

# Stakeholders' views on the establishment of a tropical poultry platform (TROP)

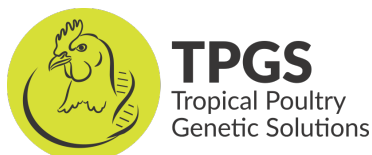
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October 2023




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ILRI thanks all donors and organizations which globally supports its work through their contributions to the [CGIAR Trust Fund](#)



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Editing, design and layout—ILRI Editorial and Publishing Services, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Cover photo—ILRI Apollo Habtamu

ISBN:92-9146-796-0

Citation: Zewdie, Y. and Dessie, T. 2023. *Stakeholders' views on the establishment of a tropical poultry platform (TROP)*. Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI.

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# Acknowledgments

This work was conducted as part of the CGIAR Initiative on Sustainable Animal Productivity for Livelihoods, Nutrition, and Gender Inclusion (SAPLING). CGIAR research is supported by contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund. CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis.

Special thanks to those who provided their views on establishing and operationalizing a Tropical Poultry Platform (TROP). The support provided by colleagues from the Tropical Poultry Genetics Solutions team/ILRI in the preparation of this document is also gratefully acknowledged.

# Acronyms and abbreviations

ACGG	African Chicken Genetic Gains
ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
ARARI	Amhara Region Agricultural Research Institute
AsCGG	Asian Chicken Genetic Gains
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
EIAR	Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research
EFFAB	European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders
EPPPA	Ethiopian Poultry Producers and Processors Association
GNPFA	Ghana National Poultry Farmers Association
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IPs	Innovation platforms
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation
KMC	Knowledge Management and Communications
LDC	Livestock Development for Community Livelihood, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana
NAHPRI	National Animal Health and Production Research Institute, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NIAS	National Institute of Animal Science, Vietnam
PI	Principal investigator
PPT	PowerPoint presentation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSPFA	Small-Scale Poultry Farmers Association, Ghana
TALIRI	Tanzania Livestock Research Institute
TPGS	Tropical Poultry Genetic Solutions
TROP	Tropical Poultry Platform

# 1 Background

In the last quarter of the century, demographic factors as well as progressive increases in average incomes and urbanization have engendered considerable demand for animal-source foods. According to a recent study, livestock-derived food demand for protein is expected to increase globally by 14% per person and by 38% total between 2020 and 2050. Demand growth is expected to be the fastest in South Asia and Africa south of the Sahara. The demand for poultry eggs and meat, which are the most efficient livestock production systems, in converting feed into high-quality food and among the most sought-after nutritious animal-source food, is said to be an important component of this surge in demand<sup>1</sup>. With the right organization and support, it should be possible to enable smallholder chicken producers in the tropics to cater to this market signal and thereby transform livestock agriculture into one that is more sustainable, climate-resilient, and profitable source of livelihood. Such a transformation would also enhance wealth creation and retention as well as help promote healthy diets.

To enable the rapid expansion of the poultry industry to meet the increasing demand for eggs and chicken meat, several programs have been implemented in different parts of the tropics. However, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners are finding it difficult to get a firm grasp of which program and partners do what and in which location. Indications are that many poultry-focused interventions are characterized by duplication of efforts, with limited, if any, synergistic effects. This lack of joined-up approaches to poultry value chain development represents lost opportunities for supporting desirable productivity, gender-aware employment, climate change adaptation, wealth, and human health outcomes. Taking the village chicken production system to new scales of operation and transforming the small-scale chicken business in the tropics demand optimal use of the available organizational and financial resources and effective coordination of the various stakeholders at all levels.

A review of the accessible literature and consultations with key stakeholders in the poultry industry have revealed the presence of several forums where poultry-related issues and lessons of experience are being exchanged. However, most of these are organized by the scientific and business community in the global North and remain not only academic in content but also focus on high-end poultry and its challenges. The few such platforms that have a focus on the poultry industry in developing regions have either a narrow focus on trade and investment facilitation or operate within the agenda set by establishment interest groups in advanced economies. Thus, these platforms are largely inaccessible to, and do not reflect the needs and aspirations of, most poultry producers and associated value chain actors in the tropics. Against the above background, for some time now, the Tropical Poultry Genetics Solutions (TPGS) team at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), has been contemplating engaging with key stakeholders to establish a mechanism – provisionally called the *Tropical Poultry Platform (TROP)* – that could integrate previously scattered initiatives by facilitating effective collective action. This report summarizes the outcomes of the consultations so far. The remainder of this report is organized as follows: Section Two outlines the preliminary thoughts on TROP, Section Three reports

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<sup>1</sup> Komarek et al. 2021. Income, consumer preferences, and the future of livestock-derived food demand. *Global Environmental Change* 70 (2021).

details on the outcomes of the consultations made, and Section Four provides a synthesis of the findings and outlines the proposed next steps<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Yihewew Zewdie. 2022. Hastening coordination among poultry stakeholders in developing countries: Towards establishing the Tropical Poultry Platform (TROP). A thought piece submitted to TPGS-ILRI for programming consideration.

## 2 An overview of TROP<sup>3</sup>

The Tropical Poultry Platform (TROP) seeks to serve as an honest broker of fostering dialogue and facilitating debate among concerned players to co-create solutions that would address identified challenges. It also aims at enhancing the visibility of the poultry industry in global discourses on, for instance, food systems transformation, climate change and low carbon economy, climate-smart livestock, and the deliberations on the fulfillment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The membership of TROP is expected to be drawn out principally from the following key stakeholders: small- and medium-scale poultry producers – represented by their (apex) organizations; national innovation platforms or national forums of poultry stakeholders; breeding companies, hatcheries, and poultry technology suppliers; academic and research communities; leading poultry sector development organizations; and investors/development partners.

Thus, occupying a strategic niche at the science-praxis-advocacy nexus in support of transforming dual-purpose poultry that serves smallholder farmers to a more market-oriented and profitable system, TROP is expected to build on the gains of the myriad interventions pursued so far and generate value addition to the existing platforms. TROP is expected to have the following **strategic objectives** and associated **core functions**:

i) Promote knowledge management and communications (**KMC**). Core functions include:

- 1 Document and share success stories of enviable practices and lessons learned.
- 2 Produce policy briefs and advocacy materials on topics of relevance primarily for a global audience, national decision makers, and/or the business community.
- 3 Popularize proven genetic innovations, allied poultry technology packages (such as feed and health innovations), and mechanical technology advances.

ii) Catalyse evidence-based actions to inform policies and institutions – **Policies and Institutions**. Core functions include:

- 1 Help build the leadership capacity of national institutions and poultry value chain actors to enable them to engage better with decision makers.
- 2 Support national stakeholders in the formulation/review of poultry development programs/strategies.
- 3 Help national stakeholders in their advocacy efforts for the formulation of appropriate policies.
- 4 Mobilize in-country and international capacity to support poultry development in selected priority countries to demonstrate the potential of the poultry sub-sector.

<sup>3</sup> This section draws from Yihenev Zewdie. 2022. Hastening coordination among poultry stakeholders in developing countries: Towards establishing the Tropical Poultry Platform (TROP)<sup>3</sup>. A thought piece submitted to TPGS-ILRI for programming consideration.

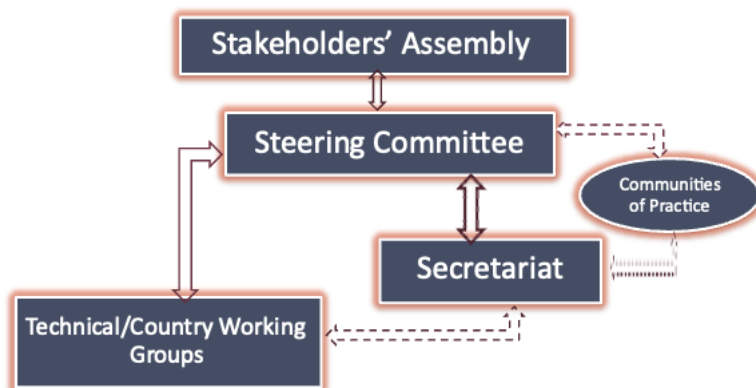


The following constitute TROP's **instruments of engagement** – mechanisms through which TROP will discharge its core functions: convene periodic and theme-based meetings and scientific events at appropriate levels of organization; web presence; publications (including periodicals and other knowledge products); create 'communities of practice' on specific themes; participate in global events of poultry significance; promote strategic alliances with like-minded organizations/networks; and co-organize series of 'tropical poultry shows'.

TROP will be operationalized in two interrelated phases: Phase I – setting up the necessary organization and management structures, and Phase II – implementing activities as per TROP's charter and plans. During Phase I, grants from investors are expected to cover the full funding requirements of the nascent entity. Whereas during Phase II, the bulk of funds required to operationalize TROP be raised through a combination of mission-generated revenue sources: membership fees, conference registration fees, advertisement fees from information providers, event participation fees (e.g., poultry shows), fees charged by TROP for services to its members and others. Given the multitude of tasks that TROP is expected to accomplish, it is hoped that grants from investors will finance some of TROP's basic operations.

In terms of organizational structure, three interrelated bodies are proposed to constitute the governance structure of TROP (Figure 1). These are the **Stakeholders' Assembly (SA)**, which is the main constituency and the highest decision-making body of the platform; the **steering committee (SC)** which will provide strategic guidance and oversight to the **Secretariat**, the main operational arm of the platform that will have a full staff complement. Upon the approval of the SC, technical/country working groups (TWGs) will be formed on an ad hoc basis to advise the SC on overcoming identified challenges. Moreover, with the knowledge of the SC, **communities of practice (CoP)** on specific themes could be established to generate and share knowledge, promote collective learning, and influence TROP's agenda.

**Figure 1: Proposed governance structure of TROP**



## 3 Outcomes of the preliminary consultations

Consultations were held continually from January to July 2023 with a total of 43 people from 30 organizations deemed important for moving the TROP agenda forward. The consultation process was conducted largely online, but in a few cases, in-person consultations were also made both in Ethiopia and overseas (see Annex 1 for details on the identity of persons with whom consultations have been made). The checklist of issues that guided the consultation revolved mainly around the relevance of TROP, views on major activities of the platform, compatibility of the proposed organizational structure with the proposed functions of the platform, the potential roles each of the stakeholders could play in support of TROP, and suggestions to make TROP financially viable (see Annex 2 for details).

*TROP would be an ideal space for initiating and supporting the design of cross-country poultry development programs and for leading a synthesis of lessons from similar schemes.' Tsigereda Fekadu, lead executive officer, Livestock and Fisheries Development, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ethiopia.*

### 3.1 In-country partners – public sector actors

Consultations of varying intensity have been held with a range of in-country professionals from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Vietnam who have been working for different public sector entities in academia, research, and national ministries of agriculture.

*'Kenya has benefited greatly from supra national platforms in the dairy sector. The poultry industry has lacked such a platform, thereby limiting the full exploitation of the potentials of the industry. TROP is, therefore, a welcome initiative.'* Ochieng Ouko, research scientist, KALRO, Kenya.

All those consulted underlined the existence of an organizational void that TROP could fill. To this extent, there was consensus regarding the relevance and timeliness of establishing TROP. A participant regarded TROP as a step in the right direction. Some maintained that TROP will make it possible to enhance the understanding of the membership on the nature and breadth of poultry-based initiatives being promoted in the tropics. Moreover, TROP, it was noted, will play an instrumental role in revamping old partnerships and creating new ones. As one poultry researcher from Ethiopia observed, a properly functioning TROP will go a long way toward promoting evidence-based interventions and professionalism in poultry development. Citing the wide-ranging benefits that their country has obtained from a similar platform in the dairy sector, researchers consulted from the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) underlined the timeliness of the initiative and expressed their hope that a proper functioning TROP will bridge an important organizational shortcoming in the poultry sector in the tropics. This appreciation was further informed by the pertinence of TROP's objectives and core functions to support the transformation of the traditional poultry production system into a more market-informed system backed by evidence-based policies and institutional arrangements.

Some of the professionals consulted expressed their hope that the core functions would be unpacked in due course as part of implementing TROP and that effort needs to be exerted to ensure that there is no duplication of activities with what other platforms/forums have been doing. In this connection, some stakeholders (e.g., those from Ethiopia and Kenya) emphasised that the KMC thrust of TROP should explicitly embrace issues of input supply and market linkages for producer organizations. Furthermore, it was suggested that TROP should identify key regional organizations (e.g., regional economic communities, RECS) in Africa and work with them in advocating for the traditional poultry industry so that poultry/livestock-focused initiatives get greater attention in regional agricultural plans and similar development programs. Building on the idea of mobilizing international and in-country capacity to support poultry development in selected priority countries, some participants also saw a clear value addition to TROP if it were to be engaged in initiating cross-border (i.e., sub-regional) poultry development programs and facilitating information exchange and experience sharing down the line. Some members of the research community expressed their wish that TROP run a scientific publication (e.g., a peer-reviewed journal) dedicated to advancing the science and practice of poultry development in the tropics.

Considering the enormity of tasks expected of TROP and the multitude of members that could constitute it, the platform would find it difficult to operationally embrace the tropics in their entirety. Thus, a consensus had been reached to the effect that **TROP should initially embrace some or all the eight TPGS countries<sup>4</sup> whilst still maintaining its tropics focus.**

There was also agreement that the proposed **organizational structure of TROP (form)** – though only outline at this time – will enable the discharge of its *functions*. ILRI's proposal to lead and host TROP in the interim – until a more suitable institutional homebase is found – was accepted by all those consulted. Several professionals underlined that ILRI has a decades-long track record of implementing poultry-based interventions with a wide range of industry players, which bodes well for **ILRI leading TROP's establishment and operationalization**. It was also pointed out that, as the main initiator of the idea of an overarching space for poultry in the tropics and considering the effort that ILRI has exerted in conceptualizing TROP, there would be a no better agency than ILRI to house and nurture the platform at least in the early days of its existence. Some even suggested that ILRI consider TROP as an integral part of its operations in the future.

*'It's natural that platforms of TROP type charge agreed annual membership fees. However, considering significant differences in the financial standing of the different category of members, TROP should consider charging differentiated levels of subscription/membership fees.'* Richard Osei-Amponsah, Associate Professor, Animal Breeding and Genetics, University of Ghana, Legon; President, Ghana Society of Animal Production.

However, other professionals noted the legal difficulty ILRI might face in collecting revenue and channeling the money towards operationalizing the platform. Further investigations were proposed to know how hosting arrangements could be best configured so that the functions of the secretariat, and oversight of the substantive work of TROP including revenue collection can be streamlined into the operations of ILRI.

*'In electing steering committee members attention should be given to fair representation of stakeholders and a number of seats should be reserved for women poultry value chain associations or agencies.'* Ebenezer Agyemang-Duah, Animal Production Directorate, MoFA, Ghana.

All those consulted noted the importance of the membership playing active roles in operationalizing the platform. One such manifestation is the payment of agreed annual membership fees. Within this context, though, and considering the austere financial situation of government entities and some of the poultry value chain institutional actors, the consensus was to institute a differentiated level of the membership fee based on the financial capacity of members. In response to the question of readiness of those consulted to allot quality time for managing the affairs of the platform, all expressed interest in providing leadership through, for instance, becoming members of the proposed steering committee if elected.

<sup>4</sup> These are Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

Moreover, those representing academic and research institutes talked of their high-level professional competence and expressed interest in, and availability for, providing subject matter-specific support to the Technical/Country Working Groups when required. Some, such as those at Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture, also broadened the conceptualization of their 'roles' to include co-convening and/or co-hosting meetings that TROP would organize at different levels and thematic areas.

*'The proposed organizational structure of TROP is fit for purpose and it is not necessary to make changes at this point; unless such changes are called for in the future.'* Ezekiel Goromela, zonal director, TALIRI Naliende, Tanzania.

In terms of potential platform **sources of finance**, most noted that the proposal has identified plausible options. Some (e.g., KALRO) even suggested that they could enjoin private sector actors to provide information about their businesses using a TROP medium of communication and make payments as defined by the platform. Still, more information is needed on how similarly organized platforms are financed for lessons that could be adopted by TROP. Moreover, given the developmental benefits that TROP is likely to engender, and the associated public-good nature of the activities of TROP, the professionals consulted emphasized the need for due attention to soliciting funds from development partners/ investors. This notwithstanding, some voices underlined the need for making TROP a private sector-driven enterprise capable of carrying out its own initiatives and steering the agenda of poultry development in the tropics. These, they argued, would contribute to enhancing the visibility of poultry in the tropics in global arenas independently of other influences.

*'TROP can play a positive role in helping solve challenges of import and export regulation of inputs and end products, streamlining of information sharing from such entities as the World Organisation for Animal Health.'* Soheil Sobhi, business development executive, Silverlands Tanzania Ltd.

## 3.2 In-country partners – private sector actors

### 3.2.1 Private poultry businesses

Consultations were also held individually with four different private sector actors operating in Ethiopia (Ethio Chicken), Tanzania (Silverlands and AKM Glitters), and Zimbabwe (Hamara Group).

*'TROP can play a positive role in helping solve challenges of import and export regulation of inputs and end products, streamlining of information sharing from such entities as the World Organisation for Animal Health.'* Soheil Sobhi, business development executive, Silverlands Tanzania Ltd.

All consulted private sector actors, who are influential poultry businesses in their respective countries, see the **relevance** of TROP in solving systemic challenges that affect most of the key industry players. All also appreciated that TROP could provide important learnings not just to those directly involved in poultry businesses but also to the research and academic communities. One area that was also emphasised from these consultations is the need for synthesizing learning around measures instituted to tackle obstacles that prevent small-scale farmers from having adequate and reliable access to markets and militate against commercializing their activities.

*'There have been some resounding successes in certain countries in isolated areas of expertise, including technical innovations, financial structuring, or commercialization capacity. Platforms for sharing successes and failures within the diverse areas of poultry initiatives are needed. TROP responds to such a need'* Ezra Prescott, manager, Hamara Group, Zimbabwe.

All saw the pertinence of the organizational structure to the envisaged TROP functions. At any rate, it was observed that the structural viability of TROP will have to be judged against the specific responsibilities it would shoulder when it commences operation. Within this context, all the private sector actors saw the importance of ILRI hosting the platform

and providing the needed leadership in the initial phase. Some also argued in favour of ILRI hosting the platform as a semi-independent organization.

*'TROP's core functions are doable; they also address pertinent areas of concern in the poultry industry. However, all core functions may not be equally relevant to all stakeholders: relevance varies between stakeholders, their mandates and priorities.'* Justin Benade, managing director, Ethiochicken, Ethiopia.

In terms of the operationalization of TROP, they expressed their readiness to support the platform. They would consider paying a reasonable membership fee if there are clear benefits of membership. Some said payment of membership fees would demonstrate commitment to TROP and ensure its financial sustainability. In addition, all expressed their openness to serve in leadership roles if elected. Most of those consulted were unsure if they would support the operationalization of TROP by advertising their products/services through TROP and paying advertisement fees for the same. They noted that such a process would be more relevant for tradable (i.e., export) products such as genetic lines.

*'I have the utmost trust in ILRI to provide TROP with the necessary guidance and leadership.'* Elizabeth Swai, CEO at AKM Glitters Company Ltd., Tanzania.

They suggested that TROP explore opportunities for additional government funding from partner/member countries to ensure it has sufficient **revenues** for its operations.

### 3.2.2 National forums for poultry stakeholders

Here consultations were held with representatives of the Livestock Development for Community Livelihood Organization (LDC-Cambodia), the Ethiopian Poultry Producers and Processors Association (EPPPA); the Association of Women in Poultry Value Chain and Small-Scale Poultry Farmers Association (Ghana); and Poultry Farmers Associations from two counties of Kenya<sup>5</sup>.

All consulted underlined the relevance of the platform idea and its potential value addition to the operation of existing national and sub-national poultry forums. Participants from Kenya cited the success of other commodity platforms (such as those of potato and dairy) as good indicators of the validity and viability of establishing TROP. Sharing of insights and experiences on success stories in poultry development, including workable knowledge on facilitation of inter-regional trade in poultry and poultry products, and information exchange on innovations and technologies, are among the core functions and activities that were identified as attractive propositions.

*'TROP has a huge potential to facilitate cross-country experience sharing among poultry businesses and to promote information exchange on a range of products and services that could help transform traditional poultry.'* Etana Degefu, Board member, EPPPA, Ethiopia.

All consulted agreed with the suggestion of **ILRI becoming a host for TROP**, because they considered the institute 'stable' and has a large footprint in developing countries through the various projects it has been implementing in partnership with key livestock stakeholders. There was an understanding that if ILRI were to host the secretariat this entity would have to be located on one of ILRI's campuses. However, given the difficulty of reaching out effectively to the entire membership from one location, as and when TROP expands, it was suggested that TROP nodes be set up in different countries in the tropics.

*'TROP is a welcome news, and we are grateful for the initiative. Realizing the potentials of the poultry industry in Africa demands a multi-sectoral approach that puts the interests of producers, the majority of whom are women, at the centre. We hope TROP will champion this!'* Victoria Norgbey, national president, Association of Women in Poultry Value Chain, Ghana. Whilst agreeing in principle with the

<sup>5</sup> Kenya is yet to establish a countrywide association/platform of poultry producers/processors. Such forums, however, exist at county level.

*idea of ILRI hosting TROP in the intervening period, some doubted whether ILRI's mandate would allow it to raise revenue from different sources as envisaged in the presentation that served as the basis for the consultations.*

All appreciated the proposed staggered manner through which TROP implementation is planned: i.e., to **start work on TPGS countries** and move to embrace other countries in due course. Within this context, some identified the need for taking steps to involve India in TROP, given the country's substantial poultry development experience in informing poultry sector development in Africa south of the Sahara.

All expressed their interest in **leadership roles in TROP** if elected. On **membership fees**, the consensus view was that once sensitized about the benefits that would accrue to them, members – including national poultry forums – would be willing to pay fees. However, opinions differed regarding the level of fees to be paid and their reliability as a dependable source of funds considering the resources required to staff the platform secretariat and fund its operations. Some opted for a flat membership fee (Ghana) so that every member could then demand to have an equal voice and claim commensurate service, while others argued in favour of a differentiated level of membership fees based on relative financial strength (Kenya; Ghana – women). Citing their own experiences, some association leaders (Ethiopia) and national innovation platform members (Cambodia) expressed their reservations expecting membership fees to be a reliable source of income for TROP.

*'The leadership of county poultry platforms involves several learned men and women with grassroots experience in diverse aspects of poultry value chain development. If elected to the management board of TROP they could provide useful practical insights into the workings of poultry in sub-Saharan Africa.'* Patrick Kinyanjui, member of Nakuru County Poultry Platform.

Regarding additional **revenue** streams for TROP, it was suggested that as and when national poultry associations mobilize funds through the direct involvement of TROP, a portion of these funds should be ceded to TROP for enhancing the platform's revenue base.

*'TROP raises same concerns that we also have; so many initiatives but many have insufficient commercial focus to develop sustainable poultry businesses. Also, it would be good to combine information sources more specifically for challenging environments and TROP could lead this work.'* Naomi Duijvesteijn, R & D Director, Traditional Poultry, Hendrix Genetics, the Netherlands.

Leaders of in-country poultry forums noted (directly or indirectly) that before implementing TROP in full, it would be necessary to observe firsthand the environment in which poultry producers and processors operate and understand the diverse challenges they face. This would help TROP devise its strategies in ways that respond better to real-world challenges.

*'Local NGOs such as LDC may find it difficult to pay membership fees on a regular basis; yet our institution could consider making a small contribution. TROP needs to explore in earnest more viable revenue sources such as organization of events and training courses, service provision for a fee, and donor investments.'* Chhay Ty, Deputy Director, LDC, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

### 3.3 Global private sector players

The first private sector player with a global reach consulted for this purpose was the Netherlands-based Hendrix Genetics company. The consultations happened both online and in-person (forms). A senior representative at Hendrix Genetics appreciated the relevance of the TROP brand but underlined that poultry stakeholders at local/national levels are better placed to express whether they have a real demand for a TROP-type structure. Furthermore, she observed that it would be better to try first a 'small platform' and build from there rather than make big plans and fail to realize them.

In response to a query from the company representative regarding the physical form that TROP will take, the TPGS team reiterated that TROP will be a virtual space facilitated by a small secretariat based at the ILRI campus in Addis Ababa. This physical structure would be responsible administratively to ILRI. However, the secretariat of TROP would be undertaking tasks of the TROP steering committee. In this regard, the representative appreciated the pertinence of the proposal for ILRI to serve as an interim home base for TROP until a more suitable institution could be found. As regards financing of TROP, she noted that, in principle, Hendrix Genetics could consider paying a prescribed membership fee. However, the extent to which the company would pay advertisement fees would depend on the potential added value of TROP to the company. In general, she observed that TROP needs funds to be made available upfront to help demonstrate its viability, after which diverse sources of finances could be explored.

Facilitated through Hendrix Genetics, a total of five Netherlands-based private sector companies involved in diverse aspects of poultry businesses, namely equipment, feed, enterprise development, and hygiene and sanitation were consulted. The discussion with almost all of them took place in one location – on the premises of Hendrix Genetics Headquarters at Boxmeer, Netherlands. The discussion benefited from a PPT presentation on the subject matter and plenary question-and-answer sessions. In sum, the participants:

- 1 Viewed the idea of establishing a forum that brings together key poultry stakeholders from both the Global South and the Global North as worth pursuing.
- 2 Appreciated the potential of TROP in enhancing the visibility of the poultry sub-sector globally.
- 3 Understood the need for engagement in global discourses, through a TROP-like structure, to underscore the importance of investment in poultry. In this respect, they saw the ramifications this would have in expanding their businesses.
- 4 Agreed that ILRI would be a preferred place to house this initiative and provide the necessary technical leadership.
- 5 Noted that such a structure (TROP) would have to be established perhaps with the support of development partners and then try to engage private sector actors.
- 6 Said they could, in principle, consider participating as members, paying membership fees, and providing support to the platform in ways compatible with their respective companies' business and developmental objectives.
- 7 Said they would be more engaged with TROP if it could demonstrate its capability of supporting meaningful business-to-business partnerships and facilitating deal-making operations.

This last point came out very strongly throughout the discussion so much so that in a follow-up communication a senior manager in one of the companies consulted said: 'For now we are not interested in investing in the TROP project. If we can get some new introductions with poultry stakeholders and open new businesses in Ethiopia or other African countries, I am sure we can contribute to the project.'

### 3.4 Investors (development partners)

Consultations with professionals at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and at the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) led to the following feedback. 'Good thinking; TROP responds to felt needs', a person contacted at the BMGF said. He further suggested that TROP could learn from the organization and management aspects of global platforms such as the European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB).

While acknowledging that some subsidy will have to be provided to operationalize TROP in the early days, advice was provided to identify who the 'investors' could be and to carry out a feasibility and reliability assessment of the proposed

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revenue streams. In this regard, it was noted that instituting user/advertisement fees from information providers through TROP could be an unrealistic proposition.

The online interaction held with Anna Okello of ACIAR, the point person for ACIAR's support to TPGS, yielded important insights into the timeliness, relevance, and feasibility of TROP. While appreciating the preliminary thoughts given to TROP and the effort made to consult widely to gauge interest in this proposed organizational structure, she noted the need for better framing of the business benefits that TROP could give private sector stakeholders. But she expressed ACIAR's readiness to explore possibilities of advancing the TROP agenda as part of the portfolio of activities the institution would support to TPGS/ILRI in the new Australian financial year (i.e., July 2023 to June 2024).

*'TROP is a logical progression from where TPGS is in Africa (with ACGG) and Southeast Asia (with AsCGG). TROP has the potential to enhance market access to poultry technologies needed to transform traditional poultry into semi-commercial systems. Moreover, a properly functioning TROP would respond both to the business interests of private sector actors as well as the developmental goals of the public sector.'* Anna Okello, research program manager, Livestock Systems, ACIAR, Australia.



## 4 Conclusion

A substantial effort to gather information on the relevance, functionality, organizational form, operational modality, and financial viability of a proposed Tropical Poultry Platform has been ongoing. Consultations have taken place with a wide spectrum of potential stakeholders that include sub-national poultry platforms; national agricultural/livestock research institutes; national ministries of agriculture/livestock; private sector players with national, sub-regional, and global investors/development partners.

Those that operate at national/sub-national levels appear to endorse the idea of TROP and are willing to be an integral part of the proposed organizational structure and support it through in-kind and membership fee contributions. However, most stakeholders emphasized the need for identifying functions and activities that speak to the different poultry development needs in different countries. For instance, stakeholders in Eastern Africa suggested the importance of TROP adding value beyond what national innovation platforms already do, including advocating for greater support to the traditional poultry industry and its inclusion in regional agricultural plans and development programs.

On the other hand, whilst acknowledging the potential of TROP in enhancing market shares for their respective products and services, large-scale private sector players are unsure how participating in the platform would translate to better business and profit for them. Consequently, most exhibited a 'wait-and-see' towards TROP. This is even though the TPGS team had hoped this category of stakeholders would provide seed funds to set in motion the establishment of TROP. Investors that are currently supporting TPGS have, however, provided broad endorsement to the idea of establishing TROP, but the extent to which they would provide the required funding to get TROP off the ground is either unclear or needs to be worked out in the foreseeable future.

Going forward, it is proposed that **ILRI pursue a twin-track strategy to establish TROP** and garner the required support from all concerned.

- 1 Given the current lukewarm reception TROP got from big private sector players, ILRI will need to invest its resources **to ensure that TPGS's traditional donors support the establishment and operationalization of TROP generously – at least for the first few years of TROP's existence. In this regard, consideration should also be given to engaging the One CGIAR partnership** because TROP's success requires a depth of expertise and knowledge that can only be adequately addressed through multi-actor collaboration across disciplines.
- 2 Concurrently with the above, **ILRI either directly, or through established matchmaking business enterprises, needs to progressively bring large-scale private sector players in the chicken business into the TROP fold.** This can be achieved through, among others, **facilitating in-person and/or online knowledge-sharing sessions, business pitches, and substantive transaction-centred dialogue platforms between poultry technology suppliers and the membership of national poultry coordination forums.** This undertaking could be one of the core activities of TROP in its early days of operation.

With its focus on the developing world, TROP is an ambitious initiative with no parallels in the poultry sub-sector in the global South. Maintaining TROP's focus on the tropics is critical because viable long-term strategies are needed to guide poultry sector growth in this region. However, given current resource limitations and the imperative of gathering information and lessons in running such a platform, the establishment TROP will need to be phased over time and locations.

Thus, trusting that seed money to establish TROP would be available to ILRI, a proposal is hereby made to **prioritize establishing TROP starting in the African countries where ACGG has progressed furthest and where strong rapport with national stakeholders has already been built (such as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania). Depending on resource availability, progress on the ground, and perceived relevance of TROP by others, ILRI could envisage expanding the reach of TROP to existing TPGS countries and beyond.** At any rate, it is critical to **study and strengthen national innovation platforms as the nuclei for the creation of such a supra-national poultry forum in the shape of TROP.** A short-term focus on selected TPGS countries has also the added value of enhancing learning-by-doing, which is critical in informing scaling options. Furthermore, **thought should be given to learning from the developmental path of comparable constituted bodies in the livestock sector such as the Global Dairy Platform and EFFAB.**

The above proposition is in line with the well-known principle in organizational development of *'think big, act small; fail forward with brilliant mistakes'<sup>6</sup> (if one must); and expand/scale rapidly.*

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<sup>6</sup> In this context 'failing forward' refers to a condition by which TROP managers possess attitudes that can accommodate failure and embrace wrong steps taken as learnings and steppingstones to future success. 'Brilliant mistakes' are those whose costs to TROP would be greatly exceeded by the value of the learning they will leave behind. Thus, failing forward with brilliant mistakes is about nurturing a culture of continuous improvement in the organization, management, and operationalization of TROP.

# Annexes

## Annex 1: List of people consulted

No.	Potential stakeholders consulted			Date	Time (East African Time)	Remarks
	Name	Organization	Position			
1	Naomi Duijvesteijn	Hendrix Genetics, The Netherlands	R & D director, Traditional Poultry	16 Jan	1:30 – 2:30 pm	Online
				2 June	9: 30 am – 5 pm	In-person
2	Alfred de Vries	BMGF, USA	Program officer	19 Jan	12:00 noon – 1:00 pm	Online
3	Ed Rege	Emerge Centre for Innovations – Africa, Kenya	Founder, CEO and chairman	03 Feb	3:00 – 4:30 pm	In-person
4	Sheba Akinyi		Program officer			
5	Soheil Sobhi	Silverlands Tanzania Ltd	Business development executive	09 Feb	10:00 – 11:00 am	Online
6	Justin Benade	EthioChicken, Ethiopia	Ethiopia managing director	10 Feb	2:00 – 3:20 pm	In-person
7	Richard Osei-Amponsah	University of Ghana; TPGS, Ghana	Associate professor; national coordinator, TPGS – Ghana	15 Feb	4:00 – 5:50 pm	Online
8	Ezra Prescott	Hamara Group, Zimbabwe	National coordinator, TPGS	15 Feb	4:00 – 5:50 pm	Online
9	Ezekiel Goromela	TALIRI, Tanzania	Zonal director	15 Feb	4:00 – 5:50 pm	Online
10	Ochieng Ouko	KALRO, Kenya	Research scientist	15 Feb	4:00 – 5:50 pm	Online
11	Evans D. Ilatsia		Deputy director general, Livestock Research Programmes, KALRO.			

No.	Potential stakeholders consulted			Date	Time (East African Time)	Remarks
	Name	Organization	Position			
12	Tsigereda Fekadu	MoA, Ethiopia	Lead executive officer, Livestock and Fisheries Development	16 Feb	2:00 – 3:30 pm	In-person
13	Melake Assefa		Lead executive officer, Livestock and Fisheries Development Extension			
14	Tilahun Degefa		Poultry resource development expert			
15	Elizabeth Swai	AKM Glitters, Tanzania	Founder and executive director	17 Feb	10:00 – 10:30 am	Online
				22 March	02:00 – 02:30 pm	
16	Adebabay Kebede	ARARI, Ethiopia	Director, Andassa Livestock Research Centre	20 Feb	8:30 – 9:30 am	Online
17	Etana Degefu	EPPPA, Ethiopia	Board member <sup>7</sup>	20 Feb	2:00 – 3:30 pm	In-person
18	Birhanu Million		General manager			
19	Ochieng Ouko	KALRO, Kenya	Research scientist	24 Feb	10:00 – 11:10 am	Online
20	Esther Omayio	Nandinate Poultry Association, Kenya	Technical service provider; livestock production officer, Nandi County			
21	Patrick Kinyanjui	Nakuru County Poultry Platform, Kenya	Member; livestock production officer, Nakuru County			
22	Ebenezer Agyeman-Duah	MoFA, Animal Production Directorate, Ghana	Senior agricultural officer	24 Feb	01:30 – 03:15 pm	Online
23	Victoria Norgbey	Association of Women in Poultry Value Chain, Ghana	National president			
24	Mavis Wobill		Secretary			
25	Pamela Agbotse		National assistant secretary; president, Greater Accra Region <sup>8</sup>			
26	Kennedy Bediako	SSPFA, Ghana	President <sup>9</sup>			
27	Ricky Aboagye Poku	University of Ghana;TPGS, Ghana	TPGS project assistant			
28	Ngo Thi Kim Cuc	NIAS, Vietnam	Deputy director general; National Coordinator, TPGS – Vietnam	21 March	04:30 – 05:20 pm	Online

<sup>7</sup> Also, ECG Poultry Farm and Meat Processing Plant owner-manager.

<sup>8</sup> Also, CEO, Pamela Chicks and Feeds Ltd.

<sup>9</sup> Also, managing director, Kenbeb Company Ltd.

No.	Potential stakeholders consulted			Date	Time (East African Time)	Remarks
	Name	Organization	Position			
29	Sothyra Tum	NAHPRI, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	Director	31 March	10:00 – 11:00 am	Online
30	Chhay Ty	LDC, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	Deputy director			
31	Thijs Berkers	Trouwnutrition/Nutreco, The Netherlands	General manager Middle East & Africa Export	21 April	11:00 am – 12:20 pm	Online
32	Louis Vlaswinkel	Limagrain <sup>10</sup> Africa and Limagrain South Africa	Head of research	2 May	05:00 – 06:15 pm	Online
33	Calvin Fambisayi		Business Dev't Director - HQ RSA			
34	Gorden Mabuyaye		Head of research			
35	Takemore Chagomoka		Regional manager, West & Central Africa			
36	Godfred Afrifa Owusu	Seed Co <sup>11</sup> , South Africa	Regional sales agronomist, West & Central Africa			
37	Stef Roijmans	Schippers Group (Health), The Netherlands	Sales manager, Africa	2 and 5 June	02 June: 2 – 5pm; 05 June (am) – office & farm visit	In-person
38	Robert Whittington		Global Animal ID sales manager	5 June	10 – 11 am	
39	Edwin van Kol	Nusana (Feed), The Netherlands	General manager			
40	Ramzy Yousef	Agromax (Equipment), The Netherlands	Director			
41	Jasper Heerkens	Aeres University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands	Researcher and teacher - Poultry Husbandry and Welfare	2 June	2 – 5 pm	
42	Teus Korevaar	Aeres Training Centre International (Capacity Building & Enterprise Development), The Netherlands	Project developer & trainer			
43	Anna Okello	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Australia	Research program manager, Livestock Systems	20 July	8:30 – 9:30 am	Online

<sup>10</sup> Limagrain is an agricultural cooperative and a multi-crop international seed group. In Africa, Limagrain is the biggest shareholder in Seed Co.

<sup>11</sup> Seed Co is a certified seed company operational in over 15 African countries.

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## Annex 2: Checklist of issues presented for discussion

A) Does TROP respond to demand? Will it be relevant?

B) What are your views on the proposed objectives and core functions of TROP?

\* Any additional roles for TROP?

\* Any inappropriate core function?

C) What are your views on the proposed form/organizational structure of TROP?

D) Any thoughts regarding ILRI's proposal for it to serve as an interim home base for TROP until a more suitable institution could be found?

E) What roles could your institution play in operationalizing TROP?

\* Willing and able to pay agreed upon membership fee

\* Willing to play leadership roles if elected – in the following structures:

Steering committee?

Technical/country working group?

\* Interested in providing information through TROP publications (or media outlets) and paying advertisement fees in return for this service.

F) Any suggestions to make TROP financially viable/sustainable?

G) Any other comments/suggestions?

