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AGRICORD



Forest and Farm Facility

PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

COUNTRY-LEVEL EXPERIENCES
AND IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE





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Executive Summary

- AgriCord has been participating in the Forest and Farm Facility since 2013. The alliance's role in the mechanism is less clearly defined than that of the other partners. The emphasis lies on the engagement of forest and farm producer organizations (FFPOs).
- Letters of agreement (LoAs) are perceived as service provision agreements by agri-agencies (AAs), not partnership agreements - FFF facilitators might perceive AAs as competitors - FFPOs need to navigate the requirements of several short-term and multi-annual programs which can be disruptive to activities
- FFPOs are highly appreciative of the needs-driven approach of FFF and the linkages to policy makers.
- Expectations for a possible third phase of the facility include: a degree of joint programming & shared methodologies, timely disbursement of resources in the direction of FFPOs, and a greater degree of complementarity with larger multiannual donor programs.

Figure 1

Farmer handling seedlings
in a nursery, Philippines
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Figure 2

*Kenyan Extension Officer
inspecting a Farm in the
border region of Kiambu and
Murang'a
© AgriCord, 2022*



AgriCord is a global alliance of agri-agencies (AA) mandated by farmers' organisations (FO) and their cooperative businesses from countries in Africa, Asia, Canada, Europe and Latin America. The alliance implements the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) Partnership since 2013.

In addition to the global level annual Letter of Agreement (LoA) between FFF and AgriCord, AgriCord's member agri-agencies coordinate and collaborate with the FFF country programs. A virtual session was organised on the 22nd of March 2023 to collect and share experiences from this collaboration from different AAs and to brainstorm on the potential of the partnership to evolve further if there would be a third phase.

AgriCord secretariat facilitated this session to which Afdi/France, AHA/Germany, FFD/Finland, Fert/France, Trias/Belgium and We Effect/Sweden participated.

Setting the Scene

Tiina Huvio, director of FFD, a current Board member of AgriCord and the current chair of the FFF Steering Committee with the MTK mandate; shared background on the history of the partnership.

FFF grew originally around forestry and forest user and natural resource user groups. From the start, FFF has aimed to balance between economic activities and sustainable natural resource use. The current phase II of FFF has sustainable landscapes and livelihoods as central objectives and the forest and farm

producer organizations (FFPO) are prominent as implementing partners. However, the mid-term review of FFF gave emphasis on engaging more with the territorial organizations and indigenous people's groups. From the FFF priority countries, this emphasis has been very relevant for Bolivia and Ecuador but less interesting in Tanzania and some other FFF countries. Access to finance and entrepreneurship are important focus areas. Also, forestry and forest conservation are again gaining importance as one of the key element for climate change mitigation.

The founding partners of the facility were FAO, IIED and IUCN. AgriCord joined later and is currently part of the FFF management team. This "latecomer" role is perhaps still to some extent reflected in the division of roles between the facility partners. Another factor which may diminish AgriCord's role as a partner, is the limited paid staff time covered by LoA. The staff time is split between different staff members at the secretariat and AAs. This fragments AgriCord's contribution to the partnership. IIED and IUCN have a

more defined role with specific tasks and a more substantive budget within the facility. IIED is responsible for knowledge management, learning and overall reporting. IUCN leads the global and regional outreach, indigenous people's groups and fundraising for the territorial groups. Further, IUCN manages the global call for the regional, continental, and global FOs for advocacy and lobby.

AgriCord's concrete role is less specific but centers on bringing in a strong FO perspective. In general, AgriCord's global LoA focuses on global advocacy and visibility trajectories, i.e., joint preparation and participation to events such as COP27. In recent years, rolling out the Building Resilience tool has been part of the AgriCord LoA activities, even if FFF employs also other adaptation tools. AgriCord contributes to knowledge management and has co-edited FFF publications highlighting FO case supported by the agri-agencies. The overall contribution to the facility through the LoA is possible with strong professional dedication by colleagues within the AgriCord Secretariat in Brussels and the agri-agency FFD in Helsinki.

Insights and reflections

Several agri-agencies were implementing LoAs via country-level grants, which are decided by the FFF national advisory committees. The agri-agencies pointed out that LoA is not a partnership instrument but meant for service provision. This has an impact on how the cooperation “feels”. The short contract duration and heavy administrative procedures were cited as hampering an effective implementation. Some AAs observed that at country level,

FFF facilitators see the agri-agencies as competitors rather than potential partners. In many cases, agri-agencies work with the same FO partners than FFF. There are sometimes tensions related to priorities the FO chooses to focus on. In some cases, it is perceived that FFF interventions disrupt the flow of activities included in more substantive, multiannual programs or projects due to the short implementation period for LoAs. This is far from optimal complementarity. When reflecting on the possible 3rd phase, it should be considered how FFF funds could better support the scaling up efforts

and complement results from bigger programs or projects.

Both FPOs and agri-agencies are highly appreciative of the linkages to policymakers that FFF offers. FFF allows FFPOs to get a place on tables and platforms they normally struggle to access. The joint lobby and advocacy at a global level and the visibility opportunities FFF provides are also highly valued by AgriCord and the agri-agencies.

Figure 3
Young woman holding seedlings, Madagascar
© Fert, 2021



Country-level Experiences

Trias

Trias has implemented FFF LoA in Tanzania. The experience has been quite positive. FFF financing has allowed to improve some of the tools and methodologies that Trias uses also in their other programs, such as the DGD financed one. FFF financing has also allowed to increase the outreach and scaling up best practices. The communication workshops organized by FFF are also well appreciated.

On the challenging side, the short duration of LoAs, only 8 months for the first LoA makes it difficult to plan within the agricultural season.

Also, for the partners in the countries, there is not enough information about the global FFF program. AgriCord secretariat commits to inform agri-agencies more regularly about the global FFF processes. FOs have requested agri-agencies to support their proposals for FFF global calls, ie. EAFF/East Africa and CLAC/Latin America reached out to Trias to submit a joint proposal.

Andreas Hermes Akademie

AHA has held discussions with the FFF country facilitator in Tanzania. One FO LoA included budget for training services from AHA. At the end AHA did not pursue the discussions further with FFF and the partner FO but in principle, AHA is open to this type of collaboration in which AHA is a service provider within a FO LoA.

Agriculteurs Français et Développement International

Afdi partners with two FOs in Togo and Madagascar who are also implementing LoAs with FFF. These LoAs focus on the restoration of degraded lands. Within the FO LoAs Afdi is providing Training of Trainers for the Building Resilience tool. Afdi's experience with FFF in Togo was marked by a very long negotiation process. The long contracting period impacted the planning negatively. Overall, the complementarity of the FFF actions and the activities Afdi implements with the same FO partners is not very clear. Improving the coordination remains a challenge.

In Madagascar the process was easier, and the implementation of action was faster. The FO feedback was still that the time between planning and signing the contract is too long. Further, it was felt that the implementation time is too short. There is not sufficient flexibility for scheduling the activities considering the workload related to agricultural seasons, which are becoming more and more unpredictable. Adding to that, the reporting burden is heavy considering the limited amount of funds.

The FFF country facilitator in Madagascar imposed the areas of interventions. SOA had indicated other geographical intervention areas in its proposal.

In principle, good coordination mechanisms exist between FFF and the agri-agencies. Afdi teams in the country are directly in touch with FFF facilitator and Afdi is part of the FFF steering committee. In practice, for no clear reason, Afdi representatives have not been invited to all the meetings.

Recently, FFF country facilitator asked Afdi to become more involved in the monitoring of FFF project implemented by SOA. This would be under the LoA of SOA. The arrangement is still under negotiations.

Fert

Fert has been involved in some discussions with the FFF country program, but nothing has concretised, as at the end FFF has not been interested in having an agri-agency involved in the implementation. Fert's FO partner FIFATA has had 3 LoAs with FFF observing the same difficulties as SOA - too long time between planning and contracting, heavy reporting burden and FAO imposing the geographical area for the activities. Overall FIFATA likes to work with FFF as the LoA allows to do concrete activities in the field and having the relation with FAO facilitates the contacts with the government actors. FIFATA is also interested in FFF financing because it allows them to co-finance their more substantive programs.

One big disappointment was the GAFSP process. FIFATA had prepared a proposal with FAO as supervising entity.

From the FAO side, there was confusion about who should sign. Consequently, the proposal was not submitted within the deadline and not considered for evaluation. FFF could play a facilitating role in such processes to ensure that FAO's administrative processes do not hamper the opportunities for the FOs.

The AgriCord secretariat could provide more support for such processes if the lines of coordination and communication can be clarified.



We Effect

We Effect considered to renew their MoU with FFF/FAO when the MoU 2016-2020 finished. Due to the heavy administrative burden, it was decided not to continue with the renewal process.

We Effect is currently implementing two LoAs in Tanzania and Kenya. These contracts are managed directly by We Effect's regional offices, not by the head office in Stockholm. The regional offices' feedback is that FFF LoAs allow for short interventions with a small budget and extensive bureaucracy.

We Effect intervenes normally with bigger funding with much less bureaucracy. As FFF funds are an add on for bigger financing, it is seen worth the effort.

"The challenge with the FFF Letters of Agreement is the the short intervention time with small budget combined with extensive bureaucracy"

Figure 4
Field visit by the Cereal Growers Association (CGA) of Kenya
© Fert, 2021

We Effect echoes other agri-agencies by saying that LoA is a service provision contract. It does not really favour a partnership role.

Going forward, We Effect would be interested in exploring joint resource mobilisation. Geographically – to add to Tanzania and Kenya – We Effect would be looking into Zambia and Amazonia.

Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas

AsiaDHRRA partner, The Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VNFU) plays a key role in implementing the facility in Vietnam. FFF has supported VNFU initiatives, particularly the ones related to forestry. AsiaDHRRA's interaction with FFF has so far been limited to sharing best cases in global conferences and publications and participating in some steering committee meetings in the region. AsiaDHRRA's mandating FO, AFA, is very involved in FFF.

AsiaDHRRA would like to see a strong role for AgriCord in the FFF partnership. AgriCord could ie. reinforce the value chain perspective in FFF interventions. More advisory service or monitoring roles for agri-agencies across the FFF implementation could also be effective. Wider involvement in FFF implementation could also raise AgriCord profile as regards climate financing.

FFD carried out a joint mission in Nepal with the FFF team delivering a ToT BR I training and visiting FFF partners. The visited FFPOs embraced the cross-sectional, multi stakeholder advocacy mechanisms which have been established with the support by FFF.

AgriCord is IFAD implementing partner in the EU and OACP funded program FO4ACP with a country coordination in place. FFF facilitators are invited to those meetings in the countries where both are present. FFD has good experiences from this in Kenya. Also, in Togo and Tanzania there is lot of interaction between FFF team and agri-agencies and their FO partners. The learnings from those should be examined further to distill best practices.

Figure 5
Farmer in Vietnam using an application to capture information on plots. The collected data can be used to e.g. estimate the existing biomass
© AgriCord, 2022



Food and Forest Development Finland

FFD has participated in the implementation of the AgriCord-FFF LoA. The key focus has been on

- i) strengthening the joint communication and visibility actions for FFF and AgriCord in support of farmers' and forest producers policy agenda and lobby and advocacy efforts,
- ii) increasing regional and country level collaboration amongst FFF and FO partners to build capacity of FO partners capacity in resilience management and
- iii) enhancing efficiency and result-orientation of AgriCord FFF collaboration towards scaling-up and joint resource mobilization.

While coordinated activities have provided good visibility for FFD and the Alliance as such, there has been some issues to ensure that the FFF country programmes and the agri-agency activities are coordinated and that interested people are aware of them early enough. A lot seem to depend on the country coordination and how well they reach out to all the partners of FFF. Sometimes FFD and AgriCord have received the information on the trainings related to carbon sequestration tools so late that it has not allowed to coordinate the participation of agri-agencies or their FO partners in them.

In the joint fund-raising, there has been several initiatives focusing on territorial organizations and funds supporting them directly. It would be interesting to challenge further the present paradigm for climate finance which seems to channel the funds to larger and government actors thereby leaving FOs as ultimate beneficiaries.

Experiences from Kenya - FFF Country Facilitator and Forest and Farm Producer Organizations



The Forest and Farm Facility and AgriCord collaboration "could be improved (...) if we could do joint programming and use the same tools"

Philipp Kisoyan
FFF Country Facilitator

Philipp Kisoyan, FFF country facilitator, has positive experiences from collaborating with We Effect and Agriterra, a member of AgriCord alliance until 2018.

The FFF facilitator put forward knowledge sharing, joint lobby and advocacy and communication efforts as successful areas of the agri-agency and FFF collaboration. Food security and climate change adaptation and mitigation and resilience are among the key common themes. The FFF/AA cooperation reinforces the impact as it brings strength in numbers.

The agri-agencies are contracted as services providers at the country level with specific LoAs.

As a point to improve, the FFF country facilitator highlighted the need for improved coordination to avoid replication and to ensure complementarities. The agri-agencies are working with different

donor financing with the same FFPO partners that FFF does. Currently, it is mostly the FFPO who must ensure the coherence of different interventions and coordinate the implementation schedules. FFF and the agri-agencies are making efforts to coordinate better at the country level, but the programming is still done individually. If the programming could be done jointly, it would increase the impact and render the scaling up efforts more effective.

Seeking opportunities for joint resource mobilization and design by FFF program and AgriCord /agri-agencies could also increase efficiency, effectiveness and final impact.

FFPOs have flagged the issue that agri-agencies are using different tools and methodologies. This is sometimes confusing and leads to the replication.

FFPOs have been advocating for more harmonized approaches by the agri-agencies.

The FFF country facilitator highlighted the importance of linking up with the government programs, policies and available financing.

Charles Nyanjua, the chairperson of FF-SPAK, a FFPO supported by FFF and AgriCord programs' financing, regretted that FFF's LoA financing supports only activities and not the staff costs. Other project financing, such as AgriCord programs, includes the staff costs for managing and implementing the activities; FF-SPAK appreciates greatly the genuine needs-driven approach of FFF. However, the slow disbursement process is mentioned as an issue that sometimes hampers the implementation of the planned activities.

"What is working well with FFF is the consideration of the issues that we request in terms of support. But what might not be working very well is the timely disbursement of resources."

Charles Nyanjua
Chairperson FF-SPAK



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