

YEAR IN REVIEW

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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## Catalysing Systemic Change for Rural Development and Food Systems Transformation

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Global Donor Platform  
for Rural Development

## Acknowledgements

The 2021 edition of the Annual Report of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) was produced by the GDPRD Secretariat, hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), under the coordination of Maurizio Navarra, Secretariat Coordinator. The document was drafted by Mandakini D. Surie, Senior Consultant. The report was graphically designed and laid out by Sarah Viñas, Graphic Design Consultant, under the coordination of Michelle Tang, Communications Coordination Analyst in the GDPRD Secretariat. It was edited and galley proofed with the support of the Communications Division of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

April 2022

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***The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development*** (GDPRD or “the Platform”) is a network of 40 bilateral and multilateral donors, international financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, foundations, and development agencies. It was established in 2003 following the First High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2002, bringing together donors that share a common vision on the role of agriculture, food systems and rural development in tackling global poverty and hunger. —>



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- AGA**  
Annual General Assembly
- COVID-19**  
Coronavirus disease
- FAO**  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- FSS**  
Food Systems Summit
- GDPRD**  
Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
- GDWGL**  
Global Donor Working Group on Land
- GIZ**  
German Agency for International Cooperation
- IFAD**  
International Fund for Agricultural Development
- RYE**  
Rural Youth Employment
- SDG**  
Sustainable Development Goal
- USAID**  
United States Agency for International Development

(Continued)

In addition to its Board and other members, the Platform is supported through the contributions of several institutions that participate in Annual General Assemblies (AGAs), meetings and thematic working groups. These institutions are committed to achieving increased and more effective aid and donor investments in agriculture and rural development through strategic influencing, knowledge-sharing and networking, to improve synergy and donor alignment on critical issues.

The work of the GDPRD sits at the intersection of a set of critical global issues that have a profound impact on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and longer-term human prosperity and security. Delivering sufficient nutritionally diverse, safe and sustainably produced food to consumers in urban and rural areas is one of the most critically important challenges the world faces. At the same time, globally, vast numbers of people in rural areas continue to face poverty, inequality and vulnerability, and there is potential for widespread humanitarian crises, social and political instability, and migration pressures. These challenges have been exacerbated by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The GDPRD plays a key role in supporting donors in synergizing and aligning their thinking and investment strategies by helping to ensure that food and rural development issues are appropriately prioritized in overall development financing; by identifying proactive and timely responses to emerging issues and crises; and by enabling donors to learn from each

other's policy and programming experiences. The Platform strives towards these goals by convening donor organizations that make substantive investments in agriculture, rural development and food systems, to exchange information, discuss emerging priorities and determine effective strategies.

**The Platform is currently structured as follows:**

The Platform has a **Board**,<sup>1</sup> its main decision-making body, which comprises the focal points of all Platform members that pay an agreed annual membership fee (currently amounting to EUR 50,000 per member).

The Platform has **Co-Chairs**,<sup>2</sup> who are elected *ad personam* by the Board members and serve for two years. The Platform Co-Chairs also serve as Chairs of the Board.

**The Secretariat** is the Platform's management unit. It supports the implementation of the annual work programme, for which it has executive authority. It currently comprises three full-time staff members: a Secretariat Coordinator, a Communications Coordinator and an Administrative Assistant. Since 2020, the Secretariat has been hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, Italy.

<sup>1</sup> Current Board members are Australia, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United States and the United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> The current Co-Chairs are the European Commission and Australia.

**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. The Platform's members share a common commitment to and vision for the realization of SDG 2 (zero hunger) and recognize the constructive and effective role that donors can play in supporting and enabling food systems transformation – one that secures better access to safe and nutritious food while ensuring environmental sustainability to safeguard the food security, health, well-being and livelihoods of rural communities.

**Mission**

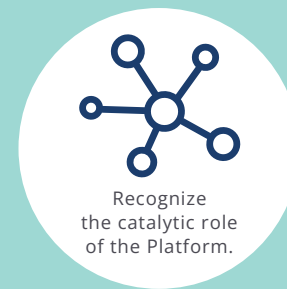
**Brokering donor collaboration for impact:** The Platform brokers donor collaboration to enhance the impact of their policies, investments and programmes on food systems and rural development. The Platform's mission statement reflects the key role of investments in food systems and rural development, as well as the critical role of the Platform and its members in ensuring that food systems and rural development issues remain a high priority for donors, governments and other key actors.



**Objectives**

The Platform has three distinct yet complementary objectives that recognize the catalytic role of the Platform in informing donor policy, programming and investment in food systems and rural development. The Platform seeks to achieve its vision and mission through:

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



## MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS



**Tristan Armstrong**

Senior Sector Specialist,  
Agricultural Development  
and Food Security,  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
and Trade (DFAT), Australia

THE 2021 UNITED NATIONS FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT (FSS) FOCUSED GLOBAL attention on the food systems agenda and the critical interconnections between agriculture, health, nutrition, poverty, biodiversity and climate change.

We must now take forward the momentum of the Summit and ensure it does not become a lost opportunity.

Over the past year, the GDPRD has been strongly engaged on the food systems agenda and has made valuable contributions to the Summit. The debates within and supported by the Platform - including the high-level event before the FSS - were very constructive and well received. In 2022, we have an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the Summit and to determine where the global donor community can make the greatest contribution.

Looking back almost 20 years to 2003 when the Platform was established, we see that the fundamental challenges of rural development remain. Rural populations across many parts of the world still suffer significant poverty, malnutrition and a lack of basic economic opportunity. And today, climate change is emerging as perhaps the greatest threat rural populations have ever faced. The mandate of the Platform and our collective efforts have never been more relevant.

The Platform has a clear role to play in continuing to focus global attention on the challenges of rural development, which remain front and centre in discussions on food systems transformation.

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**We must now take forward the momentum of the Summit and ensure it does not become a lost opportunity.**

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**Conrad Rein**

Policy Officer,  
Directorate-General for  
International Partnerships  
(DG INTPA), European  
Commission

2021 WAS AN IMPORTANT YEAR FOR THE GDPRD AS WE ENGAGED INTENSIVELY on the food systems agenda. The Platform's [Declaration of Intent on Food Systems Transformation](#) and the GDPRD [Stocktaking Report on Donor Contributions to Food Systems](#) made critical contributions to the United Nations Food Systems Summit. These contributions were well received, highlighting the strong convening power of the Platform and its capacity to foster dialogue between donors on critical food systems issues.

Building on this momentum, in 2022 the Platform will publish a white paper that will identify future strategies and investment options to guide donors and identify concrete recommendations for the role the Platform can play in the future. The Platform's AGA will take place again in 2022. It will certainly take discussions on country-level national pathways to food systems transformation to the next stage. And the AGA will address issues of donor coordination, leveraging donor finance, and the need for improved data and evidence to inform decision-making and investments on food systems.

Organizationally, the Platform is well positioned, with a fully staffed Secretariat that has been very proactive in engaging donor members, coordinating the activities of the Platform's thematic working groups and building the profile of the Platform. A key focus and agenda for the Platform in 2022 will be to increase its board membership and resource base, and to continue to work strategically with its members to share information on donor priorities and strategies while engaging and communicating more proactively with the wider development community.

The GDPRD clearly heads into 2022 with energy, enthusiasm, and a shared commitment among its donor members to make a meaningful contribution to the global discourse on food systems transformation, the SDGs and Agenda 2030 - paying particular attention to rural youth and women.

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**2021 was an important year for the GDPRD as we engaged intensively on the food systems agenda.**

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## CATALYSING DONOR ENGAGEMENT FOR FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

In 2021, guided by a new *Strategic Plan 2021-2025*, the Platform adopted a new vision that advocates a radical transformation of global food systems to achieve better access to safe and nutritious food, improved environmental sustainability and more prosperous rural communities. →

The Platform’s vision recognizes that pathways to achieve “zero hunger” must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, centred on the capacity of agriculture and rural livelihoods to generate economic growth and employment, to address inequalities and to underpin national, regional and global food and nutrition security. The Platform’s new vision represents its recognition of the critical and catalytic role of donors in driving decisions and investments towards food systems transformation.



“We cannot continue as if things are the same. Of all the food systems actors, donors have the greatest ability to turbo change action, to address this runaway hunger and malnutrition.”

Jemimah Njuki,  
IFPRI, keynote speaker

### GDPRD contributions to the United Nations Food Systems Summit

Building on the Platform’s vision, in 2021 the Platform and its members were involved in preparations for the *United Nations Food Systems Summit* (FSS). The FSS was held in New York on 23-24 September as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Described as a “people’s summit” and held entirely virtually, the FSS focused on concrete solutions that mobilize all players – from producers to consumers – to act in transforming the world’s food systems. Through the year, the Platform organized a series of meetings and discussions to galvanize donor members’ views towards a focused engagement by the Platform in the FSS (see figure 1).

### Stocktaking report and high-level event on the role of donors in food systems transformation

In the lead-up to the FSS, the GDPRD, the European Commission, IFAD and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized a high-level event, *Leveraging Change: The Role of Donors in Food Systems Transformation*, on 9 September 2021.<sup>3</sup> The event focused on the critical role of donors in supporting food systems transformation through their investments in initiatives and programmes that build the foundation for collaborative efforts across food systems. The event included a high-level panel discussion, where speakers emphasized the need for donors to go beyond individual priorities to focus on

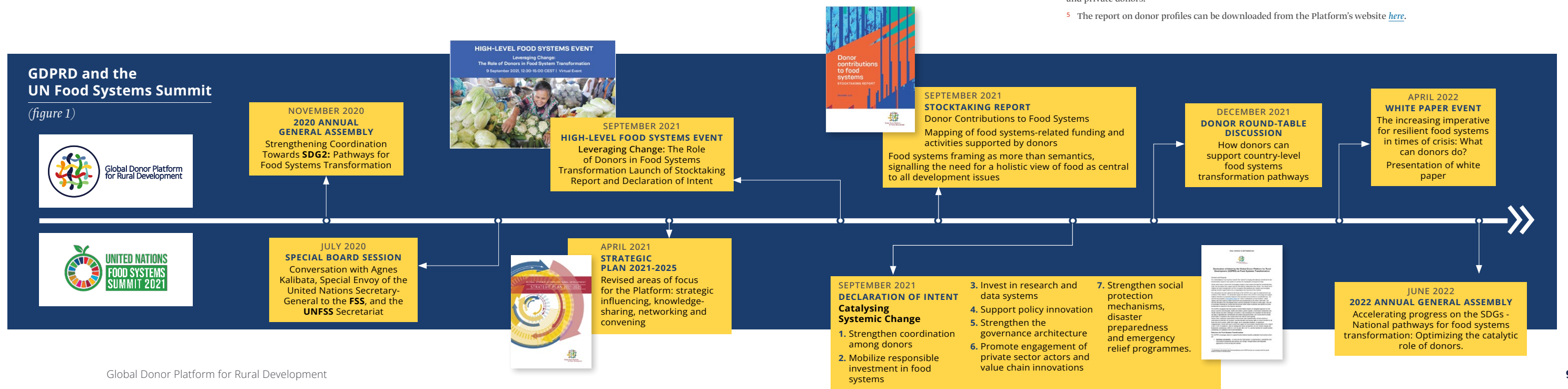
#### BOX 1: Key messages from the GDPRD stocktaking report

- Food systems framing:** Food systems framing is more than semantics. Most donors are integrating a food systems framing into their policies and programming, but it is early days, and implementing partners may not be taking this approach.
- Breadth of funding:** A modest proportion (8 per cent) of total aid activity recorded in the Creditor Reporting System goes to food systems investments, but this is critical to many food systems initiatives. Total aid activity is very small relative to the total value of investments in the agriculture and food sectors.
- Scope of funding:** A vast range of initiatives are supported across all food systems areas, from local to global levels. The bulk of funding goes to in-country programming.
- Role in global response:** Donor funding is crucial for global agenda-setting coordination and research, and for cross-country engagement and learning.
- Coordination:** Despite the Paris Declaration, donor coordination remains a challenge. Trends are towards bilateralism, which increases coordination challenges.
- Resilience:** Resilience, particularly in relation to climate change and COVID-19, will become more important.
- Catalysing systemic change:** Food systems transformation hinges on broad political and economic changes related to markets, incentives, investments, trade and policies. Donor funds make a unique contribution to change processes.

country needs, work towards building ownership of national government-led agendas, catalyse additional financing, build synergies to target investments, and collaborate and innovate to drive the food systems agenda forward.

At the event, the Platform launched a stocktaking report on *Donor Contributions to Food Systems*.<sup>4</sup> The report provides an overview of the scale of food systems-related funding and actions currently supported by donors, and assesses the degree to which donors are adopting a food systems framing to guide their investments and programmes. It also looks at how donor programmes and investments align with the FSS Action Tracks (see box 1 for key messages from the report). In addition to the report, the GDPRD also prepared a compilation of donor profiles, strategies, approaches and the types of investments they make individually in food systems.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A full report of the high-level event is available [here](#).  
<sup>4</sup> The report is based on analysis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS), interviews with donors who are members of the GDPRD, and assessment of donor websites. The analysis for the report also compiled over 700 recommendations from some 30 reports related to food systems, agriculture and nutrition. In addition, interviews were conducted with representatives of 17 GDPRD members. These included 11 bilateral donor or implementing agencies and 6 multilateral and private donors.  
<sup>5</sup> The report on donor profiles can be downloaded from the Platform’s website [here](#).





## Declaration of Intent on Food Systems Transformation

On the occasion of the FSS, the GDPRD released a [Declaration of Intent on Food Systems Transformation](#) that underscores the integrated approach needed to tackle issues of poverty and inequality, health and nutrition, gender equality, environment, biodiversity loss, climate change and other challenges. It emphasizes the important role that donors can play in supporting the commitments and actions of governments, civil society and the private sector in response to the Summit and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Through the Declaration of Intent, the GDPRD encourages donors to support transformations towards sustainable food systems that are nutritious and healthy, inclusive, environmentally sustainable and resilient. A food systems approach requires the articulation and integration of relevant sector policies at different scales of action. It calls for donors to be more holistic and integrated in

### BOX 2

#### Key Action Areas for Donors in Catalysing Systemic Change on Food Systems Transformation

**Strengthen coordination among donors and other actors** at all levels to improve alignment or complementarity of programmes and enable country-led and country-owned development processes. This should include supporting policy- and decision-making forums and coalitions at the regional and global levels that strengthen North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

**Mobilize responsible investment in food systems** from the public and private sectors to put in place the infrastructure, institutions, research and development, innovation and other capacities needed for a sustainable food systems transformation. Donors have a particular role in helping to de-risk sustainable investment, including by supporting blended financing, and in promoting responsible

investment by private financiers and public development banks in line with the [Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems](#) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

**Invest in research and data systems** needed to drive sustainable innovation, track changes in food system outcomes, assess future risks, monitor progress and ensure accountability. Donors can help to ensure that research and data-gathering, with due regard to data privacy, are gender-oriented and disaggregated by sex and age to improve the understanding of individual-level and demographic constraints and opportunities. Particular attention needs to be paid to the capabilities and engagement of the CGIAR consortium and national agricultural research

systems (NARS), along with regional and global research networks, and to integrating traditional and indigenous knowledge.

**Support policy innovation at the national and global levels** to help foster an improved enabling environment and appropriate incentives for food systems transformation, underpinned by strong science-policy interfaces. Of particular relevance are policy measures with the potential to incentivize progress towards desired food system outcomes. Donors can support analysis and intergovernmental learning for policy transitions.

#### Strengthen the governance architecture for food systems

at all scales to enhance appropriate stakeholder consultation and decision-making processes, and civil society engagement, underpinned by equitable participation and human rights. Donors can support a focus on the important role of local governments, locally led development and cooperation between territorial entities.

**Promote engagement of private sector actors and value chain innovation** to support the efforts of businesses, improve the co-design of policy mechanisms between businesses, government and other stakeholders, improve training and economic opportunities for small-scale producers, women and youth, and promote sustainable consumption and production. Donors can support initiatives that encourage the integration of sustainable, equitable and transparent practices along the whole value chain.

#### Strengthen social protection mechanisms, disaster preparedness and emergency relief programmes

to ensure that groups experiencing poverty and/or vulnerable situations have greater access to safe and nutritious foods, and are not being left behind economically, with attention to the anticipatory actions needed for enhanced resilience of food systems. Donors can also support improved coordination between humanitarian, development and security-related interventions.

their programming, and to focus on systemic change in the way they work with partners. It also requires donors to support better policy coherence across sectors in their partner countries. To help achieve the above directions for food systems transformation, the GDPRD has committed to working with the donor community and other key food systems actors to facilitate coordination and investment across an integrated set of pathways for action at all levels, considering the outcomes of the FSS (*see box 2 for action areas for donors*).

## Follow-up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit

As a follow-up event to the FSS, on 21 December 2021 the Platform organized a virtual round table on [Supporting Country-level Food Systems Transformation Pathways: What Can Donors Do Differently?](#) The round table highlighted the valuable role of the FSS in bringing together stakeholders from different sectors, ministries and countries to cooperate on food systems transformation challenges. It provided clear messages about how donors can support the development of detailed national pathways to guide action, and help maintain the momentum and the direction of the FSS.

The GDPRD is now finalizing a white paper on Transforming Food Systems: Directions for Enhancing the Catalytic Role of Donors, which will focus on future strategies and investment options to guide donors in following up on Summit pathways. Key areas of attention in the white paper include: (i) strengthening coordination; (ii) mobilizing public and private sector investment; (iii) strengthening research and data; (iv) supporting policy innovation and governance; (v) engaging the private sector; and (vi) enhancing social protection.

The white paper will build on the theory of change around food systems transformation and reflect on what that means for the donor community. It will conclude with concrete recommendations for donors, as well as on the role the Platform can play. It will be released in April, ahead of the Platform's 2022 AGA which is set to take place in June.



**“The Summit has galvanized a huge level of engagement around food systems across governments, civil society, business and science. To maintain and build on this momentum will require a focus on processes at the national level to develop viable transformation pathways. Effective national processes will require improved stakeholder engagement, cross-ministerial working, ramping up public education, and greater capability for partnership development, and this must be underpinned by enhanced science and research. The GDPRD has a clear role to play in galvanizing discussions among donors on how their investments and interventions can be more effective, and in 2022 the Platform is well positioned to do this.”**

**Jim Woodhill,**  
Senior Advisor, GDPRD



## THE PLATFORM IN ACTION

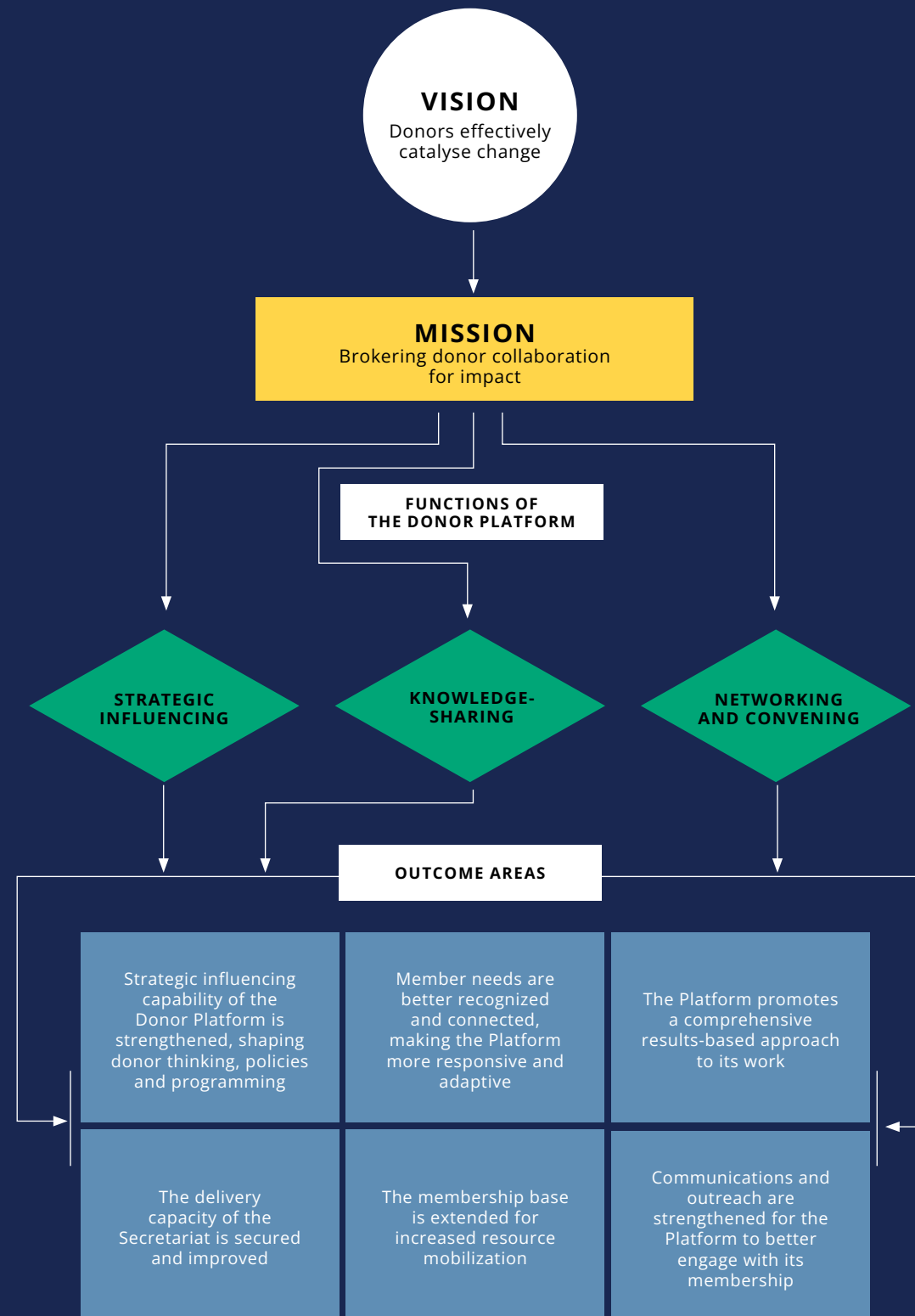
### A new strategic and results-based approach

Following the transition of the Platform Secretariat from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development [Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung] (BMZ) to IFAD in 2020,<sup>6</sup> a key focus of the GDPRD Board and Secretariat in 2021 has been on strengthening organizational systems and processes within the Platform to deliver on a more focused, strategic and results-oriented mandate. —→



## The Platform in Action

(figure 2)



Guided by the Platform's new Strategic Plan, the Secretariat developed a *results-based work plan* with clear indicators, outputs, outcomes and measurable targets. The work plan outlines six key outcome areas: (i) strengthening the Platform's strategic influencing capability; (ii) connecting with member needs and being more responsive; (iii) diversifying operational modalities; (iv) improving the delivery capacity of the Secretariat; (v) increasing the membership base to secure more resources; and (vi) improving communications and outreach (see figure 2).

### Governance and membership

During the year, there were notable changes to the Platform's Board, as David Hegwood, Senior Advisor, Global Engagement, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, USAID, and Paul van de Logt, Head of Food Security and Nutrition, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands, stepped down as Co-Chairs at the end of July 2021. Conrad Rein, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) from the European Commission, continued in his role as Co-Chair, together with Tristan Armstrong, Senior Sector Specialist, Agricultural Development and Food Security, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia, who stepped in as Co-Chair in August 2021. The number of members of the Platform remained steady at 40, even as the Secretariat continued to work towards broadening the Platform's membership (see annex 1 for a list of Platform members).

In keeping with the Strategic Plan, in 2021 there was a strong focus on strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat to deliver more effectively on its mandate and engage more effectively with members. To this end, the Secretariat was fully staffed in 2021 with three full-time staff positions, two internships and several short-term consultants. This included the recruitment of a new Communications Coordination Analyst to support the Platform's communication and outreach with its members, and a Senior Consultant to support the Platform's engagement and contributions to the FSS.

In the first meeting of its kind, the Platform hosted a *Senior Managers Meeting* on 7 September 2021, which brought together senior managers from Board organizations responsible for food systems, agriculture and rural development. The discussion focused on the changing role of donors in supporting food systems transformation and achievement of the SDGs, developing a framework for an aligned donor response to the outcomes of the FSS, and an agreed role for the GPRD in this context. Finally, pathways and opportunities to realize the potential of the GPRD and deliver on the objectives of its new strategy were discussed.

<sup>6</sup> From 2003 to 2019, the Platform Secretariat was hosted by BMZ and administered by the German Agency for International Cooperation [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit] (GIZ) in Bonn, Germany. In January 2020, the Secretariat functions of the Platform transitioned from GIZ to IFAD in Rome, Italy.

On 21 September 2021 the Platform Secretariat also organized a meeting bringing together the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the thematic working groups. The meeting was held with the objective of fostering greater dialogue and engagement between thematic working groups. Key takeaways from the discussion included focusing efforts on increasing communication between the working groups and between the groups and the Board, improving the visibility of the work of the groups, including through the Platform website and other outreach platforms, and events such as the AGA. There was also consensus on the need to work towards more results- and outcome-focused programming in the future.

### Communications and outreach

All GDPRD communications in 2021 were developed in line with the principles of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The Platform's communications focus in 2021 revolved around the food systems agenda and SDG 2 (zero hunger). The Platform engaged in the development and production of knowledge products that served as inputs to the Summit, including the report on Donor Contributions to Food Systems, the Declaration of Intent, as well as the high-level food systems event. A special interview series on members and partners, a monthly newsletter and an [opinion article](#) provided further outreach around food systems.

Post-Summit communications included the donor round table on Country-level Food System Transformation Pathways, and a focus on the finalization of the GDPRD white paper on donor coordination. Beyond the FSS, the Platform has also been intensively engaged in its outreach to members throughout the year. The Platform [website](#) continued to spotlight our members' and partners' work around food systems and rural development. In 2021, thematic working groups have been particularly active, with [Rural Youth Employment](#) and [Land Governance](#) releasing newly designed web pages.

The year ended with new projects ready for 2022 - a communications strategy update, a new website with a modernized visual identity, and a sharpened approach to communications - to ensure members are well informed on discussions and policies within the rural development community.

### Partnerships in a virtual age

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to influence the way the Platform operates and engages with its members. While there are undoubtedly some efficiency gains from engaging virtually, for a partnership platform such as the GDPRD, going virtual has to some extent come at the cost of a lesser depth and breadth of engagement and discussion. Acknowledging this, in 2021 the Platform took the difficult decision to postpone the AGA to 2022, in the hope and expectation that it may be held as a hybrid virtual and in-person event.

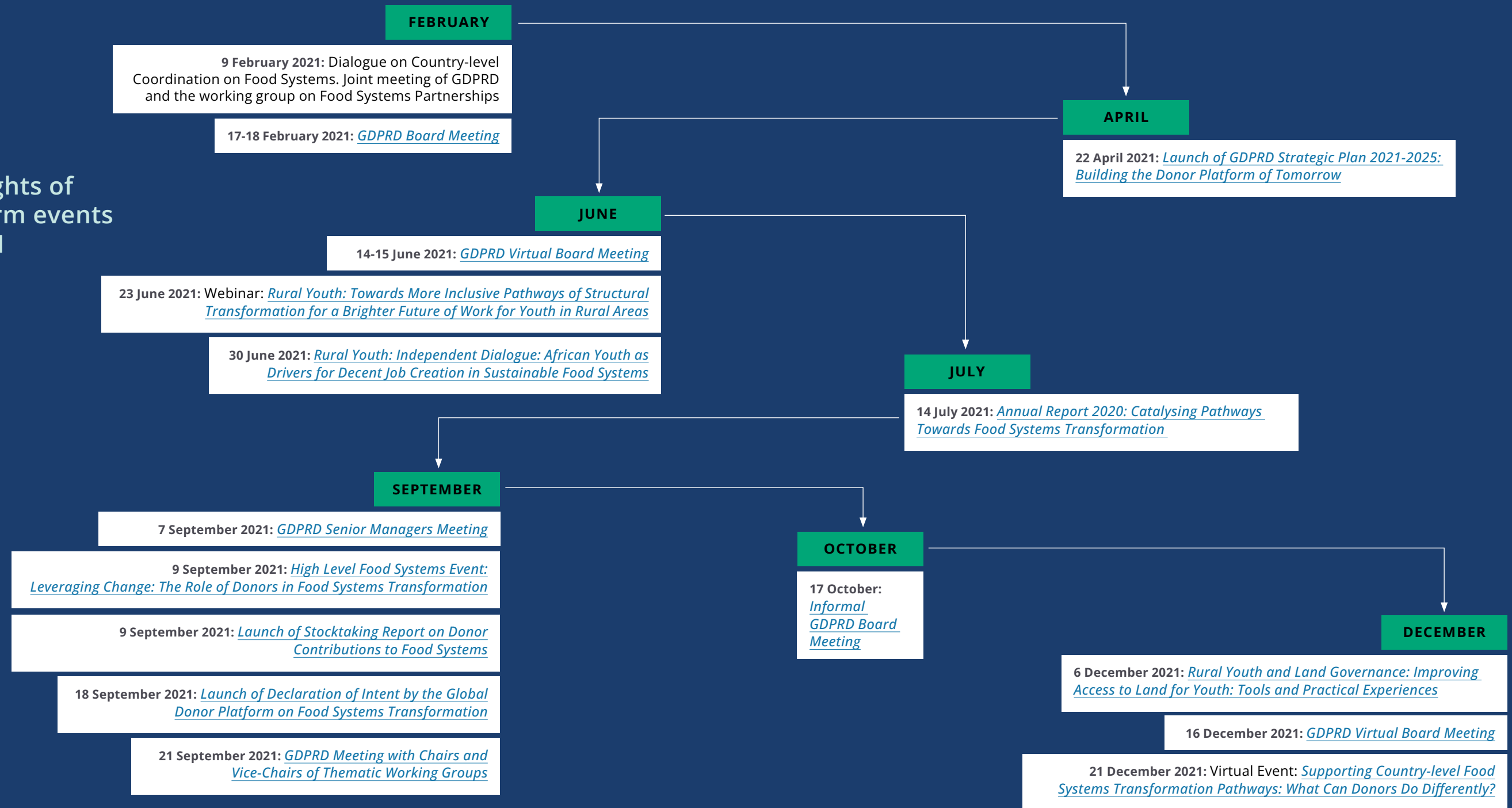
Despite the virtual environment, donors have continued to support the Platform, and there has been interest in the Platform and its activities from traditional and non-traditional donors. Over the past year, the Secretariat has been working hard to engage with new donors and bring in new members to the Board. Donor contributions to the Platform have remained steady, and the Secretariat is working towards a revived resource mobilization strategy. The donors' continued and renewed interest in the Platform and its activities is encouraging and signals recognition of the valuable role that the Platform can play in bringing donor voices to the table to discuss common issues and perspectives on the food systems and SDG 2 agendas.





YEAR IN REVIEW

Highlights of Platform events in 2021



2021 in Numbers



**THEMATIC  
WORK AREAS**

The GDPRD's *thematic working groups* provide a forum for donors to convene and discuss programmatic and institutional innovations and priorities in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Platform's thematic areas of focus are clustered around three thematic issues that are at the heart of food systems transformation: (i) Agenda 2030 and SDG 2; (ii) Land Governance; and (iii) Rural Youth Employment. —→



## Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal 2 Road Map Working Group

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP LEADS: USAID (CO-CHAIR) AND BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION (CO-CHAIR)



“Beyond the Food Systems Summit, looking at how donors are contributing towards food systems transformation and the SDGs will be one of the key focuses for the SDG Working Group.”

**David Hegwood,**

USAID, Co-Chair, SDG 2 Road Map Working Group



“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, Co-Chair, SDG 2 Road Map Working Group

A thematic working group of the GDPRD since 2019, the [SDG 2 Road Map Working Group](#) is an informal group of senior officials from different donor agencies that are active in agriculture and food and nutrition security. Co-chaired by USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the group shares a common vision for eliminating rural poverty, hunger and malnutrition through sustainable agriculture. It has come together to identify the obstacles to achieving SDG 2 and what needs to be done to address them through cooperative action.

The group's focus is to work towards developing consensus among donors on a road map for achieving SDG 2 that will: (i) develop an evidence base for improved decision-making; (ii) provide a framework for coordination on key action areas; and (iii) generate political support and mobilize funding for agriculture and food and nutrition security. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the group has also been focusing on the issue of the long-term impacts of the pandemic on food security and nutrition.

In 2021, the FSS was a key focus for the SDG 2 Working Group, with members contributing and providing input to Platform discussions that led to the development of the Platform's Declaration of Intent and donor stocktaking report. Two landmark initiatives of the group - the [50x2030 initiative](#), which has developed an evidence base of data that countries can use to achieve SDG 2, and the [Ceres2030](#) initiative,<sup>7</sup> which has developed a cost estimate for achieving SDGs 2.3 and 2.4 by 2030 - provided critical inputs into the FSS.

Both initiatives have illustrated the critical need for and importance of more data-driven and evidence-based approaches to donor investments in food systems and nutrition. Notably, the Ending Hunger Coalition that emerged from the FSS drew intensively on the findings of the Ceres2030 report.

In 2022, as a follow-up to the FSS, the SDG 2 Working Group will focus on three core issues: (i) how donors are contributing to delivering on their commitments towards SDG 2 in the aftermath of the FSS; (ii) whether the existing agricultural development institution architecture to achieve SDG 2 is fit for purpose; and (iii) working towards a common metrics and results framework on SDG 2.

In early 2022, the group will also convene a workshop with the Ceres2030 initiative to review the project and its outcomes and determine common priorities, goals and objectives in taking the initiative forward. Building on the momentum of the FSS, the SDG 2 Working Group is also looking to revitalize discussions within the group and identify ways to advocate and support evidence- and data-driven approaches to pathways to achieving SDG 2.

<sup>7</sup> Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development [Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung] (BMZ).

## Land Governance Thematic Working Group

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP LEADS: USAID (CHAIR) AND THE NETHERLANDS (VICE-CHAIR)



“How land is allocated, used and managed is at the heart of rural development challenges and solutions. It is essential that donors see land governance as a fundamental cross-cutting issue that supports multiple global agendas, including critical concerns such as poverty eradication, climate change and sustainable food systems.”

**Karol Boudreaux,**

USAID, Chair, GDWGL

The [Global Donor Working Group on Land](#) (GDWGL) is a network of 29 bilateral and multilateral donors and international organizations cooperating on land governance issues worldwide. Through its activities, the GDWGL works to facilitate knowledge-sharing and coordination among donors dedicated to land governance, and strongly advocates the recognition of the substantial role of land issues in achieving the SDGs.<sup>8</sup>

In 2021, at an organizational level, the tenure of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as Chair of the group ended in June. The role of Chair was assumed by USAID, and that of Vice-Chair by the Netherlands, in October 2021. The Netherlands will assume chairmanship of the GDWGL in October 2022.

During the year, the GDWGL continued to bring together key donors, partners and actors in the land community with a presence at the global, regional and national levels. As an input to the FSS and in collaboration with the FAO, the International Land Coalition and the Global Land Tool Network, the GDWGL developed a policy paper on [Land Tenure and Sustainable Agri-Food Systems](#). The report consolidates lessons from existing evidence that demonstrates the role of equitable access to land and tenure security in achieving sustainable food systems transformation and, subsequently, the importance of these rights for the overall achievement of the SDGs. In doing so, it seeks to highlight the importance of tenure security for sustainable agrifood systems up the policy agenda. The GDWGL has been in conversation with the FSS Secretariat to connect the activities of the GDWGL to the national pathways for food systems transformation that are being formulated at the country level.

The GDWGL collaborated with the Platform's Rural Youth Employment Thematic Working Group to jointly organize an event on 6 December 2021, as a part of the GIZ Land Hub Conference. The event, [Improving Access to Land for Youth: Tools and Practical Experiences](#), focused on key issues and pathways for rural youth to access land, particularly in Africa, as well as best-practice tools to promote land access for youth. The event emphasized the extensive crossover between land governance and youth employment, and how the two issues can be addressed simultaneously.

<sup>8</sup> The GDWGL was established by the global donor community following the endorsement of the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security](#) in 2012.

Looking ahead to 2022, a key focus for the GDWGL will be the 10-year anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGTs). The anniversary of the VGGTs provides an important opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved and what needs to be done over the next 10 years to ensure responsible governance of tenure and equitable outcomes for land governance.

Over the past year, the GDWGL has been working on a concept note for a report on the state of land tenure and governance. The report will track progress against country-level commitments while focusing attention on the linkages between land and other development challenges. The GDWGL is also working on developing a new work plan and an updated website. There are also ongoing discussions within the group on updating its land programme map, to create an automatic update function on this overview of ongoing projects on land tenure and land governance. This is one activity with which the group also aims to strengthen country-level coordination and cooperation.



“In 2021, the Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment has been very active and engaged in highlighting issues of youth and employment and its linkages to the food systems agenda. The group has contributed significantly to the FSS and also the Committee on Food Security high-level policy process on youth employment.”

**Sven Braulik,**  
GIZ, Co-Chair

### Rural Youth Employment Thematic Working Group

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP LEADS: GIZ (CO-CHAIR) AND FAO (CO-CHAIR)

The [Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment](#) (RYE) was established in 2018<sup>9</sup> to promote meaningful youth engagement in all stages of donor initiatives in agriculture and rural development. The group functions as a donor-catalysed working group - with significant youth participation - to advise donors, governments and civil society organizations on the most effective ways to support and empower youth, enabling them to benefit from sustainable rural livelihoods and food value chains.

The RYE working group’s key objectives include: (i) exchanging evidence-based approaches and promoting learning and collaboration; (ii) promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships; and (iii) creating effective and innovative communication tools and channels for sharing knowledge and information on opportunities for rural youth. Therefore, the key focus of the group during the last year has been on knowledge exchange, networking among members and non-members, and linking to policy processes.

<sup>9</sup> The thematic working group was set up in 2018 after the GDPRD AGA and in response to the G20 Initiative on Rural Youth Employment in 2017.

In 2021, the group was intensively engaged in two policy processes - the FSS and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) workstream on youth engagement and employment. As a contribution to the FSS, on 30 June 2021 the thematic working group organized an independent dialogue on the role of youth as a driver for decent job creation in sustainable food systems, with the participation of donors, development practitioners and youth representatives. The members of the group also provided input to the development of the CFS policy recommendations for youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems. Specifically, the group is looking to develop a consolidated position to submit to the CFS, which is planning to endorse the policy recommendations in October 2022.

Over the past year, the thematic working group has been very active and has organized several meetings and webinars. The joint webinar with the GDWGL on Improving Access to Land for Youth: Tools and Practical Experiences held on 6 December 2021 at the GIZ Land Hub Conference was another key highlight, and the group will continue to look for points of convergence with the Platform's other thematic working groups.

In addition to the organization of webinars and regular meetings, the RYE working group is working to collect best practices, experiences, tools and approaches that have proven to work. There is also an ongoing stocktaking exercise to map out an overview of potential partner youth organizations and networks. Both exercises will build on and add to the GDPRD [Compendium: Donor Engagement with Rural Youth](#) and the publication on [Insights into Youth Networks](#). The working group’s webpage on the Platform’s website was updated in 2021, and the group is planning to add a knowledge hub of available resources from members to make these resources available to a broader audience.

In 2022, the group will continue to follow up on the outcomes of the FSS and the CFS policy convergence process on youth engagement and employment. The group is coordinating closely with the GDPRD Secretariat for the development of the GDPRD’s white paper on food systems transformation and will organize a session at the AGA that will focus on connecting the food systems approach and RYE approach by highlighting country-level examples. The group will also engage in an anticipated study by the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on a stocktaking of achievements and good practices under the G20 RYE Initiative. On donor engagement and coordination, the RYE thematic working group will continue to reach out to other Platform members and donors, youth networks and organizations, as well as key stakeholders such as the private sector and labour unions that are often not represented in policy processes. The group will also be working intensively towards reaching out to youth more proactively and engaging them in all its activities.



“The Food Systems Summit gave us a great opportunity for boosting the engagement and visibility of youth and bring them into the global discussion. The thematic working group worked very well as a facilitator in bringing in the engagement and the topic and youth constituency on the discussion on agrifood systems.”

**Anna Befus,**  
FAO, Co-Chair



## Looking Ahead

IN 2021, THE FSS BROUGHT GLOBAL attention to the food systems agenda and its linkages with poverty, food insecurity, health, unemployment, rural development, biodiversity loss and climate change. The processes leading up to the Summit, and the event itself, provided a space for governments, donors and other key stakeholders to engage on these issues, and elevated the understanding of how critical food systems are to achieving the SDGs. However, there has equally been disappointment that the Summit did not articulate more concrete steps, frameworks, agreements on priorities, or commitments at either national or global levels. Despite these sentiments, it cannot be denied that the Summit has brought much-needed attention to the need for integrated, inclusive and systems-based approaches to tackling the challenges that nations and the world face in dealing with food and other global issues.

Key to sustaining the energy and momentum of the Summit will be the follow-up and post-Summit processes. A clear message from the Summit in this regard is that much of the discussion on pathways to transformation must be driven by national governments, with strong engagement and support from other stakeholders that are engaged in local food systems processes. The Platform's own contributions to the FSS have highlighted the need for better data and information, greater knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices, and more effective donor engagement and synergy on programming and investments.

A key focus of the Platform in 2022 will be to build on the outcomes of the FSS, and particularly to articulate a role and contribution of donors to the pathways towards food systems transformation. In this regard, the Platform's white paper on Transforming Food Systems: Directions for Enhancing the Catalytic Role of Donors will provide a theory of change on food systems transformation, articulate the catalytic role that donors must play in supporting food systems transformation and provide concrete recommendations on the role that the Platform can play in this process.

Beyond high-level global commitments, the Platform is keen to engage much more intensively with its members and other donors on the national and country level commitments that are critical first building blocks to broader discussions. To this end, the 2022 GDPRD AGA will focus on the theme of "Accelerating progress on the SDGs - National pathways for food systems transformation: Optimizing the catalytic role of donors."<sup>10</sup> The AGA will focus on setting an action agenda for SDG 2, with special attention to the country-level pathways through donor coordination, leveraged finance and improved data. The AGA will include participants from governments, international organizations, agribusiness companies, academic and research organizations, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, civil society and farmer organizations, and will ensure special attention to the engagement and participation of women, rural youth, and smallholder farmers. The Platform's thematic working groups will each hold specific sessions on their respective themes and topics.

A platform such as the GDPRD is sustained by the depth and breadth of its members' engagement and participation. Despite two years of the pandemic and the challenges of sustaining relations and partnerships virtually, the Platform today has a vibrant and engaged donor membership that shares a common commitment to advance the rural development and food systems agenda and find effective pathways to achieving the SDGs. With this strong foundation and a fully staffed Secretariat at IFAD, and guided by a clear strategic direction, vision and mission, the GDPRD is well positioned to work more effectively with its members and the broader development community.

<sup>10</sup> The GDPRD's flagship event - the AGA - was postponed in 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Platform is currently working towards organizing a hybrid AGA, which is likely to be held in June 2022.

**A key focus of the Platform in 2022 will be to build on the outcomes of the FSS, and particularly to articulate a role and contribution of donors to the pathways towards food systems transformation.**





2021 was an important year  
for the GDPRD as we engaged intensively  
on the food systems agenda.

**Conrad Rein**

Policy Officer, Directorate-General  
for International Partnerships (DG INTPA),  
European Commission. Co-Chair of the GDPRD.



## Annex I – List of Platform Members in 2022

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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 of 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
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
Global Affairs Canada
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 and Trade
Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

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KfW Development Bank
Korea International Cooperation Agency
Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation
Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Centre
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

## Annex II – Contributions

ID	Donor	Net Contribution Received
1	Australia	€ 46 000.00
2	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	€ 45 153.37
3	Germany*	€ -
4	European Commission	€ 46 000.00
5	Finland	€ 46 000.00
6	France	€ 46 000.00
7	IFAD	€ 44 616.00
8	Italy	€ 46 000.00
9	Netherlands	€ 46 000.00
10	Switzerland	€ 46 000.00
11	United Kingdom	€ 52 241.31
12	United States**	€ 83 643.60
<b>Total contributions</b>		<b>€ 547 654.28</b>

\* Germany's 2021 contribution was bundled within the 2020 membership fee.

\*\* The contribution from the United States included the 2021 membership fee and a special contribution to the Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL).

In addition to the regular contributions shown above, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) provided in-kind contribution amounting to NOK 445,000 (EUR 46,673.74), which was used to support the thematic working group on Rural Youth Employment.

## Annex III – Secretariat 2021 expenditures, by category

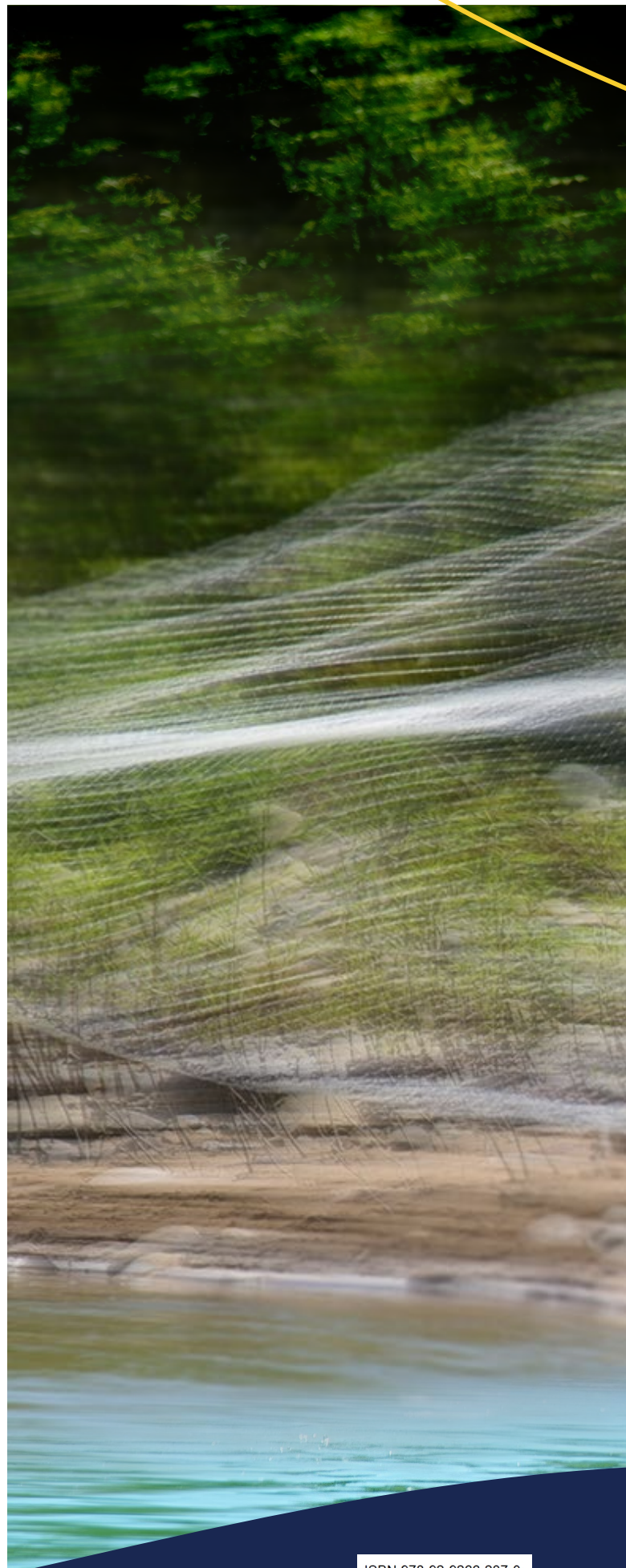
ID	Donor	Amount
1	Communications	€ 24 248.46
2	Consultancies	€ 139 967.90
3	IT/Administration	€ 8 460.46
4	Staff and internships	€ 177 773.39
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>€ 350 450.21</b>





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

Phone: +39 06 5459 2512  
Email: [secretariat@donorplatform.org](mailto:secretariat@donorplatform.org)  
[www.donorplatform.org](http://www.donorplatform.org)



ISBN 978-92-9266-237-0



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