

Virtual Board Meeting

10 December 2019, 15:00hrs – 16:30hrs CEST

Minutes

Participants

Board members: Bernhard Worm (BMZ), Conrad Rein (EC), Torben Nilsson (IFAD), Maurizio Navarra (IFAD), Marco Platzer (IFAD), Oriane Barthélemy (MEAE France), Ueli Mauderli (SDC), David Hegwood (USAID), Meredith McCormack (USAID), Sanna-Liisa Taivalmaa (MFA Finland), Paul van de Logt (MFA Netherlands)

Transition Task Force Co-Chair: Marc Nolting (GIZ)

Platform Secretariat: Laura Barrington, Marion Thompson, Oliver Hanschke, Manuel Urrutia, Octávio de Araújo

Absent with apologies: Ammad Bahalim (BMGF), Fiona Lynn (DFAT), Tristan Armstrong (DFAT), Iris Krebber (DFID)

Agenda

1. Welcome and agreement on agenda for the day
2. Final Transition Task Force Recommendations
3. Proposal for the Secretariat hosted at IFAD
4. Update: Status of transition plans
5. Co-Chair election
6. AOB and closing remarks

Agenda Point	Overview, Discussions, Decisions, and Agreements
1. Welcome and agreement on agenda for the day	<p>The Co-Chair highlighted the relevance of this Board meeting due to the changes for the Platform in 2020. The Board needs to ensure due diligence in terms of all the necessary decisions for the transition.</p> <p>The Co-Chair presented the meeting agenda and asked for any additional points before proceeding. No additions were made and the agenda was approved.</p>
2. Final Transition Task Force (TTF) Recommendations	<p>The Co-Chair thanked all members of TTF for their hard work putting together the recommendations over a short period with the assistance of the consultant, Heike Ostermann. The Co-Chair also thanked GIZ for chairing the TTF.</p> <p>The Co-Chair emphasized that the Board is not intended to make decisions on the recommendations at this meeting, but rather at the Board meeting in February 2020 when the Board will have the opportunity for a more thorough discussion. The only recommendation the Board needs to take now is the decision on the transition plan for the next six months. The Co-Chair handed the floor to the Co-Chair of the TTF, to summarize their recommendations.</p>



The TTF Co-Chair reminded the Board that the TF team had presented a set of preliminary recommendations to solicit members' feedback and response at the 9 October virtual Board meeting. The TF team has incorporated the Board's feedback and concerns in the new draft. The full set of recommendations, the TTF's TORs, and further detailed information can be found in the report annexes.

The TTF Co-Chair highlighted the key TF recommendations. Recommendation 1 deals with the Secretariat's transitional period from January to June 2020. Thanks to IFAD's final decision to host the Secretariat, the TF was able to give more clear and specific recommendations for two scenarios. It is recommended that the Board significantly reduce the number of Secretariat staff to one Secretariat coordinator, one communications officer, one junior programme advisor, one contract and finance administrator and one intern. The current staff should continue working from Bonn, Germany while at the same time coordinating closely with staff at IFAD, responsible for setting up the Secretariat, and begin handing over work packages and activities. One task that the TF recommends is a detailed work plan to identify milestones for the six-month transition phase, which shall be elaborated further between GIZ and IFAD staff and to be presented to the Board, ideally before the end of this year if feasible, or early next year. The second recommendation deals with the staffing scenario after July 2020, when IFAD will be fully responsible for the Secretariat, and calls for the principal functional positions of the Secretariat to be Coordination, Programme Advisory, Communications, Contracts/Finance and Administration.

Further recommendations deal with overall resources. Recommendation 3 calls to increase the number of paying members and to encourage all existing members to pay equal minimum fees. There was discussion on whether to offer differentiated membership levels or rates to members depending on their respective roles or mandates. In that regard, the final recommendation is for a common minimum fee for all paying members. This will allow the Platform, in combination with a smaller Secretariat and additional cost reduction measures, to have sufficient core budget to carry all foreseen activities. Recommendation 4 is to implement a minimum 3-year contribution contract for the Platform. Recommendation 5 is to reduce the number of Secretariat staff, which currently amounts to 57% of the total budget, and limit the use of consultants by requiring Board approval for all consultant contracts.

The next set of recommendations deals with membership. The TF recommends that only members who pay the minimum agreed contribution of €50,000 per year should be considered members of the Platform. At the same time, the Platform is encouraged to bring on board new paying members. The Platform is recommended to increase its outreach by implementing the new communication strategy.

A further set of recommendations deals with the composition and role of the Board. The TF recommends maintaining the current structure of the Board, which allows all paying members to be Board members. However, the recommendation flags that the Board could face an issue of having too large of a Board when the number of paying members increases. Recommendation 11 deals with making Board membership more attractive by increasing the influence, mandate, and role of the Board. This will also encourage members to pay the corresponding fee. It is also recommended that the communication between the Board and Secretariat be



enhanced. The TTF recommends that the Board maintain two meetings per year, usually one physical and one virtual.

In the recommendations on working modalities and priority activities, the TTF highlights that the AGA should remain the central stakeholder event. The format of the AGA can be either purely internal or external. The TF also recommends retaining existing thematic working groups, but to strengthen their role, influence, mandate, and function via increased frequency of the meetings, which can take place back-to-back to key conferences. In term of advocacy and networking, the TF sees communication and information sharing as future central activities that should continue to be supported. In this context, recommendation 17 calls for the exploiting the full potential of social media (e.g., Twitter and YouTube), which has been used to some extent up to now. With the reduced number of staff, social media will play a stronger role in the future operation of Platform activities. Recommendation 18 suggests Board approval before recruiting consultants to increase efficacy and strategic steering by the Board and limit costs.

The TTF Co-Chair highlighted the list of topics for further discussion and decisions by the Board, including an independent midterm review or evaluation, which has not yet been discussed in the Board. The review would be extremely helpful to assess the results and the performance of the current structure, vis-à-vis the new strategic plan to be developed for 2021-2025, which will help realign the Platform to the new purpose statement. The TTF also recommends for the Board to evaluate the current mechanism for internal and external communication.

The TTF also recommends assessing the potential of the Platform as a coordination tool for national level interventions, particularly on the topics where the Platform is most successful, such as land governance. This would encourage members to see the Platform as something beyond an international coordination body.

Discussion:

The Co-Chair thanked the TTF Co-Chair for the presentation. Linking the TTF's robust set of recommendation to the discussion at AGA where the Board defined the new Platform purpose, the Co-Chair considered the TTF report as a tremendous follow-up of the discussion. **The Co-Chair called for Board members to submit written comments on the TTF recommendations by 15 January 2020.** The TTF's report and the Board's comments will be used as the basis for the Board's discussion in February 2020.

MEAE France asked whether the Platform's budget, with 10 members paying €50,000, is sufficient as the core budget for the Secretariat, and what is the consequence for the working groups if only contributing members were considered members of the Platform.

The Co-Chair responded that based on his initial assessment, the budget is sufficient for a small Secretariat; the Board will further discuss this topic in the next agenda item with the report from IFAD. On the second question, the Co-Chair stated that the Board needs to discuss and define the membership question further.



	<p>The Secretariat added that for the first six months of 2020, the Secretariat can operate with sufficient funding, thanks to the cost-neutral extensions from BMZ and the EU Delegation agreement.</p> <p>IFAD stated that the realistic membership contribution of ten members paying €50,000 each amounts to half a million Euros per year, which will define the size of the Secretariat and be the basis for the Platform activities planned. IFAD welcomes Board members paying more than the minimum contribution. In addition, there is some funding left from previous contributions that they are hoping to be able to use for the 2020 AGA. The contributions channelled to IFAD for 2020 will be used to build the Secretariat's office in Rome and ensure Platform activities throughout the year and into the following year. IFAD also introduced Maurizio Navarra who will play a role in coordinating Secretariat activities at IFAD.</p> <p>The Secretariat asked the Board if it should share the TTF report with all the members at this time. The Co-Chair asked for the Board's approval, based on the fact that the TTF's TORs state it is open to all members. IFAD raised the point that the report should be shared after Board level discussions have defined the distinction between paying and non-paying members in an inclusive manner that does not exclude non-paying members from consultation.</p> <p>The Co-Chair motioned that the Board will not share the TTF report beyond the Board at this point.</p> <p>The Co-Chair proposed the TTF report be adopted by the Board. The Board approved without further comment. The Co-Chair thanked everyone involved in the report.</p>
<p>3. Proposal for the Secretariat hosted at IFAD</p>	<p>IFAD's offer announced at the 9 October Virtual Board meeting to host the Platform's Secretariat was contingent upon its management's final decision. The positive decision was made shortly after said Board meeting. Therefore, IFAD is now formally ready to take over this role for the Platform. IFAD highlighted that the decision was announced at the 22 October Management Meeting, however, IFAD would like to request the Board's approval of the decision for IFAD to host the Secretariat.</p> <p>The Co-Chair, on behalf of the Platform, expressed gratitude to IFAD for taking over this role and asked the Board if they agree with the decision of IFAD hosting the Platform's Secretariat commencing 1 January 2020. The Board agreed with no additional comments.</p> <p>The Co-Chair informed that BMZ agreed to extend the mandate and the EU agreed to extend its funding for the Secretariat in Bonn until June 2020 to accommodate a smooth transition process. IFAD has agreed to start setting up the Secretariat in Rome during the transition process. The Co-Chair asked for the Board's approval for the transition arrangement. The Board agreed with no additional comments.</p> <p>IFAD thanked the Board for their confidence. IFAD is happy to assume the Secretariat hosting role and feels encouraged that the Board will smoothly implement the transition period. IFAD reported that a lot of work has been done for the transition period, thanks to the Bonn Secretariat team.</p>



	<p>IFAD finds the TTF recommendation on future Secretariat staffing in the future very valuable; some of the listed functions will potentially be conducted by corporate functions within IFAD. For example, the management and financial handling of contributions will be managed through IFAD’s services. IFAD will come back to this topic with a more elaborate proposal before the next Board meeting in February 2020. The proposal could be the basis for more in-depth, realistic discussion regarding future Platform funding, ambition level and priority activities.</p> <p>In relation to the information sheet that outlines the Platform’s activities for January to June 2020, IFAD sees a need to start reflecting on the future Platform strategy for the period 2021 to 2025 and possibly the follow-up on the 2015 evaluation with a renewed stocktaking exercise.</p> <p>IFAD plans to work very closely with the Bonn Secretariat during the transition.</p> <p>The Co-Chair looks forward to receiving further information about the plans for the Rome Secretariat. The Co-Chair also asked IFAD if they have any information to provide on setting up contribution agreements.</p> <p>IFAD responded that they wanted to make the contribution agreements as simple as possible. They have prepared a template agreement and will share it before the end of this year. It is a general template, but it can be amended to accommodate any more specific content requested by the members.</p> <p>IFAD would prefer multi-annual agreements but there is nothing preventing them from taking annual contributions. They hope to be ready to sign contribution agreements in the first quarter of 2020 so that they will have some funding to work with early in the year. In the meantime, IFAD emphasized that being able to use funding left from the past contributions to fund activities during the first half of the year is helpful.</p>
<p>4. Update: Status of transition plans</p>	<p>The Secretariat provided an overview of activities and transition-related tasks for the first 6 months of 2020:</p> <p><u>AGA 2020</u> Top of the list is AGA 2020. Discussions with some of the Board members have shown that an AGA in 2020 is important to maintain the relevance and visibility of the Platform. Its timeframe is subject to the Board’s review but the initial idea is to host the event in June at IFAD’s headquarters, which would keep expenses low. A proposed theme is food systems, subject to the Board’s review.</p> <p>The Co-Chair highlighted a number of issues on the timing of AGA 2020 in June, primarily BMZ’s SDG 2 Moment conference 5-10 June, which will focus on food systems. There will also be various meetings in 2020 around the same theme. The Co-Chair requested the Board to consider the timeframe and theme for AGA 2020.</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> BMZ expressed their concern that AGA 2020 is planned to take place around the same time and on a similar topic to their SDG 2 conference in Berlin. BMZ</p>



elaborated that this event will hopefully convene key players to SDG 2 and the food systems agenda, including the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and other high-level actors to form an alliance at the conference to bring SDG 2 forwards.

BMZ confirmed their support to organize the AGA in Rome and proposed that it might be better to schedule it later in the year when IFAD is solely running the Secretariat and when the topic, regardless if it is different or similar to food systems, fits the sequence of all the conferences that will be happening.

IFAD presented three points in relation to issue with the timing of AGA 2020. First, they need to fix date as soon as possible so that they can book the necessary rooms. Second, they initially proposed to hold the AGA in May or June because they could use existing funding from current contributions before the Bonn Secretariat completes their mandate at the end of June. Third, there is still time to consider the theme in order to avoid any duplication or to see how to feed the same topic into other relevant conferences.

BMZ flagged that the Board needs to take careful consideration on the topic. As BMZ will be hosting the SDG 2 conference, it can be administratively difficult if their funds were to be used for another event with a similar topic, such as the AGA.

The Co-Chair stated that since the Bonn Secretariat will be occupied with transition phase activities, it will not have the capacity to take on the planning and organization of the 2020 AGA. The Board will need to form an AGA planning committee with Board members volunteering to work together with IFAD and BMZ to assess the timing and theme of the AGA 2020. A call will go out to Board members asking for volunteers for the planning committee.

Thematic Work Updates:

The Secretariat highlighted current Platform thematic work. The Global Donor Working Group on Land will organize a side event and have their next physical meeting at the World Bank's Land & Poverty Conference in March 2020. They will continue to hold bimonthly conference calls.

The SDG2 Roadmap Group has been discussing a next meeting back-to-back to the February 2020 Board meeting, to be confirmed.

Communications:

The Secretariat plans to hand over the Platform's communications to IFAD's communication team within the first 3-4 months of 2020. The Secretariat will continue to issue its eUpdate with reduced frequency and will send the Members' toolbox one more time in 2020. The Secretariat will also continue the publication of web articles on member and international events and will maintain the website and prepare for its handover.

Platform governance:

The Secretariat will organize the physical Board meeting in February and a second one in June 2020, whether physical or virtual remains to be determined. For Board consideration are the potential commission of a mid-term evaluation of the project as well as the commencing of the strategic planning process.



Transition Planning:

The Secretariat highlighted that one big aspect of the handover is the communications work: the communication strategy, the website, the Working Group on Land's land governance map, the record of Platform activities, reports and publications, as well as contact details and tools, and procedures.

In the area of financing and reporting, the Secretariat will complete the Annual Report earlier than usual, at the end of 2019, and is preparing to submit the Annual Progress Report for the February Board Meeting. In the spring, the Secretariat will prepare the EU Delegation Agreement Report and the BMZ Report. The Secretariat will also prepare for an external audit for the years 2019 and 2020, as required by the EU Delegation Agreement.

For the handover, the Secretariat is preparing a handbook for the IFAD Secretariat team, with documentation on the thematic working groups, activities and processes, templates, and helpful tips based on 16 years of Secretariat and Platform knowledge.

Overview Secretariat Staffing:

The Secretariat gave an overview of the Secretariat staffing until June 2020. The Secretariat will continue to have a Coordinator, the Communications Advisor, Oliver Hanschke, will reduce his time dedicated to the Secretariat to 70%, then 50% over the first months of 2020, while the Junior Advisor, Manuel Urrutia, will continue working 100%.

The Secretariat also announced that some Secretariat staff who will be leaving this year and thanked them for all their support. The Contracts and Finance Manager, Marion Thompson, will be retiring in end of December. The Office Manager, Lucia Wienand, already retired at the end of November. The Administrative Officer, Simone Miller, will be moving on to another project within GIZ at the end of 2019. To fill in these roles, the Secretariat plans to hire a new part-time staff member, but may need to increase the position to 100% to secure a qualified candidate. The Secretariat will also have a new intern, Sylvia Otieno, from Kenya, starting in January. Our current intern Octávio de Araújo will leave the team mid-January 2020.

Feedback:

The Co-Chair clarified that the mid-term evaluation and the strategic planning process is to be discussed at the February Board meeting, determining how the Platform will to start the strategic planning process for 2021-2025 period.

BMZ expressed their gratitude and best wishes to the Secretariat team for managing the transition work and for the next phase. BMZ also asked about the availability of the funding for the AGA if it is to be held in the second half of 2020.

The Secretariat confirmed that there will be funding for an AGA in the first half of 2020, due to the extension from both BMZ and the EU. In addition, if IFAD can provide the venue, costs can be reduced. IFAD assured that the Platform could realistically have a low-cost AGA and that there would be the possibility to also organize the event in autumn 2020.



	<p>The Co-Chair emphasized that the Board needs to consider all the options for AGA 2020 and come to a decision quickly. The Co-Chair encouraged members to continue this discussion by joining the AGA planning committee.</p> <p>The Co-Chair thanked the Secretariat for all the hard work to ensure a smooth transition and handover.</p> <p>MFA Finland proposed to organize the AGA back-to-back to CFS in order to reduce the cost of travelling for participants. The Co-Chair recommended the Planning Committee to look at the proposed idea from MFA Finland.</p>
5. Co-Chair election	<p>The Co-Chair informed that no one has yet expressed interest in the Co-Chair position. The Co-Chair stated that he intends to step down when his mandate ends at the next AGA and encourages one of the members to join as Co-Chair prior to that date.</p>
6. AOB and closing remarks	<p>The Secretariat proposed that the Board discuss the timing of the February Board meeting. Board feedback shows a slight preference for Thursday-Friday, 6-7 February and requests more members to confirm availability via email.</p> <p>BMZ confirmed their availability for 6-7 February.</p>

Action Points

Agenda Point	Task	Responsible	Timeline
2. Final Transition Task Force Recommendations	Members submit written comments on the TTF recommendations	Board members	15 January 2020
3. Proposal for the Secretariat hosted at IFAD	Share information about the size and the role of the Rome Secretariat	Co-Chair and IFAD	February Board meeting
4. Update: Status of transition plans	Interested Board members to volunteer for AGA planning committee	Secretariat	ASAP
5. Co-Chair election	Board members to consider expressing interest in the open Co-Chair position	Board member	February Board meeting
6. AOB and closing remarks	Members to confirm availability for February Board meeting via email	Board members	ASAP