# GLOBAL DONOR PLATFORM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025





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The document was drafted by Jim Woodhill, Director of AgriFoodNexus Consulting and Honorary Research Associate, and Mandakini D. Surie, Senior Consultant.

Sylvia Otieno, Intern at the Secretariat, provided invaluable research support.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
FTE	full-time equivalent
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development



# 1. BACKGROUND

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (the Platform) was established in 2003 to bring together donors that share a common vision on the role of agriculture and rural development in tackling global poverty and hunger. The Platform convenes donor organizations making substantive investments in agriculture, rural development and food systems issues to exchange information, discuss emerging priority issues and determine effective strategies to address them.

The Strategic Plan 2021-2025 builds on the previous Strategic Plan for 2016-2020. It is informed by the conclusions and recommendations of the 2019 Transition Task Force,<sup>1</sup> and the findings and recommendations of a comprehensive stocktaking analysis of the Platform and its activities in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

The Strategic Plan comes at a critical time for the Platform, following the transition of its secretariat to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This presents an opportunity to renew the Platform and to refine its staffing, governance and operational modalities, to enhance its capacity for impact. As highlighted by the stocktaking analysis, the Platform remains highly relevant and is valued by donors as a unique mechanism to support their efforts to better align and optimize the impact of their investments. The Platform has a key role to play in the context of the emerging food systems agenda and the pressing need to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Over the last strategic plan period, the Platform made valuable and important contributions to the global agenda on rural development and food systems through the activities of its thematic working groups and through its annual general assemblies. However, to remain relevant in the future, and given global concerns about food systems, rural poverty and hunger, the Platform must play a more effective and recognized strategic influencing role. To do this the Platform needs to refine its purpose, objectives and operational modalities, and sharpen its focus to achieve greater impact.

Drawing on the recommendations of the 2020 stocktaking analysis, the strategic plan integrates the following directions: (i) a broadened thematic focus of the Platform, from agriculture and rural development to "food systems and rural development"; (ii) maintaining the donor membership focus of the Platform while proactively engaging with other stakeholders; (iii) revising the vision, mission and objectives of the Platform to align with the evolution of the Platform's focus, recent developments and views of the membership; (iv) taking a more strategic and systemic approach to establishing areas of thematic focus, and broadening the operational modalities of the Platform to include a more diverse range of activities that are results-oriented and time-bound; and (v) streamlining and simplifying the membership, sufficient resources and a robust governance mechanism.

Global Donor
Platform for Rural
Development
(GDPRD),
Transition Task Force
Recommendations
for the Board towards
a Realigned GDPRD
(Rome: GDPRD,
2019).

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 stocktaking analysis reviewed the Platform's activities and achievements over a five-year period (2015-2020). It involved a detailed literature review key informant interviews with members of the Platform and an online survey for members. For more information see the GDPRD Stocktaking Analysis Report 2020.



# 2. CONTEXT

The Platform is operating in a changed and increasingly uncertain global environment. Delivering sufficient nutritionally diverse, safe and sustainably produced food to consumers in urban and rural areas remains one of the most critically important challenges the world faces. At the same time, vast numbers of people in rural areas continue to face poverty, inequality and vulnerability, with the potential for widespread humanitarian crises, social and political instability, and migration pressures. These challenges will be greatly exacerbated by climate change and the continued impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Responding to the challenges and opportunities for transforming rural economies and food systems will require innovation and coordination on a vast scale from local to global level. This calls for global public good investments to support research, enable multi-stakeholder collaboration and coalitions for change, broker policy learning and innovation, fund pilot initiatives, catalyse and de-risk responsible investments from the private sector and financial institutions, respond to crises and support efforts of developing nations. This makes investments by the global donor community in rural development and food systems of vital importance.

In this context, the Platform's work sits at the intersection of a set of critical global issues that will have a profound impact on achieving the SDGs and longer-term human prosperity and security. The Platform has a critical role to play in assisting donors in aligning their thinking and investment strategies by helping to ensure that food and rural development issues are appropriately prioritized within overall development financing, by identifying proactive and timely responses to emerging issues and crises, and through enabling donors to learn from each other's policy and programming experiences.

The Platform's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is informed by and seeks to respond to the following emerging global trends in food systems and rural development:

- Need for a systemic approach: It is increasingly recognized that the challenges of good nutrition, rural poverty, and sustainable and resilient food production can be addressed only through systemic approaches. Such approaches need to cut across traditional policy and donor funding domains (silos) such as health, agriculture, economic development, trade and environment.
- Shifting dynamics of development: The dramatic rise in capabilities of individuals and institutions of the Global South, the emergence of economically powerful middle-income countries that are also becoming donors, development scepticism and populist politics in traditional donor countries, and the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic are all factors reshaping the dynamics of development cooperation and financing.
- Multilateralism under pressure: The traditional "Washington Consensus" and associated multilateral institutions and processes are under financial and legitimacy pressure as new powers emerge, populist politics increases in

influence and the United Nations system struggles to reform. This has blowback effects on the degree of cooperation and coordination between donors, with development cooperation resources being viewed more explicitly as tools for pursuing the national interests of donors and an agenda of "mutual prosperity".

- Need for private sector action and investment: Food systems and economic activity in rural areas are predominantly driven and financed by the private sector. This creates a very different dynamic for development from work in, for example, the health and education sectors. Ultimately, change will come only when private sector actors change the way they operate and invest. Donor funding is small relative to the investments of farmers themselves and investments of domestic and international firms in the food and agriculture sectors. The scale of the challenges relative to donor funds means that donor resources can only ever have a catalytic role. This makes alignment and complementarity of donor funding critical, with a need to focus on how policies can create the right incentives and enabling conditions for responsible private sector investment.
- Climate change: Food systems are one of the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases and are also highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Further climate finance may open up new forms of economic activity for farmers. Climate change must be central to the thinking about food systems transformation and the vulnerabilities of rural people. This requires a far more cross-sectoral approach than has been characteristic of past development work in the food and agriculture space.
- Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a shock to economic systems, a crisis for poverty reduction and disruption in how the world functions, and these impacts will play out in unknown ways for some years to come. Pressure on resources will be a reality and there is also much discussion of what "building back better" could entail. It also seems that many of the virtual ways in which the world has learned to operate will be here to stay. Meanwhile, the pandemic has also illustrated the significant vulnerability of food systems and poorer groups in society, with a corresponding need to enhance mechanisms that enable resilience.

#### The implications of this context for the Platform are fourfold.

- Food systems and the links with rural poverty are and will remain a key development issue, central to the challenge of meeting the SDGs and responding to the climate crisis.
- 2. Optimizing the catalytic role of limited global public good resources from bilateral donors and philanthropic foundations is key to driving the innovations and transformations that are needed.
- **3.** Increased uncertainty and turbulence are inevitable, making forums (such as the Platform) that can support donors in responding quickly, effectively and in coordinated ways increasingly important.
- 4. Responding to all these challenges requires understanding, open channels of communication, trust and networks of dialogue that cut across sectors, national boundaries and the formal processes of international engagement. This is a networking and convening function core to the objectives of the Platform.



# 3. VISION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The strategic plan situates the work of the Platform across the domains of food systems, food and nutrition security, agriculture and rural livelihoods. It recognizes the Platform's particular focus and orientation towards SDG 2 and the intersection with other SDGs. For this Strategic Plan, the Platform will articulate its focus as "food systems and rural development". While staying true to the original intent and purpose of the Platform, the current Strategic Plan actions the following changes to the Platform's vision, mission and objectives to better reflect the changed operating context and environment of the donor platform and to ensure its ongoing relevance.

## VISION

<u>Donors effectively catalyse change</u>: Donor investments enable transformation of food systems for better access to safe and nutritious food, improved environmental sustainability and more prosperous rural communities.

The Platform's members share a common commitment to and vision for the realization of SDG 2 ("zero hunger") and recognize the constructive and effective role that donors can play in supporting and enabling food systems transformation – one that secures better access to safe and nutritious food while ensuring environmental sustainability to secure the food security, health, well-being and livelihoods of rural communities.

## MISSION

<u>Brokering donor collaboration for impact</u>: The Platform brokers donor collaboration to enhance the impact of their policies, investments and programmes for food systems and rural development.

The Platform's mission statement reflects the key role of the Platform in brokering and catalysing donor collaboration and investments in food systems and rural development and the critical role of the Platform and its members in ensuring that food systems and rural development issues remain a high priority for donors, governments and other key actors.

## OBJECTIVES

The Platform has three distinct yet complementary objectives that recognize the catalytic role of the Platform in informing donor policy, programming and investment in food systems and rural development. The Platform seeks to achieve its vision and mission through:

- strategic influencing
- knowledge-sharing
- networking and convening.

<u>Strategic influencing</u>: To help shape the thinking, policies and programming of the global donor community and other actors on food systems and rural development to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and longer-term prosperity and sustainability.

The Platform does this by:

- undertaking a horizon-scanning process that identifies key emerging issues and opportunities to which donors may need to respond;
- convening task teams on key issues that bring together donors and other stakeholders to identify options for responding to the issues;
- convening high-level events and briefings that help to keep members up to date on the latest thinking and evidence;
- hosting an annual meeting of senior managers responsible for food systems/ agriculture/rural development across the membership;
- mobilizing new joint efforts by donors to respond to emerging issues or funding gaps;
- supporting communication and alignment between donors in their preparations for bilateral engagement in key global forums and processes;
- profiling and discussing key emerging issues with high-level representatives during its Annual General Assembly.

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<u>Knowledge-sharing</u>: To broker the sharing of evidence, lessons, insights and technical expertise necessary for donors to align efforts, learn from each other and improve the impact of their food system and rural-development-related policies and programmes.

The Platform does this by:

- identifying policy and programming questions and issues that donors have and helping to resolve these using the experience of other donors or other relevant sources of expertise;
- convening working groups and seminars that enable donor staff to share experiences and lessons with each other on priority topics;
- holding virtual briefing sessions on emerging issues, new research and new evaluations targeted to the specific needs of donors;
- providing a resource portal on its website so that members have easy access to each other's key policies, reports and evaluations;
- providing blogs and a social media feed targeted to the interests of donors.

# <u>Networking and convening</u>: To strengthen networking, relationships and communication between donors and other actors as a foundation for collaboration and innovation.

The Platform does this by:

- supporting a network of focal points across all Platform members;
- bringing donor staff together in both face-to-face and virtual working groups, seminars and forums;
- brokering direct linkages between donors on request;
- promoting interesting work being carried out by Platform members through blogs, social media, news updates and mailings;
- hosting the Annual General Assembly, which provides a space for in-depth engagement between donors and other partners;
- maintaining up-to-date contact lists for those with key food system and rural development responsibilities across donors.



# 4. REVISED MEMBERSHIP, FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE

The Platform's membership, funding and governance structures have been revised to reflect and respond to the emerging context and to streamline its functions and operations to be better equipped to realize its full potential.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Platform brings together donor organizations making substantive investments in agriculture, rural development and food systems and brokers engagement with recipients of donor funding. The Platform derives its core purpose from its membership and seeks to support donors (bilateral donors, international and regional financial institutions, and foundations) to optimize the effectiveness of the public good investments they make towards food systems and rural development. While retaining its identity as a platform for donors, the Platform acknowledges the importance and value of engaging with a wider constituency of stakeholders engaged in food systems and rural development.

To streamline and clarify the membership of the Platform, the Strategic Plan endorses the following two-tier membership structure.

#### FULL MEMBERS

All donors will be eligible for full membership of the Platform. The definition of donors includes bilateral donors, international financial institutions, regional development banks and foundations.

All full members of the Platform will be fee-paying members, will be members of the Platform's board and will be able to avail themselves of the full range of services offered by the Platform.

During this Strategic Plan period, the Platform will endeavour to increase the number of full members by at least three.

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Associate membership of the Platform will be open to multilateral organizations (that are not donors), bilateral donors (non-fee-paying) and strategic partners. The Platform's board will retain the authority to accept or reject any special-case requests for full membership from this group on a case-by-case basis.

#### PLATFORM NETWORK

Beyond the two formal membership categories, the Platform will establish a network of organizations. The network will comprise organizations, academic institutions, platforms, civil society organizations, etc., that want to be kept updated about the Platform's work and receive invitations to public events held by the Platform.

While retaining its identity as a platform for donors, the Platform, through the work of its thematic working groups and other activities – including annual events such as the Annual General Assembly – will proactively seek to engage with a wider constituency of other donors, actors and institutions that are working in the food systems and rural development space.

#### SERVICES TO MEMBERS

The Platform acknowledges the requirement to be responsive to the needs of its membership. It recognizes that it can achieve this by checking in with its members more regularly to determine the kinds of issues faced and the services and support required on an ongoing basis. To determine the kinds of services that members would find most valuable, at the commencement of the Strategic Plan, the Platform, through consultations with its members, will draw up a list of core functions and services that it can provide for its members. Once agreed, this list will be reviewed and updated annually as part of the work-planning process of the Platform.

### FUNDING

The Platform recognizes the need to develop a sustainable and realistic longerterm funding model to address resource and funding issues that have constrained the performance and delivery of the Platform. The Platform will develop a five-year fundraising and resource mobilization strategy to secure core funding over the plan period. As part of this process, the Platform will make a renewed and concerted effort to raise the number of fee-paying members by at least three. In addition, the Platform will explore alternative funding and support arrangements for potential members that, for administrative reasons, are unable to contribute membership fees.

The Platform's existing board members (who are fee-paying members) have committed to the transition and future of the Platform and to ensuring that the secretariat is adequately resourced during the transition period. If necessary, supplementary funding to complement fees will be considered.

### GOVERNANCE

The Strategic Plan endorses the recommendation from the stocktaking analysis to establish a permanent executive board group of three co-chairs. Co-chairs play a critical role in the functioning of the board and provide an "executive board" function for the secretariat. The appointment of three co-chairs has served the Platform well in the past year and has been found to be an effective mechanism for sharing responsibilities, building the profile of the Platform and deepening buy-in/engagement by donor members in the work of the Platform.

Over the 2021-2025 strategic plan period, the Platform will seek to engage its board members more effectively. The Platform will convene an annual meeting of donor "heads of sector" to build greater support and ownership for the Platform and its activities among donor agencies.



## 5. SECRETARIAT STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To realize its potential and to meet the needs of its donor members effectively, the Platform recognizes the ongoing requirement for an adequately staffed, efficient and proactive secretariat. In the transition of the secretariat from the German Agency for International Cooperation to IFAD, the board agreed to reduce the size of the secretariat to three full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. IFAD is in the process of recruiting for three key positions: secretariat coordinator, communications officer and administrative assistant. In the interim, the secretariat functions have been supported by an acting secretariat coordinator and an intern. Going into the 2021-2025 period, there is a need to keep reviewing the staffing and responsibilities of the secretariat to ensure that it is equipped to deliver on its mandate and deliver its functions/services to members.

Based on the recommendations of the stocktaking analysis report, during the 2021-2025 period, subject to the availability of funds, the Platform will prioritize strengthening the secretariat. The Platform will do this by first looking at the key functions that can be integrated in-house into existing IFAD systems/positions and that consequently may not have direct staffing implications. Funds permitting, the Platform will consider how to strengthen the policy advice and knowledge and learning functions of the secretariat, either through the secretariat position itself or with consultancy support.

The Platform recognizes that in the initial stages of the transition not all functions may be available or some functions may have to be provided on a part-time basis.

In the longer term, given the ambitions of the Platform, the following functions are considered essential.

- Secretariat coordinator senior level: overall management and coordination of the secretariat.
- Policy advisor senior level: supports strategic engagement of the Platform with members and global and regional processes.
- Knowledge and learning lead mid-level to senior level: strategic guidance of the knowledge-brokering function and technical working groups.
- Communications officer mid-level: produces material for newsletters and the website and maintains a social media presence.
- Programme advisor/intern junior level: general support for workplan implementation.
- Administration and communication support.

## COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

The Strategic Plan recognizes that communication and outreach are essential to the effectiveness and profile of the Platform and for it to engage with a wider audience. The Platform has a variety of communication tools and channels through which it can engage with its members and the wider donor and development community. Acting on the recommendations of the stocktaking analysis, the Platform will, as a priority, review and update the 2019 Communication Strategy, with a view to implementing it more fully over the 2021-2025 period.

As part of this process, the Platform will strive to use its communication tools – website, newsletters, publications and social media platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube) – more effectively to strategically engage and communicate with its members and with a wider external audience. The Platform will also capitalize on the opportunities that the shift to virtual platforms and forums during the COVID-19 pandemic has presented to hold events such as the Annual General Assembly online and to convene smaller more targeted events, such as webinars.



# 6. THEMATIC PRIORITIES

Over the 2021-2025 period, the Platform will become more focused and strategic about the issues it addresses. In particular, it will give more attention to the cross-cutting theme of how to optimize the catalytic and enabling role that donor investments play. This reflects the work already being carried out by the SDG 2 roadmap working group.

Food systems and rural development encompass a vast range of issues and topics that the Platform could potentially address. However, there is a limited comparative advantage to the Platform covering a broad range of topics or expanding into a large number of thematic working groups, or indeed capacity.

Consequently, future thematic work of the Platform will be set by an annual horizonscanning process that will identify priority issues in which the Platform can have a strategic influence, given emerging global issues and challenges related to food systems, agriculture and rural development.

For 2021 an important focus of the Platform will be on making a donor contribution to the United Nations Food Systems Summit. The Platform will develop a White Paper for the summit. This will look at the current portfolio of donor investments in food systems and identify areas for change or greater focus in line with the needs arising from the summit's Action Tracks.

The outcomes of the summit will provide a foundation for the Platform to set its thematic priorities for the 2022-2025 period. Much of the work around the Food Systems Summit aligns with the work of the SDG 2 working group, so supporting this will be a high priority for the Platform.

The Land Governance Working Group continues to be highly valued by the Platform's membership and the Platform will continue to host and support the work of that group, while also investigating a longer-term and more sustainable funding mechanism.

A Rural Youth Employment Working Group is in place; in 2020, the Platform has worked with the group's members to revive its agenda and establish clear operational and strategic priorities to continue its important work and mission.

Over the 2021-2025 period, the Platform will complement the thematic working groups with a more flexible set of modalities for taking action, including one-off seminars and briefings, briefing papers on key issues and internal sharing sessions between donors. Owing to the secretariat not yet being fully staffed, capacity in the first half of 2021 will be limited; however, a programme of activities will be developed for the second half of 2021.

Additional priority areas for attention by the Platform are likely to include:

- building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and food systems resilience
- climate and food systems, including the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)
- catalysing and de-risking responsible private sector investment
- optimizing information and communications technology potential
- transformation of small-scale farming
- sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, including agroecological approaches
- national policy support for restructuring incentives frameworks to drive sustainable and equitable food systems.



## 7. KEY RESULTS AREAS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN PERIOD

To be effective, the Platform must be more focused, targeted and strategic in its engagement internally with members and externally with the broader development community. The Platform must also strive towards setting measurable targets and deliverables and improve its reporting and monitoring of results.

Drawing on the findings and recommendations of the 2020 stocktaking analysis of the Platform, over the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan period the Platform will focus on delivering results in each of the following key results areas.

<u>Enhanced strategic influencing capability</u>: The Strategic Plan actions the reorientation of the Platform's advocacy function towards a more targeted strategic influencing role. This strategic orientation recognizes the catalytic role that the Platform can play in shaping donor thinking, policies and programming on food systems and rural development, with the objective of accelerating progress towards the SDGs. It further recognizes the particular emphasis of the Platform, its membership and its activities towards furthering progress towards achieving SDG 2. The upcoming Food Systems Summit in October 2021 provides a unique opportunity for the Platform to take practical and tangible steps towards re-establishing its strategic influencing capability.

The Platform will achieve this by:

- organizing a high-level meeting of donors and multilateral organizations working in the food systems space in advance of the Food Systems Summit to discuss key issues and challenges, and build consensus around the potential role of the Platform in informing and influencing discussions at the Summit;
- initiating an annual horizon-scanning process, which will seek to build on discussions at the forum and identify key issues and opportunities that the Platform can use as the basis for developing a concrete workplan for 2021/22;



- convening an annual meeting of senior managers responsible for food systems/ agriculture/rural development from across the membership;
- convening task teams on key issues to bring together donors and other stakeholders to identify options for responding to the issues;
- convening high-level events and briefings to keep members up to date on the latest thinking and evidence;
- mobilizing new joint efforts by donors to respond to emerging issues or funding gaps;
- supporting communication and alignment between donors in their preparations for bilateral engagement in key global forums and processes;
- profiling and discussing key emerging issues with high-level representatives during the Annual General Assembly.

#### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- The annual horizon-scanning process was conducted each year.
- The findings from the horizon-scanning process were integrated and used as the basis for the development of an annual workplan for the Platform.
- A high-level meeting of senior representatives of member organizations was held annually with positive feedback from participants.
- The Platform convened at least two or three task teams (or as many as necessary) to bring donors and other stakeholders together to identify opportunities for the Platform to respond.
- Members perceived a substantial increase in the effectiveness of the Platform and its activities over the plan period.

<u>Connecting with member needs</u>: The Platform is a platform of and for donors making significant investments in the food systems and rural development space. The Platform derives its mandate and legitimacy from its membership. As a member-driven platform, going into the 2021-2025 period the Platform recognizes the need to be more responsive and in tune with the needs of its membership. During the 2021-2025 period, the Platform will strive to be more proactive in communicating and engaging with its members and work towards more effectively determining member priorities and expectations vis-à-vis the Platform. To this end, the Platform will strive towards being more responsive and adaptive to the needs of its membership and being more effective in demonstrating results from donor and member contributions.

The Platform will achieve this by:

- initiating a work-planning process at the start of the plan period that will be revisited on an annual basis – this will involve extensive consultations with donor members to discuss emerging issues, donor priorities and, critically, the kinds of issues, services and support that the Platform can offer its members;
- agreeing on core functions and services that the Platform can offer/provide to its membership;

- keeping members updated on key events and forums through newsletters, annual reports and through social media/communication tools;
- continuing to host cross-member thematic working groups such as the Land Governance Working Group;
- convening a high-level Annual General Assembly each year on a strategically and thematically important topic.

#### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Member consultations were held on an annual basis as part of the work-planning process to determine member priorities.
- Delivery of agreed core services to members.
- Members reported significant improvements in Platform communications and outreach and efforts to keep members informed of key developments in the food systems and rural development space.
- The Annual General Assembly was held annually and received positive feedback from members and participants.

Diversifying operational modalities: The Strategic Plan will action the recommendations of the stocktaking analysis to explore a range of different operational modalities during the plan period. This process will be driven by the horizon-scanning process (described earlier) and will seek to identify key issues that the Platform can focus on over the period of the plan, which will then be revisited on an annual rolling basis. By doing so, the Platform can be more responsive to the needs and priorities of its members, and more strategic in its approach to engaging its membership in response to emerging food systems and rural development issues and challenges. To this end, over the 2021-2025 period, the Platform will broaden its operational modalities to complement thematic working groups with a more diverse range of focused activities that could include shorter-term task groups and one-off meetings that are results-oriented and time-bound.

The Platform will achieve this by:

- identifying the needs of members, annual priorities and results to be achieved, and designing activities around these rather than relying only on ongoing thematic groups;
- having a clear Platform-wide results-oriented annual workplan;
- identifying, through the horizon-scanning and work-planning processes, discrete, time-bound and results-oriented activities that can be supported by the Platform;
- thematic working groups developing plans that align with and contribute to the overall Platform workplan;
- organizing meetings, conferences and workshops for members around emerging priority issues and themes;

- commissioning short pieces of research on emerging topics of interest to members;
- establishing time-bound and discrete task groups on emerging critical issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic;
- continuing to host communities of practice such as the Land Governance Working Group.

#### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- A Platform-wide results-oriented annual workplan was developed.
- The Platform diversified its operational modalities beyond its thematic working groups by organizing a series of meetings, conferences and workshops on topical issues.
- The Platform commissioned short and timely pieces of research on emerging topics of interest to members.
- Short-term task groups were convened by the Platform.

<u>Mobilizing the delivery capacity of the new secretariat</u>: An adequately staffed and well-equipped secretariat is critical to the efficient functioning of the Platform going into the 2021-2025 period (described in detail in section 5). As a priority, a core focus of the Platform in the first two years of the plan period will be on building and strengthening the staffing and capacity of the Platform's secretariat.

The Platform will achieve this by:

- recruiting key FTE roles of the secretariat as a priority, including a secretariat coordinator, a communications officer and an administrative assistant;
- analytically assessing and identifying potential secretariat roles/functions that could be integrated in-house by IFAD;
- recruiting mid-level to senior-level staff or consultants to support those functions that cannot be immediately filled as FTE roles;
- recruiting interns to support the secretariat and the role of the Platform coordinator;
- subject to the availability of funds, working towards expanding the current staffing structure of the Platform to a full complement of five FTEs.

- The secretariat coordinator was successfully recruited within the first three to six months of the plan period.
- Additional support staff were recruited by the end of the first year of the plan period.
- The secretariat is adequately staffed and supported by recruited FTE personnel, senior consultants and interns.

Extending the membership base and securing resources: Drawing on the recommendations of the stocktaking analysis, the Platform acknowledges the urgent need to revisit its membership and fee structure. Clarifying the membership structure, extending the membership base and securing additional resources to support the operating costs of the Platform and its activities more broadly will be critical to the performance and success of the Platform over the plan period. Simultaneously, the board and secretariat, in consultation with the members, must work towards developing a fundraising strategy that considers different financing and funding options for members.

The Platform will achieve this by:

- reassessing and simplifying the Platform's membership structure and guidelines based on the issues raised by the stocktaking report;
- increasing the number of fee-paying donor members by the end of the plan period;
- as part of the work-planning process, clarifying the services available for and engagement of full members and associate members as a priority and updating the Platform's Charter accordingly;
- developing a three- to five-year fundraising strategy to raise additional resources for the Platform and its activities.

- The Platform's membership structure was revised.
- The number of fee-paying members was increased by at least three.
- The Platform developed a longer-term fundraising model that considers different financing and funding options for members, partners and other stakeholders.
- The Platform was successful in raising additional resources from its members or through supplementary sources to support the operational costs of the secretariat.

Strengthening communications and outreach: The Platform recognizes the need to be more strategic and purposeful in how it engages internally with members and externally with a broader constituency of actors and stakeholders working in the food systems and rural development space. During the 2021-2025 period, the Platform will strengthen its communications and outreach using a range of tools, including the Platform's website, social media platforms and other communication tools. This will enable it to reach out to, update and communicate information about its activities and upcoming events to its membership.

The Platform will achieve this by:

- implementing the Platform's revised communications strategy in its entirety (taking on board the recommendations of the stocktaking analysis report);
- strengthening the design and context of the Platform's website to make it more informative, dynamic and member-oriented;
- mobilizing the Platform's social media, communication and outreach tools to engage with members more effectively and build a stronger external profile for the Platform.

- The Platform's communications strategy was revised and put into action.
- Members reported a significant improvement in Platform communication and outreach as measured through a feedback survey.
- The Platform's website and social media platforms saw a significant increase in user traffic.

Strengthening results-oriented planning and reporting: The Platform recognizes the need to strengthen the reporting and monitoring of its activities and results. To this end, during the 2021-2025 period, the Platform will work towards ensuring that its activities are planned, implemented and reported with a clear focus on how these activities relate to the broader objectives of the Platform. The Platform's reporting of its activities will also shift from a focus on events and activities to the reporting of higher-level results, outcomes and impacts that demonstrate the catalytic role that the Platform has played in influencing its members and other donors in the kinds of policy and programmatic investments that they make in the food systems and rural development space. Alongside this higher-level reporting and capturing of the Platform's strategic influencing, knowledge-brokering and networking functions, there is also a need for the Platform to systematize and strengthen the activity-level reporting of its work with reference to thematic working groups, the Annual General Assembly and other events. Finally, the Platform will ensure that information, documentation and records related to its operations and activities are duly collated and organized systematically to ensure that a periodic review of Platform activities is possible.

The Platform will achieve this by:

- formulating a Platform-wide results-oriented annual workplan rather than a set of individual thematic working group plans;
- ensuring that the annual workplan is sufficiently results-oriented and focused to be able to assess the Platform's performance at the end of the year.

- The Platform has established a clear results-oriented annual workplan.
- There was annual reporting of Platform activities that was outcome-focused, impact-oriented and focused on high-level achievements that demonstrated the Platform's unique value to its members and the broader development community.
- The reporting was sufficiently detailed at outcome and impact levels to enable an in-depth review at the end of the plan period.
- Information and documentation related to the Platform, its operations and its activities were collated, organized and kept up to date to enable a periodic indepth review.



#### Secretariat of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Phone: +39 06 5459 2512 Email: secretariat@donorplatform.org www.donorplatform.org

