

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Catalysing change and
harmonizing impact:
20 years of donor
coordination



Global Donor
Platform for
Rural Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGA Annual General Assembly | **FAO** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | **GDPRD** Global Donor Platform for Rural Development | **GDWGL** Global Donor Working Group on Land | **IFAD** International Fund for Agricultural Development | **ODA** official development assistance | **RYE** rural youth employment | **SDGs** Sustainable Development Goals | **SDG 2** Sustainable Development Goal Two "Zero Hunger" | **SMEs** small and medium-sized enterprises | **TWG** Thematic Working Group | **UNFSS** United Nations Food Systems Summit

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WHO WE ARE

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) is an informal network of 41 bilateral and multilateral donors, international financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, foundations and development agencies. It was set up in 2003 with a remit to help maximize the effectiveness of development aid in agriculture, rural development and food systems. The Platform brings together donors who believe the best way to tackle global poverty and hunger is to develop agriculture, reshape food systems and invest in rural communities. The GDPRD is hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).



Our vision

Donors effectively catalyse change:

Donor investments enable transformation of food systems for better access to safe and nutritious food, improved environmental sustainability and more prosperous rural communities.



Our mission

Brokering donor collaboration for impact:

The Platform brokers donor collaboration to enhance the impact of donors' policies, investments and programmes on food systems and rural development.

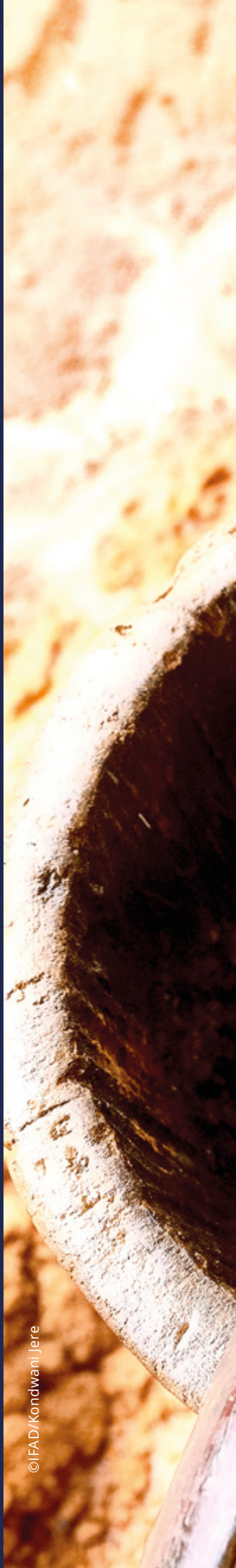


Functions of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development

Strategic influencing

Knowledge sharing

Networking and convening



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20 YEARS OF BRINGING DONORS TOGETHER

2023 was a milestone year for the **GDPRD** as we celebrated our 20th anniversary.

Over the past two decades, the aid and development landscape has changed significantly. The 2015 Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) brought renewed focus and attention to the transformational role of rural development and food systems in addressing these global goals.

While progress has been made towards reducing extreme poverty, hunger and inequality, there are still gaps and challenges that must be addressed. Rising regional conflicts, economic instability and climate change are spurring humanitarian crises on an unprecedented scale. In

response, official development assistance (ODA) is increasingly being channelled towards short-term crisis interventions, resulting in reduced funding for longer-term development processes such as food systems. Emerging donors, the private sector, and new sources and modalities of development finance are reshaping the development landscape. Driven by these shifts, there is growing momentum for rethinking the role of multilateral institutions and for donors to review the effectiveness of their approaches.

The GDPRD's 20th anniversary was an opportunity to reflect on these issues and consider the Platform's role in supporting donors to respond more

2003

Founding of GDPRD by the World Bank, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Canadian International Development Agency, the Netherlands and IFAD, with BMZ and FAO serving as Co-Chairs.

2005

Adoption of the Platform Governance Charter and establishment of the Steering Committee.

2006

First GDPRD AGA in Brussels.

effectively to current and emerging crises in rural development and food systems. We convened the 2023 Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Rome on 26–27 October to discuss how the aid effectiveness agenda has evolved over the last two decades and the emerging trends shaping ODA in food systems and rural development. A specially commissioned background paper on *Understanding the New Agriculture and Food Agenda: How is the past shaping the future?* catalysed discussions on shifting donor approaches to food systems and rural development. Discussions at the AGA highlighted the ongoing urgency and importance of enhanced dialogue and coordination among donors to address emerging issues and leverage the impact of their investments.

In an era of increasing geopolitical instability and crises, the AGA reaffirmed the value of the GDPRD as a safe space for members and partners to share knowledge and experiences, discuss emerging challenges and opportunities, and work on shaping coordinated and harmonized donor approaches.

Trends shaping development assistance

Climate change, conflict and fragility are contributing to a global surge in hunger and malnutrition, triggering forced displacement and migration.

New donors are emerging, and South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives are multiplying, founded upon long-standing collaborations in agricultural technology, involving countries such as Brazil, China and India.

Finance and financing mechanisms must increase and diversify to meet the growing challenges in food systems, agriculture and rural development.

A greater focus on gender equality and opportunities for youth can support more inclusive strategies to bolster food production, enhance nutrition and accelerate rural development.

2007

Introduction of the Platform Charter, formation of the Board, and selection of the Steering Committee and Chairs.

2009

L'Aquila Summit on Food Security, convened in Italy by the G8, leads to the initiation of a United Nations task force addressing food security challenges.

2015

Signing of the Paris Accord on Climate Change by 196 countries and adoption of the SDGs by United Nations Member States.

Reflections from Platform Co-Chairs

For the past three years, the Platform has been co-chaired by Australia and the European Commission. In 2023, Tristan Armstrong (Australia) and Conrad Rein (European Commission) concluded their terms and passed the baton to the Co-Chairs Bruce Campbell (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) and Iris Krebber (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, United Kingdom).¹

¹ On 11 March 2024, Iris Krebber assumed a new position as Head of Civil Stabilisation Group Operations, Directorate General for Humanitarian and Development at UK FCDO, departing her role as Co-Chair.

“ 20 years was that moment to reflect and ask what’s next, how the world has changed, and whether our strategies are fit for purpose and are addressing key issues.”

“The success and effectiveness of the Platform hinge on the energy and passion invested by its Members, Board and Co-Chairs. If we [the GDPRD] want to make it to 40 years, we need to keep thinking and challenging ourselves and each other.”

“People are hungry for a platform that allows them to speak honestly about issues, free to some degree from the binding constraints we face in our regular roles, and this is the real power of the Platform that needs to be preserved.”

Tristan Armstrong

Australia
Former Co-Chair (2021–2023)



2020

AGA shapes GDPRD’s contributions to the UNFSS, with IFAD hosting the GDPRD Secretariat.

2021

Launch of GDPRD’s *Stocktaking Report: Donor contributions to food systems* and unveiling of the new *Strategic Plan 2021–2025*.

2022

Publication of GDPRD’s white paper on *Transforming Food Systems: Directions for enhancing the catalytic role of donors*.

“ The GDPRD has provided a pivotal platform for facilitating formal and informal dialogues between key global players, including European Union members, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and others. These interactions, often operating under the Chatham House rules, have fostered a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose, transcending geopolitical boundaries.”

“The GDPRD celebrating 20 years ... is a great moment to reflect on how the Platform is still needed. I hope that GDPRD members will become even more involved and see the GDPRD as an important tool for coordination, for better impact on the ground and for improving the livelihoods of millions of people.”

Conrad Rein

European Commission
Former Co-Chair (2020–2023)



“ Food systems are still poorly understood and systemic thinking is not often practised institutionally. The trade-offs and choices do not necessarily come naturally to the individual actor. The GDPRD can contribute by being concrete about what food systems transformation, in incremental steps, actually means.”

“GDPRD members have a common denominator in terms of values, views and objectives. This makes it possible to work productively on approaches in a more informal way than in the fora of multilateral mechanisms.”

Bruce Campbell

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Current Co-Chair



2023

Commemoration of GDPRD's 20th anniversary coincides with the AGA, themed “20 Years of Rural Development and Aid Effectiveness: Where are we now and where we are going?”, held in Rome.



From strategy to action: Platform highlights in 2023

2023 was an action-packed year for the Platform, as we launched three new workstreams on innovative financing for food systems, donor coordination and data for food systems and rural development. The workstreams reflect a more strategic, results-oriented approach to engaging with the food systems and rural development agenda. Activities under each of the three workstreams are geared towards developing new ideas, knowledge and strategies to better support donors in making more effective policy and financing decisions and better coordinating their support to food systems transformation.

The workstreams reflect a more strategic, results-oriented approach to engaging with the food systems and rural development agenda.

To mark the Platform's 20th anniversary, the 2023 AGA in Rome in October focused on how the aid and development effectiveness landscape has changed in the past two decades. Sessions covered topics such as food systems approaches, donor coordination, sustainable finance, land governance and rural youth employment.

Throughout 2023, our thematic working groups on land governance, rural youth employment and the SDG 2 Roadmap continued to engage their members in discussions on critical and emerging issues in these areas. The working groups represent important informal spaces where donors and partners can meet to discuss joint strategies and approaches to influencing and shaping development policies.

As this is a member-driven platform, communication and outreach remain fundamental to how we engage with our members and the broader development community. Key highlights of our communications this year include a focus on the 20th anniversary and AGA, the launch of a new Instagram page, an interview series with members, and the dissemination of and outreach about a series of flagship reports and events. The Platform's website is now a valuable resource and repository of information that includes a range of interviews, podcasts, publications and events on food systems and rural development.

Leveraging the momentum of 2023 and building on the outcomes of the AGA, we will continue to advance our efforts in 2024, generating new ideas, facilitating dialogue and shaping donor thinking, policies and programmes in areas that can support more effective investments in food systems and rural development.

2023 in a nutshell

13 Board members²

2 Co-Chairs

41 Platform members

4 Board meetings

1 Annual General Assembly

11 Thematic Working Group (TWG) meetings

4 Land Governance TWG meetings

5 Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment (TWG RYE) meetings

2 Sustainable Development Goal Two "Zero Hunger" (SDG 2) Roadmap TWG meetings

6 High-level events³

6 Flagship reports⁴

² Board members are Australia, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, IFAD, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

³ These events include (i) 13 February 2023, "Assessing the Data 'Quantum' Leap in Agriculture and Food Systems: Consultations for new strategic directions"; (ii) 27 June 2023, "Donor Coordination for Food Systems Transformation: A forward agenda"; (iii) 24 July 2023, UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment side event: "Innovative donor approaches to sustainable finance for food systems transformation"; (iv) 23 October 2023, 51st session of the Committee on World Food Security side event 03: "Innovative approaches to sustainable finance for food systems transformation"; (v) 24 October 2023, Senior Managers Meeting; (vi) 26–27 October 2023, AGA 2023.

⁴ The flagship publications include (i) GDPRD *Annual Report 2022*, (ii) *Understanding the New Agriculture and Food Agenda: How is the past shaping the future? Shifts and changes in donor approaches in agricultural and rural development: A 20-year review*, (iii) *From Rhetoric to Reality: Donor coordination for food systems transformation*, (iv) *New Strategic Directions for Data in Agriculture and Food Systems*, (v) event report on the high-level dialogue *Donor Coordination for Food Systems Transformation: A forward agenda* and (vi) *Unleashing the Catalytic Power of Donor Financing to Achieve SDG 2*.

Key events

13 February 2023

Consultation event on *Assessing the Data "Quantum Leap" in Agriculture and Food Systems*

21–22 February 2023

GDPRD Board Meeting

23 June 2023

Launch of GDPRD Instagram page

27 June 2023

High-Level Dialogue on Donor Coordination for Food Systems Transformation

28 June 2023

GDPRD Board Meeting

24–26 July 2023

UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment side event on Innovative Donor Approaches to Sustainable Finance for Food Systems Transformation

25 July 2023

Launch of *Hesat2030: A global roadmap to end hunger sustainably, nutritiously and equitably*

23 October 2023

51st session of the Committee on World Food Security side event on Innovative Approaches to Sustainable Finance for Food Systems Transformation

24 October 2023

GDPRD Senior Managers Meeting

26–27 October 2023

AGA on 20 Years of Rural Development and Aid Effectiveness: Where are we now and where are we going?

16 November 2023

Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment webinar on *Green Jobs: A better future for rural youth*



THE CATALYTIC POWER OF DONORS

In 2023, we continued to respond proactively to emerging issues through the activities of three new workstreams on sustainable and blended finance, donor coordination and data.



**Sustainable
finance for
SDG 2**

These areas are interconnected, and improvements in all three areas are needed for sustainable food systems transformation. The complex food security landscape requires both attracting more funding through



**Donor
coordination**



Data

innovative financial tools and proper data to ensure those funds are used efficiently. By focusing on these areas, the GDPRD aims to move beyond reactive crisis response and build long-term resilience in the global food system.

Unleashing the catalytic role of donors in mobilizing innovative financing

Every donor dollar can trigger/ catalyse 4 dollars of commercial financing to improve access to credit for agrifood small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The power of blended mechanisms and other innovative funds must be unleashed to make donor and public funds more catalytic to support food systems and rural development.

The Platform's workstream on innovative/ blended finance explores ways in which donors, philanthropic organizations and public funds are leveraging their funding to mobilize commercial capital for greater impact.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goal Two "Zero Hunger" (SDG 2), the 2020 *Ceres2030: Sustainable solutions to end hunger* report estimates that governments and donors will have to more than double their investments in food systems annually, to reach the ambitious target of US\$330 billion in investments by 2030. Despite efforts to fill the gap, development finance alone is not enough. To achieve this goal, donors and governments will need to work closely to identify innovative ways to make their funding more catalytic. With 258 million people in 58 countries facing acute food insecurity, there is no time to lose.

The Platform's workstream on innovative finance explores ways in which donors, philanthropic organizations and public funds are leveraging their funding for greater impact; increasing allocations to food systems from thematic programmes on climate, nature, gender and SMEs; working with private capital to providers to increase investment in sustainable food systems; and assessing the performance and "additionality" of blended capital funds.

As a first step in developing this workstream, in 2023 the GDPRD and the Shamba Centre for Food & Climate undertook an enquiry into how donors, philanthropic organizations, public funds and blended capital funds can make their funding more effective to achieve SDG 2. The core message of the enquiry, emerging from a series of interviews, is that, if donors and development banks take higher risks with their grants and lending, every donor dollar has the potential to generate 4 dollars in commercial finance. When this happens, agrifood SMEs will have more financing, domestic lenders will participate and markets will have more liquidity.

Together with the Shamba Centre for Food & Climate, the Platform hosted an official side event at the UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment on 24 July 2023. The event, [Innovative Donor Approaches to Sustainable Finance for Food Systems Transformation](#), explored how donors and public funds are working continuously to enhance the impact of their investments to achieve the SDGs and transform food systems. The discussions emphasized the critical need to increase private sector collaboration, de-risk investments and revitalize SMEs to achieve food systems transformation.

The enquiry's findings were presented and discussed at the 51st session of the Committee on World Food Security side event on Innovative Approaches to Sustainable Finance for Food Systems Transformation on 23 October 2023 and at a [High-Level Session on Sustainable Finance: Making donor funding more catalytic](#) at the AGA, on 27 October 2023. Participants discussed steps that donors and development banks are currently taking to mobilize private sector investment, how development finance institutions can be reformed to allow them to be more flexible and how blended finance can be scaled up in the agriculture sector. The final report, *Unleashing the Catalytic Power of Donor Financing to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2*, was released in March 2024. It presents a unique opportunity for donors, development finance institutions and their beneficiaries in developing countries to make widespread changes by implementing its recommendations.

“ We need an extra US\$330 billion to end hunger without harming the environment by 2030. This decade, our challenge is to use the catalytic power of governments and donors to unleash the financial power of capital markets for the benefit of everyone.”

Carin Smaller

Shamba Centre for Food & Climate



“ It's clear donors alone cannot affect enough change to achieve our goals around rural development and climate. The private sector needs to step in, but it's particularly challenging to invest in agriculture. That's where there's a need for donor coordination with the private sector. We've seen success stories when donors step in to make financing more effective, realistic and affordable so that investors can cover the high transaction costs and risks in agriculture.”

Andrea Zinn

Director, Council on Smallholder Agricultural Finance, and Senior Manager Aceli Americas, Aceli Africa



Donor coordination for food systems transformation

In the coming years, donors will need to balance short-term crisis response with investments that support longer-term development and resilience. Donor resources will need to be optimized through greater policy coherence and coordination, to create resilient and secure food systems for the future.

Donors must maximize their catalytic potential by prioritizing policy coherence and improving coordination among development partners and recipient countries.

Rising food, fertilizer and fuel prices, coupled with the compounding effects of climate change, conflict and COVID-19, are exacerbating global food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty. These crises are placing multilateralism and the

international rules-based order in jeopardy. Country governments and donors face challenges in finding the proper balance between short-term crisis response and longer-term development, making resources catalytic, and ensuring policy coherence between donors and countries. Donors must maximize their catalytic potential by prioritizing policy coherence and improving coordination among development partners and recipient countries.

The Platform's workstream on donor coordination unpacks the challenges countries face in addressing the national pathways for food systems transformation, explores how donors and development partners can better coordinate their assistance at the country level, and identifies key areas such as data, finance and policy innovation where coordination is most needed. In 2023, the GDPRD released the flagship report *From Rhetoric to Reality: Donor coordination for food systems transformation*. Drawing on interviews with experts from partner country governments, international organizations, United Nations and donor agencies, the report recommendations seek to support donors and their partners in improving their coordination and alignment in food systems and rural development, particularly at the country level.

The report and its findings were discussed at a high-level dialogue, *Donor Coordination for Food Systems Transformation: A forward agenda*, held in Rome on 27 June 2023, co-hosted by the GDPRD, IFAD and the European Commission. The dialogue reinforced the key messages and recommendations in the report. It concluded with broad agreement on the need for donors and development partners to remain engaged in dialogue in their ongoing efforts to enhance coordination.

“Donors have their own agendas, and those agendas often are contradictory. We must create a space of mutual trust for donors to talk to each other, negotiate and, in principle, be able to join forces together. But definitely, the most important thing to me is that the processes are to be driven by the governments of the recipient countries. We should talk about the priorities of the country, priorities of the people, not priorities of the donors.”

Juan Echanove

Associate Vice President, Food and Water Systems, CARE International



“To improve donor coordination on food systems, we must work harder to ensure that donors and teams in country have a shared understanding of what a food systems approach means concretely and of its vital value for the people and the planet. Talking to people, I realize that one of the main challenges we still face is that, for too many people, food systems transformation remains an abstract concept.”

Nadine Gbossa

Director, Food Systems Coordination, IFAD, and Chief, Means of Implementation, United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub



Recommendations of the report on donor coordination for food systems transformation

- 🍌 **Develop** national food systems transformation pathways.
- 🍌 **Support** enhanced collaborative planning.
- 🍌 **Develop** donor-specific coordination policies.
- 🍌 **Create** effective information systems.
- 🍌 **Review** funding modalities.
- 🍌 **Increase** coordinated funding for structural change.
- 🍌 **Explore** enhanced global-level coordination mechanisms.
- 🍌 **Establish** mechanisms for effectiveness assessment.

Better data for food systems and rural development

In 2022, the 50th session of the Committee on World Food Security called for better and more harmonized data and its widespread use in setting policies.

The last decade has seen a quantum leap in data-driven initiatives in agriculture and rural development, supported by the efforts of governments and donors to measure and track progress towards the SDGs. Despite this, gaps remain in data and information availability and in scaling up efforts to address key challenges in food systems and rural development. The GDPRD's workstream on data facilitates better coordination among donors and international organizations in this area.

The GDPRD's workstream on data facilitates better coordination among donors and international organizations in this area.

On 13 February 2023, the Platform convened a meeting on Assessing the Data "Quantum" Leap in Agriculture and Food Systems, together with the European Commission, IFAD and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data in Rome to take stock of current data initiatives on agriculture and food security. Thirteen organizations presented data initiatives, including 50x2030, FAO, IFAD, the World Bank, the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub, Ceres2030 and Hesat2030.

Discussions noted that the data revolution has had a positive impact by increasing the production of data and spurring innovative approaches. However, the availability of reliable data at the country level remains a challenge, as does the actual use of available data to inform policymaking. The event concluded with broad agreement on the need to better understand data production barriers and the need for enhanced coordination on both the demand and supply sides of agriculture and food systems data. Following the event, the GDPRD published a report, *New Strategic Directions for Data in Agriculture and Food Systems*, presenting the event's deliberations and key findings. Going forward, the workstream is working towards mapping out a concrete action plan for the data community, focused on improving information sharing, convening dialogues and workshops to advocate data use in decision-making, and strengthening country capacity.

“Bringing together data from governments, product traceability systems and environmental, social and governance analysis ... introduces enormous integration challenges and requires clear and common rules for data formatting and entry.”

“Our thinking is based on past centralized data systems. What we've been working on will not solve the problems of the future. As we try to build a 747 or an A350 [a big jet], we should consider that the future is going to look something more like drones.”

From the event "Assessing the Data 'Quantum' Leap in Agriculture and Food Systems"



OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

During the year, we actively engaged members and increased outreach through our social media channels including the website, LinkedIn, X/Twitter, an e-newsletter and a new Instagram account.

The 20th anniversary of the Platform was a significant focus of our communication efforts, highlighted through a new [microsite](#) on the website. We promoted several flagship reports and events organized by Platform workstreams and TWGs through our social media.

To highlight the work and contributions of Platform members, we continued the “[Meet Our Members](#)” interview series. In addition, our miniseries on IFAD’s *Farms. Food. Future.* podcast featured conversations with experts, practitioners and thought leaders in rural development and food systems.

The Platform continues to share the work of members, partners and donors active in the food systems and rural development space. The website now features knowledge hubs on land governance, rural youth employment and the SDG 2 Roadmap, which are useful repositories of information, events and new publications. We updated the website with new content and dedicated microsites for the workstreams on finance, donor coordination and data, as well as a page highlighting the 20th anniversary.

The [Food Systems Recommendations Database](#) has expanded into a microsite with 55 reports and a dashboard spotlighting featured, trending and latest reports. A new Food Systems Architecture Database is being developed, which will give users an overview of the plethora of food systems-related organizations, initiatives, research groups, platforms, etc.

Our web and user engagement increased significantly in 2023, with a more than 55 per cent increase in total site visits and an over 81 per cent increase in total unique site visitors. The Platform continues to attract new followers and improve engagement on LinkedIn and X/Twitter, and our e-update newsletters have also seen increased open and click rates.

Communication highlights

20th anniversary
of the GDPR

6 high-level
events

6 flagship
reports

6 podcasts

10 member
interviews

Instagram
account launched

Food Systems
Recommendations
Database expanded

Web and social media engagement

55% increase in
total website visits

81% increase
in total unique
website visitors

45% increase in
LinkedIn followers

More than 3,000
Twitter followers




THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS

Over the past decade, the GDPRD has provided a space for thematic working groups to improve the coordination of donor activities in three priority areas.

 **The Global Donor Working Group on Land**, created in 2013, strives to ensure the recognition of the land rights of groups and individuals, as a cornerstone of sustainable, equitable and inclusive development.

 **The Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment**, established in 2018, seeks to support youth in finding their rightful place in rural economies.

 **The SDG 2 Roadmap Working Group**, founded in 2019, fosters collaboration between donors who share a common vision for eliminating rural poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

Global Donor Working Group on Land

Gemma Betsema

Netherlands Enterprise Agency (Co-Chair)

Chantal Wieckardt

Netherlands Enterprise Agency (Co-Chair)

Land governance and secure tenure are crucial preconditions for addressing a range of SDGs, including food and nutrition security, economic development, and peace and stability.

The Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL) brings together 29 bilateral and multilateral donors and international organizations to collaborate on land-related issues. In 2023, the GDWGL members held four meetings to discuss member participation and engagement in high-level events, exchange information and agree on annual activities. During the year, the United States Agency for International Development completed its tenure as Co-Chair of the group.

The GDWGL held a special session on Land Governance Tools and Approaches in Support of Climate Action at the AGA on 26 October 2023, which highlighted the role of land tenure and governance issues in realizing climate goals. Speakers from the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility, FAO, the International Land Coalition, and the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office shared concrete examples of how better land governance has helped their efforts to tackle climate change.

The session also illustrated how better data and information on land governance can support more informed decision-making on land policies.

Together with partners from civil society and other sectors, the GDWGL has been actively involved in a new initiative called the Global Land Agenda. With this new agenda, the group, together with partners, works towards more coordinated action for raising the importance of land globally, to mobilize new, concrete and visible political commitments; create a global forum on tenure security for dialogue and strategic direction; establish an accountability mechanism to track progress; and catalyse and increase funding for tenure security. In line with these objectives, the group invited key stakeholders from the three Rio conventions on climate (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), biodiversity (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity) and desertification (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) to exchange and discuss the role of land in their work and how donors could better support their agendas.

Continuing to build on the group's efforts to improve access to data and information on land governance issues, the GDWGL updated the Land Portal database. The database now includes an impressive data set of 3,871 projects that combine data from Land Portal's projects database (focusing on projects that have been manually added over the last five years), the former GDWGL's Land Governance Programme Map and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), focusing on land governance projects. Users can click through the map to access information on all land-related projects and programme areas. The map will be updated regularly by importing new data from the IATI dataset.

“ There remains an enormous implementation gap to close around land rights, to address discriminatory social norms and support the equal rights of women, youth, Indigenous people and migrants to access, use and benefit from land. We have the opportunity to work collaboratively for another 10 years of progress on good land governance.”

Karol Boudreaux

United States Agency for International Development



“ Good land governance policies and practices positively contribute to and create an enabling environment for achieving a wide range of development objectives and most of the SDGs. Substantially scaling these efforts requires coordinated multi-stakeholder action and an integrated approach of land within food security and climate programming, as well as within rule of law and sustainable economic development approaches.”

Gemma Betsema

Netherlands Enterprise Agency



Rural Youth Employment

Elisenda Estruch Puertas

International Labour Organization (Co-Chair)

Frank Bertelmann

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) (Co-Chair)

Sven Braulik

GIZ (Co-Chair)

Creating decent employment and income opportunities for rural youth and engaging them in policy processes is key to making them agents of change in rural economies.

The Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment (TWG RYE) catalyses donor exchange and advises donors, governments and civil society organizations on effective ways to create employment opportunities and support rural youth to contribute to and benefit from more sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems and rural economies.

In 2023, the TWG RYE celebrated its fifth anniversary of serving as a space for donors, partners, civil society, the private sector and others to exchange evidence-based approaches, develop ideas, and share information and opportunities on rural youth and employment issues. The TWG RYE held five meetings during the year.

The group convened a special session on [Leveraging Change for Rural Youth](#)

Employment and Food Systems Transformation at the AGA on 27 October 2023. The session brought together a panel of speakers representing youth, countries and international organizations to discuss country-level donor coordination and the effectiveness of interventions to promote rural youth employment in practice, with specific country examples from Kenya. Session speakers highlighted the importance of enhanced donor coordination, at both global and country levels, to advance the rural youth employment agenda.

The discussions revolved around effective policy interventions to promote green jobs for rural youth and to drive forward a just transition in agrifood systems and rural areas.

Ahead of COP28, the group organized a webinar on Green Jobs: A better future for rural youth on 16 November 2023. The discussions revolved around effective policy interventions to promote green jobs for rural youth and to drive forward a just transition in agrifood systems and rural areas, underlining the need for meaningful engagement of rural youth in critical policy processes.

The TWG RYE had an active year building connections with like-minded institutions. The Young Professionals for Agricultural Development, the KfW Development Bank and the Institute of Development Studies participated actively in the group's activities. The group also engaged with the African Union Commission, other youth organizations and research networks. The TWG RYE aims to hold quarterly meetings and organize at least two webinars and a session at the 2024 AGA in the coming year. The group will also continue to align with international policy processes, such as the Committee on World Food Security rural youth employment policy recommendations, and the UNFSS coalitions and national pathways.

“ Through the Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment, we are committed to translating the voices of youth into concrete action that responds to their needs and goals. This is key to boosting decent job creation for youth in rural areas and addressing the many decent work deficits they face. In this respect, I want to highlight the importance of social dialogue and a rights-based approach in promoting rural youth employment.”

Elisenda Estruch Puertas

International Labour Organization
(Co-Chair)



“ Young people are key actors for the future, for innovation, climate action and building more sustainable food systems; thus, investing in youth is a triple-win strategy.”

Sven Braulik

GIZ (Co-Chair)



“ The promotion of green jobs for young people in agrifood systems can play a crucial role as a connecting element for linking with other global agendas like climate change and for a just transition.”

Frank Bertelmann

GIZ (Co-Chair)



SDG 2 Roadmap Working Group

Ammad Bahalim

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Co-Chair)

Sung Lee

United States Agency for International Development (Co-Chair)

More than 600 million people will remain chronically hungry worldwide by 2030. Achieving the goal of SDG 2 (“zero hunger”) by 2030 will require sustained commitment, investment and collaboration by governments, donors, the private sector, civil society and other actors at global, regional and national levels.

The SDG 2 Roadmap Working Group is an informal group of senior officials from different donor agencies that share a common vision for eliminating rural poverty, hunger and malnutrition through sustainable agriculture. It works towards developing consensus among donors on a road map for achieving SDG 2.

In 2023, building on the foundations of the *Ceres2030: Sustainable solutions to end hunger* report, FAO, the Shamba Centre for Food & Climate, and the University of Notre Dame launched *Hesat2030: A global roadmap to end hunger sustainably, nutritiously and equitably*. The main goal of Hesat2030 is to improve the quantity and quality of ODA to agriculture and food security and achieve better integration of outcomes – focused on climate change, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, women’s empowerment and social inclusion – in donor and international agency plans, policies and programmes.

The GDPRD is a key partner of Hesat2030 and will engage with the project through the SDG 2 Roadmap Working Group. Hesat2030 was officially launched on 25 July 2023 at the UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment side event *Achieving Sustainable Food Systems in a Time of Multiple Crises: A new global roadmap*.

An emerging area for the group is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for food systems. Data science and AI learning methods were employed in Ceres2030 and specifically designed for rapid analysis of food systems data. In 2023 and going into 2024, Hesat2030 has been used for an AI-assisted donor-project database with Global Affairs Canada, to design and pilot an ODA-tracking tool generated by machine learning and AI, to collect evidence with the Juno Evidence Alliance, and to continue country and donor deep dives.

The Ceres2030 report continues to influence and shape thinking in the donor and development community. In October 2023, FAO presented a new publication, *Achieving SDG 2 without Breaching the 1.5° C Threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1: How agrifood systems transformation through accelerated climate actions will help to achieve food security and nutrition, today and tomorrow*. The global roadmap draws on Ceres2030's thinking and tools.

As the group refines its priorities for 2024 and beyond, there is a particular interest among members in looking at climate change and 1.5° C in the context of SDG 2.

“ The 50x2030 initiative and Ceres2030 report made valuable contributions to the UN Food Systems Summit, highlighting the critical importance of data and evidence-based approaches to donor investments in food systems.”

Ammad Bahalim

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



“ We need to find ways of building resilience because we can't afford, as a global community, a continued sort of humanitarian and emergency support. We try and catalyse our investments to influence policy to have an even greater impact on promoting sustainable food system transformation.”

Ron Hartman

IFAD



Annual General Assembly: 20 years of rural development and aid effectiveness

The 2023 AGA, held in a hybrid format at IFAD Headquarters in Rome on 26–27 October 2023, reflected on the theme “20 Years of Rural Development and Aid Effectiveness: Where are we now and where are we going?”

Discussions explored the potential of food systems approaches to reinvigorate rural development, the importance of enhanced access to data and information for land governance and secure tenure, innovative strategies for donor funding in food systems, and the opportunities presented by mechanical and technical jobs for rural youth.

In the opening session, Brian Baldwin, Senior Advisor to the Platform, presented the GDPRD’s background paper on *Understanding the new agriculture and food agenda: How is the past shaping the future?* The paper illustrates shifts in donor approaches in agriculture and food systems in the last two decades and the increasing complexity of these approaches as they are shaped by new and emerging crises such as climate change. The discussions highlighted the continued relevance of the GDPRD as a space where donors can shape coordinated and harmonized approaches to emerging crises. Participants stressed the importance of greater collaboration between donors, governments and others involved in food systems pathways to enhance the effectiveness of interventions on the ground.

In the *High-Level Session on Food Systems Approaches and Shifting Development Agendas*, H.E. Jeanine M. Cooper, Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Liberia, emphasized the need for peace and stability for development. Drawing on

Liberia’s experience, she highlighted the emergence of more synchronized aid in the agriculture and rural development sector, especially around food systems transformation. Other panellists emphasized the need for donors to explore the potential of new technologies and innovations, unlocking finance for agriculture and food systems, and to work towards more coordinated approaches, particularly at the country level, and think about partnerships and impact differently.

The discussions highlighted the continued relevance of the GDPRD as a space where donors can shape coordinated and harmonized approaches to emerging crises.

Four breakout sessions examined key issues that will shape donors’ work in the coming decade. The sessions focused on food security and nutrition; environment, climate change and biodiversity; aid effectiveness, coordination and alignment; and conflict, resilience and fragility. Conclusions from the breakout sessions fed into a high-level synthesis panel discussion that explored how and why donors need to rethink the way that they work. In her keynote address, Mia Beers, Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security at the United States

Agency for International Development, noted that conflict, climate change and the enduring impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by inflation and rising interest rates, have pushed more communities into hunger and multiplied the challenges for those seeking to help them. She argued that to avoid crises, which could reverse a decade of progress, more donor coordination and continuing commitment to achieve systemic change is needed. Special sessions at the AGA focused on sustainable finance, land governance and rural youth employment, highlighting new and emerging strategies and approaches by donors.

Reflecting on the discussions at the AGA and the implications for donors, Maximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist at FAO, urged donors to focus their efforts on the places where need is greatest. Reflecting on the AGA, participants said they were motivated by the discussions and inspired by the amount of information, knowledge and expertise displayed during the meeting. They acknowledged the importance for donors to continue to collaborate, cooperate and put resources towards successful and replicable initiatives. The AGA concluded with broad agreement on the continued value of and place for the GDPRD as a platform that provides donors and other development partners with an informal space to share knowledge, insights and strategies for addressing the pressing and emerging challenges to food systems and rural development. The Platform has produced a summary report of the AGA proceedings.

“ Impact ... is not felt at the level of beautiful documents that are shared, but in how you move the needle and shift the reality of the lives of rural people and all of the people in the food systems.”

H.E. Jeanine M. Cooper

Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Liberia



“ The AGA is about giving members and partners a safe space to discuss how to shape coordinated and harmonized donor approaches to better serve rural people in the path to development and make our interventions more effective and impactful.”

Maurizio Navarra

GDPRD Secretariat Coordinator





LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

Building on the momentum of activities in 2023 and successful outcomes of the AGA, in 2024 the Platform will continue to build on its efforts to advance donor coordination and shape donor thinking, policies and programmes in key areas that can support more and more strategic investments in food systems and rural development.

Key activities planned for the year include a review of donor funding modalities at the country level, coordination gatherings ahead of significant global events (such as the G7, G20, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP and others), the establishment of a multi-donor working group on sustainable and blended financing in agriculture and food systems, and the organization of seminars and roundtables on various development topics.

Workstream on donor coordination

Building on the recommendations of the report *From Rhetoric to Reality: Donor coordination for food systems transformation*, the workstream on donor coordination will undertake a review of complementary funding modalities at the country level. The review will involve a mapping of funding modalities and stakeholder engagement to identify strengths, weaknesses and synergies among different financing instruments, and will provide recommendations for donors on optimizing modalities of development finance. The review will directly contribute to the 2024 AGA and will include a series of seminars on themes such as development financing, directions of climate finance and implications for food systems, and rural development and mobilizing private sector investment.

Following guidance provided during the 2023 Senior Managers Meeting, the Secretariat has developed terms of reference for the GDPRD to organize informal coordination gatherings ahead of global events. In 2024, the Platform Secretariat will conduct the first pilot of such informal coordination gatherings on the 2024 G7 Italian Presidency, with subsequent discussions planned for other key events throughout the year (e.g. COP29, African Union Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit).

Workstream on sustainable and blended financing for SDG 2

Drawing on the recommendations of the enquiry on sustainable and innovative financing for food systems, *Unleashing the Catalytic Power of Donor Financing to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2*, the GDPRD will establish a new multi-donor working group on sustainable/ blended finance, to share data and knowledge for better collaboration. The working group will bring together like-minded representatives from donor organizations, philanthropies, public funds and foundations, and will be hosted by the Platform, with membership and participation open to donor agencies and other stakeholders actively engaging in blending.

2024 Annual General Assembly

The 2024 AGA will focus on the theme of financing food systems transformation and rural revitalization. To prepare for this event, a series of roundtables will be held to explore topics including the basics of development financing, the direction of climate finance and its implications for food systems, and emerging opportunities and challenges in blended finance. The AGA aims to foster informed discussions and collaboration among stakeholders in addressing pressing issues related to sustainable development and finance.

The Platform has developed a comprehensive result-oriented plan to take forward these and other activities during the year and looks forward to engaging with its members and other partners to strengthen donor engagement in food systems and rural development.



Annex I

LIST OF PLATFORM MEMBERS IN 2023

African Development Bank Group

Asian Development Bank

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Austrian Development Agency

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency

European Commission

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Austria

Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Belgium

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, United Kingdom

French Development Agency

Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Inter-American Development Bank

International Development Research Centre

International Fund for Agricultural Development

International Trade Centre

Irish Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs

Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

KfW Development Bank

Korea International Cooperation Agency

Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Spain

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

United States Agency for International Development

UN Women

World Bank

World Food Programme

World Rural Forum

World Trade Organization

Annex II

CONTRIBUTIONS

2023 contributions

Donor	Net contribution received (EUR)
Australia	0
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	46 259
European Union	46 000
Finland	46 000
France	46 000
Germany	49 387
IFAD	50 000
Ireland	46 000
Italy	46 000
Netherlands*	92 000
Switzerland	46 000
United Kingdom	52 166
United States**	92 209
Total contributions received	658 021

* This amount includes membership fees for 2022 and 2023.

** This amount includes membership fees for 2022 and 2023.

Annex III

SECRETARIAT 2023 EXPENDITURES, BY CATEGORY

Aggregated expenses by category as of 31 December 2023

Category	Amount (EUR)
Regular staff costs (includes interns)	354 679
Consultancies	207 938
AGA-related expenses	33 684
Other event-related expenses	15 651
Communication	27 966
IT/administration	26 054
Staff travel	3 687
Total expenditure	669 659



**Secretariat of the Global Donor
Platform for Rural Development**
hosted by the International Fund
for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

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