

Capacity building report for Morogoro Innovation platform leaders

Godfrey G. Bwana



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ilri.org

better lives through livestock

ILRI is a member of the CGIAR Consortium

Box 30709, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
Phone: +254 20 422 3000
Fax: +254 20 422 3001
Email: ILRI-Kenya@cgiar.org

Box 5689, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: +251 11 617 2000
Fax: +251 11 617 2001
Email: ILRI-Ethiopia@cgiar.org

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Introduction

This report is written in response to a consultancy to train members of the executives committee of the eight (8) innovation platforms established under Maziwa Zaidi in Morogoro and Tanga Region, and the executive members of the Morogoro region platform.

Maziwa Zaidi established eight (8) innovation platforms in four (4) districts of the two regions of Morogoro and Tanga. Two platforms were set in each of the two districts in each of the regions.

The platforms mainly comprise producers with a few other actors along the dairy value chain. The innovation platforms were established in order to address specific challenges in their respective villages.

The terms of reference required that the leaders of innovation platforms be trained in order to enhance the capacity of the leaders in understanding about the functioning and usefulness of innovation platforms. This was prompted by the project after realizing that there has been a different understanding among the platforms on what innovation platforms are, and their usefulness to the stakeholders along the dairy value chain.

This report summarizes issues observed and raised during the training sessions. No training need assessment was conducted which would have helped tailor training for each platform, the trainer had to set an entry point in order to engage the leaders on how best their platforms can be managed.

A recap session on what is innovation platform and their usefulness, how these are formed or emerging, and who are eligible members was necessary, this session was used to set the ground and bring back the leaders to focus on the concept of the innovation platform; then the action plan for innovation platform was reviewed together in order to understand the progress made to up to December 2014; this helped to trigger roles of the executive members in steering the innovation platform. Finally the leaders were probed on what challenges they are facing in executing their task as leaders of the innovation platform. Recommendations are given at the end of this report.

A simple guideline is also attached to this report which might be of benefit to be used by the innovation platforms. The guideline was not part of the terms of reference but might be help on operationalization of the platforms.

This report covers the platforms in Mvomero, Kilosa, and Morogoro region platform.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the consultant were:

- i. To Conduct two facilitation training and planning event each in Morogoro and Tanga Regions for executive members of the MilkIT village IPs. Write a brief report each for Morogoro and Tanga region.
- ii. To coach the facilitator(s)/executive members of the Morogoro Dairy Platform for effective facilitation of one more platform meeting and its follow up. Write a brief report.

Training

The training was organized in two rounds, round one which took place in December, 2014 covered platforms in Morogoro region, i.e. Manyinga and Wami Sokoine in Mvomero district, Mbwade and Twatwatwa in Kilosa district, and the Morogoro region platform. Round two took place in January and covered platforms in Tanga region.

The participants in these sessions were executive leaders of the platforms. The executive leaders include platform chairperson, secretary, treasurer and chairperson of each of small committees of the platforms.

Methodology employed was participative where participants were given much time to bring out challenges and then discuss how the challenges can be addressed. In the end the consultant emphasized on important issues and leaders agreed on the way forward.

Mvomero District

Manyinga

Manyinga innovation platform is in Turiani, Mvomero. Training session on this platform took place on 16th December, 2014. Nine (9) members of the platform executive committee attended, and these were the chairperson, the secretary, chairperson and secretary of the training committee, also two members from training committee attended the remaining three were ordinary members of the platform.

The participation of the executive committee members was not impressive, as it was expected that all chairpersons, and secretaries of all five committee will attend, but this was in the contrary.

A recap of what innovation platform was done, the members were asked if they recall what innovation platform is, it was the secretary who was able to recall and define what an innovation platform is, however all participants were able to recall why the Manyinga innovation platforms was established. A visual (**Fig.1**) aid was used to demonstrate, how the innovation platform is linked to the value chain, who are stakeholders, and how they depend to each other in the dairy innovation platform.

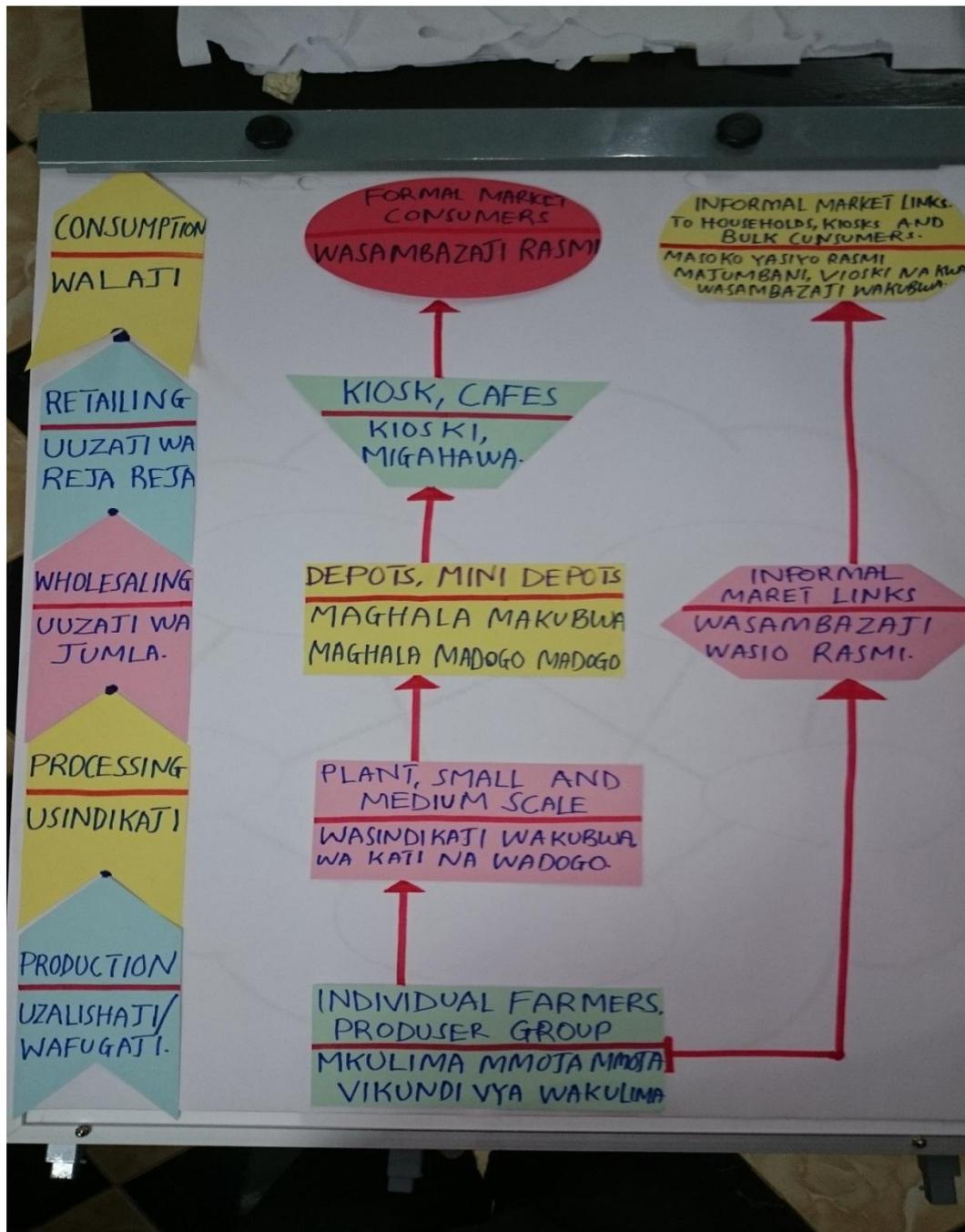


Fig.1: Simple Dairy Value Chain

After recap, the leaders became aware that their platform has members who only belong at the lowest end of the value chain. It was now very clear that for platform to perform well and become the leaders has the role to attract members from other segments of the value chain. This is possible if members of the platform should look at the relation on the value chain from business point of view.

Challenges emerging

Leaders in Manyinga complained to face hidden cost, especially in communicating to facilitate activities of the platform; the platform does not have resources to cater for these costs. (Leaders bear the burden)

Members of the committee which was to oversee training and capacity building issues reported that they did not know how to implement their work plan, some of them have attended trainings but don't know how to disseminate the knowledge. They went further to say that they have yet to notice any changes as a result of changing how they feed their cows, and as well after some of them have improved the cattle bans.

Sokoine university of Agriculture was to undertake research to establish if the producers have the right species of cows, however they did not fulfil their commitment while producers fulfilled their part. Producers were instructed to feed their cows with specific type of feed for specific period time, but once this was done the researchers from SUA didn't come backs to complete their part. This has been a setback to producers and they have been demoralized.

It came out also clearly that dairy activity is not number one income generating activity in Turiani; there a good number of other income generating activities, therefore less attention is still given on livestock; this lead farmers to hesitate to invest on improvement of the housing for the dairy cows.

Access to veterinary services and access to inputs remains a challenge in Manyinga; there is no single distributor of livestock input in Manyinga. Manyinga has 9 vitongoji (hamlets) but there is no single agro dealer, this stifles the growth of the produces (access to vet services)—again this can be addressed is the IP is elevated to cover the district where issues will be addressed at the district level.

It is obvious that the IP has the potential to attract other stakeholders; this could easily be done if this IP is integrated with Wami Sokoine IP to have district level IP—it at the district level where it will be easy to attract other actors.

Recommendations and Way Forward

Research on on-going productivity should be completed- dragging of this research has demoralized members of the platform who were selected to participate in the research.

For Manyinga to be sustainable, members thinks that they need to have access to financial services (this can be achieved only if the platform will be able to attract other members from other segments of the value chain)

Willingness to change the way producers do husbandry exist, what producers need is the 'how', producers think the project has end prematurely while they still need the support from the project..

Since the platform has only producers, there is a need to extend horizon of the stakeholders, this can only be achieved if **a district platform level platform is to be considered.**

Training to some members who can later act as para- veterinary extensionists could be a short term solution to address the challenge of availability of veterinary services to producers in Manyinga.

The platform should be supported to exploit the potential of existing market to increase productivity and production. Tanga Fresh is ready to install collection centre if producers in Manyinga can produce at least 500lts.

Sokoine University of Agriculture should complete the research to find out if the farmers have the right specie of cows for dairy production.

Some of the members seem to note benefits of the platform, but level of commitment of the members is still very low.—the commitment can be boosted if all members will start to reap the benefits, and all stakeholders play their part.

Leaders of this platform should now embark in restoring confidence to the members and need to encourage members not to withdraw from the platforms, instead clarify to them why the innovation platform is a solution to their challenges and bring back the commitment of the members. Leaders were reminded that they have the role to inform the members of the common goal of the platform and how it's going to benefit all once the challenges are addressed.

Documentation and reporting of platform activities is important and leaders should now make sure every committee keep track of their activities as per work plan, and document progress and challenges for feedback to the platform.

Wami Sokoine

The training session in Wami Sokoine took place on in the afternoon of 16th December, 2014; attendance of the leaders here was not impressive. Seven (7) members attended, only 2 were leaders and the rest were ordinary members of the platform. Most of the leaders have excused themselves to attend due to other commitments.

The recap on what is innovation platform and that platforms was established was done again here, most of the members didn't recall much what an innovation platform is, however they do understand that it was formed in order to help them improve their production of milk.

The Wami Sokoine is progressing well but rather slow. Looking at their work plan, they have not moved forward significantly and this is due to a number of factors; low understanding on what is innovation platform is, and why they are formed, perception that this is a project will just pass, not seeing the big picture that the benefits of the platform will accrue to the members and the community at large.

Members of the Wami Sokoine are yet to understand well that they own the platform and the platform is for their benefit. They would like to be paid for every meeting or gathering of the platform. This attitude is an indicator that the platform might not be sustainable; this also stand to limit other stakeholders who would like to work with the platform.

When reviewing the progress made it has been noted that there is progress on some of the planned activities. The platform has received seed for improving area for grazing. An area for pasture has been identified and demarcated. New grass will be planted in the coming season. This is done as effort to upscale production. The platform has been registered.

Challenges emerging

The Wami Sokoine platform did very little on the agreed work plan. It came to light that they expected agreed work plan will be implemented by the project team, or at least the project team will make initial efforts for each activity. This explains why little has been done. It also tells that members of this platform still have low understanding on how the platform works.

Low leadership skills was another challenge facing Wami Sokoine platform, thanks to this training which was an eye opener to the leaders and members of the platform who attended.

Transport refunds and allowances to attend meeting is a challenge which affect the performance of this platform. Most of the members still believe that they have a right to be refunded whenever a meeting or training is convened. They don't ask where the funds will come from. This need to be addressed and member of the platform should contribute to cost of running the platform.

Conflict between the platform leaders and the village leadership has affected performance of the platform.

Poor attendance on platforms meeting or executive members meeting is another challenge faced by this platform. Leaders argue that distance to be covered to attend the meetings is long and this contributes to poor attendance. And it is this factor which makes members to feel they need to be compensated.

Low understanding of innovation platform approach among the members of the platforms contributes significantly for poor performance of this platform. The question here is why low understanding. This platform received training on how platforms operate in March 2014; it was at this training when the action plan was developed and leaders elected. (may be this is due stereotype thinking toward projects- looking at project as if it is belonged to them.

Recommendation and way forward

The platform has been registered but members of the platform have not thought through what will be their source of income. It was advised they should introduce entrance fees, and monthly/periodical contributions to generate funds for the platform. This was agreed upon, and the platform will discuss it in their meetings.

There is still a need to increase awareness on leadership skills, and also to remind members of the platform what the platform can do for them.

Exit startegy for the project was not well articulated – the exit is premature given type of the intervention. This project among other things involves change of attitudes and this element has significant effect on the rest of the expected changes; nature of some interventions need longer time than two years to bring significant changes to impact the targeted beneficiaries. A well-articulated exist strategy helps to give a smooth transition where beneficiaries don't feel abandoned.

The project could have planned its exit startegy and introduced the strategy at the beginning of the project, this helps to bring the beneficiaries on the same page and they become aware that after such period of time support from project is ending and they should prepare to take over. The hand over transition is very critical on success foundation laid by Maziwa Zaidi project.

Kilosa District

Mbwade and Twatwatwa

The session in Mbwade was held on 17th December, 2014 the training was attended by leaders of the two platforms, Mbwade and Twatwatwa. The attendance was lower than expected. Eleven executive members of the two platforms attended.

During the recap on what innovation platforms are and why they are have been formed , most of the participants recalled and could explain in different terms why the innovation platforms.

Progress so far

During review of what has been done looking at the platform action plan developed in March, 2014. Committee leaders gave some progress. As explained earlier this exercise helped to bring back leader to their responsibility. They were able to quickly measure their performance.

It was reported that the committee responsible with addressing the inadequate grazing areas (Uhaba wa Malisho) managed to meet to discuss the persistence challenge of conflict between farmers and livestock keepers; the committee contacted the District Commissioner office and District Commissioners office has taken up the matter.

The platform has also addressed the water challenges, the responsible committee managed to link with IWASH as external stakeholders, and so far they managed to get two (2) wells. This has reduced water challenge. Members of the platform and the rest of the villagers contribute on running costs. Different fees have been set, consumption for human use is charged differently from consumption for animal use. (Resistance always exist; some people don't want to contribute to the running costs. Efforts are still going to increase access to water by having the charcoal dams

The platform faces the challenge of low production while interest of buyers has increased. The platform admits that currently they cannot satisfy the demand of the existing buyers. This situation is a good incentive for the producers increase productivity and production.

In Twatwatwa the platform have successful managed to work with external stakeholders who helped building shallow wells and water troughs to address access to water challenge.

The platform has yet to completely address the Klorit problem. The challenge involves various departments at the district level, and hence takes time.

Twatwatwa platform has progressed very well on gender challenge. It should be noted that this platform was the only platform which has identified gender as one of its challenges. A quick probe indicated that there is significant improvement to the society on how gender issues are approached. Now women can be heard and listened to, girls are given chance to go to school, and women are given leadership positions in the society.

Access to extension service has increased due to addition extension officer being posted at the village; thanks to the efforts from the platform. Only mobility of the extension officers to visit the producers remains a challenge.

Grazing land challenge is addressed through OXFARM support where the demarcation of grazing land from agriculture is in process. It is expected that once this exercise is completed it will significantly reduce conflicts between farmers, and livestock keepers.

Emerging challenges

At the platform level, the gender issue has been well understood, but some challenges still exist from the society at large; the understanding on this aspect is slow as it is also imbedded in the women themselves who still think that there are some think only can be done by men, especially on leadership and ownership of properties.

Convening challenges still exists; especially if the leaders need to communicate to invite the members (costs incurred are borne by the leaders)

The land committee reports that transport is now the limiting factor for the available extension officers to reach the producers. (This is a long call anyway; the project cannot solve the logistical issues like this)

Recommendations and way forward

For any innovation platform to be sustainable it need to integrate number of stakeholders like scientists, extension officers, farmers, farmer organization, private organization, NGOs, Policy makers, etc. Mbwade and Twatwatwa platforms consists mainly of producers, the reason for this is very clear; these platforms are at the village level.

Since the performance of these platforms is promising, it is recommended **that Kilosa district should consider setting up a district platform**. Advantage of this is twofold, first will it will help in widening the scope of stakeholders of the platform, and second it will improve the relationship of these platforms with the regional platform.

The members of this these platforms also have shown concern on sustainability of their platforms given the end of the project; they are of the opinion that the project should consider some backstopping for a period of six months to one year for the platform to stabilize and prepare itself to run its own affairs.

Morogoro Region Innovation Platform

The Morogoro region platform is up and running, it has leadership in place and has set up its action plan. For this coaching session, the attendance of the leaders was not impressive. The expectation was to have the top three leaders plus chairpersons and secretaries of the small committees, only three (3) leaders attended; Chairperson, Secretary and the treasury, and one committee member.

Structure wise it is the Region platform, but literally it only have representatives from two districts, (Mvomero and Kilosa) while milk production in Morogoro is in more than the two districts. This brings the need for the region to think to expand the scope (meaning increasing representation for other districts)—also attract other actors. The region platform still lack strong representation of the actors from other segments of the value chain. Members are still limited to producers from two districts, and government representative from the region office and the two districts.

The platform still face the challenges on who will cover their convening costs; currently the project was supporting to cover some costs

Sustainability of the platform is a challenge, the platform has been formed as a result of the project, and unfortunately the platform has been set up almost at the end of the project. This increases the risks that chance to attain the intended goals to be minimal. The platform is a good **output** of the Maziwa Zaidi intervention, but the **outcome** of this platform might need some time to accrue to the society, probably in the next two to three years. The outcomes will be recoded if the platform will manage to sustain itself from now.

There is no transition arrangement existing for the region platform between the regional office and Maziwa Zaidi project which has pioneered the establishment of the platform, this pose the risk of the platform failing to achieve the intended goals.

The time taken to set up the platform was so short for stakeholders to comprehend the innovation platform concept; this contributes significantly on its sustainability challenge. This is evidenced by comments from one the leaders of the platform during the training session. *“I was invited to attend the meeting on dairy platform and ended up being elected a leader, while I still don’t understand well what this forum is for and how it works”.*

Despite the challenges and modalities of formation of this platform, yet it remains very ambitious to address challenges in the dairy industry in the region, this signifies that the challenges are real, and they need to be addressed for the dairy subsector to grow.

On how the leaders manage the platform, a number of weakness were observed and addressed in the Morogoro region Innovation Platform

Running of Meetings

The leaders run the meeting in a traditional business as usual way of conducting meetings. The platform was running its meeting like routine meetings this has to change. The platform meetings should be working meeting, minutes of the meeting should indicate action points, and committee should report on the actions assigned to the committee. The meetings should be working sessions where the focus should be on feedback and problem solving.

Composition/Members

The region platform is dominated with government representatives – based on introductions made on the day of the meeting. There were a few private sector representatives, it is important to invite more actors to strengthen the platform. This will widen the scope of the platform in terms of stakeholders, and will improve performance of the platform in addressing the challenges.

Participation of Researchers

It was observed that researchers were treated as invited members, rather than active members who are pioneers of innovation. This should be avoided as these are very important actors in the platforms.

Meeting Resolutions

The platform discuss issues at the meeting and make resolutions, however some of resolutions are not very clear, and no action points are put forward, this result on having low progress on what has been resolved.

It was observed during the meeting on 17.10.2014 that committees were given assignment which was to be reported back in the meeting. However during the meeting each committee was given 10 minutes to discuss and then report back.

Recommendations

The platform should avoid to generating solutions to task assigned to committees in the previous meeting by giving the committee members a 10 minutes recess during the following meeting to discuss the solution. If solutions will be discussed in 10 minutes for assignment which was to be worked on for 3 months, the solutions might not be lasting.

The platform needs to understand ways to analyse the problem before choosing a route to solution. It was noted during the meeting the platform was discussion solutions to challenges and end up move out of that challenge and start addressing a different problem

Platform action plan or work plan should be developed with clear set targets and deadlines. Where possible the platform should have performance indicators. These will help the leaders to measure their performance.

The work plan is an important tool, and should be used and referred to from time to time to guide discussion during the meeting. This should have action points and set deadlines for completion

Most important and crucial is **TRUST** within members of the platforms (currently this seem to be low) this was evidenced with finger pointing on some statistics presented during the meeting. This is critical and it is highly recommended that it should not be given chance to happen again; the platform need to work as a team to achieve the common objective which is of mutual benefit to all members of the platform

Annex 1: Leadership Guidelines

The maziwa zaidi innovation platforms were formed based on challenges identified by research. The premise is to increase milk production through improving feeding regime of the dairy cows as well as well as the traditional cows. The project is implemented in Tanga and Morogoro.

The project applied the innovation platform approach as means to achieve its objectives.

The innovation platforms were formed at the village level and the aim was to help in addressing the challenge specifically identified for each village.

In principal these innovation platform have been built on **producer groups** which were in existence prior to the project or formed during implementation of the project.

The platforms were formed and leaders elected. The structure is simple with top having a chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. The next level is the committee level; each with a chairperson and a secretary who are elected by the members of the committee. Committee members are elected by the assembly of all stakeholders. Each committee has members not exceed 5.

This guideline intends to help innovation platform leaders to understand their roles as leaders and improve their performance in managing the platforms. The guideline is in two sections; the first section simply defines leadership and tries to elaborate some basic tasks which innovation platform leaders need to perform for effectiveness and efficiency of the innovation platforms, these tasks were generally elaborated during the coaching sessions. The second section is a sample guideline on putting in place an executive committee charter which can help the executive committee to be organized and be systematical on implementation of their activities.

Leadership Roles in the Platform

A leader is a person who leads, commands a group, organization or country.

To lead is to show the way; the innovation platforms have objectives and moves toward a certain direction. It is expected that platform leaders are the ones who will show direction and steer the platform to its intended destination; if they fail to do this noble task, the platform will fail to achieve the intended goal.

To achieve these goals leaders are entrusted with roles and responsibilities. Among many roles and responsibilities leaders has depending on size and complexity of the organization, is to set rules and modalities to operate. In case of the platform we expect rules and modalities will be the constitutions of the platforms. Other roles will be setting up of routine and regular meeting with feedback upon actions.

While doing that the leaders need to observe a number of key issues such as making sure that members of the IP are actively participating in agreed activities, the innovation platform members are committed to the platforms and owns it, an effective and efficient process of information sharing and communicating exist. As the innovation platform approach involves addressing challenges using action research, then leaders should make sure they stimulate members toward the culture of continue learning. Facilitation and management is critical especially the transition from external initiative to self-organized platform (human, physical & financial resources), leaders should be able to understand role & responsibilities of

internal & external stakeholders as these platforms consist of internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders)

The leaders of the innovation platforms should be able to:

A: Create an inspiring vision & lead by example

- Create an inspiring vision; establish shared value, give directions and set stretch goals.
- Manage changes strategically, take risks, create change, lead change, manage resistance to change
- Lead by examples, practice what you preach, set an example & share risks or hardship
- Demonstrate confidence; win respect and trust without counting popularity

B: Empower, inspire & energize people.

- Be enthusiastic, inspire & energizing people, create a positive work environment
- Empower people, delegate authority, be open to ideas, have faith in creativity of others.
- Communicate openly & honestly, give clear guidelines, set clear expectations.
- Emphasize, be willing to discuss and solve problem, listen with understanding, support & help

C: Build and lead team

- Use team approach, facilitate cooperation, involve everyone, trust your group, and rely on their judgment.
- Bring out the best in your people, have common touch with them, coach and provide effective feedback
- Permit group decision, help your team reach better decision
- Monitor progress, but don't micro manage, lead your team avoid close supervision, do not over boss, do not dictate, lead team assessment

Annex 2: Executive Committee Governance Charter

This charter can be developed for each platform and can be customized depending on the challenges existing in that particular platform. The charter gives the platform an overall picture of what is expected to be achieved and what will be done by each subcommittee and when. It helps to describe the work relationship among the platform leadership, committee leaders, and the members.

XYZ DAIRY INNOVATION PLATFORM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHARTER

Overall Roles and Responsibilities

The executive committee of the platform provides for effective operation of the platform in order to achieve agreed objectives of the platforms, and for the benefit of the members of the platform as well as the society at large. (Platforms should feel free to tailor these roles and responsibilities to be specific to their platform)

Responsibilities

Specific Responsibilities for the executive committee will be:

- Steering the Innovation Platform towards achieving the agreed objective
- Developing and submitting for approval from members the IP action Plan
- Reviewing and recommending(to members) for any relevant changes or adjustment in the action plan
- Evaluating the progress of IP
- Communicate with external stakeholders on matters of benefit to the IP
- Attract other stakeholders to the Innovation Platform.

Meetings

The executive committee meets at least **X** times in the year. Here the platforms need to specify how many times the committee will meet. It is advisable to identify and fix dates for the meeting. The executive committee meetings will deliberate on issues from subcommittee and later this will be used to develop reports for submission to members of platform in **annual** or **semiannual** meetings depending on how many the platform has agreed to meet in a year.

Members

The executive committee of the IP shall constitute the following members

- The chairperson of the innovation platform

- The secretary of the innovation platform
- The treasurer of the innovation platform
- Chairpersons of specific sub-committees
- Secretaries of the specific sub-committees

Reports

The executive committee shall receive the following reports

1. Progress Reports from sub-committees
2. Financial Reports(these can be named accordingly and agreed upon)
3. Any other relevant report which might be agreed upon by the members of the innovation platform

Annual Executive Committee Goals

The executive committee needs to establish/set its annual goals. Here the executive committee will specify what will be areas of focus. In this section the platforms can enlist the identified challenges in short, and put up agreed targets towards addressing the challenges, e.g.

- Improving housing for the dairy cattle...
- Capacity building on various aspects...