

**27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture**  
**Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members – Original language**  
 Item 2.12, Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture

<b>Member name</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Dominican Republic (Tue 22/09/2020 18:52)	<p>República Dominicana acoge con beneplácito el mandato para la Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La digitalización presenta grandes oportunidades para transformar la agricultura y los sistemas alimentarios, permitiendo a los agricultores en las zonas rurales encontrar en las herramientas digitales soluciones para mejorar los procesos de producción de alimentos, los canales de comercialización y facilitar la adquisición de nuevos conocimientos. Asimismo, la digitalización puede contribuir a reducir la brecha digital entre los productores, atraer y retener jóvenes en el sector agroalimentario y generar empleos, creando nuevas oportunidades en las zonas rurales.</li> <li>• Apreciamos que la misión y objetivos reflejen los principios de inclusión y el multilateralismo, aprovechando sinergias y evitando redundancias con los programas de trabajo establecidos en otros organismos internacionales que poseen ventajas comparativas en el ámbito digital.</li> <li>• Acogemos el mecanismo de funcionamiento propuesto, que incorpora un Grupo de representantes intergubernamentales tomando en consideración el equilibrio geográfico, para que las prioridades de esta plataforma sean impulsadas por los Estados miembros a partir del contexto de cada región.</li> <li>• En cuanto al Comité Asesor, nos gustaría recibir más información sobre el proceso de selección de las organizaciones que formarían parte del mismo y la duración prevista para su participación.</li> <li>• Tomamos nota de que la Plataforma se financiará con cargo a recursos extrapresupuestarios y esperamos la presentación del plan de financiación.</li> </ul>
Australia (Wed 23/09/2020 17:07)	<p>Australia notes that the paper on the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture (the Platform) is presented as an information note and does not provide suggested actions by the Committee; however as flagged in Council we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Governance arrangements of the Platform as outlined the Terms of Reference. In reviewing the paper we consider the Advisory Committee of the Platform to be the key element in bringing together global best practice. We would urge FAO to further consider how the Platform can maximise output while minimising input and as such would appreciate more detailed information on the expected commitment and level of engagement required for the Inter-Governmental Group. We would be interested to see the development of a solid monitoring and evaluation framework of the Platform, with periodic reporting to the FAO Council to ensure effective functioning and accountability.</p>
Peru (Thu 24/09/2020 10:03)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proporcionará un mecanismo voluntario e inclusivo de múltiples partes interesadas con el fin de aumentar la sensibilización, fomentar la coordinación, reducir la brecha entre los foros multilaterales del ámbito de la economía digital y los foros del ámbito de la alimentación y la agricultura y ofrecer a los gobiernos recomendaciones sobre políticas.</li> <li>- Se perfila como un mecanismo de coordinación flexible, sencillo y de consenso que contará con el apoyo de la FAO y que cumplirá con sus reglamentos, normas y procedimientos.</li> <li>- Establece un mecanismo de funcionamiento que estará compuesto por:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. El Grupo de representantes intergubernamentales, formado por Miembros;</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<p>2. El Comité asesor, formado por expertos técnicos de organizaciones internacionales y otras partes interesadas;</p> <p>3. El Foro en línea de múltiples partes interesadas, para velar por la participación de todas las partes en los debates; y</p> <p>4. Una Unidad de coordinación. La Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales se financiará mediante contribuciones extrapresupuestarias</p> <p>- Entre los objetivos de la Plataforma están:</p> <p>a. Promover el diálogo entre las partes interesadas sobre los efectos de las tecnologías digitales en la alimentación y la agricultura y facilitar el intercambio de conocimiento sobre marcos normativos y mejores prácticas que favorecen la digitalización.</p> <p>b. Realizar análisis y proporcionar pruebas científicas sobre los posibles beneficios y riesgos de las tecnologías digitales en el ámbito alimentario y agrícola, de conformidad con las condiciones y necesidades nacionales, a fin de impulsar el diálogo y el consenso entre múltiples partes interesadas.</p> <p>c. Crear y fortalecer los vínculos entre los foros internacionales y multilaterales cuyo mandato está relacionado con la economía digital y aquellos que se dedican a la alimentación y la agricultura, con miras a mejorar la coordinación y las sinergias sin duplicar ni prejuzgar los esfuerzos y el trabajo, y aumentar la sensibilización sobre los efectos de las tecnologías digitales que son específicas de la agricultura.</p> <p>d. Prestar apoyo a los responsables de las políticas en la formulación de políticas mediante la elaboración de recomendaciones, mejores prácticas y directrices voluntarias que permitan abordar los desafíos técnicos, económicos, sociales y éticos a los que se enfrenta el sector de la alimentación y la agricultura en el contexto de las tecnologías digitales.</p> <p>- La Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales se financiará mediante contribuciones extrapresupuestarias</p> <p>Comentarios</p> <p>- Se debe evaluar si la creación de esta Plataforma pudiera generar duplicidad con otros espacios que, al igual que ésta, buscan proponer recomendaciones de políticas, directrices voluntarias, entre otras.</p> <p>- Adicionalmente, y para una mayor justificación de la creación de la Plataforma, la propuesta debiera estar acompañada de definiciones de, por ejemplo, “la digitalización”, “la economía digital”, “digitalización de los sectores agrícola y alimentario”, entre otros.</p> <p>- Se recomienda evaluar la viabilidad de contar con un “Foro de Múltiples partes interesadas”, dado que, entre las funciones asignadas al Comité Asesor está el “promover el diálogo inclusivo mediante la organización de debates en línea con todas las partes interesadas”.</p> <p>- Sobre las implicancias financieras, y sus contribuciones extrapresupuestarias, se sugiere se acompañe de una mayor información.</p>
<p>Peru (Thu 24/09/2020 10:03)</p>	<p>Desarrollo de herramientas informáticas y perspectivas para la ganadería en el Perú con relación al Mandato de la Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales</p> <p>1. Herramientas informáticas desarrolladas para la ganadería en el Perú</p> <p>a) Sistema de Soporte a las Decisiones de la Dirección General de Ganadería del Ministerio de Agricultura y Riego del Perú</p> <p>El SODEGA es un sistema web responsivo integral, administrado por la Dirección General de Ganadería del Ministerio de Agricultura y Riego del Perú, diseñado para la toma de decisiones de la mencionada instancia en base a información de todas las actividades vinculadas al Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Ganadero 2017-2027. En tal sentido, el SODEGA, según el nivel</p>

	<p>jerárquico, permite registrar, aprobar, reportar, y analizar la data de los beneficiarios según el avance de las actividades. La información reportada, a nivel de avance físico, será puesta a disposición del público usuario a través del geoportal del Ministerio de Agricultura y Riego del Perú, entendiéndose por público usuario a las personas naturales y jurídicas que acceden al portal mencionado.</p> <p>b) Herramientas generadas en el marco del Proyecto de Apoyo de Nueva Zelandia al Sector Lechero Peruano  Actualmente, se viene implementando una herramienta de entrenamiento virtual a través de la Biblioteca Virtual de CENDOC del MINAGRI para el uso en los procesos de fortalecimiento de capacidades dirigidos a profesionales, técnicos y especialistas de MINAGRI, sus OPAS y proyectos. Esta herramienta contará con charlas técnicas sobre la calidad de la leche cruda y derivados lácteos, principalmente el queso; además de procedimientos estandarizados para la elaboración de queso fresco.</p> <p>2. Perspectivas sobre el desarrollo de herramientas informáticas para la ganadería  Como primer paso en el desarrollo de herramientas informáticas para el uso en ganadería, se requiere de un análisis del estado actual de la política nacional y sectorial relacionada con el uso de las TIC por parte del Gobierno del Perú y, especialmente, del Ministerio de Agricultura y Riego. Este análisis es importante para llegar a los productores ganaderos y para garantizar que se satisfagan sus necesidades de servicio.</p> <p>Así mismo, se necesita identificar todas las plataformas digitales del sector público en materia ganadera y hacer un diagnóstico de la situación actual de las infraestructuras tecnológicas. Además, se debería realizar una evaluación del tipo de información generada a partir de cada plataforma, y su contribución a la construcción de indicadores de gestión, que apoyen los objetivos propuestos por las políticas agrarias.</p> <p>También se requiere mejoras en la arquitectura tecnología de los sistemas de información, identificando las aplicaciones (sistemas) a implementar o mejorar, que apoyen de manera integrada los principales procesos y servicios del sector ganadero. Además, se deben definir iniciativas de corto y largo plazo que fomenten las innovaciones digitales en el sector agrícola.</p> <p>Después de diseñar el modelo de Gobierno Electrónico para el sector ganadero, es indispensable desarrollar un proyecto piloto utilizando la tecnología de las TIC para desarrollar una plataforma para los servicios de extensión rural, centrándonos en el suministro de información simplificada a través de la extensión cibernética respaldada por texto fácil o ilustraciones audiovisuales en idiomas locales que resalten la tecnología de cría de animales para desarrollar las capacidades de los productores.</p> <p>Se considera que el fortalecimiento de las capacidades en el diseño de las TIC para el desarrollo rural es fundamental, con énfasis en los funcionarios del MINAGRI y de las regiones, en términos de tecnologías digitales, servicios digitales, arquitectura digital, interoperabilidad interna y externa, seguridad digital que permitan mejorar los servicios ganaderos y agropecuarios en general a través de tecnologías TIC.</p>
<p>Argentina (Wed 23/09/2020 23:05)</p>	<p>Comentarios generales:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. La Argentina valora que la FAO mantenga en el centro de su programa de trabajo las cuestiones vinculadas con la innovación y las herramientas digitales, y es en virtud de ello que apoya la iniciativa de creación de la Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales.</li> <li>2. Conscientes del rol que desempeña la digitalización en la agricultura y los sistemas alimentarios, la Argentina considera importante contar con un mecanismo para, entre otras cosas, debatir los efectos de la digitalización e intercambiar información a fin de facilitar a los Miembros el desarrollo de nuevas tecnologías y así favorecer la producción agrícola, combatir la desnutrición y promover la seguridad alimentaria.</li> </ol>

3. En esa línea, adoptar perspectivas y enfoques innovadores se entiende importante para reforzar los sistemas de producción y distribución de alimentos, en especial a la luz de la crisis generada por la COVID-19 y a fin de evitar consecuencias negativas de la pandemia en la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición. Tales herramientas, incluyendo las herramientas digitales, permitirán encontrar soluciones y alternativas que nos ayuden a salir de esta situación, apoyando el desarrollo y el crecimiento sostenibles e inclusivos, y ofreciendo grandes oportunidades para el sector alimentario y agrícola.

4. Asimismo, es importante balancear la brecha de capacitación que existe entre los pequeños productores y las grandes compañías a fin de que la mayoría de los productores se encuentren en igualdad de condiciones a la hora de sacar provechos de estos instrumentos informáticos, poner el foco en facilitar el acceso de los productores a las nuevas tecnologías, desarrollar programas de capacitación para su uso y mejorar la conectividad. En este sentido, la Argentina apreciaría más precisiones acerca del o los mecanismos previstos para llevar adelante esta acción.

Comentarios particulares al documento COAG/2020/22:

5. Punto IV –Objetivos–, párrafo 7.b: se indica que la Plataforma “proporcionará pruebas científicas sobre los posibles beneficios y riesgos de las tecnologías digitales en el ámbito alimentario y agrícola”.

6. En este punto, sería de suma utilidad conocer cuál será base que se tomará para producir prueba y evidencia científica acerca la relación entre la tecnología y sus potenciales beneficios o daños. Es decir, ¿los insumos para evaluar los impactos serán proporcionados por los estados de forma voluntaria? ¿Se planea crear una publicación FAO que aborda esta temática? Y en caso que la respuesta a la segunda pregunta fuera afirmativa, ¿cómo podrán intervenir los Estados para evaluar las conclusiones a las que llegue la publicación?

7. La Argentina apreciaría mayor claridad sobre cómo se generarán esas pruebas científicas y cuál será su alcance.

8. Punto IV –Objetivos–, párrafo 7.d: se señala que la Plataforma elaborará “recomendaciones, mejores prácticas y directrices voluntarias”.

9. En primer lugar, estimamos adecuado que se reemplace el término “mejores prácticas” por “buenas prácticas”, toda vez que la segunda alusión permite entender que las metodologías de trabajo pueden ser útiles dependiendo el contexto, las capacidades y las prioridades de cada país, mientras la referencia a “mejores prácticas” prejuzga el uso metodologías alternativas para alcanzar resultados iguales.

10. Al mismo tiempo, se solicita que se suprima la referencia a “desafíos éticos” dado que se desconoce su alcance e impacto, siendo una alusión que se presta a la confusión y no aporta un valor agregado concreto al objetivo del párrafo.

11. Con relación a la futura elaboración de recomendaciones, buenas prácticas y directrices voluntarias, la Argentina estima que tales productos, si bien podrían contar con insumos de la Plataforma, deberían ser elaborados en el ámbito de los Órganos Rectores de la Organización –Comités Técnicos y Comité del Programa- y mediante un proceso de consultas formal, transparente e inclusivo que involucre a los Miembros.

12. Asimismo, tales documentos deberán ser producidos bajo estrictos parámetros de evidencia científica, teniendo en cuenta los elementos constitutivos de la Agenda de Desarrollo Sostenible 2030 y procurando equilibrar el contenido y alcance de los eventuales documentos para evitar la generación de enfoques conceptuales que puedan derivar en obstáculos al comercio internacional de alimentos.

13. Punto V –Mecanismos de funcionamiento–, párrafo 8.b.iii: se indica que el Comité Asesor “realizará análisis técnicos y proporcionará pruebas científicas sobre efectos de las tecnologías digitales”. La Argentina reitera los comentarios realizados en los párrafos 5 a 7 de esta presentación.

	<p>14. Punto V –Mecanismos de funcionamiento–, párrafo 8.b.v: se reiteran los comentarios relativos a la diferencia entre “mejores prácticas” y “buenas prácticas” expuestos en el párrafo 9 de esta presentación.</p> <p>15. Punto V –Mecanismos de funcionamiento–, párrafo 9: se solicita con empeño la incorporación del Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID), la CEPAL y la OIEA para brindarle mayor equilibrio geográfico, representativo y técnico al Comité Asesor. Asimismo, se valora crucial la incorporación, con una mención expresa, de las Agencias Públicas Nacionales destinadas al desarrollo de tecnología agrícola-ganadera, toda vez que se trata de actores claves en el proceso de investigación y desarrollo que podrán aportar experiencia y conocimiento al trabajo del Comité Asesor.</p>
<p>Canada (Thu 24/09/2020 14:43)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada supports the creation of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture and its Terms of Reference.</li> <li>• While the agriculture and agri-food sector has demonstrated its resilience during the pandemic, the adoption of digital technologies will continue to play an important role in helping it to address global challenges such as food security, adaptation to climate change, as well as providing economic and social opportunities for those who live and work in rural communities.</li> <li>• Canada supports the creation of the proposed international forum to encourage dialogue on challenges, risks and opportunities to the digitalization of agriculture and agri-food, exchange best practices, as well as provide evidence-based policy recommendations on supporting digital technology adoption in the sector.</li> </ul>
<p>Switzerland (Thu 24/09/2020 17:33)</p>	<p>Switzerland takes note of document COAG/2020/22 and thanks the Secretariat for its preparation.</p> <p>Switzerland attaches particular importance to digitization in the field of food and agriculture and is therefore ready to engage in the work of the proposed International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture (Platform). In our view, this Platform should ensure that digitization enhances the sustainability and performance of all actors, improves transparency along the value chain, improves efficiency and reduces administrative costs, while further improving animal welfare, the protection of natural resources and the sustainable use of resources.</p> <p>We have noted the absence of a link back to the COAG and other governing bodies of FAO. In our view, it could provide useful that policy recommendations and policy advice be endorsed by a governing body of FAO and not merely by the Platform governance. At the very minimum, the Platform should report to COAG at each session on progress made. In addition, we believe that FAO’s different roles need to be clarified. According to the draft ToR, FAO will be host of the Inter-governmental Representatives Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• member of the Advisory Committee</li> <li>• chair of the Advisory Committee</li> <li>• convener of the Advisory Committee</li> <li>• identifier and inviter of members of the Multi-stakeholder Forum</li> <li>• the Coordination Unit</li> </ul> <p>For good governance reasons and for the benefit of other participants, it will be important for other participants to understand how FAO will ensure separation of these very distinct roles in terms of workforce, competences etc.</p> <p>Below, please find specific comments on individual paragraphs:</p> <p>Par. 8a) We believe that two participants per region is not enough to reflect the diversity of approaches within each region. We therefore suggest a total of up to five participants pro region. This number seems more adequate to strike a balance between representation and size of the body.</p> <p>Par. 8a) iv) We would like to ask the Secretariat for clarification whether it is the Inter-governmental Representative’s Group that will endorse policy recommendations or propose policy recommendations for adoption by FAO governing bodies (see also</p>

	<p>comment further above).</p> <p>Par. 8b) ii) We would like to get some clarification on the “list of participants” for the various components that the Advisory Committee is charged to establish. Please clarify that the “various components” does not refer to the Intergovernmental Representatives’ Group as it should remain within the authority of FAO Members and regions to nominate their representatives. On what basis and selection criteria would such lists be established? It is not clear to us why we need a list of participants upon invitation, as opposed to allowing the open participation of those stakeholders who are interested, eager and able to contribute.</p> <p>We would also like to seek clarification regarding the notion of “develop ... agendas”; in our understanding, the Intergovernmental Representatives’ Group would develop its own agenda.</p> <p>Par.9) This paragraph lists the composition of the Advisory Committee, namely specific international organizations, farmers, the private sector, civil society and knowledge society. It is not clear to us what is meant by referring to multi-stakeholders group, given that farmers’ organizations, the private sector, the civil society and the knowledge society are not necessarily multi-stakeholder groups.</p> <p>In addition, in our view, the balance of the composition of the Advisory Committee between international organizations and other actors should be improved. In our view, the work of the Advisory Committee would benefit from a broader representation with practical expertise. We suggest to include two participants from farmers’ organizations, the private sector, civil society and the knowledge community.</p> <p>Par. 11) Please clarify the numbering (11a) and 11b) seem to be missing).</p> <p>Par. 11) It is not clear what the term multistakeholder groups entails in this context. Does it imply that the experts can be from different sectors of society (farmers’ organizations, the private sector, the civil society and the knowledge society)?</p> <p>Par. 11c) We fail to understand the added value that would come with the need to be identified and invited by the Coordination Unit in order to participate in the Multi-stakeholder Forum. An open system is preferable in order to ensure inclusiveness. In addition, we suggest to allow for occasional face-to-face meetings besides the online meeting in order for the Forum to work more efficiently.</p> <p>Par. 11d) Reference is made to the following sentence: “It will be placed in the office of the FAO Chief Economist and will be entirely managed by FAO under its mandate and institutional framework, and within its programme of work and budget.” This sentence seems to be in contradiction with the executive summary and par. 13 which state that the platform will be funded by extra-budgetary contributions while, in our understanding, the budget of the office of the Chief Economist is sourced through the regular budget. We thus ask for some clarification and rephrasing in order to ensure that the Platform, including the Coordination Unit, is funded by extra-budgetary contributions.</p>
<p>New Zealand (Thu 24/09/2020 18:16)</p>	<p>Thank you for this paper outlining Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. While it is strange that process wise, the Terms of Reference are being considered by COAG and the other technical committees only after approval of the platform by the Programme Committee and Council, overall we are reasonably comfortable with the level of consultation that has taken place to date.</p> <p>New Zealand is supportive of the role that digitalization can make to food systems productivity and to all dimensions of sustainable development. We note that digitalization issues are being addressed in several other international fora and many are not unique to agriculture such as data ownership, the digital divide, market power, privacy and security. New Zealand’s main objectives for the platform are to ensure that the platform adds as much value as possible to existing digitization work going on</p>

	<p>internationally (such as in the OECD and WTO) rather than duplicating this work. Throughout the consultation process we were very concerned that the approach was consistent with the work of those wider bodies, and it appears that their feedback has been incorporated throughout the process.</p> <p>We are also happy to see in the Terms of Reference that these bodies will have an ongoing role in the Advisory Committee. However, in recognition of the broad scope that “Digital Food and Agriculture” covers, we are interested to better understand the choice of international organizations on the Advisory Committee. In particular, given this is an International Platform for Digital Food, should the advisory committee include the other standards bodies in addition to OIE (e.g. to cover issues such as e-certification)?</p> <p>New Zealand was very concerned that the voluntary nature of the platform is made very clear, and we are pleased to see this is reflected in the paper.</p> <p>We note the further detail on the governance arrangements, and we are pleased that the paper makes it explicitly clear that the platform will be fully funded through extra-budgetary resources. Noting the likely costs associated with the proposal for a Coordination Unit composed of a full-time Director (D-1 level), a Professional Staff member (P-4 level) and General Service support (G-3 level), we would appreciate further FAO comment on the long-term sustainability of such an arrangement, and any plans for resource mobilization given the flat nominal growth FAO budget.</p>
<p>Thailand (Thu 24/09/2020 23:20)</p>	<p>Thailand welcomes the initiative on the International Platform. We recognize that the digitalization can play important roles in improving food security and livelihoods of the farmers and rural communities, as it could provide access to information and boost cooperation across the value chain.</p> <p>Thailand supports adoption of proposed Terms of Reference for International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. We suggest to amend the ToR Section VI. ‘Financial implication’ to specify that extra-budgetary resources shall be received in accordance with FAO Oversight Framework for extra-budgetary funds and that all financial resources received shall be reviewed by the Finance Committee and the Council.</p> <p>Thailand recommends that discussion on digital technologies be focused on understanding farmers’ needs and be aimed at identifying practical and viable solutions to farmers’ needs that are appropriate, relevant, secure, available, accessible, affordable and applicable, particularly to smallholders and family farmers.</p> <p>Thailand recalls the need for careful, context-specific, evaluation of risks and benefits of digital technologies for smallholders and family farmers.</p>
<p>Brazil (Fri 25/09 00.01)</p>	<p>Brazil appreciates the opportunity to present the following inputs to agenda item 2.12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The mission of the International Platform, as currently drafted in section III of the text, gets confused with and replicates the objectives defined in section IV. Accordingly, sub-items “a” and “b” should be deleted. Furthermore, the mission should include a reference to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, to frame the activities of the Platform in the context of the promotion of sustainable development in its three dimensions. Paragraph 6 could, thus, be redrafted in the following terms: “The International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture aims at providing an inclusive multi-stakeholder forum for identifying, discussing AND DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS ON the potential benefits and risks of digitalization of the food and agricultural sectors, WITH A VIEW TO CONTRIBUTING TO THE FULFILLMENT OF THE 2030 AGENDA”.</li> <li>- The terms of reference, in paragraph 7(d), define among the objectives of the Platform the formulation of “policies by developing recommendations, best practices and voluntary guidelines”. Recommendations and guidelines aimed at supporting policymaking should be submitted for approval of the relevant FAO decision-making bodies. This practice can be found in the</li> </ul>

	<p>products of the Global Soil Partnership – a mechanism in which participation is voluntary and whose technical recommendations on policy are often submitted for analysis and approval by COAG, Council and Conference. We, therefore, suggest the inclusion of the following sentence at the end of 7(d): “TO BE SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF FAO'S GOVERNING BODIES, AS APPROPRIATE.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Also in paragraph 7(d), we suggest to replace "support policymakers to formulate policies" with "SUPPORT DECISION MAKING".</li> <li>- In paragraph 7(a), the word “promote” should be replaced with “ADDRESS”, to better reflect the idea that the digitization can bring benefits and risks, in the following manner: "promote discussion among stakeholders on impacts of digital technologies on food and agriculture and facilitate the exchange of knowledge on policy frameworks and best practices that ADDRESS digitalization".</li> <li>- In paragraph 7(c), we suggest to change the text from "that are specific to agriculture” to "that are specific to FOOD AND agriculture", to adapt to the scope of the Platform.</li> </ul> <p>Brazil also respectfully submits the following requests for clarification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In paragraph 8(b), we would like to understand the rationale for including exclusively one institution of regional character.</li> <li>- In paragraph 8(c), we would like to understand how the discussions taking place in the Multistakeholder Forum will be connected to the work being developed in the remaining mechanisms, to guarantee a bottom-up approach. This should be made clear in the terms of reference.</li> <li>- As for financing and operationalization, it is not clear if the Platform would be entirely funded with extra-budgetary contributions or if the activities of the Coordination Unit described in paragraph 12 would be borne by FAO’s regular budget.</li> </ul>
<p>EU (Thu 24/09/2020 19:00)</p>	<p>First of all, we welcome the decision of the FAO Council, taken at its 164th session in July, for FAO to host the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture as a flexible, light and consensual coordination mechanism and inclusive multi-stakeholder forum.</p> <p>3. We also thank FAO for preparing the Terms of Reference for this Platform, which address many aspects important to the EU and its Member States, such as the principles of inclusiveness, transparency and regional distribution. These are essential for finding widely acknowledged solutions to the key issues the Platform has to deal with, such as security and data privacy and data sovereignty. To protect sensitive personal data, we consider it essential to include appropriate safeguard mechanisms in the Terms of Reference in order to ensure safe interaction and participation of all stakeholders to the Platform.</p> <p>4. However, reading the objectives of the Platform, we find that the Platform is lacking a clear mandate to reduce digital divides among stakeholders. Given the importance of overcoming digital divides, a separate point should be dedicated to it. In so doing, we would recognise this aspect as an issue in its own right, and that it has a cross-cutting dimension that should be taken into consideration when providing custom-made solutions for individual Members and their specific problems.</p> <p>5. Furthermore, while recognising that flexibility has to remain for the International Platform to set and adjust its agenda according to current needs and unexpected events, with a view of ensuring a more sustainable impact of the work of the Platform, we would like the Advisory Committee to provide – in addition to the provisional biennial plans of action – proposals for long term objectives for the Platform.</p> <p>6. Additionally, to further ensure that the International Platform follows a medium and long-term strategic approach in its work, it is important that there is a regular reporting of the activities and outcomes of the Platform to the FAO Technical Committees and FAO Council.</p>

	<p>7. Moreover, we ask FAO to include in the Terms of Reference a clarification on the role the newly established Office of Innovation and the Chief Scientist will play in relation to the International Platform, as they are only mentioned once in the reference document. Further explanation on their role and work is important, as in our opinion, both institutions play a pivotal role when it comes to digitalisation in food and agriculture and hence have to have a clear mandate when it comes to the International Platform.</p> <p>8. In addition, we reiterate the need for FAO to provide a solid and sustainable funding concept for the Platform with cost estimation and based on voluntary extra budgetary contributions, at the 165th session of the FAO Council in December.</p> <p>9. Finally, we request that the TOR be also considered by the next sessions of the Finance and the Programme Committees.</p>
<p>Egypt (Thu 24/09/2020 11:19)</p>	<p>نحية طيبه وبعد ارفق لسيادتكم تعليق مصر علي البند ND396 اختصاصات المنصه الدوليه للاغذيه و الزراعة / الرقميه" / COAG /202022 تري مصر ان المنصه الدوليه للاغذيه و الزراعة الرقميه احد الحلول المبتكره للتصدي للتحديات التي تواجه الامن الغذائي و التغذيه من خلال تعزيز الاتصالات و تقليل اوجه القصور و تكاليف المعلومات، و تتميز بانها الية تعاون مرنة و بسيطه و طوعيه تعمل بموجب انظمه و لوائح و اجراءات منظمة الاغذيه و الزراعة. و تستمد المنصه اهميتها من المهام الموكله لها و الاهداف المنوطه بها حيث ستقوم بالتنسيق و سد الفجوه بين المنتديات الدوليه و المتعدده الاطراف للاقتصاد الرقمي و تقديم توصيات للحكومات بشأن السياسات بهدف دعم صنع القرار علي المستويات العليا، و اجراء التحليل الاقتصادي تقديم الادله العلميه حول المخاطر المحتمله للتكنولوجيات الرقميه علي الاغذيه و فقاً للاحتياجات الوطنيه و الت وصل الي توافق الاراء بين اصحاب المصلحه المتعددين. فيما يخص الية تشغيل المنصه فستكفل تمثيل شامل لاصحاب المصلحه المتعددين و الوصول الي افضل الممارسات الزراعيه للنهوض بالانتاج الزراعي و تحقيق تنميه مستدامه (اقتصادي-بيئيه و اجتماعيه) حيث ستشكل من: • مجموعة الممثلين الحكوميين الدوليين (الاعضاء) • اللجنه الاستشاريه المكونه من خبراء تقنيين من المنظمات الدوليه و اصحاب المصلحه الاخرين • المنتدى الالكتروني لاصحاب المصلحه المتعددين لضمان مشاركة الجميع في المناقشات • وحدة التنسيق التي ستقدم الدعم التشغيلي و الاداري اليومي و الفني للمنصه الدوليه. و سيتم ادارتها بالكامل من قبل منظمة الاغذيه و الزراعة و في اطار برنامج عملها و ميزانيتها و تفضلوا بقبول و افر الشكر و عظيم الاحترام</p>
<p>USA (Fri 25/09/2020 09:33)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The United States supports increased innovation, including digitalization in agriculture to increase sustainable production.</li> <li>• Thus, the United States supports the platform's proposed role in knowledge sharing of best practices and raising awareness.</li> <li>• We note the recommendations from the Joint meeting of the Program and Finance Committees explicitly noted that the new platform should not have a policy setting function in its mandate; the recommendations of the Council made no mention of a policy function.</li> <li>• It is imperative the new platform avoid duplicating established work programs and activities of other international bodies with comparative advantage in policy areas involving information communication technologies, use of digital technologies and data, and digital economy, as well as multi-stakeholder forums providing recommendations and guidelines or supporting governments as they create new policy frameworks.</li> </ul>

- The United States requests that any terms of reference for this digital focus more on knowledge sharing, to fully remain within FAO's mandate, and not duplicate authorities or mandates of other relevant international organizations.
- With regards to the proposed provisions on policy guidance, the FAO should not duplicate policy guidance areas or ongoing work within the International Telecommunication Union, through its Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), and the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) or its forums, created by UN General Assembly.
- The United States proposes an alternative vision for the Digital Platform based on knowledge sharing in Annex 1 Alternative Outline – Mandate and Functions FAO proposed “International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture”. (The Annex follows after the end of these comments.)
- We are concerned with the proposed governance structure described in the Executive Summary and Paragraph 8.
- The United States will appreciate more information from FAO about the role of the Member States in overseeing the Platform. As currently described, the four separate components serve to diffuse action and responsibility across a range of bodies, with no clear locus of control or responsibility.
- We recognize that Member States will be asked to propose "highly qualified public senior offices" for the "Inter-governmental Representative's Group" but we also note that those officers, in the context of this Platform, are to act in their personal and not their national capacities.
- Given the importance of digital agriculture, we would like to see some sort of reporting mechanism where recommendations and proposals from the Platform are submitted to the FAO Member States for their consideration and approval. We believe this reporting structure is sufficiently important that we should delay approving this proposal until a satisfactory reporting structure is agreed.

ANNEX -- Alternative Outline – Mandate and Functions  
 FAO proposed “International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture”  
 Mandate

- (1) Share knowledge of best practices and raise awareness of agricultural technology and digital products and related advisory services, to include availability, use and trade (local, regional, or international);
- (2) Share knowledge of best practices and raise awareness of educational tools and technical training products related to agricultural technology and digital products and related technology applications; and,
- (3) promote multi-stakeholder (public-private) dialogue related to 1 and 2;

Main functions of a digital agriculture platform to:

- promote dialogue on digital transformation, adoption of digital technology and market development for advisory services;
- favor the transformation of agriculture towards more efficient and sustainable use practices;
- foster exchange of knowledge and lessons learned of technologies through bilateral and multilateral dialogues\*;
- encourage knowledge sharing of best practices to encourage reliable and affordable electronic connectivity in rural areas and farm communities;
- act as a cross-cutting initiative, working in synergy with other relevant organizations and activities, avoiding duplications with multi-lateral, international and/or country-specific/local organizations;

Philippines (Fri  
25/09/2020 11:44)

#### Popularizing Use of Digital Technologies

- The International platform for Digital Food and Agriculture should be able to set strategic directions that shall innovate digital solutions in order to be more efficient, responsive in serving farmers and fisherfolk for global agri-food challenges.
- The platform should set policy directions in its digitalization activities that will shift focus on synergy and integration. Scaling up of agritech solutions by intensifying its operations will be the major role of ICT coupled with the infusion of innovations through continued learning and development (L&D) and knowledge transfer. Thus, will give emphasis on concrete ways to sustain all the digital investments through continued upgrade and enhancement of members' systems and infrastructure to maintain its security, reliability, accessibility, and integrity.
- Drive the exchange of ideas and experiences and consequently help everyone harness the opportunities presented by digitalization.
- Intensify the collaboration and implement actions at the global, regional and national levels that aim to enhance the role of ICTs in agriculture. This will also bring benefits to the digital world to the citizens of tomorrow.

#### Identifying Opportunities and Potential Risks

- Data play a crucial role in the development of digital agriculture: the platform will need to help spreading the benefits of big data (e.g., increase of productivity, access to information) but also to manage their risks (e.g., data ownership, privacy, trust)
- Digitalization also opens up new opportunities for entrepreneurs through access to global, regional, national and local markets
- The platform should be able to identify additional roles such as:
  - identifying trends and problems
  - analyzing the impact of digitalization
  - suggesting and recommending solutions to the government
- Digitalization can create new job opportunities for untapped niche of the manpower.

#### Participatory Governance

- Advocate for a participatory policy formulation on e-agriculture linked to agricultural and rural strategy goals.
- Collaboration should be promoted, and knowledge shared, via online communities of practice, including existing regional networks and global platforms.
- The platform will need to have an inclusive, lean and non-bureaucratic governance model.
- Transparency, especially on knowledge sharing is highly encourage; a collaboration between different sectors is needed.
- Open sharing of information also helps to increase transparency and trust between otherwise disparate stakeholder groups in the global agri-food system.
- Participatory consultation with the concerned stakeholders is important