

A Report to the Government of Ireland

IRELAND'S NATIONAL TASK TEAM ON RURAL AFRICA

Findings and Recommendations



Cover image: Farmer Universe Mafuta and Miranda Mateyo of Irish Aid partner Musika inspect biofortified orange maize planted as part of an Irish Aid funded programme to support nutrition in Zambia

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PREFACE

This report connects with two significant emerging developments: the growing strategic importance of Africa for Europe and Ireland, and the international recognition that sustainable food systems have a critical role to play in reducing hunger, improving nutrition and health, and tackling climate change.

The relationship between Europe and Africa has evolved substantially in the two decades since the turn of the century. It has moved from being a predominantly aid and trade arrangement to a deeper partnership acknowledging Africa and Europe as global partners on an equal footing, with each region steering its own development. The next African Union (AU)- EU Summit in early 2021 will agree the basis for a comprehensive strategy between Africa and Europe. Africa is the region with the fastest growing population in the world and represents a continent of opportunity and new markets. Europe and Africa have a profound mutual interest in partnering to ensure that Africa can create sufficient jobs for its rapidly growing workforce and thus reduce the pressures for substantial migratory flows.

One strand of this changing relationship was the decision in 2018 to establish the Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA), put in place under the political leadership of EU Commissioners Phil Hogan and Neven Mimica and AU Commissioner Josefa Sacko. The Task Force was asked to advise on how Europe could best contribute to the sustainable development of Africa's agri-food sector and rural economy. The Task Force reported in March 2019

and the report and its recommendations were endorsed by the AU-EU Agricultural Ministerial meeting in Rome in June 2019.

Ireland's relationship with Africa has, over the past two decades, moved from the traditional basis of development cooperation, building on the historical contribution of missionaries and NGOs, to a broader base covering the political, development and economic spheres. Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025, published in November 2019, sets out a vision 'to deepen and strengthen Ireland's political, economic and cultural relationships with Africa, contributing to peace, prosperity and sustainable development'.

Ireland's international development programme has a history of prioritising Africa and tackling hunger and undernutrition. The 2008 Hunger Task Force report reflected both priorities and heavily influenced Ireland's international development strategy in the subsequent decade. But looking ahead to the 2020s, Ireland's international development policy 'A Better World (ABW)' (2019) recognises that the nature of the malnutrition challenge facing Africa is changing: malnutrition is no longer just about undernourished and hungry people; there are also increasing numbers affected by micronutrient deficiencies and obesity, with serious consequences for health. ABW includes a commitment to delivering a reframed approach to tackling these new challenges through the lens of sustainable food systems.

The relationship between Europe and Africa has evolved substantially in the two decades since the turn of the century. It has moved from being a predominantly aid and trade arrangement to a deeper partnership acknowledging Africa and Europe as global partners on an equal footing, with each region steering its own development.

The combination of both factors – the growing strategic importance of Africa and the national and international recognition of the future priority for sustainable food systems – led to a decision by the Irish government in June 2019 that a coherent national response to the TFRA report should be developed. Under the leadership of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), a National Task Team on Rural Africa (NTTRA) was established to

oversee proposals for such a response. This report is the outcome of that process. Drawing on consultation with a wide-ranging group of stakeholders, it provides a mapping of the links between the Irish agri-food sector and Africa: it concludes that these links are fragmented and sub-optimal and makes recommendations on what needs to be done to develop a more impactful national response, which supports sustainable development in Africa whilst also enhancing Ireland’s economic and development interests.

I have been privileged to chair both the TFRA and the NTTRA. The NTTRA’s work has benefitted from the strategic leadership of DFA and DAFM and the commitment of the stakeholders involved in the fact-finding and consultation process. I would like to thank our consultants Michael Barry and Stewart Gee for their excellent work during the process. The report is now being submitted to Minister Coveney and Minister McConalogue, and the wider political system, for discussion and decisions. I hope these decisions will lead to both a more effective Irish contribution to Africa’s sustainable development and to Ireland helping to shape EU policy and programmes in its future relationship with Africa.



Tom Arnold
Chairperson of the National
Task Team on Rural Africa



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2019, the European Commission's Task Force on Rural Africa (TFRA) published its report, setting out a bold yet robust Africa-Europe agenda for rural transformation. This agenda seeks to intensify cooperation within, and between, EU Member States and African countries, and was subsequently endorsed at the AU-EU ministerial conference in Rome in June later that year.

In response to the TFRA's report, Ireland established its own National Task Team on Rural Africa (NTTRA). This team was given a mandate to prepare a report on Ireland's potential contribution to the work of the TFRA and present it to the Minister for Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, (DAFM).

The NTTRA report sets out a new framework to enhance Ireland's existing contribution to the transformation of Africa's agriculture and rural economy by harnessing the collective expertise of government departments, state agencies, the private sector, civil society, academia and the African diaspora. A number of recommendations and actions have also been identified to advance this framework.

This new framework builds off the work of existing institutions and initiatives and seeks to fully harness the expertise, experiences and commitment of all interested stakeholders. It aligns with the ambitions and priorities set out in Ireland's international development policy, A Better World (ABW), and stands to both enable, and make a significant contribution to, the objectives set out in Global Ireland: Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025.

THIS REPORT PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING:

An overview of the challenging agriculture and rural development context in Africa;

A detailed description of the European Commission's TFRA;

The establishment of Ireland's NTTRA and the existing structures and programmes designed to leverage Ireland's agri-food expertise in Africa;

Findings from an initial mapping exercise of African initiatives by Irish actors;

A summary of the opportunities, challenges and constraints which were identified as part of a consultation process undertaken for this report;

A set of complementary recommendations and actions to enhance Ireland's potential contribution to the TFRA with concluding remarks on the critical components to drive effectiveness and impact.

Ongoing and Emerging Challenges

Despite significant progress on a global level towards the objectives set out by the UN's Millennium Development Goals, the number of people living in extreme poverty is on the rise in Sub-Saharan Africa. Forecasts from the World Bank (2018) have indicated that by 2030, at least 10% of the people in Sub-Saharan Africa will remain in extreme poverty and that these people will account for nearly 90% of the global population living in extreme poverty. Africa has the world's fastest growing population in the 21st century, projected to reach 2.5 billion in 2050. A majority of the African population will remain rural until the 2040s, notwithstanding expanding urbanisation: hence the need for a strong focus on the agricultural sector in future development strategies.

In relation to the agri-food sector and wider rural economy, national and regional plans within Africa to improve the performance of these sectors have fallen well short of their targets. Moreover, the growing threat of climate change, combined with frequent and, often, devastating shocks to the wider food system, continues to both erode food systems' resilience and justify the need for increased investment in this sector to protect, adapt and enhance rural livelihoods and economies.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an enormous impact both domestically and internationally. It has created a high degree of uncertainty within the global economy, with significant implications for both the Irish and African economies. Such uncertainty illustrates the need for a much more coordinated and collaborative approach by Ireland and the EU to both increase effectiveness and maximise impact in our support of rural development in Africa. Given the backdrop of global uncertainty, an approach that is adaptive and responsive will be essential for the successful implementation of this report's recommendations and actions.

NTTRA Findings

Ireland's footprint in Africa is substantial, with significant scope for further engagement. In 2019, Irish stakeholders were involved in 193 different initiatives (including the exportation of goods and services) spread across 42 of Africa's 54 countries. In the same year, Ireland exported an estimated €710 million of agri-food products to Africa, while direct imports from Africa totalled €144 million. Furthermore, in 2018 Ireland provided an estimated €66 million to support agriculture and rural development initiatives in Africa, through a variety of development schemes.

Irish organisations have demonstrated a commitment to strengthening their activities in rural Africa but need greater support to navigate the challenges of operating there. This report has found that the main request from Irish stakeholders in development and business organisations is for a coordination mechanism for organisations in Ireland, linked to country specific networks in Africa.

This NTTRA report sets out a new framework to enhance Ireland's existing contribution to the transformation of Africa's agriculture and rural economy

Recommendations

These findings have led to the development of six recommendations and 18 actions to maximise Ireland's TFRA response. These include guidance on how Ireland's response will be managed over the coming years to ensure delivery of the stakeholders shared vision of:

- » More effective Rural Development programmes
- » Increased investment in African rural economies
- » Increased two-way trade between Africa and Ireland/EU

Coordination was a common theme throughout all consultations undertaken for this report. Therefore, the primary recommendation of this report is to

- 1. Establish a framework for an Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem** that includes a new coordination function namely the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee

The remaining set of five recommendations refer to this primary recommendation:

- 2. Leverage the resources of key State Agencies**, to facilitate deeper engagement in international development initiatives in Africa and in building strategic relationships with key African partners
- 3. Improve the effectiveness of Ireland's Food Systems Research** for Development (FSR4D) in Africa through:
 - enhanced coordination infrastructure;
 - incentivising collaborations; and
 - enabling evidenced-based policy influencing.
- 4. Work with the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development (IFIAD)** to engage stakeholders with capacity in learning and development to **create an Evaluation and Learning Working Group**

- 5. Establish a network for Irish Agri-Businesses** with interests in African markets
- 6. Strengthen coordination and collaboration within, and between, Irish state actors and existing, and future, business networks within African countries**

With regards to this Report's primary recommendation, the Ireland Africa Rural development Ecosystem should comprise three core elements: 1) State Enterprise Agencies; 2) Knowledge and Learning; and 3) Ireland Africa Agri-Business networks.

Within this Ecosystem the three elements, which already interact with each other, should be further coordinated through a newly established **Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee**. Further, to maximise efficiencies, the Ecosystem should be developed by building off existing infrastructure. Responding to Ireland's commitment in A Better World to do things differently, this report identifies how the proposed Ecosystem will include new innovations, as well as setting out recommendations to strengthen existing mechanisms and initiatives.

Housed within DFA and DAFM, the proposed Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee, and its Secretariat, will be at the core of this Ecosystem. Therefore, it must have sufficient influence and capacity to ensure effective implementation of this report's recommendations so that impact is maximised.

Optimising Ireland's contribution to African rural development

In order to meet the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and fulfil their underlying objective to leave no-one behind, new ways of working are required to drive sustainable, equitable and inclusive economic growth.

As one of the lead negotiators of Agenda 2030, Ireland already holds a leadership position, which it can now use strategically in the emerging sustainable food systems agenda. Ireland's global reputation in this area is underpinned by a strong commitment to gender equality, climate resilience, human rights and ethical business. Ireland also has proven capacity in addressing global hunger, having delivered on commitments made in the 2008 Hunger Task Force Report.

The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (FSS) will provide an opportunity to demonstrate what Ireland can do in such a leadership role, both in terms of its domestic policy on sustainable food systems and in integrating food systems thinking into its wider foreign policy, including development cooperation.

This report can help to realise this vision of leadership in three ways. First, implementation of its recommendations will deliver a coherent national response, which harnesses the capacity of the Irish agri-food sector in its future partnership with Africa. Secondly, it can assist Ireland in playing a proactive role as the EU and the AU develop a deepening partnership. Finally, it can strengthen Ireland's strategic position in preparing for the 2021 Food Systems Summit. We hope that this report will galvanise decisions and actions from political leaders and the many stakeholders who have contributed to its preparation.



2. BACKGROUND

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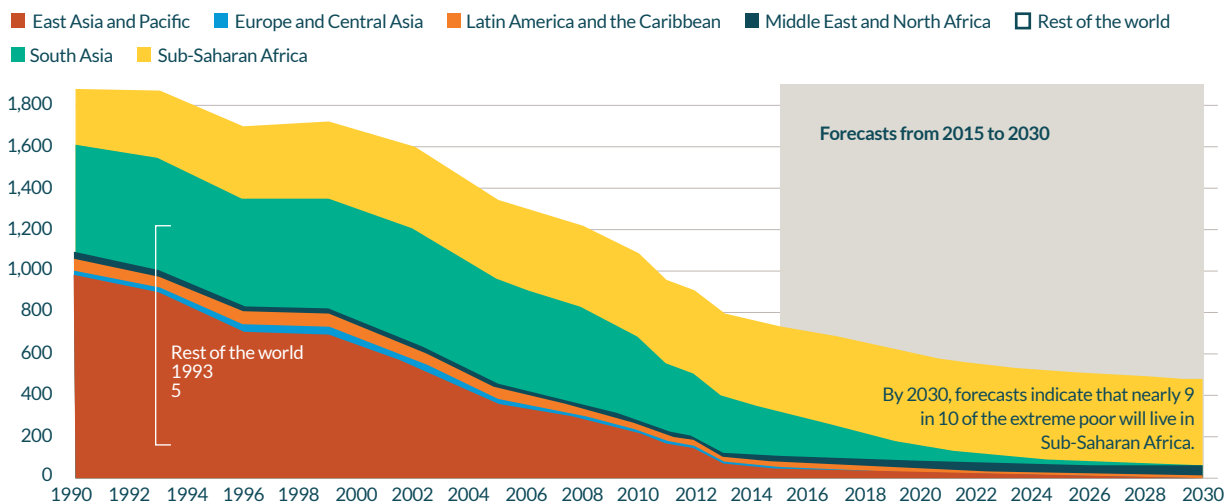
The work conducted by the NTTRA, including this report, is in response to the agricultural and rural development opportunities and challenges in Africa. The NTTRA's work is also informed by the European Commission's TFRA report and Ireland's national policy context. The NTTRA seeks to build off the work of a number of existing entities and initiatives to further develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach through which Ireland can maximise its engagement with African countries.

Context for the development of Africa's Agriculture and Rural Economy

Global efforts to achieve SDG 1, to end poverty in all its forms, will require an increasing focus on the African Continent, with World Bank forecasts indicating that nearly 9 in 10 of people living in extreme poverty will be in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030

Africa has the world's fastest growing population, projected to reach 2.5 billion in 2050. The majority of the poor reside in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their

People in extreme poverty (millions)



Source: World Bank PovcalNet and Poverty & Equity Data Portal

Figure 1: Global and Regional Extreme poverty forecasting to 2030

livelihoods. Further, the majority of the African population will remain rural until the 2040s, notwithstanding growing urbanisation. Hence the need for a strong focus on the rural economy in future development strategies. Real progress in addressing extreme poverty will be very much linked to realising the agricultural sector's potential and in achieving agri-food and rural transformation.

In 2003, African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government endorsed the Maputo Declaration on 'Agriculture and Food Security in Africa'. This Declaration adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Strategy (CAADP) as the continent's strategy for transforming its agriculture sector. This Strategy was to be implemented at national level and committed its signatories to increasing annual budgetary allocations for agriculture with the aim of achieving a growth rate of 6% annually in output. These commitments were expanded upon in the AU's 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation.

Achievement has fallen well short of the ambition and targets set out in both Declarations. The AU has instituted a Biennial Review (BR) to monitor the Malabo commitments to 2025. In 2019, the second BR reported that of the 49 Member States that submitted data, only four were on track to achieving their Malabo commitments by 2025. However, 36 countries had made significant improvement in their score relative to the first BR in 2017. Only four Member States spent 10% or more of their national budgets on agriculture. Of the 49 countries assessed, only nine were on track to halve their poverty rates through agriculture by 2025¹.

Although African plans to improve the performance of its agri-food sector have fallen well short of the targets set, renewed and sustained efforts remain imperative given the continuing economic significance of the sector at both a local and regional level. There is now an emerging need to address these challenges using a food systems approach, to ensure that growth achieved is both sustainable and inclusive, contributing to wider economic development.

The EU's Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA) and the Origins of Ireland's National Task Team on Rural Africa



The European Commission's TFRA was created in 2018 to advise the EU Commission on how best to contribute to sustainable development and job creation in Africa's agri-food and rural development² sector. The Task Force produced its report 'An Africa-Europe Agenda for Rural

Transformation' in March 2019. The report recommended four strategic areas of action to underpin long-term investment:

A territorial approach for job creation and income growth;

1. Sustainable land and natural resources management, and climate action;
2. Supporting the sustainable transformation of African agriculture; and
3. The development of the African food industry and food markets

The TFRA report also included an 'action agenda' of six short to medium term priorities aimed at kick-starting development.

The TFRA report was endorsed at the third AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference meeting in Rome in June 2019. A Ministerial Declaration and Action Agenda were agreed. These aimed at 'intensifying cooperation in sustainable agricultural/rural development/forest management, agroforestry, and sustainable food systems while seeking synergies with other nationally led actions such as National Agricultural Plans (NAPs)'.

1. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38119-doc-2019_biennial_review-en.pdf

2. The TFRA report defines rural development within a wider, 'rural economy' framing cognisant of the inherent and ever-expanding social, economic, sectoral and political inter-linkages between the various rural and urban landscape types in Africa, set within a territorial development approach. This report adopts the same meaning for rural development as conceptualized in the TFRA report.

The Action Agenda consisted of nine agenda items, similar but not identical to the six agenda items in the TFRA report. These were:

1. AU-EU Agri-food platform
2. Research and Innovation Partnership
3. Digital Solutions for Agri-Business
4. Implementation of the Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications
5. Strengthening Food Safety governance across the continent
6. Strengthening African farmers' organisations
7. African-European farmers exchange programme
8. LEADER Africa initiative
9. Improving environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and agrobiodiversity in the agricultural sector

In May 2020, the European TFRA members re-convened on a voluntary basis to update their analysis and recommendations from the March 2019 report. This was to take account of two major developments: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Africa and the change in climate policy at European level represented by the publication of the European Green Deal (EGD) in December 2019. The amended TFRA report was completed in August 2020 and has been submitted to the AU and EU Commissions for possible use in the preparation of the planned AU-EU Summit in Spring 2021. The purpose of this Summit is to agree on the core elements that should form the basis of the partnership between Africa and Europe in the coming years

Ireland's Response to the TFRA

The TFRA report was published only a short number of months after the launch of Ireland's international development policy A Better World. Subsequent

discussion on the TFRA report between DFA and DAFM concluded that there was an opportunity to create an Irish Task Team on Rural Africa, which could build on the commitments in A Better World whilst also developing a coherent national response to the recommendations in the TFRA report. Further collaboration between DFA and DAFM led to a Memo for Information, approved by the Government in June 2019. The cabinet welcomed the close collaboration between and the commitment of the two departments to work together to develop a multi-stakeholder national response to the TFRA report.

Following that Government decision, the two departments agreed that a National Task Team for Rural Africa (NTTRA) would be established to direct the project, overseen by a joint high-level steering committee. Tom Arnold was appointed to lead the NTTRA and chaired its first meeting in January 2020. Membership of the NTTRA³ comprised representatives from Government, State Agencies, academia, civil society and non-governmental agencies, the private sector and the African Diaspora.

The objectives for the NTTRA were to:

- » **Map current activities** across Government, Civil Society, Private Sector, academia, and the African Diaspora in Ireland, in support of Africa's agri-food sector, rural development and food systems transformation.
- » **Appraise existing structures and interactions** and identify areas for potential to enhance or expand interventions.
- » **Formulate a set of recommendations and actions** to maximise Ireland's contribution to the TFRA's work and to capture medium term strategic opportunities over the decade.

Consultants Michael Barry and Stewart Gee of MJB Consulting⁴ were commissioned to support the work of the NTTRA. The consultants worked under the direction of a Steering Group from DFA and DAFM, chaired by Tom Arnold. This work included a mapping phase,

3. See annex 1 for further details on the make-up of the task team

4. www.mjbconsulting.ie; stewart@stewartgeeconsulting.com

which was initiated in February 2020 to connect with stakeholders that had previously engaged with state agencies, development organisations and other groups in Africa-focused initiatives. The findings from this phase were presented to the Task Team in May 2020 and are summarised in Section 3 of this report.

..there was an opportunity to create an Irish Task Team on Rural Africa, which could build on the commitments in A Better World

Following this, the Task Team approved the next phase which consisted of a series of intensive consultations with stakeholders identifying how Ireland could overcome perceived barriers and challenges to increase its impact in supporting rural development in Africa. Using insights from this process, this report's recommendations propose how Ireland can best organise its contribution, working with African countries to achieve the transformation of their agriculture and rural economies.

The work of the NTTRA within Ireland's Policy Context



Ireland's foreign policy A Global Island (2015) sets out how we engage with the global community, under five broad themes (our people, our prosperity, our influence, our values and our place in Europe). The policy commits Ireland to capturing opportunities in dynamic, rapidly growing

economies in Africa, Asia and Latin America and promoting its reputation as a provider of high quality services and goods.



Building on A Global Island, and advancing and capitalising on the significant, sustained growth in the Irish economy, in 2018 the Government launched 'Global Ireland', a plan to double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint by 2025. 'Global Ireland' commits

to working in partnership with the governments and peoples of African nations to build partnerships beyond the traditional emphasis on international development and aid, strengthening bilateral and trade relations. Further, it recognises "scaling-up will require additional capabilities, resources and skills that can only be acquired and delivered over time" Moreover, expanding international networks will need to be supported by "reinforced capacity at headquarters in Departments and state agencies in corporate services, policy and advisory areas". Global Ireland also commits the Government to deliver on our pledge to spend the equivalent of 0.7% GNI on official development assistance (ODA)⁵ by 2030 and to update our international development policy.



Following this, Ireland's International development policy A Better World was launched in February 2019. Building on from Ireland's historical focus on alleviating extreme poverty and vulnerability, the overarching priority within A Better World is to target "the furthest

5. Official development assistance is defined by the OECD as "government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. Aid may be provided bilaterally, from donor to recipient, or channelled through a multilateral development agency such as the United Nations or the World Bank. Aid includes grants, "soft" loans and the provision of technical assistance."

behind first.” This means prioritising the poorest and most vulnerable people. The policy focuses Irish interventions on three key areas: Protection, Food and People, while addressing its four priority areas of Gender Equality, Reducing Humanitarian Need, Climate Action and Strengthened Governance. It also stresses the need for Ireland to adopt an evolving approach to tackling hunger and undernutrition through the lens of **sustainable food systems**.

Specific interventions outlined in the policy that are consistent with the scope of the NTTRA are:

- » Refreshing our approach to hunger and undernutrition within sustainable food systems.
- » Deepening our focus on agricultural markets and investment in development, including links to the Irish private sector.
- » Supporting inclusive economic growth around agriculture, especially for women and young people.
- » Harnessing the experience and expertise of the Irish agri-food sector to inform international development



Following the publication of A Better World, in November 2019 the Government launched **Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025**. This document sets out the strategic priorities for Ireland's engagement throughout the entire continent over the coming years. The

recommendations within this NTTRA report seek to leverage, and contribute to the delivery of several components of the Strategy for Africa including:

Expanding Ireland's Embassy and Consular network in Africa by 25%, with a new focus on West and North Africa;

- » Increasing trade between Ireland and Africa;
- » Increasing support for innovation by funding Irish African private sector collaboration through expansion of the Africa Agri-Food Development Programme (AADP);
- » Developing partnerships between Irish and African research institutions;
- » Engaging more closely with the EU on a common agenda for rural Africa and;
- » Capitalising on our Embassy network and other connections to build a more regional approach in West Africa, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa.

Ireland's Existing Infrastructure Supporting Agriculture and Rural Development in Africa

This final section provides further context on existing entities and programmes designed to leverage Irish agri-food experience and expertise, within both the public and private sectors, for Ireland's international development programme and wider international engagement in the agriculture and rural development sectors. Suggested changes to these entities feature prominently in the recommendations and proposed actions at the end of this report. Further details are also provided in relation to Ireland's ODA investments in agriculture and rural development across a spectrum of development actors (NGOs, multilaterals and national institutions and partners).

The *Africa Agri-Food Development Programme (AADP)* is a joint initiative between the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Its objective is to develop partnerships between the Irish Agri-Food Sector and African countries to support sustainable growth of the local food industry,

build markets for local produce and support mutual trade between Ireland and Africa. It provides grant assistance to programmes that are commercial in nature and contribute to sustainable development of food systems in Africa. Launched in 2013 there has been a significant increase in interest over recent years from Irish companies in the AADP offer, despite a limited media profile and generally low awareness of the programme. With a growing number of alumni companies and with increased media profiling there is potential to significantly grow and expand the programme in the coming years.

Africa Agri-Food Development Programme

Clár Forbartha Agraibhia don Afric



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 practice in support of Ireland's development objectives. 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 and harness Irish expertise in this area for the benefit of development programmes overseas. IFIAD, with limited resourcing, has facilitated a number of member partnerships, which have successfully bid for international development and research support. In early 2020, DFA provided support for a full time co-ordinator. This additional resourcing has supported IFIAD's ambition to expand its role and activities.



Sustainable Food Systems Ireland

A partnership of Irish Government agencies

Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI) is a consortium of five Irish Government organisations, namely Bord Bia, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Teagasc and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Launched in 2013, SFSI serves as a conduit for countries and organisations interested in tapping into Ireland's experience and expertise across all aspects of the agri-food sector. There has been a significant interest from African Governments, international agencies and development partners for its services. There is real potential for increased engagement by SFSI and its constituent organisations across the African continent in areas as diverse as animal breeding, crop science, inclusive approaches to agri-food sector strategy processes, extension and innovation systems, animal and plant disease control and food safety.

Finally, and in addition to the above, Ireland invests approximately €66 million on an annual basis in agriculture and rural development initiatives across the African continent, under its international development programmes. These investments, managed collaboratively by DAFM and DFA, are made through a range of partnerships with national and international development agencies, institutions, and multilaterals. The three Rome-based agencies (RBAs) comprising the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) are key partners to Ireland. An Agricultural Attaché based in Rome plays a key role in improving our engagement, support and influence with these important organisations.

3. FINDINGS OF THE MAPPING PHASE

Methodology

Irish stakeholders were mapped using a bespoke questionnaire distributed to organisations that had been identified as engaging either in dialogue or initiatives in rural Africa. Follow-up interviews were conducted with respondents to clarify information submitted and to gain greater context on the initiatives.

The organisations mapped during this exercise were categorised into the following headings: Private Sector; State Agency; NGO; or Academic Institution. The mapping also disaggregated respondents by geographic scope (target Country; National, or Sub-National) and funding source (Private Investment, Public Investment, or Public/Private Partnership).

Initiatives were also characterised by the form of activity undertaken: Primary Production, Processing, Logistics & Supply Chain, Agri Inputs, Policy & Advocacy, Training & Advisory, Sampling & Quality Systems.

Exports of goods and services were also included as initiatives under the above categories. Finally, financial investment was categorised into the following three groups: ≤€1 million; €1 million - €5 million; >€5 million.

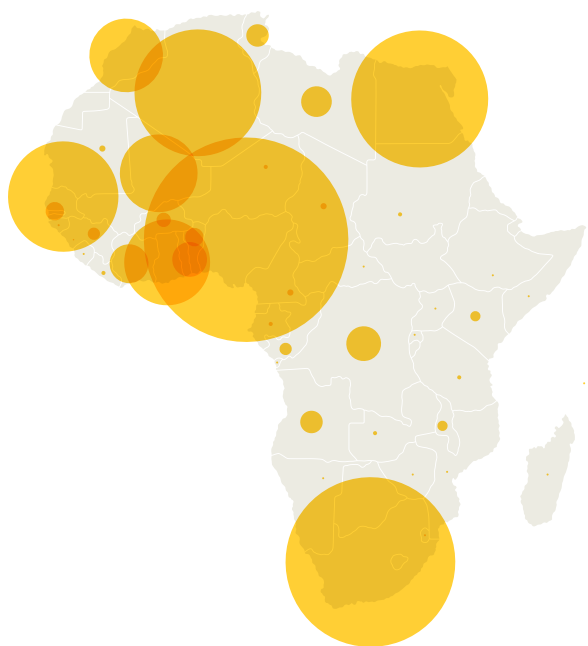


Figure 2: Ireland's main Agri-Food Markets in Africa in 2019

Results

In total, 103 organisations were contacted regarding current activities in Africa. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 64 of these. 44 of these organisations were engaged in agri-food and rural development initiatives in Africa in 2019. All together, these 44 organisations were engaged in 193 initiatives across Africa. As illustrated in Figure 6, page 21, the 193 initiatives were geographically dispersed across the whole continent with initiatives taking place in 42 of the 54 African states. The highest number of 2019 projects ongoing were in Ethiopia (19), followed by Malawi (17), Kenya (16) and Uganda (16).

The 193 projects were also categorised according to the nine TFRA Actions with many projects fitting into more than one category. One hundred and thirty projects (67%) were focused on TFRA Action 9, Improving environmental sustainability, climate resilience and agrobiodiversity in the agricultural sector. This includes almost all of the NGO projects mapped. 56 (29%) of the initiatives fall under Action 2, Research and Innovation Partnerships, while twenty-nine projects (15%) are categorised under Action 1, AU-EU Agri-Business Platform.

The remaining projects (16%) are spread across four of the six other TFRA Actions. Action 4, Continental Strategy on Geographic Index and Action 8, LEADER initiatives did not correspond to any of the projects listed by Irish Organisations.

IRELAND - AFRICA TRADE ENVIRONMENT

Existing trade flows between Ireland and African countries provide a foundation for initiatives that contribute to sustainable development and job creation in Africa's agri-food sector and rural economy.

In 2019, Ireland's agri-food exports to Africa were €710 million, accounting for 5.3% of all Irish agri-food exports. Dairy exports accounted for 76% (€540 million) of Irish exports to Africa.

Scale of TFRA Initiatives by Organisation

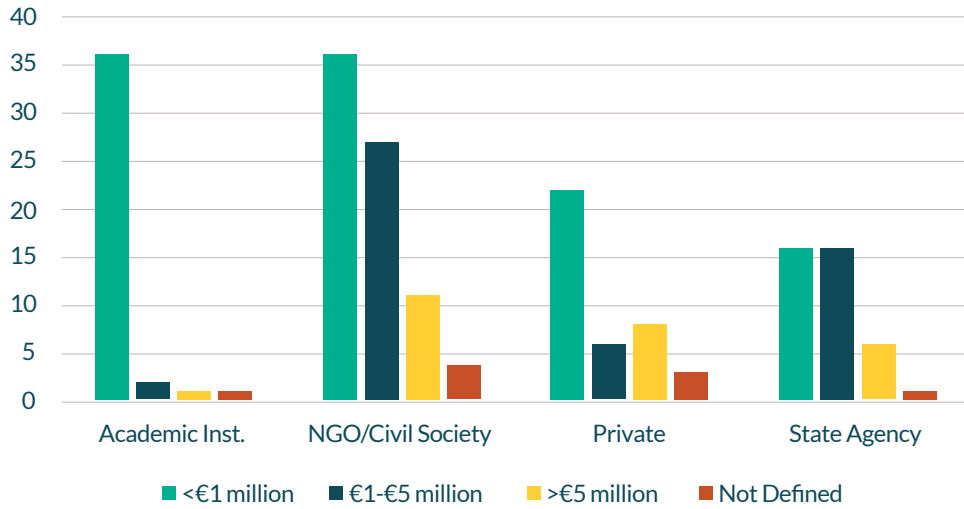


Figure 3: Financial Scale of Irish Initiatives in 2019

Irish Imports from Africa in 2019 totalled €144 million. Prepared Consumer Foods accounted for approximately €67.7 million (47%) of Ireland’s imports from Africa and was mainly composed of chocolate-based confectionary. Edible horticulture imports, mainly fruit and nuts, accounted for €35.5 million (25%). Ireland’s beverage imports from Africa accounted for €17.3 million (12%) of total imports and consisted primarily of tea and coffee. It is worth noting that imports from Africa may be understated; due to the sourcing of fruit and vegetables from Africa by UK based retailers importing product directly to UK for Irish retail markets.

In summary, the results of the mapping phase illustrate that Ireland’s activities are geographically, financially, and organisationally dispersed across the continent of Africa. Yet, when disaggregated across export and non-export related activities, a broad trend is evident. Irish trade interests are concentrated in West and North Africa, along with South Africa, while Irish development activities are predominately concentrated in East and Southern Africa. Finally, to note that investment flows by Irish companies in Africa was not included in the scope of this mapping yet this component should be included within the scope of the Evaluation and Learning group given in recommendation 4.

2019 Ireland - Africa Trade Food, Drink, Horticulture Trade



Figure 4: Ireland’s Food and Agri-Tech trade with Africa - 2019

Ireland’s Top 4 Agri-food Exports to Africa 2019

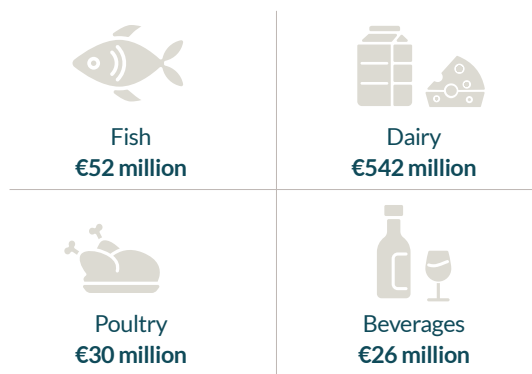


Figure 5: Ireland’s Exports to Africa 2019

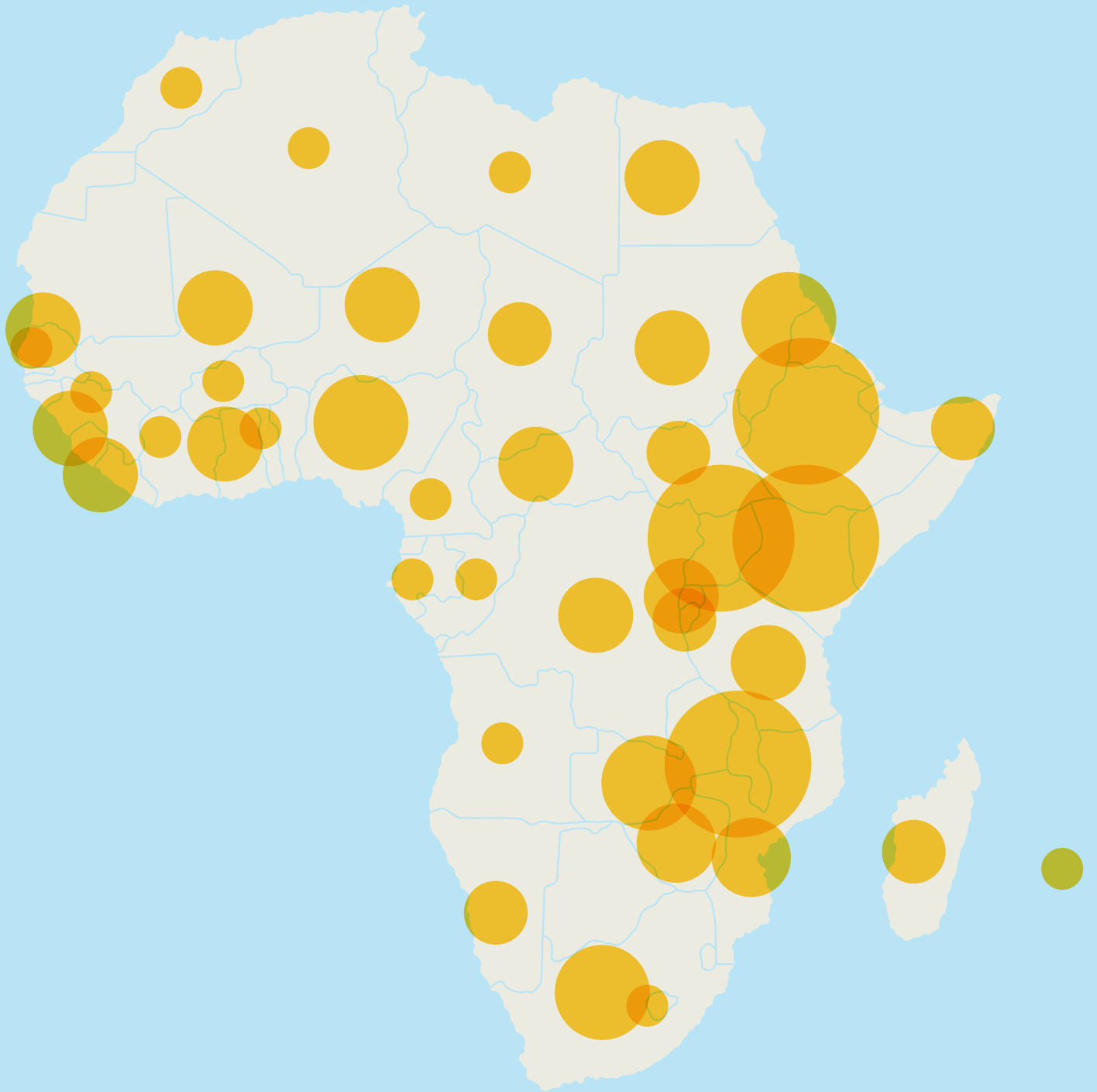


Figure 6: Ireland Inc's Initiatives in Africa 2019

THREE CORE THEMES FROM THE FINDINGS

1. Inclusive Economic Growth

All stakeholders stated that they saw increased economic activity in the agri-food sector as fundamental to the development of the rural economy in African countries. From this, the question then arises as how to enable greater economic activity in the rural agri-food sector in African contexts.

NUTRITION REGISTRATION
COOPERATIVES VOICE EFFECTIVENESS
RISK MITIGATION
MALNUTRITION MANAGEMENT
ANIMAL NUTRITION SOURCING
SUPPORT
EDUCATION COLLABORATION
COORDINATION EXPORT CREDIT
AADP LOCAL MANUFACTURING
CERTIFICATION SCALE
INFRASTRUCTURE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Figure 7: Stakeholders main requests through the mapping exercise

Even though 'scarcity of information when evaluating investment opportunities' was cited as a specific challenge by almost all company representatives during interviews, it was evident, given the diversity within the companies, that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. There are three distinct sub-groups within this cohort: 1) Irish Exporters, 2) Irish Companies aiming to establish a manufacturing base in Africa, and 3) African and Irish SMEs and social enterprises supported through development programmes.

2. Knowledge exchange for technical and systems development

While Irish organisations have the potential for significant impact in job creation in specific contexts, given their limited knowledge of and power and influence in hosting countries, transformational system change will not be possible if African companies and institutions do not take the lead. Technical knowledge on specific production systems and processes will be hugely important but equally important and often neglected is the role Irish institutions can play in building stronger systems within their African counterparts.

3. Coordination of Irish activities

Stakeholders had two overarching questions:

- A. Where do I go to get the support I need?
- B. How best to work with others to maximise my contribution?

Civil Society organisations, academia and private companies are individually pursuing activities across Africa, accessing financial and technical support through different avenues. An overarching request from stakeholders was for a more holistic package of the various supports available to complement their respective initiatives. This included support to explore opportunities for collaboration, access to credible information, and knowledge of other actors, inputs and programmes which could support their initiatives. State Agencies, including the embassy network, provide information and support but this can be on an ad hoc basis. Not all stakeholders are aware of where they should direct requests for support and assistance.

4.OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

4. OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

The 103 stakeholders contacted during the mapping phase were invited to participate in a series of consultations where the findings of the mapping exercise were presented. They then discussed the opportunities, challenges and constraints on how to maximise the impact of Ireland's initiatives in Rural Africa over the next 3 to 5 years.

These consultations engaged over one hundred stakeholders under five groups that focused on the following thematic areas:

1. Export Growth
2. Manufacturing in Africa
3. Knowledge Exchange
4. Rural Development
5. Corporate Social Responsibility

It was evident from the discussions within these groups that there was a commitment to developing initiatives in Africa and a recognition of the opportunities across the African continent. Stakeholders with experience in Africa felt that awareness of Ireland is strong and perceptions are overwhelmingly positive. In many African countries where there has been a sustained missionary and/or development engagement Ireland is perceived in a generally positive light, which can be helpful in leveraging opportunities.

Input from the stakeholders has formed the basis of the recommendations outlined in the next section of this report. It is worth noting that while consultations were facilitated on a thematic basis, many of the challenges identified were similar across the different groups. This was most evident in terms of unlocking the aggregate potential of the input, energy and resources of the many initiatives undertaken by Irish organisations in rural Africa. This is a recurring theme throughout this report.

The following is a summary of the challenges and constraints identified by stakeholders during the consultation phase:

Enabling Market Access

African markets are volatile, presenting higher risk for exporters. Exporters need greater support in navigating non-tariff barriers, financial restrictions and market information.

Developing Opportunities for African Sourcing

Irish importers do not have sufficient market data, business networks, supply chain providers, technical and regulatory supports to develop sourcing opportunities in Africa.

Developing a Value Chain Approach

There is not an infrastructure in key markets to identify supply chain partners or service providers. It is very difficult to undertake due diligence on potential business partners, further increasing the risks around developing collaborations and partnerships.

Business Networks

Business Networks are not well established in African markets making it difficult for Irish businesses and organisations to identify potential partners and develop information on the local business environment.

Clustering

There is little collective learning and information sharing between Irish organisations except for a small number of collective initiatives. Collaboration between businesses in Africa is uncommon which leads to challenges in developing business infrastructure such as cold chains, training and development and packaging technologies.

Information

Participants acknowledged the support to businesses from Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia, SFSI and the embassy network. However, more specific in-market information is required to inform investment decisions in Africa.

Finance and Investment

While several national and international financial incentives exist to support trade and investment in Africa, there is a need for more targeted programmes including longer term assistance programmes.

Knowledge Exchange between Irish Organisations with specific interests in Africa

Despite many years of experience in operating in Africa, pre-competitive knowledge is not shared across organisations. There is a need for greater networking and communication between Irish stakeholders with interest in engaging in rural development and the agri-food sectors.

Knowledge Exchange with African Counterparts/Partners

Irish knowledge in agriculture is not always directly applicable in Africa. In many instances the value that Ireland provides is the systems behind the practices, rather than applying Irish practices in African conditions. As such, initiatives and collaborations must be demand-driven by African stakeholders and context-specific to achieve effective agri-food and rural development outcomes in Africa.

Unleashing the potential of Knowledge/ Assets within 'Ireland Inc'

State agencies involved in the Irish Agri-Food sector could play a much greater role in African agri-food and rural development. Existing resources could be better coordinated, but for maximum effect more resources may also be required. This must be balanced with state agencies own priorities, dictated by their mandates, which rightly focus on the national interests of the Irish agri-food sector.

Demands on agencies limited resources are high and Africa is not always a priority.

Knowledge Exchange through Research and Innovation

The mapping exercise revealed significant relevant research undertaken by Irish academic and research institutions. However, most stakeholders are not aware of it. This resource within Irish academic and research institutions should form a core and accessible part of the overall 'Ireland Inc.' approach.

The 'Learning' Approach

Rural development stakeholders identified the need to build a culture of continuous improvement and learning within Irish-based international development and business practice, leveraging learnings from past and current initiatives.

Collaborations

There is recent evidence of increasing collaboration across and between Irish organisations operating in Africa such as DESIRA partnerships and challenge funding supported by DFA in collaboration with Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). Yet there is a need to further connect Irish, African and third-party stakeholders to deliver effective collaborations and to successfully access funding and research opportunities.

Guidelines

Stakeholders differ in their definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes, and there is a lack of clarity about how this can be successfully fostered in different African countries. While there are a number of resources for Irish organisations in designing Corporate Governance programmes in Ireland, further guidance is needed for participants seeking to initiate CSR programmes in Africa.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this report are designed specifically to build upon, coordinate and strengthen existing initiatives, and in particular to further the implementation of Global Ireland: Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025, which itself builds upon broader commitments made in A Better World and Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025. The SDGs are at the heart of Ireland's International Development Policy and Africa Strategy. It is critical that these remain the guiding principles for the Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem proposed below. All initiatives supported must link directly to the attainment SDGs.

Coordination has been the number one issue identified by all stakeholders throughout the NTTRA's consultation process. This included:

- » How we coordinate **knowledge**
 - Internally in Ireland
 - From Africa to Ireland (demand/issue driven interventions)
 - From Ireland to Africa (communicate what we have to offer)
 - Between Ireland and the EU (and other stakeholders/development partners)
- » How we coordinate resources
 - National resources:
Financial: Private Sector Investment etc. Africa Agri-food Development programme (AADP), the Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF), International Agricultural Research, Multi Annual Programme Grants, Development Education, Multilaterals, bilateral programming
Human: People and time
 - Leverage International Resources: EU Funds, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) etc.

The specific challenges and constraints outlined in the previous section have been used to formulate a series of recommendations defining necessary elements of the 'Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem.' These recommendations have been formulated to maximise Ireland's TFRA response, including optimal management arrangements over the coming 3-5 years. In implementing these recommendations, we can deliver the stakeholders' **shared vision** of:

- » More effective Rural Development programmes that ensure:
 - sustainability and economic viability of women and men smallholder farmers, agri-food MSMEs and other enterprises within the rural economy
 - More equitable and sustainable rural employment opportunities
- » Increased investment in African rural economies
 - Leaving as much value in African rural communities as possible
 - Inclusive economic growth with an emphasis on women's economic empowerment and recognition of their critical role in the food system
- » Increased two-way trade between Africa and Ireland/EU
 - That benefits the furthest behind and is in line with the SDGs

RECOMMENDATION 1 (ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK FOR AN IRELAND AFRICA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM):

This includes a coordination function, namely the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee, to align recommended actions and ensure accountability for implementation.

The proposed **Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem** consolidates existing infrastructure. However, to ensure greater coordination and optimal effectiveness from Irish stakeholders, and in response to the call in **ABW** to 'do things differently', the proposed structure does include new innovations as well as some recommendations to strengthen existing mechanisms and initiatives.

Proposed Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem

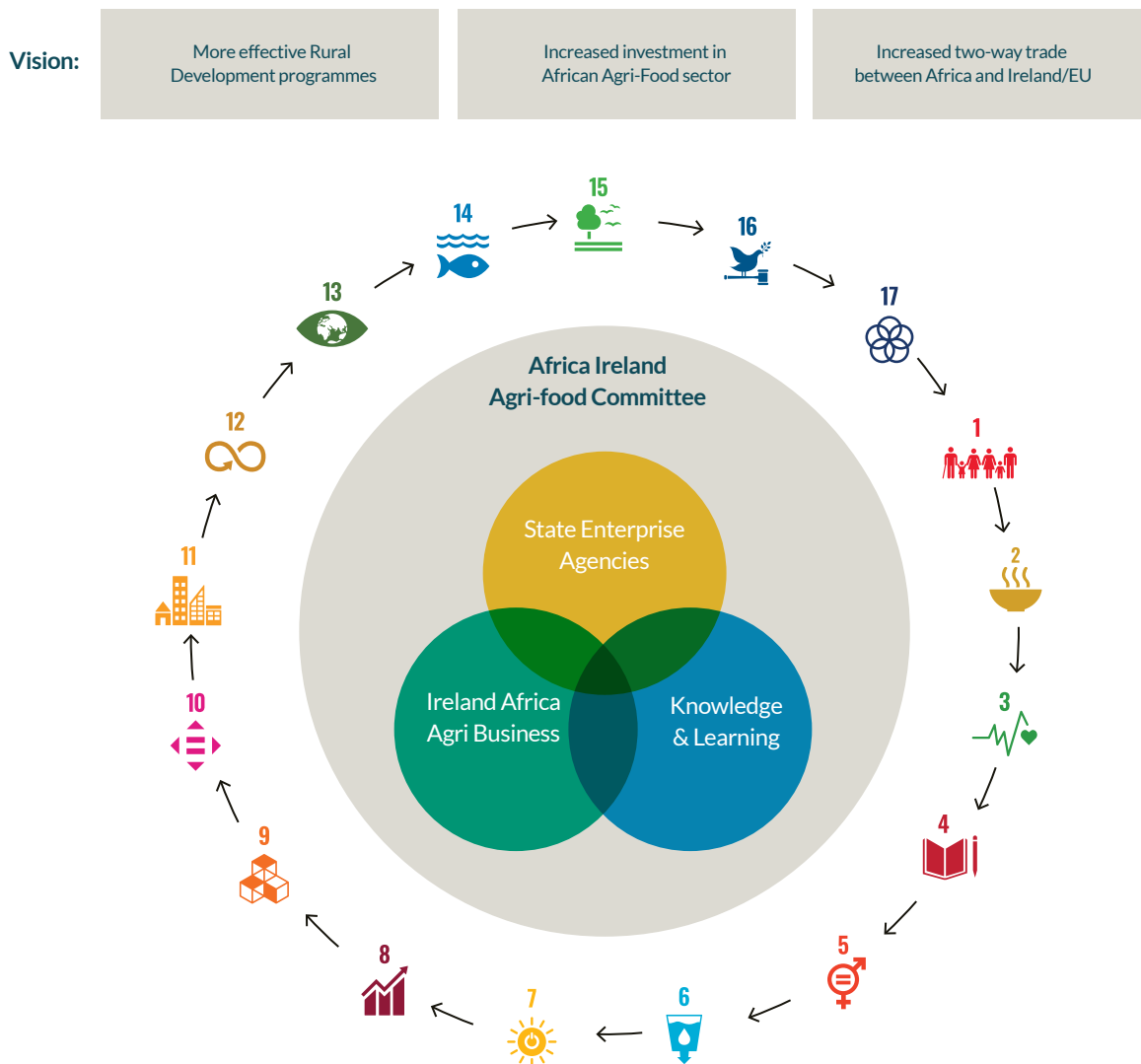


Figure 8: Proposed Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem

The development and operation of the proposed ecosystem will require resources, but costs of operation can be supplemented through use of existing functions and organisations. It is also appropriate that organisations benefiting from the services provided through the proposed ecosystem contribute to its functioning. This also serves to place a value for money on service delivery by the organisations operating within the proposed ecosystem. There is an immediate need to ensure the continued operation of the NTTRA steering committee and to ensure the eventual resourcing of a secretariat to the Africa-Ireland Agri-Food Committee.

To contextualise recommendations 2-6 presented later in this section, each of the four components of the **Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem** are described briefly below.

A. State Enterprise Agencies

In this context **State Enterprise Agencies** include Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and Teagasc. Each of these agencies has its own mandate and priorities. Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI) currently operates to a mandate from these agencies and is best positioned to coordinate across all relevant State Enterprise Agencies. This will enhance its delivery on:

- » Expertise in project and programme design
- » Government-to-government advice
- » Delivery of technical assistance
- » Organisation of training and study tours
- » Project and programme monitoring, reviews and evaluation
- » Impact evaluation
- » Creation of financing models for industry support

B. Knowledge and Learning Functions

This function incorporates two very specific working groups: Research and Innovation; and Evaluation and Learning. Given its current mandate and membership, the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development (IFIAD) is the logical organisation to host and coordinate these two working groups. IFIAD already has a funded secretariat and a working group structure. While these two working groups would be new for IFIAD, much of their proposed functions are already incorporated in IFIAD's core mandate of Sharing Knowledge, Enhancing Research, Informing Policy & Good Practice and Enabling Collaboration. IFIAD also draws on a very wide membership base from across the Irish civil society, and agricultural research communities as well as from state agencies, DFA and DAFM, which will help in coordinating initiatives across the ecosystem.

» I. Research & Innovation Working Group

- **Function:** To coordinate Irish institutions with an interest in Food Systems Research for Development (FSR4D) to more effectively engage in FSR4D in the African context and to provide feedback for policy makers. This function corresponds directly with Action 2: Research & Innovation Partnerships of the nine actions agreed at the AU:EU Agricultural Ministerial Meeting in 2019.

» II. Evaluation and Learning Working Group

- **Function:** Use evidence to raise the level of debate and continually improve the effectiveness of Ireland's agri-food and rural development initiatives in Africa.

C. Ireland-Africa Agri Business Networks

This function corresponds directly with Action 1: AU-EU Agri Food Platform, of the nine actions agreed at the AU – EU Agricultural Ministerial Meeting in June 2019. It has two key components that are very much interlinked. The first is an Africa Ireland Agri-Business Network, based in Ireland, which does not currently exist. The second are the African National Business Networks, which generally comprise Irish companies operating in the host African country along with local companies interested in doing business in/with Ireland or the EU. Some already exist to varying degrees in each country where Ireland has an Embassy/Consulate, but are not coordinated with the Irish Agri-Business community in any structured or formal way, relying mostly on individual outreach. Efforts have been made in recent years to build stronger linkages between the networks (for example, Business Ireland Kenya and Business Ireland South Africa have hosted exchange visits). A large proportion of the companies represented in these networks work directly or indirectly in the agri-food sector.

Regarding the new Business Network to be based in Ireland, the initial focus should be on the agri-food community. However, expansion into other sectors beyond agri-food should be the long-term ambition of the network, and thus its initial design should accommodate this possibility of expansion. Business networks must be business-led if they are to be successful. Government/ State Agencies can and should be involved, but primarily in a brokering/facilitation role. Building on existing Irish-Africa Business Networks across Africa should be a first priority.

- **Function:** Capitalise on the momentum generated through the NTTRA process amongst the Irish business community to establish a forum where Irish businesses can discuss the challenges and opportunities of doing business on the African continent, learn from each other, build collaborations and better integrate with the wider rural development agenda.

D. Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee

The proposed ecosystem is necessary to avoid stakeholders and projects operating in isolation and failing to benefit from the breadth and depth of knowledge and resources available. Like any balanced ecosystem each function relies on the other in order for it to perform effectively. The three functions necessarily interact with each other and are coordinated via the **Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee**.

The NTTRA is task specific and is due to disband on completion of this report. The proposed **Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee**, should be mandated to ensure the implementation and resourcing of these recommendations. It is critical that the proposed committee is effective, thus requiring a home and participation of senior personnel within the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, Food and the Marine to drive the agenda and deliver on the vision and recommendations in this report. Without this core function the entire ecosystem will not work optimally.

- **Function:** To give strategic direction to the Ireland Africa rural development ecosystem and to ensure resources are allocated/ reallocated to maximise the effectiveness of Ireland's agri-business and rural development initiatives in Africa.

Proposed Actions

1. Establish and define the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee, by March 2021, which is to be housed in DFA and DAFM. The membership should be gender balanced and should include:
 - External Chairperson
 - Dept. of Foreign Affairs
 - Dept. of Agriculture Food and the Marine
 - Representative for the State Enterprise Agencies

- Representative of the Ireland Africa Agri Business Network
 - Representative of the Knowledge & Learning Functions
 - Representative(s) from Africa and/or the African diaspora in Ireland (This could be from a partner country/African Union or regional/continental agricultural institution).
 - Representative from EU DEVCO / AGRI leading on TFRA implementation
2. Based on the agreed ToRs, establish and resource a Secretariat for the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee. It is expected that the Secretariat will perform the role of 'Knowledge Broker' for the Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem.

This should include:
 - Identifying opportunities for greater knowledge and experience sharing between functions and stakeholders
 - Coordinate with the expanding network of Embassies and consulates in Africa through the Dept. of Foreign Affairs and state enterprise agencies.
 - Link with similar networks in the EU to build alliances and coordinate resources
 3. The Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee should meet initially at least every six months, but this could move out to an annual meeting once structures and processes are put in place.
- Finally, as highlighted by actors during the consultation process, the following actions relate to existing programmes and initiatives and should be prioritised as the **Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee** convenes in March 2021:
4. Building on the recent review of the Africa Agri-Food Development Programme (AADP) assess the potential to:
 - Expand this programme both in terms of financial scope and the duration of funding
 - Develop an investment facility for African MSMEs with a specific focus on women's economic empowerment, potentially as part of an expanded AADP
 - Ensure AADP is fully aligned with both the inclusive economic growth agenda and DFA's Business and Human Rights Workplan
 - Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system for both individual AADP projects and the AADP as a whole.
 - Incorporate a Business Development Supports mechanism with a specific focus on women in business that addresses both hard and soft skills in business development to complement investments through AADP (e.g. ACORNS initiative for Irish rural women entrepreneurs)
 5. Work with existing research funds (e.g. Irish Research Council's COALESCE and New Foundations Fund and Science Foundation Ireland's Future Innovator Prize) and Departments of Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, Food and the Marine to establish an Irish Food Systems Research for Development (FSR4D) fund to catalyse collaborations on knowledge generation and exchange
 6. Building on collaborative efforts by DFA and DAFM already undertaken in relation to Ireland's engagement with the RBAs, improve coordination of funds going to IFAD, FAO, WFP, CGIAR and other multilaterals to ensure they are aligned to best complement each other and deliver on the commitments in A Better World and the Africa Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 2 (RELATED TO THE STATES ENTERPRISE AGENCIES COMPONENT):

Leverage the resources of key state agencies, to facilitate deeper engagement in international development initiatives in Africa and in building strategic relationships with key African partners. This is in line with the whole of government approach espoused in A Better World and in the Africa Strategy, which explicitly refers to leveraging the talent, resources and capacities of State Agencies.

Proposed Actions

Recognising that each State Agency's priorities are determined differently, often using market prioritisation criteria, and that the priorities of individual State Agencies may not currently align with a focus on African markets:

1. Empower State Agencies by giving them the highest possible level of authority to:
 - participate in international technical assistance for Sustainable Development, and
 - enhance the prioritization of African regions. This should include a new commitment to ensure better collaboration and coordination between (and within) Irish state functions on initiatives and programmes supporting sustainable development at country-level.
2. Strengthen engagement of DFA and DAFM in the current review of SFSI's strategy with a view to expand the role that SFSI already plays in tapping into state agency resources.
3. Explore the potential of a more strategic relationship between SFSI, DFA and DAFM to streamline ongoing and future actions and to deliver priorities related to A Better World and Global Ireland (thematic and geographical) while ensuring ODA compliance standards.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (RELATED TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING COMPONENT):

Improve the effectiveness of Ireland's Food Systems Research for Development (FSR4D) in Africa through enhanced coordination infrastructure, incentivising collaborations and enabling evidenced based policy influencing.

Proposed Actions

1. Working through IFIAD, engage FSR4D stakeholders to develop and implement a ten-year strategy to coordinate Irish investment in FSR4D. The strategy should include:
 - Details of how research and innovation will be demand driven in an African context and how this will be made operational.
 - The current and potential roles of the various research institutions in FSR4D
 - This should be based on a thorough mapping of the national Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) in Ireland and potentially in partner countries. The mapping must include an assessment of gender in AKIS.
 - Include a strategy for managing the whole research chain from initial idea to application and scale up (to include financing/ investment)
 - Details on how to coordinate with the CGIAR System and how to leverage external funding sources such as EU Framework Programmes on Research and Innovation (e.g. Horizon Europe, DEVCO's DeSIRA Programme).

2. Establish an Irish FSR4D Fund to catalyse collaborations on FSR4D and enable the allocation of resources in line with government policy.
 - Engage with DFA and DAFM to discuss how existing/new resources might be allocated for this fund and how the fund could be aligned with the Africa Strategy and A Better World.
 - Assess the potential for managing the fund through existing funds managed by DAFM, Science Foundation Ireland, the Irish Research Council, etc.
3. Compare different approaches to inclusive economic growth and assess efficacy in reaching the furthest behind first with a focus on women farmers, entrepreneurs and women in business.
4. Facilitate regular lesson sharing between the three functions of the development ecosystem and develop policy briefs/recommendations for improvements, subject to approval by the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee. Recommendation 5 (related to the Ireland Africa Agri-Business component):

RECOMMENDATION 4 (RELATED TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING COMPONENT):

Working through IFIAD, engage stakeholders with capacity in learning and development to develop an Evaluation and Learning Working Group. This working group will coordinate evaluation and learning from initiatives in Africa implemented/supported by the Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem.

Proposed Actions

1. Support the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee to develop accountability metrics based on the common vision for Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem.
 - Develop a framework for evaluating/ monitoring agri-business and rural development initiatives that focuses on Ireland's key international development priorities of Gender Equality, Reducing Humanitarian Need, Climate Action and Strengthened Governance; and their corresponding SDGs.
 - Develop common indicator(s) for stakeholders to use to track the number of sustainable and equitable jobs created by initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 5: (RELATED TO IRELAND-AFRICA AGRI BUSINESS COMPONENT)

Establish a network for Irish Agri-Businesses with interests in African markets.

Proposed Actions

1. Build on the stakeholder consultation and mapping exercise to develop a network of Irish Agri-Businesses with interests in Africa - this should include a specific focus on Irish women in Agri-Business
2. Agree terms of reference for the Africa Ireland Agri-Business Network, including a funding model and organisational structure, with a focus on trade and economics but not extending to lobbying or political activities.
3. Get clarity on the current and potential role of the Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) in supporting Irish businesses in Africa and share this information with stakeholders

RECOMMENDATION 6 (RELATED TO THE IRELAND AFRICA AGRI-BUSINESS COMPONENT):

Strengthen coordination and collaboration within, and between, Irish state actors and existing, and future, business networks within African countries.

Embassy teams, and the local state enterprise agency representatives in African partner countries, are connected to business networks where they exist. The challenge is to better coordinate existing resources to target/support business networks in the agri-food sector and to create a system where African agri-food businesses see 'Ireland Inc.' as a potential key partner/collaborator to catalyse investment in the agri-food sector. Currently, there are limited opportunities for African businesses to engage with Irish agri-businesses (and the wider development ecosystem) to understand what Ireland has to offer and where supports or opportunities might lie.

Similarly, Irish agri-businesses have limited channels for engaging with their counterparts in Africa if not operational in African markets. Notable opportunities that do exist include the Irish-African business networks noted above (e.g. Business Ireland Kenya or Business Ireland South Africa); the AADP; and relatively infrequent Trade Missions to Africa.

Proposed Actions

1. Better coordinate Irish State resources (DFA, DAFM, EI, Bord Bia, etc) to engage more strategically with local business networks and ensure a more standardised, two-way flow of information between African business communities (needs/wants) and the Ireland Africa rural development ecosystem (specifically the Africa Ireland Agri-Business Network).
2. Support establishment of business networks in each of Ireland's partner countries to develop knowledge on local agri-businesses and local business context (governance and regulations etc.) and facilitate networking and exchange information and experiences.
3. Include a specific mandate on supporting women's economic empowerment in Agri Business including the development of, or the support of existing, women in business and mentorship programmes, using a similar model to the ACORNS Initiative, which has been hugely successful in Ireland.
4. Develop in-market business intelligence, build a network of key contacts and a list of trusted partners.
5. Maintain a database of potential or unsuccessful AADP applicants which could then be used to engage with Irish companies and the wider ecosystem explained above.
6. Build relationships with the Ireland Africa rural development ecosystem, in particular the Africa Ireland Agri-Business Network (once established). Arrange virtual meetings and exchange visits, share lessons learned and good practice initiatives, and develop joint databases of companies interested in Ireland/the partner country.
7. Facilitate collaboration and communication between Irish and EU businesses with shared interests in the local context, and liaise with local EU Trade Counsellors in African countries, which undertake regular surveys of EU companies operating in the host countries.
8. Identify a point person/facilitator in each partner country to maintain contact lists and key information of the businesses in that country seeking to engage with Irish companies, in coordination with the relevant state agency and the local business network and chambers of commerce. This role should have sufficient weight to convene stakeholders, and establish and drive a clear agenda.

6. CONCLUSION

6. CONCLUSION

The work of the National Task Team on Rural Africa in evaluating Ireland's initiatives in Rural Africa has shown that Ireland makes an important contribution to the development of Africa's rural economy. The Irish government's financial contributions to African rural development initiatives are substantial totalling approx. €66 million in official development assistance 2018 and comprised:

- » €25 million to Multilateral Organisations - International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Land Coalition, Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP)
- » €3.8 million for global programmes and policy partners - Teagasc, Africa Agri-Food Development Programme (AADP), Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development (IFIAD), Global research Partnership (CGIAR),
- » €9.8 million in Overseas Development Aid distributed to Civil Society partners for agri-food projects and programmes in Africa.
- » €27 million delivered to bilateral partners and through embassies' own country-specific development partnership programmes

Existing agencies and programmes are well positioned to support and increase our engagement in agriculture and rural development. Ireland's State Agencies play an important role in supporting rural development programmes in Africa with organisations such as Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI), the consortium of five Irish Government organisations providing support to rural development programmes across Africa.

The African Agri-Food Development Programme (AADP), a joint programme managed by DFA and DAFM supports Irish companies to partner with and invest in counterpart African companies, in initiatives with clear development outcomes. Further, the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development (IFIAD) brings together Irish stakeholders to share knowledge and good practices for the benefit of agricultural development programming and policy in support of Ireland's development objectives.

What did emerge from the NTTRA consultations was a clear desire for greater alignment in the objectives, resourcing, and coordination of state resourced programmes. This alignment should not encroach on the individual mandates of respective organisations but, instead, it should identify areas of common focus and encourage further collaboration and alignment to maximise the impact of Ireland's programmes.

Ireland's development agencies, non-governmental organisations and academic institutions are significant in their rural development activities accounting for the majority of the 193 rural development initiatives mapped in 2019. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience across these organisations gained from leading many programmes in Africa over the years. However, with some evidence of collaboration across organisations, the collective knowledge and experience remains largely untapped. The recommendation for greater collaboration and a means to share experiences is based on input from these organisations. IFIAD can play a leading role, enabling meaningful collaboration, but this will require resourcing and refocusing to deliver results.

There was a lot of engagement with Ireland's business community including with some that have yet to invest

in Africa. The business and investment environment in Africa is challenging with longer returns on investment and higher business risk than in other international markets. Africa is a strategic market for businesses and both the agri-food and agri-tech sectors hold great potential for Irish businesses. Business leaders want a network for engagement, both in Ireland amongst peers and within individual markets amongst local business leaders. There is also interest from businesses to increase Corporate Social Responsibility programmes in Africa. The starting point for all is the development of business networks as outlined in the recommendations.

It is encouraging that amongst stakeholders in the public, ve private and non-profit sectors, all are aligned in their belief that the values of ethical business practices; diversity, equality and protection of women's rights; leadership in the Sustainable Development Goals; and reaching the furthest behind must underpin Ireland's initiatives in Africa. These values must be at the forefront of initiatives and implemented in pragmatic and impactful ways to ensure tangible outcomes from Ireland's initiatives in rural Africa.

Perhaps the most important recommendation is for a high-level committee that enables dialogue between the three functions outlined, provides strategic direction, acts as the policy link with government and ensures adherence to the values outlined. It is important that this committee is comprised of senior individuals with decision making

mandates and operates to the highest level of governance in relation to transparency, equality, representation, and tenure. The work of the committee has additional importance in the context of Covid-19 and in helping ensure that our food systems engagement addresses the additional challenges that have emerged over recent months.

Finally, we conclude by situating this report into its appropriate wider and longer term context. The TFRA report was framed against the reality that Africa has the world's fastest growing population in the 21st century, projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050. A majority of the African population will remain rural until the 2040s, notwithstanding rapidly expanding urbanisation. Hence, the need for a strong focus on the rural economy in future African development policy. Both Europe and Ireland see Africa as a strategic partner in the coming decades and have broad-based strategies to give effect to such partnerships.

This report is about how Ireland can aspire to an international leadership role in the area of sustainable food systems and how it can best organise its contribution to a vitally important part of that overall strategy – how to work with Africa to achieve the transformation of its agriculture and rural economy. This report seeks to galvanise decisions and action from political leaders and the many other stakeholders who can make a contribution to this transformation.

SUMMARY TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Recommendation	Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions
<p>1. Establish a framework for an Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem that includes a coordination function, namely the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee, to align recommended actions and ensure accountability for implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish and define the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee, by March 2021, which is to be housed in DFA and DAFM. The membership should be gender balanced. » Establish and resource a Secretariat for the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee. It is expected that the Secretariat will perform the role of 'Knowledge Broker' for the Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem. » The Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee should meet initially at least every six months, but this could move out to an annual meeting once structures and processes are put in place. » Building on the recent review of the Africa Agri-Food Development Programme (AADP) assess the potential to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a. Expand this programme both in terms of financial scope and the duration of funding • b. Ensure AADP is fully aligned with both the inclusive economic growth agenda and DFA's Business and Human Rights Workplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » With regard to the AADP; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an investment facility for African MSMEs with a specific focus on women's economic empowerment, potentially as part of an expanded AADP • Incorporate a Business Development Supports mechanism with a specific focus on women in business that addresses both hard and soft skills in business development to complement investments through AADP (e.g. ACORNS initiative for Irish rural women entrepreneurs) » Work with existing research funds (e.g. Irish Research Council's COALESCE and New Foundations Fund and Science Foundation Ireland's Future Innovator Prize) and Departments of Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, Food and the Marine to establish an Irish Food Systems Research for Development (FSR4D) fund to catalyse collaborations on knowledge generation and exchange.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • c. Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system for both individual AADP projects and the AADP as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Building on collaborative efforts by DFA and DAFM already undertaken in relation to Ireland's engagement with the RBAs, improve coordination of funds going to IFAD, FAO, WFP, CGIAR and other multilaterals to ensure they are aligned to best complement each other and deliver on the commitments in A Better World and the Africa Strategy.
<p>2. Leverage the resources of key state agencies, to facilitate deeper engagement in international development initiatives in Africa and in building strategic relationships with key African partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Empower State Agencies by giving them the highest possible level of authority to participate in international technical assistance for Sustainable Development. b. Strengthen engagement of DFA and DAFM in the current review of SFSI's strategy with a view to expand the role that SFSI already plays in tapping into state agency resources. c. Explore the potential of a more strategic relationship between SFSI, DFA and DAFM to streamline ongoing and future actions and to deliver priorities related to A Better World and Global Ireland (thematic and geographical) while ensuring ODA compliance standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Empower State Agencies by giving them the highest possible level of authority to enhance the prioritization of African regions. This should include a new commitment to ensure better collaboration and coordination between (and within) Irish state functions on initiatives and programmes supporting sustainable development at country-level. » Explore the potential of a more strategic relationship between SFSI, DFA and DAFM to streamline ongoing and future actions and to deliver priorities related to A Better World and Global Ireland (thematic and geographical) while ensuring ODA compliance standards.
<p>3. Improve the effectiveness of Ireland's Food Systems Research for Development (FSR4D) in Africa through enhanced coordination infrastructure, incentivising collaborations and enabling evidenced based policy influencing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Working through IFIAD, engage FSR4D stakeholders to develop and implement a ten-year strategy to coordinate Irish investment in FSR4D. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Establish an Irish FSR4D Fund to catalyse collaborations on FSR4D and enable the allocation of resources in line with government policy.

<p>4. Working through IFIAD, engage stakeholders with capacity in learning and development to develop an Evaluation and Learning Working Group.</p>	<p>a. Facilitate regular lesson sharing between the three functions of the development ecosystem and develop policy briefs/recommendations for improvements.</p>	<p>b. Support the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee to develop accountability metrics based on the common vision for Ireland Africa Rural Development Ecosystem.</p> <p>c. Compare different approaches to inclusive economic growth and assess efficacy in reaching the furthest behind first with a focus on women farmers, entrepreneurs and women in business.</p>
<p>5. Establish a network for Irish Agri-Businesses with interests in African markets.</p>	<p>a. Develop a network of Irish Agri-Businesses with interests in Africa - this should include a specific focus on Irish women in Agri-Business.</p> <p>b. Agree terms of reference for the Africa Ireland Agri-Business Network, including a funding model and organisational structure, with a focus on trade and economics but not extending to lobbying or political activities.</p>	<p>c. Get clarity on the current and potential role of the Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) in supporting Irish businesses in Africa and share this information with stakeholders</p>

<p>6. Strengthen coordination and collaboration within, and between, Irish state actors and existing, and future, business networks within African countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Better coordinate Irish State resources (DFA, DAFM, EI, Bord Bia, etc) to engage more strategically with local business networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop in-market business intelligence, build a network of key contacts and a list of trusted partners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish business networks in each of Ireland's partner countries to develop knowledge on local agri-businesses and local business context (governance and regulations etc.) and facilitate networking and exchange information and experiences. » Include a specific mandate on supporting women's economic empowerment in Agri Business including the development of, or the support of existing, women in business and mentorship programmes. » Identify a point person/ facilitator in each partner country to maintain contact lists and key information of the businesses in that country seeking to engage with Irish companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain a database of potential or unsuccessful AADP applicants which could then be used to engage with Irish companies. » Build relationships with the Ireland Africa rural development ecosystem, in particular the Africa Ireland Agri-Business Network (once established). Arrange virtual meetings and exchange visits, share lessons learned and good practice initiatives, and develop joint databases of companies interested in Ireland/the partner country. » Facilitate collaboration and communication between Irish and EU businesses with shared interests in the local context, and liaise with local EU Trade Counsellors in African countries, which undertake regular surveys of EU companies operating in the host countries.

ANNEX I – MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL TASK TEAM ON RURAL AFRICA

Tom Arnold Chairperson

Government Representative to the NTTRA

Ruairí De Búrca Department of Foreign Affairs

Sinéad McPhillips Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

State Agencies

David Kennedy Bord Bia

Lance O'Brien Teagasc

Alexa Toomey Enterprise Ireland

David Butler Sustainable Food Systems Ireland

African Diaspora

Sylvia Gavigan Honorary Consul of Uganda to Ireland

Academia

Triona McCormick/ University College Dublin
Ciara Leonard

Nick Chisholm University College Cork

Charlie Spillane National University of Galway

Chair Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development

Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations/actors

Lawrence Haddad Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

Ray Jordan Self-Help Africa

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