

# **Global Donor Platform for Rural Development**

Network Evaluation

***DRAFT***



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July 4, 2008



## Executive Summary

To be completed for final version



## Acronyms

AE	Aid Effectiveness
AFD	Agence Française du Développement
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
ARD	Agriculture and Rural Development
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COC	Code of Conduct
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DGIS	Department of Development Cooperation of the Netherlands
EC	European Commission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FP	Focal point
GPDRD	Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation)
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LENPA	Learning Network on Programme-Based Approaches
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA-FR	Ministry of Foreign Affairs – France
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PD	Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
POVNET	Poverty Network

## A c r o n y m s

RD	Rural Development
RUTA	Regional Unit for Technical Assistance in Agriculture
SC	Steering Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TOR	Terms of Reference
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## Glossary<sup>1</sup>

Beneficiaries	The individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention.
Capacities	For networks, this refers to management, governance and technical abilities, relationships and values that enable networks to carry out functions and achieve their development objectives over time.
Impact	The ultimate planned or unplanned consequences of a programme. Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
Network	Networks of not-for-profit organisations are collectives of organisations that are voluntary, goal-oriented, complex and flat in their authority structures. The relationship must benefit both the individual members and the network as a whole.
Outcome	A medium-term result that is the logical consequence of achieving a combination of outputs.
Output	The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes. Source: OECD-DAC Glossary
Performance	Performance refers to a network's overall effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability.
Results	<p>Describable or measurable changes in a given state that are derived from a cause-and-effect relationship. The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.</p> <p>Results should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.</p>
Stakeholders	Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development intervention
Strategic Planning	The ways a network or organisation thinks ahead and responds to its environment to achieve its goals. It involves the development and implementation of activities that will lead to the long-term success of the organisation.
Target Groups	The specific individuals or organisations for whose benefit the development intervention is undertaken.

<sup>1</sup> The following terms are adapted from:

OECD-DAC, Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, 2002

IDB and IDRC, Organizational Assessment, A Framework for Improving Performance, 2002

IDRC, Outcome Mapping, 2001.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Following donor consultations in Rome in June 2002 and further meetings in Montpellier (2002) and Washington (March 2003, World Bank Rural week), selected like-minded donors, development agencies, and international financial institutions (IFIs) established the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) in December 2003. In a context in which international donors' interest and investments in the Agriculture and Rural Development sector (ARD) were steadily diminishing, GDPRD, also known as the Platform, wanted to foster donor coordination and contribute to improving aid effectiveness in the rural sector in order to put "agriculture back on the agenda." During 2004 the Platform focused on establishing itself as a donor network with a very light structure. The Platform became operational in 2005 with the establishment of a Secretariat based in Bonn, Germany.

Following three years of activities, the Platform members have commissioned an external firm to review and comment on its effectiveness, efficiency and continued relevance with a view to informing the Platform's future directions. In December 2007, Universal Management Group Ltd., a Canadian evaluation firm, was contracted for the review. The review began with an Inception Phase (February 2008). Data collection took place between March and June 2008. Preliminary findings were shared with the Platform's Board via a video-conference meeting on June 12, 2008.

This document is the draft evaluation report which will be shared and discussed with the GDPRD Steering Committee and revised as required to reflect its feedback.

### 1.2 Purpose

This evaluation was commissioned by GDPRD, which is also the primary client for the review. According to the evaluation TORs, the overarching objective of the evaluation is to provide the Steering Committee and Platform members with a reasoned and analytical assessment of the implementation of the Platform as a basis for informed decision-making to guide the future development of the Platform. The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess the Platform's continued relevance to its key stakeholders and within the international development community;
- To assess the added value the Platform has brought its members and target groups since its creation, and the effectiveness of the GDPRD as a network in carrying out its mission and realizing planned objectives and results; and
- To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the network's structures, processes and internal capacities in carrying out its mission.

The evaluation will be formative and forward-looking by paying particular attention to identifying lessons from the past in order to inform future action.

## 1.3 Methodology

### 1.3.1 Evaluation Framework

Universalialia developed a detailed evaluation methodology during the inception phase of the review. The inception report containing the proposed methodology was submitted to the Platform in February 2008 and published on GDPRD website for comments. No comments were received, and the inception report was automatically approved.

On the basis of the inception phase findings and discussions with GDPRD, Universalialia developed an evaluation framework that provided the basis for evaluation data collection and analysis. The framework summarised the major evaluation foci, questions and sub-questions, as well as key sources of evaluation data. The evaluation framework is presented in Appendix I.

Building on the themes outlined in the evaluation TORs, we conceptualised the evaluation with the following foci:

- GDPRD Context (External and Internal);
- GDPRD Performance (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Network Sustainability);
- GDPRD Capacities (Strategic Leadership; Membership, Governance and Operational Structures; Output Management; Inter-institutional Linkages; and Network Processes; and
- GDPRD Future Directions.

### 1.3.2 Data Sources

The review utilised two key sources of data: people and documents.

#### People

Approximately 65 individuals were consulted for this review. Data collection methods included semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews, group interviews, focus groups, e-mail correspondence and an on-line survey.

Interview protocols were based on the evaluation framework and customised for each category of respondent.

A web-based survey targeted 39 people, including the members' Focal Points and partners' contact persons. The response rate was approximately 50%.

Seven of the ten Board members and key Secretariat staff participated in a focus group conducted during the Brussels working session in March 2008,

A list of consulted stakeholders is provided in Appendix II.

#### Interviewed stakeholders

Secretariat staff: 8 individuals

Full members FPs: 9 individuals

Associate Members FPs: 6 individuals

Partners' contact persons: 2 individuals

Member organizations' non-FPs: 24 individuals from 11 organizations

Other relevant organizations representatives: 7 individuals from 5 organizations

Donor representatives in partner countries: 1 individual

Partner country governments' representatives: 1 individual

## Documents

The evaluation team reviewed and analysed a wide selection of documents including:

- GDPRD internal documents;
- Key GDPRD meetings minutes and documentation;
- GDPRD products; and
- Relevant literature on networks, ARD, AE.

A list of the documents reviewed is provided in Appendix III.

### 1.3.3 Data Analysis

The evaluation team used descriptive, content and comparative analysis to analyse data. Validity was ensured through data triangulation (using convergence of multiple data sources) and compliance with standard evaluation practices. Based on the data analysis, the evaluation team developed findings and recommendations. A list of findings is presented in Appendix IV.

## 1.4 Limitations

The evaluation team encountered three main limitations in carrying out the review:

- **Rapidly changing context:** The global food price situation evolved dramatically during the months of the review, impacting significantly on some of the initial assumptions concerning the Platform's external context and its consequences for GDPRD. This required frequent updating of the study contents related to the external context. If the situation continues to evolve rapidly, some of the findings and conclusions of this report may be outdated.
- **Lack of timely information from other strategic exercises:** As a result of the delay of the harvesting exercise (see sidebar), the evaluation team did not have valuable information on the effectiveness of the in-country pilot projects and the Platform's products.
- **The absence of a performance measurement system:** GDPRD's broad mandate and objectives are not yet matched to any measurable indicators that would provide a basis to assess its effectiveness. As a consequence, the team used other sources and methods, including: 1) descriptive analysis of outputs based on the Platform's reports, and 2) stakeholder views on programmes and services the Platform has carried out to date, based on interviews and surveys.

#### The Harvesting Exercise

Based on a Board decision (December 2007), the Platform decided to take stock of its experiences in the implementation of its activities in a "harvesting exercise" that would yield two sets of lessons learned:

- Lessons on Platform sponsored/implemented publications and studies
- Lessons on the Platform's in-country facilitation

The concept of "Harvesting the Platform's Experiences" was approved by the Board in March 2008. Consultants were hired and started the assignment in April. Both studies are currently under way. Originally results were expected before the end of this evaluation.

## 1.5 Organisation of the Report

This report consists of seven chapters. Following this introduction, the second chapter provides a review of the external context in which the Platform operates; chapter 3 presents a profile of the Platform and its internal context; chapters 4 to 6 provide an assessment of the Platform's performance, capacities, and sustainability. Chapter 7 provides conclusions and recommendations.

Throughout the report we have used this icon to identify suggestions and considerations.





## 2. External Environment

This chapter provides contextual information about the Agriculture and Rural Development sector and the Aid Effectiveness agenda. It places particular emphasis on the implications for organisations and networks working in these areas.

**Finding 1: Over the past 25 years, the agriculture sector lost importance on the development agenda, despite its potential for reducing poverty and improving food security. Due to the current food price situation, food and agriculture are now very central on the global agenda.**

After some years of stagnation at the beginning of the 1980s, aid to agriculture declined rapidly after 1985. Total aid to agriculture fell from a 17% share in the early 1980s to 8% at the end of the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> DAC members' bilateral aid committed to agriculture evolved as shown in the table below.

**Exhibit 2.1 Commitments of DAC Donors to Agriculture 1985-2006 (as a percent of Donor's Total Commitments)**

	1985-1986	2000	2005-2006
Canada	18.8	5	4.8
France	9.9	5	1.6
Germany	10.2	5	3.1
Switzerland	24.5	4	4.5
UK	10.2	6	1.6
US	11.2	4	2.7
<b>TOTAL DAC</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.1</b>

Source: Statistical Annex of the 2007 Development Cooperation Report, OECD-DAC, 2008

The reasons for this decline were multiple:

- A change in donors' sectoral priorities from productive to social sectors reflected in the poverty reduction agenda of the 1990s and in the MDGs;
- Internal problems in the agricultural sector (e.g., difficulty in demonstrating results; some negative experiences, in particular with extension and planning projects; tendency to be very technocratic and top-down, and consequently unsustainable);
- Underinvestment and many poor investments produced very low impacts and disincentives for further investments in agriculture;
- Political economy reasons: When industrialised countries see little benefit for their own countries, leveraging adequate funding is more difficult; and
- Low food prices provided a disincentive for developing country governments to invest in agriculture.

<sup>2</sup> Commitments, DAC& CRS statistics.

Nonetheless, there is general agreement among policy makers, development practitioners, and sustainable development and poverty reduction experts that agriculture and rural development are crucial for sustainable development and poverty reduction. According to the World Bank (WB), agriculture contributes to development in various ways: as an economic activity, as a livelihood, as a provider of environmental services. Three of every four people in developing countries live in rural areas and agriculture is a source of livelihood for 86% of the rural poor. Agriculture plays an important role in meeting the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) – see sidebar – and in assuring food security.

The turning point came in 2007, when agriculture reappeared on the global agenda as a result of the World Bank's World Development Report (WDR) 2008 and the rise of food prices and subsequent food crisis in certain countries. According to the WB, the current situation is becoming more favourable to investments in agriculture and rural development.

### The World Bank's World Development Report 2008

The last WDR that focused on agriculture was in 1982. The WB put agriculture back on the agenda last year, noting its central role for development, poverty reduction, attainment of the MDGs, and economic growth in agriculture-based economies. According to WDR 2008, there is strong evidence that the global community is under investing in agriculture and rural development and growing recognition among governments and donors that agriculture must be a prominent part of the development agenda.

The WB developed an agriculture-for-development agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (see sidebar).

The fact that the WB, one of the most important and influential actors in the development arena, decided to stand on the side of agriculture after so many years is creating an important shift in both donor and public opinion and is provoking debate about the role of agriculture and rural development (ARD) in development.

### Food Price Situation and Response

After more than 30 years of declining prices, food prices started to rise in 2001 with a dramatic acceleration in the last year (e.g., the price of wheat increased 108%, corn 66%, and rice more than doubled since the beginning of 2008. Source: UN food index). The upsurge is the result of global demand exceeding production. The main causes of this phenomenon are related to: new demand for biofuels, climate change reducing production in many areas, greater food consumption (particularly meat and dairy) in transition countries such as China. Several experts believe that these factors will not change in the short term and that the current difficult situation

#### The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

Agriculture and Rural development can contribute in particular to the achievement of the 1<sup>st</sup> MDG: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

“Agriculture has served as a basis for growth and reduced poverty in many countries, but more countries could benefit if governments and donors were to reverse years of policy neglect and remedy their underinvestment and misinvestments in agriculture.”

World Bank

will last for several years.<sup>3</sup> The situation is leading to widespread unrest in poor food-importing countries (e.g., Haiti, Egypt, Ivory Coast, and Indonesia).

UN agencies, the WB, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and several donors have called for action to avoid the risk of starvation and social instability.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) held a High Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome on 3-5 June 2008 to discuss policies and strategies to improve food security and re-launch agriculture in rural communities in developing countries and identify solutions to the current food price situation. The conference participants, including 181 countries and 43 heads of state, adopted a final declaration (see sidebar).

“Coherent action is urgently needed by the international community to deal with the impact of higher prices and on the hungry and the poor. Today around 862 million people are suffering from hunger and malnourishment – this highlights the need to reinvest in agriculture. It should be clear now that agriculture needs to be put back onto the development agenda.”

Jacques Diouf, FAO Director General, May Press conference to launch the OECD-FAO Outlook, Paris, May 2008.

#### **Declaration of the High-level Conference on World Food Security**

“The international community needs to take urgent and coordinated action to combat the negative impacts of soaring food prices on the world’s most vulnerable countries and populations. (...) There is an urgent need to help developing countries and countries in transition expand agriculture and food production, and to increase investment in agriculture, agribusiness and rural development, from both public and private sources.”

“...All donors and the United Nations System to increase their assistance for developing countries, in particular least developed countries and those that are most negatively affected by high food prices.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Favourable political economy context**

According to several experts, including the WB and representatives of international civil society organisations (CSOs), civil society and the private sector are becoming stronger in agricultural policy making: In some countries, smallholder farmers are starting to have a greater voice and to be heard in decision-making processes. Also, powerful private actors, such as agribusiness, are becoming more involved (directly or indirectly) in ARD policy making. The anti-agriculture bias in many developing countries economies is declining: Agriculture is starting to be seen again as a productive economic sector, and not as a traditional, old-fashioned inheritance of an underdeveloped past that has to be overcome.

<sup>3</sup> According to the last *Agricultural Outlook from OECD and FAO*, Paris May 2008, “Agriculture commodity prices should ease from their recent record peaks but over the next 10 years they are expected to average well above the mean of the past decade.”

<sup>4</sup> *Declaration of the High-level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy*, Rome, 5 June 2008

It is still too early to provide figures on how this more favourable context has affected actual disbursements in agriculture for 2007. It is however worth noting that several donors participating at the Rome High Level Conference announced increased commitments to agriculture (see sidebar).

In 2002, the latest date for which comparable figures are available, total commitments to agriculture were approximately \$11 billion. In the first half of 2008 alone, global commitments to food security and agriculture amount to US\$18.36 billion.<sup>5</sup>

#### **New Financial Contributions announced at the High Level Conference (Rome 2008)**

World Bank: US\$1.2 billion  
 African Development Bank: US\$1 billion  
 Islamic Development Bank: US\$ 1.5 billion (over 5 years)  
 IFAD: US\$200 million  
 USA: US\$5 billion (2008/2009)  
 France: US\$1.5 billion (over five years)  
 United Kingdom: US\$590 million  
 Spain: US\$773 million (over 4 years)  
 Source: FAO

**Finding 2: While the Aid Effectiveness principles of donor coordination and harmonisation are as important in the ARD sector as in other sectors, some specific characteristics of ARD are not well accommodated by the 2005 Paris Declaration; these will be examined at the Accra Meeting in September 2008.**

As the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (see sidebar) is in the process of being implemented worldwide and sector wide, its strengths and weaknesses are emerging. Some stakeholders, including civil society organisations and independent experts, have noted the Declaration's bias towards public planning and expenditure, and its lack of sufficient consideration for beneficiaries' ownership (as opposed to country government ownership). Another concern, pointed out in particular by developing countries, is that the call for donor coordination has generated a proliferation of coordination bodies and initiatives that, instead of simplifying the development community, are crowding it even more.

#### **The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**

The Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness was signed in 2005 by 35 donor countries, 26 multilateral donor organisations, 56 developing countries and 14 civil society observers at the Second High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, in Paris. The Declaration's overall objective is to provide a strategy for increasing the impact of aid on development and accelerating achievement of the MDGs. The Declaration establishes five broad principles for donor agencies and recipient countries on aid effectiveness:

- 1) country ownership in leading the development process;
- 2) donor alignment with partner countries' national development priorities and financial management systems;
- 3) donor harmonisation through the use of common funding arrangements and more effective division of labour;
- 4) managing for results by managing and implementing aid in a way that focuses on desired results and uses information to improve decision-making; and
- 5) mutual accountability whereby partner countries and donors are both accountable for development results.

<sup>5</sup> Source : FAO

The Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra (Ghana) in September 2008 will be an opportunity to review what has and has not worked in the implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda, and will lead to an action agenda to accelerate and deepen the implementation of the Paris principles.

### **ARD and Aid Effectiveness**

Following what were considered by stakeholders as unsatisfactory experiences with investments in agriculture in the 1980s and the 1990s, the ARD sector needed not only more investments but more coordinated and effective investments, particularly given that least developed countries with agriculture-based economies have a high dependence on official development assistance (ODA). For example, according to the WDR 2008 (OECD data) ODA averages 28 % of total agricultural spending for 24 sub-Saharan countries, and for three of them (Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda) ODA averages more than 80% of total agricultural spending. In this context, sector-specific coordination is critical.

At the same time, several characteristics of the agricultural sector make it difficult to apply some of the Paris Declaration principles. For example,

- Donors have different and conflicting visions with regard to rural policies and practices, for example concerning the role of the state and the private sector in agriculture, trade issues, subsidies, the role of smallholders and of big multinationals, etc.
- Many diverse actors are involved in ARD, including governmental agencies, agribusinesses, smallholders, multinationals, rural labour, farmers associations, cooperatives, NGOs, etc.
- Within governments, responsibility for ARD is often scattered among several ministries and agencies (e.g., land, agriculture, economic development, international trade, infrastructure, etc.).
- Government has a limited role in ARD, in particular compared to other sectors such as health and education. ARD is dominated by private sector organisations, and the role of the state has been reduced in the last years to a mainly regulatory and policy formulation role. The last two decades have seen a fall in public expenditure in agriculture.
- Rural areas are economically, socially, and environmentally diverse, with different needs in terms of agricultural production systems and rural development. ARD policies and programming must be adaptable and solutions must be tailored to contexts.
- ARD's cross-sectoral dimensions (e.g., environment and climate change, migration, international trade, etc.) make programming more complex as numerous issues and stakeholders must be considered (see finding 3).

The principles of Aid Effectiveness, on the other hand, are built primarily on the assumption that governments play a major role in aid and that a single government counterpart (one ministry, for example) is responsible for public expenditures (e.g., in the SWAPs approach). This is not the case in agriculture. The current good practices and many of the Paris Declaration instruments in aid (e.g. SWAPs and budgetary aid) are based on the needs of social sectors.

According to some agriculture experts<sup>6</sup> joint approaches and common funding mechanisms are not always an adequate solution for donor coordination in ARD. They argue that other dimensions of harmonisation could be pursued by donors in ARD, such as the division of labour according to each agency's experience, expertise and comparative advantages, aiming at complementary interventions in the field.<sup>7</sup> The ARD sector can bring to the aid community different views, experiences and lessons learned on the implementation of the Paris principles that could be particularly valuable in the Accra Forum context.

Lessons learned on Aid Effectiveness in ARD will be even more valuable in the new global context: the increased global emphasis on agriculture will bring many donors back to agriculture and will bring many new players into the game. The need for donor coordination and good examples of what works or doesn't work in agriculture will be even stronger. The Accra Forum will provide a good opportunity for organisations that have been involved in ARD for a long time to share their experiences for mutual benefit with new audiences.

**Finding 3: The agriculture and rural development sector is becoming more complex in relation to the changing global context. This is putting new pressure and demands on organisations working in the agricultural sector.**

The rapidly evolving global context has some significant impacts, both positive and negative, on organisations working in ARD. The most positive consequence is that there is growing interest in organisations and networks involved in ARD. On the challenging side, it may be difficult for many ARD organisations to respond immediately to the dramatic increase in demand for their advice and support. As agriculture has not been a "hot" sector for many years, people and organisations involved in it may not have the resources or agility to respond to new opportunities. There is the risk that the sudden increase in demands and pressure on ARD organisations and experts might overstretch their resources.

New, interrelated and cross-cutting issues are emerging and becoming central to the agriculture agenda (e.g., environment, climate change, international trade). This is increasing the number of players involved – NGOs, private foundations, private sector (international agribusiness), and emerging donors (China, India, Brazil) – and the number of international agreements, fora, and initiatives to take into consideration.

Dealing with the new demands will require ARD organisations with broader competencies, very responsive mechanisms, and the capacity to create working relationships with organisations that are not strictly agricultural, for example the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Moreover, as more organisations and stakeholders become involved in ARD, competition will increase and organisations wanting to work in ARD will increasingly have to define a precise niche and demonstrate their added value.

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<sup>6</sup> Lídia Cabral, *Accra 2008: The Bumpy Road to Aid Effectiveness in Agriculture*, Overseas Development Institute, April 2008

<sup>7</sup> The division of labour debate seeks to reduce and rationalize the number of donors present in a country and/or across sectors. Each donor should develop a vision of its 'comparative advantage' in terms of sectors or countries and focus on those. This is to avoid the proliferation of donors in some "cherished" developing countries and the desertion of others.

Coordination of efforts among donors and international organisations is a growing challenge. In the last few years, a multitude of sectoral, technical, and issue-specific networks, initiatives and working groups have formed to address this challenge. While these joint initiatives could help coordination, their proliferation can also have negative impacts: According to some stakeholders, “efforts towards harmonisation have been outstripped by the proliferation of global and regional activities, implemented through separate vertical funds. The aid architecture in agriculture shows growing overlaps and duplications (...)”<sup>8</sup>

**Finding 4: Networks are being used increasingly to address complex global problems that cannot be effectively addressed by individual organisations. However, the broader scope and diversity of a network’s constituency increases the pressure to respond to a multiplicity of expectations and needs, some of which may be conflicting.**

Complex global problems that combine cross-cutting issues, broad and diversified stakeholders, and that have potential worldwide consequences are fuelling the need for joint solutions among stakeholders. Many organisations are forming some type of inter-organisational relationship to tackle these issues (see sidebar). In this report we have used the term *network* to refer to this type of grouping, as GDPRD is a network of organisations.

Networks, in particular networks of not-for-profit organisations, have some common characteristics.<sup>9</sup> They are collectives of organisations that are voluntary, goal-oriented, complex, and flat in their authority structures. The inter-organisational relationship must benefit both the individual members and the network as a whole.

- **Voluntary** – Member organisations come together of their own accord.
- **Goal-driven, synergistic** – Members come together to accomplish some objective or compelling mission that individual members could not achieve alone, with the expectation that their collective results will surpass the sum of the members’ independent efforts.
- **Complex** – While members are committed to the network objective, they remain committed to the mission and objectives of their own organisations. Their purposes, structures, systems and processes also exist at both levels (i.e., individual and collective) and they operate in multiple environmental contexts which may be the same, overlapping or distinct.

“The global concerns of poverty, war, famine, equality, the environment and so forth invariably exceed the capacity of any single organisation to impact. (...) Institutions and organisations find themselves increasingly incapable of dealing with problems of expanding scale and scope. Accordingly, new ways are sought to address these issues and other problems of international reach.

Specifically, over the past decade or so we have seen the growth of a wide assortment of organisational forms to tackle these challenges. These new forms are, in fact, constellations of organisations. (...). Individuals and organisations in the field of international development are increasingly forging linkages with others in the public, not-for-profit and even for-profit sectors in the hope that together they will better achieve their objectives. A plethora of labels have been applied to these organisational groupings including networks, consortiums, strategic alliances, coalitions, joint ventures, partnerships and inter-organisation relations.”

C. Lusthaus and C. Milton-Feasby, *The evaluation of inter-organisational relationships in the not-for-profit sector*, Universalialia 2006, p.1

<sup>8</sup> Cabral 2008

<sup>9</sup> Characteristics adapted from Charles Lusthaus and Christine Milton-Feasby, *The Evaluation of Inter-organisational Relationships in the Not for Profit Sector*, Universalialia 2006.

- **Flat structures** – A network’s flat governance structure reflects its collaborative origins, and while members share the costs and responsibility for network activities, this adds considerably to the complexity of management and communication.
- **Benefits** – Members expect to benefit from the accomplishments of the network’s objective and to benefit locally in pursuit of their own goals and objectives. How to measure these various benefits is not always clear.

While organisations participating in networks may share the need to address a common problem, they usually bring to the common table very different cultures, expectations, and practices that in some cases may be conflicting. This is true for all organisations constituted of diverse individuals, but networks of organisations amplify this characteristic. This puts particular pressure on networks, because they are expected to satisfy the multiple expectations and needs of their members while working towards fostering joint solutions and actions.



### 3. GDPRD Profile and Context

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter has two purposes. First, it provides a factual profile of GDPRD: an overview of its mandate, objectives, programmes, structure and finances. Second, it assesses GDPRD's internal context and its implications for the Platform's performance and capacities, which are addressed in chapters 4 and 5.

#### 3.2 Objectives and Activities

GDPRD, also known as the Platform, was established in Bonn, Germany in December 2003 by a group of like-minded donors, development agencies, and international financial institutions (IFIs) that shared the conviction that that no single agency could address all the needs of the rural poor in a world of competing development agendas and limited financial resources, and that more coordinated and collective action was required in rural development.

##### **Platform's mission statement**

"We are committed to achieving increased development assistance impact and more effective investment in rural development and agriculture"

Source: Platform's communication strategy, 2006

The Platform's ultimate objective<sup>10</sup> is to "reduce poverty in developing countries and enhance sustainable economic growth in rural areas through improved cooperation and collaboration between international development partners and coordinated dialogue with partner countries."

The Platform's activities are structured along three Pillars (also called outputs). The Pillars have evolved significantly over time; the categorisation provided below reflects the content of GDPRD's revised Charter updated March 2008.

##### **Pillar/output 1: Advocacy and Outreach**

"The members of the Platform will serve as advocates for the needs of the rural poor and the agriculture agenda at the international, regional and country level."

##### **Pillar/output 2: Knowledge Management and Innovation**

"The members of the Platform seek to enhance the quality and impact of rural development investments through shared learning and recognition of better practices (...)."<sup>11</sup>

##### **Pillar/output 3: Aid Effectiveness**

"The members of the Platform will join in collaborative efforts to refine aid effectiveness principles for agriculture and rural development programmes by means of further debates, agreement to common principles and the dissemination and application thereof at the international, regional and country level."

A summary of the key GDPRD activities associated with each Pillar is provided in Exhibit 3.1.

<sup>10</sup> GDPRD's Charter, March 2008

<sup>11</sup> Previous versions included shared learning, innovation, and recognition of better practices.

**Exhibit 3.1 Profile of GDPRD Pillars and Activities**

PILLARS	DESCRIPTION <sup>12</sup>	KEY GDPRD ACTIVITIES TO DATE
Advocacy and outreach	“The members of the Platform serve as advocates for the needs of the rural poor and the agriculture agenda at the international, regional and country level. This includes contributing to policy debates and highlighting the relevance of rural development and agriculture within the context of the MDGs.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The publication of various studies, briefs and pamphlets</li> <li>• Support to the World Development Report 2008 ‘Agriculture for Development’</li> <li>• Organisation or support of international events: Platform Annual meetings, 2nd European Forum on Sustainable Rural Development, Donor Consultation Workshop on World Development Report 2008, (Washington), Donor Consultation Workshop on CAADP, (Geneva)</li> <li>• Participation at international and regional events</li> <li>• Development of a communication strategy (website development, publication of “Platform Speaking”)</li> <li>• Outreach activities in member organisations (e.g., lunch time seminars)</li> </ul>
Knowledge management and innovation	“The members of the Platform seek to enhance the quality and impact of rural development investments through shared learning and the recognition of best practices, both through networking and the collation and dissemination of innovations, and by undertaking joint training sessions and missions.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing policy guidelines, joint donor statements, and studies on agriculture and rural development</li> <li>• Identifying and addressing jointly the ‘hottest topics’ in rural development and facilitating the formulation of policy briefs on each topic</li> <li>• Sharing good practices, experiences, and operating guidelines on what works in rural development and what doesn’t via the website and periodical newsletters</li> </ul>
Aid effectiveness	“The members of the Platform join in collaborative efforts to refine aid effectiveness principles for agriculture and rural development programmes by means of further debates, agreement on common principles, and the dissemination and application thereof at the international, regional and country level. This includes joint efforts to support national agriculture and rural strategies, harmonising procedures and practices in the context of OECD/DAC donor alignment efforts, utilising national systems, and strengthening the assessment of the impact of strategies and investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working towards joint principles for donors supporting agriculture and rural development programmes</li> <li>• Facilitating enhanced donor coordination and alignment to African countries’ strategies with respect to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)</li> <li>• Providing in-country facilitation services in pilot countries (Cambodia and Nicaragua)</li> <li>• Hosting inter-country workshops on the formulation and implementation of programme-based approaches</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Source GDPRD’s Charter, March 2008

### 3.3 Structure

GDPRD is an informal membership organisation currently consisting of 31 members, 10 full members and 21 associate members, together representing approximately 80% of international ODA in agriculture. A definition of the two categories of membership in GDPRD is provided in the sidebar.

GDPRD does not have a legal identity; it operates within the legal framework provided by a contract between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). GTZ provides the Platform's Secretariat and management support services on a fee-for-service basis. It manages the Secretariat as part of a larger BMZ-GTZ project.

GDPRD membership is voluntary and open to the following entities: international donor countries and development agencies; multilateral organisations including IFIs; and foundations working in the field of agriculture and rural development (ARD). At the time of writing, GDPRD members include twenty-one bilateral donors, seven multilateral agencies, and three IFIs. Each full and associate member organisation appoints an individual known as a Focal Point to represent their organisation in the Platform.

GDPRD works with a group of partner institutions to carry out its mandate. Partnerships are defined in a very broad way: They are open to other donor platforms or networks, farmers' organisations, international or regional research institutions, civil society organisations, and regional networks that share a common interest with the Platform. At May 2008, GDPRD was engaged in eight partnerships, with different degrees of formality, with research institutions, global and regional networks, and global initiatives in agriculture and rural development (see sidebar).

According to the Platform's revised Charter, "Platform's partners engaged in parallel activities that support Platform's objectives commit to implementing the vision and objectives shared by all members of the Platform."

#### GDPRD Membership

Members contributing a minimum of 50,000 Euros per year are **full members** of the Platform. They receive all services of the Platform without additional cost and can serve as task Leaders for specific activities. They are invited to Annual Meetings and each full member has one seat on the Board. At the time of writing, GDPRD has 10 full members.

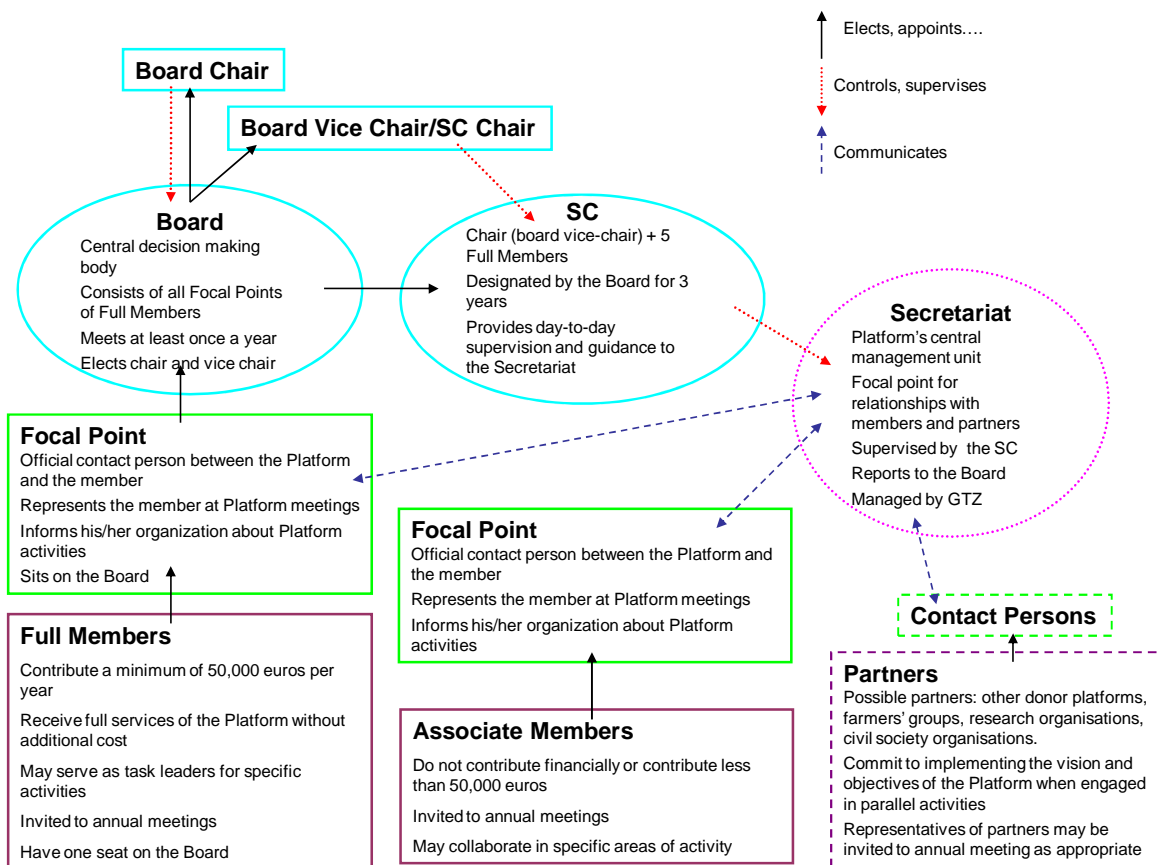
Members which do not contribute financially to the Platform or contribute less than 50,000 Euros are known as **associate members**. Associate members are invited to Annual Meetings of the Platform and are welcome to collaborate in specific thematic areas or activities. At the time of writing, GDPRD has 22 associate members.

#### GDPRD Partners

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)  
 Natural Resources Institute (NRI)  
 Overseas Development Institute (ODI)  
 Regional Unit for Technical Assistance in Agriculture (RUTA)  
 World Vegetable Center (AVRDC)  
 Livelihoods Connect / Institute of Development Studies (IDS)  
 Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation  
 ACP-EU (CTA)  
 Neuchâtel Initiative (NI)

GDPRD's structure, as established in the March 2008 Charter, includes a Board, a Steering Committee (SC), and a Secretariat as depicted in Exhibit 3.2. More details on the Board, SC and Secretariat roles and responsibilities are provided in Appendix V.

Exhibit 3.2 GDPRD Structure



The **Board** is the central decision-making body of the Platform and consists of the Focal Points (representatives) of all full members. It is headed by the Platform's Chair.

The Board meets at least once a year to consider the long-term strategy of the Platform and to approve its annual budget and annual work plan. It approves and amends the Charter, decides upon the admission of new members and partners. It approves and

**GDPRD Board**

**Chair:** German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

**Vice-chair:** International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

**Members:**

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID)

Directorate-General for Development, European Commission (EC-DG DEV)

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFA-F)

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

United States Agency for International Cooperation (USAID)

World Bank (WB)

amends the TORs of the Secretariat and the terms of agreement with the institution that provides the Platform's Secretariat. The GDPRD Board was created in the 2007 charter and met for the first time in December 2007.

The **Steering Committee**, a sub-committee of the Board, provides day-to-day supervision of, and guidance to, the Secretariat. It also reviews the performance of the Secretariat and reports

**Steering Committee**

**Chair:** IFAD

**Members:** CIDA, DFID, EC-DG DEV, MFA-F and WB

to the Board on a regular basis. The Platform Vice-Chair acts as Chair of the Steering Committee which consists of five Board members who are designated ad personam by the Board for a three-year period. Two SC members are replaced every year. A list of current GDPRD Steering Committee members is provided in the sidebar. The SC was created in June 2005 and met for their first retreat in September 2005 in Ottawa, Canada.

The **Secretariat** is the central management unit of the Platform and the main contact point for relations with GDPRD members and partners. The Secretariat supports the Board and the Steering Committee, and bears the primary responsibility for ensuring that their decisions are carried out.

The Secretariat was established in 2005. It is hosted by BMZ and managed by GTZ as a service provider contracted by BMZ in the framework of a wider BMZ-GTZ project ("Poverty Reduction in Rural Areas") of which GDPRD's Secretariat is one of three components. This relationship is established in a general framework contract between BMZ and GTZ and more specifically in the project proposal. The project lasts six years: its first phase was from January 2003 to June 2006; the second phase began in July 2006 and will end in December 2008. The project underwent a GTZ internal evaluation in February 2008.

The Head of Section, Division Agriculture and Fisheries of GTZ manages the Secretariat and supervises the staff. Currently there are four full-time and three part-time staff members, and a short-term communication consultant in the Secretariat. The Secretariat is now undergoing a transitional period and by the end of 2008 all Secretariat staff will be based in Bonn. Until June 2007 three staff members were based in Bonn, Germany (the Coordinator, the Task Leader on Agricultural and Rural Policy, and the student assistant); three staff members were based in GTZ offices in Eschborn, Germany (the Task Leader on Aid Effectiveness and Communication, the junior professional, and the financial advisor). One staff member (the Task Leader for the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme [CAADP]) was based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Two full-time national facilitators and two international facilitators were also hired by the Platform to support in-country facilitation services in Cambodia and Nicaragua; however, the Nicaragua project finished in December 2007 and the Cambodian project is currently phasing out.

The Secretariat is also the Platform's Trust Fund administrator: the Platform's fund is on a GTZ account and members enter into financing agreements with GTZ for their financial contributions. The Head of Section, Division Agriculture and Fisheries of GTZ is responsible for this budget line. The GDPRD financial administrator (part-time Secretariat staff and part-time GTZ employee) provides monthly budget overviews to GTZ and quarterly overviews to the Platform. Budget updates are also included in GDPRD's annual reports.

### 3.4 Finances

Since the Platform was founded, its activities have been financed through the contributions of its members. According to the Charter, members may contribute to activities financially and/or through in-kind contributions by taking on tasks initiated and commissioned by the Platform. Financial contributions are made to the Platform Trust Fund which is now administered by GTZ (until 2007, by the FAO-Investment Centre on behalf of the Platform).

Funding takes two forms: untied core-funding and funds allocated to specific GDPRD activities. All budget allocations for activities are managed by the Secretariat in accordance with the work plan endorsed by the Steering Committee.

BMZ made the first financial contribution to the Platform in 2003. Over the past five years, the most significant financial contributors have been BMZ-GTZ, the World Bank, and the European Commission (EC). Other financial contributors include DFID, USAID, CIDA, MAE France, and SDC. The Platform also receives in-kind contributions from these and other members (IFAD and NORAD). BMZ, in addition to its financial and in-kind contributions, provides two fully equipped offices for the Secretariat and supports their operating costs. This support was mentioned (whereas not calculated) in the progress report 2007 as in-kind contributions whereas not calculated in the Platform's budget.

**Exhibit 3.3 Financial and Monetised In-kind Member Contributions 2003-2008 (in Euro)**

Contributions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 <sup>1</sup>
<b>1. Financial contributions (Euro)</b>						
CIDA			€125,466	€105,760	€99,405	€100,000
EC through FAO Investment Center				€310,000	€410,000	€500,000
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)			€32,000	€133,000	€50,000	€50,000
USAid through WB Trust Fund					€107,327	€107,000
DFID		€100,000	€108,275		€203,891	€105,000
MAE France					€80,000	
World Bank			€153,800	€265,117	€153,602	€150,000
BMZ	€230,512	€279,534	€208,000	€414,000	€305,000	€350,000
<b>Sub-Total Financial Contributions</b>	<b>€230,512</b>	<b>€379,534</b>	<b>€627,541</b>	<b>€1,122,117</b>	<b>€1,309,820</b>	<b>€1,362,000</b>
<b>2. In-kind contributions (Euro)</b>						
IFAD contribution (Rural Focus of PRSPs)				€96,521	€12,813	
USAid contribution					€34,819	
WB contribution (indicator study)					€30,641	
NORAD contribution (Rural focus of PRSP and WDR support)				€160,596	€30,000	
BMZ/GTZ contribution (WDR support)				€70,000	€60,000	
<b>Sub-Total Value In-kind Contributions</b>				<b>€327,117</b>	<b>€168,273</b>	
<b>Total Platform contributions</b>				<b>€1,449,234</b>	<b>€1,478,093</b>	<b>€1,362,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Estimations at May 2008

Total contributions to the Platform more than doubled between 2005 and 2006, remained stable for a year, and are forecasted to decrease slightly in 2008.

Expenditures are steadily increasing but priorities are evolving, as shown in Exhibit 3.4. In 2007 for example, more money was invested in Pillar one, following an SC decision to give more importance and resources to Advocacy and Outreach. According to the 2008 forecast, this trend seems to be reversed: more emphasis will be put on Pillar 2 and less on Pillar 1.

Exhibit 3.4 GDPRD Expenditures 2005-08 (in Euro) <sup>13</sup>

Expenditures	2005	2006		2007		2008 (forecast)	
Output 1 Advocacy and Outreach		147,107	11%	460,762	24%	233,750	10%
Output 2 Shared Learning		323,019	24%	261,384	14%	562,000	25%
Output 3 Aid effectiveness		569,743	43%	681,117	36%	629,150	28%
Management and governance		192,423	14%	390,512	21%	545,200	24%
Overheads	65,480	96,921	7%	101,070	5%	256,113	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>569,170</b>	<b>1,329,213</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,894,845</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,226,213</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.5 Internal Context

**Finding 5: The Platform is a relatively new network, in formative stages of growth and evolution. This needs to be taken into account when assessing its performance and capacities.**

Networks, like individual organisations, typically evolve through various stages of development from birth to decline, akin to an individual's life cycle. This evolution is not only healthy but critical to survival, particularly in rapidly changing environments; stagnant organisations and networks become quite vulnerable if they cannot demonstrate their continued relevance to their stakeholders over time.

Since its foundation GDPRD has evolved in an organic way, finding practical solutions to emerging needs and progressively adapting its structure to suit them. It has experimented with different categorisations of its key output areas and has gone through several processes of strategic definition intended to clarify programme areas and/or a niche, stakeholders, etc. While it has existed since 2003, GDPRD activities commenced relatively recently, in 2005. These characteristics are common in young networks that are still in formative stages in their evolution.

The literature contains many frameworks that define the various stages of an organisation's evolution; however, there are relatively few frameworks that define these stages in a network. Exhibit 3.5 outlines a framework that defines five stages of a network's evolution: formation, growth, maturity, renewal, and eventual decline; it also provides a list of the main characteristics of networks for each of the five stages. (Note: The acronym IOR indicates inter-organisational relationships.)

Exhibit 3.5 Stages of a Network's Evolution <sup>14</sup>

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
<b>Mode</b>	Formation <i>Getting together</i>	Growth <i>Getting to work</i>	Maturity <i>Organising ourselves</i>	Renewal <i>Recommitting or Refocusing</i>	Decline <i>Coming apart</i>
<b>Leadership Role</b>	<i>Champion</i>	<i>Cultivator</i>	<i>Consolidator</i>	<i>Change Agent</i>	<i>Philosopher</i>
<b>Climate</b>	<i>Exuberance</i>	<i>Production-oriented</i>	<i>Results-oriented</i>	<i>Reinvigorated</i>	<i>Despair &amp; Acceptance</i>

<sup>13</sup> No data available on expenditures before 2005.

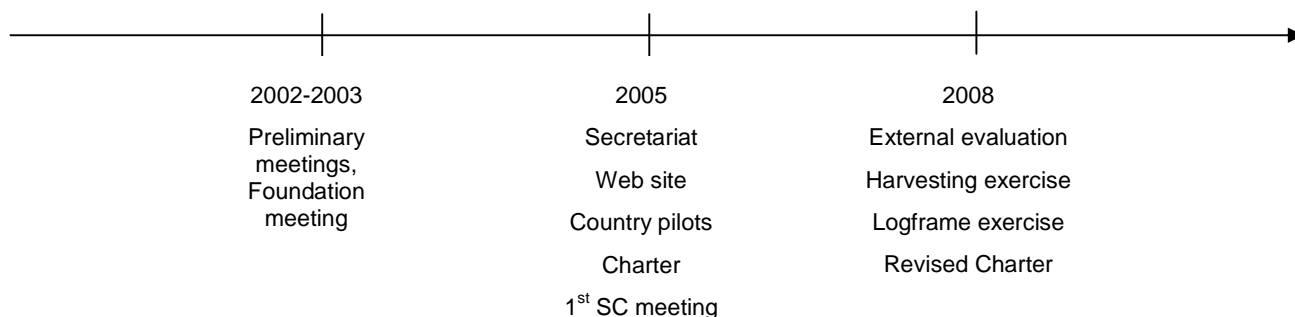
<sup>14</sup> Lusthaus and Milton-Feasby 2006

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
<b>Developmental objectives</b>	<p>To articulate objective requiring collaboration</p> <p>To determine IOR niche and potential organisational members</p> <p>To encourage collaboration</p> <p>To get started</p>	<p>To clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations</p> <p>To set up basic coordination mechanisms</p> <p>To produce goods and services</p> <p>To create a structure that facilitates action</p> <p>To reflect on business model</p>	<p>To define business model</p> <p>To institutionalise mechanics for work planning, shared decision-making and communication</p> <p>To establish formal evaluation and monitoring systems</p> <p>To test effectiveness and impact</p>	<p>To recognise signs of a partnership in trouble</p> <p>To encourage settling of disputes or revitalize IOR around a fresh purpose</p>	<p>To create a new IOR (purpose, partners etc.) on foundation of old relationships</p> <p>To orchestrate its dissolution, so that good relations are maintained among partners</p>
<b>Performance objectives</b>	To start up to do things	To begin service or programme delivery	To show that outcomes can be achieved	To increase reach, introduce new services or programmes	To terminate service or programme
<b>Legal Framework</b>	Not defined	Under definition	Defined	Defined	Defined (resolution)

Exhibit 3.6 shows some important Platform milestones that have marked the evolution and growth of the network. A more detailed list of GDPRD milestones is provided in Appendix VI.

**Exhibit 3.6 GDPRD Milestones and Stages of Evolution**

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
<b>Mode</b>	<p>Formation</p> <p><i>Getting together</i></p>	<p>Growth</p> <p><i>Getting to work</i></p>	<p>Maturity</p> <p><i>Organising ourselves</i></p>





This model, as all models, is a simplified version of reality and the passages from one stage to the other are not sharp. Nonetheless, in terms of the framework in Exhibit 3.5 above, GDPRD is currently situated between the second (growth) and third (maturity) stages of development, while it is still working on some limited aspects of stage 1 (formation):

- In terms of performance objectives, the Platform tends to be oriented more to service and programme delivery, rather than outcomes, which is typical of stage 2. However, GDPRD members are increasing their demands for more results evidence (e.g., this evaluation and the harvesting exercise which began in April 2008) and for a results-based logic system (stage 3).
- The Platform’s legal framework is not yet defined (stage 2).
- The Platform is fully engaged in clarifying roles, responsibilities and expectations. This was one of the main objectives of the revised Charter, and the Platform is working to further clarify some roles and especially expectations, as appeared for example in the Brussels working session in March 2008.
- The Platform has started developing institutionalised mechanisms for work-planning and shared decision making, such as the 2008 Workplan, and is integrating in the Revised Charter the “selection criteria and approval process for the Platform products and activities”<sup>15</sup> (stage 3).
- The Platform is still thinking about its niche, members and stakeholders – which is usually typical of stage 1. This is due to the dynamic external context and the new ideas being proposed by new members. And, although the Platform has articulated the objectives requiring collaboration (typical of stage 1), it is now in the stage 2 process of confirming and clarifying them (e.g., Brussels working session).

As the Platform is in a transitional stage in its evolution, it would be inappropriate to apply standards expected of an older, more mature organisation. This factor has been taken into account throughout the evaluation.

**Finding 6: A small core group of passionate individuals from GDPRD member organisations played an active role in creating the Platform in 2003 and in guiding its evolution over the past several years. Changes in the core group’s composition present opportunities and challenges to the Platform’s continued development.**

Typical of many young networks which are built on leadership by a few key individuals, strong trust among members and personal ties, a core group of passionate individuals came together in a very informal way, to create what is known today as the Platform.

The idea of donor coordination and the importance of agriculture to reduce hunger were first discussed by agencies at the World Food Summit held in Rome in 2002. This was followed by the First European Forum on Rural Development Cooperation (Montpellier) in September 2002, where the WB, in the framework of its new rural strategy, introduced the Idea of a Global Forum for Rural Development and spoke about harmonisation and donor coordination as pillars of the new WB strategy. The World Bank drafted the TORs for a “Forum” (the entity that would later become known as GDPRD) and circulated them among selected agencies. In March 2003, at the Rural Week in Washington, the topic was raised again. The WB and BMZ/GTZ were the most

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<sup>15</sup> TORs and guidelines can be regarded as coordination tools because they provide an agreed and standardized framework for action.

active supporters of the Forum idea, together with FAO, IFAD, the EC and to a lesser extent CIDA, DFID, the Department of Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). These agencies eventually established the GDPRD in December 2003 and have played a very active role in its evolution.

According to several interviewees there was great enthusiasm among these individuals about the Platform project and the start-up phase was a very energising period. Constituting the core group of the Platform, the individuals representing the founding institutions played an important role in guiding the evolution of the Platform, nurturing it with their engagement and their ideas, and managing it (with the support of the Secretariat); these individuals had a strong influence on the Platform's development.

From the outset, this core group set the values and the culture of the Platform. They wanted the Platform to be lean, informal, neutral, un-bureaucratic, member-led and, consensus-based. They shared the desire of making a difference as a network in what they could not achieve as individuals within their own institutions. They were driven by their personal commitment and engagement to the ARD sector and its undervalued importance for development (see section 2). These values are still highly praised by GDPRD members today; in particular the Platform's informality and neutrality (see sidebar).

**What are the Platform's most distinct characteristics according to its members?**

- It is neutral
- It is not an organisation
- There are no hidden political agendas
- It has a light non-bureaucratic structure
- It is informal
- It has a systemic effect
- It gathers the combined knowledge of all members

The core group was homogeneous in many ways: Most members were working in middle management positions in donor agencies or in agriculture-specific international organisations; they were experts in agriculture in policy making or technical support units; they were male and in advanced stages of their careers. They shared a common passion about agriculture and a common feeling of being an isolated minority in their organisations, a group of individuals threatened by the external context which was not particularly supportive of the ARD sector.

"Several Platform members noted that they work at institutions in which the profile of Agriculture and Rural Development remains low. Some are evidently the only or one of a few professional staff working in the sector. Most participants believe that Agriculture and Rural Development deserve expanded support, but it is unclear that their views are shared by the agencies they represent."

GDPRD First Business meeting minutes, December 2003, p.2

The original core group did not change much over the years, and many of the same individuals are still involved in the Platform (6 out of 11). The institutions represented in the core group are still largely the same. With the exception of the Department of Development Cooperation of the Netherlands (DGIS), the original founding institutions are all represented in the Board today, and some new full members have joined the core and become part of the Board (MAE France and USAID).<sup>16</sup> Representatives of the core organisations form the majority of Steering Committee members and the positions of Board Chair and Vice Chair.

<sup>16</sup> IFAD was not originally a full (i.e., paying) member but was very active in the creation of the Platform. IFAD became a full member in March 2008.

The original core continues to have a very important influence in GDPRD today, in particular, the original key champion organisations – BMZ and the World Bank (see sidebar). While this continuity provides needed stability in early stages of a network's development, it can contribute to unhealthy dependencies on the financial or other kinds of contributions (e.g., leadership) of these agencies and/or individuals, with potential long term adverse affects on the Platform's sustainability.

In addition, the relatively modest turnover among these organisations (and in some case individuals) holding critical leadership positions in the Platform provides a certain level of comfort and stability. However, it may also (unintentionally) prevent the infusion of new ideas and/or energy into the Platform or healthy questioning of the status quo. We will explore these matters further in section 5.1 on strategic leadership.

#### **Important Roles Played by World Bank and BMZ**

The WB and BMZ were the two main champion organisations in the founding of the Platform. In particular, two individuals had very important roles – Kevin Cleaver of the World Bank and Christoph Kohlmeier of BMZ.

While the World Bank did not want the Platform to become another organisation in the constellation of the WB and did not want to take the financial lead, it has provided conceptual leadership and significant financial contributions to GDPRD from its inception. The WB remains highly involved but less visible.

Since the Platform's foundation, BMZ has played a very important role in its development. It provided the original pool of resources to start the Platform project (230,000 €) and made the arrangements for a Secretariat in Bonn. In December 2003, the Platform's foundational meeting was held in Bonn, hosted by BMZ. In addition to financial support, it has provided various forms of in-kind support, and its representatives have held important leadership positions on the Steering Committee, and more recently, the Board. BMZ took the lead for all organisational aspects and also for the conceptual direction.

#### **Finding 7: GDPRD has broad objectives, modest resources, and a growing list of members with new ideas. This has led to diverse expectations about the Platform's performance and is contributing to some tensions within the Platform.**

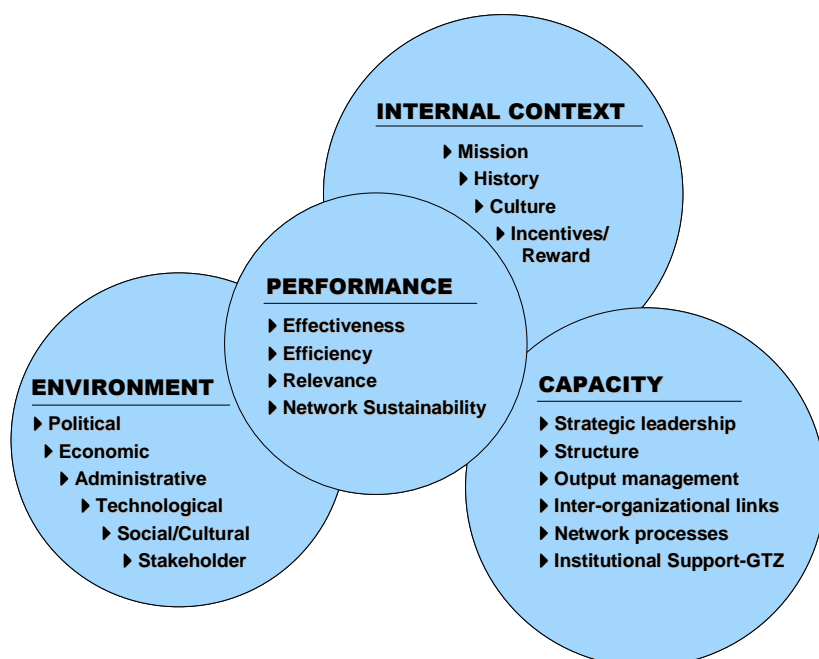
The Platform's purpose, "to reduce poverty in developing countries and enhance sustainable economic growth in rural areas through improved donor cooperation, collaboration and coordinated dialogue with partner countries," is broad and ambitious, which is not uncommon in networks. Broad objectives leave room for experimentation in young organisations that learn by doing and that are driven by their members' inputs.

However, as a result of its broad objectives and the integration of new members with ideas that may be different from those of the original members, the Platform is coping today with increased and diversified expectations and some tension between new members and original members. While the Platform has developed several different lines of work that respond to its members' different expectations, demands, and input (see section 5.1), the Platform's resources, financial and human, are modest: It has a small Secretariat and relies on SC members to volunteer their time for the Platform; it has a relatively limited budget, based on the contributions of a small number of funding members. The dispersion of limited resources to different lines of activity has limited the Platform's ability to deliver tangible results, which affects future member contributions. This is discussed further in sections 4.3 and 4.4 on effectiveness and efficiency).

## 4. GDPRD Performance

### 4.1 Introduction

Institutional performance refers to how well an institution is doing. In our experience, the concept of institutional performance has four important dimensions. The first relates to an institution's success or effectiveness in addressing its mandate, purpose and/or goals. The second relates to the institution's ongoing relevance to its stakeholders and to its context. A third element relates to how efficiently an institution utilises its resources. A fourth dimension refers to the sustainability of the institution in financial and other terms (e.g., human resources). In this chapter we examine the first three dimensions; GDPRD sustainability is considered in chapter 6 of the report.



### 4.2 Relevance

Relevance refers to the ability of an organisation to meet the needs and gain the support of its priority stakeholders in the past, present and future (continued relevance). It also refers to the extent to which its objectives are consistent with global priorities and beneficiaries' requirements, and to what extent they remain valid over time given changed circumstances.

In this section we examine the relevance of GDPRD objectives to its external context and stakeholders over time.

**Finding 8: The Platform's mission and objectives are congruent with the developing international consensus around the need for more and better coordinated efforts in ARD to address the current food price situation and contribute to achieving the MDGs.**

Several international fora have called for more donor action and coordination in ARD since the early 2000s (e.g., G8 meeting Kananaskis 2002, World Food Summit 2002, European Forum on Rural Development 2002). The Platform was founded to respond to these needs. The international community seemed to have found a general consensus on these issues with the WDR 2008. "The global agriculture-for-development agenda requires (...) new mechanisms to

ensure that the agenda is well coordinated and integrated into the overarching tasks of the 21st century.”<sup>17</sup> Most recently the Rome High Level Forum on Food Security (June 2008) restated the need for the international community’s urgent and coordinated action in the context of the current food price situation. According to several stakeholders, there is a need to translate this theoretical attention into disbursements, and to coordinate potentially growing ARD investments – an area in which the Platform has a potential niche.

The Paris Declaration principles on aid effectiveness constitute today the internationally agreed consensus on aid practice.

Nevertheless their implementation still requires refinement, reflection, and knowledge sharing in each sector, as well as experimentation and learning. This is evident in the Accra meeting organisation (Table 8 will revolve around the implementation of the Paris principles in different sectors).

According to some interviewed stakeholders, the Platform is even more relevant today than it was at its foundation because there is now consensus on the general principles of aid effectiveness and the importance of agriculture in development (e.g., Paris Declaration 2005; OECD’s Povnet study on “Promoting Pro-poor Growth- Agriculture” 2006; WDR 2008; FAO-OECD Overlook 2008).

The challenge now is to work on the “how” of implementing, coordinating and harmonising ARD initiatives. According to the vast majority of interviewed stakeholders (both GDPRD’s members and non-members), this is a crucial moment for the Platform to prove its ongoing relevance. The growing emphasis on food security and ARD (see external environment, chapter 2) will provide many opportunities for organisations working in ARD to prove their added value. But this context is also highly competitive and organisations will have to react quickly in defining their niche. As a global mechanism for donor coordination in ARD, the Platform has a high potential to demonstrate its added value in this context; but if it doesn’t, it will risk losing its place in the ARD arena (this is discussed further in chapter 6 on sustainability).

The Platform’s mission statement and ultimate objective are congruent with global priorities. And, while its Pillar/Output statements are also generally congruent with international priorities, they can be read in two very different ways: In a broad sense they indicate that the Platform will act at a high multistakeholder level; in a narrower sense, they indicate a focus on donor agencies and what they can do.

#### **The Platform’s Mission and Objectives**

**Mission statement:** “We are committed to achieving increased development assistance impact and more effective investment in rural development and agriculture.”

**Ultimate objective:** To reduce poverty in developing countries and enhance sustainable economic growth in rural areas through improved donor cooperation, collaboration and coordinated dialogue with partner countries.

#### **Pillar/output 1: Advocacy and outreach**

The members of the Platform will serve as advocates for the needs of the rural poor and the agriculture agenda at the international, regional and country level.

#### **Pillar/output 2: Knowledge management and innovation**

The members of the Platform will enhance the quality and impact of rural development investments through shared learning, innovation and recognition of better practices.

#### **Pillar/output 3: Aid effectiveness**

The members of the Platform will join in collaborative efforts to refine aid effectiveness principles for agriculture and rural development programmes by means of further debates, agreement to common principles and the dissemination and application thereof at the international, regional and country level.

Source: GDPRD revised charter (December 2007 version)

<sup>17</sup> WDR08, p. 265

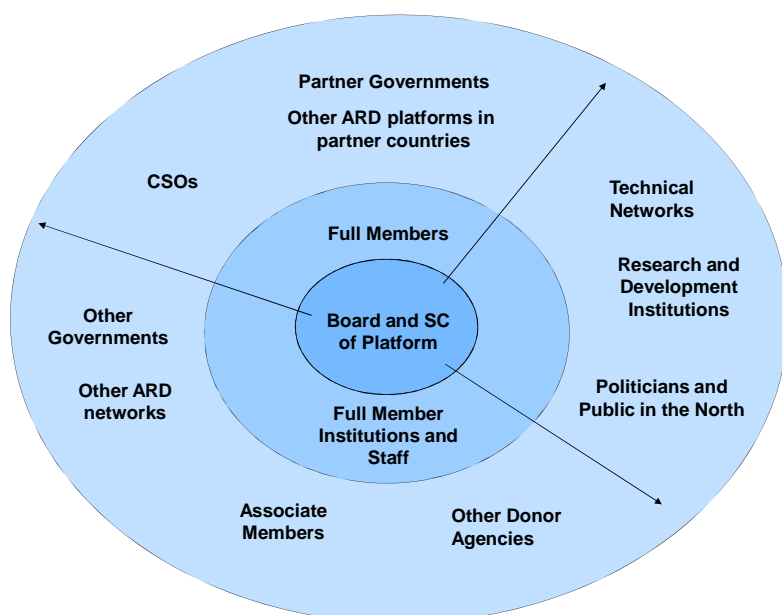
For example, Pillar 2 (knowledge management and innovation) can be interpreted as, “The Platform will generate cutting-edge knowledge in the field of ARD and produce innovative studies for the public good”. Or it can be interpreted as “The Platform will be a global clearing house for shared knowledge among its members and will provide support to the development of joint lessons learned.” Pillar 1 (advocacy and outreach) could imply that the Platform will spread its messages at high level global fora, or that it will focus primarily on advocacy within its member organisations. The broader interpretations of the Platform’s pillars are subject to greater risks of duplication with other, more qualified organisations (for example, among the research institutions consulted for this evaluation), while in the narrower interpretation the added value of the Platform is clearer. Moreover, the narrower interpretation is the only one that makes sense given the Platform’s current constituency and level of resources. The Platform is more relevant in the current global context when it acts within the narrower interpretation of its outputs.

**Finding 9: The Platform’s relevance to its very broad range of stakeholders varies by their proximity to and involvement with the network. While GDPRD’s mission and objectives remain highly relevant to its inner core (individual members of the Steering Committee), its relevance to other stakeholders is growing slowly but unevenly.**

In our analysis of the Platform’s relevance to its stakeholders we have borrowed from a stakeholder analysis conducted at the Poggiovalle SC Retreat (September 2007). At this retreat, SC members outlined the architecture of the Platform’s stakeholders in concentric circles identifying groups that should be directly involved (close to the centre of the circle) or indirectly involved with the Platform (further from the centre). See also section 5.1 on strategic leadership.

In our analysis we used this model and adapted it to reflect the extent to which the Platform is relevant to its stakeholder groups on the basis of the data collected through interviews, documents, and surveys. The Platform is progressively testing its relevance to the outer stakeholder groups (see Exhibit 4.1), but with mixed results. The relevance of the Platform seems to be increasing over time, progressing from the original group of founders to a wider group of stakeholders, but in an uneven way.

**Exhibit 4.1 GDPRD Relevance to its Stakeholders**



## Relevance to the core group

In interviews with key informants, we found that the Platform has been and still is very relevant to the core group of original members.

As noted earlier (section 3.5, internal context), the original core group is today largely represented in the SC and in the Board. Interviews show that the Platform is still very relevant to this group, and they prove it by committing their time, resources and energy. For the same reason, they are also concerned about the Platform's ability to remain relevant in the new international paradigm.

## Relevance to full members

The Platform is relevant to its full members in different ways and for different reasons. The evaluation interviews and survey results show that there is general agreement among full members that the Platform is relevant as a place where donors can discuss and debate issues, share views and information, defuse conflicts in the ARD sector, and work together towards joint positions and principles aimed at improving the quality of donor support to agriculture.

Beyond this common base, members have varying perceptions of what the Platform is and should be. Members attach a different weight to each of the Platform's Pillars according to their own priorities and expectations, which reflect their different interests and motivation for joining the Platform. This is not surprising in a network.

Despite multiple perspectives, there is some evidence that over time the Platform has become more relevant to:

- **Like-minded donors:** The Platform is an informal, voluntary, member-driven network. As membership is expanding (10 full members at the time of writing, and two more potential full members in 2008), this could be considered as a good proxy of growing relevance among like-minded donors.
- **Member organisations and staff:** The Platform's relevance is increasing at the institutional level of its full members (i.e., at their headquarters and to some extent at the field level), but in a very uneven way. While the ultimate objective of the Platform (poverty reduction) is congruent with most donor agencies' priorities, several factors affect the way they perceive the Platform's relevance – some attributable to the Platform and some to the member organisations' internal contexts:
  - The Platform's relative newness and limited visibility to date;
  - The Platform's limited visible and measurable results to date;
  - Mixed buy-in of some members to aid effectiveness, donor coordination and harmonisation;
  - Member organisations' level of involvement in agriculture and rural development; and
  - Member organisations' level of decentralisation (ratio of HQ staff to field staff).

## Relevance to associate members, non traditional donors and other stakeholders

There is also evidence that the relevance of the Platform is increasing in a limited and selective way among other groups of stakeholders such as associate members, other networks, research and technical groups, working groups, etc.).

The number of associate members is both increasing and diversifying. In addition to the initial group invited at the Platform's foundation meeting, 12 new associate members have joined the Platform. This group includes not only traditional bilateral donors, but also some UN agencies and

other governmental groups such as the OECD. These organisations are only marginally involved in the Platform and usually only on selected issues that are relevant to their organisations. Nonetheless, associate members' Focal Points interviewed for this evaluation expressed their interest in being informed of Platform initiatives and participating in initiatives they deem relevant.

Other networks and initiatives are also showing a growing interest in the Platform and are building different kinds of relationships with the Platform that range from partnerships to participation in specific events. These include research groups (e.g., IFPRI, ODI), technical initiatives (e.g., Neuchatel Initiative), regional networks (e.g., RUTA), CSOs (e.g., Oxfam), and specific working groups (e.g., OECD-DAC working group on aid effectiveness). The Platform's continued relevance to these organisations will depend to some extent on the role the Platform plays in the future (see section 5.1 for a discussion of roles).

### Relevance to partner countries

There is some evidence of the relevance of the Platform to partner countries. Examples of this include the CAADP process support to African countries and the demands for Platform facilitation services from developing countries. For example, at March 2008, five countries (Niger, Rwanda, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Honduras) had placed official or unofficial requests to the Platform for support to harmonisation efforts. Several stakeholders (e.g., donor representatives in partner countries, stakeholders involved in CAADP, member representatives with field experience) also pointed out that the Platform provides a one-stop shop for developing countries to liaise with donors. This reduces transaction costs and is highly appreciated and needed by developing countries partners – and was mentioned concerning Nicaragua, Cambodia, and African countries represented by the OECD Africa Partnership Forum.

Some stakeholders believe that the Platform's relevance to partner countries has been limited by its top-down approach. They noted, for example, the supply-driven selection process for the four pilot countries<sup>18</sup> involved in the project to support Donor Harmonisation and Alignment in Rural Development project (see finding 14). According to some stakeholders, the constituency of the Platform (donors) limits its legitimacy in activities in which developing countries are the direct and primary beneficiaries (see sidebar).

"You can't talk about development without including partner countries in the discussion (...) The Platform can't operate in a vacuum."

Associate member interview

"The Platform is legitimate as a group of donors, for example in exchanging knowledge and experiences about the implementation of AE principles in ARD. The Platform's does not have legitimacy outside the circle of donors. It can't act alone, without the contribution of partner countries, if it wants to advocate for the needs of the rural poor or if it wants to develop analysis on ARD in developing countries. The objectives of the Platform as defined today do not refer only to donors. But the members are exclusively donors."

Member interview

As the evaluation methodology did not include a survey of partner countries, we cannot speak with authority on what such countries feel. What we know is that interviewed stakeholders feel that GDPRD is not as legitimate as it could be by not specifically including such countries as members or associates or partners. This is discussed also in section 5.2.1 on membership.

<sup>18</sup> Nicaragua, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Cambodia



## Conclusion

The Platform's continued relevance to its different groups of stakeholders will be highly dependent on the role that the Platform decides to play in the changing global context. The Platform should also consider how appropriate and realistic it is for a network with limited resources to have such a broad spectrum of stakeholders and if or how it could satisfy all their needs. The Platform should further clarify its target groups (members, donors, partner countries, the rural poor) and decide who its most important stakeholders are in order to be able to increase its relevance to them. This might entail redefining programming or redefining working relationships with certain stakeholders (e.g., partner countries).



## 4.3 Effectiveness

GDPRD's broad mandate and objectives are not yet matched to any measurable indicators that would provide a basis to assess its effectiveness. In addition, the results of the "Harvesting of the Platform's Experiences" exercise, which were expected to provide an important source of information for assessing the Platform's effectiveness, were not available at the time of writing.

As a consequence, we used other sources and methods, including: 1) descriptive analysis of outputs based on the Platform's reports, and 2) stakeholder views on programmes and services the Platform has carried out to date, based on interviews and surveys.

Bearing in mind the methodological limitations, we analysed GDPRD's effectiveness at three levels: its ultimate objective, its three pillars, and its outputs. Note: Here we use the word "output" according to the OECD DAC definition: "The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention." (i.e., in this section of the report, an "output" is not a "pillar.")

## GDPRD Objectives

**Finding 10: According to consulted stakeholders, the Platform has been somewhat effective in fulfilling its ultimate objective, considering its young age and limited resources.**

The majority of the surveyed members' Focal Points (FPs) consider that the Platform has been relatively successful in fulfilling its ultimate objective as stated in the Charter, given its relative youth and limited resources. In particular the Platform has contributed to improve donor cooperation and collaboration among its members and, to a lesser extent, to improve donor-coordinated dialogue with partner countries.

**Exhibit 4.2 Focal Point Survey Results: Extent to which the Platform has been successful in realising its ultimate objective**

	VERY SUCCESSFUL	SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL	TOTAL
"The Platform will contribute to improve donor cooperation and collaboration"	21.1%	47.4%	68.5%
"The Platform will contribute to improve donor coordinated dialogue with partner countries"	5.3%	57.9%	63.2%

There is broad agreement among interviewed stakeholders (both members and non members) that the Platform has been successful mainly in allowing donors to meet, get to know each other, discuss issues and exchange views, and to a lesser extent to work together towards joint positions.

There is a certain agreement among interviewed members that, given the stage of evolution of the Platform, the process (the debate among donors, etc.) should be valued as an important result in itself.

“The Platform is being a successful international clearing mechanism: it’s useful to give a chance to donor to discuss about and eventually come out with common positions.” A Focal Point.

“The Platform has provided a unique opportunity to meet among donors. This gave to each member a bigger insight in international ARD issues than it would have had alone. It exposes individuals to a form of exchange that otherwise wouldn’t be available.” A Focal Point

### GDPRD Pillars

The Platform’s members consider the three pillars an adequate structure to organise Platform programming, but their views on the importance and implementation of each pillar, and their contributions to Platform objectives are mixed. Some agreement among full and associate members emerged, both in the survey and in the interviews, concerning the extent to which the Platform has been successful in implementing its stated objectives. Exhibit 4.3 synthesises the survey results on this issue.

**Exhibit 4.3 Extent to which the Platform has been successful in realising its stated objectives**

	VERY SUCCESSFUL	SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL	TOTAL OF SUCCESSFUL ANSWERS	LEVEL OF SUCCESS <sup>19</sup>
<b>Pillar I – Advocacy and outreach</b>				
The members of the Platform will serve as advocates for the needs of the rural poor and the agriculture agenda at the <u>international</u> level.	26.3%	52.6%	78.9%	++
The members of the Platform will serve as advocates for the needs of the rural poor and the agriculture agenda at the <u>regional</u> level.	15.8%	36.8%	52.6%	–
The members of the Platform will serve as advocates for the needs of the rural poor and the agriculture agenda at the <u>country</u> level.	10.5%	26.3%	36.8%	–
<b>Pillar II – Knowledge management and innovation</b>				
The members of the Platform will enhance the quality and impact of rural development investments through <u>shared learning</u> .	5.3%	63.2%	68.5	+–
The members of the Platform will enhance the quality and impact of rural development investments through <u>recognition of better practices</u> .	5.3%	57.9%	63.2	+–
The members of the Platform will enhance the quality and impact of rural development investments through	0%	38.9%	38.9	--

<sup>19</sup> Methodology: The level of success takes into account the relative weight of all answers, with a point system attaching 4 points to the very successful answers, 3 to somewhat successful, 2 to not very, 1 to not at all.

	VERY SUCCESSFUL	SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL	TOTAL OF SUCCESSFUL ANSWERS	LEVEL OF SUCCESS <sup>19</sup>
<u>innovation.</u>				
Pillar III – Aid effectiveness				
The members of the Platform will join in collaborative efforts to refine aid effectiveness principles for agriculture and rural development programmes.	33.3%	38.9%	72.2%	+

**Finding 11: The Platform has had some good results in Pillar 1 (advocacy and outreach) and is becoming more visible and better known internationally at the ARD/members level but not yet at the global level.**

According to its members the Platform has been relatively successful in “advocating for the needs of the rural poor and the agriculture agenda at the international level” but much less at the regional and national levels. Both members and other stakeholders indicated that the Platform is becoming more visible and recognised internationally but is still not a major player at the higher global level.

The Platform has put increasing efforts into advocacy, although some members feel the focus on advocacy is still not sufficient. While the Platform is starting to have some good results in influencing the thinking of its members in terms of good principles for donor coordination and harmonisation in ARD, this has not yet translated into members’ increased expenditures in ARD, at least not as a consequence of GDPRD’s advocacy.

It is generally agreed that the Platform’s participation in the WDR 2008 was very good for its visibility and potential influence, as was co-hosting the Berlin Forum with the EU. The Platform has been quoted in several official communications of the EC, FAO, WB, and UN and international conferences. Some stakeholders commented positively on the Platform’s outreach efforts to member organisations (e.g., brown bag lunches) saying that these events help the Platform to become better known by its member organisations. The Platform website ([www.donorplatform.org](http://www.donorplatform.org)) is considered a useful tool.

Several stakeholders share the opinion that the Platform’s visibility and influence is limited to the ARD/members circle, which limits its advocacy impact. In particular, non-members pointed out that the Platform has little/no influence at the higher global level, and very limited possibilities to influence the international agenda.

“The Platform doesn’t have the high level of international credibility necessary for advocacy. It is still not recognised as an important forum, even if things are improving.”  
 FP interview

“The Advocacy objective is not fulfilled: there are some progresses but not enough. Before making the message known you have to have the Platform known. The Platform is still working on this. It is now quite visible inside the ARD circle, but not outside, and to really advocate you need this.”  
 Member organisation non-FP interview

Stakeholders have mixed views on the role played by the Platform in the movement to get agriculture back on the agenda. While some believe that the Platform has contributed to this movement, others stated that the new attention to the ARD sector is due to external factors such as the food price situation.

Nevertheless, all interviewed stakeholders share the opinion that the fact that agriculture has been included as one of the sectors at the Accra forum is a big lobbying success for the Platform. It has shown its capacity to influence a major international forum, and members are convinced

that the Accra forum will be a very important moment in the life of the Platform, enhancing its influence.

**Finding 12: In terms of Pillar 2 (knowledge management and innovation), members regard the Platform as a good knowledge broker, but consider innovation to be its main weakness.**

According to the surveyed members' FPs, the Platform had some limited success in "enhancing the quality and impact of rural development investments through shared learning and recognition of better practices" while it was very weak in innovation.

The Platform has provided some knowledge management (e.g., papers and studies circulated among donors) and is considered by its members a good knowledge broker. It was agreed that the added value of the Platform is that it "brings together knowledge from different corners," but there are mixed views on the usefulness of the Platform's products.

The majority of the surveyed and interviewed stakeholders identified the SWAps Study as an example of the Platform's successful knowledge management. The study was considered interesting, useful, and innovative because it consolidated donors' experiences and was operational. Another example of both shared learning and coordination was the fact that the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) integrated the Platform's "Joint Donor Concept on Rural Development" as its own strategy for rural development.

The Platform's Policy Briefs on Hot Topics were mentioned frequently in stakeholder interviews. Many appreciate these syntheses of key issues that donors deal with in their everyday work.

Other members expressed concern that the Hot Topics are fixed and not evolving, and that they reflect the interests and positions of single members rather than joint positions – which limits buy-in.

There were mixed views on the quality and added value of the briefs. There was significant agreement among surveyed FPs and interviewed stakeholders that the Platform's more theoretical studies/products (e.g., "Mind the Gap: How to Improve Rural Urban Linkages" policy brief, PRSP Rural Focus study) do not add much value. According to one key informant the quality of the products is linked to the Platform's limited resources and the quality control system which is based on voluntary input from members.

"The Platform is not a research group, but a good place to share knowledge and experiences."

"Innovation is a weakness for the Platform. The Platform is not working at the edge."

"There is no top intellectual quality in the Platform's products. But the Platform shouldn't do this, it is not an intellectual leader. What it can do well is to bring together best practices and share them, making them more accessible."

"There is not enough money to put into studies. Good studies cost a lot of money. You can't get to the critical mass if you do it cheap. Other organisations (e.g., WB, ODI) really put good money into studies, research, publications. The Platform has to be more selective as it doesn't have enough resources."

**Finding 13: The Platform has been more effective in refining aid effectiveness principles at the HQ level than in supporting coordination in country.**

The third pillar (aid effectiveness) is the one on which interviewed stakeholders had the most divergent opinions. In general they agree that the Platform has been more successful in its work on aid effectiveness principles at the members' HQ level than in facilitation services provided at the country level. However, a number of interviewees think the Platform should focus more at the HQ level, while a smaller number think there should be more efforts at the field level.

Members' views also diverge significantly on the expected involvement of the Platform in the third pillar: Some indicate that the Platform is spending too much energy and too many resources on aid effectiveness, while others think it is not spending enough and that this explains its very limited results.

“The Platform is starting to be recognised as the global mechanism for discussing AE principles in ARD.”

“The Platform fuels in a positive way the debate on the implementation of PD in ARD.”

“The fact that donors come together to discuss about the COC or division of labour is an accomplishment. The Platform will eventually contribute to aid effectiveness, lowering the level of competition among donors.”

The Platform has been somewhat successful in joining its members in “collaborative efforts to refine aid effectiveness principles in ARD programmes” (see comments in sidebar).

“The debate among donors on how to implement the Paris Declaration (PD) in ARD programmes is very interesting and useful. An example of this is the COC. But it is a huge effort which results are not easy to obtain.”

“CAADP Partnership Platform provides a good forum for bringing development partners together to speak about African ARD.”

The main examples of this type of collaboration are the SWAps

study, the efforts towards a Code of Conduct (COC), and the discussions around the Accra forum. Many stakeholders share the view that the Code of Conduct is a good idea but still needs significant work to yield results. The Platform's involvement in the CAADP process was also mentioned as a positive example, but it remains quite independent of the the Platform's programming (e.g., it has its own workplan, its own FPs within member organizations).

According to a few members and also non-members, it is useful to have an analytical observatory on what works and what doesn't in the implementation of aid effectiveness principles in ARD at the country level. For example, some members found the presentation about Vietnam<sup>20</sup> at the Paris annual meeting in December 2007 very interesting, and other stakeholders considered the four pilot countries assessment studies were useful. But facilitating donor coordination at the country level is much more difficult than sharing lessons learned on what works and what doesn't in the implementation of AE principles in ARD.

Stakeholders have very divergent views on the Platform's work at the country level. A minority think this is a very interesting aspect of Platform activities and the only way the Platform can keep in touch with the operational level. According to others, the Platform should not be a service provider for coordination in country, mainly because it does not have the resources to do this.

<sup>20</sup> “Vietnam: Making National ARD Policies More Effective”, presented by Dr. Le Van Minh, Director General of the International Cooperation Department at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam.

Some interviewed stakeholders involved in pilot countries (not only members) considered the support from the Platform professional, unbiased, useful in bringing innovative thinking, and to a certain extent, in mitigating tensions. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the interviewees (both members and other stakeholders involved at the country level), share the idea that the Platform's involvement at the country level did not produce good results (see sidebar).

The Board recognised the majority of these issues in its first Board Meeting and decided to withdraw from country work: Its support to Nicaragua harmonisation and alignment processes came to an end in December 2007 and its engagement in Cambodia is planned to be completed by August 2008. This also led to the decision to start the harvesting exercise described in section 1.4.

#### Stakeholder Comments on the Platform's Work at Country Level

By becoming another actor in the coordination arena, the Platform was losing its role of "honest broker."

The pilots did not help to close the gap between the field and the HQ, as they were supposed to do. The field staff did not understand what the Platform was doing or its added value. The lack of good and timely communication with the field created a disconnect between what the Platform was trying to do in the countries and what the member representatives in the field needed.

The pilot projects were supply driven, top-down approach, paternalistic.

There weren't enough resources. There was no possibility for scaling up: just a few pilots can't make the difference, they can't have a real impact.

## Outputs

**Finding 14: Since its inception, the Platform has been very activity-oriented, which has led to a significant number of outputs. Like other networks at similar stages of evolution, it has focused on experimentation rather than outcomes and performance measurement.**

The Platform's stakeholders are generally satisfied with the quantity of outputs to date. According to some stakeholders it is important to acknowledge that the Platform, despite its very young age, "has done something" while very often similar networks take longer to become operational. There is a sense that the Platform is increasing its ability to deliver: "they are setting the principles for action, but they will have to be further developed."

The number of outputs/products produced each year has significantly increased over time, showing that the Platform is gaining momentum. The Platform has produced outputs/products in a range of categories, including: publications (studies, collections of experiences, joint documents), organisation of international events, participation in international events, facilitation services at country and regional levels, communication products, and information seminars in member organisations. The outputs produced by the Platform for each pillar are presented in Appendix VII.

As pointed out in chapter 2, the attention to service and programme delivery rather than outcome achievement is typical in networks in their early stages of evolution. Members typically bring a great deal of enthusiasm and want to translate their ideas into visible products. Networks at this stage of development also need to experiment and learn by doing. The main risk in this stage is a lack of focus that affects the overall impact of the activities.

This issue was noted by the majority of stakeholders interviewed or surveyed. Several stakeholders consider the gap between the resources available and the number of activities undertaken as a major problem for the Platform's effectiveness. The quality of the Platform's products also appears to be a related and widespread concern among stakeholders. Despite the increasing number of products and activities, the Platform is struggling to deliver measurable and

visible results. Members have very different expectations concerning the Platform’s results, usually according to the resources that they put into it: The most active members are more concerned about the Platform results, while more marginal members seem more content.

In order to increase the possibility of longer term results, manage resources, and provide visible results to their members, networks in this stage of evolution start seeking coherence and alignment between activities, outputs, longer term objectives and overall purpose. In other words, they adopt the principles of results-based management and organise themselves accordingly.

**Exhibit 4.4 Network Evolution to Results Management** <sup>21</sup>

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
<b>Mode</b>	Formation	Growth	Maturity
<b>Climate</b>	<i>Exuberance</i>	<i>Production-oriented</i>	<i>Results-oriented</i>
<b>Developmental objectives</b>	To articulate objective requiring collaboration.	To create a structure that facilitates action	To establish formal evaluation and monitoring systems
	To get started.	To produce goods and services.	To test effectiveness and impact.
<b>Performance objectives</b>	To start up to do things.	To begin service or programme delivery.	To show that outcomes can be achieved.

Like other networks at a similar stage of evolution, the Platform has paid limited attention to outcomes and performance measurement so far. For example:

- As currently stated, GDPRD objectives/results are not SMART (see sidebar).
- The Platform has no logic system in place, no results chain linking activities to outputs to outcomes.
- Its mission and impact statements are ambitious, broad, and not results-oriented.
- There are no defined outcomes. No indicators have been defined to assess the extent to which the Platform has fulfilled its objectives. There is no monitoring system in place.
- Outputs are broad, not measurable, not realistic given the Platform’s resources, and do not clearly identify beneficiaries.

**SMART Results**  
**Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Bound**  
 Results statements should be designed so that it is easy to understand what situation will change, who will benefit, and where the change will occur. They should be relevant to the beneficiaries. They should be easy to measure and be achievable within the parameters of the project (time, resources available).

Platform members and the Secretariat have expressed the need for reflection on GDPRD’s logic model and results-based management system, and have started a process intended to lead to some clarification. This will be discussed further in section 5.1 (strategic leadership).

<sup>21</sup> Adapted from Lusthaus and Milton-Feasby 2006



## 4.4 Efficiency

### **Finding 15: The Secretariat's processes and procedures aimed at limiting transaction costs are sometimes detrimental to full participation and transparency.**

With limited resources, the Platform has worked to keep its costs low and has developed a number of processes aimed at reducing transaction costs, particularly in relation to communication, coordination, and decision making (see also section 5.6, network processes). These include:

- A 10-day decision making rule (in which Platform products are submitted to members for feedback within a ten-day period);
- The use of teleconferences and videoconferences;
- The tendency to “piggy-back” several events, or hold events in tandem with international events that its members plan to attend;
- Leveraging resources of members for Platform activities (e.g., studies); and
- Using GTZ for ready-made institutional support rather than developing its own internal capacities (see sidebar).

#### **GTZ Institutional Support**

Organisational start-up costs and efforts can be considerable and a barrier to their creation. The Platform's access to “ready-made” GTZ support provided the Platform with needed flexibility at its inception and allowed it time to develop.

GTZ provides equipped office space, and a support structure that can be used on an as-needed basis (financial administration, human resources, contract and legal support).

The Platform pays overhead costs to GTZ (13% of its programming costs).

The cost of the GTZ service appears reasonable when compared with the costs of developing an independent support system.

The Platform is still working to implement other efficient solutions: For example, reuniting all the Secretariat staff in Bonn by the end of 2008 will reduce internal communication and coordination costs.

While these steps to increase efficiency are laudable, interviews indicate that there is a downside in terms of their effect on participation, transparency and ownership. For example:

- In some cases, the 10-day-rule does not provide enough time for the FP to consult colleagues in their HQ and/or in their field offices; this is particularly important in the event of strategic matters, and perhaps less important for operational matters.
- Having different events grouped together is sometimes counter-productive as the time allocated to each event is limited, there is too much information to absorb, and the quality suffers.
- Utilising GTZ infrastructure in some ways compromises the image of the Platform as an independent initiative.

It is important for the Platform to find a good balance between cost-effectiveness and efficiency on one side and participation and ownership on the other. This is a very common challenge in networks which by definition are complex mechanisms with high transaction costs for coordination. Network members will often tolerate somewhat higher transaction costs as long as they can participate in the initiative, obtain results that they wouldn't be able to obtain otherwise, and/or if the costs for the same results would be higher if undertaken on their own.

**Finding 16: The Platform’s full members are generally satisfied with the Platform’s value-for-money considering its activities to date and their relatively small investment. However, there is a wide agreement that continued or increased contributions will depend on more measurable results.**

Value-for-money assessments are challenging even in the best circumstances, but in particular in situations such as GDPRD’s where the lack of measurable results does not allow the development of cost-effectiveness ratios. For this reason we have based the assessment of the Platform’s value-for-money on its members’ perceptions.

The majority of interviewed members’ representatives indicated that they found it difficult to comment on the Platform’s value-for-money. Paying members are usually convinced that the Platform is a good investment for their organisations, because “they have to be on board.” In general they report that they have had a fairly good return, primarily in terms of opportunities to meet and exchange with other donors, share information, gain visibility. They also consider the return satisfactory given the stage of evolution of the Platform and the number of activities it has undertaken. Another common comment was that the Platform does not ask for too much money. It remains a relatively small investment, thus there is less pressure for it to demonstrate tangible returns in the short term.

In several cases members said that they felt that their level of contribution was sufficient given the stage of evolution of the Platform, but that they would not increase it unless more tangible results were generated. In other cases, larger contributors are starting to enquire more about visible results, indicating that this will be a condition for further funding. This is one of the reasons the GDPRD network evaluation was commissioned.

**Finding 17: The Platform’s administrative cost ratio is quite high, which is normal in networks. The Platform would have a clearer understanding of its efficiency if it distinguished between the operational and administrative costs of its programming.**

An important dimension of a network’s efficiency is the ratio of its administrative to operational costs, which shows the estimated costs of managing the network in relation to its total resources.

Administrative costs vary significantly from one entity to another, depending on their structure, services provided, etc. It can be difficult to make a comparative analysis for a variety of reasons. Cost estimations are affected by how financial records are kept and by different budget categorisations. Some costs can be considered as both operational and administrative (e.g., staff costs and administrative costs related to a specific activity).

In our experience an organisation’s administrative costs are usually between 5% and 25% of the total expenditures. Networks tend to fall at the higher end of this range (see sidebar) primarily because coordination, which is fundamental, is a particularly complex task in networks.

**Administrative costs: some examples from other networks**

An established international education network

Administrative costs remained at 14-15% in 2002-2004

A global coalition for urban poverty reduction

Administrative costs increased steadily from 11% in 2002 to 19% in 2003 and 26 % in 2004. In 2005 it dropped back to 17%, due to a significant increase in programme allocations as the organisation matured.

A training and research support network

Administrative costs decreased from 38% to 28% in the first four years of the network’s existence.

The literature on networks shows that administrative costs are higher at the beginning of a network's life, "as members need opportunities to meet each other, establish initial understanding, and define agendas and approaches to the activities they want to pursue."<sup>22</sup> At the same time, programming is still limited. When networks grow and their programming accelerates, their administrative costs tend to stabilise or grow in a steady way. According to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) "some networks were able to reduce their staff and administration costs even within the first five years."<sup>23</sup> One of IDRC's network evaluations, of the Economy and Environment Programme for South East Asia, shows that the network's "ratio of staff and administrative costs to total budget went down from 38% to 28% in four years, primarily because the scope of their activities grew, and initial coordination needs eased off."<sup>24</sup>

GDPRD currently groups its expenditures as follows:

- Programming costs, which are broken down into:
  - Output costs for Pillars 1, 2, 3
  - Management and Governance costs – which include Secretariat staff costs, staff travel, communications, office rent, office equipment.
- GTZ overhead costs – which are calculated as a percentage of GDPRD's programming costs. The Platform benefits from a BMZ in-kind contribution for the provision of part of the office space and their running costs, which are not monetarised or considered in the budget.

Exhibit 4.5 shows the programming and overhead costs for 2006 and 2007. Management and Governance costs were approximately 14.5% of total expenditures in 2006, and increased to 20.6% in 2007 when the Secretariat expanded. All staff costs are included in this category. The GTZ overhead costs were 7.87% in 2006 and 5.63% in 2007, but increased to 13% in 2008 (see sidebar).

From the minutes of the first Board meeting (December 2007)

"Participants accepted the percentage GTZ needs to charge as a service provider (13%).

Participants also noted and agreed that the "costs of running the Secretariat are not overhead. The work of the Secretariat is directly attributed to the functioning of the Network rather than to the administration. The Management and Governance component therefore constitutes an operational aspect of the Network and in this sense are programming costs and not overheads."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Tricia Wind, *A Review of IDRC Documentation on the Sustainability of Networks (1995-2005)*, IDRC 2004, p.24.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>24</sup> Mohan Munasinghe, *Evaluation of the Economy and Environment Programme for South East Asia*, IDRC 1996, section A3.3

<sup>25</sup> First Board meeting minutes, December 2007.

## Exhibit 4.5 Programming and Administrative Costs 2006-2007

	2006			2007		
	Total expenditures	Percentage of total programming costs	Percentage of total expenditures	Total expenditures	Percentage of total programming costs	Percentage of total expenditures
Outputs costs	1,039,869	84.38%	78.23%	1,403,263	78.23%	74.06%
Management and governance	192,423	15.62%	14.48%	390,512	21.77%	20.61%
<b>SubTotal Programming Costs</b>	<b>1,232,292</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>92.71%</b>	<b>1,793,775</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>94.67%</b>
GTZ overheads	96,921	7.87%	7.29%	101,070	5.63%	5.33%
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>1,329,213</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>1,894,845</b>		<b>100.00%</b>

Interviews showed that administrative costs are a sensitive issue among full (i.e., paying) members of GDPRD and that members' tolerance for administrative costs depends on their expectations. There seems to be agreement among members in favour of an informal, lean, un-bureaucratic structure which in theory should also be low-cost. This may explain some of the discontent that was expressed by some participants at the Platform's first Board meeting in Paris in December 2007 during which the Secretariat clarified the GTZ overhead costs and other administrative expenses (as noted in the sidebar above).

According to the Board's current method of cost calculation, GDPRD is currently spending just over 5% on overhead. If Management and Governance costs were instead considered as part of the administrative costs, Platform overheads would be approximately 26%, or at the higher end of the normal range mentioned above. Given that the network is still in early stages of development, this higher ratio is not particularly alarming, and will likely decline over time and with maturation of the network.

However, the higher ratio is off putting for some members who use different ways of categorising and reporting administrative expenses. While the Board has made its views clear, it should consider re-examining this decision, with a view to distinguishing administrative/governance costs from those associated with programming: for example, by establishing a timesheet system to track Secretariat staff time spent on different tasks. This would help increase the Platform's transparency to members and other stakeholders.



## 5. Network Capacities

### 5.1 Strategic Leadership

**Finding 18: There are multiple and increasing expectations about the Platform’s role among its members. The absence of a well understood role, combined with limited resources, is affecting the Platform’s effectiveness and reputation.**

The Platform’s members have multiple expectations about the network’s role; these have evolved and increased over time.

The founding members saw the Platform as a “donors club”<sup>26</sup> with two main foci: 1) advocacy for more investments in ARD, and 2) operational support for Platform members and their staff, both in the HQ and in the field, in order to have better and more coordinated investments in ARD. These two foci implied different approaches, audiences, and instruments. There was also the belief that effective advocacy required a sound base of evidence so that investments in agriculture could lead to better results; developing or compiling this evidence required its own resources and approaches.

From this starting point, the Platform responded to emerging issues, needs, and changing contexts in an organic way.

#### Stakeholder Views on the Platform’s Role

A “chat room”, a “talk shop”

An “international clearing house”: a forum to discuss informally among donors about non-consensual issues, defuse conflicts and build consensus

A place to share and circulate knowledge and thinking among donors

An information sharing mechanism among donors

A place to find “best solutions” for issues that all donors face

A “one-stop shop” to liaise with donors

A mechanism for donor coordination

A joint donor instrument to provide technical assistance on donor harmonisation

An “honest broker” for in-country donor coordination

An advocate for ARD

An instrument to inform agriculture practitioners

A group of donors working on how to implement and adapt the aid effectiveness principles to ARD

### From Discussion to Programming

From 2003 to 2005, the Platform was a venue for a small nucleus group to discuss ARD issues, in particular the need for more and better investments in the sector; it engaged in very little programming. Starting in 2005, the Platform became more operational. Its members wanted to demonstrate that effective ARD was possible before advocating for more investments in ARD: They decided to engage in pilot programming in four countries with the goal of developing lessons learned and good practices in donor coordination in ARD. This was also linked to the evolving Aid Effectiveness agenda and principles. As one of the original champions said, “It had to jump on the train” of aid effectiveness. The Platform widened its focus to include harmonisation and alignment as well as coordination. At the same time, members decided that to see what was working in ARD they had to improve their knowledge management and this line of activity started to develop.

<sup>26</sup> Source : business meetings minutes

## Current Context: Multiple Expectations

In 2008, GDPRD members have different perceptions of what the Platform is and should be.

As noted in section 4.2 on relevance, there is general agreement among different stakeholders (both members and non members) that the Platform is a place where donors can discuss and debate among themselves, sharing views, defuse conflicts that are common in the ARD sector, and work together, when possible towards joint positions.

There is also consensus that there is a need for better quality donor support to agriculture and that the Platform has a niche in shared learning.

The Platform is also seen (by members, but especially by non-members) as a place where conceptual aid effectiveness

principles can be translated into more operational, sector-specific, and field-oriented approaches.

Some stakeholders want the Platform to have a strong advocacy role. Some feel it should advocate for increased investments for ARD; others feel that it does not have the necessary clout to accomplish this; while others want it to support initiatives such as WDR 2008.

Our analysis of the Platform's activities to date, of the Members and of the Secretariat's expectations, and of the Platform's projected image to non-members suggests that it is implicitly<sup>27</sup> expected to play various combinations and/or permutations of five different roles, as listed in the sidebar and described in Exhibit 5.1.

While the roles are all potentially relevant within the global context, members attach a different importance to each of these roles according to their priorities and expectations (see section 4.2 on relevance). The discrepancies have grown as active newcomers have joined the Platform and as the more complex and rapidly changing external context is putting new pressures and demands on organisations involved in ARD.

### Members' Views on the Platform's Future Directions

(Survey of Member representatives)

**Advocacy** – A significant majority of respondents think that the Platform should focus on advocating for ARD and AE at the development and ARD communities levels. A minority think that advocacy should take place at the global level.

**Knowledge** – Respondents agree that the Platform should continue being a knowledge broker and, to a lesser extent, to work to develop joint policies. Very few think that the Platform should be a knowledge creator.

**ARD Delivery Standards** – Respondents broadly share the idea that the Platform should focus on developing and promoting commonly agreed standards for ARD delivery following AE principles.

**ARD Support** – A majority of respondents think that in-country/regional support to development partners (donors and international organisations) to improve aid effectiveness is a future added-value area. Few respondents think that the Platform should focus on in-country/regional support to partner countries.

### GDPRD's Implicit Roles

- Networker
- Knowledge broker/clearing house
- Advocate
- Knowledge creator
- Service provider

<sup>27</sup> We use the word "implicitly" to acknowledge that this categorisation reflects our understanding of GDPRD stakeholders' expectations, which is a little different from how the Platform currently categorises its activities by three Pillars. We use this categorisation deliberately to illustrate the operational and other implications for the Platform.

**Exhibit 5.1 Profile of GDPRD Roles and Activities**

ROLE	MAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES
1) Networker	Collegial networking, internal information sharing	To enable networking among ARD experts in donor agencies To enable information sharing among members	Organising networking and learning events Sharing and diffusing relevant information and documents via regular communications (e-mails)
2) Knowledge broker/clearing house	Knowledge sharing, coordination regarding AE in ARD	To provide a place for discussion and debate on controversial and/or topical issues To foster knowledge sharing, and the research of “best solutions” for issues that all professionals face	Sharing good practices, experiences and operating guidelines on what works in rural development and what doesn't via the website and periodical newsletters Developing joint principles Publishing guidelines, best practices collections, joint statements and operational papers on ARD and AE in ARD
3) Advocate	Advocacy	To advocate for the needs of the rural poor, and for better and higher investments in ARD at the international, regional, national level	Organisation or support of international events Participation at international and regional events Development and implementation of a communication strategy Outreach activities in member organisations (ex. lunch time seminars)
4) Knowledge creator	Innovation and knowledge generation	To generate knowledge on the themes of ARD and AE in ARD.	The publication of various studies, briefs and pamphlets
5) Service provider	Provision of facilitation services for the implementation of Aid Effectiveness principles	To foster the implementation of aid effectiveness principles to the ARD sector providing support to national agricultural and rural strategies, and donor harmonisation and alignment procedures and practices in the ARD sector	Facilitating enhanced donor coordination and alignment to African countries' strategies with respect to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Providing in-country facilitation services on demand Hosting inter-country workshops on the formulation and implementation of programme-based approaches

It is very important for the Platform to have a well understood role among its members and in the global context. It is also crucial that the Platform's role is aligned with its resources. The lack of a clear role among its members and in the international arena combined with limited resources is one of the main challenges the Platform is facing today.

As discussed in section 4.3 on effectiveness, the lack of focus and the dispersion of limited resources on several lines of activities drastically reduce the Platform's effectiveness and ability to deliver visible and consistent results. This affects both the members' future willingness to invest in the Platform and the Platform's reputation outside its members' circle.

Outside the Platform, the lack of a clear role affects the Platform's reputation and its potential linkages with other networks or organisations. Some external stakeholders pointed out that the added value of the Platform in the international context is less clear if it is dispersed in several directions. Not being able to distinguish the specific niche/role of the Platform, one external stakeholder labelled the Platform as an “empty vessel.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the lack of a clear role limits its ability to build constructive linkages with other organisations. We will discuss this further in section 5.5 on inter-institutional linkages.

The absence of a well understood role makes it difficult for the Platform to determine future directions and develop the strategies needed to fulfil those directions. The Platform's objectives and future activities will depend on the role(s) that the Platform wants to play, as will the governance and organisational structures and the business models, as illustrated in Exhibit 5.2. In our view, GDPRD stakeholders need to clarify the Platform's role(s) before attempting to resolve other strategic questions such as its governance structure or business model.



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<sup>28</sup> ETC Group Communiqué, Issue n. 97, January 2008, p.5



**Exhibit 5.2 Analysis of the Strategic Implications of GDPRD Roles**

ROLE	MEMBERSHIP	OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES	RESOURCES	REVENUE GENERATION	MAIN TARGET GROUPS	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
1) Networker	ARD experts in donor organisations and relevant international organisations	Very light or no Secretariat, mainly responsible for coordination communication  Important role of individuals representing members	Aggregated knowledge and experience of members  Limited financial resources	Members' fees	Individual members	Members' level of satisfaction  Level of interactions among members  Level of participation in GDPRD events and communication exchanges  Occurrence of cross-fertilisation cases
2) Knowledge broker/clearing house	Donor organisations and relevant international organisations represented by ARD experts	Light Secretariat, mainly responsible for coordination communication  Important role of individuals representing members	Aggregated knowledge and experience of members  Limited financial resources	Members' fees	Member organisations  Other donor agencies	Level of utilisation of Platform's instruments by member organisations and others  Extent to which Member organisations align to joint principles
3) Advocate	All stakeholders involved in ARD, not only donors  Member represented by senior/influential individuals	Strong Secretariat with mainly international and high level communication and coordination responsibilities  Important roles of members to use their influence at high decision making levels	Secretariat staff with skills in communication and advocacy  Significant financial resources (organising visible international events and communication campaigns, commissioning high level innovative studies)  Champions: the Platform would need very popular and charismatic "champions" such as international personalities committed to its cause and willing to put their "face" on issues	Member contributions Other funding: private foundations, etc.	Most influential donors (public and private)  Agenda-setting international fora  Regional organisations  Development country governments	Visibility of the Platform in the public international debate  Platform influence in international policy making  Level of investment in ARD

ROLE	MEMBERSHIP	OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES	RESOURCES	REVENUE GENERATION	MAIN TARGET GROUPS	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
4) Knowledge creator	All stakeholders involved in ARD, not only donors. Important role of research institutions.	Strong Secretariat with coordination and quality control responsibilities and research and writing abilities Systems in place to control the quality of the knowledge products Members role in providing general guidance and oversight and in quality control (peer-review mechanisms)	Highly qualified “content” staff Important financial resources (commissioning high level innovative studies)	Member contributions Other funding: private foundations, subscription fees, etc.	Donor agencies and international organisations Influential experts and policy makers ARD practitioners Universities and research institutions	Visibility of the Platform in the public international debate Platform influence in international policy making Rate of utilisation of GDPRD publications Members’ and other stakeholders’ level of satisfaction with generated knowledge
5) Service provider	Donors (mix of ARD and AE experts at HQ and field level) Others (International orgs? regional orgs? CSOs?)	Strong Secretariat with project management responsibilities Demand driven and results oriented Limited role of members in day-to-day activities Members could provide general guidance and oversight	Project management skills Technical/content skills in Secretariat (or in the network) Supporting infrastructure for technical assistance (logistics, etc). Solid core financial basis to keep the organisation running, but not necessarily for project implementation	Possibility of a mix of service fees and member or (other’s) contributions	Donor agencies (field offices) Partner governments	Demand for services Client satisfaction with services provided

**Finding 19: The Platform recognises the need to take stock and has taken various steps aimed at clarifying future directions. The potential success of these efforts is challenged by several limitations in the management of the strategic process and its members’ time.**

With a view to informing its future directions, the Platform has initiated several strategic exercises since 2005, and in particular since 2007, which included review of the following aspects of GDPRD: its mission and objectives, stakeholders, structures, and achievements to date.

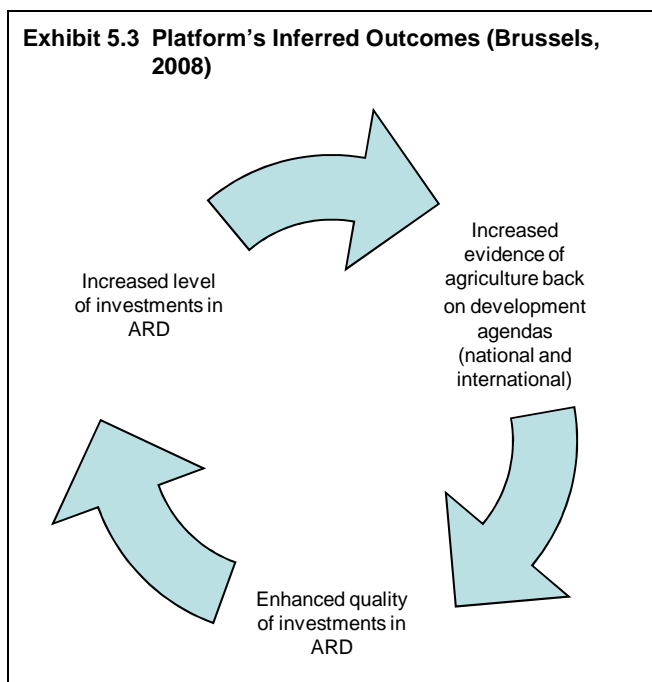
### Mission and Objectives

During the Poggiovalle Retreat (2007), SC members identified the lack of a clear framework, a well- established mission and objectives as one of the main threats for the Platform (for more details see section 4.3 on effectiveness).

During an SC/Board working session in March 2008 in Brussels, participants agreed that the Platform’s stated impact is very broad,

reflecting the general orientation of all developing agencies and provides a broad basis for action, and that the stated impact is not operational. They suggested that the Platform instead has three inter-related outcomes as shown graphically in Exhibit 5.3, which is intended to represent the circular dynamic of influence among field staff, partner governments’ representatives, donors HQ, and the Platform. Due to time constraints, the March session did not identify other levels of results in the logic chain; workshop participants decided that the Steering Committee would engage in follow-up steps to complete the exercise. To the best of our knowledge, this has not happened to date.

GDPRD Strategic Exercises
First Charter (2005)
Poggiovalle Retreat (2007)
Internal evaluation (2008)
Gender assessment (2008)
Charter revision (2008)
GDPRD Network Evaluation (2008)
Harvesting exercises (2008)
SC/Board Brussels Workshop (2008)



## GDPRD Stakeholders and Target Groups

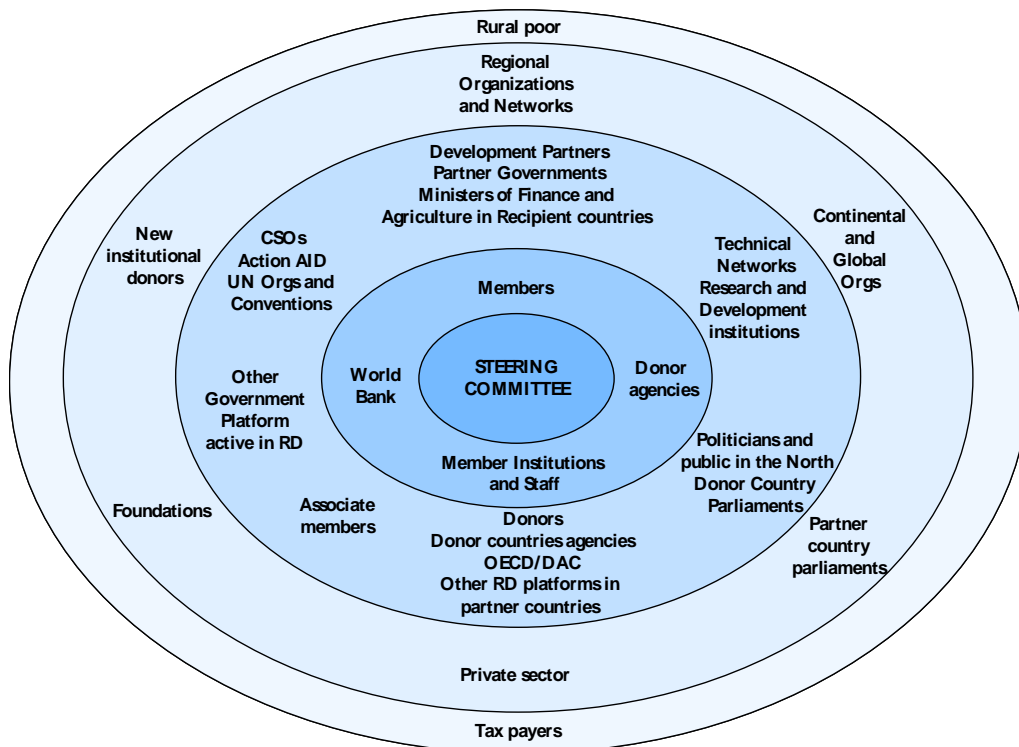
The Platform has also started a process aimed at clarifying its stakeholders and targets. At the Poggiovalle SC Retreat (September 2007) the SC members outlined the architecture of the Platform’s stakeholders. The diagram in Exhibit 5.4, which depicts their stakeholder analysis, identifies the groups that should be directly or indirectly involved with the Platform: The closer to the inner core, the greater their involvement in and ownership of the Platform.<sup>29</sup> In the 2008 Brussels working session, participants agreed that the primary target of the Platform is the Focal Points (FPs) and their institutions. They confirmed that the level of involvement and the possibility to influence people decreases from the inner to the outer circles of the Poggiovalle scheme. According to participants, the Platform’s current reach (direct or indirect) is limited to the three inner circles of the scheme: the first circle includes the owners and main clients, the second circle just clients, the third circle are episodic stakeholders. The rural poor remain far from the Platform’s reach.

Evaluation survey results partially confirmed this analysis: The Platform’s main clients (i.e., direct beneficiaries and users of its products and services) are the full members (FPs, staff and institutions), followed by associate members and other donor agencies. More than 50% of surveyed FPs consider partner country governments as secondary clients, and almost 50% do not consider the rural poor as either primary or secondary clients.

It would appear that further refinement of the Platform’s stakeholders and targets should be linked to the clarification of the Platform’s mission and objectives and roles.



Exhibit 5.4 Stakeholder Analysis (Poggiovalle, 2007)



<sup>29</sup> An adapted version of this stakeholder diagram was presented in section 4.2 on relevance..

## Organisational Structure

In 2007 the Platform undertook a revision process of its organisational structure that resulted in the revised Charter (March 2008). For more details on structure, see sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.

## GDPRD Performance and Capacities

Since 2007, the Platform has undertaken several activities aimed at clarifying its strengths and weaknesses, its achievements to date, and its intentions to become more results-oriented in the future. This includes the SWOT analysis held in Poggiovalle (2007), the harvesting exercises, the Brussels workshop, and this evaluation.

## GDPRD's Emerging Strategy

GDPRD's emerging strategy for better defining its future direction is necessary and appropriate at this stage of its evolution and given its current challenges. Nevertheless its success has been hampered by a few factors, as noted below.

**Fragmented strategic initiatives:** In an organisation's strategy, all the elements mentioned above (role, mission and objectives, stakeholders, structures, achievements) are inter-related: An organisation's mission and objectives are defined in relation to the role it wants to play; stakeholders are defined in relation to the mission and objectives; structures and resources are instrumental to the fulfilment of defined objectives; achievements are measured against the objectives and made possible by an appropriate use of resources.

The SC and Secretariat have launched various activities in response to the Platform's emerging needs and priorities without necessarily considering how these initiatives are inter-related and should together inform a larger strategic planning exercise. Activities to date have been somewhat ad hoc and not sequential (e.g., the March session in Brussels attempted to identify GDPRD results before receiving and analysing the results of the network evaluation and the harvesting exercises).

**Limited human resources:** The development and implementation of the activities noted above are completely reliant on a small group of busy volunteer members (the SC) and a small Secretariat. Time and resource constraints limit the results of any strategic exercise. Moreover, the lack of engagement of other stakeholders outside the core (e.g., other Board members, associate members, or GDPRD partners) reduces the potential comprehensiveness of the process and may limit potential buy-in for any emerging strategy.

**Lack of timely follow through:** A related limitation is the lack of follow through on initiatives. Follow-up requires time and energy and a clear idea of how any initiative can be useful within a larger picture. Without proper follow-up, the Platform's strategic initiatives remain isolated and their results are not disseminated, further developed, or integrated in the Platform's work. This creates frustration among participants who have the impression that the limited time that they can dedicate to the Platform is not used productively: ("We spend together 2 or 3 days, but then what happens?"). Several of the measures initiated in recent years have not been adequately followed through (e.g., the stakeholder analysis, the March 2008 working session) due to limited staff and SC time.

## Conclusion

It is crucial for the Platform to develop a clearer future direction and to develop its structures accordingly, but to do this, strategic initiatives have to be conceived and managed in integrated, coherent, participatory, and realistic ways. Sound and clear strategic leadership is very important at this stage of the Platform's evolution. This will take significant commitment either from its already very busy stakeholders, or ideally from a larger, more diversified group as will be discussed in the next finding.



**Finding 20: The Platform profited in its early stages from the strong formative leadership of a small group of champions who have maintained their support and steady influence over the years. One important challenge for the Platform today is building a sustainable broad-based leadership for the future.**

As discussed in section 3.5 on internal context, the Platform's core group of founding members – its original champions – continue to have a very important influence in GDPRD today.

Champions are usually crucial in the start-up of networks and in their first stages of development. As a network matures, becoming more organised, structured, and results-oriented, the need for managerial skills emerges. The conceptual leaders of the beginning do not necessarily have these skills. According to some stakeholders this issue is starting to emerge for GDPRD. The Platform is seen by some stakeholders as the private property of a few members. This has not affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the Platform so far, but it could create some problems in ownership of the Platform by its members and in external perceptions of the Platform.

The revised Charter sets clear rules for rotation of leaders (see sidebar). This will reduce pressure on a very small number of volunteers, facilitate succession, broaden ownership and buy-in by members, and inject fresh energy into the system. Moreover it will help to align evolving leadership needs with leaders' capabilities. (Some interviewed stakeholders flagged this as a missed opportunity in the December 2007 election process.)

### Rotation and Succession of leaders (Revised Charter)

"The Platform Chair and Vice-Chair are elected (...) for a mandate of two years. One individual cannot be elected for more than two consecutive mandates in one position."

"The Steering Committee members are designated ad personam by the Board, for a three-year period. Two SC members are to be replaced every year. Membership of the SC will rotate among all Platform Board members."

Nevertheless, the Platform needs a sufficient number of active members from which to draw leadership. As discussed in the next section, this has been a challenge.

## 5.2 Membership, Governance and Operational Structures

### 5.2.1 Membership

**Finding 21: GDPRD’s governance and operational structures are highly dependent on the input of volunteer representatives of its members (i.e., the Focal Points). Assumptions about Focal Points’ availability to participate are not being met, reducing the potential effectiveness of the Platform.**

One important characteristic of GDPRD’s governance and operational structures is their dependence on volunteers. The leaders (the Chair, Vice Chair, and those sitting in the SC) are FPs from member institutions who fulfil their functions within the time and resources they have available. The paid Secretariat provides support to the FPs in the fulfilment of their roles. This scheme is supposed to ensure the members’ ownership of the Platform, but it also puts a great deal of pressure on very busy individuals. The individuals involved in Platform leadership usually have leadership roles within their own organisations as well. This is positive in that their dual roles are interrelated and nurture each other in terms of influence, resource leverage, visibility, and networking. But again this characteristic puts extra demands on the individuals involved, and the Platform’s leadership is sometimes weakened by their lack of availability.

Voluntary leadership is also starting to pose some succession problems in the Platform. Most of the individuals in the core group are approaching the end of their careers and their personal involvement in the Platform is not always backed up by their own organisations’ commitment to the Platform: While some member organisations have succession strategies to ensure the continuity of the FP role, in other cases no succession plan exists. A recent case has proven the weakness of this system: A very influential member of the core group left his role suddenly and has not been formally replaced, leaving the Platform with a temporary but significant gap in strategic leadership. Similar problems are plaguing the Platform in its operations, as will be discussed in section 5.2.2 on operational structure.

The Platform is at a critical crossroads and may need to reconsider whether the role and expectations of Focal Points are realistic, and if not, to identify other strategies that may assist it in attracting the human resources it needs to guide and support the Platform in fulfilling its role. The answers may lie outside the current membership structure.

According to interviewed members, the SC is having difficulties fulfilling its responsibilities as its members often lack the time and resources required. Stakeholders noted several occasions when the SC was not able to provide clear and effective decision making and direction: how to follow up on strategic exercises (e.g., after the Poggiovalle retreat and Brussels working session); how to relate to external stakeholders; the evolution of the Platform membership (to what extent growing or not growing, to what extent diversifying or keeping a more homogeneous membership); the definition of Platform objectives and areas of activities (e.g., re-definition of the third pillar).

Survey results and interviews show that in general FPs feel that they do not have enough time to carry out their role, and in many cases, not enough institutional support. For most FPs, their motivation to participate in the Platform is personal and is only marginally supported (if at all) by their institutions.

Moreover, their role is both strategic and operational and implies an active role in the implementation of Platform activities. Several FPs complained that operational decision making (especially in the SC) takes precedence and there is not enough time or resources for strategic decision making.

According to many full members' FPs, promoting institutional rather than individual ownership among members would have several benefits: It would provide FPs with institutional back-up such as more time allocated to

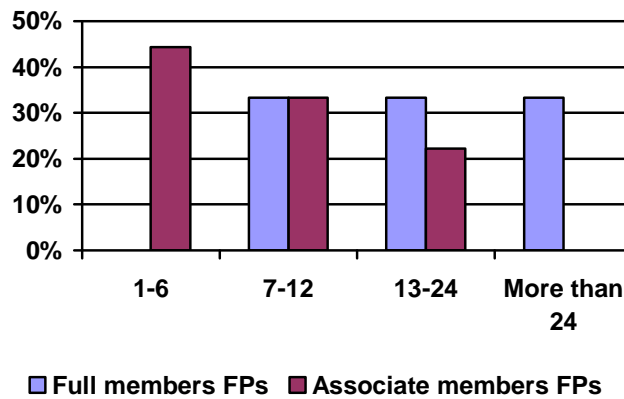
Platform responsibilities, having a team instead of individual responsibility, the possibility of substitutes, etc. It would also create an increased sense of responsibility among FPs if they were accountable within their own organisations for work done as Platform's FPs (e.g., if the FP task was considered in their performance reviews). FPs who already have greater institutional support appear to have more resources (especially time) to commit to the Platform.

Some stakeholders also suggested that member organisations might have more than one representative: "For each member organisation there may be a need for a senior level representative and a middle-level working official, so that you get the right combination of senior engagement at the strategic level and time available for day-to-day input in the Platform."

**Finding 22: The Platform's current membership structure of bilateral and multilateral donors permits consensus building among similar organisations but does not provide for meaningful interaction with other key stakeholders including the private sector, CSOs, and country representatives from the South.**

Traditional donors (both bilateral and multilateral) are currently well represented in the Platform; according to the Platform's sources its members represent about 80% of international ODA. With the exception of Japan, the most important bilateral donors are active members of the Platform;<sup>30</sup> the most significant multilateral donors are members (WB-IDA, EC, IFAD, UNDP, FAO); and two regional banks are members of the Platform: the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB); the African Development Bank (AfDB) is not a member. It is interesting to note that the Platform's Board is composed primarily of donors that contribute significantly to agriculture (WB, US, France, Germany, UK, IFAD, and Canada).

**Survey results: How many days per year do FPs spend carrying out their responsibilities?**



<sup>30</sup> According to the OECD-DAC statistical data on aid to agriculture (December 2001) the most important donors in agriculture in 2000 were: Japan (22%), US (10%), France (5%), UK and Denmark (4%), Germany (3%), Canada (2%). For other DAC members, the percentage of ODA to agriculture was 0% to 1%.



The Platform does not yet include emerging/non traditional donors and is discussing whether membership should be opened to private foundations (e.g., Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation) and emerging donor countries (e.g., Brazil, China). Some members feel that it is important for the Platform to remain homogeneous in order to build trust and allow coordination; according to other members and some external stakeholders, homogeneity was highly desired at the beginning of the Platform but should now integrate emerging actors to remain relevant in the changing context. Some members, in particular newcomers, feel that the Platform is a somewhat closed circle or private club in which it is difficult to integrate different views and voices.

Several interviewees raised the issue of whether the Platform should remain a donor network or should start including partners in developing countries, both governmental and CSOs. While some stakeholders feel that restricting membership to donors limits its legitimacy and its voice in the development community, the majority believe that being a donors' initiative is an added value and is what makes the Platform different from other organisations (e.g., It has a lighter structure where discussion is easier and decisions are taken faster). Nonetheless, there is also consensus that a more structured relationship with Southern country representatives and CSOs is needed. The modalities might be different, including for example partnerships, affiliations, regular liaisons with parallel Southern organisations, or institutionalised meetings. Some stakeholders suggested that these relationships could be more easily and productively built at the regional level. The Platform's involvement in CAADP was cited as a good example of this type of dynamic.

Ultimately, the Platform's definition of its membership should be informed by the role(s) it decides to play and its objectives. The current membership (mainly traditional donors represented by ARD experts) is most appropriate for a donor initiative with networking, information sharing and knowledge brokerage objectives. Should the Platform assume other roles, it could benefit from a broader membership.

**Finding 23: The Platform is striving to find a good balance of commitment and participation between founding members and newcomers and between full members and associate members.**

According to the FP interviews, the Platform membership seems to be traversed by two interrelated divides: founding members/new-comers, and full members/associate members. Full members, the smallest group, have more decision making power than associate members and are represented in the main decision making bodies. As noted earlier, there has been significant continuity in the Platform core group: founding members tend to be today's full members. Nonetheless, the Platform has grown over the years, including new full members such as France and USAID, and many new associate members.

### **Founders/Newcomers**

Some different perspectives emerged during interviews between founders and newcomers, in particular with respect to the level of homogeneity of Platform membership and the capacity of the Platform to integrate new ideas and views. As noted in section 3.5 (internal context), the original homogeneity remains predominant in the Platform's governing bodies (Board and SC). But as the number of both full and associate members is growing, internal diversity is slowly increasing (bilateral, multilaterals, donors, not donors). New and diverse views and priorities are making their way into the Platform.

Some interviewed newcomers report difficulty in contributing to GDPRD decision making which they feel is controlled by GDPRD founders. On the other hand, not many newcomers are willing or able to invest as much time and resources in the Platform as the core members who feel compelled to continue to fulfil the engagements undertaken. Newcomers do not always have the same sense of commitment and ownership as the founders, but they can bring new energy. It is important for a network at this stage of evolution to find a good balance between founders and newcomers in terms of commitment and participation. In this respect, having different levels of membership, with different rights and responsibilities in relation to their level of involvement, is very useful.

### Full Members/Associate Members

Having two levels of Platform membership, full and associate, is sensible: It allows different levels of involvement according to the organisations needs and resources. But this scheme, as developed in the revised Charter, has some drawbacks:

- Associate members do not have a formal voice in the decision-making process of the Platform and their ownership and participation are thus limited.
- The current system allows organisations a “free-ride” as they can become associate members without any cost or commitment.
- The revised Charter does not clearly define the purpose and role of associate members within the Platform architecture. This emerged clearly in interviews with associate members who have very different perceptions of their roles. Some see themselves as active members with limited resources, others see themselves as members of GDPRD’s audience, while others see themselves as selective GDPRD clients.

Building on the new Charter, it will be important for the Platform to further clarify its membership structure and the different roles and responsibilities of different types of membership in order to reduce the risk of tension among members and allow wider participation and ownership – which is crucial for network sustainability (discussed further in the following finding).

In particular, the Platform should clarify the role and purpose of associate members and the most appropriate way for them to participate in the Platform.

The Platform might consider having all members pay a symbolic fee. This would provide a broader financial base for the Platform, avoid “free-riders”, and enhance commitment. It would also legitimise the participation of associate members in the decision-making process.



The Platform could also consider introducing another level of relationship (e.g., affiliation) for organisations that want to have regular contact and exchanges with the Platform but do not want to contribute or participate (e.g., partner countries and CSOs).

### **Finding 24: The highly variable institutional ownership of members challenges the Platform’s effectiveness and sustainability. The Platform has started to address this.**

Focal Points represent their organisations’ interests in the Platform. According to the majority of interviews, a member’s sense of ownership lies with the individual FP and varies between full members/core group and associate members.

Survey results show that individual ownership and commitment to GDPRD is very high for full members' FPs and relatively high for associate members' FPs:<sup>31</sup>

- 100% of full member FPs and 55.5% of associate member FPs feel a personal connection and commitment to GDPRD.
- 66.6% of full member FPs and 55.6% of associate member FPs are proud of being the FP for their organisation.
- 83.4% of full member FPs and 55.5% of associate member FPs feel ownership and responsibility for the quality of Platform products and services.

Interviewed GDPRD stakeholders noted that while FPs may be individually committed to GDPRD, there is a wide range of institutional commitment:

- The vast majority of FPs reported one of the following two situations:
  - There is no ownership for GDPRD in their institutions; all the weight of being GDPRD's members falls on their shoulders.
  - While ownership is at the individual level, their institutions provide some back-up or support (e.g., accommodating some time for the FP role, identifying substitutes, senior management demonstrating willingness to be informed and kept in the loop, providing financial contributions).
- Only a small minority of FPs reported that their institutions had completely bought into the Platform. In these cases, the FP's role has been institutionalised and senior management is involved in Platform initiatives and receives regular feedback on the Platform's activities. In one case, one of the Platform's joint documents "The Joint Donor Concept on Rural Development" was integrated by the SDC as its RD strategy.

**Survey Results**

66.7% of full members FPs and 44.4% of associate members FPs are satisfied with their organisation's level of ownership and commitment to the Platform

50% of full members FPs and 33% of associate members FPs have their role as FPs included in their job description and/or in their annual performance reviews

The lack of consistent institutional ownership has some significant consequences for the Platform's effectiveness and sustainability:

- It does not create the appropriate conditions for FPs to carry out their roles in terms of time available, resources, institutional support, and lines of accountability. If the FPs are not able to fulfil their roles, the Platform's effectiveness is challenged. Moreover, if FPs are not accountable to their organisations for their involvement in the Platform, their commitment and performance can be inconsistent.
- The objective of the Platform is to foster donor coordination and cooperation in ARD to improve the quality and impact of investments. Fulfilling this objective requires member organisations to buy into the Platform's efforts. Individual buy-in by some members is not sufficient.
- The Platform depends on financial and other types of contributions from its members, and institutional commitment is needed to disburse financial resources on a regular basis.
- Individual commitments can come to an end (e.g. changes or end of career). If their own organisation is not ready to provide a substitute, the Platform loses a member.

<sup>31</sup> On survey items inquiring about FP commitment and ownership, the percentage of full member FPs and associate member FPs who answered Very or Mostly.

The Platform is undertaking some initiatives to create the conditions for increased institutional ownership:

- At the first Board meeting (Paris December 2007) participants noted the need “for the confirmation of membership status of each organisation and verification of Focal Point as well as appointment of an alternate FP by the respective institution and its management.”<sup>32</sup> The Secretariat and the Chairs sent a letter with the revised Charter (March 2008) to respective directors general requesting confirmation of membership status and Focal Point/alternate. At the time of writing, 15 confirmations had been received and one organisation had discontinued its membership. As no fixed deadline was set for replies, the organisations that have not answered may still retain their associate membership status.
- According to the TORs, member organisations should appoint one Focal Point and one alternate and should budget four to five staff-weeks for the duties of the Focal Point. The TORs also list the duties and responsibilities of the FPs.
- The Platform has developed TORs for FPs and included them in the new Charter with the aim of further clarifying and institutionalising the role of the FPs. However, this formalisation of the role of FPs has met with mixed reactions among members. According to some members, the TORs are needed to harmonise the understanding of the FP’s role, provide it a more official status within member organisations, improve institutional buy-in, and create lines of accountability within their organisations for the work of FPs. Other members feel that strictly defining the roles and responsibilities of FPs will limit participation to only those members who can commit human resources above a certain threshold. According to these members, as the Platform is based on voluntary membership, it should allow different levels of involvement.

The ability of the Platform to improve institutional buy-in and ownership by its institutional members is a challenge for its future effectiveness and sustainability. This is a question that deserves more in-depth study as the Platform determines its future directions.



### 5.2.2 Governance Structure

**Finding 25: The Platform’s full members are responsible for the Platform’s advisory governance, but the legal authority lies outside the Platform itself. While this type of temporary arrangement is typical in young networks, it can become challenging as the Platform matures.**

One definition of governance emphasises the legal status of an organisation: “The governing structure of an organisation represents the ownership or legal guidance system of the organisation. It relates to the ultimate legal and social responsibility of the organisation.”<sup>33</sup>

A broader definition of governance states: “The governing structure provides an overseeing function to the organisation.”<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> First Board meeting minutes, December 2007

<sup>33</sup> Lusthaus, Adrien, Anderson, Carden, Montalván, *Organisational assessment. A framework for improving performance, Inter-American Development Bank and IDRC, Washington and Ottawa, 2002, p. 51*

<sup>34</sup> Ibid p. 52

Shenk defines governance as “the institutions, processes and traditions that determine how power is exercised, how decisions are made and enforced and how members pursue their interests.”<sup>35</sup> We will refer to this here as advisory governance.

### Advisory Governance

One key aspect of the Platform’s culture is that it is member-led. Its advisory governance is exercised by full members’ representatives within the two main governing bodies: the SC and the Board. As noted earlier the FPs capacity to provide guidance and strategic direction to the Platform is hampered by their time and resources constraints. This is a serious limitation for GDPRD which needs such input at this stage of its evolution.

### Legal Entity

The Platform came together as an informal network and it still does not have a legal identity. The only existing legal framework is the one provided by BMZ-GTZ as part of a joint project of which the provision of Secretariat services to GDPRD is one component. Thus, the ultimate legal responsibility for the Platform lies outside the Platform.

A consequence of this is that the lines of accountability between GDPRD governance bodies and BMZ-GTZ are not clearly defined. The BMZ-GTZ project proposal that provides for the GDPRD Secretariat (see section 3.3) does not detail the Secretariat’s relationship with the Platform’s members and governing bodies. The only accountability lines contemplated in the project are those internal to GTZ and between GTZ and BMZ. The Platform’s Charter established roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability between the Board, the SC and the Secretariat. According to the old Charter, the SC/Board did not play a role in GTZ contract negotiations and oversight (except for the person of the Chair, as part of its duties in BMZ). Thus the Secretariat found itself between two systems of accountability that did not communicate with each other. This has been changed in the new Charter, as we discuss in the next finding.

As networks mature they often revisit their legal structure and level of institutionalisation. The Platform is in this stage of its evolution. Should the Platform become an independent organisation with a legal identity? An independent and permanent legal framework would clarify accountability lines and would reconcile the legal and advisory aspects of governance in the members’ hands, but it would also impose a higher level of formality that, in some ways, is contrary to its initial ideas.

In our view, the question of whether the Platform needs a legal identity pales in comparison to other more fundamental questions facing the Platform such as its future role and strategic directions. Once these are clarified, the Platform should address its legal identity.

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<sup>35</sup> Schenk I., *Structured flexibility: the governance, coordination and outcomes of IDRC supported networks*, IDRC, 2005

**Finding 26: The Platform has taken the positive initiative to revise its Charter; some further clarifications are needed to ensure that it remains a living and dynamic document.**

Networks are dynamic organisations. Their membership changes and expands, bringing new demands, and sometimes the need to re-orient their goals. For these reasons networks' governance structures tend to evolve as the network grows.

At the beginning, there did not seem to be a need for a Platform governance structure. An

informal Charter was adopted at a constituent meeting in December 2003. In March 2005 a governance structure was needed to receive further financial contributions from the WB and other donors.<sup>37</sup> While trust among founding members was sufficient initially, the Platform was growing beyond the initial circle, and it needed a structure. The first real Charter was approved in June 2005. The Platform underwent a revision process starting in late 2007, and culminating in the new Charter approved in March 2008. The Platform's governance structure, as established by the revised Charter, is described in chapter 3. The Charter clarifies roles, responsibilities and processes, and addresses some main issues: the participation of all paying members in the Platform governing structure, the relationships between the governance and the operational structures, the role of non-paying members.

While it is still premature to assess the impact of the new governance structure, some observations can be made:

- The Board is a new creation and the distinction between the roles of the Board and the SC is not yet well understood. Those who sit on the Board and the SC have been involved with the Platform for a long time, and are not yet accustomed to having two distinct bodies, so responsibilities get blurred.
- The Platform's governance structure appears overly complex for its current size; it has only ten members, six of whom form the SC. Presumably this system will make more sense as the number of GDPRD members increases.
- Associate members do not have a formal role in the governance structure. While one of the main reasons the Platform's governance structure was changed was to allow all full members to actively participate in decision making, the issue of participation remains for associate members. The new Charter states that "every member is regarded as equal, irrespective of available resources, whether human or financial." But associate members do not participate in decision-making processes, as they do not sit on the Board. Interviews show mixed perceptions of this issue: Some associate members feel that they are not sufficiently involved in the Platform governance mechanism and do not have any instrument to influence the Platform; others take a pragmatic approach and say they do not have enough resources to participate more; others are satisfied with the current situation because they see themselves more as selective users than active members.

"(...) Governance arrangements seem to generally change as networks develop. In a network context, governance should be considered as a work in progress, as a steady constructive effort. The dynamic nature of networks demands adjustments and changes in the way a network is run. (...). The revision of such procedures usually happens as a result of the growth of the network, the emergence of new demands and of the increasing dedication of partners. Changes on responsibilities and participation on strategic aspects of network governance are not only necessary but also desirable to reflect the development of the network and to balance the involvement of members."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> María Fernanda Tuozzo and Diana Tussie, *The Governance and Coordination of Networks: An Analysis of the Findings from an IDRC Strategic Evaluation (1995-2005)*, IDRC, 2006, p. 9

<sup>37</sup> Fourth Business Meeting minutes, March 2005.

- GDPRD relationships with partners are not clear and the way that partnerships are contemplated in the new Charter is not helpful for the Platform to build purposeful and structured relationships. The role of partners is very loosely defined; the purpose of partnerships is not defined; and the way partners relate with the Platform is not defined beyond the communication flow with the Secretariat. (See also section 5.5 on inter-institutional linkages.)
- Some ambiguities remain regarding the lines of accountability between GTZ and the Board, the Secretariat and the SC.
  - According to the revised Charter, the SC is responsible for reviewing the performance of the Secretariat and reporting to the Board chair regularly. But within the contract between GTZ and BMZ, the Secretariat staff is accountable to GTZ, performance reviews are done by GTZ, and the staff is managed by GTZ.
  - According to the revised Charter, the Board is responsible for approving and amending the general terms of agreement with the institution that provides the Secretariat and for approving and amending TORs for the Secretariat. The current GTZ contract lasts until the end of 2008. Then the system of accountability defined by the new Charter will have an opportunity to be tested.

In future Charter refinements, the Platform should consider revising the rights and responsibilities of different types of members, clarifying the roles and added value of partners and how it relates to them, and further elucidate accountability lines.



### 5.2.3 Operational Structure

The operational structure of an organisation is “the system of working relationships arrived at to divide and coordinate the tasks of people and groups working toward a common purpose. (...)”<sup>38</sup>

The Platform’s operational structure is characterised by significant volunteer input of the full members’ Focal Points (especially SC members) and a small professional Secretariat.

**Finding 27: The Platform’s operational structure, based primarily on the role of Focal Points, limits the ability of the SC to make timely operational decisions and to provide the Secretariat with needed guidance.**

The SC provides the link between the Platform’s governance and operational structures. Beyond its strategic decision making, the SC has also been responsible for direct supervision and guidance of the Secretariat and for operational decision making. FPs therefore play crucial and active roles in GDPRD operations. They are responsible for both the identification of potential activities as well as the implementation of activities (as “activity leads”). Moreover, their day-to-day input is the basis of the Platform’s information sharing and knowledge management mechanism.

While the role of the FPs is pivotal for the functioning of the Platform, the gap between FPs’ responsibilities and resources limits the ability of the SC to make timely operational decisions and to provide the Secretariat with the needed guidance. Some examples noted in interviews by FPS and Secretariat staff include: decisions about whether to continue the pilot projects, staffing and size of the Secretariat, deciding which studies and publications to pursue, deciding the

<sup>38</sup> Lusthaus, Adrien, Anderson, Carden, Montalván, Organisational Assessment. A framework for improving performance, Inter-American Development Bank and IDRC, Washington and Ottawa, 2002, pp.54

purpose and agendas of general meetings (i.e., high profile meetings with influential external speakers and guests, or lower profile working sessions, or a mix of the two).

This creates some tension between the SC and the Secretariat (discussed further in the following finding), hampers the Platform’s ability to achieve its objectives and meet members’ needs, and could challenge the Platform’s sustainability (see chapter 6).

While the Platform’s recently developed TORs for FPs have generated both positive and negative reactions from members (see Finding 24: ), the majority of members do not consider the recommended four to five staff weeks for FP duties realistic within their organisations.

If the Platform cannot obtain members’ institutional buy-in for the current FP role and time requirements, the Platform should consider redefining the role of the FPs in a way that is realistic and feasible for all member institutions. This could mean introducing some changes in operational structure as shown in the sidebar and discussed in the next finding.

**Possible changes to the Platform’s operational structure to reduce pressure on FPs**

- Splitting the role of the FPs: a senior level representative responsible for the strategic level and a middle-level working official, responsible for the operational aspects and day-to-day input
- Introducing a professional Executive Director
- Semi-professionalizing the role of the SC Chair (perhaps through rotational secondments among members)



**Finding 28: The clarification of the Secretariat role and its cooperation with the SC are crucial to Platform’s operational effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, particularly in the context of limited resources.**

According to the Platform’s Charter “the Secretariat is the central management unit of the Platform and it also serves as the main contact point for relations with GDPRD members and partners. (...). The Secretariat supports the main organs of the Platform, the Board and the Steering Committee, and bears the primary responsibility for ensuring that their decisions are carried out.”

When the Platform became operational at the beginning of 2005, it chose to utilise a “secretariat model”, but intended to keep it relatively small and, as far as possible, under the members’ control. According to the majority of the stakeholders, the decision to have a Secretariat was a good one because the Secretariat “allows things to happen.”

**Documents defining Secretariat Roles and Responsibilities**

The BMZ-GTZ framework contains general rules for reporting, evaluation, audit, HRs, and financial arrangements which are applied to the GDPRD Secretariat.

The BMZ-GTZ “Poverty Reduction in Rural Areas” project proposal establishes the Platform Secretariat but does not detail its roles and responsibilities.<sup>39</sup>

The Platform Charter defines the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board, the SC, and the Secretariat but there are no linkages with the GTZ-BMZ project or general framework contract.

The Secretariat TORs are currently the foundation for the Secretariat’s work. According to the internal evaluation, the TORs adequately describe the tasks and responsibilities of staff members. The TORs were written by the Secretariat and shared with the Board in December 2007. Apparently no formal approval was requested and they were included in the revised Charter.

<sup>39</sup> The Secretariat seems to have realised this: The new project proposal for the continuation of service delivery after December 2008 will apparently contain more details on the Secretariat tasks.



The Secretariat is meant to facilitate activities and tasks within the volunteer and financial resource base provided by the Platform’s members, in particular the SC members. In reality, the Secretariat plays a backstop role when volunteer resources aren’t available and often assumes a more proactive role to keep the Platform going. This creates some tension between the Secretariat and the members. While members appreciate the pro-activeness of the Secretariat because it allows the Platform to work, they sometimes feel deprived of their role when this goes too far.

The vast majority of members say they want a Secretariat that coordinates, facilitates, and implements the decisions of the SC (and of the new Board). This was in fact the intention, but the reality is mixed (see sidebar).

The cooperative relationship between the Secretariat and the SC follow a cyclical wavy path: To fill the guidance and operational void left by very busy FPs, the Secretariat becomes more proactive and assumes more responsibilities. When the FPs realise that the Secretariat has gone beyond its coordination and facilitation role, they reaffirm their oversight and management role, sometimes re-orienting Secretariat activities.

Clarifying coordination between the SC and Secretariat, to allow them both to fulfil their roles, is very important for the Platform effectiveness and sustainability. The balance between the Secretariat’s facilitation/coordination role and its operational/strategic role should be openly discussed.



Another challenge for the effectiveness and sustainability of the Platform’s operational structure is the wide scope of the Secretariat tasks compared to its limited resources.

The Secretariat has adapted over time as the Platform has evolved. Originally, the Secretariat was a very light coordination-communication mechanism with only one person employed. Gradually, as the Platform became more ambitious in its objectives, the Secretariat acquired a role in the planning and implementation of the Platform activities in addition to its coordination role. Its human resources have expanded from one person to four full-time and three part-time staff.

According to the GTZ internal evaluation of the “Poverty Reduction in Rural Areas” project, of which GDPRD Secretariat is one component, (February 2008), the Secretariat today fulfils not only administrative functions, but also conceptual/strategic functions (e.g., developing joint concepts and analysis), and ensures the implementation of pilot projects/initiatives in different countries. The multiplicity and diversity of roles played by the Secretariat today sometimes creates confusion among members who feel that the Secretariat is playing their role. Moreover, the expanding and diversifying tasks are generating increasing pressures on the Secretariat. Interviews with Secretariat staff and the results of the internal evaluation show that Secretariat staff feel overworked. Interviews with members’ representatives show some concerns about the ability of the Secretariat to meet such diverse and multiple demands, especially given its limited resources.

**SC and Secretariat Roles – Some mixed messages about who is responsible for hiring and HR decisions**

The SC is responsible for human resource decisions.

The Secretariat provides recommendations to the SC on HR needs. It writes the TORs and sends them to the SC for information or approval depending on the case.

The SC approved the TORs for the agricultural expert and the CAADP Task Leader, while it only generally approved the positions for the JPO, financial advisor and interns.

The SC conducted interviews for the internal position of the CAADP Task Leader and ARD Policy Task Leader. GTZ procurement and rules and regulation for hiring staff apply.

The position for the Coordinator, the JPO, financial advisor and communications officer were national recruitments. The SC reviewed the CV for the Coordinator (but not the others). It did not take part in the hiring process.

The Platform is striving to find a balance between an operational structure that can sustain the amount of work requested and a very light and non-bureaucratic structure which is regarded by its members as one of its distinctive values. An important challenge for the Platform will be to balance member expectations and contributions with a realistic workplan managed by the SC or its representative.

Considering these challenges, the Platform could consider modifying its operational structure, for example by introducing a professional executive director or semi-professionalising the SC chair role. These options will be further discussed in chapter 7.



**Finding 29: While the Platform has benefited from GTZ’s well-established administrative support, which was low-risk and very pragmatic in the Platform’s early stages of evolution, this model may be a challenge for the Platform’s continued development.**

The internal evaluation and interviews with FPs show that FPs are generally very positive about GTZ institutional support to the Secretariat in terms of services provided and performance, and with the financial administration. However, some issues were raised concerning:

- The clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat in relation to the SC, the Board, and BMZ-GTZ (as discussed in section 5.2.2 on governance);
- The transparency of the institutional arrangements in that all institutional arrangements are in German and internal between GTZ and BMZ;
- The independence of the Platform from its hosting/managing institutions. According to some members, the Platform projects a German image to the outside, which could be negative for the Platform’s reputation as a neutral and *super partes*; and
- Some suggested that at this stage, the Secretariat may be ready for an independent office. On the other side BMZ and GTZ emphasised that the Secretariat is a service provider for all members of the GDPRD, and neither an 'arm' of the BMZ nor a representative for GTZ.<sup>40</sup> The current location is simply the most pragmatic given the current arrangements for service provision.

There is evidence that GDPRD benefits from GTZ’s established administrative support. As noted in section 4.4 on efficiency, this was a low risk system for GDPRD in its early stages and a pragmatic solution to get things started. The main challenge of this system lies in its temporariness: GTZ’s institutional support to the Platform is based on a time-bound project and the high involvement and commitment of one of its members. The Platform is entering a stage of its evolution in which the question of the level of formalisation becomes an important issue. On one hand, a more formal, institutionalised and independent support system, as could be provided by an independent professional Secretariat in a legally formalised network, would ensure stable services and better control by Platform members. On the other hand, this would have high costs and would create a heavier legal and bureaucratic framework, which members seem to oppose. In any event, the role that the Platform decides to play in the future will determine its needs for institutional support, in particular the size and level of institutionalisation of the Secretariat.

The internal evaluation pointed out that even if the Secretariat is primarily a service provider for the whole GDPRD, it is of special relevance for the BMZ which currently is chairing it. The work of BMZ is becoming more known internationally because of the services of the secretariat. The work of the secretariat has also positively influenced the degree to which GTZ as a service provider is known.

### 5.3 Output Management

In most evaluations we would analyse the organisation's programme management cycle, but it is still premature to examine GDPRD at the overall programme level. Since most Platform programming to date has revolved around outputs, we have focused our analysis at this level.

**Finding 30: Output management in GDPRD has been pragmatic and ad hoc to date, but the Platform is in the process of formalising its approach.**

A complete programme management cycle requires clear roles and responsibilities and a solid infrastructure of procedures and processes for planning, implementation, quality control, and monitoring and evaluation.

The Platform's management cycle is not yet completely in place. This is typical in young networks that are focused on getting started and beginning the production of goods and services: Programming tends to be experimental, opportunistic, reactive rather than strategic, and activity-oriented rather than results-oriented. In informal networks such as GDPRD, structures and processes develop progressively in an organic way.

Recently, the Platform has started to formalise its output management instruments. As noted in section 3.5 (internal context), this is typical of networks entering a more mature stage of development (stage 3). While some emerging GDPRD instruments and processes have started to be utilised, output management remains fragmented. According to Secretariat staff, it is still difficult to generalise how the output management cycle works, as new activities have used slightly different procedures.

#### Planning

In the first few years of the Platform there was no strategic planning. According to the Secretariat and SC members, activities were ad hoc and reactive "jumping on opportunities." Activities could be

In the first Business meeting, "The participants agreed that the Platform should start by focusing on concrete products that can be delivered within the first year of the Platform. (...) Objectives will be defined for the first year only – in order to remain on a feasible level, and to keep senior management engaged."

Source: First Business meeting minutes, December 2003.

suggested by FPs in general meetings, at SC meetings, or through personal communications. In some cases, the Secretariat would then screen and endorse them and write concept notes. In other cases, the SC would define a priority and the Secretariat would suggest related activities. This flexible process is pragmatic but has some limitations:

- It is difficult for the Platform to maintain a clear focus and direction in programming. In a scenario of scarce resources, this can lead to reduced effectiveness.
- In the absence of a workplan, programming can be driven by proactive members who promote their interests. Several FPs lamented the fact that some studies responded to the interests and needs of single members and not those of the Platform as a whole.

The Platform has taken some steps to formalise planning. In 2007, the Secretariat developed an informal action plan and a 2008 workplan and related budget. The workplan was endorsed by the Board (Paris, December 2007). While this is an important step in planning, the workplan is activity- rather than results-oriented.

The revised Charter introduced some important and positive clarifications in GDPRD selection criteria and approval processes for the Platform products and activities. It clarified the division of labour between the Secretariat, SC, and members; built on some lessons learned from the Platform's past programming (e.g., activities must be driven by demand or need); and addressed some issues raised by members during the course of this evaluation (e.g., activities should benefit the majority of members, and should have an operational value).

## Implementation

According to its TORs, one of the Secretariat's key responsibilities is the implementation and supervision of Platform's activities. More specifically,

- It guides and supports Platform activities, including analysis and policy advice; and
- It identifies international consultants, prepares ToRs, and provides supervision and quality control of their work and products.

The Secretariat maintains a supervisory role, but tends to outsource most implementation to international consultants. In three cases to date, full member FPs were designated as the "leads" for specific Platform activities: 1) the study: "Formulating and Implementing Sector-Wide Approaches in Agriculture and Rural Development", 2) the study on "Rural Focus of Partner Countries' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers", and 3) the initiative on "CSOs and Aid Effectiveness in ARD." The leads were responsible for drafting the initial TORs, providing financial or in-kind contributions from their own organisations, indicating the implementing agency or consultant, and supervising the implementation of the activity in terms of content and processes. This system, which was formalised in the Selection Criteria and Approval Processes of the revised Charter, has been useful in alleviating the Secretariat workload. On the negative side, it seems to encourage single-member ownership instead of broad ownership by the Platform as a whole (as noted above in Planning). Moreover, some interviewees noted that since the activity leads are volunteers, it may be difficult for the Secretariat to "keep them on track."

## Quality Control

The Platform's current internal quality control mechanism for its products (especially studies and publications) is based on FP feedback according to a "10-day rule": The Secretariat circulates draft products to FPs for review and comment within ten days. If there are no comments, the product is approved.

This system cannot ensure steady quality because it is based on the input and availability of volunteers. FPs may not have the time to comment, or the product may not be within their area of expertise or interest. The Secretariat noted considerable inconsistency: While some studies have been largely commented on, others (particularly lately) have received hardly any comments. Furthermore, the agricultural expert at the Platform's Secretariat is responsible for supporting the FPs in quality control. Given the scarcity and unpredictability of FP inputs, his task has become very large.

To ensure a more predictable level of quality and to relieve the Secretariat staff workload, the Secretariat outsources some services (for example re-writing and editing), but this has higher costs.

Some members suggested that other peer review mechanisms could be tested, including for example the creation of control groups for each product composed of two or three specifically appointed FPs.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The Platform does not yet have a monitoring and evaluation system, or a logic framework that it can use to define and assess its performance (see section 4.3 on effectiveness). While the Secretariat is responsible for annual reporting, given the absence of defined results and indicators, the Secretariat reports against its work programme. Its annual reports, which are narrative and activity-focused, are circulated among FPs and published on the web site.

The Platform has undertaken several efforts to evaluate its results (e.g., the harvesting exercise and this external evaluation) and has expressed its willingness to develop a logic system, which could provide a basis for systematic monitoring and evaluation. The first initiative in this direction was the Brussels working session in March 2008. Further development of a logic system will require significant follow-up and commitment (see section 5.1 on strategic leadership).

### 5.4 Inter-institutional Linkages

**Finding 31: The Platform has identified possible strategic partners for each pillar. While this is a good first step, more attention needs to be paid to the purposes of these partnerships in relation to the Platform’s objectives.**

According to the Platform’s Charter, the Secretariat is responsible for “actively explor(ing) strategic partnerships to complement the work of the Platform.” Over the past couple of years, it has taken several steps to identify potential partners for the Platform:

- The Platform’s Action Plan for 2007 included some efforts to develop relationships with other organisations/initiatives. Within Pillar 1, one of the lines of activity was “developing strategic partnerships” which included a meeting with the Neuchatel Initiative and a letter to the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). Under Pillar 3, the need for “collaboration with regional networks” was identified, and included the signing of a collaboration agreement with the Regional Unit for Technical Assistance in Agriculture (RUTA) and informal contacts with the Hub (an interactive online community for human rights) and the Learning Network on Programme-Based Approaches (LENPA).
- At the Poggiovalle retreat (2007) the Platform began to identify its main target groups and stakeholders by pillar. Strategic linkages were noted for Pillar 1.
- In the 2008 workplan, the Secretariat identified strategic relationships with other organisations/ initiatives/groups for each pillar, as shown in Exhibit 5.5 below.

**Exhibit 5.5 Developing Strategic Relationships (2008 Workplan)**

	THE SECRETARIAT PLANS TO UNDERTAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:	IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL TARGETS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
<b>Pillar 1: Advocacy and outreach</b>	“Ensure that Chairs and Board strategically address identified key stakeholders and new players in the international policy arena”	China, Japan, Australia, India, AfDB, Rockefeller Foundation (AGRA), Clinton Foundation, Gates Foundation	“The Board and Secretariat will arrange for delegations or meetings for policy dialogue and with key stakeholders throughout the year on an ongoing basis”
<b>Pillar 2: Shared learning and innovation</b>	“Strengthen its work through closer collaboration with Regional Networks and initiatives (...) as vehicles for facilitation of regional workshops on knowledge	RUTA, NEPAD, ASEAN	None

	THE SECRETARIAT PLANS TO UNDERTAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:	IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL TARGETS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
	dissemination”		
<b>Pillar 3: Aid effectiveness</b>	“Facilitate and ensure methodological linkages to relevant international initiatives“	EC Division of Labour process, EIARD, the UN MDG I Task Force, OECD DAC, Development cooperation Forum, ECOSOC, Neuchatel, Donor Committee for Enterprise Development etc	Participation of FPs and/or Secretariat at relevant meetings and events with view to clarify a closer methodological role thereafter

GDPRD’s efforts to identify potential strategic partners and build relationships with them are positive initiatives. However, the linkages lack clarity, structure and consistency, reflective of the Platform’s stage of evolution. While GDPRD’s Charter makes provision for the Platform to enter into partnerships with other organisations, the purpose and expected results of such partnerships is not explicit. Instead, the Charter makes general references to the values of these partners (*to commit to implementing the vision and objectives of the Platform*). This is not a particularly helpful basis for building inter-institutional relationships.

“The Platform may enter into partnership with other platforms and networks, including other donor platforms, farmers’ organisations, regional or international research organisations, civil society organisations and regional networks, which share common interests with the Platform. Platform Partners engaged in parallel activities that support Platform objectives commit to implementing the vision and objectives shared by all members of the Platform. (...) Representatives of Platform Partners are invited to attend the Annual General Assembly, or sessions thereof, as appropriate.”  
GDPRD’s revised Charter (2008)

To date, the Platform has built relationships with other organisations in rather ad hoc, un-structured ways. While it lists eight organisations as partners, the nature of these relationships varies considerably and is sometimes not clear. In most cases, the partnership was initiated by the partner through a verbal request for cooperation (i.e., in practical terms, this often meant being included in the mailing list and invited to the Platform meetings). One partner (Neuchatel Initiative, a network of rural advisory services specialists) made a written request suggesting a cooperation mode (to be further detailed in a subsequent document, not yet developed). In only one case (RUTA) was the partnership formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that detailed the objectives and scope of the collaboration, operational considerations, coordination mechanisms, provisions for reciprocity, entry into force, termination, and amendments.

The purposes of the Platform’s partner relationships are diverse and not always defined. For example, some partners provide services to the Platform as in-kind contributions from members (e.g., the International Food Policy Research Institute [IFPRI] is responsible for Hot Topics as a USAID in-kind contribution). In other cases, as for example RUTA, the objective of the partnership is to improve cooperation at the regional level in Central America and to improve exchanges of lessons learned between the regional and the global level. In others the purpose is generic technical advice and exchange of information (e.g., Neuchatel Initiative).

As a network matures, building sound and strategic inter-institutional linkages is very beneficial. “Having regular contact with other institutions, organisations and groups of strategic importance to the organisation’s work can result in healthy exchange of approaches and resources (including knowledge and expertise).”<sup>41</sup> An important challenge for the Platform’s future development will be to build meaningful linkages that support its strategic objectives. This process would benefit from the clarification of the Platform objectives, role, and added value – which would help define the purpose and role of strategic partnerships on the basis of the network’s comparative advantages and niches. This is particularly relevant in a context where new initiatives are proliferating and attention to the ARD sector is increasing. In an increasingly competitive global environment, the Platform’s ability to build cooperative rather than competitive relationships with other significant initiatives will be of major importance for its sustainability.

The Platform should consider defining the role and purpose of partnerships and developing a formal framework for their definition. In this respect, the MOU with RUTA signed in 2007 could be considered as a first good example. Moreover the Platform should consider defining different types of inter-institutional linkages, according to their purpose – which may range from operational support (for example at the regional level) to simple information sharing.



## 5.5 Network Processes

In this section we examine the Platform’s processes for communication, coordination, decision-making, and problem solving.

**Finding 32: The Platform has developed several resource-saving and relatively effective coordination mechanisms. However, GDPRD coordination relies heavily on members’ volunteer input, which presents some challenges for effective coordination.**

Coordination is a key function in networks. In fact, a perceived need for coordination is often the basis for the establishment of a network. Coordination is particularly complex and burdensome in networks due to several factors: i) networks are usually flat, volunteer-based structures; and ii) they encompass many members with different corporate cultures, different languages, often geographically spread.

GDPRD uses the following mechanisms and event for coordination:

- SC meetings (videoconferences) once a month;
- Extraordinary SC meetings (retreats, etc.);
- Board meetings once a year (the first was held in Paris in December 2007);
- Annual general meetings;
- Website – to keep members informed about what the Platform is doing;
- Project task forces (e.g., CAADP: fortnight teleconferences with CAADP FPs);
- Informal gatherings on the occasion of other events – which allow members to discuss and coordinate outside of official meetings of the Board and of the SC; and

<sup>41</sup> Lusthaus, Adrien, Anderson, Carden, Montalván, *Organisational assessment. A framework for improving performance, Inter-American Development Bank and IDRC*, Washington and Ottawa, 2002, pp.81

- TORs and guidelines: Secretariat TORs, FP TORs, “Principles for working together in the Platform membership,” and “Selection criteria and approval process for the Platform products and activities.”<sup>42</sup>

While these mechanisms are generally considered cost-effective and appropriate given the geographically wide-spread nature of GDPRD, it is too early to assess their effectiveness:

There has been only one board meeting to date and most of the TORs and Guidelines were developed quite recently and integrated into the revised Charter in December 2007.

“Video conferences are a very good tool: they are very operational, they don’t cost too much, they allow FPs to participate.”

Member interview

Members have mixed views on the purpose of the annual meetings: Some feel that these meetings should be working sessions open to all members, not only those involved in the Board or SC; others feel these meetings should be bigger events, capable of creating interest and buy-in by new possible members.

“Annual meetings are useful, but they don’t have to become big events, only focused on visibility. They should remain working sessions.”

“Annual meetings should focus on interesting subjects and not on operational issues in order to create more buy-in.”

Member Interviews

The Platform’s coordination processes remain quite simple, without a proliferation of committees and subcommittees. Members consider this a value, and want to “keep it light, and avoid the monster!” Coordination efforts are led by the Secretariat but rely heavily on the volunteer input of members, mainly through their active participation in meetings. There is widespread satisfaction with how the Secretariat carries out its coordination responsibilities, despite its frequent work overload. As noted earlier, however, the FPs’ lack of time is sometimes a problem. An important challenge for the Platform is to balance the expanding coordination needs of a growing network with maintaining simple coordination mechanisms that respect members’ time constraints.

Several stakeholders pointed out that the lack of a structured coordination mechanism with institutions or regional organisations in the South is one of the Platform’s short-comings. The Platform’s involvement with CAADP, and in particular the hiring of a task leader responsible for coordination and communication, was seen as a very positive first step in this direction.

**Finding 33: The Platform has efficient decision-making mechanisms that rely heavily on the input of full members’ FPs. The main challenges are timely decisions on operational matters and broad-based decisions on strategic matters.**

As noted in section 5.2, as of December 2007 the Board is responsible for long-term strategic decisions; this has not yet been fully operationalised. The SC is responsible for short-term strategic decisions and operational decisions (shared with the Secretariat); the SC’s decision-making process is consensus based.

<sup>42</sup> TORs and guidelines can be regarded as coordination tools because they provide an agreed and standardized framework for action.



Decision making takes place in SC and Board meetings and, between meetings, through the 10-day-rule (i.e., a mechanism for soliciting FPs' input into decision making; the Secretariat manages the process and is responsible for follow-up on decisions).

“All members are asked to reply to specific requests for information and/or to comment on joint activities or publication within (10 working days). After the 10 days have elapsed, activities and publications are considered as approved. “

Source: GDPRD Charter, March 2008, Annex 3

The 10-day-rule is an efficient mechanism because it allows decisions to be taken in a relatively short time and with very low costs. According to some members, in horizontal and loose organisations such as networks, “You need the 10-day-rule to make decisions possible.” But it is a passive way of making decisions. Moreover, according to some members, the 10-day-rule limits the possibility of involving member organisations in decision making because it does not leave enough time for FPs to circulate information within their organisations and to receive and process feedback. For these reasons the 10-day-rule appears more suitable for operational than for strategic decisions.

The Platform's decision-making processes, both the SC/Board meetings and the 10-day-rule are heavily reliant on the FPs input, which as noted earlier, can reduce their effectiveness when FPs' time is limited.

According to some SC members, decision making could be more efficient. They noted that there are too many lengthy SC deliberations (in meetings or via virtual consultations) on minor management issues. Interviewed FPs noted for example a long discussion about the Platform's logo. Some members suggested that the SC should make important strategic decisions and leave the rest to the Secretariat, but other members fear that the Secretariat would then become too proactive and autonomous in decision making.

Associate members participate very marginally in decision making. They can contribute only by commenting on documents circulated with the 10-day-rule, and in most cases they do not have time or resources to take part in this mechanism. Some associate members think this is normal given the fact that they are not paying members of GDPRD. Others see this as a problem; they feel that “there is an inner circle directing the Platform and all the others are just called in to provide justification.” (See also section 5.2.2 on governance).

The main challenge for Platform decision-making processes is to find ways to ensure timely decision making for operational matters and broad-based decision making for strategic matters. To address these concerns, GDPRD would have to consider delegating operational decisions to others to ensure it has sufficient time to focus on the more strategic matters, and identifying mechanisms for involving stakeholders outside its inner circle.



**Finding 34: GDPRD's internal communication processes rely on the Secretariat's use of communication tools, which are used effectively, and the roles played by FPs, which have had mixed results.**

According to the revised Charter, the Secretariat “serves as the hub for relations with the Platform's Full Members, Associate Members, and Partners” and is responsible for establishing and maintaining an effective stream of communications. The Secretariat uses a variety of tools to accomplish his, including: regular e-mails to FPs, website, videoconferences with SC, newsletters, and informal communications in person, by telephone, and via e-mail. These tools are relatively effective at reducing the costs of geographically widespread communication.

- Through **e-mail**, the Secretariat informs FPs about ongoing activities and events and sends them all relevant documents (meetings minutes, content products, TORs, concepts, revised charter, workplans).

- The **website** is complete and user-friendly. All content products and administration documents such as meetings minutes are published and downloadable. It was originally conceived as an internal information-sharing mechanism rather than an external communication tool. Several stakeholders commented that while the website is very good, it is a passive instrument for communication and that it requires some effort and curiosity on the part of individuals who want to access it. They also noted a proliferation of other web sites concerning development, aid effectiveness, and ARD.

**Web Site Use Statistics**

Since April 2007 the number of visits to the web-site has increased significantly.

	April-June 2007	July-Sept 2007	Oct-Dec 2007	Jan-March 2008	April-June 2008
Number of visits	2276	3707	4141	3464	4190

(Note: Due to technical changes in the web site design and administration it is not possible to track data before 2007.)

To date there are 228 registered users, of which 153 are Platform members or partner organisations. Among registered members, the most represented organisations are, in order: GTZ, FAO, IFAD, WB.

The documents downloaded most frequently have been the Platform’s core position papers – the “Joint Donor Concept on Rural Development” and “The Role of Agriculture and Rural Development in Achieving the MDGs: A Joint Donor Narrative” – followed by “SWAPs in ARD: A Desk Review of Experiences, Issues And Challenges.”

- **Videoconferences** are appreciated by Platform members as a cost-effective and pragmatic communication tool, and the Secretariat coordinator is regarded as an effective facilitator. Technical difficulties occasionally reduce the quality of this type of communication.
- The Secretariat publishes a **newsletter** that 65 people currently subscribe to (via the website). They planned to publish every four months, but other obligations have prevented this. To date, two newsletters were published (June and November 2007). According to some interviews, a regular newsletter could be a very good tool to keep members and non members informed of activities, accomplishments and future plans – and to keep people outside the core group (associate members, field staff, partners, etc) in the loop. For busy FPs, it would provide a useful summary.
- Members commented very favourably on **informal communications** and the quality of relationship with the Secretariat. In some cases, personal contact was the main way of communication, especially at the beginning of a person’s involvement.

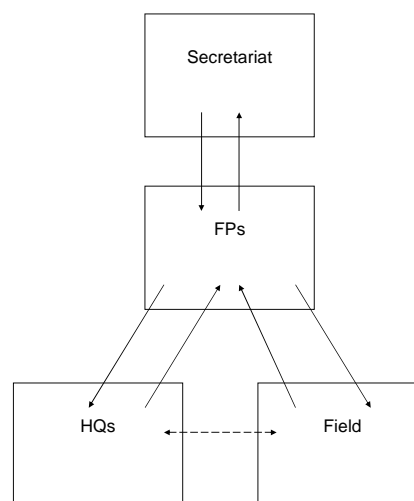
**The role of the FPs in the communication process**

FPs have a central role in communication as almost all communications flow through them. According to many stakeholders, the flow of information between Secretariat, FPs, HQ staff, and field staff of member organisations is crucial. The FPs are the pivots of this two-way communication system, as shown in Exhibit 5.6. They distribute outgoing information on ARD and AE to headquarters and field staff, and process incoming feedback for the Platform.

**Exhibit 5.6 Communication and Information Flow**

According to the Platform Charter, “FPs serve as the official contact persons between the Platform and the respective member organisations.” More than 80% of FP survey respondents (100% of the full members’ FPs) said that they fulfil this role on a regular basis.

FPs also “ensure that the headquarters and the field staff in their respective organisations are well informed about the Platform activities.” As shown in Exhibit 5.7, FPs are less successful in fulfilling this role with respect to field staff. Furthermore, the vast majority of FPs (of both full and associate members) said they do not have enough time to inform and receive feedback from people inside their own organisations.



**Exhibit 5.7 To what extent do FPs carry out the following activities as part of their responsibilities? (survey results)**

	REGULARLY		OCCASIONALLY		NEVER	
	ALL RESPONDENTS	FULL MEMBERS	ALL RESPONDENTS	FULL MEMBERS	ALL RESPONDENTS	FULL MEMBERS
Ensure that the headquarters staff in their organisation is well informed about Platform’s activities and reflection.	61.1%	80%	38.9%	20%	0.0%	0.0%
Ensure that the field staff in their organisation is well informed about Platform’s activities and reflection.	40%	60%	46.7%	40%	13.2%	0.0%

These results are also reflected in the level of awareness about the Platform inside member organisations, as shown in Exhibit 5.8. HQ sectoral experts appear to be relatively well informed, while field staff are the least aware. Communications with field staff and with AE staff are a weak link. This may be partly due to the FPs homogeneity: they are all HQ staff and agriculture experts; none of them works in AE divisions. The Secretariat communicates directly with AE staff in a few organisations, but examples are limited. Some stakeholders suggested more varied representation such as sharing the FP role among two or three different people representing ARD, AE, and the field.

**Exhibit 5.8 Which of the following groups are most aware of the Platform within the member organisations? (Survey results)**

	VERY	SOMEWHAT	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL	DO NOT KNOW / NO ANSWER
HQ sectoral experts	9	6	0	0	3
HQ country officers	0	9	3	2	4
HQ policy makers	3	4	6	1	4
Field staff	1	4	4	3	7

Several interviews within member organisations also noted a problem with communication overload (see sidebar).

### External communications

According to several stakeholders, especially non-members, external communication remains a challenge.

The Platform has undertaken efforts to become more visible and well-known inside and outside its members' circle and its communication strategy developed since 2006 includes several instruments (e.g., renewed website, new pamphlet, "Platform Speaking"). See section 4.3 on Effectiveness. Stakeholders consider the brown bag lunches a successful initiative to promote the Platform within member organisations.

While the Platform has made promotional presentations at several international events, several stakeholders share the opinion that the Platform's visibility is very limited outside the ARD/members circle. One

reason may be that the FPs are all involved in ARD, which makes it more difficult for the Platform to be influential outside the agriculture niche. Moreover, most FPs consider their role at international events is to represent their own organisations and are not ready to wear a double hat. This limits the Platform's ability to promote the network at international events.

External stakeholders noted that the Platform's communications are not very visible, especially when compared with similar networks in other sectors such as health. The more regular use of newsletters was mentioned as a good way to promote the Platform.

### Conclusion

An important challenge for the Platform is to adapt its communication system to what can be realistically accomplished by very busy volunteers and a small Secretariat.

#### Members' Views on Platform Communication

"Communication must be very effective in order for busy people to take care of it. The Platform should be realistic on what the FPs can do."

"Communication with members has to be useful and concise."

"The communication system is too garrulous: too many communications take place. They should reduce the quantity to improve the quality."

"These networks don't have to be too big. It becomes too complicated and burdensome for members. Already now there are too many e-mails. Some FPs can't keep up with them."

#### Survey results: To what extent do you represent the Platform at international meetings/fora as part of your responsibilities as a FP?

Full members: 20% regularly, 60% occasionally, 20% never

Associate members: 0% regularly, 12.5% occasionally, 87.5% never

## 6. Sustainability

In this section we examine the Platform's ongoing sustainability and the factors that are shaping its opportunities and challenges.

**Finding 35: The Platform's sustainability will depend on how it responds to new opportunities and addresses challenges in resources, results, and ownership.**

### **Seizing new opportunities will require timely and strategic deployment of resources and capabilities**

According to the vast majority of Platform stakeholders, the present global context provides a unique but crucial opportunity for the Platform.

As described in Chapter 2, external context, food security, agriculture and rural development are taking on a renewed importance as the world struggles to find solutions to the challenges of the current food price situation. Many opportunities will be opened to organisations working in ARD that have the capacity and resources to respond quickly to increasing demands for their services.

The Platform has a high potential to demonstrate its added value in this context, because of its niche as global mechanism for donor coordination in ARD. But time is of the essence. The Platform's ability to respond to emerging issues quickly and professionally, and to integrate diverse forces emerging in the global agriculture scene in a constructive and structured dialogue, will determine the Platform's sustainability and continued relevance in the next few years.

### **The Platform's ability to deliver results that meet members' needs and expectations**

Several stakeholders commented that in the near future they expect the Platform to deliver visible products and services that meet the needs and expectations of members and that respond to the evolving context. Several members think that as the Platform is entering a more mature stage it is time for it to demonstrate what results it can achieve (see section 4.3 on effectiveness). This is particularly important for actual and potential paying members: The survey results and interviews show that the main condition for full members to continue or increase their financial contributions and for new members to become paying members is the extent to which the Platform can demonstrate its added value in terms of measurable results. So far the ability of the Platform to deliver results has been reduced by its broad objectives and the expectations of diverse members which have pushed the Platform to implement many diversified activities. As noted in section 5.1 on strategic leadership section, the Platform is currently implementing elements of five different roles; given its limited resources this reduces its potential to deliver results.

### **The limited number of paying members, given the Platform's business model**

The Platform's current business model is based on "membership plus projects" (i.e., members' fees and contributions tied to specific projects) and is heavily dependent on the contributions of its nine paying members. Moreover, within this small group, a few members (BMZ, WB, EC) have provided 70% of the Platform's total resources since 2003. The Platform's future development and ability to deliver results would benefit from a more solid base of core funding. The Platform's ability to increase the number of paying members will become critical in the near future.

### **Uneven ownership, buy-in and participation by members**

As discussed in section 5.2.1 on membership, the sense of ownership of the Platform is higher among the “core group” than among associate members and newcomers. Moreover, individual ownership and commitment of the FPs is not always backed up by institutional ownership. This has several implications for the Platform’s sustainability:

- Institutional ownership and support are needed for FPs to carry out their pivotal role for the Platform: decision making, strategic leadership, communication and coordination, and activity implementation. The lack of institutional commitment seriously endangers the Platform’s functioning and ability to deliver results.
- The lack of institutional commitment makes succession more difficult (i.e., when individual commitments come to an end).
- Broad institutional ownership is needed to secure financial contributions.
- The limited participation of associate members and newcomers in decision making limits the Platform’s ability to include their views and respond to their expectations, which over time could reduce its ongoing relevance to this group.
- The limited ownership and buy-in of associate members, partially due to their limited participation in decision making, increases the Platform’s dependence on a small core group for both for financial and human resources.

### **Limited succession and rotation among champions**

As discussed in section 3.5 on internal context and 5.1 on leadership, there has been continuity in the Platform’s champions. As these leaders approach retirement, the absence of clear institutional succession strategies puts the Platform’s future at stake. Moreover, as only full members can sit on the Board or SC, the pool from which the Platform can draw a new generation of leaders is quite small. While continuity in leadership provided stability and trust in the early stages of the Platform’s evolution, the lack of leadership rotation created some unhealthy dependencies on a few members and discouraged participation and buy-in by other members. The revised Charter addresses this issue, but it is too soon to see what effects this will have.

### **Attracting and retaining volunteers and other human resources**

The Platform is heavily reliant on members’ volunteer input. It is crucial for the Platform to have a roster of qualified and committed people in member organisations that it can count on. The very small professional Secretariat is overworked and each staff member is crucial. GDPRD needs to assess the validity of its assumptions and expectations about the FP role. It may need to consider alternative ways to operate. As noted in section 5.2.3 on operational structure, suggestions included augmenting the Secretariat staff and its roles and responsibilities, reducing the scope of the Platform, and/or introducing semi-professional or professional positions such as an executive director.

In conclusion, the status quo is hardly sustainable for the Platform. If it is to survive, it will need to:

- Clarify its role and objectives in relation to its resources and to its context;
- Demonstrate its added value to its members;
- Establish a business model suited to its role;

- Ensure that future investments are congruent with its role; and
- Create conditions for member's institutional ownership and broader member participation.

We address these points in our recommendations in Chapter 7.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Conclusions

**The current global context suggests that a network such as GDPRD is relevant in the institutional framework of the ARD sector.** As a result of the current food price situation, food and agriculture are now very central on the global agenda. UN agencies, IFIs, and several donors have called for immediate action to avoid the risks of starvation and social unrest in many poor food-importing countries. The FAO High Level Conference in Rome (June 2008) adopted a final declaration calling upon the international community to take urgent and coordinated action to combat the negative impacts of soaring food prices, in particular through increased investments in agriculture and rural development in least developed countries.

Complex global problems that combine cross-cutting issues, broad and diversified stakeholders, and that have potential worldwide consequences fuel the need for joint solutions among stakeholders. Networks are increasingly used to respond to this type of need.

The ARD sector is becoming more complex, encompassing several cross-cutting issues such as environment, climate change, and international trade, as well as many new and diversified stakeholders. As the number of actors and the investments in ARD increase, so will the competition. Coordination will become more necessary and more challenging than ever before.

The rapidly evolving global context will have significant impacts on organisations working in ARD: While there is a growing interest and need for these organisations, it might be difficult for ARD organisations to respond quickly to the dramatic increase in demands for their services.

GDPRD has a potential niche as a joint donor initiative and as the only global mechanism for donor coordination in ARD. There is general consensus among GDPRD stakeholders that in this context the Platform could play significant roles as a networker, knowledge broker, and clearing house, and some believe that it also might have a role as an advocate or service provider for AE in ARD. The Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra (September 2008) will provide a good opportunity for the Platform to demonstrate and explore its worth.

**Given its stage of evolution, the Platform has had some degree of success and is starting to be recognised in the global community, but it is not yet an influential player.**

The Platform is a relatively new network in the formative stages of growth and evolution. It is becoming more visible and well known internationally among its members and ARD organisations. Despite its relative youth, the Platform has contributed to improving coordination and collaboration among its members, primarily by providing a place for donors to meet, discuss and share information, and develop joint positions, and its advocacy efforts are beginning to show good results in terms of influencing its members' thinking. The Platform is not yet influencing the global agenda, but one step in this direction was its success in lobbying for the inclusion of the ARD sector at one of the tables at the upcoming High Level Forum in Accra.

Among its members, the Platform is seen as a successful knowledge broker. Due to its collaborative efforts to refine AE principles for ARD among its members, the Platform is starting to be recognised as a global mechanism for discussing the implementation of AE principles in ARD. However, it is still relatively unknown outside of ARD circles and at the field level, and is not yet a major player at the global level. While the Platform is not considered the ARD sectoral authority and some of its members, in particular the WB, are more influential than the Platform itself, it has capitalised on its relationships to its own advantage, as for example with the WDR 2008.



**GDPRD has undertaken many activities in a wide range of areas. This has fuelled some unrealistic stakeholder expectations.**

The Platform has very broad objectives and its members have highly diverse interests and expectations. The Platform has evolved organically, responding to emerging issues, needs, and opportunities, and, as is typical for young networks, has experimented with many different activities, focusing more on the production of goods and services than on results. Its implementation of such diverse activities implies that the Platform has five roles, which has fuelled unrealistic expectations among its members who have interests and needs in these diverse areas.

The absence of a well defined role makes it difficult for the Platform to determine future directions and develop the strategies needed to fulfil those directions. The lack of a clear role also affects the Platform's reputation in the international community and limits its ability to demonstrate its added value in a highly competitive and demanding global context.

Operating with a very small Secretariat, the Platform's business model is based on contributions from its full members and volunteer time. The lack of focus and the dispersion of limited resources to several lines of activity drastically reduce the Platform's ability to deliver visible and consistent results.

**The Platform's governance and operational structures are based on assumptions that are currently not completely valid.**

The Platform's models for both its governance and operations assume that volunteer member representatives (i.e., Focal Points) have sufficient time and resources to dedicate to the Platform. Such is not the case. The members' limited institutional commitment to the Platform reduces the ability of Focal Points to fulfil their roles.

Uneven ownership and commitment among different members (in particular between the core group and the other members) increases the Platform's dependence on a very small group of devoted individuals to provide leadership. In addition, the unclear division of labour between the Board, SC and Secretariat leave the Platform with scarce strategic leadership at a time in its evolution when it is sorely needed.

**The status quo is not a sustainable option for the Platform.**

The Platform is at a critical juncture. It must demonstrate its continued relevance and added value in a growing and increasingly competitive field, which, given its unclear role and limited resources, presents a major challenge.

The Platform's few active paying members do not provide sufficient financial and human resources for the Platform to respond to increasing contextual demands or to meet the expectations of its various members. And, while members say they are unlikely to increase their financial support without more visible results, given the considerable gap between the Platform's broad scope and its scant resources, visible results remain illusive.

The Platform's leadership, which has not rotated and has remained concentrated in a small core group, is not sustainable and has been a disincentive to broad ownership and participation. The current uneven ownership, buy-in, and participation of Platform members, as well as the lack of institutional commitment to the Platform, hamper the effective functioning of the Platform's governing and operational structures (which are currently dependent on the volunteer time and financial contributions of a very small group of members) and create a challenge for succession and renewal.

**Winding down the network would be not only a disappointment to current members, especially the highly devoted core group and some energetic newcomers, but would be a missed opportunity in the current global context.**

The Platform is at a critical stage in its evolution. If it wants to pursue its mission and become a recognised and influential actor in the current global context, it will need to take urgent and immediate action to increase its effectiveness and viability.

## 7.2 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: The GDPRD Board should immediately develop and operationalise a plan to make the network more focused and strategic.**

In order to remain relevant in the changing context, GDRPD must identify a limited number of priority roles and align its membership, business model, structures, processes, resources to these roles.

The Platform should develop a strategic plan that addresses the following key questions and options:

- 1) Clarify **priority role(s), mission, objectives, target groups, and expected results.**  
The Platform could consider combinations of five possible roles:
  - Networker
  - Knowledge Broker/Clearing House
  - Advocate
  - Knowledge Creator
  - Service Provider
- 2) Depending on role(s), consider implications and make appropriate choices concerning:
  - **Membership**
  - **Structure**
  - **Human resources**
  - **Financial resources**

More details on the options available to the Platform in each of the abovementioned strategic areas are provided in Exhibit 7.1
- 3) Depending on the Platform's identified role(s), structures and resources, adapt or develop a **programming strategy** and develop a **system to track and report on performance.**
  - Align the annual workplan with objectives and resources
  - Develop a results-based monitoring system:
    - Depending on the Platform's objectives, activities and resources, different type of results monitoring systems may be envisaged.
    - The Platform should define the most appropriate level of formality and complexity of the monitoring system, and determine whether it will be carried out internally or externally or a combination.

**Exhibit 7.1 Platform’s main options in its four key strategic areas**

<b>Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members could be individuals, institutions, or institutions represented by appointed individuals</li> <li>• Individual members or individuals representing member institutions could be ARD experts or other groups (AE experts, field staff, upper management) within organisations</li> <li>• Define a good balance between an exclusive membership model (i.e., a core of traditional members) and an inclusive model (i.e., an extended family that includes new stakeholders)</li> <li>• Identify the appropriate number of members (i.e., grow/ not grow)</li> <li>• Identify the most appropriate types of relationships the Platform needs to develop (e.g., different levels of membership, partnerships, and affiliations) and define their purpose</li> <li>• Define the rights and obligations of the different membership categories at the institutional and individual level</li> </ul>
<b>Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide whether to remain an informal network or move to a more formal structure. This could imply making decisions about the Platform’s legal identity and the Secretariat’s status and legal framework.</li> <li>• Decide whether the structure will remain light and non-bureaucratic or become more structured and institutionalised (in terms of Secretariat/operational support unit and processes and systems)</li> <li>• Decide whether governance and operational structures will remain volunteer- and member-based, or become professionally based, or a mix of the two.</li> <li>• Define/clarify the role of the Secretariat (e.g., facilitator, coordinator, manager, operational implementing unit).</li> <li>• Clarify and adjust if necessary the roles of the Board and SC. Consider the possibility of introducing another executive position to link the Secretariat and the governing bodies (e.g., professional executive director, or seconded SC chair)</li> <li>• Define the most appropriate location for the Secretariat: It could be a virtual office, a dedicated central office, or spread among several offices in different member organisations. If the Secretariat is based in a central office, decide whether it will be an independent entity or hosted by a member organisation. In the last case, evaluate the most convenient option</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the competencies required in the Secretariat and executive bodies. Consider the need for both content and process skills.</li> <li>• Define the number of staff required by the Secretariat to handle its workload.</li> <li>• Decide on the mix of paid, volunteer, and contract human resources.</li> <li>• Consider the balance between continuity (retaining current human resources, both professional and volunteer) and the need for new skills and ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify an appropriate and sustainable business model given the Platform’s key role(s)</li> <li>• Consider possible options and combinations (e.g., membership fees, member contributions, grants, fees-for-service).</li> </ul>

**Recommendation 2:** In order to realise recommendation 1, the GDPRD Board should initiate a strategic process aimed at clarifying the Platform's role and objectives. This should culminate in a strategic plan and an operational business plan to guide the Platform's future development.

The time is very appropriate for the Platform to undertake a strategic planning process:

- The current period is crucial for the Platform to show its worth and added value. The sooner the Platform begins tackling the challenges that hamper its performance, the better it will be placed to respond to emerging demands and pressures and to consolidate its niche in the global context.
- By July 2008 the Platform will have the results of several exercises: external evaluation, harvesting exercises.
- From now to the end of the 2008 the Platform's members will have several opportunities to meet: SC retreat in July, Accra meeting in September, the annual meeting in October/November.

The Platform's strategic process should have three components:

- The development of a **general strategic plan**. This document will provide an overview of what the Platform is, where it sees itself going, what its key roles will be given the external context, its mission and objectives, and who it wants to influence/benefit. At a general high level it will deal with related strategic areas such as the business model, membership, and structures. The ultimate responsibility for this document will lie with the Board.
- The development of an **operational business plan**. This document will be a technical working plan on how to implement and operationalise the strategic directions set in the general strategic plan. The ultimate responsibility for this document will lie with the Secretariat. The operational business plan will be developed after the Platform adopts a General Strategic Plan. It will take longer to develop the operational plan as it will have to address in practical and technical terms several important elements, including: the business model, the governance and operational structures, the alignment of programming to strategy and resources, and the establishment of an RBM system.
- The establishment of a **feedback mechanism** to solicit input from all members on the strategic process. The mechanism may be informal or formal, but should be undertaken on a regular basis (every three to six months). Feedback should be reviewed to validate and/or revisit decisions made in the strategic process.

### **Proposed Process for the development of the Platform's General Strategic Plan**

The remainder of this section focuses on the first proposed component of the Platform's strategic process, the development of the Platform's general strategic plan, because of its urgency and crucial importance for the Platform, given the external context and GDPRD stage of evolution. Other subsequent components can be detailed further if/as required by the Platform.

The process leading to the development of the Platform's general strategic plan should:

- Begin as soon as possible (July) and provide some first results by the end of 2008 (ideally by the annual meeting). Timing is crucial.

- Be guided by a clear workplan that includes: objectives, expected results, roles and responsibilities, timelines, resource allocation, assumptions/risk factors.
- Take advantage of upcoming opportunities for members to meet, discuss and share/gather information about the strategic plan (SC retreat, Accra High Level Forum, the Platform's annual meeting).
- Be based on the consolidated information from the strategic exercises recently undertaken by the Platform (external evaluation, internal evaluation, harvesting exercises, Poggiovalle retreat, Brussels working session).
- Have a phased approach:
  - In the first phase, the Platform should identify key role(s), mission, objectives, target groups, expected results.
  - Subsequent phases should address other strategic dimensions: business model, membership, structures.
- Recognise the commitment, time, human and financial resources, and passion that are required, and provide for these – otherwise the process will not succeed.
- Have a strong leader. The strategic process will require strong leadership to ensure that it is carried out in a timely fashion and that decisions are made. The strategic process leader will ideally have sufficient clout to lead the process and the time to devote to it, as it will be a time-consuming responsibility. The Platform should consider hiring someone for this role, possibly someone with good knowledge of the Platform, instead of relying on volunteer input. The Platform might also consider hiring an external professional facilitator with an objective perspective to work with the leader and support the process.
- Solicit broad-based participation and integrate the views of all Platform stakeholders to the extent possible given the time available. The Platform should consider creating a working group for the development of the strategic plan composed of representatives of full and associate members and the Secretariat.
- Be conducted very openly. Updates on its status and main decisions/outputs should be published on the web site or circulated among all members and partners to keep all stakeholders on board.

While the Platform's strategic plan will require official endorsement by the governing bodies, it should be considered a living working document that can be adapted as necessary to the Platform's continuing evolution and changing external contexts.

Exhibit 7.2 presents an example of a workplan for the development of the Platform's strategic plan.

**Exhibit 7.2 Example of a Workplan for the Development of the Platform’s Strategic Plan**

WHEN	WHAT	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
July 2008	Consolidate information from various strategic exercises	<p>Receive network evaluation report</p> <p>Receive report on harvesting results</p> <p>Draft consolidated list of findings and recommendations</p> <p>Circulate this information among GDPRD members</p>	List of consolidated findings and recommendations prepared and circulated	Secretariat
	Board (or SC) retreat	<p>Board (or SC) discusses consolidated findings and recommendations and makes decisions on how to move forward. In particular, it should decide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives and timeframe of the strategic process</li> <li>Who will be involved in the working group responsible for the process: the SC, or a subcommittee of the Board, or a group composed of full and associate members and Secretariat representatives</li> <li>Size of the working group (between 5 and 8 members)</li> <li>Who will lead the process: a member of the working group, an external paid full-time or part-time person</li> <li>What resources will be allocated to the process (financial and human)</li> </ul> <p>Prepare a message to circulate to all members and associate members about the initiation of the process.</p>	<p>Identification of main objectives and timeline for the strategic process</p> <p>Identification of possible members of the working group and leader</p> <p>Identification of available resources</p> <p>Message to members about the initiation of the process</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>SC</p> <p>SC</p> <p>SC</p>
July-August 2008	Create working group representing different stakeholders and set up the strategic process	<p>Create a strategic process working group</p> <p>Elect/appoint the task leader (in the case of a hired professional, TORs prepared by Secretariat and approved by SC)</p> <p>Circulate message about the launching of the process to all members and via web site</p> <p>Creation of a wiki (or other online collaboration space) for sharing comments and feedback within the working group and with other stakeholders</p>	<p>Working group created</p> <p>Group leader appointed</p> <p>Message circulated</p> <p>Wiki (or other online collaboration space) activated</p> <p>Synthesis document on Platform roles, mission, expected results drafted and circulated to working group</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>SC</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Group leader/ Secretariat</p>

WHEN	WHAT	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
August 2008	Strategic process workplan	The working group develops the strategic process workplan SC endorses it Publish workplan on website	Workplan developed, approved and published	Working Group/ SC/ Secretariat
August- November 2008	Implementation of workplan	The working group, under the guidance of the task leader, develops first draft of the Platform's strategic plan  The working group will share information and communicate electronically. Video conferences may be arranged.  The working group may take advantage of the Accra meeting in September to organise a side event (group meeting) or to gather information from Platform stakeholders on an individual or small group basis.  Throughout this period the working group provides updates on the process on the website or via e-mail to all members. All members can provide comments and feedback.	Draft Strategic Plan	Working Group (with the support of the Secretariat)
November 2008	Share results, revise plan	The working group presents the draft Strategic Plan to the annual meeting  Feedback is collected and integrated  Revised Strategic Plan is circulated/published	Revised Strategic Plan	Working group/ Secretariat
December 2008	Approve Strategic Plan / end of the process	Board approves revised Strategic Plan Final document published on the web site	Final Strategic Plan	Board/Secretariat
2009	Develop Operational Business Plan	Secretariat to develop Operational Business Plan with input from others	Operational Business Plan	Secretariat





## Appendix I Evaluation Framework

AREAS	FOCI	MAJOR QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS	SOURCES OF DATA
Organisational Performance	Relevance	<p>Are the mission and objectives of the GDPRD relevant given the global context?</p> <p>Are the mission and objectives of the GDPRD relevant given its members' needs and priorities?</p> <p>Are the mission and objectives of the GDPRD relevant given its identified target groups and beneficiaries?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to the context</li> </ul> <p>How does GDPRD fit into the global context for aid effectiveness? For the attainment of the MDGs? What niche does GDPRD have/could have within the larger international development architecture? What is/could be its added value in this context? What are the key roles that GDPRD is playing today? What other organisations are playing a similar role to the Platform (if any)? How does GDPRD compare to those organisations?</p> <p>Are the Platform's goal and mission statements congruent with the priorities, strategies and objectives set out in international declarations (e.g. UN Millennium, 2000; Monterrey, 2002; Rome, 2003; Paris, 2005)?</p> <p>Are the conditions at the origin of the creation of GDPRD still prevalent? What has changed? Has GDPRD evolved to respond to a changed environment?</p> <p>Have the mission and objectives of GDPRD changed since its foundation? Are they still relevant in the international cooperation context? Will they remain relevant over time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to its members</li> </ul> <p>Are the Platform's goal and mission statements consistent with the priorities, mandates and strategic plans of its member organisations? What is GDPRD added value for its members?</p> <p>To what extent are GDPRD's activities relevant to the needs of its members? at the HQ level (sectoral, policy)? At the country level?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to its target groups</li> </ul> <p>Are GDPRD mission, objectives and activities relevant to the needs of its identified target groups? (donors? Partner countries? Others?)</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Perception analysis</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Literature review</p> <p>Consultation session with FPs and Secretariat in Brussels in March 2008</p>

AREAS	FOCI	MAJOR QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS	SOURCES OF DATA
Organisational Performance (cont'd)	Effectiveness	<p>To what extent has the Platform fulfilled its mission and objectives for each of the three pillars?</p> <p>What are the key lessons learned?</p>	<p>To what extent are GDPRD's mission and expected results clear and appropriate? To what extent are GDPRD's target groups and beneficiaries clearly defined and appropriate? To what extent are GDPRD's pillars – outreach, shared learning and aid effectiveness – appropriate and sufficient to deliver the Platform purpose? Has the focus on certain activities changed over time and why? Have these changes been appropriate?</p> <p>What are the inferred results of GDPRD's mission, objectives and activities? To what extent has the Platform fulfilled its inferred results?</p> <p>What have been and what are the most significant activities of GDPRD? How have they contributed to the pillars' expected outputs? How have they contributed to the realization of GDPRD's mission and ultimate objective given the stage of evolution of the Platform itself?</p> <p>What are the main successes, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of the activities in the 3 pillars? How have they changed over time? How will they evolve in the near future?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Consultation session with FPs and Secretariat in Brussels in March 2008</p>
	Efficiency	<p>To what extent are the Platform's resources used efficiently?</p>	<p>Has the Platform provided good value-for-money for its members?</p> <p>To what extent are GDPRD procedures and processes in place efficient?</p> <p>What is the ratio between administrative and programme expenditures? Is this the optimal ratio given the state of the evolution of the network?</p> <p>To what extent are the costs of GDPRD activities reasonable?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Document review</p>
	Sustainability	<p>Is GDPRD's business model appropriate to ensure its long-term sustainability?</p>	<p>Is GDPRD's funding base sufficient and appropriate to ensure its sustainability in the short, medium and long-term? Is it sufficiently differentiated?</p> <p>To what extent is GDPRD reliant (financially, human resources, infrastructure, other) on one or more members or individuals within member organisations for conducting its operations in the short, medium and long-term?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Consultation session with FPs and Secretariat in Brussels in March 2008</p>

AREAS	FOCI	MAJOR QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS	SOURCES OF DATA
Context	External Environment	What are the main characteristics of the Platform's external environment and how can/are they affecting the Platform?	<p>What were the main characteristics of the global context in the field of aid effectiveness, rural development and poverty reduction when the Platform was created? How have they changed over time? What are the main implications for the Platform?</p> <p>What other organisations/networks/working groups were dealing with similar issues at the time of GDPRD foundation? Now? How do they work? What value added was envisaged for GDPRD? What are partner countries' positions in respect to the Paris declaration principles? Are they changing over time? How does this affect the Platform?</p> <p>What are the key lessons regarding international networks of relevance to the Platform's growth and development?</p> <p>What are the major opportunities and risks in the external context for GDPRD and its partners, and have appropriate mitigating strategies been used?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Perception analysis</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Literature review</p>
	Internal Context	What are the main characteristics of the Platform's internal context and how can/are they affecting the Platform?	<p>Why was GDPRD created and how? How has this affected its further development? What have been the main milestones of its evolution?</p> <p>Who were the original founders? How have their views affected GDPRD's development? Has the role of the original founders evolved within the network? How?</p> <p>What were the values, incentives, cultural characteristics (or personality) of GDPRD when it was founded? Today? How and why have they changed? How are these changes affecting GDPRD?</p> <p>To what extent do BMZ hosting and GTZ administrative and management support affect the Platform? How?</p> <p>What have been the key changes in GDPRD's mission, structure, leadership, programmes, funding, key milestones, stakeholders, members, partners, beneficiaries, organisational crises and/or successes since its foundation? How did they take place and why?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Document review</p>
Organisational Capacities	Strategic Leadership	To what extent have the GDPRD SC and Board been able to provide leadership and direction-setting for the network?	<p>What role does the Board play in strategic leadership? The SC? Others (e.g. the Secretariat)?</p> <p>What strategic processes are in place, if any to help the Platform: Scan the environment? Plan and manage itself strategically? To review GDPRD performance? Are they adequate to provide good direction-setting for GDPRD?</p> <p>To what extent are GDPRD stakeholders adequately consulted and engaged in the strategic management of GDPRD?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Consultation session with FPs and Secretariat in Brussels in March 2008</p>

AREAS	FOCI	MAJOR QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS	SOURCES OF DATA
Organisational Capacities (cont'd)	Structure	<p>To what extent do the GDPRD governance, operational and membership structures support GDPRD in operationalizing its mandate efficiently and effectively?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance structure                     <p>To what extent is the Platform governance structure appropriate given the Platform's stage of evolution? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Platform's Governing System?</p> <p>What are the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the SC? Are they clear? Are they appropriate for the Platform at its stage of evolution? What is the chain of accountability in the Platform? Is it clear and adequate?</p> <p>To what extent do the Governing bodies provide appropriate guidance to the Secretariat?</p> <p>Does the present governance structure ensure adequate consultation and participation of members and partners?</p> <p>Are systems for reporting and accountability adequate at different levels of the Platform's governance structure?</p> </li> <li>• Operational Structure                     <p>To what extent are existing operational structures adequate given the mission of GDPRD?</p> <p>Are roles and responsibilities clear within the Secretariat? Are the roles and responsibilities clear between the Secretariat and the Steering Committee? The Board?</p> <p>Are there adequate mechanisms for internal communication and coordination among those employed by the Secretariat? Among different offices?</p> <p>Has the Secretariat changed over time (e.g. structure, staff, role, relationship with the members)? How and why?</p> </li> <li>• Membership:                     <p>Does GDPRD have the right members? Are the existing members appropriate to achieve the Platform's objectives? Are the existing members appropriate given the Platform's rationale? Are there other organisations that should become members in order for the Platform to remain relevant and effective?</p> <p>Is the size of the membership appropriate? Do members feel ownership for GDPRD products and services? Are there adequate incentives for membership?</p> <p>Are the different categories of membership (full and associate) adequate for the Platform and the members' needs?</p> </li> <li>• Role of FPs (each of the following questions refers both to full and associate member FPs)                     <p>Are FPs' roles and responsibilities clear within the Platform? Within their organisation? Have they been fulfilling their roles? Does this vary according to FPs? Why? Do FPs have within their organisations the appropriate power, clout, experience, and competences to carry out their roles?</p> <p>Do FPs feel ownership for the Platform services and products? To what extent does their engagement and sense of ownership depend on personal or institutional factors? To what extent does GDPRD governance and operational structures support FPs engagement and ownership (both full and associate member FPs)?</p> </li> </ul>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Consultation session with FPs and Secretariat in Brussels in March 2008</p>

AREAS	FOCI	MAJOR QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS	SOURCES OF DATA
Institutional Capacities	GTZ Institutional Support	Is the support provided by GTZ, in terms of the Platform management, appropriate and sufficient for the Platform to be effective and efficient?	<p>Does the Platform receive the type of human resources management, financial management, infrastructure management that it needs to carry out all planned activities form GTZ? What are the identified strengths and areas for improvement?</p> <p>Is there a good balance between the role of staff, consultants, partners, and members? Is turn-over an issue? Is the internationalization of the staff an issue?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders (especially Secretariat)</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>BMZ Internal evaluation 2008</p>
	Output Management	To what extent does GDPRD plan, manage, monitor and evaluate its activities and outputs to achieve its objectives?	<p>What are the planning, management, implementation, monitoring and reporting cycles and processes in place in GDPRD? How do they work? To what extent are they appropriate given GDPRD's stage of evolution, mandate and resources?</p> <p>Are the Pillars identified in the Charter helpful in guiding output planning? To what extent are the activities aligned with GDPRD objectives?</p> <p>Is GDPRD managing for results?</p> <p>What are the roles of the Secretariat, Board, SC, and other FPs in the planning and implementation of GDPRD activities?</p> <p>Is there sufficient and appropriate expertise within these different bodies for output management?</p> <p>Is the current allocation of the budget appropriate to obtain the expected results? Has it changed over time? How? What has the impact been?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Consultation session with FPs and Secretariat in Brussels in March 2008</p>
	Inter-Institutional Linkages	To what extent are GDPRD's relationships with other relevant networks or organisations adequate and strategic to achieve its objectives?	<p>What is the level and nature of cooperation between GDPRD and similar networks/coalitions? How has this changed over time?</p> <p>What is the level and nature of cooperation between GDPRD and its partner organisations? How has this changed over time?</p> <p>What is the relationship with OECD-DAC? Is it the most strategic possible?</p> <p>What are GDPRD relationships with regional initiatives such as CAADP? Are they the most strategic possible?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Perception analysis</p> <p>Document review</p>

AREAS	FOCI	MAJOR QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS	SOURCES OF DATA
Institutional Capacities (cont'd)	Network Processes	To what extent do GDPRD processes for communication, coordination, decision-making and problem solving support the network in fulfilling its mandate efficiently and effectively?	<p>What communication processes are in place within GDPRD? Are they appropriate given the stage of evolution of the Platform? Do they support the fulfillment of the Platform mandate efficiently and effectively? How could they be improved?</p> <p>What coordination processes are in place within GDPRD? Are they appropriate given the stage of evolution of the Platform? Do they support the fulfillment of the Platform mandate efficiently and effectively? How could they be improved?</p> <p>What decision making and problem solving processes are in place within GDPRD? Are they appropriate given the stage of evolution of the Platform? Do they support the fulfillment of the Platform mandate efficiently and effectively? How could they be improved?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Consultation session with FPs and Secretariat in Brussels in March 2008</p>
Future Directions		What recommendations for future directions could be drawn by the Platform's experience to date?	<p>What changes are needed to improve GDPRD's performance?</p> <p>What changes are needed (if any) in GDPRD's structure, capacities, and processes to improve its performance?</p>	<p>Interviews with GDPRD stakeholders</p> <p>Web-based survey</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Consultation session with FPs and Secretariat in Brussels in March 2008</p>

## Appendix II Stakeholders Consulted

NAME	ORG.	ROLE	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
<b>Secretariat</b>			
Sonja Bartelt	GDPRD Secretariat	Coordinator	Individual (face-to-face and telephone) and group interviews E-mail communications Session In Brussels (March 2008)
Christoph Langekamp	GDPRD Secretariat	Task Leader Agricultural and Rural Policy	Individual (face-to-face) and group interviews Session In Brussels (March 2008)
Ada Hakobyan	GDPRD Secretariat	Junior Professional	Group interview E-mail communications
Julia Rost	GDPRD Secretariat	Student Assistant	Group interview
Daniel Gerecke	GDPRD Secretariat	Task Leader Aid effectiveness and Communication	Group interview E-mail communications
Yinehew Zewdie	GDPRD Secretariat	Task leader CAADP	Individual telephone interview
Marc Witzel	GDPRD Secretariat/GTZ	Financial Administrator	Individual face-to-face interview. E-mail communications
René Adrian	GTZ	Web site management	E-mail communications
<b>Board members</b>			
Christoph Kohlmeyer	BMZ	Chairman of the Board Senior advisor, Division 314-Rural Development, Global Food Security	Individual face-to-face interviews Session In Brussels (March 2008)
Brian Baldwin	IFAD	Co-Chairman of the Board/Chairman of the SC Senior Operations Management Adviser,	Individual face-to-face and telephone interviews Session In Brussels (March 2008)
John Barrett	DFID	SC member Head of Profession (Livelihoods)	Individual telephone interviews
Mushtaq Ahmed	CIDA	SC member Policy advisor – Agriculture, Economic policies division, Policy Branch	Individual telephone interviews Session In Brussels (March 2008)

NAME	ORG.	ROLE	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Nwanze Okidegbe	WB	SC member Senior Advisor, Agriculture and Rural Development	Individual telephone interviews Session In Brussels (March 2008)
Florence Lasbennes	MAE-Fr	SC member Adviser Dept. Of Economic and agricultural development, DGCID	Individual face-to-face interview Session In Brussels (March 2008)
Marc Debois	EC	SC member Head of Sector, Agriculture, Food Security, Rural Development	Individual telephone interview Session In Brussels (March 2008)
Susan Thompson	USAID	Senior Policy Advisor - Bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade	Individual telephone interviews
Willi Graf	SDC	Senior Advisor, Natural Resources and Environment	Individual telephone interview Session In Brussels (March 2008)
<b>Associate member FPs</b>			
Hanne Carus	Danida	Chief Technical Adviser: Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Department for Technical Advisory Services	Individual telephone interviews
Siv Øystese (unofficial FP)	Global Mechanism	Associate financial and private sector strategy officer	Group face-to-face interviews Session In Brussels (March 2008)
Michael Angstreich	Norad	Senior Advisor, Agriculture and Environment, Private Sector Development Department	Individual telephone interview
Doreen Kibuka (unofficial FP)	OECD APF	Technical Advisor	Individual face-to-face interview
Sibiri Jean Zoundi	OECD SWAC	Head of Unit, Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development	Individual face-to-face interview
Lasse Krantz	Sida	Senior Rural Development Adviser, Department of Natural Resources and the Environment	Individual telephone interview
<b>Partner contact persons</b>			
Shenggen Fan	IFPRI	Director -Development Strategy and Governance Division	Individual telephone interview
Joachim Hofer	Neuchatel Initiative	Contact Person	Individual telephone interview
<b>Member organisations' non-FPs</b>			
Bernard Esnouf	AFD	Manager, Agriculture and Rural Development Division	Group face-to-face interview



NAME	ORG.	ROLE	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Didier Simon	AFD	Economist, Agriculture and Rural Development Division	Group face-to-face interview
Manfred Konukievitz	BMZ	Deputy Director General, Global and sectoral policies	Individual face-to-face interview
Jost Kadel	BMZ	Policy unit -Aid effectiveness division	Individual face-to-face interview
Hanspeter Schwar	BMZ	Cambodia desk officer	Individual face-to-face interview
Jean-Marcel Laferrière	CIDA	Agriculture specialist, Africa Branch	Individual face-to-face interview
Ben Davies	DFID	Rural Livelihoods Adviser	Individual telephone interview
Andrew Kidd	DFID	Head, Africa Growth Team, Africa Policy Department	Individual telephone interview
Jim Harvey	Previously DFID UK Permanent Representation to the UN Food and Agriculture agencies in Rome	Former DFID FP Ambassador	Individual face-to-face interview
Willem Olthoff	EC	CAADP PP Focal Point	Individual telephone interview
Guy Evers	FAO	Chief – Southern and Eastern Africa Service- FAO Investment service	Individual telephone interview
Sandra Aviles	FAO	Senior programme officer , Field Programme Development Service, Policy assistance and resource mobilisation division, technical cooperation department	Individual face-to-face interview
Michael Wales	Previously FAO	Former FAO FP Former Principal Advisor of FAO's Investment Center	Individual telephone interview
Elisabeth Barsk	Global Mechanism	Director strategic programme	Group face-to-face interview
Christian Henckes	GTZ	Head of section, Agriculture and Food	Individual face-to-face interview Session In Brussels (March 2008)
Helmut Albert	GTZ	Agricultural Economist GDPRD internal evaluation team	Group face-to face interview
Angelika Fleddermann	GTZ	Senior Manager, Rural Development and Management of natural resources GDPRD internal evaluation team	Group face-to face interview

NAME	ORG.	ROLE	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Rod Cooke	IFAD	Director, Technical Advisory division	Individual face-to-face interview
Karim Hussein	IFAD	Regional economist, Africa I Division, Programme Management Department	Individual face-to-face interview
Kevin Cleaver	IFAD (previously WB)	Assistant President for Programmes Previously World Bank's Director for Agriculture and Rural Development	Individual telephone interview
Philippe Dardel	MAE-Fr	Bureau des Politiques du développement économique et agricole	Group face-to-face interview
Marie-Cécile Thirion	MAE-Fr	Bureau des Politiques du développement économique et agricole	Group face-to-face interview
Jean-Luc François	MAE-Fr	Adjoint au Sous-directeur Politiques Sectorielles et OMDs	Individual face-to-face interview
Mark Cackler	WB	Manager, Agriculture and Rural Development Department	Individual telephone interview
<b>Developing countries government representatives</b>			
Sar Sovann	Cambodian Ministry of Land management , Urban Planning and Construction	Deputy DG and Director LMAP	Individual telephone interview
<b>Donor representatives in developing countries</b>			
Tiina Huvio	Finland Embassy in Nicaragua	Senior Adviser for Rural Development	Individual telephone interview
<b>Other relevant organisations</b>			
Ebba Dohlman	OECD (Previously OECD – POVNET Agriculture )	Principal Administrator, Office of the Secretary-General	Individual face-to-face interview
Michael Laird	OECD-DAC POVNET	Senior Policy Analyst, Poverty Reduction and Growth	Group face-to-face interview
Peter Bieler	OECD-DAC POVNET	Senior Policy Advisor, Poverty Reduction and Growth	Group face-to-face interview
Hubert De Milly	OECD-DAC Aid Effectiveness group	Senior Policy Advisor	Individual face-to-face and telephone interviews
Aksel Noerstad	The Development Fund	Senior Policy Advisor	Individual telephone interview
Sheri Arnott	Canadian Hunger Foundation	Program Manager, Southern Africa	Individual telephone interview
Pat Roy Mooney	ETC Group	Executive Director	Individual telephone interview

## Appendix III Documents Reviewed

### 1. INTERNAL DOCUMENTS

#### 1.1 Secretariat/administration

- GDPRD Secretariat, *Platform Secretariat TORs*, May 2007
- GDPRD Secretariat, *Concept “Harvesting the Platform’s Experiences*, March 2008
- GDPRD Secretariat, *Note: Status of country requests*, March 2008
- GDPRD Secretariat, *Contribution arrangement IFAD 2008 (model)*
- RUTA GDPRD, *Memorandum of Understanding on collaborative efforts*, 2007

#### 1.2 Evaluations/reviews

- GTZ, *“Fighting poverty in Rural areas” Project internal evaluation draft report*, February 2008 (extracts, translated form the original document in German)
- Catherine Hill, *“Reinforcing Gender in the Work of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development”*, Draft Report, January 2008
- GDPRD, *Assessment of the ownership, harmonization and alignment action plan for the rural productive sector: achievements, lessons learned and recommendations, draft*, April 2008

#### 1.3 In-country pilot projects documentation

- GDPRD, *Cambodia PBA Facilitation – Mission Reports 2006-2007*
- GDPRD, *Experiences and results from the Platform’s in-country facilitation service in Cambodia*, November 2006
- GDPRD, *Burkina Faso Mission Report on Harmonization Efforts*, March 2006

#### 1.4 Reporting

- *Platform Progress Report 2007*, Donor Platform 2008
- *Platform Progress Report 2006*, Donor Platform 2007
- *Platform Progress Report 2005*, GDPRD 2006

#### 1.5 Workplanning

- GDPRD Secretariat, *Indicative Secretariat workplan 2008*, January 2008
- GDPRD Secretariat, *Overview of Secretariat Activities*, January 2008
- GDPRD Secretariat, *Activity Matrix 2008*, January 2008
- GDPRD Secretariat, *Indicative Secretariat Workplan for CAADP*, January 2008
- GDPRD Secretariat, *Expanded version of the draft CAADP workplan for 2008*
- GDPRD Secretariat, *Platform Action Plan 2007*
- *GDPRD Secretariat, Planned Budget and expenditures for the activities of GDPRD in 2007*

## 1.6 Charters

- GDPRD Charter March 2008
- GDPRD Charter June 2005

## 2. MEETINGS MINUTES AND DOCUMENTS

### 2.1 Business meetings minutes

- GDPRD - Minutes 5th Business Meeting, June 2005
- GDPRD - Minutes 4th Business Meeting, April 2005
- GDPRD - Minutes 4th Business Meeting, Annex, April 2005
- GDPRD - Minutes 3rd Business Meeting, December 2004
- GDPRD - Minutes 2nd Business Meeting, June 2004
- GDPRD - Minutes 1st Business Meeting, December 2003

### 2.2 SC meetings minutes

- Minutes from the 1<sup>st</sup> Steering committee meeting (September 2005) to the 17<sup>th</sup> SC Meeting, January 2008

### 2.3 Poggiovalle SC retreats

- Agenda of the Steering Committee retreat, Poggiovalle/Italy, September 26-29, 2007
- Minutes of the 2nd Steering Committee retreat, Poggiovalle, Italy, September, 2007
- Immediate Action Points after the Steering Committee Retreat in Poggiovalle, Italy, 2007
- Other related documents:
  - Review Platform Pillar III "Enhancing Aid Effectiveness", 2007
  - Review Platform Pillar II "Sheared Learning", 2007
  - Review Platform Pillar I "Outreach and Policy Dialogue", 2007
  - Platform Charter review at the Steering Committee retreat, Italy, 2007
  - Pictures of the stakeholders' analysis
  - Pictures of the SWAT analysis

### 2.4 Board meetings

- 1<sup>st</sup> Board meeting minutes, Paris, December 2007
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Board Meeting Minutes, Brussels, March 2008

### 2.5 General meetings

- Paris December 2007
  - *Agriculture is back on the agenda: Seizing the opportunity*, Annual General Meeting Report
  - Annual Meeting Programme, 2007
- Washington December 2006
  - Programme Platform Meeting Washington 2006 **F +P**
  - Synthesis Report Platform General Meeting Washington December 2006 **F +P**

- Brussels April 2006
  - Programme GDPRD Meeting 2006
  - GDPRD - General Meeting 2006, Brussels, Final Report

### 3. GDPRD PRODUCTS

#### 3.1 Communication/outreach

- Michael Cleaver (WB), Presentation “Global Forum for Rural Development”, 1<sup>st</sup> European forum on rural development, Montpellier 2002
- Global Donor Platform Flyer 2007
- Platform Speaking, GDPRD 2006
- Targeting Rural Poverty to Achieve Millennium Development Goal 1; GDPRD, Sept 2005 (advocacy pamphlet)
- Web site
- Platform Newsletter No. 2, November 2007
- Platform Brief June 2007

#### 3.2 Consensus and discussion papers

- Concept towards a Code of Conduct: Establishing Joint Donor Minimum Standards for effective ARD Programmes, Donor Platform June 2007 (Concept note for the for the Platform-facilitated process towards a Code of Conduct). Revised December 2007.
- Cornerstones for Effective Agriculture and Rural Development Programmes under a Programme-based Approach, Donor Platform June 2007
- External Facilitation Note, GDPRD 2006 (Operational guidelines for the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development’s facilitation service)
- Hot Topics, GDPRD April 2006
- Improving Donor Coordination for Rural Development, March 2004 (discussion paper on guiding principles and general approach towards future action)
- Joint Donor Concept on Rural Development, GDPRD 2006
- Joint Donor Minimum Standards for Effective Aid Management in Agriculture and Rural Development Programmes, Draft, Donor Platform June 2007
- Joint principles for Aid Effectiveness in A&RD, Dec 2007
- The Role of Agriculture and Rural Development in Achieving the MDGs: a Joint Donor Narrative; GDPRD, Sept 2005
- The way to donor harmonisation: Fostering, collaborative effort at country level issues, objectives, June 2004 (discussion proposal)

#### 3.3 Studies and guidelines

- Assessment Study on Harmonisation and Alignment in Rural Development in four pilot countries; GDPRD, March 2005
- Formulating and Implementing Sector-wide Approaches in Agriculture and Rural Development: A Synthesis Report, Donor Platform 2007

- Indicators for tracking results in less than ideal conditions. An M&E sourcebook for A&RD. December 2007
- Platform Policy Brief No. 1: Mind the gap: How to improve rural-urban linkages and reduce poverty, October 2007
- Study on SWAps for Agriculture and Rural Development - Information Sheet, GDPRD, April 2006
- SWAps in Agriculture and Rural Development: A Desk Review of Experiences, Issues and Challenges, GDPRD-FAO, IDS, ODI, April 2006

#### 4. Other Documents

##### 4.1 Literature and relevant documents on organizations and networks

- Lusthaus, Adrien, Anderson, Carden, Montalván, Organisational assessment. A framework for improving performance, Inter-American Development Bank and IDRC, Washington and Ottawa, 2002,
- Lusthaus and Milton-Feasby, The evaluation of inter-organizational relationships in the Not-for-profit sector, Universalialia 2006
- Mendizabal E., Building effective research policy networks: linking function and form, ODI, London, October 2006
- Schenk I., Structured flexibility: the governance, coordination and outcomes of IDRC supported networks, IDRC, 2005
- Tuozzo and Tussie, *The Governance and Coordination of Networks: An Analysis of the Findings from an IDRC Strategic Evaluation (1995-2005)*, IDRC, 2006,
- Willard and Creech, The sustainability of networks: an analysis of the findings from an IDRC strategic evaluation (1995-2005), IDRC, Ottawa, October 2006
- Wind T., A Review of IDRC Documentation on the Sustainability of Networks (1995-2005), IDRC 2004
- Other relevant networks evaluations, Universalialia, 2005-2007

##### 4.2 Literature and relevant documents on ARD and AE

- Cabral L., *Accra 2008: The Bumpy Road to Aid Effectiveness in Agriculture*, Overseas Development Institute, April 2008
- Declaration of the High-level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, Rome, 5 June 2008
- ETC Group Communiqué, Issue n. 97, January 2008
- FAO, *Summary of food and agricultural statistics*, 2003
- More and better Secretariat, “More and Better” An international Campaign for food, agriculture and rural development aid to eradicate hunger and poverty (communication pamphlet), Rome
- OECD, *2007 Development Cooperation report – Statistical annex*, 2008
- OECD/FAO, *Agricultural Outlook from OECD and FAO, “Agriculture commodity prices should ease from their recent record peaks but over the next 10 years they are expected to average well above the mean of the past decade”*, OECD, Paris, May 2008

- OECD-DAC, *Promoting pro-poor growth – Agriculture*, OECD, Paris 2006
- OECD-DAC, *Aid to agriculture*, Paris, December 2001
- WB, *World Development Report 2008 “Agriculture for development”*, IBRD/WB, Washington, 2007

#### 4.3 Evaluation and RBM

- IDRC, *Outcome Mapping*, Ottawa 2001
- OECD-DAC, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*, Paris 2002

## Appendix IV List of Evaluation Findings

- Finding 1: Over the past 25 years, the agriculture sector lost importance on the development agenda, despite its potential for reducing poverty and improving food security. Due to the current food price situation, food and agriculture are now very central on the global agenda.
- Finding 2: While the Aid Effectiveness principles of donor coordination and harmonisation are as important in the ARD sector as in other sectors, some specific characteristics of ARD are not well accommodated by the 2005 Paris Declaration; these will be examined at the Accra Meeting in September 2008.
- Finding 3: The agriculture and rural development sector is becoming more complex in relation to the changing global context. This is putting new pressure and demands on organisations working in the agricultural sector.
- Finding 4: Networks are being used increasingly to address complex global problems that cannot be effectively addressed by individual organisations. However, the broader scope and diversity of a network's constituency increases the pressure to respond to a multiplicity of expectations and needs, some of which may be conflicting.
- Finding 5: The Platform is a relatively new network, in formative stages of growth and evolution. This needs to be taken into account when assessing its performance and capacities.
- Finding 6: A small core group of passionate individuals from GDPRD member organisations played an active role in creating the Platform in 2003 and in guiding its evolution over the past several years. Changes in the core group's composition present opportunities and challenges to the Platform's continued development.
- Finding 7: GDPRD has broad objectives, modest resources, and a growing list of members with new ideas. This has led to diverse expectations about the Platform's performance and is contributing to some tensions within the Platform.
- Finding 8: The Platform's mission and objectives are congruent with the developing international consensus around the need for more and better coordinated efforts in ARD to address the current food price situation and contribute to achieving the MDGs.
- Finding 9: The Platform's relevance to its very broad range of stakeholders varies by their proximity to and involvement with the network. While GDPRD's mission and objectives remain highly relevant to its inner core (individual members of the Steering Committee), its relevance to other stakeholders is growing slowly but unevenly.
- Finding 10: According to consulted stakeholders, the Platform has been somewhat effective in fulfilling its ultimate objective, considering its young age and limited resources.



- Finding 11: The Platform has had some good results in Pillar 1 (advocacy and outreach) and is becoming more visible and better known internationally at the ARD/members level but not yet at the global level.
- Finding 12: In terms of Pillar 2 (knowledge management and innovation), members regard the Platform as a good knowledge broker, but consider innovation to be its main weakness.
- Finding 13: The Platform has been more effective in refining aid effectiveness principles at the HQ level than in supporting coordination in country.
- Finding 14: Since its inception, the Platform has been very activity-oriented, which has led to a significant number of outputs. Like other networks at similar stages of evolution, it has focused on experimentation rather than outcomes and performance measurement.
- Finding 15: The Secretariat's processes and procedures aimed at limiting transaction costs are sometimes detrimental to full participation and transparency.
- Finding 16: The Platform's full members are generally satisfied with the Platform's value-for-money considering its activities to date and their relatively small investment. However, there is a wide agreement that continued or increased contributions will depend on more measurable results.
- Finding 17: The Platform's administrative cost ratio is quite high, which is normal in networks. The Platform would have a clearer understanding of its efficiency if it distinguished between the operational and administrative costs of its programming.
- Finding 18: There are multiple and increasing expectations about the Platform's role among its members. The absence of a well understood role, combined with limited resources, is affecting the Platform's effectiveness and reputation.
- Finding 19: The Platform recognises the need to take stock and has taken various steps aimed at clarifying future directions. The potential success of these efforts is challenged by several limitations in the management of the strategic process and its members' time.
- Finding 20: The Platform profited in its early stages from the strong formative leadership of a small group of champions who have maintained their support and steady influence over the years. One important challenge for the Platform today is building a sustainable broad-based leadership for the future.
- Finding 21: GDPRD's governance and operational structures are highly dependent on the input of volunteer representatives of its members (i.e., the Focal Points). Assumptions about Focal Points' availability to participate are not being met, reducing the potential effectiveness of the Platform.
- Finding 22: The Platform's current membership structure of bilateral and multilateral donors permits consensus building among similar organisations but does not provide for meaningful interaction with other key stakeholders including the private sector, CSOs, and country representatives from the South.

- Finding 23: The Platform is striving to find a good balance of commitment and participation between founding members and newcomers and between full members and associate members.
- Finding 24: The highly variable institutional ownership of members challenges the Platform's effectiveness and sustainability. The Platform has started to address this.
- Finding 25: The Platform's full members are responsible for the Platform's advisory governance, but the legal authority lies outside the Platform itself. While this type of temporary arrangement is typical in young networks, it can become challenging as the Platform matures.
- Finding 26: The Platform has taken the positive initiative to revise its Charter; some further clarifications are needed to ensure that it remains a living and dynamic document.
- Finding 27: The Platform's operational structure, based primarily on the role of Focal Points, limits the ability of the SC to make timely operational decisions and to provide the Secretariat with needed guidance.
- Finding 28: The clarification of the Secretariat role and its cooperation with the SC are crucial to Platform's operational effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, particularly in the context of limited resources.
- Finding 29: While the Platform has benefited from GTZ's well-established administrative support, which was low-risk and very pragmatic in the Platform's early stages of evolution, this model may be a challenge for the Platform's continued development.
- Finding 30: Output management in GDPRD has been pragmatic and ad hoc to date, but the Platform is in the process of formalising its approach.
- Finding 31: The Platform has identified possible strategic partners for each pillar. While this is a good first step, more attention needs to be paid to the purposes of these partnerships in relation to the Platform's objectives.
- Finding 32: The Platform has developed several resource-saving and relatively effective coordination mechanisms. However, GDPRD coordination relies heavily on members' volunteer input, which presents some challenges for effective coordination.
- Finding 33: The Platform has efficient decision-making mechanisms that rely heavily on the input of full members' FPs. The main challenges are timely decisions on operational matters and broad-based decisions on strategic matters.
- Finding 34: GDPRD's internal communication processes rely on the Secretariat's use of communication tools, which are used effectively, and the roles played by FPs, which have had mixed results.
- Finding 35: The Platform's sustainability will depend on how it responds to new opportunities and addresses challenges in resources, results, and ownership.

## Appendix V Board, SC and Secretariat Roles and Responsibilities

FOCAL POINTS	BOARD	SC	SECRETARIAT
<p>(Source Charter 2008 – FPs' TORs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that the headquarters and field staff in their respective organisations are well informed about Platform activities</li> <li>Serving as contact point between the Platform Secretariat or all other Platform's working bodies and their relevant member organisations</li> <li>Reviewing work undertaken by other organisations on behalf of the Platform in accordance with (the Platform's) communications procedures</li> <li>Exchanging data and information with other member organisations, including providing the Secretariat with relevant data and other information materials for Platform website and relevant publications</li> </ul>	<p>(Source Charter 2008)</p> <p>The responsibilities of the Board include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To nominate, through election, the Platform Chair and Vice-Chair</li> <li>To nominate, through a consensus of Board members, the members of the Platform Steering Committee</li> <li>To agree upon the admission of new Platform members and associate members</li> <li>To consider the long-term operational strategy for the Platform</li> <li>To approve the Platform annual budget</li> <li>To approve the Platform annual work plan</li> <li>To approve and amend the Platform Charter, including its annexes</li> <li>To agree on the formation of Technical Working Groups</li> </ul>	<p>(Source Charter 2008)</p> <p>The responsibilities of the Steering Committee include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide day-to-day supervision of, and guidance to, the Secretariat</li> <li>To review the performance of the Platform Secretariat and evaluate its impact</li> <li>To help raise additional resources</li> <li>To report to the Board Chair on a regular basis, and annually to the Board.</li> </ul>	<p>(Source Charter 2008)</p> <p>The Secretariat's responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance and Management</li> </ul> <p>Support to the main Governance bodies of the Platform and implementation of their decisions, bearing the primary responsibility for ensuring that Board and SC decisions are carried out;</p> <p>Proposing activities to implement Board decisions and preparing the TORs for contracted consultants who carry out work on behalf of the Platform;</p> <p>Providing advisory services to the Board, member organisations and Platform partners in the area of rural development and agricultural policies, aid effectiveness and specific external initiatives, for example CAADP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation and supervision of activities</li> </ul> <p>Guiding and supporting Platform activities, including thorough analysis and policy advice in the area of aid effectiveness, knowledge management and innovation, CAADP and ARD policies;</p> <p>Screening and evaluating programme proposals as a basis for informed decision making in the Board;</p> <p>Identifying international consultants, preparing ToRs, and providing supervision and quality control of their work and its products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication &amp; Network management</li> </ul> <p>Establishing and maintaining an effective stream of communication with the members, associate members, partners and the general public; (actively exploring strategic partnerships to complement the work of the Platform);</p>

FOCAL POINTS	BOARD	SC	SECRETARIAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending meetings of the Platform (1-2 meetings per year)</li> <li>• Ensuring that his/her organisation meets its financial and/or human resources obligations to the Platform</li> <li>• Standing prepared to represent the Platform at international meetings and other fora, in agreement with the Platform Chair, with support from and coordination by the Secretariat.</li> <li>• FPs of full members sit on the Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To agree upon new Platform Partnerships and their modalities</li> <li>• To approve and amend the Terms of References of the Secretariat</li> <li>• To approve and amend the general terms of agreement with the institution (currently GTZ) that provides the Secretariat of the Platform</li> </ul>		<p>Organising and managing all aspects, both substance and logistics, of Platform meetings (Annual general meetings, Board meetings, Steering Committee meetings, Technical Working Groups);</p> <p>Providing the necessary support for Platform Focal Points so that they may adequately fulfil their mandate as advocates of the Platform both inside and outside their organisations and as specified under the Platform’s “outreach” activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Management</li> </ul> <p>Ensuring the proper financial management of the Platform Trust Fund, including the drafting of the annual work program and budget, and the administration and disbursement of funds;</p> <p>Managing all eligible expenditures that are directly related to the fulfillment of the Platform’s mission and activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting and Auditing</li> </ul> <p>Complying with specific reporting and auditing requirements within the framework of co-financing agreements that are concluded between participating donors and the Secretariat;</p> <p>Preparing for all Platform members an annual report on all Platform activities and summary financial statements, no later than six months following the end of the calendar year;</p> <p>As fund administrator, providing full members with a management statement on an annual basis, together with a certification from its internal auditors of satisfactory performance in compliance with agreed procedures and controls for the administration of Platform funds;</p> <p>Arranging for external financial audits of Platform activities at the request of the Board, and/or individual Members with respect to their contributions.</p> <p>Fulfilling other reporting duties to the Focal Points of the Platform and especially to the SC, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular official e-mail correspondence by the Secretariat related to the work programme and funding requests;</li> <li>The sharing and storing of Platform documents such as the Minutes of meetings, work plans and the budget on a password-protected web-page at <a href="http://www.donorplatform.org">www.donorplatform.org</a>.</li> </ul>

## Appendix VI Platform Milestones

- June 2002, World Food Summit, Rome: first discussion around the idea of donor coordination and the importance of agriculture to reduce hunger
- September 2002, First European Forum on Rural Development Cooperation, Montpellier. The WB, in the framework of its new rural strategy, introduced the idea of a Global Forum for Rural Development and spoke about harmonisation and donor coordination as pillars of the new WB strategy. The World Bank drafted TORs for the Forum and circulated them.
- March 2003, Rural Week, Washington. The decision is made, by the WB and BMZ, together with FAO, CIDA, Dutch, IFAD to operationalize the idea of the Forum. BMZ obtain the money to start the project and set the arrangements to have a Secretariat in Bonn.
- December 2003, Bonn: Platform foundational meeting. Hosted by BMZ. BMZ chair, FAO co-chair
- March 2004, Discussion paper “Improving Donor Coordination for Rural Development” and presentation of the Platform at the Rural Week
- June 2004, 2nd Platform Meeting, Paris, France. Theme: Establishing a Work Plan
- December 2004, 3rd Platform Meeting, Bonn, Germany. Theme: Selection of four Platform pilot countries
- February 2005, Beginning of country pilot projects (assessment studies)
- April 2005, 4th Platform Meeting, Washington DC. Theme: An action plan for Platform support to in-country harmonisation & alignment efforts in the four pilot countries
- June 2005, 5th Platform Meeting, Paris, France. Theme: Endorsement of the Platform governance charter and creation of the Steering Committee (SC)
- September 2005
  - 1st Retreat of the Platform Steering Committee, Ottawa (Wakefield), Canada
  - Publication of “The Role of Agriculture and Rural Development in Achieving the MDGs: a Joint Donor Narrative; GDPRD”
- November 2005, Steering Committee endorses development of a Platform communication strategy
- April 2006
  - 1st Annual General Meeting, Brussels
  - Platform-convened Donor Consultation Workshop CAADP, Geneva. Theme: Devising ways and means to support the CAADP Framework
- November 2006, Donor Consultation Workshop on the CAADP, Geneva
- December 2006
  - 2nd Platform General Meeting, Washington DC
  - Donor Consultation Workshop on the World Development Report 2008, Washington DC

- June 2007, Second European Forum on Sustainable Rural Development, Berlin
- September 2007, 2nd Retreat of the Steering Committee, Poggiovalle, Italy
- December 2007
  - 3rd Platform annual meeting, Paris. Presentation of new Charter, creation of the Board, election of SC, of the Board chair and vice-chair
  - Beginning of the external evaluation
  - End of engagement in Nicaragua
- January 2008, Internal Gender assessment final report.
- February 2008, Internal evaluation final report
- March 2008, Platform meeting with CSOs and strategic workshop
- April 2008, beginning of harvesting exercise

## Appendix VII GDPRD Outputs by Pillar

PILLARS	DESCRIPTION	KEY ACTIVITIES TO DATE	OUTPUTS TO DATE
<b>Advocacy and outreach</b>	The members of the Platform will serve as advocates for the needs of the rural poor and the agriculture agenda at the international, regional and country levels, including contributing to policy debates, and presenting the relevance of rural development and agriculture within the context of the MDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The publication of various studies, briefs and pamphlets</li> <li>Support to the World Development Report 2008 'Agriculture for Development'</li> <li>Organisation or support of international events:</li> <li>Participation at international and regional events</li> <li>Development of a communication strategy</li> <li>Outreach activities in member organisations</li> </ul>	<p><b>2005</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication: "Targeting rural poverty to achieve MDG1" (advocacy pamphlet)</li> </ul> <p><b>2006</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewed website</li> <li>Publication of "Platform speaking" (both on line and paper)</li> <li>Participation and presentations in a dozen conferences (Regional Conference on Rural SWAps in Central America, Managua, IFAD General Meeting, International Conference on Alternative Development in a Drugs Environment, The World Bank European ESSD Forum, Oslo Conference on African Green Revolution, FAO World Food Day, Rome)</li> <li>WDR Donor consultation workshop, Washington, DEC.</li> </ul> <p><b>2007</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aid effectiveness treated as a cross-cutting issue and in separate working groups at the Second European Forum on sustainable rural development (Platform co-organiser).</li> <li>6 Information seminars in member organisations (GTZ, SIDA, DFID, FAO, CIDA, Norad)</li> <li>Participation in several international events (Value Chains for Broad-Based Development, Berlin; Widening Markets and overcoming Supply-side Constraints for African Agriculture, Lusaka; African Green Revolution Conference, Oslo; The 11th Africa Forum, Accra; The Vision 2020 conference, Beijing)</li> <li>CSOs initiative: consultations in 13 countries and publication of "good practices synthesis paper".</li> <li>Support to WDR2008: 70 best practices gathered and published on website, subchapter on "Increasing aid effectiveness for agricultural programmes".</li> <li>Improvement of Platform website (integration of Web 2.0, "H&amp;A" section)</li> </ul>

PILLARS	DESCRIPTION	KEY ACTIVITIES TO DATE	OUTPUTS TO DATE
<p><b>Knowledge management and innovation</b></p>	<p>The members of the Platform will enhance the quality and impact of rural development investments through shared learning, innovation and recognition of better practices, including through networking, the collation and dissemination of innovations, and by undertaking joint training sessions and missions.</p>	<p>Publishing policy guidelines, joint donor statements and studies on agriculture and rural development</p> <p>Identifying and addressing jointly the 'hottest topics' in rural development and facilitating the formulation of policy briefs on each topic</p> <p>Sharing good practices, experiences and operating guidelines on what works in rural development and what doesn't via the website and periodical newsletters</p>	<p><b>2004</b></p> <p>Publication: "improving donor collaboration for rural development" (Background note)</p> <p><b>2005</b></p> <p>Website</p> <p>Publication: "the role of Agriculture and rural development in achieving the MDGs –a joint donor narrative"</p> <p><b>2006</b></p> <p>Renewed website</p> <p>2 annual general meetings</p> <p>WDR Donor consultation workshop, Washington, DC</p> <p>Publication of "The Joint Donor Concept on Rural Development" (adopted by SDC as rural development strategy)</p> <p>Definition of 10 Hot topics</p> <p><b>2007</b></p> <p>Publication of the first Platform Policy Brief: "Mind the Gap: How to Improve Rural Urban Linkages"</p> <p>Publication "Cornerstones for Effective ARD Programmes under a Programme Based Approach"</p> <p>Publication of three SWAps country studies (Mozambique, Tanzania, Nicaragua) and of the synthesis study</p> <p>WDR2008: 70 best practices gathered and published on website, subchapter on "Increasing aid effectiveness for agricultural programmes".</p> <p>Video learning events and cross-country exchanges: video-learning event between Burkina Faso and Cambodia, Participation of Honduras delegation to Prorural mission in Nicaragua.</p>



PILLARS	DESCRIPTION	KEY ACTIVITIES TO DATE	OUTPUTS TO DATE
<p><b>Aid effectiveness</b></p>	<p>The members of the Platform will join in collaborative efforts to refine aid effectiveness principles for ARD programmes by means of further debates, agreement to common principles and the dissemination and applications thereof at the international, regional and country level. This will include joint efforts to support national agriculture and rural strategies, harmonising procedures and practices in the context of DAC/OECD donor alignment efforts, utilizing national systems, and strengthening the assessment of the impact of strategies and investments.</p>	<p>Working towards joint principles for donors supporting agriculture and rural development programmes</p> <p>Facilitating enhanced donor coordination and alignment to African countries' strategies with respect to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)</p> <p>Providing in-country facilitation services in pilot countries</p> <p>Hosting inter-country workshops on the formulation and implementation of programme-based approaches</p>	<p><b>2005</b></p> <p>Publication: assessment studies "Harmonisation and alignment in rural development in four pilot countries"</p> <p>June 2005: Platform workshop in Managua "Harmonisation and Alignment in the Rural Sector in Nicaragua: drafting a 3-year plan"</p> <p>Since September 2005, facilitation service in Nicaragua</p> <p><b>2006</b></p> <p>Publication of "Operational Guidelines to the Platform's Facilitation Service"</p> <p>CAADP Donor Consultation workshop, Geneva</p> <p>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) 1<sup>st</sup> Partnership Platform Meeting, Midrand, September 2006</p> <p>Nicaragua: Support to the implementation of Pro-rural and to the Action Plan on Ownership, Harmonisation and Alignment</p> <p><b>2007</b></p> <p>Publication "Cornerstones for effective ARD programmes under a Programme Based Approach"</p> <p>Production of "Joint Principles for Enhancing Aid Effectiveness in ARD programmes" (First draft)</p> <p>Publication of 3 SWAPs country studies (Mozambique, Tanzania, Nicaragua) and of the synthesis study.</p> <p>CSOs initiative: consultations in 13 countries and publication of "good practices synthesis paper"</p> <p>Video learning events and cross-country exchanges: video-learning event between Burkina Faso and Cambodia, Participation of Honduras delegation to Prorural mission in Nicaragua.</p> <p>Cambodia: "Partnership Principles in the Land Sector" drafted with support of facilitation team</p> <p>Memorandum of understanding with RUTA</p> <p>CAADP: exchange of info between African partner institutions and Platform members, institution of the CAADP Partnership Platform</p>