



Irish Forum for International
Agricultural Development

Leveraging Irish Expertise for Sustainable Agricultural Development





Amina, Lalmonirhat district, Hatibandha upazila, Dauabari union, Bangladesh. Concern Worldwide.

Context

Agricultural development is central to the realisation of Ireland's development objectives and globally, the realisation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals – the new global development framework adopted by the UN in September 2015.¹

Agricultural development has the power to substantially reduce global poverty and under-nutrition while transforming the lives of many millions of people who rely on agriculture for their food and incomes.

While globally agricultural productivity continues to rise, there is still a significant gap in reaching optimum potential yields in many developing countries, and in parts of Africa yields have even declined. Rio+20, in framing the challenges for agriculture, emphasized the need to reinvigorate a diversity of farming systems through support to farmers – with emphasis on **women's empowerment and gender equality** - and increased investments in research, technology, market infrastructure, extension and knowledge sharing. This will catalyse innovation and empower farmers.²

Ireland itself has undergone significant changes in its agriculture sector over the past fifty years, led by research and technology-driven innovation. Farming is still crucial to Ireland's economy and agri-food remains the most important indigenous sector, providing primary employment for 170,000 people. Challenges remain, which are as relevant to Ireland as they are to many other countries, with emphasis on climate change, rising energy costs, food insecurity and rural decline. Such challenges call for **increased investments in agriculture** in order to ensure it is more resource efficient and to balance different resource uses with the need to preserve the integrity of ecosystems. This thinking has informed both Ireland's domestic agriculture sector development and its overseas development programming, in an on-going effort to achieve a balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development - central to the Irish Government's Policy for International Development.³

In this light, the **interface between research, policy and practice** becomes increasingly demanding, with a call for **greater scientific/policy dialogue and multisectoral engagement** in the area of agriculture for development – covering a spectrum ranging from agricultural production to value chain and market system development. It is within this framework that the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development was established.

¹ Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, UN Doc. A/RES/70/1.

² Farming First, The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, p.1, 2016.

³ One World One Future: Ireland's Policy for International Development, May 2013.

Who we are

The Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development (IFIAD) is a **voluntary, multi-disciplinary platform**, bringing together actors from the agri-food sector to share knowledge and good practices for the benefit of agricultural development programming and policy in support of Ireland's development objectives.¹

Why the Forum

The underlying premise for establishing IFIAD was a recognised need for a more effective multi-disciplinary engagement in the area of agricultural development combined with an opportunity to better leverage Irish expertise in this area for the benefit of development programmes overseas. Capitalising on Ireland's excellence in the agri-food sector, the Forum aims to bring together researchers, policymakers and practitioners with a **view to strengthening the research-policy-practice interface** and maximising the Irish contribution to agriculture-driven poverty reduction in **developing countries**.

The Structure

The Forum comprises:

- Chair
- Vice-chair
- Steering Committee
- Secretariat
- Ad hoc technical thematic groups

¹ One World One Future: Ireland's Policy for International Development, May 2013.

Vision

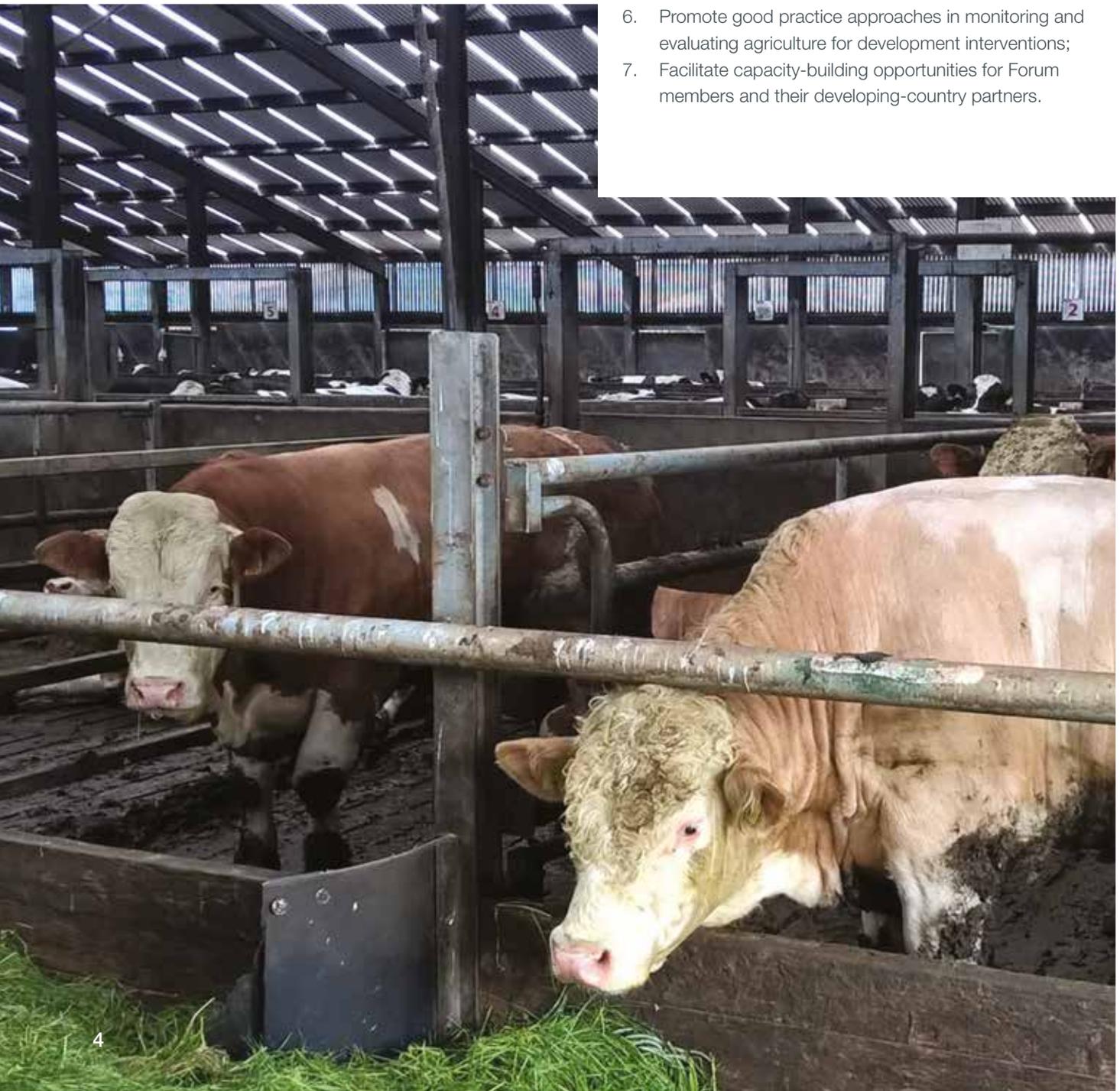
Transformed livelihoods of people living in poverty in the developing world through initiatives which support resilient, equitable and sustainable agriculture, food and nutrition security.

Mission

The Forum will work towards achieving its vision via developing partnerships of excellence through the generation, sharing and application of experience, knowledge and innovation in agriculture for development.

Objectives

1. Share knowledge and information between Forum members on sustainable agriculture, food and nutrition security for better livelihoods and promote impact-oriented and needs-driven application in farms, communities and value chains;
2. Promote the visibility of Ireland's role in agriculture for development at national and international level;
3. Contribute to policy processes at national and international level, with particular emphasis on policy coherence;
4. Maximise collaboration, synergies and complementarities among different Irish actors involved in international agriculture development;
5. Identify new opportunities that have the potential to deliver poverty reduction, inclusive sustainable development on farms and in communities and value chain;
6. Promote good practice approaches in monitoring and evaluating agriculture for development interventions;
7. Facilitate capacity-building opportunities for Forum members and their developing-country partners.



Areas of Work

Sharing Knowledge

We will:

- Identify knowledge gaps in research and agriculture for development
- Identify and disseminate demand-driven guidance on good practices
- Share and disseminate relevant findings from national and international sources
- Organize conferences, workshops and symposia on selected thematic areas
- Provide a learning platform for researchers, policy makers and practitioners alike

Enhancing Research

We will:

- Build a collaborative network of researchers interested in agricultural development in middle and low-income countries
- Enable the development of research groups that address factors that impact on the positive delivery of results in agriculture development programmes
- Commission and mobilise research as appropriate
- Link members to capacity building opportunities in different technical areas

Informing Policy

We will:

- Develop contributions to policy and/or technical dialogues taking place at national and international level
- Contribute to the evidence base on optimal approaches to addressing agriculture-driven development
- Participate in relevant policy/best practice debates at national and international level

Enabling Collaboration

We will:

- Facilitate communication between members
- Develop and maintain a database of network members expertise
- Promote the Forum and its activities to agencies with an interest in agricultural development
- Facilitate the formation of long-term links between policy, agricultural education and research institutions in middle and low-income countries
- Engage with other networks and enter into collaborative arrangements as appropriate



Founding Members



Irish Aid, the Irish Government's programme for overseas development, is managed by the Development Co-operation Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The work that we do in fighting global poverty and hunger is integral to Ireland's foreign policy. Our expertise and long-standing commitment to these objectives is internationally recognised. Engaging with IFIAD provides Irish Aid with an opportunity to strengthen our current collaboration on agricultural development with the Irish private sector, academia, NGO partners, State bodies and others in pursuit of these important goals.



Vita is an Irish development partner committed to fighting hunger and climate change in Africa. We deliver community led, knowledge backed programmes to rural households, working with skilled partners to ensure maximum impact that enables people to build sustainable livelihoods. This integrated approach allows us to scale up our programmes for a much wider reach. By engaging with IFIAD, Vita can ensure that we continue to forge new partnerships while building on existing ones. These partnerships demonstrate Ireland's leadership role in building resilience to hunger and climate change in Africa through agricultural innovation.



The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's mission is to lead the sustainable development of the agri-food, forestry and marine sector and to optimise its contribution to national economic development and the natural environment. It manages part of the Government's overseas development budget and allocates this to development programmes managed by UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and UN World Food Programme. These programmes resonate strongly with Ireland's commitment to contribute to the eradication of the global problems of hunger and food security. By engaging with IFIAD the Department can share its experience in the agri-food sector with other countries embarking on a similar journey.



Trócaire was set up in 1973 as the overseas development agency for the Catholic Church in Ireland. Trócaire's mandate is two-fold: to support the most vulnerable people in the developing world and to raise awareness of the root causes of poverty and inequality at home in Ireland. Today Trócaire works in 25 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Addressing the combined challenge of food insecurity, poverty, climate change and gender inequality is critical to Trócaire's practical and policy response. Trócaire will participate in IFIAD to share its work on rights based transformative approaches to agriculture and to learn from others working in Ireland on agriculture and development.



Teagasc is the Irish national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food sectors. The organisation emphasises the need to consider the constraints to Irish agriculture within the context of global food security and climate change challenges. Teagasc is committed to utilising its capacity in agriculture and food research, knowledge transfer and education for the benefit of agricultural development in poorer countries. This builds on longstanding experience with technical assistance projects in developing countries. Engaging with IFIAD will ensure that Teagasc aligns with other players in strengthening Ireland's contribution to agricultural development in developing countries.



Misean Cara is a faith-based NGO of Irish religious and lay missionary organisations. Our members live and work long-term with marginalised and vulnerable local communities in some of the world's most impoverished regions, in the areas of education, healthcare, livelihoods, environmental sustainability and human rights. Misean Cara works in partnership with local communities, international and national agencies, to make a difference to the lives of the poorest. Engaging with IFIAD will enable Misean Cara to generate and share experience, knowledge and innovation in agriculture for development, and contribute to sustainable rural development and sustainable livelihoods of farmers in developing countries.



The National University of Ireland Galway is widely engaged in multi-disciplinary activities relating to agricultural research for development. With an €50 million annual research income, NUI Galway has 2400 academic/research staff, 17000 undergraduate students, and 1200 postgraduate students. Working closely with international and developing country partners, teams within the NUI Galway Plant & AgriBiosciences Research Centre (PABC) are extensively engaged in agricultural research for development, and in capacity building (e.g. MSc in Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security). The IFIAD will enable NUI Galway to forge more effective evidence-based "agriculture for development" impact pathways with national and international partners.



Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI) is the international consultancy group of the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine and four state agencies – Teagasc, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. SFSI offers the expertise of these bodies to partners overseas, on a commercial basis. This whole-of-government approach enables us to focus on systems-wide development, in addition to the individual components of effective agri-food value chains, such as productivity, animal health, food safety, enterprise development, R&D systems, knowledge transfer etc. Being part of IFIAD will help SFSI to build wider coalitions of knowledge, skills and impact.



UCC is one of the largest Universities in Ireland with approximately 20,000 full-time students, and a strong international outlook. UCC academics have a particularly strong teaching and research focus on agricultural development and the agri-food sector, including activities related to sustainable agriculture, food security and agriculture-nutrition linkages, and there are strong connections to the Irish agri-food sector. UCC also offers a BSc in International Development and Food Policy and engages with Irish development NGOs to provide these students with practical experience. Engaging with IFIAD will provide a valuable learning platform for UCC to further develop partnerships with like-minded organisations and to exchange ideas and information.



UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science (SAFS) covers research and teaching programmes focusing on: Animal and Crop Production; Agribusiness and Rural Development; Agri-Environment and Sustainable Resource Management; and Food Science and Nutrition; which collectively span the complete food chain from farm to fork. Our research contributes to improving the productivity and the sustainability of agriculture and the environment, and to the quality and security of the food produced, and to consumer well-being. Engaging with IFIAD will enable the UCD SAFS to enhance its contribution in partnership with other members to addressing the global challenges of hunger and climate change.



Gorta-Self Help Africa (GSHA) is an international development organisation with operations in nine countries across East, Southern and West Africa. We work with smallholder farmers, farmer associations, cooperatives and agribusiness to help them grow and sell more food, improve diets and diversify incomes and make their livelihoods more sustainable and resilient to external shocks. We also work to raise awareness of smallholder farmer issues and represent their interests at policy and institutional level. By engaging with IFIAD we aim to contribute to the generation and dissemination of knowledge and innovation, and the identification of new research and development partnership opportunities.



Concern Worldwide is an international development and humanitarian organisation based in Dublin, with offices in London, New York and Seoul, that works in 28 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean. The majority of Concern's beneficiaries, the extreme poor, live in remote rural areas and rely on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods so over 40% of Concern's budget of €180 million is spent on agriculture. Through IFIAD Concern Worldwide will access Irish agricultural research and innovations, share best practice to enhance the impact of our programs, and work with the Forum members for greater influence in national and international fora.



Greenfield International is a privately owned International consultancy business which provides independent advice and practical solutions to Government agencies, Industry and service sector, NGOs and farmer clients. Particular experience in Research, innovation support, enterprise, capacity building and change management. Track record working in Agri-Food sector on agriculture, food security, value chain and governance. In country (development country) experience includes, East Africa, South America, the Caribbean and Asia. The overall goal is to add value by identifying opportunities and then helping clients to implement effective and sustainable solutions.



ICMSA is a democratic, non-political association that represents the views of Irish farmers at all levels. We particularly focus on defending the rights and incomes of family dairy farms. Membership throughout the State works for the advancement of farm families and the welfare of rural districts. ICMSA contributes and responds to all relevant EU and State policy. We are the Irish constituent of the European Milk Board and can point to a record of over 60 years of solid work and representation. ICMSA is – always and everywhere – on the side of the farmers with no other interest permitted to exert influence. ICMSA is committed to engage with IFIAD and will contribute to the best of its ability.



The Irish Farmers Association (IFA) is Ireland's largest representative organisation for farmers, representing 75,000 members across all agriculture sectors. The IFA has spent more than 60 years protecting and defending the interests of Irish farmers nationally and in Europe. The Association works to improve the incomes and conditions of all farm families, and to promote, foster and develop a sustainable agriculture sector in Ireland. Working within IFIAD, IFA will share its knowledge and expertise and draw from the experiences of our farmer members to contribute to agricultural advancement and sustainable farmer livelihoods in developing countries.



ICSA (Irish Cattle & Sheep Farmers' Association) represents over 10,000 cattle and sheep farmers with members in every county in Ireland. The head office is located in Portlaoise. The association lobbies for the interests of the cattle and sheep sectors at local, national and EU level and is a recognised national social partner and a registered EU lobby group. ICSA has carried out consultancy work with farm organisations in Botswana in 2015, where the focus was on enabling farmer representatives to be better organised in negotiating with government and other agencies in regard to the problems in the cattle farming sector in Botswana.



Macra na Feirme

Macra na Feirme is a voluntary organisation for young people between the ages of 17 and 35. The organisation consists of a nationwide network of clubs with six key areas of activity: agriculture, sports, travel, public speaking, community involvement and performing arts. One of Macra's main aims is to help young farmers get established in farming and assist them through learning and skills development. Macra works with and represents the views of young farmers nationally and internationally. Macra, through its partnership with Vita has been involved in a project to assist young farmers in Ethiopia and looks forward to working with IFIAD.

Membership

Membership of IFIAD is open to all institutions and individuals actively involved in, or committed to, the role of agriculture in development, especially:

- Research institutions
- Public agencies
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- The private sector
- Farmers' organisations
- Private individuals

Cover photo: Tozene Nada, Chencha Woreda, Ethiopia. VITA. 2014.

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sharing knowledge
enhancing research
informing policy
enabling collaboration