

Programme: Launch of NAgDI Policy Guide (Hybrid Event)

Date: Thursday 23 October 2025

Time: 13:00 - 16:30 BST

Venue: Delegates Lounge, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London

The Commonwealth Secretariat is pleased to host the Launch of a Policy Guide on National Agricultural Data Infrastructure (NAgDI), an approach to delivering Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for agricultural data management at country level as part of its Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment (CCA) programme.

The agricultural sector is at the heart of food systems transformation agenda across the Commonwealth. The sector is ripe for digital transformation but requires robust data infrastructure at national level to effectively address the challenges it faces. Investing in data infrastructure offers private sector investors the opportunity to play a crucial role in building the backbone of modern agriculture in the global south, tap into dynamic and evolving markets, and gain better access and insights into market trends.

This event will raise awareness on the opportunities that are available with the launch of the Guide and provide a platform for stakeholders to engage with the Commonwealth on strategies to translate the content of the Guide into actions in member countries.

AGENDA

TIME	ITEM
13:00-13:15	ARRIVAL & NETWORKING
13:15-13:40	Welcome Remarks - Mr Rajiv Babooram, <i>Adviser & Head, EDTI, Commonwealth Secretariat</i> - Mr Dreli Silas Solomon, <i>Embassy of the Republic of Vanuatu</i> - Dr Ruth Kattumuri, <i>Senior Director, EDTI, Commonwealth Secretariat</i> Overall Moderation - Ms Opeyemi Abebe, <i>Adviser & Head, EDTI, Commonwealth Secretariat</i>
13:40 - 14:10	NAgDI Animated Explainer Video Presentation on NAgDI and the Policy Guide Dr Benjamin K Addom, <i>Adviser, Agriculture & Fisheries Trade Policy, EDTI</i>
14:10-14:20	- Official Launch of the Policy Guide on NAgDI - Remarks from High Commissioners (TBC) - Group Photos - both online and in-person
14:20-14:40	TEA BREAK & ONLINE NETWORKING
14:40-15:10	Guest Speakers - Dr Celso L. Moretti, <i>Chief Executive Officer, The OpenAg Foundation</i> - Mr Ville Sirviö, <i>CEO, Nordic Institute for Interoperability Solutions (NIIS)</i>
15:10-16:20	Q&A on the Implementation Strategy for NAgDI - Mr Ville Sirviö, <i>CEO, Nordic Institute for Interoperability Solutions (NIIS)</i> - Dr Ruth Kattumuri, <i>Senior Director, EDTI, Commonwealth Secretariat</i> - Mr Lars Kahnert, <i>Advisor Digitalisation, GIZ/DIASCA</i> - Mr Krishan Bheenick, <i>Knowledge Management Specialist, KMNCB Associates</i> <i>Facilitated by Dr Benjamin K Addom, Adviser, EDTI, Commonwealth Secretariat</i>
16:20-16:30	Closing Remarks & Networking Dr Ruth Kattumuri, <i>Senior Director, EDTI, Commonwealth Secretariat</i>

Speakers



Dr Ruth Kattumuri

Senior Director, Economic Development, Trade and Investment Directorate (EDTI), Commonwealth Secretariat

Dr. Ruth Kattumuri is a Senior Diplomat and Academic. With over thirty years of global experience spanning teaching, research, technical assistance, capacity building and policy influence. She provides strategic, technical and thought leadership for economic resilience and sustainable development. Her expertise spans innovation and technology, entrepreneurship, climate finance, and international development. She holds a PhD from LSE, is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, and is a Cambridge Commonwealth Fellow. She was awarded the Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman Award in recognition of her contributions to inclusive development.



Mr Dreli Silas Solomon

Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Vanuatu

Dreli Solomon is a diplomat from Vanuatu, currently serving as the Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of Vanuatu High Commission in Brussels, Belgium. In his diplomatic role, he represents Vanuatu in its relations with the European Union and other accredited countries and multilateral organisations. Mr. Solomon has been a speaker on international platforms, including discussions related to climate change and the initiative to advance the recognition of ecocide in international law, demonstrating his involvement in key global issues for the Pacific nation.



Dr Celso Luiz Moretti
CEO, OpenAg Foundation

He is a results-oriented leader with a global vision, with over 30 years of experience in agribusiness. With a degree in agronomy and an MBA, master's degree, and doctorate in food production, Moretti served as President of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa, Brazil) from 2019 to 2023, where he led a team of 8,000 employees, including 2,100 PhD researchers, distributed across 43 research centres in Brazil. He is an alumnus of the Harvard Kennedy School (USA) and Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Florida (Gainesville, USA) since 2006. Celso is recognised for his strategic leadership and commitment to sustainability and innovation in the Brazilian agricultural sector. He is the incoming Chair for the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGIAR).



Mr Ville Sirviö
CEO, Nordic Institute for Interoperability Solutions (NIIS)

Ville Sirviö is the CEO of the Nordic Institute for Interoperability Solutions (NIIS), where he leads the development of X-Road® open-source software, used by hundreds of millions of people worldwide. With a diverse background spanning startups to listed companies, he has led organisations specialising in software development, digital commerce, SaaS platforms, digital government, interoperability, and open-source software. He has served on several boards and advisory groups, including the Gaia-X European Association for Data and Cloud, the European Commission's Informal Expert Group on the Next Generation European Interoperability Framework, and the United Nations DPI Safeguards Strategic Advisory Board.



Mr Lars Kahnert
Advisor Digitalisation, GIZ / DIASCA

Lars Kahnert is an advisor on digitalization within the GIZ Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains Initiative (SASI). He is steering DIASCA, fostering DPI in agriculture. Earlier, he initiated the open-source traceability solution INATrace. Prior to joining GIZ in early 2019, Lars worked with the Global Coffee Platform and the 4C Association for 12 years. Here, he has led projects to establish data standards for coffee and cotton, carbon foot printing, pesticide management, and access to finance. Earlier, Lars worked in international development in South Asia, Africa and Germany. He holds a degree in Geography and Indian Philology from FU Berlin.



Mr Krishan Bheenick
Knowledge Management Specialist, KMNCB Associates

Krishan is a knowledge management specialist, a systems thinker and practitioner with over 30 years of work experience in agricultural and rural development, actively making interventions locally and within regional and international organisations in the past 20 years, facilitating networks, online communities of practice and innovation platforms among multidisciplinary teams of policy, planning and technical champions in the areas of Agricultural Policy Development, Research, Extension and Farmer Organisations in Rural Development. He holds a Bachelor and Master of Agricultural Sciences Degree from the University of Melbourne. Krishan has been the Knowledge Management Facilitator in the development of the Policy Guide on NAgDI.



Ms Opeyemi Abebe

Adviser & Head, Economic Development, Trade and Investment Directorate (EDTI), Commonwealth Secretariat

Ms. Opeyemi Abebe is an Adviser and Head of the Trade Competitiveness Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat where she leads a team of Trade Advisers to provide technical assistance to member countries on trade competitiveness issues working in over 20 Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Pacific countries. She leads on the delivery of the Commonwealth Trade Ministers meetings and serves as a focal point on several pan commonwealth trade initiatives. She has previously worked on development projects funded by DFID, World Bank and USAID on diverse trade and investment topics. She holds a LL.M in International Trade and Investment Law and has a Doctoral degree in view.



Dr Benjamin Kwasi Addom

Adviser, Agriculture & Fisheries Trade Policies, Economic Development, Trade and Investment Directorate (EDTI), Commonwealth Secretariat

Ben is an international development expert in the domain of digital agriculture. He leads the digital agriculture workstream of the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment. Ben is spearheading the design and implementation of National Agricultural Data Infrastructure (NAgDI), a delivery approach to DPI for agricultural data management at country level. Ben has over 20 years of experience combining senior leadership and hands-on operations. He holds a doctorate in Information Science and Technology, Syracuse University; master's in international agriculture and Rural Development, Cornell; bachelor's in general agriculture, University of Cape Coast; and a Certificate in Executive Leadership, Oxford University.