



# The AU-EU International Research Consortium Platform

Transitioning the AU-EU Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable  
Agriculture Partnership to a long-term sustainable Platform



African  
Union



# Table of Contents

Foreword . . . . .	4
<b>1. Introduction . . . . .</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Why do we need an IRC for FNSSA . . . . .</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Contributing to long-term impact . . . . .	9
2.2 Strategic Statement . . . . .	10
2.2.1 . . . . . Vision . . . . .	10
2.2.2 Mission . . . . .	10
2.3 Value Proposition . . . . .	11
2.3 IRC objectives and anticipated outcomes . . . . .	12
<b>3. What does the IRC look like? . . . . .</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Potential Functions and Services . . . . .	14
<b>4. What are the guidelines for membership . . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 Which stakeholders can opt for membership? . . . . .	17
4.2 Benefits and obligations for members . . . . .	19
4.3 Associated partners . . . . .	20
4.4 How will the IRC platform grow its membership and remain sustainable in the long term? . . . . .	20
<b>5 How will the IRC be set up and activities coordinated . . . . .</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1 Governance . . . . .	21
5.1.1 The Strategic Guidance of the IRC . . . . .	22
5.1.1a The General Assembly (GA) . . . . .	22
5.1.1b. The Council . . . . .	23
5.1.2 The Advisory Function . . . . .	24
5.1.3 The Operational Arm of the IRC . . . . .	24
5.1.4 The Support and Coordination Function . . . . .	25
5.1.4a The Secretariat . . . . .	25
5.1.4b Coordination . . . . .	26
5.2 Approach to the grouping modalities of the Working Groups . . . . .	27
5.3 Remaining issues . . . . .	27
<b>6. How will the IRC be funded and what . . . . .</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>strategies will ensure sustainability . . . . .</b>	<b>28</b>
6.1 Funding strategy . . . . .	28
6.1.1 Incentives for funders . . . . .	28
6.1.2 IRC funders' toolbox . . . . .	30
6.1.3 Steps to make the funding strategy work . . . . .	32
6.1.4 Identification of funds . . . . .	32
6.2 The IRC sustainability strategy . . . . .	32
6.2.1 Short term sustainability strategies . . . . .	33
6.2.2 Long term sustainability strategies . . . . .	33
6.2.3 Incentives for funders . . . . .	35
<b>7. Knowledge management, Communication and Dissemination . . . . .</b>	<b>37</b>

7.1 Tools and channels for the IRC .....38

**8. Annexes . . . . .41**

Annex 1: Summary of main causes underlying the fragmentation problem .41

Annex 2: What needs to be in place for a sustainable platform, impact pathways and theory of change? . . . . . 42

Impact Pathways .....44

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# Foreword

Africa and Europe share many challenges in research and innovation for which policy has a central and urgent role. The African Union-European Union high level policy dialogue (HLPD) on science, technology and innovation defined Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) as one of the priorities to strengthen the research and innovation cooperation between Africa and Europe in the context of the green transition. The main tool to address this priority is the European Union-African Union FNSSA partnership, under which a joint investment of over 380 million Euro, has so far, been channeled for the implementation of the Joint FNSSA roadmap. One of the strong pillars of the partnership and its roadmap has been the idea of 'co-funding' through which all partners contribute to fund the agenda. Based on experiences in the past years, it appears a new financing mechanism needs to be put in place.

The LEAP4FNSSA is a coordination support action project with a main objective to provide a mechanism for European and African institutions to engage in a sustainable partnership platform for research innovation in the FNSSA domain. Over the past four years, LEAP4FNSSA partners have been working towards the achievement of this main objective. The platform needs to be at the service of the beneficiaries, not only as final recipients but also as users leading the process. The AU-EU FNSSA partnership is a great achievement and its related FNSSA roadmap has a very privileged position in the programming of Horizon Europe. Nonetheless, the roadmap requires adaptation to the current political priorities such as the European Green Deal and the Farm-to-Fork strategy on the European side, and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) on the African side.

We would like to assure all stakeholders and partners that the AU and the EU are both committed to support research and innovation towards sustainable food systems that further builds on its achievements by setting our new policy framework including agroecology, bioeconomy, food systems transformation and strengthening resilience to climate change. With the launching of the International Research Consortium (IRC), both public and private investments will be mobilized.

We would like to thank the LEAP4FNSSA project, which is now coming to an end for the excellent work over the last four years in support of the FNSSA partnership. LEAP4FNSSA supported the FNSSA Working Group and its oversight role with a very efficient secretariat. In particular, the LEAP4FNSSA laid the grounds for setting up a sustainable platform which now takes the form of the International Research Consortium (IRC).

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We are excited and look forward to the IRC becoming operational in the near future. We believe the IRC could play a very important role in boosting the FNSSA partnership for the successful implementation of the shared EU-AU agenda and achieving the green transition in Europe and Africa.

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# 1. Introduction

The first priority of the AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) roadmap on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) was adopted by the AU-EU Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in 2016. The implementation of the FNSSA Roadmap is expected to be improved through a platform of an alliance of stakeholders (including funders) with a long-term and sustainable governance and funding mechanism, and a knowledge management and communication system that will inform policy makers and other major FNSSA actors. The International Research Consortium is the new platform that is launched in 2022 under the aegis of the European Union Horizon 2020 Coordination & Support Action (CSA) project: the Long Term European African Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (LEAP4FNSSA), in line with the decisions of its General Assembly and the EC note-to-file, both in 2020.

The IRC is a follow-up of the LEAP4FNSSA activities. The LEAP4FNSSA project started in 2019 and is expected to close in October, 2022. After four years of its implementation, important achievements have been made that provide the important building blocks for the transformation of the existing collaborations into a more structured Platform for collaboration (confirmed by the External Project Review in January, 2022). Also, an external independent analysis of the project by a four-member expert Task Force provided good pointers that supported the establishment of a sustainable platform in the form of an International Research Consortium (IRC).

These positive directions from the January Project External Review and the Task Force action plan provided the impetus for the project Steering Committee to launch in March, 2022, a transition process towards to the establishment of the IRC. These steps have been completed as follows; 1. Developing a transition work plan of the project Grant Agreement activities and strategic IRC related activities for each work package (WP) (between March – April, 2022) 2. Crafting the IRC structures (March – September, 2022) 3. Invitation and participation of external Institutions / stakeholders that have declared intention of joining IRC in the crafting of the IRC document (May –September, 2022). 4. Implementing specific

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<sup>1</sup>These working groups are "internal" to the LEAP4FNSSA Consortium. They will work together to provide initial draft documents (including different options), which will then be discussed and modified during 3 planned online consultative sessions with all the interested institutions.



WP activities to close LEAP4FNSSA project including the final write shop, final General Assembly and the founding Launch of the IRC (between March – September, 2022) and 5. Final Documentation and Closure (October, 2022).

To initiate the crafting process, six internal working groups have been set up to facilitate the crafting of the IRC structures on the following six components; 1. Theory of Change and Impact Pathway, 2. Membership Criteria and Growth Strategy 3. Functions, Services and Value proposition, Vision and Mission statements 4. Governance, Coordination including Clustering mechanism, 5. Communication and Dissemination and 6. Funding and Sustainability Strategy. The crafting of the IRC structures has been undertaken with full participation of all institutions that have declared their intention to be members of the IRC. In line with this inclusive approach, the IRC crafting process involved a schedule of sharing the draft versions of the document (online) to receive inputs from prospective member institutions of the IRC Platform in three consultative sessions on 27th May, 5th July and 30th August, before the final writeshop, final General Assembly and IRC Founding Launch held on 14-16th September, 2022.

As LEAP4FNSSA consortium members, work package leaders and co-leaders, task leaders and working groups teams, we look back to a successful final event where the IRC was launched, and we will be happy to contribute to the implementation of the IRC, going from Partnership to Platform.



# 2. Why do we need an IRC for FNSSA

This International Research Consortium (IRC) is unique in a way that it will be the main long-term bi-continental platform for FNSSA, closely linked to the main policy process of the AU-EU cooperation on Research and Innovation- the High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD). The HLPD has representatives of AUC, EC, and their Member States. The IRC will connect existing structures, such as regional and sub-regional organisations or partnerships on research and innovation towards increasing their coherence and impact, hence acting as a network of networks.

## 2.1 Contributing to long-term impact

The IRC is meant to contribute to long-term impact on FNSSA. The proposed impact pathways are informed by lessons learned in the FNSSA partnership and its associated M & E Framework, as well as success factors emanating from the LEAP4FNSSA project. Some results include the Knowledge management and communication tools; the LEAP4FNSSA Theory of Change, and elements derived under the discussions on impact pathways such as the TCIP and process guideline for cyclic programme planning and management; the coordination infrastructure to build an AU-EU Knowledge Management and Communication Framework for a diverse network of actors in different sub-regions, as well as the associated coordination services (see a 2-page summary on TCIP for the AU-EU Platform and Cyclic Future Cooperation Processes – LEAP4FNSSA website; Liferay).

FNSSA is top priority in the ‘Green Transition’ in Europe and Africa. However, there exist a number of differentiated FNSSA actors/ initiatives/ strategies/ programmes at national, sub-regional and continental level, making the network highly fragmented. Fragmentation leads to overlap, inconsistency and inefficient use of (tools for) knowledge and innovation. It has therefore been challenging to implement some of the FNSSA goals as laid out in the 10-year HLPD Roadmap 2016 and to see the impact.

IRC aims to eliminate fragmentation of efforts by addressing the underlying causes:

1. A lack of knowledge management,
2. A lack of mechanisms for continuous dialogues and action among actors in food systems on different geographical levels,
3. A lack of communication mechanisms and frameworks, and
4. A lack of coordination structures.

While the causes of this fragmentation are yet to be fully elaborated, the most significant underlying problems relating to the IRC are shared in Annex 1.

The causes of the problems that the IRC seeks to address are multi-faceted, complex, structural, and dynamic. Forming the IRC is a next step to strengthen and enable an integral approach to different political, environmental and stakeholder priorities, by bringing greater coherence between research and innovation programmes and the wider bi-continental FNSSA landscape.

## 2.2 Strategic Statement

### 2.2.1 Vision

The IRC articulates the following vision:

*Africa and Europe collectively achieving national, regional and global targets in food and nutrition systems through accelerated implementation of the High-Level Policy Dialogue FNSSA Roadmap underpinned by coherent research and innovation programmes.*

This vision requires that IRC facilitates equitable, gender responsive and inclusive partnerships among multi-sectoral and transdisciplinary actors to drive impactful research and innovation that builds upon the heterogeneous knowledge base of its members. Its partnerships will contribute to improved multi-actor social-organizational, technological and policy innovations that support economic, social and environmental scaling-up and out. IRC supported research & innovation will be accessible to all partners in ways that preclude exclusionary science practices in order to ensure mutual benefit for all IRC members.

### 2.2.2 Mission

The IRC mission is:

*To support, convene and coordinate joint African and European FNSSA Research and Innovation that supports global challenges, focused on the SDGs and how they relate to specific environments in both Africa and Europe, in line with the FNSSA Roadmap.*

Achieving the IRC vision will depend on the equitable development, facilitation and strengthening of linkages between different sectors and research stakeholders that enable the expected outcomes stated in section 2.1 above.

Doing so will require the development of structures, mechanisms and communication channels to enable multi-actor network building, social learning and negotiation that facilitates collaborative and sustained multi-sectoral working relationships. Included within these will be the creation of stakeholder appropriate, accessible and equitable channels and mechanisms that support identification of common issues, streamlining of funding towards greater impact and increased mutually supportive research & innovation activities.

### 2.2.3 Value Proposition

The added value of the IRC is seen as:

*A bi-continental platform linking all actors in research and innovation in Africa and Europe to advance a science-led growth in sustainable food and nutrition security based on equity and common priority agendas and generating global spillovers.*

The IRC confers the following benefits;

1. Better use and higher impact of R&I (projects, skills, events) by cross-country, cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral learning and easy access to other institutions working on FNSSA and the implementation of innovations in practice; in other words, bringing FNSSA results to the end-user
2. A higher efficacy of projects with access to a large knowledge database on AU-EU collaboration, which avoids unnecessary duplication and enhances scaling, targeted investments and effective governance of joint programmes
3. A participatory and demand-led approach that will promote joint funding opportunities on topics under the FNSSA Roadmap, contributing to the SDGs as well as European and African development goals
4. Established two-way communication in the AU-EU science-policy interface and easy partnering with institutions across Africa and Europe

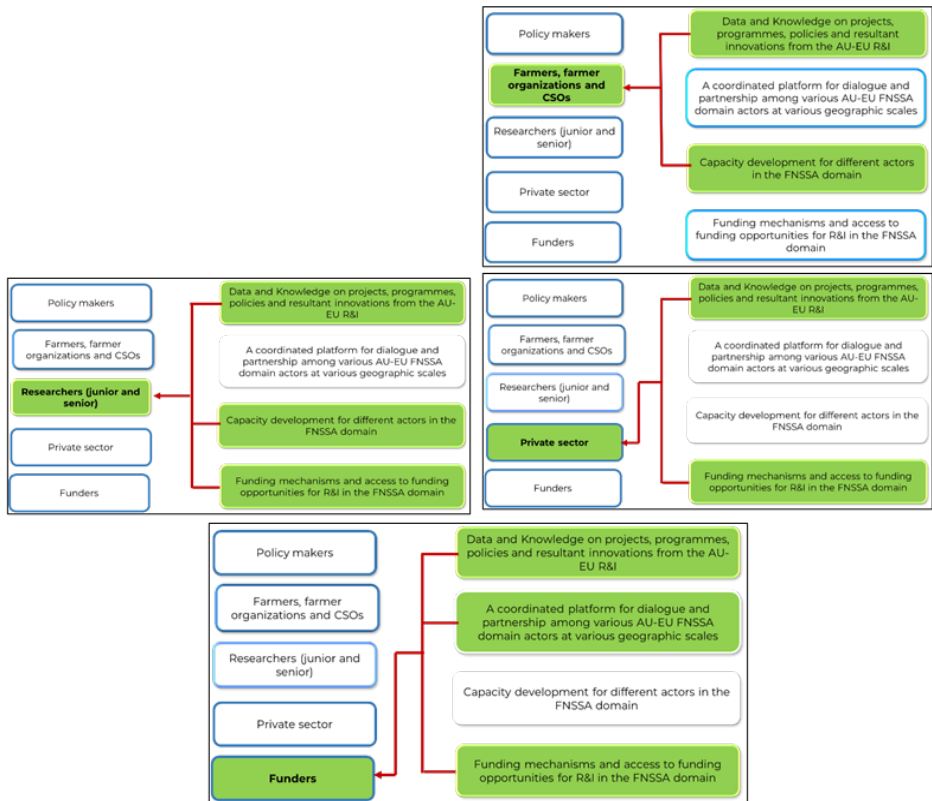


Figure 1: Examples of IRC value propositions for different stakeholder categories

## 2.3 IRC objectives and anticipated outcomes

The overall objective of the IRC is to improve coordination and create synergy between the many R&I programmes, initiatives, and actors with the aim of improving the FNSSA agenda in Africa and Europe. Addressing the fragmentation issue will assist in eventually reducing the difficulties of identifying partners in R&I, finding appropriate funding opportunities, contributing to relevant policy developments, boosting innovation, and supporting creativity and of all FNSSA stakeholders at national, sub-regional, and continental level. The IRC will also facilitate the liaison between, on one side, all these many R&I programmes, initiatives, projects and actors, and, on the other side, the specific STI policy dialogue between the AU and the EU.

The IRC is being launched on the premise that an appropriate vehicle for supporting solutions to these problems is a sustainable platform that supports the elements and

processes required to deliver on the ambitions of the FNSSA Partnership. The AU-EU FNSSA IRC Platform is therefore envisioned to strengthen the linkages among different sectors and research stakeholders to enable the:

- formation of local, national, sub-regional and bi-continental partnerships, clusters and alliances;
- identification of common issues and joint solutions;
- management and communication of knowledge, experience and insights; and,
- mobilisation of resources.

The Platform is expected to address four specific objectives:

- (i) Increase the synergies and coherence between actors, research and innovation projects, initiatives and programmes, through the development of institutional alliances and clusters of projects and expertise,
- (ii) Develop a learning environment and a large knowledge base, including monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) activities, creating communication and links between different initiatives to improve STI cooperation
- (iii) Establish a long term and sustainable coordination infrastructure, governance and funding mechanism
- (iv) Liaise with the HLPD Process.

(see Annex 2 for impact pathways and theory of change)

Addressing these objectives requires that IRC facilitates equitable, gender responsive and inclusive partnerships among multi-sectoral and transdisciplinary actors with a heterogeneous knowledge base. IRC supported research & innovation will be accessible to all partners in ways that preclude exclusionary science practices in order to ensure mutual benefit for all IRC members. This will require stakeholder appropriate, accessible and equitable structures, mechanisms and communication channels.

Achieving the IRC vision will depend on the equitable development, facilitation and strengthening of linkages between different sectors and research stakeholders that enable the expected outcomes stated in section 2.3 above.

Doing so will require the development of structures, mechanisms and communication channels to enable multi-actor network building, social learning and negotiation that facilitates collaborative and sustained multi-sectoral working relationships. Included within these will be the creation of stakeholder appropriate, accessible and equitable channels and mechanisms that support identification of common issues, streamlining of funding towards greater impact and increased mutually supportive research & innovation activities.

# 3. What does the IRC look like?

The IRC functions are closely linked to the objectives of and outcomes and lessons that emanated from implementing the LEAP4FNSSA project over 4 years (2018 -2022) (Table 1).

**Table 1: linkage between LEAP4FNSSA objectives and IRC functions**

LEAP4FNSSA objectives	IRC functions
Increase synergies and coherence between actors	Identification of priorities, alignment of R&I programmes, facilitate clustering of institutions & solutions for scaling
Develop a learning environment and knowledge base including MEL	Development of a credible data and knowledge management system centred on user needs, enabling effective dissemination of R&I opportunities and outputs for impact
Establish long-term and sustainable governance and funding mechanism for IRC	Development and operationalization of a sustainable & inclusive structure of R&I governance and funding
Support HLPD Bureau	Facilitate interaction between multi-stakeholders in the FNSSA and with the HLPD and other relevant policy bodies in AU and EU

## 3.1 Potential Functions and Services

The IRC would perform the potential functions delivered through mechanisms as outlined below.

Broad Functions	Services	Proposed delivery mechanism
Increase synergies and coherence between actors	Identification of priorities for R&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-actor dialogues at national, regional and continental level, a.o. the EU-Africa policy dialogue on the innovation agenda (in prep.) and the AU-EU new partnership strategy (2021);</li> <li>Consultation surveys;</li> <li>Analytical studies involving the two continents</li> <li>Online and on-site consultation with diverse actors</li> </ul> Interactive development process towards common Impact Pathway
	Alignment of the many R&I programmes, initiatives, and actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continental/regional/national policy reviews;</li> <li>Project and actor clusters and alliances;</li> <li>Continuous cooperation in the field of knowledge management and communication and Programme and institutions meetings for lesson sharing and learning</li> </ul>

Broad Functions	Services	Proposed delivery mechanism
	Showcase solutions that work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge Extractor Pipeline System (KEOPS);</li> <li>• Projects database;</li> <li>• Development and distribution of print, and audio-visual dissemination materials suitable for all stakeholder categories such as TV and Radio programmes; trade fairs; scientific conferences; hackathons; mentorship sessions; policy dialogues</li> <li>• Connecting Communities of Practice</li> </ul>
Develop a learning environment and knowledge base including a long-term Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) concept	Regular update on projects, programmes, and national, regional, and continental policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and innovation briefs. Organise events targeting different stakeholders to widely disseminate outputs and outcomes of different projects Polycentric cluster coordination network with services in the field of knowledge management and communication</li> </ul>
	Facilitating finding appropriate funding opportunities in line with relevant policy developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly convene funding actor dialogues to discuss modalities for co-funding R&amp;I in FNSSA. Develop and co-fund projects and programmes between Africa and Europe. Profiling funding opportunities and sharing among different stakeholders in the FNSSA domain</li> <li>• Project/programme proposal development trainings and mentorship</li> </ul>
	Successive growing of an AU-EU Knowledge Management and Communication Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the existing Knowledge Management and Communication Unit</li> <li>• Create interfaces to link KMSs of various stakeholders to the IRC KMS</li> <li>• Facilitate utilization of the IRC's KMS</li> <li>• Facilitate collaboration among actors engaged in knowledge management through events, joint projects</li> <li>• Launch and regularly adapt the KMS based on user feedback promote and support its utilization by IRC stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Establish a long-term and sustainable governance, and funding mechanism for the IRC	A sustainable and inclusive structure of governance and funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Secretariat to coordinate different services of the IRC</li> <li>• Develop co-funded AU-EU programmes for R&amp;I in FNSSA with new funders alliances/consortia</li> <li>• Regularly convene funding actor dialogues to discuss modalities for co-funding R&amp;I in FNSSA</li> <li>• Profiling, widely disseminating, and facilitating access to funding</li> </ul>

Broad Functions	Services	Proposed delivery mechanism
Liaison with the AU-EU HLPD Bureau	Organisation and institutionalization of a regular dialogues with the AU-EU HLPD institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise annual regional &amp; continental policy engagement events</li> <li>• Conduct foresight and analytical studies of policies that guide R&amp;I in FNSSA</li> <li>• Develop knowledge products that inform policy processes in AU &amp; EU</li> <li>• Focused dissemination and knowledge sharing events for policy makers</li> </ul>
Capacity development in FNSSA domain	To feed the AU-EU TCIP capacity audits and situation analysis to be conducted for relevant stakeholder categories from various administrative and geographic scales in the FNSSA domain in Africa and Europe, to propose capacity development agendas in the TCIP roadmaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission biennial capacity audits in the FNSSA domain across Africa and Europe</li> <li>• Targeted trainings and mentorship of various actors in the FNSSA domain to utilize platform services</li> <li>• Strengthen capacity of various actors in the FNSSA domain based on their mandate to develop and/or utilize R&amp;I in FNSSA products</li> <li>• Develop stakeholder capacity for resource mobilization</li> </ul>





# 4. What are the guidelines for membership

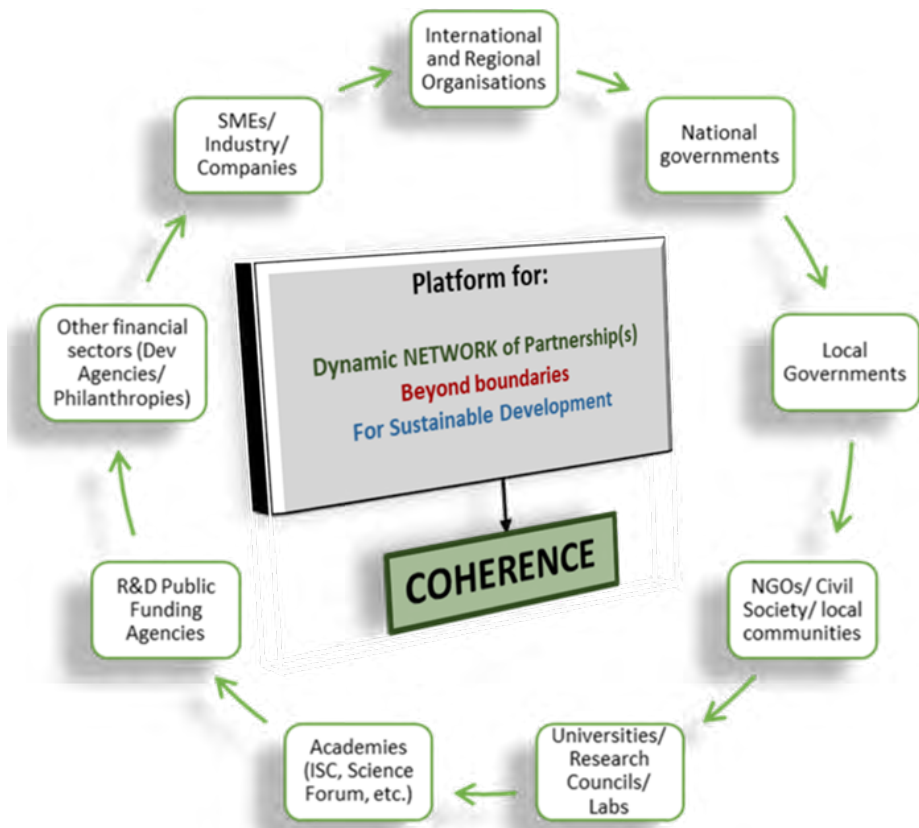
Membership of the IRC provides an opportunity to participate in and contribute to consortium services and activities. Membership also confers benefits to individual institutions and their networks. IRC members join a collaborative network and enjoy benefits such as access to complementary skills, expertise and information as well as the opportunity to share ideas and resources. Following these benefits membership will provide to organisations and institutions the opportunity to participate in and contribute to the implementation of services and activities. Members will promote the impact of R&I activities. They will be actively involved in research studies, surveys and contributions to external communication (through website, social media, policy briefs). Membership also confers benefits like joint articulation of priorities above fragmented interests of individual institutions, and their partnerships and networks, hence derive a more robust R&I system.

So far, 33 institutions have signed a declaration of intent to join the IRC, with about equal African and European numbers. Research institutions are the majority, followed by R&I coordinating bodies. Funders, ministries and end user organisations are less well represented.

## 4.1 Which stakeholders can opt for membership?

IRC membership is open to all public and private institutions (legal entities) involved in either funding, implementing or applying research and innovation in an AU-EU context. These stakeholders encompass academia and research organisations, national and international R&I funders, policy makers, private sector, SMEs, advisory services and organisations of farmers and civil society. Members support an enhanced and shared coordination of the activities.

The IRC is established to serve all stakeholders in the FNSSA domain in Africa and Europe (see the figure below).



**Figure 2 | Stakeholders in the AU-EU IRC Platform for FNSSA**

Funders, public and private, are essential for the sustainability of the IRC. Therefore, the IRC will invite international development banks and alliances to become a member in addition to the funders from AUC, EC, and national funding agencies. Some of them are part of the HLPD working group and already familiar to the IRC.

Members are contributing to the priorities of the FNSSA Roadmap, i.e. R&I on

- o Sustainable intensification
- o Agriculture and food systems for nutrition
- o Expansion and improvement of agricultural markets and trade
- o Cross-cutting issues: research infrastructures, capacity building, earth observation
- o Any other (future) priorities jointly defined such as in the EU-AU partnership 2021 or the EU-AU Innovation Agenda (in prep.).

A well-balanced representation of youth and women is aimed at. For example, the inclusion

of YPARD, European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA), women farmer organisations etc. will be sought.

The membership of private companies, including farmer organisations and SMEs, is crucial for the impact pathway. Preliminary work carried out by LEAP4FNSSA has provided lists of private partner organisations that are interested to co-build the IRC.

## 4.2 Benefits and obligations for members

The balance between the actual thematic areas and its (future) subthemes will be supervised by the Council (see governance section). This balance will be flexible, depending on the short- and long-term priorities set by the members. By acting in this way, the IRC functions as an exchange of ideas and opens the possibility to take up new priorities and policies of EU and AU.

Members from all backgrounds have equal access to the benefits of the partnership and an equal share in decision taking as members of the General Assembly (see GA under governance section).

- **Benefits**

- Finding partners with complementary skills, expertise across countries and regions
- Sharing information on current and expected AU-EU projects and policies
- Sharing ideas, jointly exploring opportunities for resources
- Value for money (services at low cost)
- Higher impact of R&I in all its dimensions, and capacity to achieve these goals
- Funders will have the opportunity to finance specific aspects of interest or launch specific calls, next to pooled funding

- **Obligations**

- An inclusive membership structure will be designed to allow all members an equal opportunity to contribute to decision making processes without discrimination. However, equal footing will be a burden for governance, as members funding initiatives will not always accept that those who do not commit anything get the same benefits. Therefore, the rights of committing and non-committing members should be clearly defined.
- As the IRC is meant to be a long-term partnership, members will sign a membership declaration for the duration of 5 (to be decided) years. There will be a minimum contribution (cash or in-kind, to be decided by members) to keep the IRC running. The demand will be sent from the future Secretariat.
- Members are putting effort into the generation of bi-regional and bi-continental activities (projects, skills, events) and the utilization of the results by cross-country and cross-disciplinary learning. They are willing to share resources, either by

funding projects, or in kind (in person), by exchange of thoughts or contribution to discussions on future activities.

- o Members are willing to strive for greater coordination and efficiency and a multidisciplinary, demand-led approach and in line with actual AU-EU policies.

### 4.3 Associated partners

For stakeholders (legal entities) that cannot apply (for instance because of legal restrictions) for a full membership, the option of associated partner is offered. Associated partners have no decision power but have access to the research projects, can contribute to projects, be a member of working groups, and be an observer in the General Assembly meetings.

The possibility for some institutions to join with an 'observer' status, with no voting rights but without paying a membership fee, may be considered. It would be a good way for institutions who are hesitant to join to gain a better knowledge of the IRC and familiarise themselves with the services it offers. This possibility of having an observer status should be limited in time, for instance for two years maximum, and also in number of observers allowed at the same time. The observer status differs from the 'associated'.

### 4.4 How will the IRC platform grow its membership and remain sustainable in the long term?

In order to remain sustainable over time, the IRC will

- In the near future:
  - o Create commitment at institutional level
  - o Include Europe-Africa private sector FNSSA initiatives (for profit and not-for-profit)
  - o Synergize with other networks or platforms
  - o Showcase relevant services of the IRC
- For the long run:
  - o Guarantee long-term funding activities
  - o Showcase results with impact in practice
  - o Develop a shared vision
  - o Ensure fair governance
  - o Membership contribution (fee)
  - o Just representation of women and youth organisations
  - o Adapt R&I priorities if and when needed
  - o Make use of IRC ambassadors on both continents to promote the visibility of the activities
  - o Look into the possibility of focal points appointed at institutional or national level

# 5 How will the IRC be set up and activities coordinated



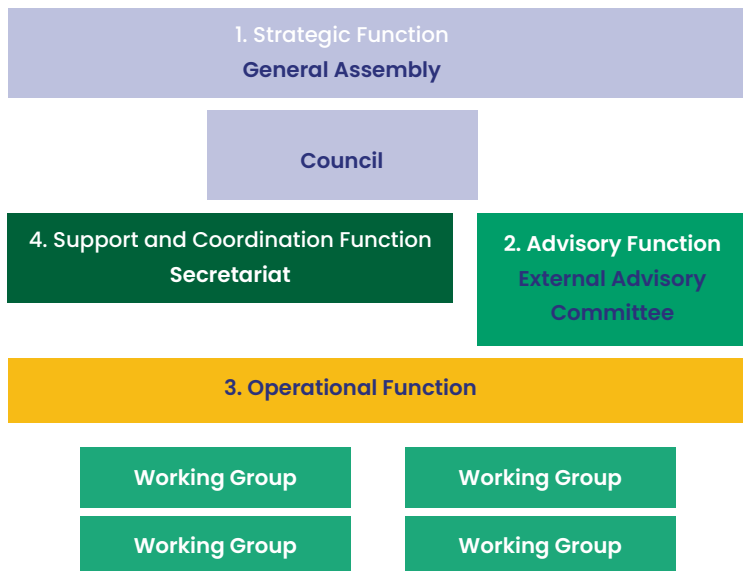
Given the bi-continental, transdisciplinary and multisectoral nature of the IRC, its governance will remain flexible to differing needs and priorities of actors. Specifically, this entails creating membership and consortium structures that are accessible to actors who come from non-traditional research & innovation entities who face differing, and often seasonal and resource-based constraints.

## 5.1 Governance

The Governance proposed for this IRC is light and geared towards joint actions. It includes the following bodies;

1. A decision-making body: the General Assembly (GA), where all member institutions are represented;
2. A Council, made up of representatives of a limited number of the IRC members, who accept to dedicate more time to the management of the IRC;
3. An advisory body: the External Advisory Committee (EAC);
4. A Secretariat, which supports the Council, the EAC, and helps prepare the GA; and
5. Working Groups that provides the operational arm and enables inclusive participation of the IRC members. The Working Groups will work through a clustering approach (thematic or regional) which will be defined by the members.

In order to have a light governance, it is proposed to organise it around four key functions: strategic, advisory, operational and support & coordination (see Figure).



## 5.1.1 The Strategic Guidance of the IRC

### 5.1.1a The General Assembly (GA)

The General Assembly brings together representatives of all the member institutions that have agreed to the objectives and guiding principles of the IRC.

#### **Tasks:**

- It appoints Council and Council chairs with due consideration being given to the diversity of the constituency (e.g. gender and geography balance etc.) between the various African and European regions.
- It appoints EAC members and co-Heads (one from each region) of the Secretariat
- It ratifies IRC policies, strategic and operational plans, Working groups and themes and approaches (e.g. clustering approach)
- It discusses the progress of the Working Groups towards achieving the overall strategic goals of the IRC.
- On the basis of the inputs of the Working Groups and of the External Advisory Committee, the GA sets the priorities guiding the work of the IRC in order to deliver on the strategic orientations of the relevant policy frameworks.
- It represents the IRC and participates in dialogues with AU and EU to ensure IRC inputs contribute to shaping AU-EU and global strategic directions on Research and Innovation.

**Composition:**

The General Assembly brings together representatives of all the member institutions that are in good standing as per membership criteria and rules.

- The GA is co-chaired by a representative of an African institution and representative of an European institution. The co-chairs are appointed by consensus for a two-year period. Following the principle of a rotating presidency, the co-chairs of the current year and of the ensuing year prepare jointly the GA.

**Functioning:**

- The GA meets once a year, except when an exceptional GA is needed. At the invitation of one of the co-chairs, these GAs are held alternatively in an African or in a European country.
- Decisions by the General Assembly are taken by a simple majority .

## 5.1.1b. The Council

The Council ensures the continuity of the work of the IRC in-between the meetings of the General Assembly.

**Tasks:**

- Ensures the decisions of the GA are carried through
- Discusses and monitors IRC working group activities and progress.
- Ensures the IRC representation on and participation in the FNSSA Working Group, the HLPD Bureau and its processes
- Oversees the work of the Secretariat and ensures its proper functioning
- Approves projects and actions, and their monitoring.
- Put in place a mechanism for conflict resolution.

**Composition:**

- The Council is made up of 11 representatives of active IRC members, who commit to dedicate more time to the management of the IRC. They are appointed by the GA.
- To ensure continuity and effectiveness of GA business, the Chairs of the GA could chair the Council
- Mandates are for two years, renewable once only

**Functioning:**

- The work of the Council is based on roles of the GA and informed by the functions of the working group actions.
- The Council reports to the GA.

## 5.1.2 The Advisory Function

### ***The External Advisory Committee (EAC)***

This committee provides strategic advice to the General Assembly in order to reach the objectives of the IRC in terms of research, innovation, training, and impacts on FNSSA in Europe and in Africa.

#### ***Tasks:***

- It brings advice to the GA, the Council and the Working Groups.
- It responds to specific requests from the GA or Council on particular technical advice

#### ***Composition***

- The EAC has up to 7 independent members (to be decided: non-IRC member?) selected for their merits and appointed *intuitu personae* by the General Assembly. These members come from Innovation hubs, academia (e.g. authors in international scientific panels), organizations committed to sustainable development goals (e.g. development agencies, financial institutions, foundations, regional organizations). The selection criteria (e.g. including excellence and expertise in the field) are defined by the GA.
- The EAC members are elected or appointed by consensus by the GA, on the basis of a shortlist prepared by the Secretariat. The EAC composition ensures a balance of skills, of genders and a geographical diversity.
- Mandates are for two years, renewable only once.

#### ***Functioning:***

- The EAC works upon referral from the GA or the Council and meets at least once a year
- Its opinions are expressed by consensus.

## 5.1.3 The Operational Arm of the IRC

### ***The Working Groups***

The Working Groups constitute the operational arm of the IRC and ensure an inclusive participation and benefit to all members.

#### ***Tasks:***

- They propose to the GA thematic or sector targeted actions (calls for proposals, capacity building activities) in line with the strategic priorities defined by the GA.
- Once approved by the GA, they implement and report of those activities to the Council and subsequently to the GA.



**Composition:**

- The Working Groups gather representatives of several institutions that are members of the IRC from local to continental levels to address specific issues of interest to the IRC (operational / thematic / geographic / ad hoc)
- Composition and orientation of the Working Groups may depend on the grouping / approach approved by the GA.

**Functioning:**

- The Working Groups report to the General Assembly and the Council
- The Working Groups benefit from the support of the Secretariat

## 5.1.4 The Support and Coordination Function

### 5.1.4a The Secretariat

The Secretariat is the main support structure for the IRC. It works closely with the Council to engage the HLPD processes. The Secretariat supports the work of the General Assembly, the Council, the External Advisory Committee and the Working Groups.

**Tasks:**

- The Secretariat organises the General Assembly meetings and other governance meetings, including the editing of documents, and the follow-up of GA and Council decisions.
- It facilitates activities of all the governance structures and ensures effective coordination among stakeholders to implement activities (capacity building, access to research infrastructures, and common research programs)
- It facilitates the work of the FNSSA Working group through the Council
- It supports the organization of the meetings of the Council and of the EAC
- It supports / facilitates the activities of the Working Groups.
- With guidance and approval from Council, it launches R&I FNSSA calls for proposals;
- It facilitates implementation of projects and actions, and their monitoring and evaluation
- It undertakes the relevant knowledge management, communication and dissemination of project results and IRC progress

**Composition**

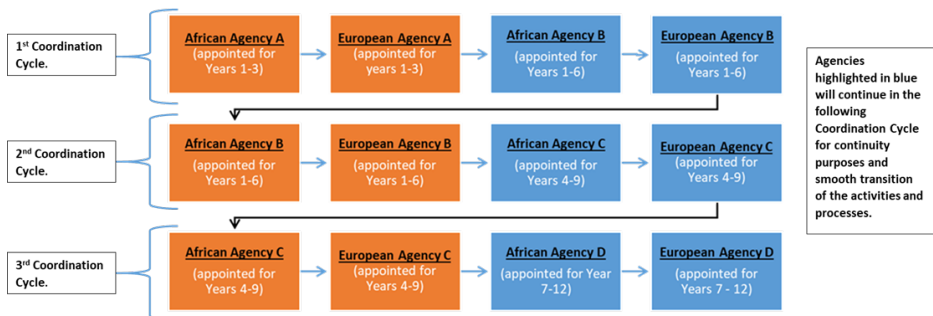
- The Secretariat includes 4 (to be decided) FTE, members of African and European institutions.
- Each institution member of the IRC will appoint one or two contact persons who will ensure communication with the Secretariat.

## Functioning:

- The Secretariat works under the authority of the GA co-chairs.
- Engagement with Funding agencies to facilitate technical and Financial reporting, Quality assurance and monitoring

### 5.1.4b Coordination

As indicated above, the activities of the IRC will be coordinated by the Secretariat working closely with the above-mentioned structures, the consortia as a whole and the different actors in food systems in many different ways and in a subsidiary function in a context of constantly changing needs. The Secretariat is therefore the primary administrative arm of the IRC ensuring the links between the GA, the Council, the EAC, Thematic Working Groups and the Cluster Networks. It serves as a glue, pulling together all the different activities of the IRC by taking responsibility for the general Knowledge Management and Communication of the IRC, the different Thematic Working Groups and the Cluster Networks. It will consist of two African and two European institutions (four institutions in total) working on a rotating system of responsibilities in order to avoid coordination monopoly of an organisation or country. For continuity purposes, only one Africa and one European institution rotates every 3-years. The figure below illustrates the rotational system for the IRC Secretariat.



The Secretariat is responsible for the general Knowledge Management and Communication of the IRC as follows:

- Knowledge management (coordinate existing knowledge management systems, including creating interfaces between different clusters, networks and data management systems).
- Communication management (provide advisory and establish capacity building initiatives utilising different communication methods, technologies, media channels for different stakeholder groups – the Secretariat is responsible for the different dialogues within IRC).

- Monitoring, evaluation and learning (develop indicators for monitoring processes based on Theories of Change and Impact Pathways; evaluate and analyse impact, design, implement and maintain learning processes).

## 5.2 Approach to the grouping modalities of the Working Groups

The IRC will promote joint funding opportunities, either through EC, AUC, national or international funds. Additionally, combining the stakeholder interactions with the access to a large knowledge and database on AU-EU collaboration, a higher efficacy of future initiatives, unnecessary duplication, targeted investments and a more effective governance of joint programmes will be achieved.

Whichever grouping modalities are approved by the GA for the IRC (clusters, networks, alliances, hubs?), the overall aim should be to facilitate vibrant collaboration among various partners/actors in the Africa-Europe FNSSA domain through providing information and knowledge required by each actor, facilitating sharing and interaction among different actors, creating synergies and an environment that will allow identifying needs, realising possibilities and finally building collaborations that will provide answers to the identified needs.

## 5.3 Remaining issues

There are a number of questions in the AU-EU FNSSA domain that remain to be answered, and with the constant changes in national, regional, continental and global policies, strategies and priorities, new questions will certainly arise. At the same time, new knowledge is continuously produced, providing with some answers, and creating new ones. The clustering approach will facilitate collaboration and synergistic effects between different actors in the AU-EU FNSSA domain to provide both with answers but also to create new critical questions and needs that will require actions towards fulfilling the goals of the FNSSA IRC.

# 6. How will the IRC be funded and what strategies will ensure sustainability



The IRC should trigger funds, to push into the research and innovation action. Different types of funding are envisaged:

- Acquisition of funds to fuel partnership and coordination.
- Acquisition of funders, who join the network with their funding schemes.

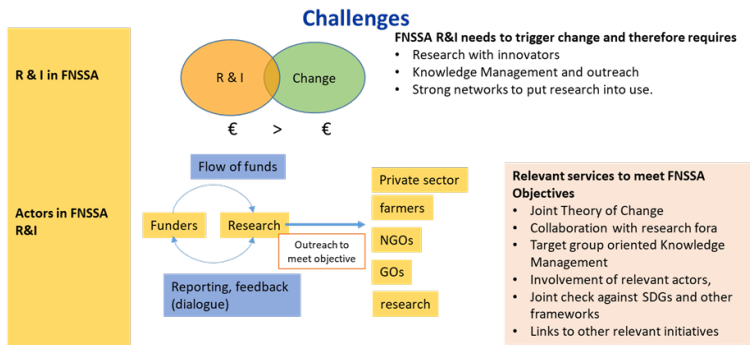
For the IRC the focus is placed on the latter option, as it is the sustainable foothold. The IRC strategically aims at attracting funders' networks, such as LEAP-Agri, FOSC, CSA Green ERA Hub, JPI Facce to be part of the platform.

## 6.1 Funding strategy

### 6.1.1 Incentives for funders

Funders in general position themselves in a visible niche, but also, they need to link to the knowledge society. R&I needs to trigger change to meet its objective. FNSSA R&I therefore requires research with innovators and other actors in target regions, knowledge management and outreach, building of strong multi-actor networks to put research into use and effective M&E. However, due to their volume and funding rules, many funding instruments cannot provide these services on their own. The provision of these services (see section 3) therefore underscores the selling point of the IRC. As R&I funding instruments often concentrate on a close dialogue with research, they risk not financially reaching out to the targeted actor groups, which can affect change.

## What makes the difference in FNSSA funding?



The IRC offers research funders to join a large multi-actor network with many services to meet the FNSSA objective, i.e. to link the research to innovation and practice and achieve scaling up:

### Joint launch of research

- Building alliances of multi-actors including funders. Alliances shall jointly organise research

### Joint Knowledge Management

- Building of thematic networks and clusters with similar approaches
- Joint information management
- Joint preparation of outreach
- Joint dialogue with other initiatives

### Jointly putting research into practice

- Joint implementation of feedback loops from practice to research

### Build new research on successful and existing outcomes.

- Research-management cycles will provide the basis to build new joint research events on previous experiences and findings.

### Services, which additionally attract funders:

- IRC should provide services based on (sub)regional demand, with precise objectives and specific target groups.
  - Organised Agenda setting at regional and subregional level
  - Build on existing principles to jointly formulate subregional Theories of Change and Impact pathways.
  - Condense joint agendas by means of an IRC based clearing house?
  - Contribution to FNSSA Roadmap

- Tools should facilitate dialogue with diverse actors, especially private sector, farmers, market actors and other researchers.
- Tools must facilitate scaling
  - Scaling Out: 'Impacting greater numbers'
  - Scaling Deep: 'Impacting cultural roots'
  - Scaling up: 'Impacting laws and policy'
- Services must be attractive in order to invite funders to invest into IRC.
- Funders work under the pressure of specific eligibility criteria, fiscal years, short-lived funding phases etc. These „pressures' have to be addressed.
- Funders should fund research and accompanying services : Knowledge Management and joint agenda setting (e.g. joint theory of change and impact pathway.) Also funders should fund the participation of actors in research (e.g. NGO participating in action research) and accompanying measures.

## Current Status

After the end of the LEAP4FNSSA project, funding for a 'transitional phase' has to be identified. Funding could be through

- Fees
- First R&I activities funded within FNSSA R&I Alliances, i.e. start with FNSSA research and innovation at small scale
- Submit proposals to obtain funding to fuel network services

At closure of the LEAP4FNSSA project, these options are not yet in place nor feasible, so the different funding modalities have to be decided by the future members of the IRC.

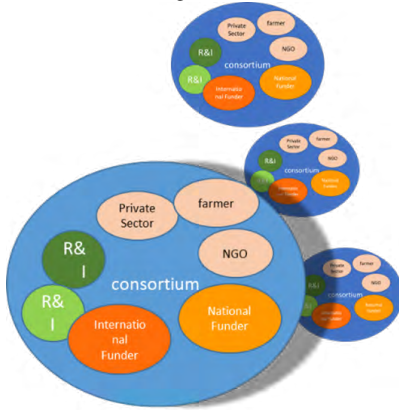
### 6.1.2 IRC funders' toolbox

Funders shall implement different modes of joint funding to pool funds, trigger pooling of in-kind resources and pool funds for accompanying measures. Generally, two modes are expected:

1. Centralised calls
2. Forming of simple research alliances.

Centralised calls require high coordination costs (e.g. call secretariat) to accomplish harmonisation of national funding regulations and eligibilities (e.g. in virtual common pots), as well as different fiscal years and availability of funds and achieve joint responsibility and outreach. However, they also achieve good visibility. The IRC should facilitate these types of calls (see section 3).

Research alliances are international and interdisciplinary but smaller groupings of researchers, funders and 'target groups' jointly launching R&I. They are easier to organise and can be integrated on the IRC.



Ideally, funders control organisational structures through the definition of topics and rules for eligibility to use funds along the EU-AU FNSSA Roadmap, as well as international frameworks, such as SDGs. The IRC should provide services to jointly monitor these aspects.

Eligible cost items must be defined to facilitate relevant actors and necessary services, such as Knowledge Management, M&E, Q&A services, Conflict Managers and especially Scaling-Up schemes within individual projects, as well as overarching a joint research programme. The IRC provides a high diversity of perspectives to fuel these activities.

**Thus the IRC welcomes funders to facilitate not only research, but also accompanying measures. Some examples:**

1. Fund and define Knowledge Managers to translate research recommendations into 'recipes'; knowledge being the key factor to effect change. Also install moderators, e.g. conflict managers to facilitate R&I dialogue, intrinsic actors motivation. Fund capacity development within R&I projects
2. Facilitate joint definition of mandatory Theories of Change and Impact Pathways (e.g. as in LEAP-Agri)
3. Support Rural labs to test research recommendations and provide basis for upscaling
4. Give research a voice through adequate Research – Policy interaction
5. To turn around funding cycles and pay target groups, e.g. Question and Answer Service for producers (example: ISICAD): provide vouchers to farmers to pay for Q&A. Provide vouchers to farmers to pay teachers in organic farming (example: Organic Farming Programme/BLE)



## 6.1.3 Steps to make the funding strategy work

The IRC will provide the following services to funders:

- **Forming of research alliance:** Funders can link up with actors from IRC with the objective to organise joint research.
- **Build agendas on subregional demand:** Funders can link up with research fora, practitioners, private sector, rural actors etc. to set up the agenda and research models.
- **Jointly communicate research outputs for use:** Funders can interact up with private sector, producers, NGOs, GOs to obtain feedback via knowledge fairs and other services.
- Position your institution within EU-AU Partnership and interact with the FNSSA working group
- **Identify new challenges and concepts** by networking with EU and AU actors to identify topics in global concepts.

## 6.1.4 Identification of funds

- Invite funders with attractive IRC services. To achieve this, there is a need to densify the IRC concept.
- Avoid distraction of IRC concept in the light of agendas of other funders and networks.
- Identify funds or other resources for transition period. Partners can organise small events for coordination, with the objective to keep the network together. Develop a collaboration culture.
- Stratify and demarcate agendas of different types of funders:
  - o national governmental funders
  - o private sector funding
  - o regional funds
  - o international funds.

## 6.2 The IRC sustainability strategy

Sustainability strategy for the IRC can be viewed in the short and long term.





## 6.2.1 Short term sustainability strategies

In the short term, the main issue is to 'bridge the gap' between the end of LEAP4FNSSA (end of October 2022) and the effective start of the IRC (end of 2023).

The proposal is to:

- Contact all the WP co-leaders, asking them to identify within their WP what should be continued during this gap. This could include the maintenance of the Project Database (WP3), the continuation of some WP4 communication activities (like maintenance of LEAP4FNSSA website, until the IRC website is launched), the storage of data (like the contact lists which should have been transferred in 2021 to FARA d-Group), the secretariat of the FNSSA WG (WP1), etc.
- Ask the LEAP4FNSSA task co-leaders who are in charge of the identified activity or database to continue providing this service (though it could be at a minimum level), as 'custodian', during the few months that this gap should last.
- If a LEAP4FNSSA Consortium member does not want to continue providing this service, then it should be transferred to FARA (Coordinator) before the end of LEAP4FNSSA.

## 6.2.2 Long term sustainability strategies

In the long term, the issue will be to maintain the interest of European and African institutions to continue their membership in the IRC and therefore to balance the 'cost' of being a member of the IRC with the 'benefits' this membership brings.

*"By construction"*, the IRC is not limited in time and will continue to exist (= is sustainable) as long as there are institutions from Europe and from Africa willing to be members of the IRC.

This implies that the IRC is providing relevant services to its members, and at a reasonable cost. In particular the recurrent costs due to the IRC governance should be kept to a minimum: the IRC governance should, at least initially, be 'lean', with a very small number of statutory bodies (secretariat, external advisory committee, etc.) and virtual meetings should be preferred to face to face meetings (although not all meetings should be virtual).

It is important that the IRC does not depend only on external project funding to pay for its recurrent costs. Members should not join the IRC only because they want a share of some institutional project funding. There must be institutional commitment to maintain the IRC. This strong institutional commitment will provide a convincing base to obtain project funding.

If the IRC is efficient in providing relevant services at a low cost, if the way it is organised and governance is clear and sensible, it will also be easier to convince its members to pay a small annual membership fee (in addition to support coming from external donors, most probably on a project by project basis). This membership fee should be as low as possible as a high fee may block the participation of some institutions, in particular from Africa. It is relevant to notice that a low fee level combined with a high level of services provided do exist in the African context, with the example of RUFORUM, a fee-based organisation gathering more than 100 institutions and with more institutions wanting to join!



## 6. 2.3 Incentives for funders

Following the e-consultation with donors and funders, several incentives are recommended for funding strategies and donors involvement

1. Alignment of the donors thematic agenda with partners thematic agendas.
  - Building strategies to sustain projects that were already sponsored by donors
  - Designing of large programs that bring together complementary components funded by various agencies.
2. Options to embed the own agenda into structural framework of the network
  - It is not necessary to modularize the pathways to impact in terms of levels of organization. For example, linking an EU initiative like Farm to Fork may not be possible within a sub-regional project in Africa, but it could be related to a sub-regional programme and the latter links to a project in the sub-region at country level. Thus, the IRC provides the platform to link these modules, which may otherwise not necessarily be connected. This modular approach may be useful for addressing these diverse issues listed on your slide.
  - Some stakeholders also argued that the IRC provides pathways for dealing with issues, which have cross-sections between funders and fund users at the national, sub-regional and regional level or global level.

3. Interaction with actors to identify demand and access to services: outreach, knowledge management & capacity development

The following services are suggested to be provided by the IRC:

- mapping (region, expertise/interest)
  - development of strategic papers
  - organisation of workshops, regional meetings
  - elaborate orientation on a commonly defined vision
  - deal with information overflow - keeping it simple
  - develop a set of tools & formats for meetings
4. Overcome the contradictory motivation: collaboration versus individual visibility.
    - A common purpose/grounds may not hinder individual visibility
    - A platform should allow for individual visibility, as donors contribute funds and want the visibility of their contribution.
    - The platform must ensure specific institutional responsibility and even appoint focal points.
  5. Joint Monitoring and Evaluation  
Joint M&E should be accomplished by both donors and researchers, who receive funds, as in such a way a common understanding is developed and knowledge

gaps can be filled. This is also a strategy, which provides sustainability.



# 7. Knowledge management, Communication and Dissemination

The knowledge management, communication and dissemination process linked to the IRC Platform is principally aimed to:

1. create identity, inform, and raise awareness
2. promoting membership among key stakeholders
3. consolidate networks, dialogue and alliances

## **Create identity, inform, and raise awareness**

The focus will be on developing a learning environment, and disseminating the IRC activities and achievements. The knowledge management will build mechanisms to provide with the wished information to the different stakeholder categories of the IRC. Communication activities will inform about the platform's scope, raise awareness on the IRC's functionalities and benefits to potential members. The knowledge management and communication actions will lay the basis for generating dialogue and interest among and within the concerned communities, harvesting the information required using a combination of tools and channels: project databases, a functional website, social media , newsletters, briefs and others according to the expressed needs.

## **Promoting membership among key stakeholders**

Knowledge management on FNSSA related issues will link with other existing FNSSA information sources being a component adding value to the IRC. Communication activities will aim to trigger the interest of the institutions actively involved in EU-AU collaboration in R&I for FNSSA inviting them to be part of the IRC Platform by actively promoting the findings of the IRC activities.

## **Consolidate networks, dialogue, and alliances**

The final aim will be to develop joint activities, promoting institutional networks and projects clusters.

A range of different stakeholders with different and variable needs in knowledge and information are targeted by the IRC. An indicative list to show the variability of needs is

presented below where different target groups are described.

Target group
Senior officials of the HLPD, Members of the HLPD Bureau
National and regional policy makers
Programme owners, Funding agencies, cooperation agencies, EU-AU initiatives officials/ coordinators, Development agencies
Private Sector organisations
Sub-regional organisations
Research organizations, Universities
Innovation actors (Entrepreneurs, incubators, Innovation brokers, start-ups)
Extension services
Scientific community
Civil society organisations (farmers, consumers, NGOs - non-governmental and grassroots organisations)

To maximise the impact of knowledge management, communication and dissemination activities, a range of different tools and activities addressed to different stakeholders (in multiple levels) need to be offered. The IRC knowledge and management system will be linked with other existing and developed ones (LEAP4FNSSA, FARA, JRC, DeSIRA, CGIAR, other), including knowledge from activities projects/programmes from organisations other than EU and AU that will join or synergise with the IRC on FNSSA (e.g. national development and research agencies, World Bank, USAID, other).

## 7.1 Tools and channels for the IRC

The variety of target groups requires the use of several tools and channels to effectively inform, communicate and engage with its many audiences. For these, existing tools and channels in LEAP4FNSSA could be used (see list in the Table below) that will be linked with tools from other initiatives that will be aligned with the IRC. Tools that are wished to be included:

- A project database with FNSSA-related projects funded by the AU and EU but also other organisations working in the FNSSA domain to provide with several details on the project, e.g. partners, funders, aim, description, finding etc.
- A partner database to indicate and make available for further communication partners active in projects and other activities working within the FNSSA domain in Africa and in Europe.

- Links to channels of information that offer job and funding opportunities related to the FNSSA domain in Africa and in Europe.
- For the digital channels, a website is seen as a channel most able to convey digital content, including IRC general information, news, newsletters, webinars, and a social awareness platform.
- Print channels include reports, papers, publications, flyers, brochures. However, it is also important to circulate some of them as digital content, accessible from mobile phones and tablets, for reaching some categories of stakeholders but also for environmental consideration.
- Audio-visual will include YouTube videos, infographics, streaming videos.

Below a list of existing LEAP4FNSSA tools ready to support the IRC Platform and suggestions for future tools are presented. The current tools need to be adjusted to the identified needs and requirements of the IRC members.

Tool	Content
Project database	An extensive database with FNSSA-related projects funded by the AU and EU, with participants from both continents, categorised in several ways (per theme, country, region, organisation type) and with extensive information of each project connected to different deliverables (websites, reports etc)
Organisations database	A database with all organisations participating in the different projects in the project database that can be categorised per type of organisation, continent, country.
Knowledge extraction system	A 'knowledge extraction system', the KEOPS (Knowledge Extract Or Pipeline System) that is an artificial intelligence tool to harvest the wished and needed information from the vast available information on specific subjects.
E-mail account and mailing lists	The contact email info@leap4fnssa.eu has been created to directly communicate with the stakeholders interested in the IRC Platform.
Newsletter	The newsletter will provide insights into topics and trends. In addition to a recap of the publications and online actions that took place in the previous months, it will be possible to find resources, links and in-depth information, as well as selected multimedia and social media contents (best videos, best tweets, best discussion/thread).
Digital brochure and leaflet	Promotional brochure (in English), roll-up and leaflet will describe the key facts, objectives and expected results, so that the general public can quickly understand what the IRC is about. Next step: a brochure in French.
Social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube)	The social media channels were selected taking into account their reach towards target audiences and acknowledging the requests and needs coming from the digital actors. This diversification and stratification of stakeholder groups by media channels aims at involving general audiences as well as specific segments and to address a varied range of topics.
Audio-visual	Next step: a short video trailer will be produced to promote the IRC objectives and activities. The video will include: a) what an IRC is, b) why joining the IRC; c) how to become a member of the platform.

Tool	Content
Website	Next step: a website contributing to the IRC's objective of informing and raising awareness among the target audiences and disseminating results. The existing LEAP4FNSSA website can be adapted to the scope of a new website.
Agora	The Agora has been designed to strengthen and support the website activities. Its main function will be to promote the membership among key stakeholders, dialogue with research organizations, ministries and research councils.
PAEPARD FARA community network	Next step: FARA will use his PAEPARD community network to communicate and disseminate IRC platform vision and objectives.



# 8. Annexes

## Annex 1: Summary of main causes underlying the fragmentation problem

### 1. Lack of knowledge management

- Different quality standards and strategies
- Lack of infrastructural and educational capacities and knowledge
- Lack of interconnectedness
- Lack of long-term investments
- Conflicting decision making/ conflict of interest
- Negative and poor or unfriendly policy decision making environments
- Prevailing Prejudice that may hinder progress and limit the scope of operation.
- Unstable Policy framework due to frequent change in policy makers and portfolios

### 3. Lack of communication mechanisms and frameworks

- Lack of clusters and cluster networks and their coordination
- Lack of a sufficient information basis for funders and donors in their prioritization- and decision-making processes for investing in R&I and capacity building
- Lack of mechanism and infrastructure for long-term multilateral prioritization and investment processes
- Lack of mechanism and coordination infrastructure for long-term Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) processes
- Lack of a long-term subsidiary finance mechanism to maintain a coordination infrastructure and its services for the AU-EU member states in an AU-EU Platform for R&I on FNSSA

### 2. Lack of mechanisms for continuous dialogues and action among actors in food systems on different geographical levels

- Absence of scientists in the private sector and policy making
- Lack of planning for analysis, up- and out-scaling
- Lack of understanding and knowledge about potential communication channels, methods, and technologies
- Lack of long-term contact points for exchange
- Long-term MEL mechanism has not been institutionalized
- Lack of knowledge about typical stakeholder dialogues and action
- Lack of effective communication medium that will penetrate the many interiors and remoted regions

### 4. Lack of coordination infrastructures

- Knowledge management and communication infrastructure
- Infrastructures for up- and out-scaling of research results
- Infrastructures for stakeholder dialogues, -networking and -action

## Annex 2: What needs to be in place for a sustainable platform, impact pathways and theory of change?

A new understanding of cooperation among projects needs to be developed, possibly through a coordination hub. This coordination hub could also support the development of the funders network and the temporary funders alliances, and for certain services in programme cycles, another key building block envisaged for the design of the Platform.

To achieve and support these coordination hubs, processes to communicate research outputs and co-develop research that align with the shared and different priorities between the two continents need to be in place. This would be supported by a clear vision that is articulated and understood by a variety of stakeholders. To communicate this vision, a communication concept that allows for the maintenance of exchanges between actors in co-development processes needs to be developed, along with better coordination of communication events.

### ***What needs to be in place for linkages and STI cooperation to contribute to a sustainable platform?***

A requirement of the coordination and structures of the Platform is to have a functioning motor that drives multistakeholder interactive capacities, and leadership that supports this. This could be additionally supported through the use of innovation brokers or facilitators and guided by sufficient processes to enable priority setting with FNSSA stakeholders.

This would be strengthened alliances to support joint funding and joint priority setting, which would also be presented by having stakeholder impact & benefit monitoring system (for funding and stakeholder engagement).

### ***What needs to be in place for the governance system to contribute to a sustainable platform?***

Firstly, the Platform requires committed mid and long-term funding mechanisms to directly support a range of functions including support for a Secretariat / Support mechanisms and tools to better facilitate the IRC multi-stakeholder and bi-continental communication. Achieving this will require a clear membership definition/ criteria and a shared vision

A process orientated requirement of the interoperability of data systems to support communication & evidence for decision making.

***What needs to be in place for M&E and knowledge and communication mechanisms to contribute to a long-term sustainable platform?***

There is a well-articulated need for adequate inclusion of private sector, civil society, as well as policy makers, research funders, research performing organizations. This necessitates adequate funding resources to do so and inclusivity in the design and commitment of members of the Platform. This would therefore require further elaboration of aims, governance, activities in clear, binding documents and utilizing the political engagement and commitment of senior officials. Finally, to be able to coordinate this fully, an M&E & Knowledge and Communication Framework needs to be in place.

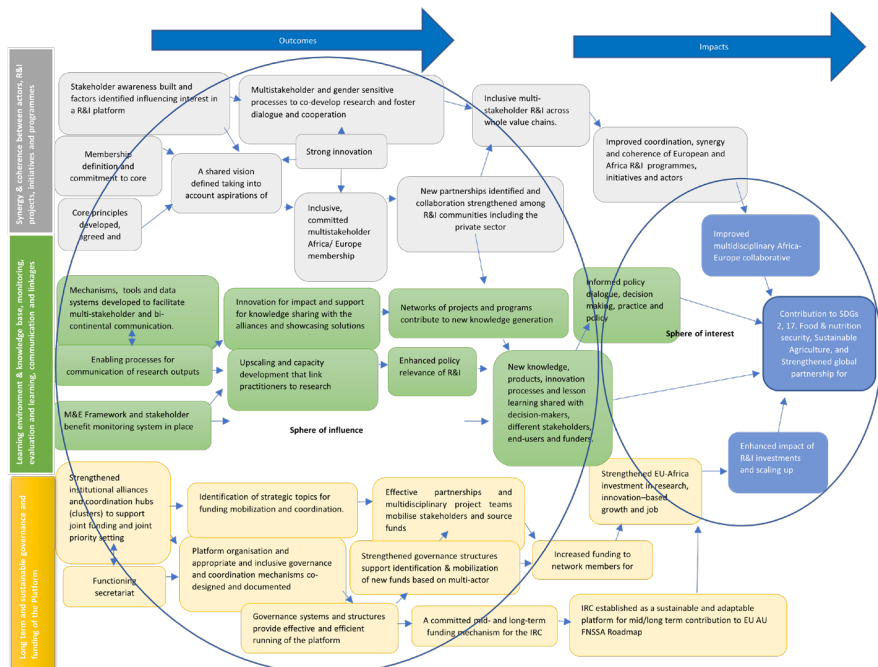
# Impact Pathways

The below diagram provides a mapping of the envisaged outcomes and impacts of the IRC along three interconnected impact areas:

1. Synergy & coherence between actors, R&I projects, initiatives and programmes,
2. Learning environment & knowledge base, monitoring, evaluation and learning, communication and linkages, and
3. Long term and sustainable governance and funding of the Platform

Outcome areas and pathways should follow logical flows towards the sphere of interest, which is concentrated around three distinct and inter-connected themes:

- a) Improved multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder Africa-Europe collaborative research & innovation in FNSSA
- b) Contributions to SDGs 2 and 17 (food and nutrition security, sustainable agriculture and strengthened global partnerships for sustainable development)
- c) Enhance impact of the R&I investments and scaling up and out



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