Gates Foundation

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

DIASCA Digital Integration of Agricultural Supply Chains Alliance

COSA Committee On Sustainability Assessment

AGILE DATA & DPI SUMMIT 2026

Agile Data & DPI Summit 2026

“What is holding progress back” Session Report

Day 2 | World Café Conversations

Challenges, Root Causes and Way forward

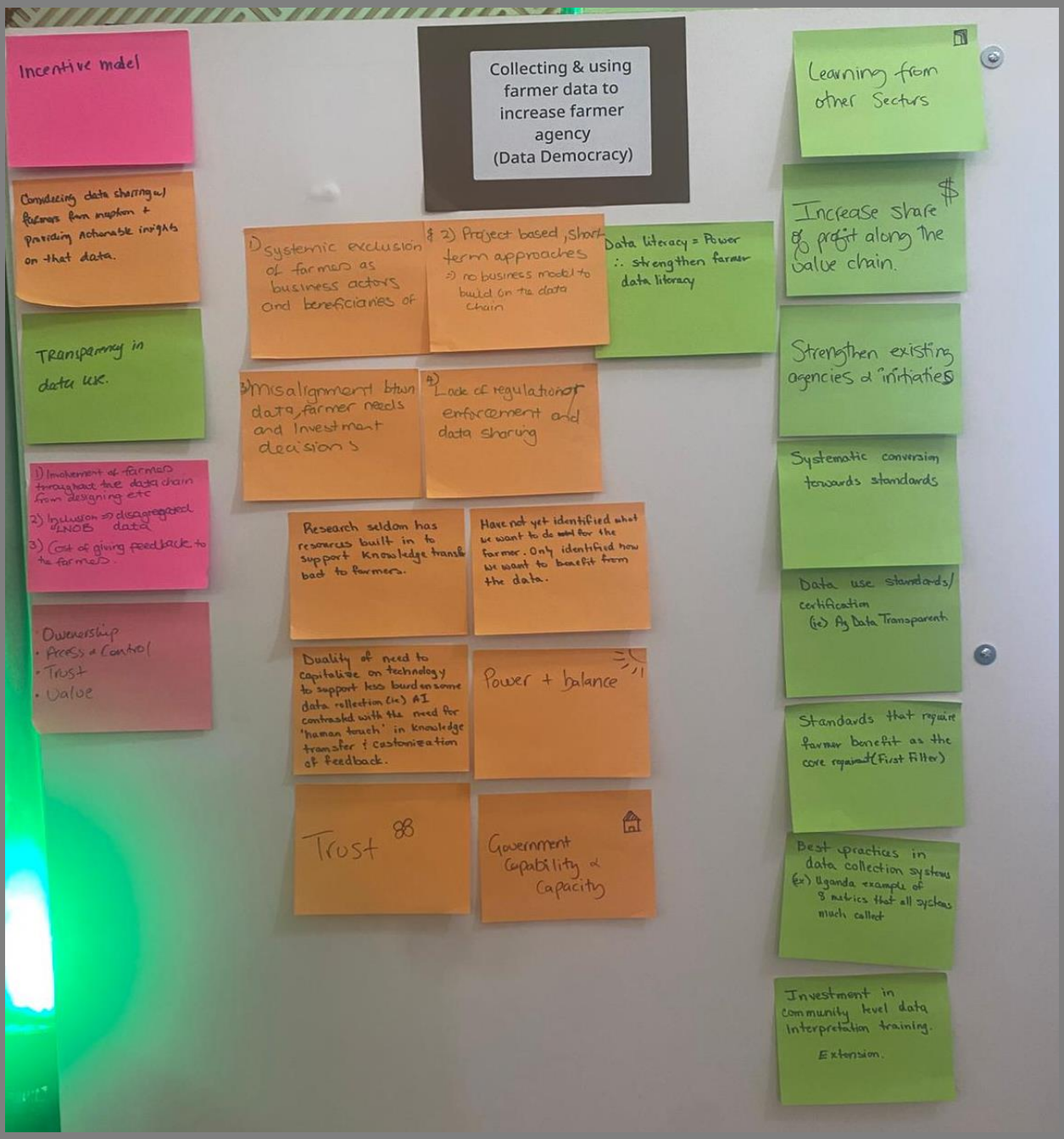
Introduction

Grounded in the presentations of the four foundational topics presented in the morning (Data Democracy, Shared registries, Trust architecture and National data infrastructure), participants explored the challenges, root causes and potential for collective action in the following 4 topics, in a world café format.

Collecting & using farmer data to increase farmer agency (Data Democracy)	Shaping policies and other enabling environment for data exchange
Deploying & relying on shared registries	Collaborating between competitors & with public sectors (Architecture of Trust)

This document summarizes the main point of discussions; It has been generated thanks to AI and based on the reported group notes.

1. Collecting & using farmer data to increase farmer agency (Data Democracy)



Challenges

- **Missing Incentive and Feedback Models:** Participants emphasized that an incentive model is currently lacking; farmers must be considered in data sharing from inception, and the system must provide actionable insights back to them to create value.
- **Transparency and Trust Gaps:** There is a critical need for transparency in data use. Fundamental pillars such as ownership, access, control, and trust remain unresolved, hindering the "value" farmers receive from the ecosystem.
- **Design and Inclusion Barriers:** Current systems often fail to involve farmers throughout the entire data chain, from design to implementation. Furthermore, achieving inclusion requires disaggregated "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) data to ensure marginalized groups are not excluded.
- **Operational Costs of Reciprocity:** A significant practical challenge is the high cost of giving feedback to farmers. Providing meaningful, local-language, or "closing the loop" feedback requires resources that are often not budgeted in technical pilots

Root causes

- **Transactional and Extractive Focus** Initiatives have historically focused on what organizations can benefit from data rather than what they can do for the farmer. There is a systemic exclusion of farmers as legitimate business actors and primary beneficiaries of the data value chain.
- **Project-Based Short-Termism** A reliance on project-based, short-term approaches means there are no sustainable business models to support the data chain over time. This leads to a lack of long-term system sustainability.
- **Incentive and Investment Misalignment** There is a significant misalignment between collected data, actual farmer needs, and the subsequent investment decisions made by funders and governments. Research often lacks the built-in resources required for knowledge transfer back to the farmers.
- **Technical Duality and Human Gaps** There is a tension between the need to use technology (like AI) to reduce the burden of data collection and the essential need for a "human touch" to customize feedback and ensure effective knowledge transfer.
- **Governance and Power Imbalances** Existing power imbalances in the supply chain limit farmer control. This is worsened by a lack of government capability and capacity, along with a lack of enforceable regulations regarding data sharing and farmer rights.

Way forward

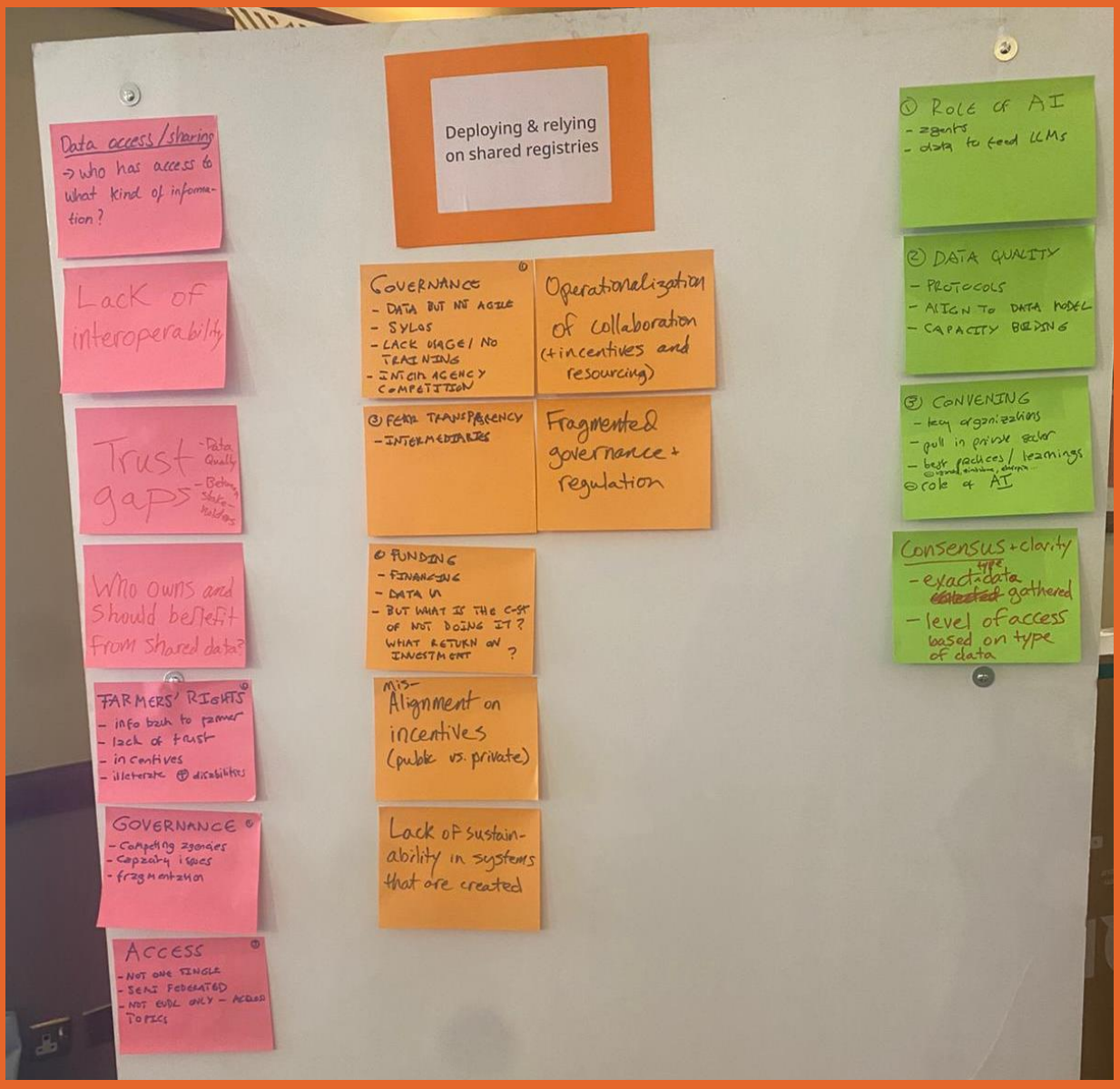
- **Farmer Empowerment and Data Literacy**
  - Data literacy is recognized as a direct form of power; therefore, initiatives must prioritize strengthening farmer data literacy.
  - There is a critical need for investment in community-level data interpretation training, specifically utilizing extension services as the bridge.

- **Standards and Certification as a "First Filter"**
  - The community should adopt standards that regain farmer benefit as the core requirement and "first filter" for any new project.
  - There must be a systematic conversion towards standards and recognized certifications, such as Ag Data Transparent, to ensure technology providers adhere to best practices.

- **Operational Best Practices and Shared Metrics**
  - Adopting proven best practices in data collection, such as the Uganda model (which identifies 8 mandatory metrics for all systems), ensures consistency and quality.
  - Success involves learning from other sectors (e.g., Health or Finance) to understand successful networking and data models.

- **Economic Rebalancing and Agency Support**
  - A primary goal must be to increase the share of profit along the value chain, ensuring farmers are not just data providers but financial beneficiaries.
  - Efforts should strengthen existing agencies and initiatives (like DIASCA and COSA) rather than creating redundant, fragmented structures.

2. Deploying & relying on shared registries



Challenges

- **Technical Interoperability and Access** There is a significant **lack of interoperability** between existing systems. Participants noted that access should not be limited to single topics like **EUDR** but should move toward a **semi-federated model** covering multiple agricultural topics.
- **The Trust and Data Quality Gap** Profound **trust gaps** exist between stakeholders, often driven by concerns over **data quality** and a lack of consensus on **who owns** or should **benefit** from shared information.
- **Farmer Rights and Reciprocity** Systems are often criticized as **extractive**, failing to provide **meaningful feedback** to farmers. This lack of **incentives** and failure to account for **illiteracy or disabilities** undermines farmer agency and participation.

Root causes

- **Inflexible Governance and Silos** Data systems are often rigid rather than agile, resulting in isolated "silos" where information is trapped. This is exacerbated by **inter-agency competition** and a lack of training or actual usage of existing data.
- **Failed Collaboration and Misaligned Incentives** There is a significant **misalignment of incentives** between the public and private sectors. True collaboration is hindered by a lack of operationalization, including clear resourcing and specific incentives for partners to work together.
- **Fear of Transparency** Intermediaries and stakeholders often harbor a **fear of transparency**, preferring to maintain proprietary control over data rather than opening it up to a shared ecosystem.
- **Sustainability and Funding Gaps** Systems are frequently created without a long-term plan, leading to a **lack of sustainability** once initial support ends. Furthermore, while there is a focus on "data in," there is a failure to articulate the **return on investment** or the **cost of inaction** to justify continued financing.

Way forward

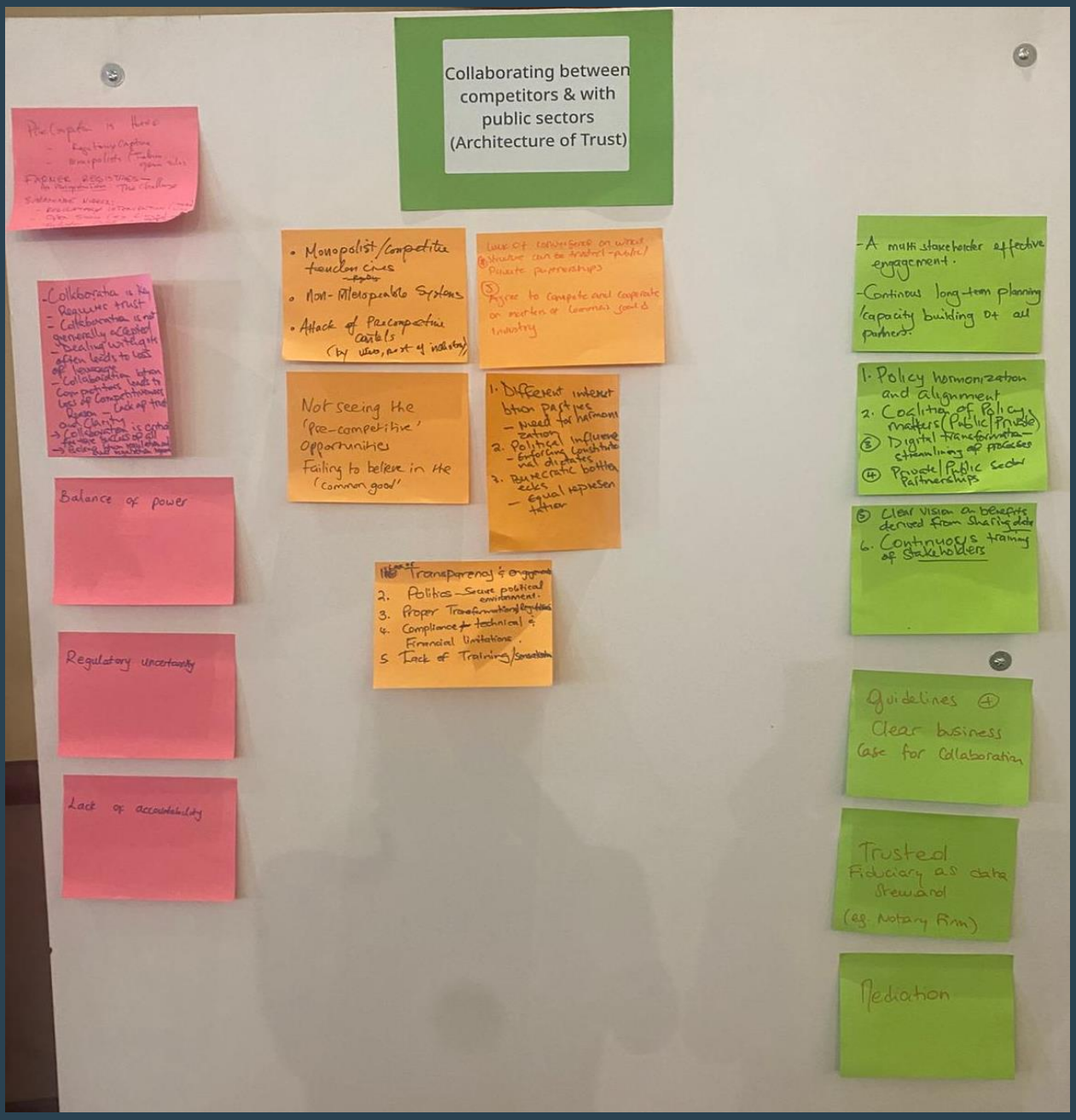
- **Strategic Role of AI and Digital Agents** AI is envisioned as a tool to power digital

agents and feed Large Language Models (LLMs) to enhance system capabilities. These tools should complement human extension services rather than replace them.

- **Data Quality and Technical Standards** Success depends on establishing strict data quality protocols and aligning all systems to shared data models. This must be supported by continuous capacity building for all stakeholders.
- **Convening and Cross-Sector Collaboration** There is a need to bring together tech organizations and the private sector to share best practices and lessons learned. These convenings should specifically explore the operational role of AI in real-world contexts.

- **Consensus on Data Governance** The community must reach total clarity on the exact types of data being gathered. Access levels must be clearly defined and differentiated based

2. Collaborating between competitors & with public sectors (Architecture of Trust) on the specific type of data involved.



Challenges

Competitive and Market Barriers

- Operating in a **precompetitive** space is difficult because collaboration between competitors can lead to a perceived **loss of competitiveness**.
- The sector faces risks of **regulatory capture** and the emergence of **monopolies** or ag-tech market capture.
- Ag-tech providers often maintain **proprietary data systems**, creating "lock-in" and limiting the development of sector-wide tools.

Collaboration and Leverage Dynamics

- While **collaboration is critical** for the success of all actors, it is not yet generally accepted as a standard practice.
- There is a persistent fear that sharing information leads to a **loss of leverage** during negotiations or operations.
- A fundamental **lack of trust and clarity** regarding how shared data will be used prevents effective partnership.

Regulatory and Governance Gaps

- **Regulatory uncertainty** and a general **lack of accountability** among technology suppliers create high-risk environments for farmers and funders.
- Maintaining **farmer registries** requires sustainable models that may necessitate **regulatory intervention** or an **open-source** approach to ensure longevity.
- There is a significant **imbalance of power** between smallholder farmers and the large private enterprises that often control the digital value chain.

Root causes

Competitive Friction and Monopolistic Tendencies

- The sector is plagued by **monopolistic and competitive tendencies** that favor proprietary, **non-interoperable systems** over shared infrastructure.
- There is an active **"attack" on pre-competitive controls** by both users and industry actors who fear losing market leverage.

- Many actors fail to recognize **pre-competitive opportunities** or believe in the concept of the **"common good,"** leading to fragmented efforts.

Failure of Strategic Dialogue

- There is a significant **lack of conversation** regarding which structures can be trusted, particularly concerning the balance of **public-private partnerships**.
- Stakeholders have yet to agree on how to **cooperate on matters of common good** while still competing in the commercial market.

Political and Bureaucratic Obstacles

- **Political influence** and **bureaucratic bottlenecks** prevent equal representation and the enforcement of "constitutional dictates" within data governance.
- A lack of **secure political environments** and proper **transformational regulations** creates uncertainty for long-term investment.

Misalignment and Capacity Gaps

- **Different interests** between parties require deep **harmonization** of objectives and incentives.
- Compliance is often hindered by **technical and financial limitations**, compounded by a general **lack of training and sensitization** across the value chain

Way forward

Neutral Governance and Oversight

- Establish a **neutral public body** or **trusted third party** to act as a "Notary" or **trusted facilitator**.
- Develop a **regulatory framework** and implement a **code-based approach** to governance, potentially modeled after oversight bodies like OFCOM.
- Incorporate **mediation** services to resolve conflicts and manage power imbalances between competing stakeholders.

Multi-Stakeholder Platforms and Long-Term Planning

- Commit to **continued long-term planning** through a multi-stakeholder engagement platform where every voice is heard.
- Ensure **capacity building for all parties**—from government officials to smallholder farmers—to ensure everyone can participate effectively in the digital shift.
- Streamline processes to reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and create a smoother path for data integration.

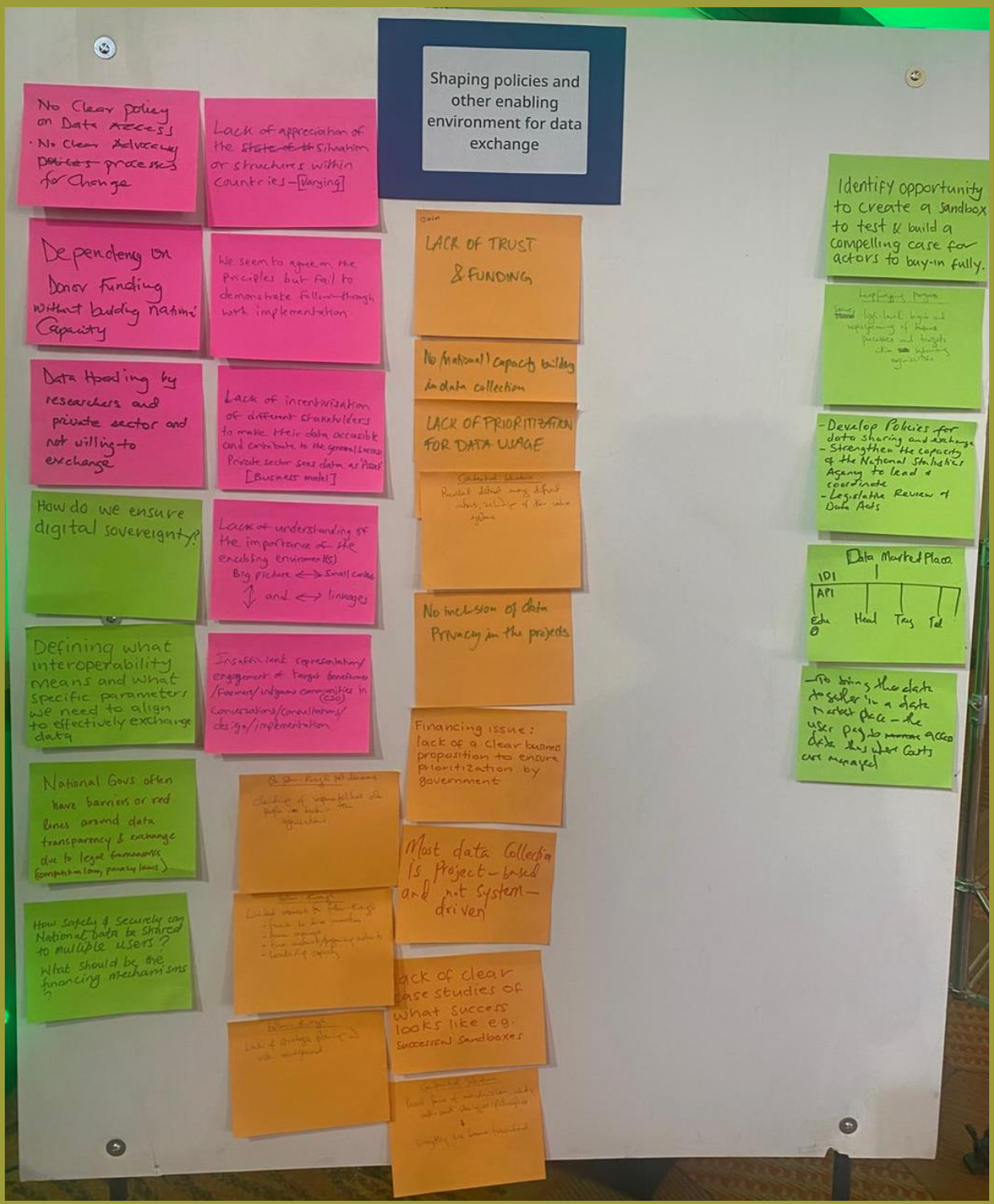
Policy and Technical Harmonization

- Drive **policy harmonization and alignment** across different national and regional agencies to prevent fragmented regulations.
- Implement **continuous training and testing of standards** to ensure technical systems remain robust and relevant.

Defining the Business Case for Collaboration

- Develop **clear business case guidelines** that prove the value of collaboration over proprietary isolation.
- Shift the narrative from "extractive data" to a **mutual benefit model** where the ROI for all parties is clearly articulated.

4. Shaping policies and other enabling environment for data exchange



Challenges

Lack of Policy Clarity and Strategic Advocacy

- There is currently **no clear policy on data access** and a corresponding lack of **advocacy processes** to drive regulatory change.
- National governments often maintain "red lines" regarding **data transparency** due to rigid legal frameworks, such as competition or privacy laws.
- There is a general failure to appreciate the varying internal structures and situations within different countries.

Follow-Through and Implementation Gaps

- While stakeholders often agree on high-level principles, there is a consistent failure to demonstrate **follow-through** in implementation.
- Post-summit, there is a lack of clarity regarding **individual responsibilities** once participants return to their respective organizations.
- Pragmatic constraints such as **limited time**, **leadership capacity**, and a lack of **strategic planning** hinder long-term progress.

Incentives and Data Hoarding

- A major barrier is **data hoarding** by researchers and the private sector, who view data strictly as a proprietary **business asset** rather than a shared resource.
- There is an insufficient **incentive model** to encourage stakeholders to make their data accessible for the collective success of the ecosystem.

Funding and Sovereignty Concerns

- The sector suffers from a heavy **dependency on donor funding**, which often fails to build sustainable **national capacity**.
- Critical questions remain regarding **digital sovereignty** and how to safely share national data with multiple users while maintaining security.
- There is a lack of defined **financing mechanisms** to drive the necessary policy and infrastructure shifts.

Exclusion of Key Beneficiaries

- Conversations, designs, and implementations often suffer from **insufficient representation** of farmers, indigenous communities, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

Root causes

Financial and Strategic Misalignment

- **Project-Based vs. System-Driven:** Most data collection is temporary and **project-based** rather than **system-driven**, leading to fragmentation.
- **Lack of Business Case:** There is a **lack of a clear business proposition**, making it difficult for governments to prioritize DPI within national budgets.
- **Funding Gaps:** A general **lack of trust and funding** persists, which prevents long-term commitment.

Capacity and Technical Neglect

- **National Capacity:** There is a failure to invest in **national capacity building** for data collection, often leaving countries dependent on external donors.
- **Privacy Omissions:** Many initiatives suffer from a **lack of data privacy inclusion** within their project designs.
- **Lack of Evidence:** The ecosystem lacks **clear case studies** or successful "sandboxes" that demonstrate what success looks like in practice.

Contextual and Ideological Distrust

- **Actor Distrust:** There is **prevalent distrust** among different actors, including fundamental clashes in their **value systems**.
- **Ideological Friction:** Discussions remain clouded by **neo-colonial ideologies** and a persistence of South-South philosophical tensions that hinder global cooperation.
- **Usage Prioritization:** There is simply a **lack of prioritization** for how data is actually used once collected.

Way forward

Policy and Legislative Reform

- **Data Sharing Frameworks:** Develop comprehensive policies specifically for data sharing and exchange to move beyond current "red lines" and legal barriers.
- **Legislative Review:** Conduct formal reviews of existing Data Acts to align national laws with the needs of a modern digital public infrastructure.

Institutional Leadership and Coordination

- **Strengthening National Agencies:** Prioritize the capacity building of a National Stakeholder Agency to act as the central lead and coordinator for DPI efforts.

- **High-Level Buy-In:** Secure commitment from top-tier leadership within subscribing organizations to "reprogram" business processes and targets toward DPI alignment.

Sustainable Market and Technical Models

- **Data Marketplaces:** Transition to a "user-pays" data marketplace model where the cost of data access is managed through the value it generates for the consumer.
- **Sandboxes for Buy-In:** Identify opportunities to create "interoperable sandboxes" to test configurations and build a compelling evidence-based case for stakeholder adoption.
- **Leapfrogging through Tech:** Use these sandboxes and AI capabilities to bypass slow manual processes and accelerate technical progress.