

Global Donor Platform  
for Rural Development

## Virtual Board Meeting

9 October 2019, 15:00 hrs – 17:00 hrs CEST

### Participants

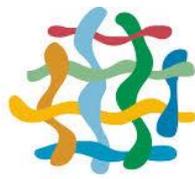
**Board members:** Co-Chair David B. Hegwood (USAID), Conrad Rein (EC), Bernhard Worm (BMZ), Oriane Barthélemy (MEAE France), Sanna-Liisa Taivalmaa (Finland), Marco Platzer & Paolo Sertoli (IADC), Torben Nilsson (IFAD)

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

**Platform Secretariat:** Laura Barrington, Marion Thompson, Oliver Hanschke, James Kyewalabye, Octávio de Araújo

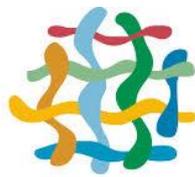
**Absent with apologies:** Patrick Herlant (EC), Atsuko Toda (AfDB), Julie Delforce and Fiona Lynn (both DFAT), Ueli Mauderli and Simon Zbinden (both SDC), Ammad Bahalim (BMGF)

Agenda Item	Discussion and Comments
<b>1. Welcome and agenda for the day</b>	<p>The Co-Chair welcomed the Board members, informed that Marc Nolting will join the meeting to provide an update on the work of the Transition Task Force, and asked if anyone had an objection to Marc attending the entire meeting. No objections were raised to Marc Nolting joining the entire meeting.</p> <p>The Co-Chair introduced the agenda highlighting a change in the order of agenda items and asked the members if anyone had any objections. No objection was raised and the agenda was accepted.</p>



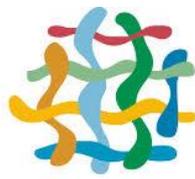
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<p><b>2. Update: Transition Task Force and 1st Draft Recommendations</b></p>	<p>The session aimed at ensuring that the Transition Task Force (TTF) addresses all the issues that require attention and identify issues that may be missing attention. The Co-Chair flagged that some options are inconsistent and perhaps mutually exclusive and the Board must have discussions how it will make decisions on these recommendations.</p> <p>Marc Nolting provided an overview on the progress of the TTF and pointed out that the platform is a well-established broad network with a well-equipped but costly Secretariat. It has however weaknesses including having few paying members and different activity levels of the working groups. He introduced the four areas of focus for TTF i.e. resources and membership, operations/working modalities, priority activities and the Secretariat.</p>
<p><b>2.1 Resources and membership</b> - Revenues – membership fees, are members willing to pay more on an equitable basis?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Co-Chair</b> highlighted that the ability to reduce spending depends on where funds are currently spent. 25% of the general budget goes into activities, and the rest is allocated to staff costs and fixed costs.</li> <li>• <b>IADC</b> and <b>France</b> both submitted that increment in membership fees may be hard to explain to superiors and <b>France</b> further suggested that Membership subscriptions to working groups could create incentives for participation as well as increase cash flows.</li> <li>• <b>IFAD</b> submitted that the current working budget could be feasible if the Secretariat would be significantly reduced but this could negatively affect the amount and quality of activities. IFAD did not support a mandatory subscription and said it could hinder broad collaboration.</li> <li>• <b>IFAD</b> – Supported multi-year agreements for proper planning and predictability.</li> <li>• <b>BMZ</b> raised no issue with increased membership fees but expressed concern on administrative requirements of collecting subscriptions to the working groups.</li> <li>• The <b>Co-Chair</b> pointed out that there is need to have a discussion on working groups and the model through which their activities are financed and advocated for further discussion on this and also highlighted that a one-size fits all approaches may not accommodate all working groups.</li> <li>• <b>Finland</b> expressed concern on the future of the Platform if there is no willingness to increase fees and that there could be a compulsory collection of membership contributions.</li> <li>• In closing the discussion, the <b>Co-Chair</b> highlighted that although all members want an equitable Platform, there is nothing against extra contributions for activities. He also called for consideration on what</li> </ul>



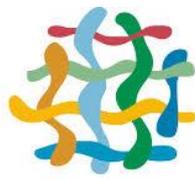
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	<p>the function of the Platform is and whether it is to have mutual discussions or broadly engage with other stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>2.2 Operations/ working modalities</b> - Board composition, - Operation of working groups - Are working groups the core function of the Platform? How do we increase participation, make them more effective, what resources should they get, etc.?</p>	<p>The <b>EC</b> submitted that a smaller Board could stimulate more involvement of members with the activities of the Board. In addition, they also supported broad engagement with other stakeholders as it could make the Platform richer and fit for purpose in current times and give room for work beyond just donor dialogue. They also mentioned that they feel well-informed on activities of the Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL) and the SDG2 Roadmap Initiative, but there is less information from other Thematic Working Groups.</p> <p><b>IADC, Finland</b> and <b>EC</b> recommended that the Board remains in its current structure. IADC supported the adoption of a smaller actively engaged working group within the Board. Finland also added that being part of the GDPRD Board could be a requirement attached to the contributions to the Platform.</p> <p><b>IADC</b> suggested that the working groups should be made more attractive to attract member participation, as members at times need to prioritise activities in which they are active.</p> <p><b>Finland</b> highlighted that a compulsory subscription could make the Platform an institution and this is not the objective of the Platform. Never in the history of the Platform has an organisation been rejected regardless of their commitment to paying a subscription; it may be hard to say no to potential members who want to be part of the Platform.</p> <p><b>IFAD</b> stated that the Platform is viewed as only relevant as its convening powers to create influence around SDG2, and hence there is value in opening up to even non-paying members (while some activities could be restricted to paying members).</p> <p>In reference to a paper prepared for the Virtual Board Meeting in January 2019, the <b>Co-Chair</b> highlighted that the major difference between the different member groups is their participation in the Board Meetings. He added that in accordance with the role of the Platform, there is agreement that many issues require broader discussion.</p> <p>The <b>Co-Chair</b> also pointed out that the discussion has not yet covered if there is additional value in senior officials meeting periodically and regularly to network and exchange. This could be a beneficial activity of</p>



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	<p>the Platform. <b>IFAD</b> in response affirmed that the real benefit comes from interactions at senior level on members’ key approaches.</p> <p><b>France</b> suggested that the discussion could focus on the activities of the Board rather than on the structure. Board members should have more opportunity to influence Platform activities and this could create incentive for more members to subscribe.</p>
<p><b>2.3 Priority activities</b> What is the purpose of the AGA? How do we prioritize themes for working groups?</p>	<p>Key recommendations raised for discussion included the structure of the AGA, the role of side-events and function of Thematic Working Groups, which should be more member driven and also more steered by the Board. In addition, improvement in communications including E tools and social media and reducing the commissioning of studies (unless funded by working groups) were suggested.</p> <p><b>IADC</b> expressed that before entering the conversation on reducing costs and increasing revenues, there is a need for an assessment of the expectations and deliverables of the Platform. Based on the outcomes, the activities could be identified and a budget be defined.</p>
<p><b>2.4 Secretariat</b> - What are the essential functions for the Secretariat?</p>	<p>The TTF agreed that the future structure and functions of the future Secretariat are dependent on the new host and new mandate of the Platform and expressed the need of a fast decision on the new host. The TTF presented three scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the current structure and core staff;</li> <li>• Reduce project staff by 50% which would imply that the Secretariat may not maintain all the activities that it is currently carrying out;</li> <li>• Significant reduction to only two staff and limited responsibilities, which would mainly concern communications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Finland</b> said that the Secretariat is necessary to keep the Platform going on and although there may be a need to save money by reducing the number of staff, it is important to keep in mind that the Secretariat still has a key role to play.</p>
<p><b>3. Update: future Platform hosting arrangement</b> - Overview on the proposal from GIZ InS and IFADs inquiry on hosting the Secretariat.</p>	<p>Following on the last Board meeting at the AGA, IFAD and IADC offered to explore the option of hosting the Secretariat.</p> <p>The <b>Secretariat</b> summarised its findings regarding a hosting option GIZ International Services (GIZ InS) and referred to a full-length summary already shared with the members in July. <b>IADC</b> declared it would not be able to offer hosting services. <b>IFAD</b> has expressed interest in hosting the Secretariat, however is conducting a due diligence process before it can make a final decision.</p>



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**BMZ** reported that they have agreed to extend the commission for three to six months to allow for a smoother transition and proper handover of the Secretariat functions to a new host. The **EC** in addition expressed their will to align their co-funding with BMZ's suggested period of extension (no-cost extension).

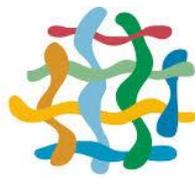
**IFAD's report on exploring hosting possibilities:**

IFAD raised that the preliminary consultations circulated around two key questions: Is there commitment from the Board to continue with the platform? In addition, can financial sustainability of the platform be assured?

IFAD informed further:

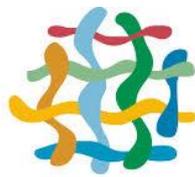
- Members may find it difficult to roll over current funding contracts; there may be a requirement to have new contracts that would have to be independently negotiated with the donors.
- IFAD structures principally also allow for both annual and multi-year (but the latter is preferred to reduce the workload associated with annual year agreements)
- Hosting the Secretariat will not raise any legal issues, as the Global Donor Platform is not a legal entity and IFAD would only host the Secretariat function. Regarding structure there will be the need to have some staff assigned to the Secretariat but IFAD's corporate departments could already take over some of the functions, e.g. communications. Further consultation on the transition process will be needed to ensure that no current functions or services get lost unintentionally in the transition

The Board unanimously approved that IFAD should be considered as the ideal option to host the Secretariat. The Co-Chair requested IFAD to move forward to finalize their decision to host and affirmed that the Platform will not seek any other option while IFAD is finalizing. IFAD confirmed that the decision to host the Secretariat is on the agenda for the IFAD's management meeting in WN42 (14-18 October 2019) and emphasize the importance of a 6-month extension of the current commission to ensure a smooth transition of the Secretariat to IFAD.



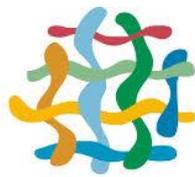
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<p><b>4. Budget and finance issues, staffing overview</b></p> <p><b>(i)_Financial Contributions</b> <b>(ii)_2019 budget status</b> <b>(iii)_Secretariat staffing</b></p>	<p><b>Overview of financial contributions and 2019 budget status:</b></p> <p><b>(i) Financial Contributions:</b> Since the Board meeting in June BMGF and DFID have signed their contributions for 2019. The Secretariat is still actively taking in contributions for 2019. In addition, IADC has confirmed its contribution but there is no confirmation for IFAD's 2018 and 2019 contribution. The Secretariat has stopped taking in further 2020 contribution agreement but there are still 3 agreements (SDC, USAID, DFAT Australia) which have provision for 2020.</p> <p>The total contributions for 2019 are 1,636,265 Euros and one contract in the pipeline bringing the total contribution of 2019 to 1,636,265 Euros. There is a preliminary amount of 362,404 Euros in operational buffer carried over from 2018 (pending IFAD's 2018 contribution. The buffer added to the total annual contributions of 2019 (1,636,265 + 362,404 Euros) give a total budget of 1,998,669 Euros.</p> <p>434,007 Euros of BMZ's contribution is largely flagged for VAT and ISC-gap booking which are both not financed by Platform members' contributions. This brings the current 2019 proposed Platform budget ceiling to 1,564,662 Euros (again including contributions in the pipeline).</p> <p><b>(ii) Status of the 2019 Budget per accounting date 31 August 2019:</b> The current costs and commitments to the budget are 1,027,652 Euros including indirect GIZ support costs of 118, 225 Euros, staff management costs of 757,425 Euros and activity related budget items of 152,002 Euros. This brings the operational balance to date to 522, 384 Euros but includes a value of 13% ISC, which makes it a net figure of 462,255 Euros. This figure includes EC and BMZ contributions that are available after the year-end and USAID's supplemental funding of 46,102 Euros.</p> <p>The Secretariat also informed the members that 50,000 Euros is the minimum amount of contribution since 2003 when the Platform was founded. This could be a justification for an increase and to advocate for an investigation if an increase is possible.</p> <p><b>(iii) Secretariat staffing</b></p> <p><i>This agenda item was not discussed because of the advanced time. The Secretariat will discuss the Secretariat staffing with the Co-Chair separately.</i></p>
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	<p><b>Remarks from the Board:</b></p> <p>The <b>Co-Chair</b> highlighted that there is adequate funding for the rest of this year and there will be some funding available during the extension of BMZ's commission next year but the exact amount is still unclear at this point. He mentioned that USAID contributions will not carry over, and most likely only two contributions (EC and BMZ) can potentially be carried over. In addition, there is no funding marked for the second half of 2020.</p> <p><b>IFAD</b> expressed concern on paying into a Secretariat that has excess balances and the fact that apart from the EC and BMZ contributions, other contributions may not be able to be extended and would need to be returned. He inquired if new funding contribution could be channelled to the new Secretariat office at IFAD to ensure that they do not remain unspent at the old Secretariat office at GIZ.</p> <p><b>MEAE France</b> informed the Board that France would not have an issue with signing the 2020 contributions with IFAD but would need clarification from their administrators as to whether funds remaining in the 2019 budget can be rolled over.</p> <p>The <b>Co-Chair</b> pointed out that more clarity is necessary on what funds are available and the timeframe required to have new contribution agreements with IFAD. He asked to explore the possibility of members withholding contributions for 2019 to 2020 to make funds available directly to the new host for the first half of the year. He said that he would request the Platform's Budget Committee to do this and share it with the Board members as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>In response, IFAD</b> reported that the process of preparing contribution agreements could be started as soon as the decision to host the Secretariat is made. This process will not take a lot of time. These steps will, however, require an understanding of the Platform's activities and may imply that as a first step, a work plan be developed as a base for justification of funding.</p>
<p><b>5. Update: Platform activities and status of transition plans</b></p>	<p><i>This agenda item was not further discussed due to lack of time. The update will be presented during the Management Meeting, see below.</i></p>
<p><b>6. Co-Chair Elections</b></p>	<p><i>No expressions of interest were raised in for the Co- Chair position.</i></p>



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<b>AOB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Secretariat informed the Board about the informal Members reception at the <b>CFS 46</b> at <a href="#">Marco Martini Restaurant (Viale Aventino, 121, 00153 Rome, Italy)</a> on <b>Wednesday, 16 October</b> at 17:30 hr CEST.</li><li>• The Secretariat also informed the Board that the next <b>GDPRD Management Meeting</b> will take place on <b>22 October 2019, 15:00 – 16:00 hrs. CEST</b></li></ul>
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### Action Areas

- The TTF will continue the work and will have a final draft of recommendations by end November.
- The Co-Chair will ask the Budget Committee to explore the possibility of members withholding contributions for 2019 to 2020 to make funds available directly to the new Secretariat host for the first half of the year and what funding can be rolled over to the new host.
- The Secretariat will organise an extended Board meeting in Rome during end January that will be hosted by IFAD.