



Transforming
food systems in
times of crisis

Annual Report 2022



Global Donor
Platform for
Rural Development

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Who we are

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development is a network of 40 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. It brings together donors that believe the best way to tackle global poverty and hunger is to develop agriculture, reshape food systems and invest in rural communities.

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.

AN INTRODUCTION
FROM PLATFORM CO-CHAIRS
TRISTAN ARMSTRONG
AND CONRAD REIN

Shifting the focus from strategy to implementation

2022 was an extraordinary year for the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD).

First and foremost, we continued to pay extremely close attention to the food systems agenda, focusing on the efforts of the donor community to support countries in developing national pathways to transform their food systems.

Second, we published an important white paper on donor coordination, *Transforming Food Systems: Directions for enhancing the catalytic role of donors*, which offers clear directions, options and recommendations for enhancing the catalytic role of donors.



“We need to draw closer links between development and security. Around the world, where we fail to provide people with economic opportunity in rural areas we get bad outcomes, resource depletion, mass migration and conflict.

“Aid has partly become a contest for influence. The GDPRD is one of the few opportunities to talk informally to others in similar positions.

Tristan Armstrong

Third, we responded quickly to the unforeseen war in Ukraine, tracking the consequences for food supplies, and for the costs of farm inputs, fuel and fertilizer.

We are now witnessing the worst food price crisis in two decades, hampering efforts towards some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the world is getting hungrier. This food crisis had an immediate effect on official development assistance, partly shifting the focus of the donor community to the emergency. It has also prompted reflection across the development community: should more have been done earlier to strengthen the resilience of rural communities against unforeseen shocks and climate change?

The war, the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasingly dramatic consequences of climate change have certainly been powerful reminders of the benefits of multilateralism and cooperation.

This underlines the need for informal mechanisms such as the GDPRD. The Platform provides a valuable opportunity to talk informally to others in similar positions about visions, strategies and policies, and the challenges the development community encounters in terms of design, delivery and impact.

Climate change, a universal challenge for humankind, has also reinforced the growing focus on agriculture, and one strength of the Platform is its ability to bring together many organizations and people with strengths in this field.

This annual report details many of the achievements of the GDPRD in 2022. Throughout the year, we continued working hard to understand and develop donor approaches to strengthening food systems transformation, hosting discussions about how best to put new rural development policies into effect. Our thematic working groups continued conversations around the challenges of creating rural jobs for youth, reinforcing land rights and achieving SDG 2 (“zero hunger”).

Our Annual General Assembly brought dynamic, well-informed and acutely pertinent discussions about key development issues, enlivened by case studies and some memorable presentations from young African entrepreneurs.

We also thoroughly overhauled, improved and expanded our communications, in particular by launching a new website and knowledge hubs for our thematic working groups, triggering an upsurge in visits and activity. We hope this report will inspire you to explore the Platform’s expanding online library of knowledge, resources and connections.

As we move into 2023, donors are strengthening their alignment with the priorities of the countries and people we are trying to help. Platform members will be sharing their knowledge and experience with countries in order to design national pathways for developing

rural areas as they reshape their food systems, and to help the countries achieve various objectives determined by their national situations. Access to land will be a common issue, and the needs of youth and women will be in sharp focus as donors confront the challenges of building food security, especially in Africa.

The Platform will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2023 – and that is proof of its value as a forum for sharing information, ideas, and new and better ways of achieving donors’ goals. But it is also a moment to think about the contribution the Platform makes and its strategic direction.

We should reflect on what we do well and identify any gaps that need to be filled. We must continue reaching out to potential members, including in Asia. We should reflect on the ways in which security underpins development and a lack of development contributes to insecurity. Furthermore, we should continue to build closer connections with those we are seeking to help.

Similar to rural communities, the donors and the Platform are constantly learning about how to advance rural development, a goal we all share.

“We need to engage more with the people we are trying to address. They know best what is needed. I have particular confidence in young people and women.

“As a platform we need to reach out to new potential members, especially in Asia, because issues such as climate change and hunger are global problems.



Conrad Rein



Making food systems transformation a reality

White paper

In March 2022, the Platform published a landmark white paper, *Transforming Food Systems: Directions for enhancing the catalytic role of donors*. The white paper builds on the proceedings of the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, identifying clear strategies to help donors become more attuned to local circumstances and needs, identify possible actions, and design or recognize initiatives that will better support food systems transformation and advance the international food systems agenda.

WHERE SHOULD DONORS BEGIN?

The white paper says that global donors - including bilateral agencies, financial institutions, development banks and philanthropic foundations - have a critical role to play in the necessary reshaping of food systems. Their investments and innovations, and their ability to facilitate collaboration, can help bring about more nutritious, more local and more sustainable food systems.

The white paper says that: “To be effective, donors will have to focus on interventions that create the enabling conditions for systemic change, are responsive and adaptive to rapidly changing circumstances, and tackle the political and economic barriers to equitable and sustainable development.”

To be effective, donors will have to focus on interventions that create the enabling conditions for systemic change.

The need for healthier diets, zero hunger, decent earnings for all working in food systems, preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, and adaption to and mitigation of climate change is being increasingly recognized.

The white paper calls for much more attention to be paid to **how** food systems transformation can be achieved. The aim should be to identify practical and feasible pathways for action, particularly at the national and local levels.

It identifies three overarching implications for donors.

- If food systems are to be reshaped, those involved will have to develop **coherent policies** and integrate their actions, investments and initiatives across sectors.

- To be effective, donors will need to **tackle structural barriers to change**, paying more attention to differing stakeholder interests and associated power dynamics, so that change becomes possible.
- Donors will also need to **develop a systemic approach** - managing flexibly, learning as they go and adapting what they do in response to results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper details seven areas donors must focus on if they want to help improve food systems.

- 1 Strengthening coordination among donors and other actors to support national pathways for food systems transformation:** Donors need to coordinate more closely and effectively to support the development and implementation of national plans (including national food systems pathways) for better food systems.
- 2 Mobilizing responsible investment in food systems from the public and private sectors:** Donors need to mobilize responsible investments in food systems from the public sector, and from private companies and individuals.
- 3 Promoting the engagement of private sector actors and value chain innovation for sustainable development:** Donors must encourage and help private companies and individuals to develop new, more sustainable ways of producing, processing and distributing food.

4 Supporting policy innovation:

Donors need to support the development and adoption of new and better policies that promote or facilitate the production and distribution of healthier food in more sustainable ways.

5 Investing in research and data systems:

Donors must invest in research and in gathering and using data that enable a better understanding of what is happening in food systems, the effects on human nutrition, the resilience of farms, and other outcomes of the changes that are being made.

6 Strengthening governance for food systems transformation:

Donors are key to facilitating the broad consultations needed to build a consensus on how food systems should be changed, and then helping design and put into effect the changes needed (which will include new regulations).

7 Strengthening universal social protection mechanisms, disaster preparedness and emergency relief programmes:

Donors have been stepping up their spending on emergency relief. They should also help partner countries develop protection measures for the poorest people, who are most at risk, and ensure that emergency relief reaches those who need it most.

Annual General Assembly

The 2022 AGA was held on 14–15 June 2022 at IFAD’s headquarters in Rome. Members, speakers and guests were able to attend in person or online, in a hybrid format.

Presentations and discussions centred on the theme “implementing national pathways for food systems transformation to accelerate progress towards the SDGs in times of crisis and conflict”.

This section of the Annual Report summarizes the debates and their conclusions, and sets out the initiatives that emerged.

BUILDING COUNTRY-LEVEL COORDINATION

Promoting and facilitating coordination and collaboration between donors is at the heart of the Platform’s work. The need to work together more closely intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, and continues to be an urgent priority during the war in Ukraine.

The ongoing war has reduced production and export of grains and oilseed from Ukraine, a leading global producer, and has led to lower oil and fertilizer exports from Russia. Consequences include a surge in the prices of traded food commodities and energy, and increasing inflation, particularly of food prices in some developing countries.

Combined with the effects of intensifying climate change, this escalating crisis has put up to 222 million people in 53 countries at increased risk of famine or death.¹ It has also pushed up the costs for humanitarian organizations. However, it has prompted a raft of initiatives from donors and others, designed to both gather data on the crisis and address some of its effects.

Donors are therefore seeking to improve their coordination as they wrestle with multiple challenges simultaneously. Via the GDPRD, they are working together to:

- Support the design and implementation of national food systems transformation pathways;
- Build consensus and coordination of initiatives launched in response to the food crisis;
- Try to make more and better use of data in order to improve development outcomes;
- Ensure the creation of jobs for rural youth;
- Ensure people in rural areas have access to land.

DESIGNING NATIONAL PATHWAYS TO FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

Following the United Nations Food Systems Summit, the GDPRD embraced the challenge of helping target countries to develop pathways to transform their food systems. A virtual round table for donors, convened by the Platform in December 2021, established a new workstream to focus on ways to work with countries to develop their pathways and put them into effect. The Platform's 2022 AGA was dedicated to this task.

Géraldine Mukeshimana, the Rwandan Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, opened the AGA by establishing a crucial overarching principle: it is vital that countries recognize that open trade in food provides resilience and strengthens food security. Exporting and importing food helps balance supply and demand of food commodities whose production fluctuates in response to climatic factors, such as rainfall, or that can be disrupted by conflicts.

The minister said that countries should invest in agriculture and infrastructure to support farmers, thus helping them to become more productive and more economically successful. Rwanda has been working successfully with donors, and the minister called on the donors to “find their niche” within national investment plans.

The investment needs are huge.

Claudia Sadoff of CGIAR reminded the AGA that the report *Ceres2030: Sustainable solutions to end hunger* found that donors need to double their investments, channelling an additional US\$14 billion a year to food systems, to end hunger by 2030.² The need for and urgency of this have been compounded by the war in Ukraine. Yet investing in food systems could generate over US\$1 trillion in returns, and the Platform has “a critical role to play” in the development of national pathways.³

Stefanos Fotiou, the Director, Office of Sustainable Development Goals, FAO. Director, United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub, highlighted the work of the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub in helping countries design projects, access funding and monitor progress.

¹ World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Hunger Hotspots: FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity, October 2022 to January 2023 outlook* (Rome: World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2022), <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/hunger-hotspots-fao-wfp-early-warnings-acute-food-insecurity-october-2022-january-2023-outlook>.

² <https://ceres2030.iisd.org/>

³ <https://ceres2030.iisd.org/>

The subsequent Panel discussion emphasized the need to promote diversity in production, technology and consumption.

Attendees said policies should pay less attention to production volume, and more to nutritional benefits and food security. Policies must also be inclusive and attentive to the needs of the most vulnerable, ensuring that all citizens benefit, rather than just a privileged few.

HOW DONORS TRANSFORM FOOD SYSTEMS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Adopting a food systems approach is the best way to understand and respond to the ongoing food crisis. Analysis begins with collecting, sifting and interpreting data to identify the principal problems and possible solutions. It is important to ensure wide and open access to information, both to understand how different people and groups are affected, and to achieve consensus on desirable solutions. The Platform therefore plays a vital role as an information hub.

The AGA showed how ideas and perspectives from civil society and the business sector enrich analysis and the range of options. **Karima Al-Hada'a**, planning and liaison specialist at Yemen's Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, stressed that citizen participation also helps ensure that national pathways reflect people's needs and aspirations, and that society at large is committed to achieving the transformation desired.

Johan Swinnen, Managing Director of Systems Transformation, CGIAR, and Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), told the AGA that, while food price volatility was once exceptional, spikes have become more common. He stressed the need to double down on long-term strategies that improve the diversity and sustainability of food production and availability.

The AGA showed how ideas and perspectives from civil society and the business sector enrich analysis and the range of options.

Jyri Ollila, Director for International Affairs at Finland's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, said that one overriding lesson is that countries and food system actors at every level need to identify dangerous dependencies that can put their food production at risk. They need to develop food systems that are more self-sustaining in the fields of energy, genetic materials, labour, finance and knowledge.

International trade, of course, has a role to play. Imports can help contain cost increases and even save lives when disruption occurs. But the Platform's AGA concluded that, over time, donors must work with countries to reduce their vulnerabilities, and enhance the diversity of production and consumption.



Donor crisis response

Round table on food, fuel and fertilizer for small producers

The Platform held a virtual round table in May 2022, in collaboration with IFAD and the European Commission, to discuss ways of addressing the impact that Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine has had on food, fuel and fertilizer prices for small producers.

Although prices have since fallen from their peaks, and grain exports from Ukraine have resumed to a limited extent, Ukrainian production and exports remain constrained, as do Russian exports of grain, energy and fertilizer. Prices of these commodities remain vulnerable to new shocks. Donors attending the round table agreed on the importance of five elements.

1 Firstly, **enhanced coordination is needed to ensure donors synchronize their responses to the crisis.** Many initiatives have been launched, but some overlap, reducing their effectiveness. Donors insisted on the importance of comprehensive, coordinated measures that include grass-roots groups in rural areas, civil society and private companies, and that are tailored to local situations.

2 Secondly, donors stressed that **responses to short-term needs should not derail existing long-term approaches or progress towards the SDGs.** Improving the efficiency of fertilizer use, for example, can help compensate for higher prices, while benefiting the environment.

3 Thirdly, **emergency measures should not divert funding from long-term solutions.** Short-term measures also need clear exit strategies, and should not become lasting initiatives that undermine or divert resources from permanent fixes.

4 Fourthly, to ensure that those most in need are those who benefit, **donors need accurate data and information on which to base their decisions.**

They need to know who is experiencing food insecurity, and where, in order to reach them efficiently.

5 Finally, the food, fuel and fertilizer crisis raises new kinds of problems that require novel solutions. **Working together more closely will help donors to achieve better solutions.**

By focusing attention on dangerous dependencies, the crisis reaffirmed the urgency of transforming food systems to make small-scale producers more resilient and less vulnerable to events half a world away.

Special high-level session on donor crisis response initiatives

(DURING THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY)

The vital relevance of the Platform to food systems transformation is even more acutely evident during times of crisis.

During 2022, the cost of living spiked worldwide. This was due to a range of factors, such as post-COVID-19 reopening, supply chain shortages and rising interest rates. These combined with climate change and the knock-on effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine to push up the prices of food and agricultural inputs.

The Platform grasped the opportunity offered by the AGA to hold special high-level discussions between donors and other participants about coordinating responses to the short-term crisis, while doubling down on their long-term efforts to help countries develop more secure, more resilient food systems. The conversation focused in particular on mechanisms, risk assessments

and the effects of donor architecture on coordination. How could donors ensure they effectively addressed the ongoing disruption of food, fuel and fertilizer flows, and resulting food insecurity? Donors noted that short-term hunger relief needs to be financed by new money. Long-term strategies need to be financed by new investment, enhance resilience against such crises, and be developed and implemented in a coordinated way. Short- and long-term approaches should be considered collectively. For example, the AGA session highlighted the African Development Bank's US\$1.5 billion African Emergency Food Production Facility,⁴ which provides finance for programmes designed to address both short- and long-term needs. The facility aims to enable 20 million farmers to produce an additional 38 million tonnes of food by 2024.

This facility is among several multinational responses to the crisis. The AGA panel noted that the United Nations has responded with a Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance.⁵ The G7 group of large economies put together the Global Alliance for Food Security.⁶ The Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM)⁷, endorsed by the governments that are part of the European Council, seeks to ensure food security. It recommends a threefold strategy: avoiding overstocking while keeping borders open to food exports and imports; providing emergency food assistance to the most vulnerable countries and ensuring that Ukrainian grains can be exported; and strengthening the food systems resilience and sustainability of developing countries.

⁴ See <https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/african-emergency-food-production-facility>.

⁵ See <https://news.un.org/pages/global-crisis-response-group/>.

⁶ See <https://www.gafs.info/about/>.

⁷ See <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/development-assistance/food-security-nutrition-and-sustainable-agriculture/international-food-and-agriculture-resilience-mission-farm-initiative-for-food/article/international-food-and-agriculture-resilience-mission-farm-initiative-for-food>.

At the AGA, donors identified a long-standing underinvestment in rural development. They saw the crisis as a wake-up call. The challenge, they said, was getting the necessary inputs and knowledge to farmers in time for the coming growing seasons.

Donors agreed on the need to work together more effectively than ever before to achieve greater, more resilient and more nutritious farm production. They also emphasized the importance of mechanisms such as the GDPRD, and its members and stakeholders, in discussions that build consensus that can then inform other forums such as the G7 and G20.

Round table on food systems financing

Building on the May round table on the food, fuel and fertilizer crisis, in September the Platform organized a follow-up event called “Reshaping food systems financing in a crisis and post-crisis environment”.

The event was a collaboration with IFAD, the European Commission and the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub. The second round table was a further effort to speed up responses, which were made more urgent by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the increasing effects of climate change.

The Food Finance Architecture,⁸ launched during the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, predicted that achieving appreciably better food systems by 2030 would require investment of US\$300 billion

to US\$350 billion a year, but that is a modest sum compared with the hidden environmental, social and economic costs of today’s food systems, estimated at US\$12 trillion. Donors called for a financing paradigm shift to shine a light on these hidden costs and redirect funding to areas that benefit humankind and the planet. The discussions drew attention to three factors.

1 Firstly, **better data, transparency and accountability are needed to help donors, policymakers and others assess the true cost of today’s food systems and how best to redirect resources.** This suggests a need to invest more in information to enable better decision-making.

2 Secondly, development assistance is not the only factor at stake. Attendees said that agricultural policies frequently cause harmful distortions of food production, trade and prices. This can make some foods, such as bread, too cheap, while harming the sales and incomes of small producers growing more diverse foods. **Financial incentives and investment should be redirected from export production to supporting local producers,** they concluded, improving access to affordable, healthy diets while improving biodiversity and incomes.

3 Thirdly, the responses of the health sector to the COVID-19 pandemic - in particular the use of public-private partnerships - could provide valuable examples for those seeking to transform food systems. **Blended finance, derisking and guarantee funds offer a broader range of solutions, donors believe, although financing must align with environmental, social and health targets.**

⁸ See World Bank, “Food Finance Architecture: Financing a healthy, equitable and sustainable food system”, accessed 8 June 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/publication/food-finance-architecture-financing-a-healthy-equitable-and-sustainable-food-system>.



Thematic working groups

Introduction

Over the past decade, the GDPRD has provided a space for thematic working groups to improve 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 economic development.
- The Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment, established in 2018, seeks out the best ways of helping youth find their rightful place in rural economies.
- The SDG 2 Road Map Working Group was founded in 2019 with the task of ensuring collaboration between donors amid the realization that the world is not on course to end hunger by 2030.

Global Donor Working Group on Land

Karol Boudreaux, United States Agency for International Development (Chair)

Gemma Betsema, Netherlands Enterprise and Development Agency (Vice-Chair)

Around the world, access to land underpins security, livelihoods and culture. Security of tenure, for groups and individuals, is essential for economic and social development - and to protect vulnerable habitats. Yet in many countries documentation of rights is poor, often discriminates against women, and gives rise to uncertainty and conflict, while holding back investment. Donors are therefore working to reinforce land rights in diverse ways. By collaborating closely, donors can better understand the problems, share experiences and develop effective solutions.

The Global Donor Working Group on Land has:

- Built on the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*, adopted in 2012 by member states of the Committee on World Food Security;
- Linked with efforts to protect biodiversity, achieve the SDGs and pay increased attention to social objectives, such as community rights to land;
- Launched, during 2022, a drive to update the Land Governance Programme Map and Database, which now covers more than 800 projects in 140 countries;
- Held an evidence summit to focus attention on emerging best practices, and explore links between land and the accelerating drive to reshape food systems.



Land is the basis for how many people live their lives and earn their livelihoods. Where land governance is weak, people can lose their access to land. Where land governance is strong, people are more likely to invest. Secure access to land is a key to development and prosperity.

Gemma Betsema

In October, the group looked at the issue of protecting property rights in illegally occupied or war-damaged parts of Ukraine. Buildings in these areas have been destroyed or damaged, and 23 per cent of land has been contaminated with explosives. During 2023, the group will discuss how its updated project database can be integrated into national pathways. It will also be preparing for a global land summit, which will aim to develop policies and priorities, and show progress towards improved land governance and SDG land indicators, to inform political choices and policymaking.

Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment

- Frank Bertelmann**, German Agency for International Cooperation (Co-Chair)
- Elisenda Estruch Puertas**, International Labour Organization (Co-Chair)
- Sven Braulik**, German Agency for International Cooperation (Co-Chair)
- Anna Befus**, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (Co-Chair)
- Peter Wobst**, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (Co-Chair)

Youth will be at the heart of the big social and economic transformations of the 21st century. Their energy and entrepreneurship will power the development of healthier food systems that are better adapted to a changing climate. A more human-centred approach to development, especially in Africa, where populations are far younger on average, makes dialogue-driven youth employment policies essential.

During 2022, the Platform's Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment continued to build on the work of the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the Committee on World Food Security to promote youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems.

Meeting on more than 15 occasions, members shared evidence and experiences, strengthened partnerships and engagement with youth organizations, and worked to improve communication.

One highlight was the webinar "Green jobs for rural youth in agri-food systems". Others included an in-depth look at decent work, living income and wages, and a special focus on rural youth and their potential role in overhauling food systems, which took place at the Platform's AGA. The participation of young entrepreneurs at the AGA provided vivid examples of the challenges young entrepreneurs face, and of the successes some have achieved nonetheless.

Many experts among the group's 66 member bodies also provided technical advice to colleagues working on issues such as migration and rural development.

As 2023 began, there was a clear shift from developing policies to their implementation. Creating jobs for youth in rural areas is more urgent than ever. A third of the world's population is under 20, and in over 30 African countries the majority of the population is under 20.⁹

The working group will sharpen its focus on how best to create jobs in rural areas, including through efforts to combat climate change and through agroecology.



“

We cannot continue as we have in the past: creating green jobs for young people is now an urgent priority.

Sven Braulik

Sustainable Development Goal 2 Road Map Working Group

Ammad Bahalim, senior programme officer, Global Policy and Advocacy Division, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Sung Lee, international affairs specialist, United States Agency for International Development

In recent years, it has become clear that progress towards the SDG of zero hunger by 2030 (SDG 2) is severely off track. This working group, launched in 2019, was therefore set up to reinforce the focus on eliminating poverty, hunger and malnutrition by promoting sustainable agriculture.

The group has driven two important efforts to overcome the obstacles. The Ceres2030 report, published in October 2020, sought to identify what needs to be done. The 50x2030 initiative, now underway, aims to resolve the problem of inadequate data on food systems in 50 countries by 2030.

Ceres2030 helped draw attention to the plight of people suffering from hunger, and showed that hunger cannot be tackled in isolation.

Therefore, during 2022, the group developed a new initiative - Hesat2040: A global roadmap to end hunger sustainably and nutritiously - with the intention of drawing up a plan of actions for donors and governments based on the Ceres2030 findings.

The initiative has three aims. Firstly, it aims to ensure development assistance targeting agriculture and food security becomes more efficient and effective. Secondly, it plans to improve the integration of nutrition, gender equality and climate change factors so that efforts to tackle hunger become more holistic, are based on evidence and take account of the wider food system. Thirdly, it aims to do everything needed to ensure these efforts continue.

This initiative will involve efforts to track and monitor official development assistance, to improve and harmonize technical standards for evidence via the Juno Evidence Alliance, and to identify institutions willing to take this work forward. This ambitious agenda will shape the group's efforts in 2023.

⁹ Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser, "Age Structure", OurWorldInData.org, 2019, accessed 8 June 2023, <https://ourworldindata.org/age-structure>.



Knowledge and communications

Building the Platform's agenda

The GDPRD brings together donor organizations that believe the best way to tackle global poverty and hunger is to develop agriculture, reshape food systems and invest in rural communities. This belief is based on their collective knowledge - acquired through experience on the ground over decades of work - and a heartfelt commitment to overcoming poverty and hunger. The job of the Platform is to share and communicate this knowledge and commitment. It aims to help its 40 donor members ensure every dollar invested is a dollar invested well.

The Platform acts in three ways.

- It helps shape the thinking, policies and programming of the global donor community on food systems and rural development to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, and longer-term prosperity and sustainability.
- It brokers the sharing of the evidence, lessons, insights and technical expertise necessary for donors to align their efforts, learn from each other, and improve the impact of their policies and programmes related to food systems and rural development.
- It strengthens networking, relationships and communication between donors and other actors as a foundation for collaboration and innovation.

Communication is at the heart of what the Platform does. During 2022, the GDPRD implemented a new and vigorous communication plan, aiming to deliver messages in ways that are focused, short, interesting and, above all, readable. A new visual identity was created and its website redesigned to enable the GDPRD to be a plain-speaking entry point into the issues and thinking shaping rural development today.

The GDPRD launched a series of podcasts and member interviews, and redesigned its knowledge hubs. The results have been encouraging: more people visit the website, they view more pages and they stay markedly longer. The number of people following the Platform on social media has surged.

Modern communication tools and hybrid online/in-person formats allow the Platform to bring experts and beneficiaries together.

The aim is to make the Platform and its content an essential tool for members. It should be a place where they can find and access the knowledge generated by each other, and connect. The GDPRD convenes events on topical issues, such as the implementation challenges arising from the United Nations Food Systems Summit or the need for better data, and it publishes a growing number of documents.

Modern communication tools and hybrid online/in-person formats allow the Platform to bring experts and beneficiaries together to discuss what does and does not work, and exchange experiences and ideas.

The GDPRD is working hard to be the main platform for exchanges on rural development because, like its donors, it wants to see productive and prosperous rural communities that offer opportunities to all.

Launching the new website

The new Platform website was launched in October 2022. It is designed to be clear, concise and user-friendly. It is written in English, but is intended for people from around the world, who may be reading in their second, third or fourth language. It aims to make complex ideas clear and to make it easy for visitors to find what they are looking for.

To find out about the Platform, visitors can look at the website's history, objectives and members sections.

There is a resources section where visitors can search for information about any aspect of the GDPRD's activities.

There are also knowledge hubs for each of the three thematic working groups: the Global Donor Working Group on Land, the Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment and the SDG 2 Road Map Working Group. These hubs include minutes of the group's meetings, documents and presentations on relevant issues.

For members keen to participate in the Platform's activities, there is a calendar, and news and publications sections.

Perhaps equally important, the site is carefully maintained and kept up to date, and its content is regularly updated with new reports and information. The site grows as the GDPRD's work progresses, and as members acquire new knowledge and experience to share.

Developing the Food Systems Recommendations Database

The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit was a turning point in terms of views regarding rural development. It marked a shift in thinking towards a more all-embracing view that takes climate change and environmental concerns into account, and pays particular attention to the needs of women, youth and indigenous peoples. Increasingly, small producers are seen as part of a complex food system that must be reshaped to ensure fair rewards for producers, and healthy and nutritious food for consumers.

To help collate this body of necessary knowledge as it builds up, in 2022 the GDPRD set out to create a Food Systems Recommendations Database.

While the summit sketched out the goals of this new approach, it also highlighted huge deficits in data and knowledge, and left much of the 'how' to be worked out by those seeking to bring about the changes desired.

To help collate this body of necessary knowledge as it builds up, in 2022 the GDPRD set out to create a Food Systems Recommendations Database. Launched in October, it is the first step for anyone seeking to discover the recommendations made by key global reports in relation to food systems transformation.

By providing rapid access to key reports and their conclusions, the database helps practitioners, policymakers and researchers identify and access the most relevant sources as quickly as possible. By sorting recommendations or conclusions into thematic areas, such as gender, environment and resilience, it also helps them quickly pick out what is relevant and avoid wasting time on what is not.

2022 in a nutshell

Four
Board
meetings

Twelve
Board
members

Three
special events
organized by
thematic working
groups

Two
co-chairs

Fifteen
thematic working
group meetings

Four
Platform
members

Four
high-level events
and round tables

One
Annual General
Assembly

February

Board meeting

SDG 2 Road Map Working Group virtual workshop
“Ceres2030: Stocktaking and brainstorming on future action and initiatives”

April

High-level event “The increasing imperative for resilient food systems in times of conflict and crisis: What can donors do?”

Launch of white paper *Transforming Food Systems: Directions for enhancing the catalytic role of donors*

May

Round table on the food, fuel and fertilizer crisis

The Global Donor Working Group on Land celebrates the ten-year anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security

June

AGA with special high-level session on donor crisis response initiatives

Informal Board meeting

July

Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment webinar
“Green jobs for rural youth in agri-food systems”

September

Round table on what drives donor commitments when reshaping food systems financing in a crisis and post-crisis environment

October

Senior Managers Meeting

Launch of new website and recommendations database

December

Virtual seminar and new workstream: “The emerging needs and opportunities for a coordinated donor response to food systems transformation in difficult times”

Board meeting



Looking ahead

With its new, highly functional website in place and its knowledge database established, the GDPRD is now positioned to become a nexus for ideas and information on the new development agenda of food systems transformation. Looking ahead to 2023, the GDPRD is working to develop thinking and knowledge in three new areas vital to reshaping food systems.

Donor coordination on food systems transformation workstream

The Platform's 2022 AGA identified country-level donor coordination as a key theme for donors. The immense diversity of food production, distribution and consumption patterns and practices around the world means there is no simple solution to the challenge. Rather, donors need to assist national governments in striving to design a programme of actions that can advance rural development, environmental protection, and the nutrition and food security of their citizens. Putting our heads together will enable the provision of more and higher-quality support.

Innovative finance workstream

The *Ceres2030: Sustainable solutions to end hunger* report called for a doubling of investments in food systems, to reach a total of US\$28 billion a year. Since official development assistance budgets are unlikely to expand to this extent, donors clearly need to work more closely with other sources of finance, leveraging their own investments with external funding. The GDPRD has set up a finance workstream to explore opportunities and mechanisms that can help increase funding, and to build stronger links with funding institutions.

Strengthening the focus on data

The 2023 programme started on 13 February with a hybrid event that focused on the challenge of improving the quality of data available to donors and other stakeholders as they design policies and programmes. The event was called “Assessing the data ‘quantum’ leap in agriculture and food systems”, and was organized by the European Commission, IFAD, the GDPRD and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. A report on the event is available online.¹⁰

¹⁰ GDPRD, “Assessing the Data ‘Quantum’ Leap in Agriculture and Food Systems”, accessed 8 June 2023, <https://www.donorplatform.org/news-and-op-eds/assessing-the-data-quantum-leap-in-agriculture-and-food-systems/>.

Celebrating the Platform’s 20th anniversary

The GDPRD celebrates its 20th birthday in 2023. Many other initiatives have withered in the past two decades. What sets the GDPRD apart?



“ [T]he group has proved its value by providing space and opportunities for different actors in rural youth to share their views, methodologies, results and lessons learned. This strengthens partnerships and coordination among the group’s members.

Elisenda Estruch Puertas

new Co-Chair of the Platform’s Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment



“ This is a great platform ... not where agriculture people talk to each other but a place about rural resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation, natural resources, biodiversity, income and jobs in rural places, and digitalization.

Sebastian Lesch

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, GDPRD Board member

“ The new Donor Platform website has collected good guidance to help us on food systems approaches. Here, I listen to the voices of FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations], the World Bank and the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development], for ideas where we need to look at more and that will direct the future for us.



Elisabeth Simelton

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, GDPRD member



“ It is only through this support from donors that marginal communities get to be more included and that farmers get access to some of the technologies to improve yields and raise productivity that can help deal with food security and poverty reduction.

Agnes Kalibata

President of AGRA, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit

“ Through coordination and cooperation, you may prevent local governments from moving into directions which are not sustainable in the long run.



Johan Swinnen

Global Director of Systems Transformation, Director-General of International Food Policy Research Institute

“ We must work to build more effective multilateralism, including via platforms such as the GDPRD - but this ... needs commitment at the highest levels within our own organizations.



Tristan Armstrong

GDPRD Co-Chair



Annex I

List of Platform members in 2022

African Development Bank Group

Asian Development Bank

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Austrian Development Agency

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency

European Commission

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Austria

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, United Kingdom

French Development Agency

German Agency for International Cooperation

Global Affairs Canada

Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to
Combat Desertification

IFAD

Inter-American Development Bank



International Development Research Centre

International Trade Centre

Irish Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs

Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

KfW Development Bank

Korea International Cooperation Agency

Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland

Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Belgium

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Spain

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands

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 Trade Organization

Annex II

Contributions

Donor	Net contribution received (EUR)
Australia	46 000.00
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	55 007.47
European Commission	46 000.00
Finland	46 000.00
France	46 000.00
Germany	49 601.00
IFAD	50 000.00
Italy	46 000.00
Netherlands*	—
Switzerland	46 000.00
United Kingdom	52 755.37
United States*	—
Total contributions	483 363.84

* The 2022 contributions from the Netherlands and the United States will be combined with the 2023 membership fees.

Annex III**Secretariat's 2022
expenditures,
by category**

Description	Amount (EUR)
AGA	29 520.00
Communication	35 452.16
Consultancies	147 954.01
Events	4 527.72
IT/administration	27 638.50
Miscellaneous	1 682.09
Staff and internships	364 437.71
Total expenditure	611 212.19



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Platform for Rural Development**

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