STRATEGIC PLAN
2016 – 2020

Championing the transformation of agriculture, food systems and rural livelihoods
# Table of Contents

Abbreviations 02  
Executive Summary 03  

1. **Background** 05  
   - Introduction 05  
   - Context 05  
   - New global aspirations 05  

2. **The Functions of the Platform** 07  
   - Knowledge-sharing 07  
   - Advocacy 07  
   - Networking 07  
   - Strategic focus 08  
   - 2030 Agenda 08  
   - Agricultural and rural transformation 08  

3. **Vision and Mission** 08  
   - Vision 08  
   - Mission 08  

4. **Results Framework** 09  
   - Outcomes 09  
   - Outputs 10  

5. **Platform Governance** 11  
   - Membership 11  
   - Board 12  
   - Contact points 12  
   - Partnerships 12  
   - Secretariat 12  

6. **Funding** 13  
   - Core funding 13  
   - Supplementary funding for thematic work 13  

7. **Output Management and Results** 14  
   - Output management 14  
   - Work planning processes 14  
   - Task management 14  
   - Results monitoring 14  
   - Performance management 15  

**ANNEXES** 16  
1. Theory of Change 16  
2. Thematic Working Group Processes 17  
3. Operationalising Supplementary Funding for Platform Activities 18  
4. Platform Partners’ Engagement Principles 19
Abbreviations

AAA
Accra Action Agenda

AAAA
Addis Ababa Action Agenda

AGA
Annual General Assembly

ARD
Agriculture and rural development

AWPBA
Annual work plan and budget

BRICS
Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

CAADP
Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme

CFS
Committee on World Food Security

CGAP
Consultative Group to Assist the Poor

COP
Conference of the Parties

CP
Contact Point

CSO
Civil society organisation

CSR
Corporate social responsibility

DAC
Development Assistance Committee

DCED
Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

DE
Development effectiveness

DFID
UK Department for International Development

DWG
Donor working group

FAO
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN

FID
Financing for Development

FP
Focal Point

GACSA
Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture

GAFSP
Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme

GDN
Global Development Network

GIZ
German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation

GPEDC
Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

HLF
High level forum

ICAI
Independent Commission for Aid Impact

IFAD
International Fund for Agricultural Development

KIT
Royal Tropical Institute

LDC
Less developed country

M&E
Monitoring and evaluation

M4P
Markets for the Poor

MDB
Multilateral development bank

MYP0W
Multi-year programme of work

NAFSN
G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

NEPAD
New Partnership for Africa’s Development

NGO
Non-governmental organisation

NTD
Non-traditional donor

ODA
Official Development Assistance

OECD
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

SDC
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SDG
Sustainable Development Goal

SEEP
Small Enterprise Education and Promotion Network

SP
Strategic Plan

TWG
Thematic Working Group

WEF
World Economic Forum

WTO
World Trade Organisation
Executive Summary

Introduction
The Platform was formed in 2003 through the collective action of a group of donors who decided to lobby for increased investment in agriculture and to promote the idea of aid effectiveness through donor harmonisation. This Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 (SP), has emerged from extensive consultations with Platform members and partners, a ‘brainstorming’ session with Focal Points (FPs) and the conclusions and recommendations of the 2015 External Evaluation.

New Global Aspirations
2015 is an opportune moment for the Platform to revisit its Strategic Plan. It marks the end date of the MDGs and the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) aimed at ending all poverty and achieving zero hunger by 2030. The relationship between developing and developed countries, reflected in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), is also changing. Results, transparency and accountability are the key indicators of donor success in achieving development effectiveness and there are many new opportunities for partnerships to further this. At the same time, there is new thinking about rural development under the banner of ‘rural transformation’ that is about the process of improving the environment within which rural people make their living. The continued donor commitment to food and nutrition security and to the role of sustainable agriculture in global food systems is reflected in the G20 and G7 initiatives. At COP21 a historic agreement was reached to keep global warming ‘well below 2° C’, and committed US$100 billion per year to help poor countries to cope with climate change. It also recognised the priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger and the particular vulnerability of food production systems to the impact of climate change.

The Functions of the Platform
In 2013 the Platform agreed on new functions: advocacy, knowledge-sharing and networking. These new roles offer an opportunity for the Platform to champion rural development including food systems, food and nutrition security. The Platform offers a neutral convening space in which members are able to work together on issues of common interest, share experience and expertise, and to network informally with other ARD professionals. Effective knowledge-sharing means better development results. The Platform will strengthen its role in knowledge-sharing through systematising and streamlining its management of knowledge resources. Effective advocacy will be built upon solid evidence and clear messages from the Platform’s own knowledge products around the strategic focus of the 2030 Agenda and agricultural and rural transformation.

Vision and Mission
The Platform’s new vision is of prosperous rural communities underpinning global food and nutrition security, built upon economically, socially and environmentally sustainable agriculture that also addresses inequalities. Its mission is to use its knowledge network to enhance development results in agriculture and rural livelihoods through better informed donor development policy and programming.

The Platform’s strategic focus is aligned to the 2030 Agenda and targets the transformation of agriculture and food systems as part of a broader rural transformation approach. It views the goals of economic, social and environmental sustainability through a rural lens, alert to the particular challenges in rural areas including gender equality, empowerment for women and girls, employment, especially of youth, and to the voice of civil society such as farmer organisations.
OUTCOME

The Platform contributes to a single main outcome:
Evidence-based donor policies and programmes for sustainable agriculture and rural transformation enhance food and nutrition security, economic growth and reduce poverty and inequality in rural development.

OUTPUTS

The Platform contributes to this outcome through four outputs:
1. 2030 Agenda priorities related to ARD and rural transformation issues addressed.
2. Strategic thematic work conducted that adds value in line with the strategic focus.
3. Key knowledge and lessons communicated through a new, coherent and imaginative approach to outreach.
4. Strategic partnerships formed with a diverse range of institutions to enhance development results through studies, joint advocacy and links with developing countries and regional networks, the private sector and civil society.

Platform Governance

The Platform is a network of donor organisations. Full members are those organisations that pay the annual membership-fee of €50,000, nominating senior staff to become the organisation’s representative to the Platform, whilst naming ‘Contact Points’ [CPs] to manage the two-way flow of communications with the Platform. The Platform actively seeks to expand membership, especially by non-traditional donors. Organisations that do not pay the full membership-fee are Associate Members. The Board champions agriculture, food and nutrition security and rural development, taking a long-term strategic view, and guaranteeing the quality of its outputs. Membership offers an opportunity for senior member representatives to benefit from the Platform’s convening role in knowledge-sharing, discussing important strategic issues, and to contribute to learning and high level advocacy.

The focus on learning demands a wide variety of partnerships to expand the base of knowledge, learning and advocacy beyond donor members. Formal and informal strategic partnerships will be formed with other networks and platforms in order to build upon the synergies of mutually shared objectives.

The Platform secretariat is empowered to act within the framework of the agreed multi-year programme of work, and its professional capacity will be strengthened, especially in knowledge management.

The Platform encourages members to make multi-year pledges for the agreed programme of work on the basis of a reinvigorated vision and programme. Supplementary funding will be sought for thematic work [see Annex 3]. A multi-year programme of work (MYPOW), launched in 2016, will cover the first 2 – 3 years of the SP period. The first MYPOW will be the subject of extensive consultation with members during the early part of 2016. The system for managing outputs will be strengthened, and thematic working groups [TWG], led by members, will manage each task.
1. Background

Introduction
The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (the ‘Platform’) was created in 2003 and currently comprises 38 bilateral and multilateral donors, multilateral development banks, intergovernmental organisations and development agencies. The Platform is a network of donor organisations and agencies engaged in delivering international development assistance in the field of agriculture, food and nutrition security and rural development.

This Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 (SP) builds upon the current Strategic Plan (2012 – 2015). It has emerged from extensive consultations with members and partners over a period of three months, and a ‘brainstorming’ session with Focal Points (FPs) hosted by SDC in Thun, Switzerland, 8 – 9 October 2015. It was also informed by the conclusions and recommendations of the 2015 External Evaluation.

Context
The Platform was formed through the collective action of a group of donors who agreed that agriculture in developing countries was neglected. There had been a secular decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to agriculture. An all-time low was hit in 2003 of less than US$2 billion per year (4.5% of total ODA) from a peak of US$10 billion per year and 20% of total ODA in 1979. Evidence was also emerging to indicate that investing in agriculture is the most effective way to reduce poverty. At the same time, the idea was gaining currency that there were benefits to developing countries and donors if the donors worked better together, harmonised their approaches and aligned behind national programmes. This was formalised in Rome with the 2003 Declaration on Harmonisation, and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005.

As a donor network, the Platform was well positioned to address both these emerging trends in development assistance. It lobbied strongly for increased investment in agriculture and also played an important part in the Accra 3rd HLF (2008) on Aid Effectiveness, and the 4th HLF in Busan that followed in 2011.

Despite its title, the Platform has focused overwhelmingly on agriculture and food security. Its work in advocating for increased investment in agriculture received a boost in the World Bank’s World Development Report 2008 entitled “Agriculture for Development”, a report in which the Platform played an important consultative role. The high food price crisis in 2008 highlighted the urgent need for more investment in agriculture and its share in ODA began to rise. In 2012/13, total bilateral and multilateral concessional disbursement to agriculture and rural development was US$9.7 billion or 9.9% of sector allocable aid.

An independent External Evaluation of the Platform in 2015 concluded that the Platform is ‘relevant’, operates ‘efficiently’, is ‘effective’ and, notwithstanding the fragile nature of its funding, is ‘sustainable’.

New global aspirations
2015 is an opportune moment for the Platform to revisit its Strategic Plan. Several different strands have come together to create a renewed global aid environment. The Platform’s Strategic Initiative

---

1 GDPRD: Final Evaluation Report, KIT (Royal Tropical Institute), The Netherlands, May 2015,
2 Constant 2013 prices; OECD-DAC www.oecd.org/stats/agriculture
Post-2015 is designed to help donors in agriculture and rural development (ARD) to respond creatively to the opportunities to make their development efforts more effective. It is doing this by identifying key issues and gaps in knowledge needed by donors to enhance the effectiveness of their ARD policies and programmes through the selection of new work themes.

**2030 Agenda.** 2015 marks the end date of the MDGs that successfully galvanised the world behind poverty reduction. It also marks the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that will shape development assistance for the next 15 years. The ambitious new sustainable development goals (SDGs) reflect the global challenges of economic, social and environmental sustainability. The aim is to end all poverty and achieve ‘zero hunger’ by 2030. The fact that 70% of the poor and food insecure in agriculture-based low-income countries live in rural areas makes the SDG challenge central to the mission of the Platform.

**Financing for development.** 2015 also marks a sea change in the relationship between developing and developed countries reflected in the Third Financing for Development (FfD) Conference in July 2015 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). As ODA is being scaled back in many countries, there is a growing recognition that donor-supported public investment alone is insufficient to transform developing economies. Ending poverty and hunger through sustainable development cannot be achieved without massive investment by the private sector. There is also a shift by many donors away from concessional financing for middle-income countries, towards other types of partnership, particularly around trade.

**Development effectiveness.** Results, transparency and accountability are now the key indicators of donor success in achieving development effectiveness (DE). Although less attention is now given to aid effectiveness, there is still scope to reinforce ‘good practice’ on issues such as national ownership, harmonisation and alignment with national strategies to enhance the coherence of donor programmes. Partnerships play a key role in sharing ‘best practice’ and learning in DE and there are new opportunities that may be seized such as the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA) and the G7 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN). NEPAD’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), renewed in the Malabo Declaration, is a valuable forum for donor engagement.

**Rural transformation.** There is an emerging consensus that in order to transform agriculture and the rural economy, actions need to address constraints in the wider local, national and global economy.

‘Rural transformation’ is about improving the environment within which rural people make their living. It demands new and creative approaches that recognise the critical links between rural and urban economies and societies, and the food systems that underpin global food security. The 2030 Agenda offers the potential to achieve such transformation of the rural economy.

**Food and nutrition security.** The G20 Food and Nutrition Security Framework and the vision of the G7 Schloss Elmau Summit in 2015 for a “Broader Food Security and Nutrition Development Approach” reflect the continued donor commitment to food and nutrition security and to the role of sustainable agriculture in global food systems.

---

3 World Development Report 2008, World Bank, Table 1.2
4 See the outcomes of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) launched in Mexico in 2014.
5 For example, the New Alliance and Grow Africa Leadership Council, in June 2015 pledged “…to deliver an inclusive transformation of African agriculture as defined by …[the] Malabo Declaration…”
6 G20 Food and Nutrition Framework, 2015
Climate change. The 2015 Paris Climate Conference – COP21 – achieved a historic commitment by nearly 200 countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions so as to keep global warming “well below 2° C” and to endeavour to limit it to 1.5° C. The agreement also includes commitment by developed countries to provide US$100 billion per year to support poor countries cope with climate change. For the first time, the agreement also recognizes the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger and the particular vulnerability of food production systems to the impact of climate change.

2. The Functions of the Platform

Members agreed a newly defined set of roles for the Platform in 2013, namely: advocacy, knowledge-sharing and networking. The Platform offers a neutral convening space in which members are able to work together on issues of common interest, share experience and expertise, and to network informally with other ARD professionals. The Platform responds to members’ needs – for example, gathering and disseminating information on ARD, mounting events on topical issues, and conducting analysis of donor programmes. Through the Platform, members collectively pursue emerging issues in ARD by setting priorities for work themes and agreeing the topics for the Annual General Assembly (AGA). The sharing and management of knowledge by the Platform is facilitated by formal and informal networking which in turn builds the evidence base and consensus for advocacy.

Knowledge-sharing
Effective knowledge-sharing means better development results. Effective knowledge-sharing on donor approaches to ARD through peer learning, the analysis of different policies, instruments and programmes, contributes to better development results through better donor policy and programming. Knowledge-sharing is particularly important for smaller donors who are often knowledge ‘takers’, but is also valuable to donors who have the resources to generate knowledge, as a means of disseminating views to the donor community at large.

Advocacy
Effective advocacy is built upon solid evidence and clear messages. The Platform’s advocacy is built upon its own knowledge products and strategic focus. It focuses on high level policy issues and targets the wider development assistance community including non-traditional donors, and the many stakeholders engaged in rural areas in developing partner countries such as the private sector, civil society, NGOs and farmer organisations.

Networking
Networking is at the heart of the Platform’s functions. The Platform was created out of the informal networking amongst senior staff in donor organisations that shared a common vision of the future of agriculture and rural development in tackling poverty reduction. This role is important to members as a way of reaching out informally to their peers as a ‘community of practice’ around agriculture and rural development issues.

7 See for example, “Practices of Successful Learning Networks”, USAID, August 2013
STRATEGIC FOCUS

2030 Agenda
The Platform’s strategic focus is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The emergence of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, based on 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, provides an overarching framework for the Platform’s Strategic Plan. The Platform views the goals of economic, social and environmental sustainability through a rural lens. This builds upon and continues the work started by the Platform under the Strategic Initiative Post-2015. The dramatic transformation of the rural economy that is already occurring and is likely to hasten, poses particular challenges for the poorest and most vulnerable, making it especially important to ensure that no one is left behind.

Agricultural and rural transformation
The Platform’s strategic focus is on enhancing agriculture, food systems and rural livelihoods as part of rural transformation. The Platform’s strategic focus centres on championing the transformation of agriculture and food systems as part of a broader rural transformation approach. Rural transformation is about the process of improving the environment within which rural people make their living. This includes recognising the importance for food security of rural-urban linkages, migration and remittances and the consequent feminisation of agriculture. Agriculture is one of the principal generators of economic growth, is central to the sustainable management of natural resources and maintenance of biodiversity, and an effective mechanism for distributing wealth in the economy through productive rural employment.

3. Vision and Mission

The Strategic Plan is built around the roles of advocacy, knowledge-sharing and networking, targeting agriculture, food and nutrition security and rural development, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

Vision
"Prosperous and sustainable rural communities underpinning global food and nutrition security". The Platform’s members share a common vision that is framed around pathways to achieve ‘zero hunger’ (SDG 2). These must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, centred on the capacity of agriculture and rural livelihoods to generate employment and economic growth, to address inequalities, and to underpin national, regional and global food and nutrition security.

Mission
"To enhance the impact of development investments in agriculture, food systems and rural livelihoods through informed policy and programming". The Platform’s mission reflects its key roles in advocacy and knowledge-sharing through a donor network to deliver effective knowledge and learning in support of agriculture, food systems* and rural livelihoods. Its ambition is to be able to inform donor policy and programming in ARD in the public sector and to encourage more and responsible private investment.

---

* The term ‘food systems’ covers the growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consumption and disposal of food and food-related items, including all inputs and outputs.
4. Results Framework

The Platform comprises donor members that share a common interest in achieving the ‘zero hunger’ goal expressed in SDG 2. As a network, its contribution to achieving this goal is through managing and applying knowledge that informs donor development policy and programming to enhance the environment for investment in agriculture and rural livelihoods and food and nutrition security (see Annex 1 Theory of Change).

**VISION**

Prosperous and sustainable rural communities underpinning global food and nutrition security

(Zero Hunger)

**OUTCOMES**

Enhanced development results in agriculture and rural livelihoods

Evidence-based donor policies and programmes for sustainable agriculture and rural transformation enhance food and nutrition security, economic growth, and reduce poverty and inequality in rural development.

**OUTPUTS/MISSION**

Better-informed development policies and programmes

- 2030 Agenda priorities and rural transformation issues addressed
- Strategic thematic work that adds value conducted
- Key knowledge and lessons communicated
- Strategic partnerships formed to deliver effective development results

The Platform will contribute to the delivery of a single major outcome during the Strategic Plan period:

**Enhanced development results in agriculture and rural livelihoods:** Evidence-based donor policies and programmes for sustainable agriculture and rural transformation enhance food and nutrition security, economic growth, and reduce poverty and inequality in rural development through: (a) an enabling environment for small farmer and private sector investment in agriculture and food systems;

---

*Outcomes are defined as the effects or change resulting from one or more outputs.*
(b) coherent multi-sectoral approaches to enhancing rural livelihoods; and, (c) measures to ensure access to food by all. Through its evidence-based knowledge products and networking the Platform will strengthen opportunities for learning by donors to enhance their policies and programmes in the public sector, and to foster a greater awareness by the private sector of the need to consider the economic, social and environmental consequences of their investments.

Key policy areas will include: (a) identifying strategic public investments that deliver effective and sustainable support to small farmers, especially women; (b) enhancing small farmer access to markets, and trade agreements that protect and benefit small farmers; (c) territorial development embracing local governance, policies and investment in rural areas; (d) environmentally and socially responsible private sector investment in agriculture, and shaping emerging corporate social responsibility (CSR) within the context of the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment (CFS RAI), the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure (VGGT)\textsuperscript{10}, and the UN Global Compact\textsuperscript{11}; (e) food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, minimise waste, conserve biodiversity and adapt to and mitigate impacts of climate change\textsuperscript{12}; and (f) social protection measures that ensure adequate nutrition and health so that ‘no one is left behind’ and exploit the positive links with agricultural development.

**OUTPUTS**

The Platform will achieve its mission and contribute to its strategic outcome through delivering four main outputs\textsuperscript{13}:

1. **2030 Agenda priorities in ARD and rural transformation issues addressed.** The Platform will align its activities to address the achievement of the SDGs, taking into account the conclusions of the AAAA and the agreements reached at COP21, through its Strategic Initiative Post-2015. It views the goals of economic, social and environmental sustainability through a rural lens, fully aware of the particular challenges in rural areas of gender equality, empowerment for women and girls, employment (especially of youth), and giving voice to civil society. Although SDG 2 (zero hunger) with targets related to agricultural productivity and sustainable food production systems, nutrition and food security, genetic diversity, trade, and food commodity markets, will be its central focus, there are many other SDGs that are of relevance to agriculture and rural areas\textsuperscript{14}. The challenges of defining the scope of rural transformation and translating this into effective donor policies and programmes will also be tackled.

2. **Strategic thematic work conducted.** The Platform will carry out thematic work in line with its mission and strategic focus on the 2030 Agenda and rural transformation. The current active work themes on land governance, aid-for-trade and nutrition will continue as long as members wish to support them. A limited number of new work areas that are ‘strategic’ and add value will be initiated, driven by the expressed interest of members, backed by commitment of leadership and resources of the members\textsuperscript{15}.


\textsuperscript{11} UN Global Compact on Food and Agriculture Business Principles, October 2014

\textsuperscript{12} Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, October 2015.

\textsuperscript{13} ‘Outputs’ are defined as the products or services that result directly from inputs or activities.

\textsuperscript{14} SDG 1 (eliminating poverty); SDG 5 (gender equality); SDG 8 (employment, youth unemployment, labour rights especially for women, economic diversification and aid for trade); SDG 10 (to reduce inequality within and among countries); SDG 11 (inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable human settlements); SDG 12 (sustainable management of natural resources, food waste); SDG 13 (resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change); SDG 15 (protection and sustainable use of ecosystems, halt biodiversity loss); SDG 16 (effective, inclusive and accountable institutions); and, SDG 17 (high quality data and statistical capacity).

\textsuperscript{15} New thematic areas will be identified as a result of work carried out under the Strategic Initiative Post-2015.
3. Key knowledge and lessons communicated. The Platform will put in place a systematic knowledge management system for the sharing and dissemination of key knowledge and lessons around ARD through a new, coherent and imaginative approach to outreach, including:

- **Knowledge networks**: Identifying and organising networks of member organisations and partners (including the private sector, CSOs, NGOs and developing country partners) around topics of common interest.

- **Annual General Assembly**: A renewed vision for the AGA that is focused on priority topics with high quality discussion material, high calibre speakers and senior level audience, as well as a structured involvement of the private sector, civil society and academia.

- **Publications, web site and social media**: Dissemination of high quality (hard and online) publications, peer reviewed and endorsed by recognised thought leaders in rural development through a new web site and a regular reporting on rural development trends.

- **Member networks**: Member organisations will be encouraged to share their own learning material, and to disseminate formal and informal Platform knowledge products through their own networks, aimed at reinforcing ‘good practice’ on issues such as donor policy coherence and programme alignment.

4. Strategic partnerships formed to deliver effective development results. The Platform actively pursues partnerships with bodies that will contribute to achieving the Platform’s outcomes and specific outputs. Key strategic partnerships in pursuit of food and nutrition security will be sought with the G7 and G20 initiatives, and opportunities for country level engagement through developing country networks, in particular NEPAD/CAADP, RECs, and country level DWGs will be actively pursued. Achievement of the Platform’s strategy will be furthered through leveraging partnerships for joint advocacy with bodies that share its goals. Potential partners include UN agencies, international research centres (CG), other development Platforms, NGOs, farmer and consumer organisations, the private sector, regional economic organisations and development research institutions.

5. Platform Governance

The Platform’s governance structure is ready to meet the challenges of the new global aid environment.

**Membership**

The Platform is a network of donor organisations. Membership of the Platform is voluntary and open to bilateral donor organisations, multilateral development institutions and international finance institutions, non-traditional donors including foundations as well as UN agencies and other intergovernmental organisations. Organisations that pay the annual membership-fee will be ‘Full Members’, nominating a senior staff member to become the organisation’s representative and, if

---

16 For example, 3ie, IFPRI and ODI for studies and research feeding into the biennial ‘Global Report on Rural Development’; DCED, OECD/DAC and ICAI for results measurement; M4P, SEEP, BEAM Exchange for value chains; WTO on aid-for-trade; WEF, Grow Africa and Grow Asia on private sector development.

17 The governance of the Platform was originally encapsulated in the Platform’s ‘Charter’ in 2008. The Board has agreed that the governance principles should be incorporated into the Strategic Plan rather than as a separate document.
necessary, a separate Contact Point (CP) for all official communications. Organisations that do not pay the full membership-fee or make no payment at all will be ‘Associate Members’. The Platform will actively seek to expand its membership especially from NTDs.

**Board**

The Board is the voice of the Platform championing agriculture, food systems and rural development. The Board is charged with taking a long-term strategic view of the Platform’s future and guaranteeing the quality of its outputs. Senior representatives of member organisations have the opportunity to benefit from the Platform’s convening role in knowledge-sharing, discussing important strategic issues, and contributing to learning and high level advocacy.

The Board comprises senior representatives of member organisations that pay the annual membership-fee. The Board meets formally twice a year: during the AGA in order to approve an annual work plan and budget (AWPB) adopted by the members as part of a multi-year programme of work; and also in mid-year to review the Platform’s progress and, along with invited Associate Members, to participate in ‘visioning’ with thought-leaders to identify emerging strategic issues in ARD. Two co-chairs are elected by the board members and serve for two years. They engage on a regular basis with the secretariat as a management team. The Board may appoint one or more external advisers, especially to support its role in strategic visioning and in reviewing all knowledge products emerging from the Platform’s work including any advocacy messages.

**Contact points**

Contact Points (CPs) are responsible for managing the two-way flow of communication between the Platform and their parent organisation. CPs are expected to report back to their organisation on Platform activities, actively share information and knowledge, and identify units and individuals within their organisation that are most likely to be interested in the work themes organised by the Platform. They are expected to devote up to 10 staff days per year to their work with the Platform.

**Partnerships**

The functions of the Platform - knowledge sharing, advocacy and networking - as well as vision and mission demand a wide variety of partnerships. In order to expand the knowledge base of the Platform and to be able to widen the scope and impact of advocacy and networking, it is crucial for the Platform to reach out beyond its formal members.

Operational partnerships should be formed with all interested parties like NGOs, private sectors and its institutions, research organisations, „think tanks“, farmers organisations and others in an open dialogue and longer-term relationships structured around engagements in specific tasks. The operational, yet informal partnerships can take various forms of collaboration and appearance on the website of the Platform. The Platform membership should seek to form partnerships also with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and engage actively in the Development Partners Coordination Group in support of CAADP in an appropriate and mutually agreed form.

The partnerships shall be based on the Platform Partners’ Engagement Principles as annexed to the Strategic Plan in Annex 4.

**Secretariat**

The Platform secretariat is empowered to act within the framework of the agreed annual work plan and multi-year programme of work. The Platform secretariat’s principal function is to implement the
AWPB and MYPOW, for which it has executive authority, seeking guidance on major issues from the Co-Chairs when necessary. Its professional capacity will be strengthened to this end, especially in knowledge management. It reports to the Board on progress and budget execution every six months and to the AGA, and prepares an Annual Report. Its principal functions are to:

- Take management decisions within the remit of the approved AWPB and MYPOW.
- Serve and support member organisations, especially in areas related to knowledge management and dissemination, in particular the web site and social media.
- Support thematic working groups (TWGs) through managing financial contributions, and procuring the services of consultants or other providers.
- Arrange for peer review of all Platform knowledge products including through expert panels, so as to ensure high quality.
- Support knowledge generation and dissemination, facilitating communications and the analysis of data on donor programmes.
- Participate in major global ARD events and, where appropriate, communicating collective positions.

6. Funding

Core funding

The Platform’s effectiveness will be enhanced through multi-year pledges of funding. The Platform encourages members to make multi-year pledges for the Platform’s agreed core programme of work, and to pay more than the minimum yearly membership-fee of €50,000. Financial contributions to the Platform are formalised by concluding a contribution agreement between the member organisation and the organisation of the Platform secretariat. A bold vision and outputs that are congruent with the ambition of its members will enhance the perceived value of its contribution to global food security and rural development.

Core funding includes budgets for activities of the work themes, the annual general assembly and additional activities like the recent evaluation. It also includes staff costs and administrative costs. The annual work plan and budget should be endorsed by the Board based on the roll-over budget, signed legal agreements and prospected contributions of the members for the respective year or years to come.

Supplementary funding for thematic work (see Annex 3)

Work themes will be strengthened through supplementary funding. The secretariat provides services (communications, meeting management etc.) to support the activities of TWGs. However, each TWG will be expected to solicit supplementary contributions from members or outside bodies in case of unplanned activities that can be made in cash or in-kind through providing, for example, the time of staff members to undertake activities in support of the work theme.

In-kind or cash contributions (below €50,000) do not necessarily go through the accounts of the Platform or its secretariat. In order to decrease administrative costs, members should either administer their supplementary contributions themselves or increase the membership fee.
7. Output Management and Results

OUTPUT MANAGEMENT

Work planning processes
The Platform will launch a multi-year programme of work in 2016. The Platform will launch a multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) that will cover the first 2 – 3 years of the SP period. The first MYPOW will be the subject of extensive consultation with members during the early part of 2016 and the AWPB will ‘roll over’ each year, reflecting demonstrated added value, member commitment and resources.

The Platform’s core programme reflects the strategic priorities set out in the SP. Existing work themes that have demonstrated added value will continue, and new topics will be adopted based on ‘market forces’ reflected in commitment of leadership and funding by one or more member organisations. Although multi-year programmes would be encouraged, the Platform is flexible in responding to members’ immediate, short-term needs for a convening ‘space’ in which to discuss important emerging topics.

Task management
There is an effective system for managing tasks and outputs. During the consultation with members to define a MYPOW in the first part of 2016, it is expected that groups of ‘like-minded’ members will formulate coherent plans for priority work themes. The process (see Annex 2) is intended to ensure broad ownership of each work theme, adequate resources and high quality products. The system includes setting up specific TWGs with defined responsibilities incorporating peer review and expert panels, and strengthening the professional capabilities of the secretariat specifically to meet the demands of knowledge management.

Results monitoring
As a network, the Platform’s contribution to achieving outcomes is always indirect, through its members. For this reason, priority is given to measuring results at output level, around the four main programme outputs in the results framework and endorsed in the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW). In addition, each TWG is responsible for setting the results it intends to achieve and the indicators that will be measured. Specific activities, including work themes that contribute to delivering the outputs, are approved by the Board at the beginning of each year, following the AGA.

The Platform’s results at outcome level are measured by the contribution it has made through knowledge capture, generation and dissemination to enhancing the policies and programmes of its member organisations. Indirectly this is reflected in the impact these improved policies and programmes have had on the environment within which small farmers and the private sector in agriculture operate, on the implementation of multi-sectoral approaches to rural development, and on enhancing food and nutrition security. Results at this level are assessed by the achievements reported by member organisations and compiled by the secretariat. The cumulative impact of improved donor efforts on agriculture and rural development, influenced by the Platform’s activities and outputs, is intended to be captured in various publications on rural transformation/development.
Performance management

Over the course of the SP period, the management of the Platform’s performance will be linked to the annual allocation of resources to specific outputs. Clear lines of accountability will be established for each output. The secretariat is responsible for compiling and measuring the programme output indicators and reporting annually to the Board and to members at the AGA. Within each work theme, the TWG is responsible for monitoring expenditure managed through the secretariat (GIZ).
Annex 1

THEORY OF CHANGE

VISION
Prosperous and sustainable rural communities underpinning global food and nutrition security (Zero Hunger)

GOAL
Enhanced development results in agriculture and rural livelihoods contribute to sustainable development, reduced poverty and inequality, and economic growth.

MISSION
Better informed, evidence-based donor development policy and programming to transform agriculture and rural livelihoods in line with the 2030 Agenda

ACTIVITIES
Knowledge capture, generation, analysis, learning, dissemination and application inform development policy and programming

MONITORING AND LEARNING
Annex 2

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP PROCESSES

The purpose of a working group is to bring together members with a common interest in a specific theme to share and advance knowledge aimed at enhancing their policies and programmes in agricultural and rural transformation. Although multi-year programmes would be encouraged, the Platform is flexible in responding to members’ immediate, short-term and less formal needs for a convening ‘space’ in which to discuss important emerging topics.

The Platform facilitates the creation and operation of working groups around agreed work themes. Current work themes that continue to draw member support and are relevant to the Platform’s new Strategic Plan, will operate through multi-annual processes and be maintained in the AWPB. The process for initiating and operating new formal work themes will be strengthened. The process is intended to ensure broad ownership of each work theme, adequate resources and high quality products.

Setting up a Thematic Working Group (TWG)

The system will include setting up specific thematic working groups (TWGs), particularly for themes that are anticipated to run for several years, as part of the MYPOW. Proposed work themes will be prioritised each year at the AGA. Preferably, no more than 2-3 themes will be operated simultaneously. Each selected work theme will create a TWG, with a self-selected leader from a member organisation (not necessarily the CP) responsible for:

- Identifying and inviting specialists from member organisations to join the group.
- Identifying relevant external experts or advisors.
- Formulating a concept note, terms of reference and a work plan for the activity.
- Securing supplementary resources from members in cash or in-kind.
- Overseeing the contracting and selection of external inputs by the secretariat.
- Reviewing outputs from external sources and conducting peer review through a specially-selected expert panel.
- Synthesising key messages or lessons for dissemination by the secretariat.
- Consulting broadly with members to obtain feedback and support for dissemination.

Strengthening the secretariat

In order to better support the implementation of the Platform’s programme, including the TWGs, the professional capabilities of the secretariat will be strengthened with staff and consultants (retained or for specific tasks) to give advice and direction and specifically, to meet the demands of knowledge management. This would include:

- Providing oversight and expertise on specific policy issues.
- Assigning each professional staff member responsibility for a major work theme; in some cases, a staff member on short-term assignment to the Platform or secondment from member organisations will backstop a working group.
- Advising on peer review and the selection of expert panels.
- Providing the TWG with support on communications, managing funds, procurement, event management, dissemination and networking.
OPERATIONALISING SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING FOR PLATFORM ACTIVITIES

In the Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 of the Platform under point 6. “Funding”, a distinction between core funding and supplementary funding for thematic work of the Platform is made. It says in more detail that “each Thematic Working Group (TWG) will be expected to solicit supplementary contributions from members or outside bodies in case of unplanned activities.”

It is suggested that the operationalisation of the agreement means:

**Core funding:**
1. €50,000 per annum as will remain the minimum membership fee and it entitles to become a member of the Board;
2. The Board approves the core budget normally in January of each year based on the Work Plan and realistic core funding prospects;
3. Core funding prospects need to be communicated by all members to the co-chairs and the secretariat by latest 31 March of each year in writing;
4. All members are encouraged to provide multi-year core funding as to increase planning security and implementation;

**Supplementary funding:**
1. Supplementary funding can be provided by any member (board member or not) at any point during the year.
2. Such funding would be provided for activities of any working group or the Strategic Initiative Agenda 2030.
3. In-kind contributions are defined as contributions by staff time of the respective member organisation or any support which can be provided by the member organisation’s recurrent budget without direct financial flows either through the secretariat or by hiring a consultant to provide services.
4. GIZ, as the administrator of the Platform, cannot administer supplementary contributions below €50,000 because of the necessary legal agreements with relatively high transaction costs unless an existing agreement for the yearly membership fee is increased by the amount of the supplementary funding by way of amending the existing agreement;
5. Supplementary funding higher than €50,000 shall be counted as a full-fledged contribution to the Platform and would entitle board membership.
6. Any supplementary funding from member organisation would be reported upon in the in the annual progress report, including costed in-kind contributions. Such costing of in-kind contribution would be provided by the respective member organisation.
7. Supplementary funding administered by GIZ would appear in the overall budget and expenditure report as well as in the external audit of the Platform and reported on as agreed in the legal agreement (ear-marked funding etc.).
Annex 4

PLATFORM PARTNERS’ ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Background
Since its foundation in 2003, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development provided space for bilateral donor agencies, International finance institutions and multilateral organisations of the UN engaged in agriculture and rural development to share knowledge and advocate for more coordinated policies and public and private investments in agriculture and rural development. Since its inception, the Platform has worked closely with a wide range of partners depending on the operational focus and strategic policy priorities. Under the Platform, a number of semi-formalised partnerships exists and are displayed on the website. The formalisation was documented by exchange of letters of partnership intents. Other organisations have been cooperating for quite some time in the context of the work streams of the Platform without any formalisation.

In the recent past, a growing number of organisations have engaged in the deliberations of the thematic working groups and in the development of the Strategic Initiative Post-2015 of the Platform. These partners are coming from all constituencies, including NGOs and the private sector. Recently, some institutions have requested to become partners of the Platform.

Furthermore, “emerging donors”1 like Brazil, China and others are neither members of OECD/DAC nor do they engage as “donors” in the Platform, but they feature as “partners” in development cooperation, albeit mostly on a bilateral basis with developing countries. Next to these new governmental partners in development, foundations, networks, think tanks and charity organisations engage in agriculture and rural development changing the networking landscape for the Platform.

At the same time, many “traditional donor agencies” and current members of the Platform are revising their development portfolio. The revisions aim to include and strengthen the focus on new approaches to agriculture and rural development (ARD) like trade and promotion of agribusiness, climate change finance etc. Next to these substantive and strategic policy changes, investments are focused on a selection of developing countries steered by the ‘modernisation of ODA’ by OECD/DAC with regard to concessional development finance (ODA) and ODA accountability as well as by (macro-) economic interests.

---

The new Strategic Plan of the Platform 2016 - 2020

Outlook on membership and partners: The function of the Platform is clearly outlined in the new Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 calling for (i) knowledge sharing, (ii) advocacy and (iii) networking. All functions can only be made full use of, if the Platform engages a broader scope of constituencies to increase investments in the rural space of developing countries.

The Strategic Plan therefore calls for effective flexible partnerships beyond the formal membership as outlined in Section 5: Membership.

The definitions of partners and the formalisation of partnerships with the Platform is outlined in the Strategic Plan being very open to new and unconventional partners which seek cooperation due to the changing institutional landscape in agriculture and rural development as outlined in Section 5: Partnerships.

Partnership arrangements should be informal, possibly time-bound and flexible as demanded by the cooperation necessities and interest of work streams of the Platform and based on the Platform Partnership Engagement Principles as outlines below.

Proposed Platform Partnerships Engagement Principles

Considering that the status of partners is flexible and does not constitute full membership in the Platform, the following Platform Partnerships Engagement Principles should be applied in engaging with partners and actors of a broad variety of constituencies and institutions:

1. The platform and its secretariat strive for enhanced partnerships in the Strategic Initiative Agenda 2030 as well as in the thematic working groups. As appropriate and in view of the objectives of each working group, interested partners and actors of a broad variety of constituencies and interest groups shall be invited to contribute in an appropriate way as defined by every working group or work stream.
2. Partnerships remain flexible without any formalisation and at the working level. It might be time bound depending on the interest of both partners. This should lead to making partnerships less divisive, more accommodating and encourage greater engagement by a broader variety of actors and their institutions;
3. Consider at each members’ day of each AGA and each board meeting the new partnerships formed in the previous year and discuss networking, outreach and knowledge creation with partners as part of each annual work plan
4. Partners can make use of the communication tools and services of the Platform, they will be featured in the partners’ section of the GDPRD website, highlighting recent publications and activities;
5. Partners are invited not only the AGAs, but also to the members’ day of each AGA.
6. Continue identifying and making contact with “emerging donors/development partners” as part of the Platform’s work plan.
7. Organise outreach activities and/or specific missions to targeted institutions which are increasingly active in ARD and engage with major players of the NGO community and the private sector.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The development of the Platform’s strategic Plan was supported by all the members of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development. We are thankful to our colleagues who provided expertise, insights and greatly assisted the research and writing processes. We extend our sincere gratitude to all of them.

This publication consumed a great amount of work, research and dedication. Still, implementation would not have been possible if we did not have the support of Michael Wales. We are extremely grateful to him for facilitating the process and we express our greatest appreciation for sharing his knowledge and expertise during the course of writing.

The Publication of the Strategic Plan follows the endorsement of the Board on 22 January 2016. Following the decision of the Board, an Annex 3 was added to the original presented in January. In May 2017, an Annex 4 was added to the original version to reflect the Board’s decision on Partners’ engagement principles agreed during the Board meeting on 17 May 2017.

Prepared by:
Global Donor Platform for Rural Development members

Author:
Michael Wales

Published by:
Global Donor Platform for Rural Development

Design:
Iris Christmann

Original Publication:
April 2016

Amended edition:
May 2017