

A person wearing a red and white plaid shirt is using a tablet computer in a greenhouse. The tablet screen displays a data dashboard with various charts, including a pie chart, a bar chart, and a map of the world. The person is holding a stylus and pointing at the screen. The greenhouse is filled with rows of green plants, and a large fan is visible in the background.

FO-MAPP initiative: an interactive platform for sharing information about Farmer Organisations in the world

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by Katungisa Kenneth, Chief Executive Officer, Uganda National Farmers Federation

Background

At the Global Farmers Forum (2016) at IFAD, one of the string requests from the farmers' organisations (FOs) was the creation of an interactive database of Farmers organisations and rural producer organisations. This platform was to be fed by the farmers' organisations themselves with information on their nature, areas of intervention, their services and products. This initiative was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2017.

This platform (Farmers and Rural Producers' Organisation – FO-MAPP, as it came to be called, was created) was created by IFAD and was tested by the farmers' organisations, following the testing, some changes were made based on the feedback from the FOs that tested the platform and it was finally launched at the World Rural Forum in Bilbao and also presented at the just concluded Farmers Forum 2020.

Who can be on this database?

The farmers' organisations that can be on this platform must be legally recognized, be membership-

based, have a membership composed primarily of smallholders and family farmers, have a minimum of 500 individuals in their membership, operate at national and sub-national levels.

What does this platform offer?

This Platform is a unique tool that provides enough information about farmers' organizations' services, products, location, geographical coverage, strategic direction among others. With a click of a button, an interested party can be able to get a first impression of any farmers' Organisation that is on the platform. FO-MAPP, therefore, has the capacity to improve their (FOs) visibility and engage in sustainable development.

Who can use this information and for what?

A wide range of actors – including development assistance agencies and governments– could use information in the database to identify organizations in a given country/area and explore possible synergies and partnerships that could be developed.



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Development assistance agencies and practitioners

these can use the database to better target their financial support and/or identify countries and regions in which farmers and rural producers' organizations might be partners for them to engage within the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and initiatives. The platform would provide an avenue to get this information (at least the basic information) from the comfort of their offices so as to make decisions without necessarily having to physically visit the FOs.

Farmers and rural producers' organizations

can use FO-MAPP as a tool for knowledge-sharing among peers, to support their engagement with one another, and to increase their visibility for governments and other actors; it can also act as a tool to support each other in the implementation of their programmes in areas where the organisations are implementing programmes/projects in the same geographical area.

Local and national governments

can use the database to better recognize and identify farmers and rural producers' organizations, enable public officials to easily approach them and foster partnership and collaboration. Most of the farmers' organisations are very good tools for farmers mobilization and information dissemination (based on how elaborate their structures are) so this tool would help governments at all levels to make better choices on which FO to work with where and in which programme.

Private agri-food companies and financial services providers

can use the information in the database to better understand the activities, expertise, services and products undertaken by farmers and rural producers' organizations in a particular country or region, and explore the possibility of engaging in win-win partnerships and also make investment decisions after all, the farmers are their clients and this tool would give an idea of which farmers, in which geographical areas need what services.



Katungisa Kenneth, Chief Executive Officer, Uganda National Farmers Federation

Mr Kenneth holds a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Uganda Management Institute with 9 nine years of experience in Farmer Organisational Leadership. An environmentalist by profession has helped to spearhead innovations in agriculture to tackle the advance effects of climate change through training farmers on mitigation, adoption and adaption mechanisms. He has also coordinated the implementation of several Projects along different value chains such as Cassava, Coffee, among others. Kenneth has a passion of changing the agricultural sector through institutional capacity building and empowering farmers by creating an enabling environment for sustainability and engage duty bearers through lobby and advocacy and create synergies and networks to improve policy processes with different stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

Find out more at

<https://www.fo-mapp.com/>



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Researchers and academia

can use the information in FO-MAPP to better understand the positions of farmers and rural producers' organizations within local and national contexts and on global policy issues and to promote information exchange and knowledge-sharing. It can also help in ensuring that researchers and academia pick their partnerships with farmers based on who is doing what and how they are doing it. In a way, it promotes coordination between researchers and the end-users of their research.

From the above, it is very clear that this platform is a very important tool for everybody that works with or for farmers and farmers' organisations. However, it can only fulfil its potential if everybody does their part; farmers' organisations for example should:

1. Constantly edit and update their profiles, with all the changes in their operations and / or services. This will ensure that the users are not misguided by obsolete information. This is probably the most important role of farmers' organisations in keeping this platform useful and relevant.
2. Constantly use this platform to build partnerships and create linkages with their peers especially in country partnerships.

Development partners should also

Use this platform to reach out and work with Farmers Organisations on the platform, this will create an incentive for farmers organisations to continuously update this platform because there will be value attached to ensuring accurate information on the platform.

In conclusion, all of us have a role to play to ensure that this excellent initiative is exploited to the fullest potential. I hope that we all commit ourselves to this task. It is especially in our (FOs) best interests that it works because it will save us resources in mapping peer to peer collaboration. As the Uganda National Farmers Federation, we were among the first people to get on the platform and even participated in its review. We remain committed to this innovation.