

# Global Donor Platform for Rural Development

## 2019 Member Feedback Report

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### → 1. BACKGROUND

This paper provides a synthesis of the data and resulting key messages from a feedback exercise conducted with members of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (hereafter Platform) between May and June 2019. The exercise consisted of:

- a) three virtual calls facilitated by consultant Nancy White and where members were asked: What are the unique challenges you face as a donor, particularly going forward? What is the unique value does or could the Platform provide you? What are some insights, ideas or inspirations from networks we can learn from and why?
- b) an online survey focused on understanding the Platform's strengths and framed using five key conditions for collective impact and shared success in networks<sup>1</sup>: a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communications, and backbone support.

Fifteen Platform members took part in the online survey and sixteen members joined the virtual calls.

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<sup>1</sup> The framework was adopted from "[Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact](#)", by Turner et al., 2012.

## → 2. KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE MEMBER FEEDBACK 2019

### 2.1 Unique Donor Challenges

#### KEY TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

Two key challenges were repeated by different donors:

- The need to “sell” agricultural rural development (ARD) themes as part of other emerging development issues that are perceived by their institutions to be more politically relevant (e.g. economic growth, youth)
- How to tap into the potential and avoid the negative externalities of public-private partnerships, particularly in the framework of inclusive agribusiness and natural resource management initiatives

During the virtual discussions, participating Platform members were asked what are some of the unique challenges they face as donors, particularly in the short term. Responses can be grouped into five general categories of challenges: a changing donor environment, creating and measuring impact, thematic working areas, working with host and client institutions, and donor coordination (Table 1).

**TABLE 1: Unique donor challenges**

Category	Challenges
Changing Donor Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decreasing funding</li><li>• Role of public-private partnerships<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ New players resulting in grey areas of who does what and where</li><li>○ Finding the right balance between international public priorities and private sector priorities</li></ul></li><li>• Internal institutional restructuring<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Both structurally and personnel wise</li></ul></li><li>• Aligning multilateral actors</li></ul>
Impact Creation & Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering greater impact across spatial scales</li><li>• Obtaining and understanding better evidence of impact from new forms of development work</li><li>• Clearer and more coherent indicators definitions and standards, comparability of standards</li><li>• Finding new partners for monitoring and evaluation</li></ul>

### Thematic Working Areas

- Adapting to emerging new and/or cross-cutting issues
  - E.g. humanitarian assistance, inclusive agribusiness & trade, climate change, natural disasters attributed to climate change, natural resource management
- Advocating for specific issues within own institutions
  - Selling ARD themes as part of other issues with greater political currency

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### Working with Governments

- Ensuring member institutions are structured to work under the Agenda 2030 framework
- Adopting structured approaches to working with government clients

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### Donor Coordination

- Aligning donor strategies
- Defining the Platform's role
  - A new direction to include other themes other than solely ARD?
  - Role of Members and Secretariat within the Platform?

## 2.2 Meeting the challenges and supporting donors

### KEY TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

Members stated that they would like the Platform to continue to foster networking and knowledge sharing amongst the donors, especially work done in the TWGs. Potential new ideas to support donor challenges include: structuring activities along the political objectives of members' host institutions in order to create synergies, adopting joint Platform positions, and creating new TWGs.

Members were asked in the feedback exercise what the Platform could do for them given their challenges/changes in the current and future donor environment. The recurring answers were:

- The Platform “may advocate and provide space for coordination, concentration, negotiation,” and other activities that could help members achieve institutional goals while increasing their ability to sell ARD issues at home.
    - However, some members cautioned that the Platform has yet to play a role in the policy sphere and it is uncertain whether members would want it to and whether it should be empowered to do so.
  - The Platform should continue to foster networking and sharing knowledge amongst its members.
  - The Platform can help harmonize donor programs within a shrinking financial resource landscape so that they are not competing for resources.
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### → 3. COLLECTIVE IMPACT: UNDERSTANDING THE PLATFORM'S STRENGTHS

In order for the Platform to help members meet the challenges they face, results from the feedback exercise are used to explore the collective impact of the Platform, that is, what the members and the Secretariat of the Platform do together because success cannot be achieved alone. The Platform's current value and future potential value were examined using the collective impact framework and were used to assess the fitness of the Platform in delivering its core functions and its ability to help members meet future challenges.

#### 3.1. Collective Impact 1: Common Agenda

##### KEY TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

The Platform's common agenda is centred on the networking, knowledge sharing, and advocacy on general ARD trends and topics and specific TWGs issues that are facilitated by the Platform. The relationships formed between donors in the neutral convening space of the Platform are key to the success of the Platform.

- The Board was generally perceived as playing an important role in helping the Platform to develop a common agenda/purpose (Fig. 1), but that the general membership and the Secretariat have a stronger role in driving the direction of the Platform (Fig 2 & 3).
- Members stated that the opportunities that the Platform facilitates to network, build relationships, and share knowledge amongst peers are critical towards creating a common agenda.
- Despite overwhelming positive response to how members utilize the networking and knowledge sharing facilitated by the Platform, the only perceivable activity to some members is the AGA. At the thematic working group (TWG) level, criticism has been levied against low member engagement in many TWGs.

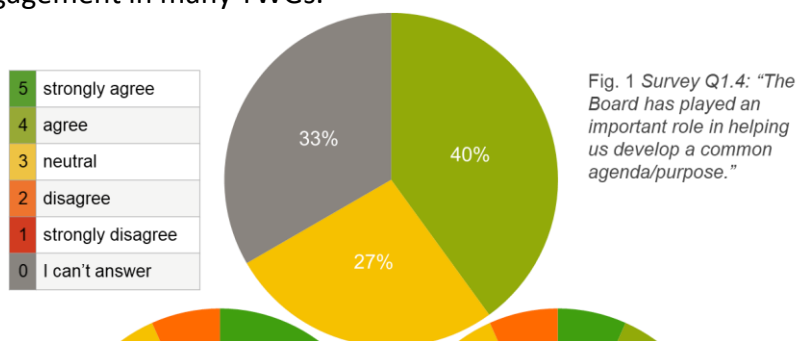


Fig. 1 Survey Q1.4: "The Board has played an important role in helping us develop a common agenda/purpose."

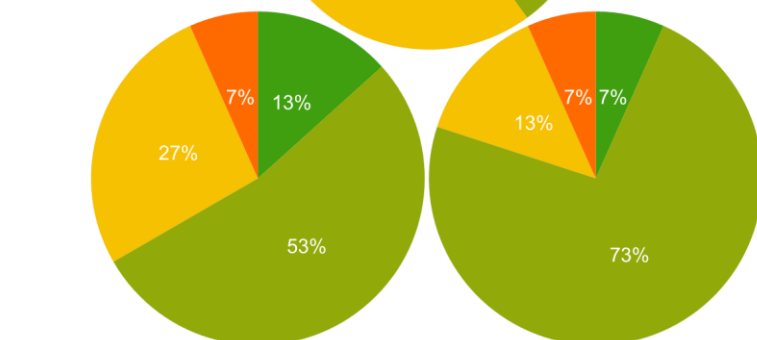


Fig 2. Survey Q1.6: "We, as members, have played an important role in developing a common agenda/purpose."

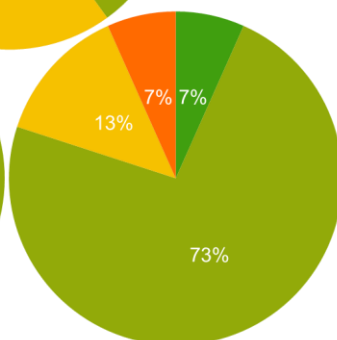


Fig. 3 Survey Q1.8: "The Secretariat has played an important role in helping us develop a common agenda/purpose."

## 3.2 Collective Impact 2: Shared Measurement

### KEY TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

The number of members who reported contributing to shared measurement<sup>2</sup> is fewer versus those who reported benefiting from shared measurement. Most of the shared measurement occurs in the TWGs and most members would appreciate deeper shared measurement, which could be a means to closing the shared measurement gap.

- More than half of surveyed members said that they do not directly contribute to shared measurement and data, yet 2/3 of respondents said they benefited from shared measurement and data generated through the Platform (Figs 4 & 5).
  - Most of the shared measurements occur within TWGs, particularly the Global Donor Working Group on Land Governance, but some members reported not benefiting from shared measurement because they do not participate in certain TWGs as they have separate forums for these topics.
- Members see great value in going deeper into shared measurement (Fig. 6), but caution that it will be “challenging because data calls can be seen as taxing to members, reducing the likelihood of timely responses”, and that “it is often not easy to develop a clear framework to allow for shared measurement of often very diverse approaches/portfolios”.
- Despite these challenges, members think that deeper shared measurement would be of great value.
  - Via peer review, indicator sharing, promoting joint planning and reducing the risks of sectoral approaches in countries, and maps of members’ activities based on country/theme (e.g., the [Land Governance Programme Map & Database](#)).

Fig. 4 Survey Q2.1 “I have directly contributed to shared measurement and data as part of my involvement in the Global Donor Platform.”

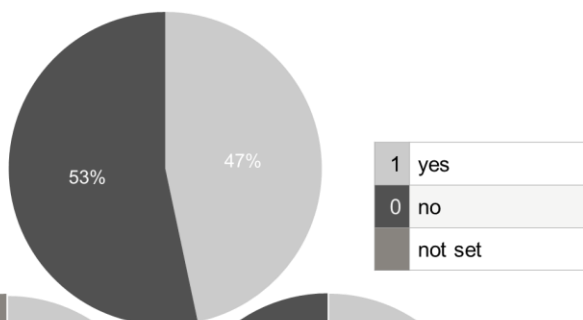


Fig. 5 Survey Q2.3 “I have benefited from shared measurement and data generated through the Platform.”

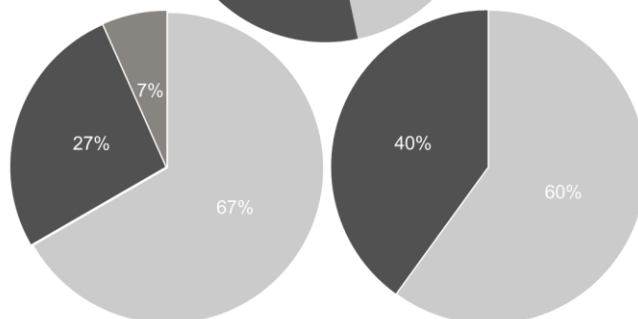
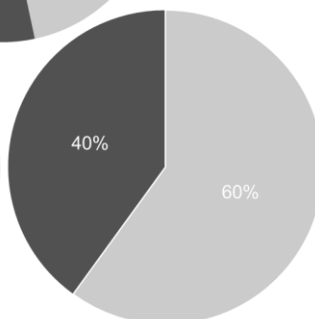


Fig 6 Survey Q2.5 “I see great value in going deeper into shared measurement, for example, for peer review and member programme coherence.”



<sup>2</sup> Collecting data, measuring results and using these insights to ensure efforts remain aligned and members hold each other accountable.

### 3.3 Collective Impact 3: Mutually Reinforcing Activities

#### KEY TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

There is less participation by Platform members in TWGs than in general Platform events. Regardless, members find added value, such as informal and formal exchanges of “business intelligence” in both general Platform and TWG events, which have contributed to directly influencing members’ work. Members view the Secretariat as being the key player in organizing and facilitating activities.

- 80% of surveyed members said that general Platform activities have added value (Fig. 7).
  - A majority agreed that the activities offered something they could not get anywhere else (Fig. 8) and that Platform events directly influenced their work (Fig. 9).
  - Informal and formal exchanges of “business intelligence”, in-person gatherings (e.g., physical meeting, side-events, and the AGA), and thematic studies (e.g., the compendium on rural youth and the aid for trade publication) were mentioned as the top three highly appreciated activities and products (Fig. 10).
- 53% of surveyed members stated that the TWGs have added value in terms of networking, knowledge sharing, and advocacy (Fig. 11).
  - Members’ responses regarding the unique value of TWGs is varied (Fig. 12); however, it stands to reason that TWGs with greater perceived added value are those TWGs with greater member engagement. The question of whether TWGs directly influence members’ work remains open, as Fig. 13 shows a diverse range of answers to this question.
- With regard to directing the Platform and TWGs activities such that they are aligned to a common agenda, the Secretariat was viewed as having a larger leading role (47% agreed/strongly agreed), followed by the members themselves (40% agreed/strongly agreed), and lastly, by the Board (20% agreed/strongly agreed).

Fig. 7 SurveyQ3.2.1 “The Platform events have added value, i.e. in terms of relationship building with other donor professionals and/or spending time with peers to more deeply explore and share challenges. The Platform events have also been helpful in providing input or data and insights about crucial issues.”

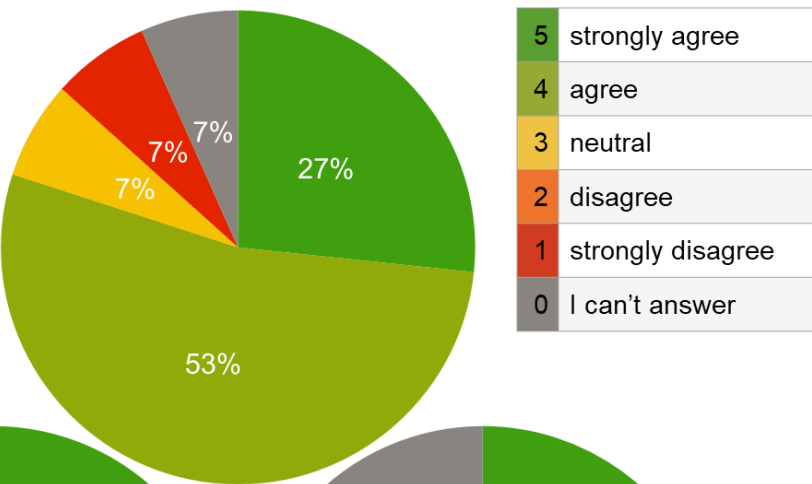


Fig. 8. Survey Q3.2.2 “The events offer something I cannot get elsewhere.”

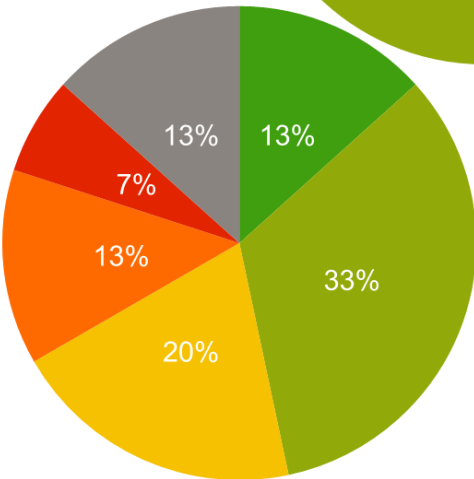
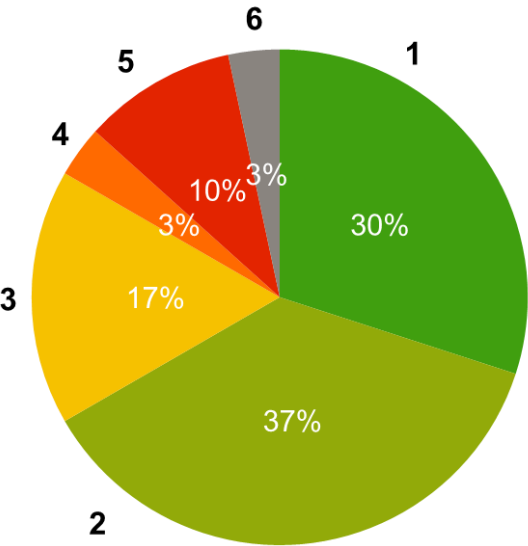
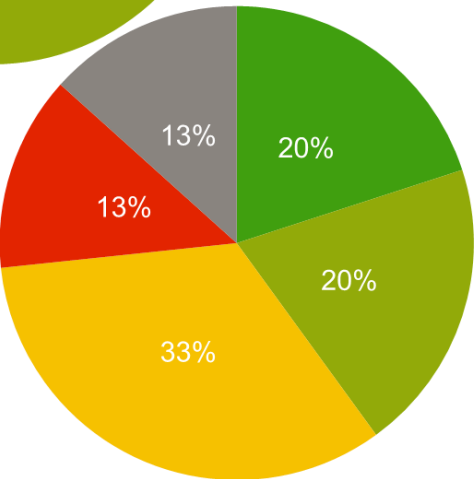


Fig. 9 Survey Q3.2.3 “The events have influenced my work directly.”



1	Convening / facilitating of meetings, side-events, conference calls
2	At these meetings and events the formal and informal exchanges, exchange of “business intelligence” and strategic insights
3	Publishing thematic studies in collaboration with the Platform
4	Utilizing research publications and compendium studies of Member strategies & programmes
5	Cross-sectoral exchange facilitated by the Platform
6	Platform communications – a “publicity channel” for member publications and events
7	Coordinating and supporting organization of side-events

Fig. 10 Survey Q3.7 “Please name the 2 activities you appreciate most in the Platform and why.”

Fig. 11 Survey Q3.1.1 “The working groups have added value, i.e. in terms of relationship building with other donor professionals and/or spending time with peers to more deeply explore and share challenges. The working groups have also been helpful in providing input or data and insights about crucial issues.”

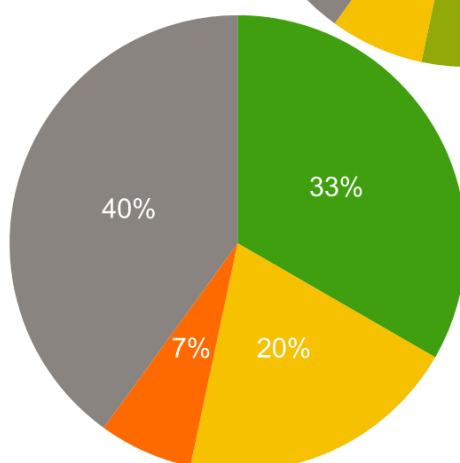
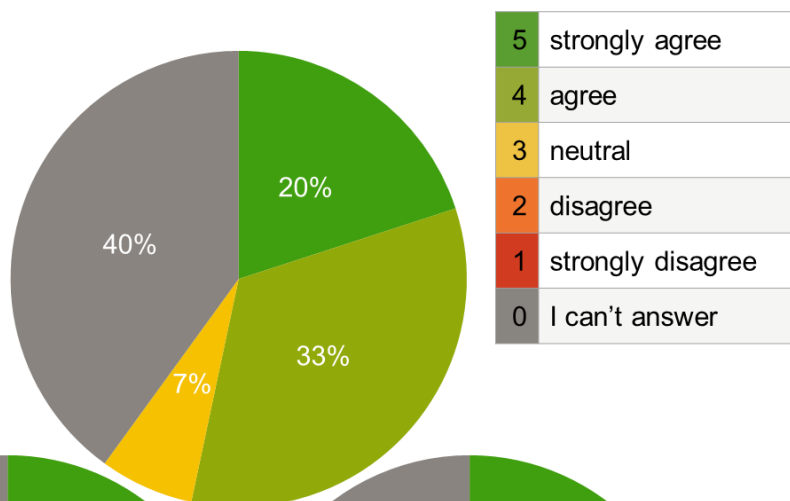


Fig. 12 Survey Q3.1.3 “The working groups offer something I cannot get elsewhere.”

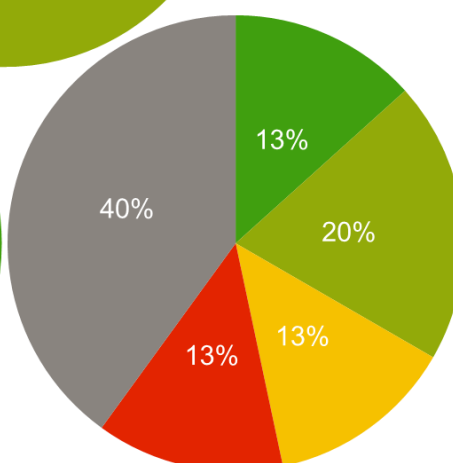


Fig. 13 Survey Q3.1.5 “The Working groups have influenced my work directly.”

### 3.4 Common Impact 4: Continuous Communications

#### KEY TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

The Platform plays a solid role in facilitating cross-sectoral, as well as multi-stakeholder exchange, which are key to sustain effective networking and knowledge sharing

- 54% of survey respondents stated that the Platform facilitates cross-sectoral exchange, while 73% stated the Platform facilitates multi-stakeholder exchange (Fig. 14 & 15).



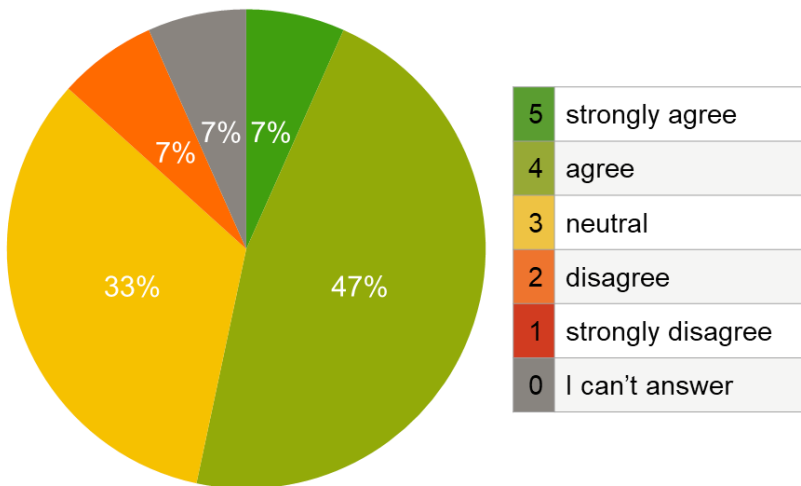


Fig. 14 Survey Q4.2 “The Platform facilitates cross-sectoral exchange.”

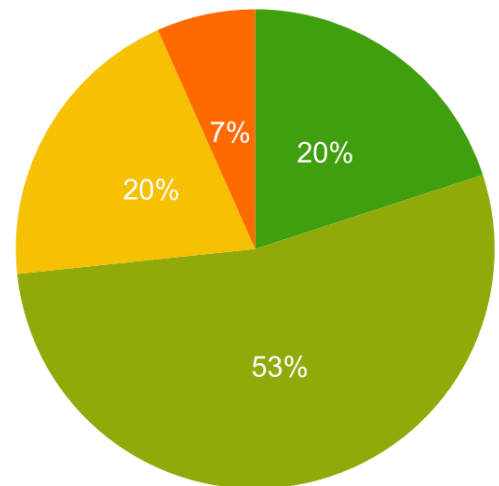


Fig. 15 Survey Q4.3 “The Platform facilitates multi-stakeholder exchange.”

### 3.5 Common Impact 5: Backbone Support

#### KEY TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

A majority of surveyed members perceive the Secretariat to be well equipped to successfully provide the necessary backbone support that the Platform and members require.

- The Platform’s structure consists of two key elements: the members and the Secretariat, which supports the work of the members and provides the “glue” that allows the operations of the Platform to continue.
- The Secretariat’s support is most prominent in the TWGs, where 67% of survey respondents said that they have had direct experience with the Secretariat’s backbone support.
- 54% of survey responses said that the Secretariat is equipped to successfully provide backbone support to the Platform and its members (Fig. 16).

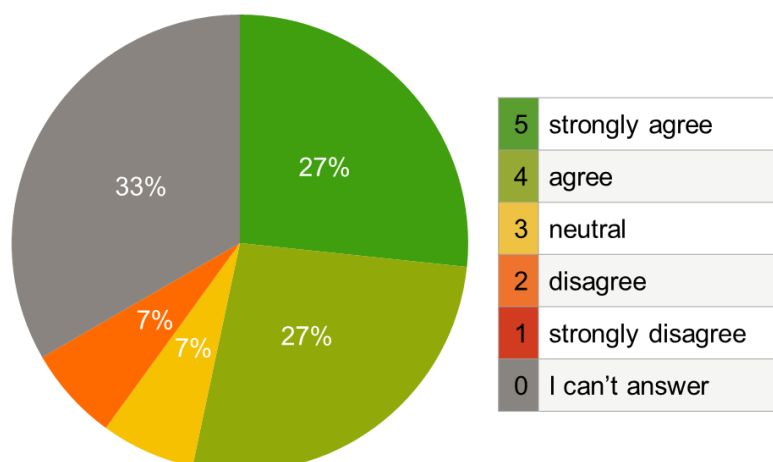


Fig. 16 Survey Q5.1.1 “Is the Secretariat currently equipped to successfully perform the backbone support function?”

## → 4. THE PLATFORM'S ADDED-VALUE TO MEMBERS

### KEY TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

The Platform's added value to members stems from the fact that it facilitates relationship building between peers in a neutral forum, which allows members to network, share knowledge, and advocate for ARD across scales.

- The most obvious value that the Platform provides its members is offering a forum for like-minded donors (Fig 17).
- Many survey responses and virtual discussions highlighted the value of the opportunities to share knowledge and form relationships with peers via the Platform.
- Networking and advocacy can lend itself to greater donor coordination and policy cohesion.
- Members view the Platform as facilitating the translation of "a rather general development agenda [Agenda 2030] into more concrete recommendations and practical terms".

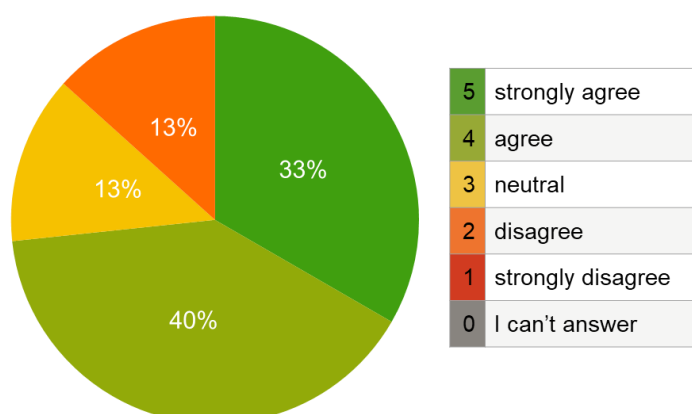


Fig. 17 Survey Q4.1 "The donor-focus of the Platform is one of the main reasons I belong. There is no place else where I can have this particular kind of interactions and communications with fellow donor professionals."