

PAFO FO Exchange Platform

How to learn from each other in an easy and cost efficient way – across borders, language barriers and time zones

Context

Today, online exchange platforms are a key tool to share knowledge, expertise, and experiences – irrespective of where people are based. They reduce costs and are an easy way to meet, share, and build relationships for people from every corner of the African continent. The Pan-African Farmer's Organization (PAFO), through its regional farmers' organizations (RFO) and consequently national farmer's organizations (NFO), represents more than 80 million farmers on the African continent. And since PAFO brings together a wide variety of NFO and RFO, it also brings together a range of thematic areas: leadership, youth engagement, knowledge management, policy development, lobby & advocacy, and cooperation with scientific institutions.

Structure of the PAFO Platform

Objective: African NFOs share insights and learnings to develop their capacities and competencies. The leaders,

managers and technicians of FOs are strengthened in their organizational and thematic capacity. Ultimately, FOs are in a better position to make their voice heard on the national, regional, and global level to shape framework conditions in favor of their members and improve agri-food systems.

Team: The PAFO FO Exchange Platform is run by a coordinator and a technical person in Kigali, Rwanda. A group of 15 people – staff and elected representatives of FOs – from 11 different African countries was selected and trained in moderation techniques and methods. This group of 15 people is called the Core and Moderation Team (CMT). The CMT members moderate and prepare the content of the sessions.

Target group: Technical staff and elected leadership of RFOs and NFOs who are members of PAFO. Non-PAFO members may be invited to sessions depending on the content.

Sessions: Sessions take place every second week. A small team of 3 out of the 15 CMT members moderates the exchange sessions. A total of 30 sessions will be organized until the end of the project in December 2024.



Exchange session on climate smart agriculture



CMT members during an exchange session

Implementing organizations & duration: The project owner is PAFO. Agrarkontakte International backstopped the PAFO team from January until December 2023. Throughout the project, Andreas Hermes Akademie supports the moderators by providing a senior moderator and moderation trainer. The project duration is from January 2023 to December 2024.

Functioning of the platform

Selection of topics: The ideas for the topics of the exchange sessions come from the PAFO members, that is the RFOs and NFOs. Before the start of the project, PAFO members were asked to participate in a survey to identify the most important issues. These results were then discussed by the CMT and the sessions for 2023 were planned based on this discussion. The CMT plays a key role in the selection of these topics since they are all members of FOs and know best what topics are of interest to their members.

Translation: French – English / English – French translation is provided in all sessions.

Invitation to sessions: All members of PAFO, that is the RFOs and hence the NFOs as members of the RFOs, receive the invitation via email and can register online for the sessions.

Early results

Some of the early results are:

- 9 sessions were organized in 2023 and touched on the topics of lobby & advocacy, climate change, resource mobilization and management of FOs.
- Up to 60 participants from RFOs and NFOs were exchanging in key sessions. Generally, 20 - 30 participants from FOs took part in each session.
- On a thematic level, RFOs and NFOs discovered new and innovative ways to approach relevant challenges in agriculture.
- At the thematic level, participants discovered also new ways how to develop their organization, for example during sessions such as management of farmer's organizations.
- Sharing expertise among the participants also created new connections on different levels and across barriers between RFOs and NFOs. Members of NFOs and RFOs established personal links with each other and now work together more closely and efficiently.
- The 15 CMT members all come from RFOs and NFOs who are members of PAFO. The 15 CMT members now also moderate online exchange sessions and live meetings within their RFOs and NFOs.



CMT members at the moderation training in Kigali in May 2023

Perspectives for 2024

- The idea is to establish the platform sustainably at PAFO as a hub for exchanges for many years to come. 2023 was used to pilot the platform, train the PAFO coordinator and technical staff and to adapt it to the demands of the target group.
- In 2023, the important foundations have been laid. 2024 will be used to work towards the sustainability of the platform including to anchor the platform at the RFOs.
- In 2024, we will conduct a survey among PAFO members to identify key topics and the CMT members will subsequently select topics and plan the sessions in 2024 and beyond. Approximately 20 sessions will be organized in 2024 on a range of topics, for example communication and management of farmer's organization.

Find further information on the platform on the PAFO FO Exchange Platform website:



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