





2015 Annual Report

Promoting Sustainable
Rural Development



Global Donor Platform
for Rural Development

Global Donor Platform
for Rural Development

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An aerial photograph of terraced rice fields, showing the intricate, wavy patterns of the terraces. The rice is in various stages of growth, with some areas appearing bright yellow and others green. A small, traditional stone house with a tiled roof is nestled among the terraces on the left side of the image. A large, dark blue diagonal shape overlays the right portion of the image, serving as a background for the text.

About us

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development is a network of 38 bilateral and multilateral donors, international financing institutions, intergovernmental organisations and development agencies. In 2015, the Platform adopted the new vision of prosperous rural communities underpinning global food and nutrition security. The members continue to share a common vision that is framed around pathways to achieve 'zero hunger'. These must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, centred on the capacity of agriculture and rural livelihoods to generate economic growth and job creation, to address inequalities and to underpin national, regional and global food and nutrition security.

The background of the page is a photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a tree with green leaves and some red flowers. Behind it, there is a field of tall green grass. In the distance, there are rolling green hills under a clear sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Agriculture at the Centre of Sustainable Development

With the Agenda 2030, agriculture and rural development were put in a new perspective. The international commitment to end hunger and poverty will guide members' activities over the next 15 years. With the new Strategic Plan 2016–2020, they adopted a new mission and vision to strengthen the efforts towards raising the profile of agriculture, rural development and food and nutrition security.

Vision

'Prosperous and sustainable rural communities underpinning global food and nutrition security.' This vision goes hand in hand with the commitment made by the international community under the SDG2 to achieve 'zero hunger'. The members of the Platform recognise that the implementation of this goal relies also on economic, social and environmental stability, which can be achieved through a strong agricultural sector and rural livelihoods that generate employment and inclusive economic growth.

Mission

'To enhance the impact of development investments in agriculture, food systems and rural livelihoods through informed policy and programming.' The mission reflects the Platform's key roles in knowledge-sharing and advocacy to deliver effective knowledge and learning in support of agriculture, food systems and rural livelihoods. The Platform's ambition is to inform donor policy and programming and to encourage responsible private investments.



The Platform's Board

The Board is the voice of the Platform in championing agriculture, food systems and rural development. The Board is charged with taking a long-term strategic view of the Platform's future and guaranteeing the quality of its outputs. Two co-chairs, elected by the Board to serve for two years, lead the Board. They also engage on a regular basis with the secretariat as a management team.

In 2014, the Board decided to extend the old Strategic Plan until 2016 and initiated the development of the new Strategic Plan 2016–2020 in the course of 2015. The new plan was developed after extensive consultations with members and partners and it reflected on the structures and objectives of the Platform in order to help best position it in the new development framework of Agenda 2030.

In 2015, the Platform had 12 Board members. Co-chairs Marjaana Pekkola (MFA-Finland) and Mauro Ghirotti (IADC-Italy) led the Board.

Two Board meetings took place in 2015. The first one was virtual in March and the second in person upon invitation of the Swiss Development Cooperation in Thun, Switzerland. The main focus of both was the development of the new Strategic Plan. In March, the Board members also officially acknowledged the Evaluation Report and started discussions about the next Annual General Assembly. In Thun, the participants discussed the adoption of the recommendations from the Evaluation Report into the new Strategic Plan. The Board also took stock of the implementation of the Work Plan 2015 and discussed the staffing situation in the secretariat.

All the meeting minutes are accessible through the > [Platform website](#).

Membership Developments

The Platform membership has remained constant at 38 members in 2015. Several members underwent re-structuring processes to strengthen policy coherence and coordination of all related development cooperation activities, especially under the Agenda 2030. One example includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Italy creating the new Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

New Focal Points Focal points are responsible for managing the two-way flow of communication between the Platform and their parent organisation. There were six new focal points in 2015: Ola Möller (SIDA), Seemin Qayum (UN Women), Marketa Jonasova (World Bank), Annelene Bremer (BMZ), Shantanu Mathur (IFAD) and Julie Delforce (DFAT-Australia).

Box 1

Members of the Platform:

- African Development Bank (AfDB)*
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)*
- Austria – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Austrian Development Agency (ADA)
- Belgium – Directorate-General for Development Cooperation
- Belgian Technical Cooperation
- Global Affairs Canada*
- Denmark – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- European Commission – Directorate-General DEVCO*
- Finland – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (co-chair)*
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
- France – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- French Development Agency (AFD)
- Germany – Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)*
- German International Cooperation (GIZ)
- Global Mechanism of the UNCCD (UNCCD GM)
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)*
- International Development Cooperation Agency – Italy (IADC) (co-chair)*
- Irish Aid – Department of Foreign Affairs
- KfW Development Bank, Germany
- Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)
- Luxembourg – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Norway – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- Spain – Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)*
- United Kingdom – Department for International Development (DFID)*
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)*
- The World Bank (WB)*
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- World Trade Organisation (WTO)

* Board member





Partners The Platform has further opened up in 2015. A closer cooperation was established with the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) in the working group on trade. Partnership was also established with the newly launched GrowAsia. On the topic of aid effectiveness and Agenda 2030, there was a closer collaboration on several occasions with the World Farmers Organisation (WFO) and Biovision. Partner organisations' representatives were invited to participate and collaborate in events and workstream teleconferences. The Platform has also liaised with several different research institutions and other global and regional networks and initiatives.

Platform Secretariat

The Platform secretariat was empowered by the new Strategic Plan 2016–2020 to act within the framework of the agreed Annual Work Plan. The main responsibility of the secretariat is to implement the work plan with executive authority, seeking guidance on major issues from the co-chairs, when necessary. It reports to the Board and AGA on progress and budget execution and prepares the Annual Report. The secretariat is supported by the Budget Group (Marketa Jonasova, World Bank and Iris Krebber, DFID).

Based in Bonn, Germany, the secretariat team supports the members in knowledge management and dissemination, supports the thematic working groups, arranges for peer review of all Platform knowledge products, supports knowledge generation and dissemination and participates in major global ARD events, and, where and when appropriate, communicates collective positions.

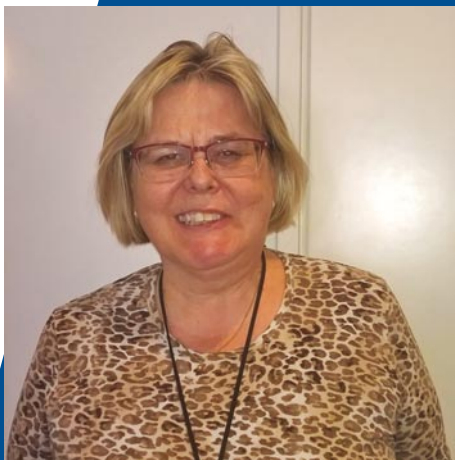
The secretariat provided all Board members with the annual independent external audit report and its 2014 Annual Report in June 2015. The co-chairs of the Platform, Marjaana Pekkola (MFA-Finland) and Mauro Ghirotti (IADC-Italy), visited the secretariat in July.

In 2015, the secretariat team welcomed Jedi Bukachi and Martina Karaparusheva as new Junior Policy Officers and said goodbye to the secretariat Coordinator Monika Midel.

The secretariat team in 2015 included Monika Midel (Secretariat Coordinator until November 2015), Christian Mersmann (Senior Policy Analyst), Romy Sato (Policy Analyst), Jedi Bukachi (Junior Policy Officer since August 2015), Martina Karaparusheva (Junior Policy Officer since August 2015), Marion Thompson (Finance Administrator), Sonja Phelps (Office Manager) and Simone Miller (Finance Administration). Programme interns and consultants supported the team in communication and thematic tasks.



Message from the Chairs



2015 was a very stimulating year for the international community and our development partners. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets as well as the modernised financial architecture “Financing for Development – Addis Ababa Action Agenda” (AAAA) will have a great impact on agriculture and rural development (ARD). As co-chairs, we have indeed enjoyed this very busy year with all its dynamics. It was a pleasure to support the active engagements of Platform members and many new partners in addressing the new opportunities.

The Agenda 2030 defines the implementation process for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the new financing architecture and facilitates an earnest shift from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness. It confirms the centrality of food security in sustainable development and the need for a more responsible and efficient use of natural resources, social integration, economic growth and employment generation. Sustainability is strongly back on the development agenda.

We believe it was functional to put at the disposal of the international community the experience gained in the field with our development partners and to appraise the impact of the new global agenda on our organisations' *modus operandi*. The first analysis of the Platform in this regard entitled 'Prospects – Agriculture and rural development assistance in the post-2015 development work' was produced to encourage deeper analyses of the post-2015 dialogue, the centre of our constructive policy engagement in 2015.

This global strategic process post-2015 coincided with and nurtured key internal Platform dynamics. We finalised an external evaluation whose conclusions and recommendations helped in the definition of our new Strategic Plan for 2016–2020. This outlook document addresses the opportunities and challenges for ARD in the future for individual member organisations and for the international community as a whole. We are very grateful for the profound engagement of our membership to position the Platform in the new development context.

The vibrant debate on the new Strategic Plan and the first analysis of the relevance of the SDGs for rural transformation have greatly informed existing work streams of the Platform like land governance, nutrition and gender, and stimulated the creation of new ones like inclusive agribusiness and trade. The latter was the subject of our Annual General Assembly in Geneva in January 2016, where we promoted the dialogue of the international community with the private sector and the civil society. This report highlights the major activities carried out in 2015 and some of the results we achieved in our collaborations.

The new Strategic Plan confirms that the main functions of the Platform are knowledge sharing, advocacy and networking. How can the donor community better respond to the changing scenarios and new needs of the developing world? How can we adhere more efficiently to the principles of aid and development effectiveness? Who are the target audiences for our advocacy work? With whom shall we collaborate to strengthen the network of the Platform and how can we be better partners? Questions to which we need to find answers together.



The Year in View

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Sustainable Development Goal Two

Box 2

Agenda 2030 Goals Directly Relevant to the Platform's Work

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

The past year has transformed the policy landscape within which donor agencies work. Against the background of the three major agreements of the international community, namely SDGs/Agenda 2030, Finance for Development and UNFCCC COP21 outcomes on climate change, the donor community has been struggling to adapt to a new role in development. The increased importance of domestic finance of developing nations, the enhanced role of private sector investments and the high impact of remittances on development efforts call for revisiting donor approaches and more effective use of ODA.

A further challenge to the development assistance flows from the donor community was posed by the highly increased migration of refugees to Europe in 2015. While recognising the positive role ARD plays in combating the reasons for migration, many European countries opted to re-locate ODA assigned budget to migrants support, integration and administration. Donor agencies agree that in the framework of Agenda 2030 even more funds should be transferred to migration countries. The members of the Platform, as well as the international community as a whole, agreed that a higher level of donor coordination and exchange will be required to sustainably address the complicated sustainable development agenda and the challenges to agriculture and rural development in order to achieve measurable positive development on migration and economic development.

It is certain that agriculture and rural development (ARD) constitute highly complex systems and need long-term support. Calling for more sustainability in development by the SDGs challenges the **cooperation between new actors such as the trade community or the climate change community**, each introducing new approaches,

new understanding and a requiring of a profound debate between all partners to achieve joint action towards rural transformation.

The Platform's **Strategic Initiative Agenda 2030** addressed these new dimensions of development cooperation. The Platform analysis of SDG 2 on food security and SDG 8 on economic growth and the following debate exemplified the need to define new pathways towards rural transformation considering job creation, trade with value chain development and inclusive agribusiness and new opportunities deriving from rapid urbanisation. However, not every development issue can be a policy priority and the ARD community needs to understand which low hanging fruits are ready to be picked to build a more comprehensive approach to sustainable development of the rural space.

In parallel to the changes in the international development agenda, a number of donor agencies have already changed their focus and policy priorities leading towards **more investments into trade and inclusive agribusiness** as well as adaptation to climate change. Agriculture and rural development (ARD) find new support and the Platform has addressed these changes through internal debate, side events at the WTO 5th Global Review of Aid for Trade, the Committee for World Food Security (CFS) and the development of new work streams.

In this regard Asia has been very prominent on the Platform's agenda. The interest to profit from the knowledge-sharing and networking in the Platform has been demonstrated by the Inclusive Agribusiness Roundtable in Southeast Asia and by the interview with KOICA's president Mr Kim Young-mok on the development of South Korea from a recipient to major ODA contributor. Both serving as the starting

point to inclusive agribusiness work stream. At the same time, existing work streams have been actively enhanced like the very active Global Working Group on Land governance addressing the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries (VGGT) and the G7 Land Partnerships.

Changing the policy focus also means to tap into new sources of finance for ARD. The Finance for Development agenda talks about ‘blended finance’ from old and new sources. New institutions, new decision-makers and new administrative procedures confront the rather traditional ARD support community with the need to build additional capacity in cooperation, governance and the design of encompassing programmes which are convincing to the new partners. The year in review shows that we are heading for interesting times and the Platform membership has to strive very pro-actively to keep food security and rural transformation at the top of the policy priorities of development. The competition over scarce resources has shown to be very tough.

Box 3

Platform Core Principles for Action in Agricultural and Rural Development

- Support government leadership and ownership in agricultural and rural development, based on inclusive processes with effective participation of key agricultural stakeholders and farmers
- Alignment to partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures
- Support strengthening of internal coherence of policies and consensus building of government with civil society and the private sector
- Harmonisation of action by donors and international finance institutions
- Management for development results
- Mutual accountability between donors and partners
- Open and inclusive development partnerships with developing countries

(* Based on the new Strategic Plan 2016–2020)

Box 4

Some International Meetings and Platform's Side-Events During 2015

January

- Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, Berlin

February

- Feeding the World, *The Economist* Conference, Amsterdam

March

- One World, No Hunger Conference, Berlin
- World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, Washington DC
- Hidden Hunger Conference, Stuttgart

May

- Brussels Development Briefing – Improving Nutrition, Brussels
- Investment Action Group of the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture, London

June

- Nutrition for Development Conference, Berlin
- Global Landscapes Forum, London
- NIPAD/CAADP Meeting on Agriculture, Climate Change and Gender, The Hague
- Fifth Global Review on Aid for Trade, WTO, Geneva
- WTO Annual General Assembly, Milan

July

- Finance for Development Summit, Addis Ababa

September

- Inclusive Agribusiness Roundtable, Ho Chi Minh City
- UN Sustainable Development Summit, New York

October

- Platform New Strategic Plan Meeting, Thun
- Side-events at CFS 42

November

- ICTSD Agricultural Trade Outcomes Event, Geneva

December

- UN Climate Change Convention COP21, Paris

Platform Themes



Agenda 2030 and Rural Transformation

The work stream was led by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (IADC), Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP), and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany.

Now, rural development really is back on the international agenda! And the Global Donor Platform serves as an ideal platform to facilitate the broadened discussion we need on Agenda 2030!

Stefan Schmitz, BMZ

The Platform was established in 2003, following a considerable decrease in ODA expenditure for agriculture and rural development in the 90's. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 was the central agreement for the Platform to advocate for increased public spending by developing countries, donor and private sector investments in agriculture and rural development (ARD) under the leadership of developing countries, both governments and civil society. The Accra Action Agenda followed and in Busan, the agreement was reached that a global partnership for effective development cooperation was to be established, which held its first high-level meeting in 2014.

Encouraging initiatives like the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) by NEPAD were launched, and the Maputo Declaration of Heads of African States confirmed that African governments would spend at least 10% of the public budget in ARD which was reaffirmed by the recent Malabo Declaration in 2014, however, with limited success up to now. The donor communities fully supported such initiatives, but the year 2015 showed that a new downward trend in ARD finance is noticeable. At the same time, private sector investments are increasing, but not at the scale needed.

In parallel, the new architecture of development cooperation following the SDGs and FfD calls for a debate on the

International Highlights:

- Adoption of the 'Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' in September 2015
- Signing of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in July 2015

Platform Highlights:

- 9 interviews on aid and development effectiveness
- 1 interview on the post-2015 process
- 2 interviews on CAADP
- Participation in one thematic event: 'Brussels Development Briefing 41' on the topic of 'Improving through accountability, ownership and partnership'
- Study on the "Implications of Agenda 2030 for Rural Development"

role of ODA and donor agencies. For ARD, this is particularly important as the international community is turning towards development effectiveness rather than aid effectiveness, because donor engagement is increasingly part of the overall development engagement rather than a 'separate' undertaking.





OECD has agreed on a 'modernisation of ODA' in late 2014 against the background of the rapidly increasing number of lower middle income and middle income countries which are no longer eligible to receive concessional ODA.

The Platform has observed and taken up many of the elements of the emerging new development cooperation structure by forming the Strategic Initiative Agenda 2030. First, the analysis of the SDGs for rural transformation (John Barrett, 2015) and the initial discussions on donor engagement led to the conclusion that the Platform debate has to move beyond the substantive considerations of the new opportunities and address ongoing changes in donor programming, policy focus and strategic considerations which are not necessarily supportive to ARD. The question arose whether or not ARD is indeed a vehicle to achieve broader development objectives such as economic growth and job creation given the complexity of the sector. Are governments ready to invest strongly into ARD because of food security consideration backed by donor engagement?

Does rural development politically arise out of national economic aspirations in a world where the conventional divide between rural and urban areas no longer holds; where rural-urban migration continues at high speed; where rural economies increasingly include non-farm activities; where some rural areas are becoming peri-urban; where urban markets for a range of cash crops are an increasingly important outlet for smallholder produce; and where a third of rural income is from non-farm earnings?

The year 2015 was a time for reflection, knowledge creation and analysis of the global consensus on the future of development cooperation. The new Strategic Plan 2016–2020 outlines clearly the way ahead, but the time to position ARD as a policy priority is scarce and precious. The call for food security and self-sufficiency in food production of developing countries need to be answered by a new way of donor engagement, in particular to achieve a rights-based approach and improved governance.

Reflecting these changes and addressing SDG 2, the G7 Summit in Germany in June 2015 set out a broader vision for rural development, stating that it must 'promote agricultural and food value chain approaches that link smallholder farmers with business, attract investment, and generate much-needed non-farm employment and income.'

Climate Resilient Agriculture

The work stream was led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs France (MFA-France).

Responding to climate-related risks involves making decisions and taking actions in the face of continuing uncertainty about the extent of climate change and the severity of impacts in a changing world.

IPCC 2014

International Highlight:

- COP21 Paris Agreement

Platform Highlights:

- Observing the development of the Global Alliance on Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA)
- Study (continued in 2016) on donor approaches to support developing countries in their efforts to adapt to climate change

Agriculture is where the battles against poverty and climate change – arguably the two greatest challenges of the 21st century – most clearly converge. Climate change threatens to undo many of the gains made in the past 15 years through the Millennium Development Goals, by increasing the vulnerability of farmers to the vicissitudes of the weather. As the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted in its fifth assessment of climate change science, published in 2015, climate change hits the poor hardest – 'poverty determines vulnerability.'

Before UNFCCC COP21, many bilateral and multilateral initiatives, programmes, policies and strategies have been





developed. Many of them for safeguarding agriculture and food security from climate change impacts. Climate resilience, adaptation to climate change and climate-smart agriculture (CSA) have been debated in technical terms as outlined in the CSA Source published by FAO. New financial resources are available, but ARD has to make its case like in the Green Climate Fund or the climate funds and facilities of the World Bank and regional development banks.

The Platform and many of its members have been observing the development of the Global Alliance on Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA) and supporting its establishment since 2014. The African Climate-Smart Agriculture alliance of NEPAD and partners, the emerging West African Climate-Smart Alliance and other initiatives are helpful to determine the way ahead in decreasing the long-term stress of climate change on agriculture and rural develop-

ment. And many Platform members signed up to the Montpellier Statement on climate-smart agriculture, delivered at a conference in March, which stressed mobilising science for ‘building agricultural resilience, along with ecological intensification and ecosystem services, will promote food and nutritional security and poverty reduction and improve livelihoods.’

The Platform has embarked on a systematic and profound analysis of donor approaches to support developing countries to adapt to climate change through national adaptation plans (NAPs), non-agricultural market access negotiations (NAMAs) and the achievement of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. Surprisingly, most INDCs of developing countries have placed agriculture in the centre of INDCs, giving a very strong message also to the Platform members that its call to keep food security at the forefront of development and climate resilience matches the development priorities under the climate regime.

The aforementioned analysis will only be ready in mid-2016 because of the continuously changing landscape in climate finance for agriculture. But first results show that governmental institutions in developing countries as well as the private sector are ready to increase their portfolio for specific actions to protect their investments and to achieve the intended results. Climate change safeguards increase the costs of programmes, project and investments and change the cost-benefit analysis – the negotiations between ministries of finance and agriculture are ongoing. Platform members are finding its position of support in this context, but 2015 was just the beginning.

The Platform is using any opportunity to engage, but it is only after COP21 that members have established a new work stream on agriculture and climate change. Many ARD portfolios of Platform members are currently decreasing, but climate change finance is rapidly increasing. Based on the analysis of donor reactions to the call for safeguarding ARD through climate finance, the activities of the Platform in 2015 have prepared the ground for an effective engagement in bilateral and multilateral efforts to combine food security with resilience to climate change, particularly in Africa.

Land Governance

The Global Working Group on Land was led by USAID and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs France (MFA-France).

The Global Donor Working Group on Land has proven its value as a meeting forum, whereby members use the Group as a uniting instrument to put forward interventions and solutions that they cannot achieve individually.

Heath Cosgrove, USAID Land Director & Chair of the GDWGL

In 2015, the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries (VGGT) was very high in the agenda of the land community. Four years after their endorsement, the VGGT are becoming a benchmark for ethical practice on land issues for governments, donors and the private sector.

Based on the VGGT principles, the Platform's Global Donor Working Group on Land was especially active in encouraging the private sector to make improved land governance and respect for local land rights as a core business procedure. It also supported governments towards the same end, for instance by helping donors in prioritising investments according to adherence to land rights. This donor commitment to the VGGT was reflected in the G7 Summit communiqué in June, in which members promised to 'align their own ODA-supported investments with the VGGT.'

A few months later, members of the Working Group on Land endorsed the [Analytical Framework for Responsible Land-Based Agricultural Investments](#), developed by land experts of a number of Platform member organisations and partners, following a commitment made by the New Alliance and Grow Africa Leadership Council in 2014. The Analytical Framework provides a practical guide for land investors to operationalise the VGGT principles,

building upon and harmonising the efforts of several donors and multilateral institutions who have previously released similar operational tools. The Working Group on Land also pushed hard for the inclusion of a land indicator in the Agenda 2030 by issuing two policy briefs and directly reaching out to country representatives at the



International Highlights:

- Implementation of the VGGT and RAI
- G7 commitment to align their ODA-supported investments with the VGGT
- Negotiations of the SDG Indicators

Platform Highlights:

- Side event at the World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty
- 2 policy briefs on joint advocacy that resulted in the inclusion of land target and indicators under SDG1
- 1 interview with MFA-France and AFD on VGGT implementation
- 1 expert meeting on VGGT integration in donor activities
- 2 physical meetings of the Global Working Group on Land

Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDG). The resulting indicator 1.4.2, incorporated as part of Goal 1 on ending poverty, will measure the ‘proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognised documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure.’

There is a long way to go. A session organised by the Working Group on Land at the World Bank Land Conference heard that implementation of existing land rights law was sadly underdeveloped in many African countries. Some 90% of Africa’s traditionally owned rural land remains undocumented, making it highly vulnerable to land grabbing and expropriation. And although from the private sector side, some companies are trying to implement tenure arrangements in the countries where they work, businesses are noting that there is large unfulfilled demand for land advisors on the local level, and overcoming the capacity constraints of local institutions is key to avoid conflicts over land.

From the decision-makers’ side, there is another type of gap. Policy-oriented research is often scattered across disciplines and not always readily accessible to donor organisations, policymakers or development practitioners to consider where funding and other resources should be prioritised. To bridge this gap, the Working Group on Land commissioned in 2015 studies to examine the current knowledge base in four different, yet highly interlinked, areas: technologies, multi-stakeholder partnerships, policy coherence and private sector engagement. They prepared the ground work to guide donors in 2016 in prioritising activities and investments in land governance.

The group also engaged during 2015 with NGOs and other networks, working to raise the profile of land rights issues. These included discussions with participants and a display of the Group’s Land Governance Programme Map and Database at the Global Land Forum, organised by the International Land Coalition in Senegal in May, as well as guest presentations to donors by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), on legal tools for citizen empowerment – and the African Land Policy Initiative, on the remaining obstacles for the implementation of the VGGT in Africa.

Two physical meetings in March and in October brought together members of the Working Group on Land, who discussed about progress made in relation to the Group’s objectives, their strategic support to issues such as VGGT monitoring, and planning of activities to be carried out in 2016.



Gender and Youth

The work stream was led by FAO and IFAD.

If you're a poor farmer, particularly if you're a woman farmer, and you're not secure in your land, would you invest more? No, you probably wouldn't.

Mark Cackler, World Bank



With young males departed for jobs in cities or industry, women are often in a strong majority in rural populations. In many countries, they also carry the major burden of agricultural activities. Overall the FAO estimates that women make up 43 % of the agricultural workforce in developing countries. Yet rural women remain marginalised in their economic opportunities, influence and legal rights. Women are under-represented among landowners and over-represented among unpaid, seasonal and part-time rural workers.

This state of affairs is unjust, socially divisive and economically inefficient. Studies suggest that if women had equal status to men in agriculture and the marketing of agricultural products, overall rural productivity would rise by around a fifth. For women to realise their potential as agriculturalists, finance is also needed to reduce women's domestic and reproductive workload, through improved rural services and childcare, in building women farmers' organisations and social capital, and in strengthening their rights to other productive assets.

Platform members are addressing these challenges and opportunities by improving their sharing of experiences in the implementation of programmes and design of policies to ensure that a gender approach is systematically applied in agriculture and rural development.





Building on the momentum for gender issues created by the Platform's Annual General Assembly in Florence in 2014, members started reviving the Gender Work Stream in 2015. Key outcomes were the agreement to migrate the content of the former 'Gender in ag' website, belonging to the World Bank, FAO and IFAD, to the Platform's website, followed by various conference calls and the drafting of an annual plan of work for 2016.

It is also worth to mention other achievements by donors beyond the Platform framework, but indicating nonetheless a large potential for coordination to improve women's opportunities in rural areas. For example, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda committed to giving women equal rights to economic resources, including land and access to financial services. And at the Commission on the Status of Women conference in New York in March, Platform members stressed the importance of addressing the status of women in rural affairs, including land rights, food security and nutrition. They stressed that in many agricultural areas, women are the prime producers of fruit, vegetables and legumes that provide most of the micronutrients needed to combat 'hidden hunger'. Ensuring their rights to land and access to agricultural investment would thus bolster efforts to improve nutrition, especially in the households of smallholders and among vulnerable rural communities.

International Highlight:

- 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Platform Highlights:

- 1 Interview on women's land tenure challenges
- 1 virtual briefing on women's economic empowerment in agriculture
- Platform highlighted the importance of rural women at the Commission on the Status of Women 59



Nutrition

The work stream was led by Lynn Brown.

Achieving the SDGs will require concerted action on food security and nutrition while making progress on the factors that contribute to persistent hunger and malnutrition – including reducing inequality, achieving gender equality, sustainably managing water and taking action on climate change.

Mary Robinson, Mary Robinson Foundation



Nutrition has long been the Cinderella goal of development assistance. Malnutrition/bad nutrition has three key characterisations – undernutrition/underweight, overweight/obesity and micronutrient deficits. While overweight and obesity has been increasing in many developed countries, many developing countries now have a double burden of both undernutrition and overweight and obesity.

This double burden challenge continues to be at the heart of the discussions in the Platform's Nutrition Work Stream. In 2015, group members exchanged information and lessons on various initiatives led by individual agencies in trying to deal with this problem, as well as to raise nutrition concerns in donors' agricultural programmes. Such discussions informed that micronutrient malnutrition

International Highlight:

- Adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/310 on the follow-up to ICN2

Platform Highlights:

- 5 interviews on various topics
- 1 virtual briefing on the role of ICT for nutrition
- Participation at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture
- Participation at the Hidden Hunger Conference
- Present at the Nutrition for Development meetings and the Committee on World Food Security 42

(or *hidden hunger*) is the most prevalent form of malnutrition, affecting more than 2 billion people and with particular implications for the health of young children. The 2015 Hidden Hunger congress in May, attended by the Platform, heard that under-nutrition is most destructive in the first thousand days of life, when the absence of micronutrients can stunt growth, and cause lasting damage to brain and immune-system development. The micronutrient state of both pregnant women and nursing mothers can be critical to the development of their children.

Through several conference calls, the Nutrition Work Stream learned, for example, that the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) continued its project

on Affordable Nutritious Foods for Women, aimed at meeting the micronutrient needs of women of reproductive age by increasing local demand for, and supply of, nutrient-rich foods in markets where they are lacking. Its work was concentrated in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Bangladesh.

In the same line, in 2015 the European Commission established a series of National Information Platforms for Nutrition, initially in Bangladesh, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Laos and Niger. They form the monitoring element in an EU nutrition action plan aimed at reducing stunted growth among children under 5 years old by 7 million by 2025.

One continuing element of the Nutrition Work Stream's engagement is the impact of food safety on nutritional outcomes, and notably that of mycotoxins, particularly aflatoxins. This continues from the expert meeting it held in 2014. USAID, as part of its Feed the Future Activities, funds the Nutrition Innovation Lab at Tufts University, designed to enhance improvements in nutrition from investments in agriculture. One aspect of their activities focused on the linkages on aflatoxins and nutritional outcomes in Timor Leste. A new program focuses on mothers and their children up to 18 months of age in Nepal and Uganda.

The Platform also attended the Committee on World Food Security in Rome in October, where a report on the State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015 disclosed that, while 79 developing countries reached their MDG target of halving the proportion of their population that is under-nourished, 57 did not. The Committee stressed the inter-connections between food security, nutrition and other development goals, including climate change, gender equality and poverty reduction.

To meet such challenges, donors are increasingly working to integrate food security and nutrition into agriculture and rural development, especially through greater focus on women. Examples include Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), a collective global movement for nutrition interventions, and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, which brings together public, private sector and other stakeholders. Moreover, the G20 summit in Turkey in 2015 began implementing the G20 Food and Nutrition Security Framework, as part of its investment in food systems to eradicate poverty and stimulate sustainable economic growth in low-income countries.



Private Sector and Trade

The work streams were led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – the Netherlands (MFA-Netherlands) and WTO and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia (DFAT-Australia).

Aid for Trade is about helping developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, to build the trade capacity and infrastructure they need to benefit from trade opening.

UN FAO



Until recently, trade and agriculture were worlds apart and aid was often split into the support to trade and agriculture and rural development (ARD). But today, donors are increasingly integrating their trade and development agendas to find synergies and to foster economic development – partly to bridge the gaps left by declining ODA budgets. The Platform has picked up this trend, creating a ‘Trade and ARD’ work stream which inter alia prepared for the Annual General Assembly (AGA) entitled:

Agricultural trade and rural development: Duet of Solo playing? The objective of the AGA was to discuss policy coherence of trade and ARD and to analyse emerging opportunities of the global, regional and national trade regimes for ARD.

Undoubtedly, value chain development and trade offer enormous opportunities for ARD, but the trick for this integration agenda will be to ensure that the market forces that drive trade do not undermine the sustainability of ARD and broader development, but rather reinforce it by delivering ecological and social gains as well economic benefits.

Increasingly governments worldwide are investing in trade and private sector cooperation as a key strategy for rural transformation. A side event organised by the Platform’s ‘Trade and ARD’ work stream at the World Trade Organization’s fifth Global Review of Aid for Trade, held in Geneva in June, heard how some donor governments have recognised these new opportunities provided by enhanced trade by re-orienting their programs, support mechanisms and their own institutions. For instance, Canada and Australia have merged their trade ministries and development agencies with their ministries of foreign affairs, linking diplomatic systems with development and economic cooperation.

International Highlight in Trade:

- WTO 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya

Platform Highlights in Trade:

- Trade for ARD informal consultations at MFA NL (May 2015)
- Side-event at WTO's 5th Global Review of Aid for Trade (July 2015)
- 1 interview with Fairtrade
- 1 virtual briefing on market access for farmers from East Africa
- Side-event at CFS42

International Highlight Private Sector:

- Adoption of Kinshasa Declaration at the African Agribusiness Forum 2015

Platform Highlights Private Sector:

- 1 interview on investment in smallholder farmers
- Co-organisation of Inclusive Agribusiness Southeast Asia Roundtable

For smallholder farmers, their conventional markets are primarily local. Sustaining and providing infrastructure for those local markets is key to their well-being. In May, the Platform organised a webinar on the East African Farmers Market Initiative, cross-sector partnership established to develop efficient and modern markets for fresh produce across the East African Community. A prime task was improving the information available to small farmers on market prices, as a lever for secure livelihoods and a trigger for economic development.

In September in Vietnam, the Platform co-organised with the World Economic Forum's Grow Asia Initiative, as well as with other partners, the Roundtable on Inclusive Agribusiness in Southeast Asia. A vibrant agricultural sector is of key importance to the economies of Southeast Asia, but some of the region's poor still face food insecurity and inadequate nutrition. The Roundtable's purpose was to help position overseas development assistance as a catalyst for private investment that can help unlock the economic power of its smallholder farmers and local agribusiness entrepreneurs, to secure food and nutrition to the region's poor. With the growing recognition for the importance of private sector involvement in the implementation of Agenda 2030, the topic of inclusive agribusiness gained momentum after the Roundtable. A separate work stream of the Platform was established and with the support from the secretariat, the work on the topic and the outcomes from Viet Nam were presented at a pre-event during the Annual General Assembly.

A second side event organised at the Committee on World Food Security at its 42nd Session in October 2015 in Rome, focused on food value chain development, trade agreements and support mechanisms which are being backed by donor support. Some side event participants expressed concern about the vibrant dynamics of trade in ARD showing clearly that coherence in approaches and joint understanding of the ARD and trade communities still need profound debate.





Capturing and Exchanging Knowledge

With the new Strategic Plan 2016–2020, the Platform set new, even stronger, focus on communication and outreach. The members of the Platform will engage even more proactively with new partners and like-minded stakeholder to position the issues of agriculture and rural transformation higher on the agenda of the SDGs implementation. The new Agenda 2030 will also guide the strategic thematic work of the Platform, opening more possibilities for collaboration and exchange. With a flagship publication, better use of knowledge networks, comprised of different stakeholders, with the face-to-face communication at the Annual General Assembly or through different other tools such as publications, website and social media, the Platform will continue exchanging knowledge and communicating critical issues to members, partners and the wider development community.

Interacting Face-to-Face

The Platform participates in development conferences and events as they are important venues for networking and discussion of critical issues related to agriculture, rural development, and food and nutrition security. The Platform organised several side-events at major international conferences like the World Bank Land Conference and the Committee on Food Security. Furthermore, the Platform also actively participated in events focused on nutrition, trade and food security.

Publications

The Platform continued producing knowledge pieces in form of short **InfoNotes**. In 2015, two InfoNotes were published – one introducing the ‘Livestock Programme

Box 5

Website and Social Media Highlights over 2015

Web articles created	131
Interviews	25
Virtual Briefings	2
Calendar entries	183
Site visits	23 054
Page views	67 533
Average visit duration	4:08 mins
eUpdate issues	9
Twitter followers	2 552
Tweets	5 770

Map' and one on the definitions of 'Food Losses and Waste & Post-Harvest Losses'. The InfoNotes were posted on the website and shared with the members through the electronic newsletter. With the so called **eUpdate** the Platform informs over 570 subscribers of the newest developments in the Platform. With the nine newsletters in 2015, the Platform shared different information and knowledge pieces that reflected on the issues of agriculture and rural development. The Global Working Group on Land produced two **Policy briefs**, both representing the joint advocacy position by the members of the Group to protect the crucial land rights indicator in the post-2015 SDGs.

Studies The Global Donor Working Group on Land commissioned four studies that explored the way of improving global land governance with technologies, partnerships and donor coherence. The studies 'Open Data, Innovative Technology-Based Solutions for Better Land Governance', 'Characteristics of Successful Model for Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Improve Land Governance in Developing Countries', 'Land Governance as

a Corporate Performance Standard: Opportunities, Challenges and Recommended Next Steps' and 'Effective Approaches to Strengthen Coherence across Individual Donor Governance Regarding Responsible Land Governance' were all officially launched at the World Bank Land Conference in 2016.

Annual report The Platform's Annual report 2014 'Food systems, gender & post-2015' reflected on the work and achievements of the Platform in 2014. It captured the most important knowledge exchange opportunities and networking activities amongst members and partners.

Online Communication Tools

Website In 2015, the website of the Platform was slightly updated and re-structured to better represent the work of the Platform and the growing focus on development effectiveness in the Agenda 2030 framework. Platform-organised events were given a more prominent position at the front page of the website. There were 131 new webstories, 183 calendar entries, 25 interviews and two virtual briefings. The site was visited 23,054 times, with the average duration of 4:08 minutes per visit.

Online Depositories The Platform is hosting two global donor databases of livestock and land governance projects. Both display information on the location, duration and scope of projects in the form of interactive maps. The website is also housing a library for post-harvest losses related research knowledge pieces and a newly created gender in agriculture library.

Twitter The secretariat team continued to connect and engage with members and partners through Twitter. The team has actively posted from events, re-tweeted messages and connected back to the website. The Platform's Twitter account gained 614 new followers in 2015 and posted more than 1150 new tweets.

Virtual Briefings and Online Interviews The secretariat's team continued engaging directly with prominent personalities from the ARD field to discuss crucial issues and initiatives from 2015. There were 32 newly uploaded videos on the Platform's YouTube channel, including 25 new interviews and two virtual briefings.

Looking Ahead



Knowledge creation, advocacy and networking are the functions of the Platform which are ever more important as we are facing competitive times – agriculture and rural development (ARD) continue to demand a long-term commitment by all actors, in particular governments of developing countries. The ARD community is entering unfamiliar territory and has to cope with the development priorities of their new partners, be it in trade or climate change. On the other hand, highly important ARD priorities like land governance need their solid share of attention, as well as nutrition and gender considerations need to be mainstreamed into the various work streams under the Platform and in the operations of Platform members and their partners.



The Platform offers a forum for debate on more effective impact – both in operations in developing countries as well as impact through outreach into Platform members' own institutions. New networks and coalitions need to be built to share common interests, debate on diverging ones, and learn from each other's experiences and know-how. The focal points of the Platform have already mobilised many colleagues from their own institutions working on the various work stream topics. It is expected that the interest in the Platform's work will rise as we have increased the number of partners considerably in 2015.

Using the momentum created by the international agreement on SDGs, FfD and Climate change, the Strategic Initiative Agenda 2030 of the Platform is crucial to address rural transformation in a more comprehensive way. In order to keep this process on a realistic track, the different work streams of the Platform are instrumental to feed their results into the development of effective common strategies to change rural life and to use the great opportunities which the rapid urbanization offers. Policy priorities on poverty reduction and food securities remain unchallenged, but need to be tackled by changing means like trade and climate considerations.

Looking ahead, Platform members agree that issues like rights-based approaches in land governance, and the participation of rural communities in the design of rural transformation and social and environmental safeguards need to match the call for increased agricultural production, job creation and economic development. This line of work will be strengthened and the renewed engagement of the Platform in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) will provide a great opportunity for this work to be implemented at the national level.

With the changing architecture of development finance, Platform members will address private sector potentials and its needs in terms of governmental services – be it infrastructure, legal provisions or governance. Using the lens of inclusive agribusiness and trade, the Platform will engage with farmers' associations, small and medium-sized local businesses and large international corporations to achieve the required change on the ground. In other words, agriculture will need to be addressed more coherently and in a coordinated manner given the increased stakeholder groups. Since agriculture is the common thread connecting most SDGs, more holistic approaches to rural transformation and investments in sustainable agriculture will promote social, economic and environmental stability and last but not least, directly affect the sources of migration and possibly contribute to a solution.

The Agenda 2030 is providing a pathway for a new type of development cooperation – the Platform as a forum and network has its clear limitations, but will focus on connecting actors and resources in order to create greater impact than individual member organisations can achieve on their own.

Costs and Financial Contributions for Platform Activities in 2015

Platform activities continued to be funded by annual membership contributions towards the Platform trust fund managed by GLZ. Members contributing €50.000 annually or more qualify for a seat on the Platform Board, the main decision-making body of the Platform.

At the Platform Board meeting held in Florence in December 2014, the Board endorsed the 2015 Platform Annual Work Plan and the corresponding indicative budget. The Platform Strategic Plan 2012–2015 continued to serve as a guideline in planning Platform activities.

Contributions 2015

There were 12 Board members in 2015. At the end of the year, four Platform members held contribution agreements for the purpose of the Platform which go beyond calendar year 2015. These are: AfDB (until 2018), DFAT-Australia (until 2017), DFID (until 2018) and the EC (until 2016).

Funds received in the trust fund for the implementation of the Platform work plan totalled €1.627.131,81 in 2015.

Indicative budget and costs 2015

Actual costs in 2015 totalled €1.447.218,09 (Table 1, audited figures). In terms of percent, this sum represents 82% of the total approved 2015 indicative budget which allotted for up to €1.762.001 in terms of plan costs.

Overall spending in 2015 has been less than was planned due to the long medical leave of the Coordinator and in the activity area ‘Learning events/roadshows/workshops’ as the secretariat was not fully staffed in 2015. It is noted that while the assignment for the external evaluation of the Platform took place from August 2014 to May 2015, costs for this item became effective only in 2015 in line with the contract payment schedule.

The external audit of the 2015 Platform costs and contributions has been conducted in April 2016. The official audit report and financial statement has been forwarded to Board members in the course of May 2016.

Table 1: Costs and Endorsed Activities 2015**Euro**

Activity areas	
Website and IT support and communications	165.570,71
Web conferencing	3.345,51
Annual General Assembly	35.724,52
Board meetings	438,62
Policy briefs (incl. consultants, layout, printing and dissemination)	27.978,32
Studies (incl. consultants, layout, printing and dissemination; topics as indicated in the workplan)	127.247,66
Learning events/roadshows/workshops as identified in the workplan (incl. consultants)	64.132,30
Development and running of issue/event websites	20.704,31
Side events/co-organisation at conferences as indicated by members	67.543,63
Annual Report	7.615,00
Sponsoring of travel/participation	18.563,97
Sub-total activity areas (I)	538.864,55
Secretariat, administration and management	
Secretariat coordinator (80%)	
ARD advisor -1	
ARD advisor -2	
Junior ARD advisor -1	
Junior ARD advisor -2	
Office manager (70%)	
Contract- and finance manager	
Administrative officer (60%)	
Sub-total staff	458.198,77
Office rent and communication infrastructure	55.744,58
General admin and management	28.337,43
Independent external audit	13.125,16
Platform evaluation	132.320,61
Staff travels	54.132,87
Sub-total secretariat, administration and management (II)	741.859,42
Total costs and outputs (I+II)	1.280.723,97
GIZ indirect support costs (ISC)	166.494,12
Total costs in 2015	1.447.218,09

Imprint

Edited by

Secretariat Global Donor Platform for Rural Development

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Graphic design and production

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Published by

Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
www.donorplatform.org

June 2016

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