

IGAD Community of Practice proposal

June 2021

1. Introduction: A detailed articulation of what issues the CoP will address, how this CoP is aligned with the RDA mission, and how this CoP would be a value-adding contribution to the RDA community.

The [Interest Group on Agricultural Data](#) (IGAD) came to life in Gothenburg ([Göteborg](#), Sweden) in 2013 at the beginning of the [Research Data Alliance](#) (RDA) and has since grown to include over 260 registered members, from across continents. IGAD is a domain-oriented interest group working on all issues related to food and agricultural data. It represents stakeholders in managing data for food and agricultural research and innovation, including producing, aggregating and consuming data.

Beyond this, IGAD promotes good practices and RDA Recommendations in the research domain, including data sharing policies, data management plans, and data interoperability. As a forum for sharing experiences and providing visibility to research and work in food and agricultural data, IGAD has become a space for networking and blending ideas related to data management and interoperability. It also provides fertile ground to reach out and promote projects among other international organizations and institutions working in food and agricultural research and innovation. On a logistical level, one of IGAD's chief roles is to serve as a **platform** that leads to the creation of domain-specific Working Groups.

This document presents the reasons why IGAD should transition to become the “Improving Global Agricultural Data” Community of Practice, described further in the “Objectives” section. Benefits and alignment with RDA goals are described below under the Value Proposition section.

2. User scenario(s) or use case(s) the CoP wishes to address, and what triggered the desire for this CoP in the first place.

Scenario1: A regional network of agricultural data managers that has not yet engaged with the Research Data Alliance discovers RDA and seeks the best groups to participate in. Because IGAD is the designated community for agricultural data, the new network is quickly connected to like-minded experts and oriented to ongoing activities and how they can participate in RDA. Ideas from the new network are introduced to the conversation, leading to a new working group, and RDA recommendations flow into the new network.

Scenario 2: A funding opportunity for a multi-national collaboration arises and some members of IGAD want to pursue this opportunity. In order to demonstrate that their collaboration will be informed by and benefit the global community, they discuss the opportunity with the larger IGAD community. Community members provide supporting letters and in some cases, offer commitments of shared purpose. The coordinated support from a wide variety of stakeholder groups, each representing facets of prospective user community, indicates to funders that the project is highly likely to succeed. As the project proceeds, the CoP maintains high awareness of its progress and has plenty of opportunities to shape its direction and benefit from its outputs.

Scenario 3: Technically-oriented RDA working groups are seeking use cases for their developing standards in applied areas such as agriculture. Due to the large international nature of the CoP, IGAD can provide multiple perspectives; these provide excellent test cases, and even important, edge cases, for emerging ideas from these non-domain groups.

Scenario 4: Some IGAD CoP members belong to institutions and networks that lack capacity to travel or build extensive infrastructure. Yet these members play a critical role in their home countries for realizing Sustainable Development Goals such as ending hunger. The IGAD community can work to include these members in global conversations about solutions, and foster collaborations and leadership development that lead to more equitable access to information and technology.

3. Objectives: A specific set of focus areas for discussion and action.

To illustrate our primary objective, we introduce a new name for our group that maintains the IGAD acronym: Improving Global Agricultural Data.

Our more specific objectives/priorities can be added as 'subheaders' to the name, for example:

- IGADs Semantics
- IGADm Management
- IGADw Workforce
- IGADs Sovereignty
- IGADs Capacity Building
- IGADi Infrastructure

A subset of these objectives will be chosen for each year.

4. Value Proposition: A specific description of who will benefit from the creation and animation of the CoP and what tangible impacts should result.

Agricultural data practitioners and the organizations they work for will benefit due to:

- Better alignment with global practice.
- Opportunities to form partnerships on specific projects.
- Better ability to impact stakeholders via improved data systems and practices.
- Mutual learning from exchanging experiences

Research Data Alliance will benefit:

- **Connecting with other initiatives.** IGAD as an RDA focal point for food and agricultural sciences guarantees a connection with existing, relevant communities in other initiatives. IGAD can ensure knowledge sharing and promotion of RDA recommendations outside of the RDA network, important for the RDA as this expands awareness and possible adoption of RDA recommendations.
- **Minimizing the TAB's work.** As with the old and current Working Groups under the IGAD umbrella, IGAD has played a key role to assure the correct RDA development processes, to address issues and to discuss needs and requirements to effectively deliver their work. A set of tasks has been done by the IGAD chairs before RDA TABs are contacted which has minimized the amount of work for them.
- **Attracting new RDA members, particularly researchers and stakeholders from low and medium-income countries.** Due to the characteristics of the food and agricultural sciences which are multilingual and extremely global, the approach that IGAD has taken since the earliest days focused on

IGAD is always willing to collaborate with other groups with common goals. One identified IG that shares common interests is the RDA for the Sustainable Development Goals IG.

Eventual new IGs and/or WGs to be proposed directly by the CoP;

At this time, the CoP is able to announce the proposal of the new 'Crop Data Interoperability' Working Group, which is already being discussed within the IGAD community. Other IGs or WGs are expected to be announced in the future.

Interaction with key stakeholder organisations within the proposed discipline / research domain; Description of the CoP's planned approach to engage with their discipline / research domain and its key stakeholder organisations and planned approach to encourage broader community engagement and participation, including proposed ambassadors.

We are inviting first our known networks to collaborate as partners in the CoP, then we will learn from members what other regional or subdomain networks we should reach out to for participation. Each network will have a key point of contact, which we could call an ambassador, and they serve as liaison with their communities. Initial networks include:

- CGIAR
- Global Open Data in Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN)
- AgGateway
- International Society of Precision Agriculture (ISPA)
- Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC)
- GO FAIR Food System and Regional Go-Fair Agro Implementation Networks

Outline of proposed collaboration and partnerships with industry, associations, organisations and media as well as discipline/domain-specific funding opportunities.

See below.

6. **Outcomes:** Outline what the CoP intends to accomplish and how it plans to measure achievement. Include examples of WG topics or supporting IG-level outputs that might lead to spin off IGs and/or WGs later on.

IGAD has successfully delivered outcomes in the past and it is planning to continue doing so. One of the main priorities is to establish a robust network of non-RDA CoPs to enhance the outreach of RDA deliverables. In other communities, see section on *Interaction with key stakeholder organisations ...* Any measure of success becomes a challenge, since indicators like increasing the number of participants in IGAD or number of participants in online knowledge sharing activities might not be considered as impact indicators. However, they are relevant for a day-to-day evaluation of the success of IGAD within RDA. Additionally, it is expected to increase participation in events organized by non-RDA communities.

Adoption Plans (optional): If applicable, please provide specific plans for adoption or implementation of RDA outcomes within the organizations and institutions represented by CoP members, as well as plans for adoption more broadly within the community.

N/A

Operational Mechanisms:

Leadership: Describe how the CoP will be managed, how often it will meet and how it will maintain momentum between Plenaries. Include details on how the CoP will develop consensus, address conflicts, stay on track and within scope, and move forward during operation.

A team of at least three co-leads, drawn from different geographic regions, will meet regularly (e.g. weekly or co-weekly) to plan, operate by consensus at leadership level.

CoP: Provide a description of the CoP's mode and frequency of operation (e.g. on-line and/or on-site, how frequently will the group meet, be updated, etc.).

Offer engagement opportunities for CoP membership between in-person or virtual RDA meetings, a longer event (e.g. weeklong virtual session) and/or webinar series to happen at least annually. A communication plan will be developed to determine more regular opportunities to update the community.

IGAD promotes a continuous learning environment through periodic activities such as webinars. IGAD coffee breaks, for instance, is a new kind of webinar series to support the exchange of experiences within IGAD and beyond. It consists of virtual 15-minute presentations on the following topics of interest to the IGAD community, followed by 15 minutes of discussion and the session is recorded for those who cannot attend.

Timeline: Describe draft milestones and goals for the first 18 months, including the mandatory Public report to be submitted to Council for review every 18 months.

- Organize sessions for plenary (2 a year)
- Organize the IGAD Annual Week (either April or September, once a year)
- Develop communication plan based on capacity development and knowledge sharing activities
 - Objective: Facilitate knowledge sharing to understand the gaps and stimulate the discussion and developments
- Ensure global south participation
- Survey to assist any newcomers to RDA to identify any who may onboard to IGAD
 - to be a focal point and find out what people want
 - to actively invite to follow up with them proactively
- Introductory sessions to explain how RDA works
- Prepare a video to promote the CoP
- Submit Review (Public Report) to Council after 18 months

Potential Group Members & Supporting Organisations:

Leadership: Include proposed chairs/initial leadership and eventual plans for chair rotation.

Co-chairs: Imma Subirats (Italy, FAO of the United Nations), Patricia Rocha Bello Bertin (Brazil, Embrapa), Cynthia Parr (United States, US Dept of Agriculture)

The IGAD CoP philosophical approach is to represent all geographic regions and increase the participation of the global south. Leadership and the process of chair rotation is expected to reflect this

Transitions: Flexible, based on individuals, Inviting members to volunteer for leadership of activities as a means to prepare for leadership track

Member Participation: Outline which communities will be involved, what skills or knowledge should they have, and how will you engage these communities.

Members will include practitioners of agricultural data management in academia, government and industry, engaged in large part via the regional or disciplinary organizations that they have formed to support their efforts. They should have skills in both their domains and in relevant aspects of data management, whether for research or for agricultural activities, but because the community expects to enhance skills and knowledge we do not expect any specific requirements.

We anticipate engaging key members of larger communities as IGAD members to act as liaisons with their larger communities. Members of those larger communities may or may not become IGAD members themselves but are welcome to participate as desired.

Supporting Organisations / Institutional Commitment: include evidence of support from key stakeholder organisations, associations, etc.

Letters from GODAN and Syngenta.

Adherence to RDA Guiding Principles and Code of Conduct: the application must include a confirmation that the CoP will operate according to the RDA Guiding Principles and Code of Conduct.

The CoP commits to operate according to the RDA Guiding Principles and Code of Conduct.