifications on what sort of results can be expected from the proposed “results-oriented plan”. She also supported the proposal for an annual senior-level ‘heads of sector’ meeting, to help build the profile of both the Platform and food security and rural development issues. In response, Jim Woodhill used the SDG2 Roadmap working group and its workstreams as an example for explaining what expected results are and how the Platform can achieve them. With regards to the level of engagement, he further highlighted the following two levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement of heads of agriculture, food rural development in each agency. ○ Engagement of people beyond agriculture to discuss issues in a broader context with other issues (multi-sectoral approach). • SDC pointed out that it will be interesting to conduct annual monitoring and analysis on how much donors spend on food security and rural development sector versus partner governments. • USAID in line with SDC’s comments noted that the G7 Food Security working group started tracking donor support for food security and nutrition a few years ago. It makes sense and there is a foundation for donors to make such an annual analysis. • MEFA France also added that it is a good and interesting idea to monitor expenditure, but also mentioned that there is a critique of the G7 large expenditure in this sector, yet the number of hungry people keeps increasing. Thus, the need for explanation on the numbers. <p>Recommendation 4.4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IADC sought clarification of what is meant by the diverse set of modalities through which the Platform needs to engage at the thematic level, and whether this has already been defined. In response, Jim Woodhill explained that the idea is that not everything needs to be structured through topic-oriented thematic working groups but some can flexible and



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	<p>time-bound task forces focused on specific events, knowledge-sharing, etc. that would benefit the membership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCDO stressed the importance of continuing the work of successful working groups i.e. Land and SDG2. <p>Recommendation 4.7: Use of the term “food systems” instead of agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMGF no strong concerns about it, but this change might have implications within some member agencies, for example different departments may be assigned to deal with these two distinct issues. • The Netherlands in response to BMGF noted that where food systems will be positioned is yet to be seen. But the focus on the global agenda right now is that agricultural development must be connected to other issues such as environment, nutrition, and employment. So, the use of the term food systems does not necessarily mean a shift from agriculture, but that agriculture should be interconnected to other sectors as well.
<p>7. Future operations</p>	<p>Recommendation 5.1: Wording should not imply moving completely away from working groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IADC inquired about the kinds of results that can be considered under point c. There is a need to have some sort of visibility for example through publications/ policy papers. <p>Recommendation 5.2: Should be clearer on what exactly is expected from Co-chairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Netherlands noted that the current chairmanship model works well, but the focus should be put on active participation rather than numbers. It is also important that the chairmanship represents the scope of donors. • USAID added that it makes sense to leave the number of Co-Chairs open but focus on active participation. <p>Recommendation 5.3: Keep the Secretariat more flexible by allowing the hiring of consultants on a need basis.</p> <p>Recommendation 5.5: Outline for Strategic Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Netherlands suggested that operational focus be discussed after the revised vision, mission, and objective and not towards the end. The focus should be more on operational priorities rather than on thematic priorities. Revised funding, membership, and governance come earlier than expected. • FCDO questioned the thinking behind listing knowledge and convening as the third objective despite the findings showing that it is the most valued Platform service. In response, Jim Woodhill explained that it was placed third as arguably the networking and convening can be thought of as a means to an end. • The Netherlands added that in his view, the networking and convening enable strategic influencing and not the other way around. Networking is a valuable Platform asset, as it enables information sharing amongst donors. A bigger network also allows for enhanced influence.
<p>8. Development of Strategic Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Consultant team will use the revised recommendations as a basis to start developing the new Strategic Plan. The first draft should be ready in January 2021 and will be shared with Board members for feedback in mid-January. The revised draft will then be shared with the broader membership for further review and endorsement. • Jim Woodhill inquired about the content of the Strategic Plan: whether it be more detailed on the substance or the operational side. In response, the Secretariat noted that in line



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with the February 2020 Board meeting, the board prefers to have a more general outline rather than being too specific.

Agenda Point	Task	Responsible	Timeline
Stocktake Report	Secretariat to circulate the draft report to board members for further written feedback/comments	Secretariat Board members	By Tue 8 th December 2020
	Consultant team to incorporate the comments and finalize the report	Consultant team	End of December
Strategic Plan	Drafting the Strategic Plan and presenting the first version to board members for comments	Consultant team Secretariat	Mid-January 2021
	Incorporating Board comments to the draft Strategic Plan and presenting it to the broader membership for endorsement	Consultant team Secretariat	By February 2021