## Towards the establishment of an International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture

The need for an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach to discuss digital technologies in agriculture and food has been reflected in January 2019, during the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA)[[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/digital_council#_ftn1), approximately **74 ministers of agriculture** from around the world and high-level representatives of international organizations committed to **use the potential of digitalization to increase agricultural production and productivity**, while improving **sustainability, efficient resource use, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, and living conditions**, especially in rural areas.

Based on the Ministerial Communiqué 2019[[2]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/digital_council#_ftn2), the agriculture ministers called upon FAO to draw up, in consultation with stakeholders including the World Bank, African Development Bank, IFAD, WFP, OECD, WTO, ITU, OIE and CTA a concept for the establishment of an international Digital Council for Food and Agriculture to help everyone harness the opportunities presented by digitalization.

Focal points were identified from each organization to work as part of a taskforce to join efforts to create **a concept note for the establishment of an International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture, as a starting point for this initiative**. Working collaboratively, such a Council would discuss and develop voluntary guidelines, provide advice to policymakers, and enhance knowledge-sharing on best practices that would contribute to sustainable agriculture and rural development during the digital transformation.

To date, FAO jointly with the international organizations:

* **House an open consultation process** involving relevant multi-stakeholders to develop the proposal for the establishment of an International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture;
* **Work towards delivering a Concept Note** based on a participatory consensus-based approach that defines the Terms of Reference (purpose, scope, functions, legality roles and responsibility, and operating model) to establish the International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture, together with a roadmap for implementation; and
* **Identify constitution, mechanism and timeline** for the establishment and implementation of the International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture.

Given this background, this consultation aims to involve stakeholders, interested parties and individuals in the development and improvement of the proposed Concept Note.

The current draft is in the process of being developed by FAO, with the support of Deloitte and in consultation with the taskforce focal points through a series of consultation meetings. Following this online consultation, FAO, together with the focal points will reconvene to discuss its outcomes and develop the final Concept Note. For this consultation, we will share some key parts of the Concept Note for which we still need inputs and suggestions from each of you.

**To better understand the points of view toward the establishment of a Digital Council, we hereby invite you to consider the following questions:**

1. What are the potential entry points for government to address challenges and foster the development of digital agriculture? ([Please click here to see the relevant section of the Concept Note](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/files/162_Digital_Council/Discussion_guide_Q1.pdf))
2. How can the establishment of the Digital Council address the numerous barriers to adoption of these technologies? ([Please click here to see the relevant section of the Concept Note](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/files/162_Digital_Council/Discussion_guide_Q2.pdf))
3. Do you think that the roles identified for the Digital Council are suitable for facing the food systems challenges outlined above? ([Please click here to see the relevant section of the Concept Note](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/files/162_Digital_Council/Discussion_guide_Q3.pdf))
4. What governance structure should be in place in order for the Council to serve its purpose?([Please click here to see the relevant section of the Concept Note](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/files/162_Digital_Council/Discussion_guide_Q4.pdf))
5. Please add any other comment or relevant content you think should be included in the Concept Note.

We thank you for your valuable contribution to the development of the Concept Note for a Digital Council for Food and Agriculture and for helping the Taskforce prepare a comprehensive document  that considers the view and experiences of all relevant stakeholders.

Best regards,

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[[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/digital_council#_ftnref1) [www.gffa-berlin.de](http://www.gffa-berlin.de/)

[[2]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/digital_council#_ftnref2) <https://www.gffa-berlin.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GFFA-2019-Communique.pdf>