

Management Meeting

12 July 2018, 15:00hrs – 16:00hrs CEST

Minutes

Participants: Patrick Herlant (EC), Shantanu Mathur (IFAD), Oriane Barthélemy (France MEAE), David Hegwood (USAID), Emanuela Benini and Marco Platzner (IADC), Ueli Mauderli (SDC), Petra Jacobi (GIZ), Linda Chiasson (GAC), Liz Sharma (Marchmont Communications)

Secretariat: Reinhild Ernst, Marion Thompson, Laura Barrington, Romy Sato, Jedi Bukachi, Mariya Ukhanova

Apologies: Meredith McCormack (USAID), Vincent Glaesener (LuxDev), Anders Aeroe (ITC)

Agenda:

1. Feedback from the Annual General Assembly
2. Communications strategy
3. AOB

1. Feedback from the AGA

The Platform members offered their feedback on the recent Annual General Assembly, which took place on the topic of Rural Youth Empowerment, from 13-14 June 2018 in Berlin.

Shantanu Mathur (IFAD) mentioned that it was very positive having the key stakeholders – the youth – well represented at the AGA, alongside the donors and high-level representatives. It was encouraged that even in the future this be maintained.

Oriane Barthélemy (France MEAE) expressed appreciation for the timely theme of the AGA, as well as for the interactive nature of the event, which allowed for high engagement among those in the room, as compared to formats with several non-interactive speeches. The discussions led France to reflect on their work and to identify where there is room for improvement within their agency to integrate youth issues into their work.

For the future, France recommended having a more representative cohort of youth, instead of inviting only those who are highly educated English speakers. This would allow for more insights to come directly from those who represent the vast majority of the population.

Emanuela Benini (IADC) commented that the event was well organized and that giving a voice to the youth was very important. Now that there is the youth working group starting up, there is an opportunity to carry forward with some of the issues which were raised at the AGA. IADC also appreciated the members' session, as it gave members the opportunity to learn about each others' work and exchange ideas.



For the future, IADC recommended that the working group sessions of the AGA be more interactive and allow time for reactions and discussions between the people in the room and the presenters.

Ueli Mauderli (SDC) found the AGA very inspiring and the discussions that took place most insightful.

SDC recommended that it could be useful for the AGA to reach joint conclusions. This was also mentioned in the context of the members' session, which SDC found to be very productive, but wished that more time would be allocated for the members' session to make more strategising amongst members possible.

Meredith McCormack (USAID) offered her feedback in writing. Overall, USAID felt it was a great event and a timely topic for discussion. USAID mentioned that the Secretariat did an excellent job finding dynamic young speakers and the first day particularly reflected that. The second high-level day opened with a great youth voice, Ibrahim Ceesay. However, after him, USAID felt that the day fell a bit flat and that it would surely have been beneficial if he could have stayed on for the next panel as well to provide a real youth perspective.

USAID recommended for the future to avoid having all male panels, and along the same lines, when talking about youth, ensure that at least one young person is represented.

2. Communications strategy

Liz Sharma of Marchmont Communications gave a presentation on the Platform's communications strategy. The development of a timely communications strategy was approved by the Platform Board in January 2018, and is aligned with the Platform's Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

Marchmont Communications has been commissioned to undertake the development of a communications strategy through a two-part process. The first involves looking at the existing communications products and processes and carry out an online-survey as well as face-to-face interviews to get feedback from the membership. The second part will use the feedback from the first phase to create a new communications strategy in line with members' needs.

The first phase is almost complete and a presentation was given at the Management Meeting to share first findings. The presentation containing the results will be shared alongside these minutes for member's reference.

Feedback on the results of the first phase of developing a communications strategy

Following the presentation, members were requested to offer their feedback and/or request clarifications.

IFAD commented that it was interesting to note that the Platform's advocacy function has fallen behind the knowledge sharing and networking functions. IFAD elaborated that it is more difficult to measure advocacy, because people may not be making a conscious effort to capture the amount of times in various arena in which they hear or refer to the Platform or its work. It was further felt that the attribution of the Platform's advocacy to the success of members work exists, but is not always immediately recognized because members are otherwise occupied and are not always aware of the efforts made by the Secretariat.

IFAD further commented on the result of the Secretariat's efficiency, commenting that almost 90% of members found the Secretariat's work positive, and requested clarification on the 66% result. It was explained by Liz Sharma that indeed the work of the Secretariat was overwhelmingly viewed positively, and the result of 66% is only because of the differentiation between those who solely found it "positive" (67.65%) and not combined with those who rated it "fairly positive" (23.53%). If looking at the sum of both, the overall rating would be around 90% positive.

EC commented that the advocacy function is likely to pick up again, as the resources available for agriculture are posed to go down when compared to the recent positive cycles of finances for agriculture, food and nutrition security. This means advocacy will once again be important to make the case for agriculture.

The EC also commented on the importance of coordination as a Platform function, which is different from the functions described in the communications strategy (knowledge sharing, advocacy and networking). Content and strategic coordination as well as getting closer to national and regional partners is all about coordination and it would be important that the communication strategy takes note of this and not limit the coordination role of the Platform to networking and knowledge sharing alone.

SDC added to the comment of the EC, agreeing that the coordination function of the Platform is of great importance and that it would be beneficial if members would commit themselves more to this function. SDC also underlined interest in seeing the Platform's communication strategy draw lessons from the operations of the BEAM exchange and other networks.

France MEAE inquired about the next steps in the process of the new communications strategy. The Secretariat informed that based on the results of the findings of the online-survey, the interviews, the input of members during today's Management Meeting and the audit of the existing communication channels (website, webinars, telcos, events, newsletter etc.), the consultant will carry out a one-day workshop with the Secretariat in early August to explain the outcomes and to further re-fine the target audiences and approaches to engage them.

The communications strategy will thereafter be drafted. Before it is finalised, another meeting will be conducted to share the draft with Platform members in order to ensure that it responds to the needs of the membership. SDC commented that it would be important that the majority of all members attend the meeting where the communications strategy is being presented. When consensus is reached, the strategy will be finalised and operationalised.

The Secretariat reminded Platform members who have not yet responded to the communications survey to offer their feedback by 20 July 2018.

3. AOB

The Secretariat shared with the members the reason why the Platform continues to use Webex as the tool for online conferences, as the question had come up a number of times. Webex allows for recording of the discussions and is more widely accessible for the different agencies, with many organisations reporting that they cannot use Skype at their respective offices. The Secretariat will nevertheless continue to look into new options.

Upcoming events

The Global Donor Working Group on Land has applied for two side events at the CFS. More information will be given in due course. France also mentioned that they will have side events at the CFS.

The EC will once again have a regional network meeting for the Eastern African region. At the last one, several Platform members were present.

IADC mentioned the AGRF forum, which will take place in Kigali in early September. Those Platform members who are working together on conceptualizing the upcoming Youth Thematic Work stream are planning to attend.

Action points

Agenda Item	Task	Responsible	Timeline
2. Communications strategy	Members to respond to survey by 20 July 2018	Platform members	20 July 2018
3. AOB	Secretariat to explore different options for alternative tools for online conferencing besides Webex or Skype	Secretariat	ASAP