Global Donor Platform for Rural Development

Informal Board Meeting

23 September 2020

Participants

Co-Chairs: David Hegwood (USAID), Paul van de Logt (The Netherlands)

Board Members: Ammad Bahalim (BMGF), Fabrizio Moscatelli (BMGF), Oriane Barthélemy (MEFA France), Marco Platzer (IADC Italy), Ron Hartman (IFAD), Sanna-Liisa Taivalmaa (MFA Finland), Meredith McCormack (USAID), Federica de Gaetano (AICS Rome), Paolo Enrico Sertoli (IADC), Maurizio Bonavia (MFA Italy), Ueli Mauderli (SDC), Boris Buechler (GIZ)

Guests: Jim Woodhill (Consultant), Mandakini Devasher (Consultant)

Platform Secretariat: Maurizio Navarra and Sylvia Otieno (IFAD)

Apologies: Conrad Rein (EC), Chris Penrose-Buckley (FCDO), Willem Wefers Bettink (IFAD), Atsuko Toda (AfDB), Tristan Armstrong (DFAT), Iris Krebber (FCDO), Bernhard Worm (BMZ).

Agenda
1. Introduction and welcome
2. Presentation of 2020 Annual General Assembly (AGA) concept note + linkages with the Food Systems Summit (FSS)
    a) FSS and 2020 AGA: General overview
    b) AGA: intro, dates, objectives, outcomes, structure
    c) Run-through of virtual events, including speaker's line-up
    d) Next steps, audience, invitation letters, documents to prepare.
3. Discussion and finalization of concept note
4. AOB

Agenda Point	Overview, Discussions, Decisions, and Agreements
1. Introduction and welcome	**The Co-chair (USAID)** welcomed participants, stressing the relevance of this informal meeting to catch-up and deliberate on the next steps of the AGA preparatory process.

2. **Presentation of 2020 AGA concept note + linkages with the FSS**
 a) **FSS and 2020 AGA: General overview**
 b) **AGA: intro, dates, objectives, outcomes, structure**
 c) **Run-through of virtual events, including speakers line-up**
	The Secretariat thanked the Board members for their feedback on the AGA concept note and gave an overview of the AGA events, highlighting the following key areas:
	
	 a) The linkages between the Food System Summit (FSS) and the 2020 AGA
	 b) The organization of the AGA, including its suggested dates, objectives, outcomes, and structure
	 c) Overview of planned virtual events including possible speakers' line-up:
	   - **High-level session:** Transformation of the food systems: Implications for coordination and financing.
	   - **Second session:** Pathways for food systems transformation
	   - **Third session:** Food systems: Data for evidence-based policymaking

d) Next steps, audience, invitation letters, documents to prepare.	**On the third session, USAID** explained that one of the successes that the SDG2 Roadmap Working Group has had so far is to emphasize the need for evidence in support of decision-making processes. He further noted that the need for evidence and data to enable countries to make informed decisions to support food system transformation will continue to be a critical issue leading to the FSS and beyond. He highlighted the importance to include the issue of digital tools in the session.

BMGF added that there is a general agreement about the need for better data and evidence to inform decision and policymaking. He noted that the Ceres2030 and 50x2030 initiatives make the case for that in a very specific way. A lot of the people involved in both initiatives are incidentally also contributing to the scientific advisory group of the FSS. He suggested the panellists for this session include representatives from both the Ceres2030 and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data initiative. Some of the speakers can present the evidence that was assembled using the Ceres2030 work, and the utility of statistics from a global perspective. The session could also include in-country representatives, who will present specific examples of how information and data are used.

- **Fourth session**: A new vision for the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development

d) Next steps, audience, and invitation letters
- o Finalization of the AGA concept note
- o Identification of speakers
- o Communication plan (including AGA branding)
- o Identification of participants
- o Email invitations +invitation letters
- o Preparation of short concept notes for each event
- o Preparation of guidance notes for speakers

Discussion

The Netherlands noted they support both the suggested dates and the concept note. In addition to the FSS and other discussions on "housekeeping" items, there are substantive elements that the Platform needs to address, for instance, initiatives coming from the Development Ministers meeting. He then recommended that a strong focus should be placed on content and the agenda, rather than housekeeping matters. The proposed concept note achieves this balance.

USAID reported that the **European Commission (Conrad Rein)** supports the proposed concept note. USAID also inquired whether a formal Board meeting should be organized at the end of the AGA, as in past editions. This suggestion will be discussed at a later stage.

Italy inquired whether the discussion on the Platform's thematic working groups will be included in the fourth session.

Responding to Italy's question, **Jim Woodhill** pointed out that there is a need to decide whether the fourth session will focus on an in-depth discussion on the Platform's working groups, or whether it should have a higher-level focus, on the future of the Platform. He then suggested that in case external stakeholders will be invited to the session, then the discussion should focus on high-level matters. Otherwise, there needs to be an in-depth, more focussed discussion with Platform members on the future of the working groups post AGA.

MFA Finland asked if the fourth session will only be opened to Platform members. Keeping focus with a large group with a lot of new ideas might be too risky.

Jim Woodhill sought clarification about the potential focus of the session on working groups: Whether to present some of the work that they are currently doing /planning to do or whether to discuss their future (which is one of the areas that will be analysed by the Strategic Plan).

Secretariat flagged that the original intention was to open the four sessions to external stakeholders, to encourage broad participation.

SDC supported the idea of discussing the Strategic Plan among members only.

Jim Woodhill stated that part of the stocktaking exercise is to provide an overview of the Platform's thematic working groups' achievements and impact. It is envisaged that part of the presentation will have a brief input from this exercise.

USAID summarised that there is a general need for a discussion on the status and content of the Strategic Plan at the AGA. He further noted that since the Secretariat and Jim Woodhill have been more involved with the concept note, the Board will leave it to them to flesh out and propose how best to structure this session. He however emphasized the need for the session to have a more focussed discussion within the Platform membership.

Secretariat suggested, as a way forward, to open the first three sessions to a broader audience and limit the discussions on the Strategic Plan to Platform members only. The proposal was welcomed by the Board members.

USAID also put forward two concrete proposals on the table for structuring the AGA sessions. **Firstly**, he suggested having a private sector representative at the high-level event. He reported that he recently had an interesting discussion with WEF, which is very active in building networks that they hope will deliver concrete outcomes to the Summit. It will be useful to invite some actors from the private sector including WEF to participate in the AGA in some fashion and see if the Platform can benefit from their experiences. **Secondly**, he highlighted that it is important to listen to the voices from the countries that Platform members are working in. Whilst in the concept note there is already a proposal to bring someone like the CAADP CEO (Ibrahim Mayaki) in the AGA, it will also be useful to have representatives from other organizations, such as the AU, and AGRA which could bring that voice to our discussions.

The Netherlands stated that they welcome these suggestions and pointed out that there is also an interest from such organizations to listen to our discussions and see what the Platform has to offer, especially in the context of the FSS.

Jim Woodhill cautioned about overloading the first session, especially given the limitations of virtual meetings. He further inquired about whether having another session (on the private sector) would make sense. To some extent, there is a degree of logic in organizing such a session. Apart from the need for data and evidence, a clear role of the donor community is to catalyse more inclusive private sector engagement. The flow of the AGA could work well in that sense, including discussions on the big picture on transformation processes, and follow-up sessions featuring broader stakeholder engagement. This can then be followed by the two sessions that go into detail on data and private sector engagement. That will make the events flow coherently.

	SDC inquired about how to make sure that the inputs and discussions are kept on the right level in a way that participants get insights on what is happening on the funding/financing coordination side.
	USAID clarified that we would have to be careful when selecting the participants. The sessions, as suggested in the concept note, should be structured as interactive events, with a moderator asking questions, rather than panellists delivering a sequence of statements or presentations. Having the specific session concept notes, as well as the guiding questions will be key. Therefore, the Board will have to look at those two things to make sure that the discussion is focussed.
	Secretariat complemented Jim Woodhill's suggestion of having an additional session, by suggesting taking out the fourth session on the Strategic Plan from the public concept note, and instead replace it with the session on the private sector. An additional side session dedicated to the strategic plan and open only to the membership will then be organized soon after the fourth session.
	USAID inquired whether, given this suggestion, day three should be split into two events to accommodate both the evidence and the private sector sessions.
	Secretariat pointed out that the four days should be kept for the four proposed sessions. And then the session on the Strategic Plan with the members can be organized right after the fourth event. He later emphasized the need of limiting the events to one per day so as not to lose the audience, keeping in mind the different time zones.
	USAID inquired about the duration of the sessions.
	Secretariat clarified that the current proposal is that the first and second sessions be 1 ½ to 2 hours while the other sessions 1 to 1 ½ hour. The details will be made more explicit in the concept and guidance notes that will be shared with all Board members for approval.
	MEFA France inquired whether the session on the private sector will have only private sector speakers, or whether donors will also be invited. Otherwise, MEFA France is happy with how the concept note looks. For the high-level session participation, she will check internally if someone will be available and will get back to the Secretariat.
	USAID noted that he certainly does not envision that the private sector session only includes private sector panellists. It will be important to hear different perspectives on the role of the private sector. It will also be helpful to hear about some of the tools and platforms that the private sector is engaged in. Focusing only on how to get the private sector to invest more in agriculture and food systems will not be doing justice to the topic, as the role of donors and public sector entities in interacting with private companies is key to understanding how food systems can be transformed.
	MEFA France suggested that the Secretariat use the AGA concept note on the private sector initially prepared in March as a starting point.
5. Discussion and finalization of concept note	**Decision point:** - The Secretariat and Jim Woodhill to add a fourth session on the role of the private sector in the AGA Concept note and conceptualize a fifth "housekeeping" session on the future of the Platform (outside of the AGA Concept note).

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	- Once finalized, the draft concept will be shared with the AGA prep committee for comments before sharing it with the board for a quick approval
6. AOB	No A.O.B.

Agenda Point	Task	Responsible	Timeline
3. Presentation of 2020 AGA concept note + linkages with the FSS **e) FSS and 2020 AGA: General overview** **f) AGA: intro, dates, objectives, outcomes, structure** **g) Run-through of virtual events, including speakers line-up** **h) Next steps, audience, invitation letters, documents to prepare.**	Identify and reach out to potential speakers and participants	Board members & Secretariat	ASAP
	Organize all the AGA logistics: - Development of a Communication plan (Including AGA branding) - Email invitations +invitation letters - Preparation of short concept notes for each event - Preparation of guidance notes for speakers	Co-chairs, AGA committee, Secretariat and Jim Woodhill	ASAP
4. Discussion and finalization of concept note	Finalization of the AGA concept note	AGA prep committee, Secretariat & Jim Woodhill	ASAP