

Inclusive Agribusiness Workshop in Brighton, 7-8 March 2017

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Travelers

Romy Sato and Christian Mersmann – Donor Platform Secretariat

Date

7-8 March 2017

Destination

Brighton, UK

Purpose and expectations

The Donor Platform was one of the co-organizers of the workshop

Persons met/participants

Participants of the Workshop (see list).



01_Participants.pdf

From donor/IFIs and implementing agencies: Jennifer Chow and Daniela Maor (USAID), Matthew Brooke (EC), Chris Penrose-Buckley and Vincent Langdon-Morris (DFID), Frank Bertelmann, Alessandra Fiedler and Max Baumann (GIZ), Wadzanai Katsande (FAO) and Zachary John Bleicher (IFAD).

Background and results

The workshop was co-organized by the Wageningen Centre for Development, through the Seas of Change Initiative, BEAM Exchange and the Global Donor Platform.

The **initial objective** was to formulate a comprehensive, global agenda and collaborative structure (i.e. Alliance) for research priorities and learning processes in the field of inclusive agribusiness (IAB) for the coming five years. There was an expectation from some participants, particularly coming from the knowledge institutes and NGOs, that donors would be ready to commit to fund such an Alliance, which could not be met at that point.

The workshop showed that there is a lot of knowledge sitting in different institutes, through different initiatives in various parts of the world which are not being effectively synthesized. This includes experiences of how IAB are involving women and promoting their economic empowerment, the opportunities and challenges for smallholders to access finance, how multi-stakeholder partnerships are enabling inclusive businesses etc.

On one hand, donors recognized the importance to access this knowledge in a synthesized way in order to justify future investments – and the arguments for establishing a structured alliance that can provide such a synthesis. On the other hand, in practice, many donors reported having limited time for learning and a lot more emphasis is given to project design and implementation. Despite that, they agreed that getting a general impact narrative based on solid evidence would be critical to



sustain investments that provide market-based solutions for small farmers (see below separate meeting with donors).

Priority areas for a global research & learning agenda

The workshop moved from its initial objective to consider, in more general terms, how practitioners in inclusive agribusiness can learn more effectively from the wealth of work being done in this area, and key points for a research and learning agenda – to be taken forward collectively with interested organisations, mobilising resources on an ad-hoc basis, but without a formal alliance at this point. Six priorities for collaborative action were identified:

1. **Synthesis and meta-analysis** of research already done – this is the most urgent need, as there is too little harvesting from all that is happening to reveal emerging insights and trends.
2. The **business case** of inclusive agribusiness cases – Cost-benefit analysis of many cases is the most urgent synthesis priority.
3. A **big data approach** to link and analyse relevant databases – Setting up a longer-term structure to share data, and make on-going synthesis and analysis possible.
4. Supporting those who induce **system change** in inclusive agrimarkets – Inclusive agribusiness is about changing the way business is done, which requires more deliberate targeting of change-makers.
5. **More precise policy advice** – An essential requirement for desired system change.
6. **Better multi-stakeholder collaborations** – Inclusive agribusiness is always a joint effort, what are best ways of working together.

Separate meeting with donors

A separate meeting with donors took place on the second day of the workshop, led by Matthew Brooke (EC) and supported by the Platform Secretariat. The objective was to consult on donor's interest to further the Platform's work stream on Inclusive agribusiness and trade.

The EC, who is currently leading this work stream, informed that at the recent HARDS meeting EU donors had agreed to merge the EU Working Party on Agriculture and Private Sector Development with the Donor Platform's work stream on inclusive agribusiness. Against this background, it would be important and desirable to seek more regular and structured exchanges within the work stream, thus, considering the subtopics that this community would like to address, the "terms of reference" of such a group, and a few activities for 2017.

Agreements and discussed points:

- There is need for more donor peer-exchange on IAB programmes, challenges and opportunities. A major concern in this space is how to demonstrate the impact of IAB initiatives on poverty
- Some donors asked for caution in absorbing trade topics into the IAB work stream due to diverging agendas between the trade and inclusive agribusiness departments within their agencies. However, it was agreed to but plan for a few meetings/activities in the year that will bring these two communities together.



- Donors were skeptical about engaging with and funding another alliance on IAB (as proposed in the workshop) at this stage, but agreed to continue the exchange with the organisations represented in the workshop for information sharing and eventually leading to donor-funded initiatives to address the knowledge synthesis gap.
- Donors need comparisons, evaluations etc. And there is probably a lot of this information sitting in their own organisations, but they have not tried to gather it and compare it with that of other agencies.
- There is a delay between reviewing lessons and the design of the next programme phase. There are also political changes, design fashions etc., all of which influence in the process of using lessons and evidence to better inform development policies and programmes. A more regular peer-exchange can help address at least part of this gap.

Next steps:

Under the leadership of the EC and in consultation with other members, the Secretariat will further consult with members on the subtopics that they would like to address in this work stream, and draft a work plan for 2017. It will include a list of relevant events in 2017 and ideas for conference calls and webinars in close cooperation with the Platform's trade work stream.

Further Links, annexes

- [Full report of the workshop](#) – prepared by Seas of Change
- A [web-article](#) focusing on the role of donors during the workshop was prepared for The Practitioner Hub and reproduced in the [Donor Platform's website](#).