Terms of Reference
Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) – Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Rural Youth Employment

1) Context

The GDPRD Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Rural Youth Employment was initially formed following a GDPRD Board decision during the 2018 AGA that focused on Rural Youth. **It is meant to be a donor-catalysed TWG** to advise donors, governments and civil society organisations on the most effective ways to create employment opportunities in rural areas, particularly in agri-food systems and emerging green sectors and to support the empowerment of youth to productively contribute to and benefit from sustainable rural livelihoods.

After two years and with the new GDPRD secretariat hosted by IFAD, the TWG members have agreed to re-vitalize the group and sharpen its strategic orientation. Therefore, the initial concept note is amended to emphasise the **focus on developing decent job opportunities in rural areas, particularly in sustainable agri-food system as well as green jobs such as in ecotourism, natural resource management and clean energy systems**, especially for the growing youth population in Africa.

As a first step the **"Compendium on donor engagement with rural youth"** was prepared in 2018 to provide an overview of ongoing donor initiatives. It was meant to inspire and support discussion with recommendations translated into activities, taking into account perceptions, knowledge gaps, and challenges. As it states, the heterogeneity of young women and men, and the realities they face **require differentiated pathways to rural youth empowerment**. Employment promotion and economic empowerment of youth also includes dimensions such as political and civic engagement, qualification and skills development, strengthening self-confidence and the ability to make choices and be heard, as well as access to resources such as land, finance, quality education and health, to strengthen youth as key actors for future development.

The group confirms the important role of **the TWG as a joint space to exchange and develop ideas, update and rally each other towards common outcomes.**

2) Objective

The objective of the TWG is **to promote decent youth employment in rural areas through their engagement in sustainable agri-food systems, green economies and other non-farm activities.** The TWG believes in an inclusive rural transformation approach by designing youth-sensitive programmes and increasing youth mainstreaming in relevant donor activities. Therefore, the group will:

   a) **Evaluate and co-create innovative approaches** how donors can boost decent rural youth employment across their operations;

   b) **Increase (strategic) coherence and coordination among donors** and development agencies, national and local institutions;

c) **Align with and link to international policy processes**, initiatives and platforms like the G20/G7, Committee on World Food Security (CFS), Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth and others;

d) **Engage with and help to empower rural youth and youth organisations**, which represent the heterogeneity of youth;

e) **Engage and collaborate with other stakeholders** like the private sector, service providers, agripreneur organisations, etc. to leverage their knowledge, expertise and resources.

The TWG members will work to achieve its objective through:

a) **Sharing evidence-based concepts and approaches to effectively promote** youth-specific and inclusive programming to create, decent, profitable, innovative and inclusive employment in agri-food systems along diverse value chains.

b) Using its convening power and potential for advocacy for **engaging in international processes and promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships** among donors, multilaterals, regional and national institutions working with the diverse actors including youth, donors, governments, universities and civil society organisations.

c) Mobilizing resources for **catalytic and niche activities aimed at engaging and empowering rural youth** and those that enhance coordination of donor youth programmes, for developing knowledge sharing products and sponsoring youth participation in relevant meetings and fora.

d) **Promoting learning and collaboration** across a variety of means, including South-to-South and North-to-South youth cooperation, rural-urban linkages, intergenerational linkages and innovative partnerships.

3) TWG Membership

The TWG Youth was established by the GDPRD in 2018 with leadership from the AfDB, IADC, USAID, NORAD and with initial participation of several youth leaders and organisations. Since then some founding members have left the group and new members joined (e.g. IFAD, FAO, BMZ/GIZ, OECD). **The group is actively pursuing to expand its member base** including the commitment to increase youth engagement in its activities.

Criteria for membership:

a) Group participation **is open to all GDPRD members and participants**.

b) **Core members shall be committed to actively engage in and contribute to the TWG** and be willing to participate in regular group calls and meetings.

c) The **TWG is generally open to and welcomes any relevant stakeholders** like youth organisations, private sector, producers' organisations, think tanks, research institutes, etc. to engage and participate in specific TWG areas of work and concrete activities and outputs.

4) Chair / co-Chair Function

- The Chair / co-Chair of the TWG functions as **direct contact person for the Platform Secretariat**. The Chair shall **guide the group, coordinate meetings, and act as a focal person** with members and others externally.

- The **Chair / co-Chair will be held on a rotating basis** by representatives of the participating organisations for a **suggested timeframe of 2 years.**

- The **Chair / co-Chair will be held by members who are proposed for the role by consent**, with the objective to provide all active members with the opportunity to hold the chair.

- The procedure can be amended according to member needs, by consensus.

5) Formats for collaboration, admin and logistics

a) The TWG will practice a **combination of regular TWG meetings and continuous exchange on a "Community of Practice" (CoP) platform** (accessible to everyone).

b) The group will **meet quarterly via conference calls**, on the basis of a shared agenda, current emerging issues, questions and documentation and report to the GDPRD Board.

c) The **agenda for the regular TWG group calls** will be a combination of
   i. Presentation and exchange on specific "in-depth topics", and/or update on ongoing initiatives and technical topics (to be selected prior to call, input prepared by one of the members/or external partner);
   ii. Discussion and coordination of concrete joint TWG activities;
   iii. A brief tour de table for updates.

d) The "Community of Practice" (COP) working platform should be accessible to everyone to **easily share (and co-work on)** documents, information, events, and **facilitate communication** and chat like discussions, posting questions / answers, etc.

e) Members **aim to meet physically at least once a year** e.g. as part of the GDPRD annual general assembly or back to back with major (rural) youth related events.

f) The **Platform Secretariat** provides technical facilities and support for the group's interaction, a dedicated space on the Platform website for the work on rural youth, allowing continuous member engagement and documentation of the TWG activities.

g) **All outputs** of physical or virtual exchanges and meetings **are documented / summarized** by the Platform Secretariat and the chair, with minutes sent out to members with the final approved summaries **posted on the GDPRD webpage**.

6) Next steps to re-vitalize the TWG:

a) Call for an all group member meeting to **discuss the renewed strategic orientation of the TWG and endorse the amended ToR**;

b) **Appoint a group chair and deputy chair;**

c) Identify activities for the TWG and **drafting an annual (or longer-term) work plan;**

d) **Agree on a technical platform** and develop an effective system for sharing information and facilitate communication among TWG members and youth networks. (Follow up on the idea to create a "Community of Practice" (CoP) platform)