New strategic directions for data in agriculture and food systems

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What is this about?

> **Statistics and data are sources for storytelling.**

> **In Africa, for example, more than half of countries have produced no data on agricultural production in the past five years, and data on the nutrition of children under 5 are non-existent.**

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development convened a consultation in Rome on 13 February 2023 focusing on the gathering and use of data.

The event was jointly organized by the European Commission, IFAD, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, and hosted by IFAD.

The objective was to assess how data used in agriculture and food security have evolved over the past decade, and what more can be done to improve matters.

Back in August 2014, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, called for a "data revolution" to facilitate sustainable development. The aim was to improve the collection and analysis of data to facilitate improved development decision-making. Identifying good practice in this area was later recognized to be crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to ending hunger.

But problems clearly persist. In October 2022, the 50th session of the Committee on World Food Security drew renewed attention to this issue, calling for better and more harmonized data, and their more widespread use in policymaking.

Sharing information and ambitions

Against this backdrop, the consultation of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development brought donors and other development professionals together to understand what is working well and what is not. The aim was to identify options and opportunities to improve data gathering, sharing and use.

The event allowed donors and others to set out their data initiatives, report on progress and difficulties encountered, and identify possible areas for collaboration.

It was also a chance for donors to learn about existing initiatives, contribute to informing strategic decisions involving such initiatives, and optimize their future data gathering and analysis investments.

The aim was to help donors align their actions to maximize their effectiveness as they strive to spur economic development around the world and to end hunger and poverty.

So where are we with the "quantum leap"?

When challenged to pay more attention to data gathering and analysis, donors have responded with energy and enthusiasm. They understand that data can help show us what is going on in the world.

Many more data, of increasingly diverse types, are now being gathered. But some of the most basic data needed to help the world end hunger and poverty are still missing: 30 per cent of countries still fail to report their annual agricultural production.

Data for decision-making

Clearly, gathering data serves little purpose unless the data are put to good use. So it is vital to collect the right kind of data, upon which decisions can be based.

What kinds of decisions are data used for? Small-scale producers, investors, governments and even households all need data for making decisions that shape food systems.

To maximize their impact, donors need sound data to understand how the decisions they take can influence food systems for the better. Donors also need data to assess the effectiveness of their project interventions. Measuring effectiveness is a tough challenge, and one of the best solutions is to ask beneficiaries whether they have indeed benefited and in what ways. However, to be valid, the data must be compared with those of similar producers or families who did not benefit from the project.

Impact assessment of this kind requires hard work and rigour, but provides valuable feedback that can enhance the effectiveness of subsequent projects and help donors decide how best to invest their limited resources.

It can also provide a measure of resilience. When seeking ways to ensure that people do not fall into hunger – particularly in the context of accelerating climate change – this kind of data gathering can help identify risks and support preventive action.

What do we need data about?

The importance of data is growing, as donors increasingly see their objectives in terms of transforming food systems. But what is a food system? It's a broad and poorly defined concept involving environmental factors, technology, markets, institutions and cultural factors.

Globally, food systems contribute around 12 per cent of GDP, of which a third – some 4 per cent – is generated by farms.

> **Statistik: (noun) German – "of the state". Statistics were developed as a tool for state-building.**

> **Every dollar invested in data yields US$32 of benefits.**

> **Policymakers can't make decisions based on likes on Facebook.**

> **Good fences make for good neighbours. Coordinate. Know what is your territory, and what belongs to others.**

Donor objectives include better nutrition, prosperity, inclusion and gender equality, and resilience to climate change. But what are the connections to production and how do they influence outcomes? New kinds of data are needed so that donors know which levers to pull.

Innovation is also needed in data gathering. New techniques recently adopted include phone surveys, which became more widespread in response to COVID-19 travel restrictions, and the use of new trackers and dashboards for prices of inputs such as fertilizer and for food prices in the wake of the war in Ukraine.

Analytics and modelling, based on these dashboards and the trends they show, make it easier to predict how outcomes will evolve when variables change. They also make it easier to anticipate the likely increase in hunger that often follows the outbreak of conflicts, and to see which populations are most affected by particular shocks, and how.

The better the data, the better the indicators and the more accurate predictions will be.

What challenges arise?

Today, there are many new kinds of data and new ways of collecting them. Combining data from many, diverse sources improves the quality of information available for decision-making. Too often data are seen as a cost, rather than an investment. But every dollar invested in data yields US$32 of benefits. In terms of improving people's lives, data gathering is on a par with vaccines. The opportunities are huge.

Combining satellite imagery and survey data in Senegal, for example, enables more efficient distribution of drought-resistant seeds. But this requires collaboration between institutions, which must be open to innovations proposed by statisticians.

Such initiatives require rigorous data governance, so that data are produced to common standards and are therefore high quality and comparable. The numbers also have to merit public trust and be used to benefit, not harm, people.

Gathering good data on scattered smallholder farmers can be difficult, but is vital to ensure changes in production actually reduce poverty. There are still many gaps to fill. Investing in data infrastructure and governance needs to be a higher political priority and must be better coordinated so that investments in data are efficient and avoid duplication.

Where should we look?

Today, there are 828 million hungry people, up 150 million since before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 3.1 billion who cannot afford a healthy diet, up 122 million. Yet food and food waste generate 37 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, donors' core objective has shifted from simply feeding the world to doing so in a healthy manner that is environmentally sustainable.

But there are not enough data on many aspects of food systems to design better policies to address these issues. The data needed to understand policy interrelationships and trade-offs and synergies are lacking. These are data we need to achieve food systems transformation.

One useful new tool to address this data deficit is the "food dollar" concept,[1] which shows how much spending goes to each element of the food value chain. It shows that only around 2 per cent of household spending on food accrues to the farm sector, while 25 per cent goes to food processing and nearly half to the retail and wholesale trade.

More data are urgently needed on the quality of food available and on people's diets. Donors need to understand both supply and demand. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is developing a database that will combine information on national food consumption and production trends, and greenhouse gas emissions along the food value chain.

Although there has been progress, today only 0.3 per cent of official development assistance is invested in data, and some efforts are duplicated. The priority is to avoid duplication, and focus investment where needs are most acute. In Africa, fewer than half of the countries have produced data on agricultural production in the past five years, and data on the nutrition of children under five are non-existent.

Partnerships are necessary to ensure the required data are collected, and to a gold standard. We also need to be making better use of high-frequency and high-resolution real-time data that can be drawn from mobile phone networks or satellite images. These can plug gaps and be used to validate conventional data. This is especially important when a shock occurs. More widespread partnerships with the private sector may bring more creative thinking and the adoption of novel data sources.

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

> **More and more value added is created downstream – by private companies that repurpose public data and get money for doing so.**

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[1] https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/new-data-tool-explores-where-the-food-dollar-goes/en.

Getting into the detail

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

1. What data initiatives are under way for agriculture and food systems?

What's the problem?

- Lack of data is exacerbating the current food crisis.
- The need is urgent: Liberia, for example, hasn't produced any agricultural statistics for 40 years.
- Data gathering has been a low priority for governments and official development assistance.
- Data often fail to provide the information needed.
- Without good data, we don't know if donor interventions are working, or how to improve them.

Spotlighting projects designed to plug data gaps

This session detailed a series of projects designed to plug data gaps.

For details of 11 initiatives designed to address data gaps, see the annex of this report.

50×2030

This initiative targets 50 low-income and lower-middle-income countries. It aims to improve the quality of their data by 2030. To be beneficial, statistics must be accurate, reliable, timely and used.

The initiative aims to encourage countries to gather data, help them do so, guide the use of data and then leave. The initiative has been rolled-out in nine countries, and aims to cover 25 by 2025.

What are its strengths? First, it's a joint effort, involving the World Bank, FAO and IFAD working in partnership. Second, it is designed to develop capacity so that countries will continue gathering data when the initiative ends. Seventy per cent of the funding is borrowed by the countries from the World Bank: they are borrowing to invest in data. The remaining funding comes from donors.

Countries are trained in the best techniques for gathering data, and how best to use them. The data must provide the information needed for policymaking, so ministries must advise on their needs.

50x2030

Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

This is a United Nations initiative dating from 2000, with the first phase being completed in 2019. It is developing the capacities of countries to carry out complex, integrated agricultural surveys.

The second phase, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the European Union, includes an Africa action plan, now under way. Methodologies for gathering data have been defined, training has been conducted and strategic statistics plans have been drawn up by 40 countries.

Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS)

Set up in 2006 under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), this is a South-South initiative designed to help African countries track what is going on in their agricultural sectors. It has provided a slew of materials and training to help countries conduct biennial reviews.

By January 2023, reporting rates in target countries had reached 88 per cent, across more than 260 parameters. The consequences include increases in agricultural investment in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger, and better-informed policy discussions in Malawi and Mozambique. But, of 51 countries involved, 22 still lacked data on up to 29 of 334 parameters in 2021.

The next phase will focus on two challenges: working with partners such as 50×2030 to develop simpler, less detailed surveys in other countries and to create a digital tool to facilitate data-based policy decisions.

IFAD impact assessments – making sure interventions work

Impact assessments are vital to ensure that donor interventions work, and to uncover ways to improve them. They must compare what happens in areas that benefit from interventions with what happens in similar areas elsewhere. That's tricky. But donors must be accountable to stakeholders, and be able to show they are doing useful work, and continuously improving its quality.

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> **Big companies invest in data – for good reason. So should we.**

What remains to be done?

Participants concluded the following.

- Data collection and publication must be speeded up.
- Many countries are now gathering better data, but lack capacity to analyse them and develop policy recommendations based on them.
- Greater political accountability is needed, so that country leaders are motivated to try to solve problems and seek data to guide their efforts.
- Better-quality data will make information more trustworthy, and more useful for stakeholders to identify problems and press for solutions.

2. What's the nexus between data, food security and nutrition?

Creating reliable indicators can aid our understanding

Tracking food prices yields nutrition insights.

Around the world, the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet was almost 3.1 billion in 2020, up 112 million year-on-year. Of the total, 73 per cent were in low-income countries.

To achieve food security, reliable indicators are needed for the cost and affordability of healthy diets. Policymakers need to know who is eating what and where. These data can be used to guide food system interventions and monitor progress on getting the right foods to those who most need them so that they can eat a balanced diet.

The **Food Prices for Nutrition DataHub** gives access to the data compiled for the biennial *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* report produced jointly by five United Nations agencies. It includes national and subnational insights into food costs, where they are available.

Using indicators to predict crises

The **Food Security Portal** was set up in response to the world food crisis of 2007-2008 to provide an information hub to give early warning of any impending food crisis. It tracks prices and analyses relevant media reports, promoting information-sharing and policy discussions.

Overcoming the barriers

Clearly, good data are vital to food and nutrition security. Today, it is possible to collect data at every level, from the macroeconomic to the individual level, enabling the linkages from national production to personal consumption of different foods and nutrients to be understood.

Although conventional statistics may be lacking, digital devices and connections contain a trove of personal and collective data that can provide powerful insights into many aspects of food systems. To access such data, multiple barriers must be overcome.

- People need to be sure that their personal information is secure, and that sharing their data will not put them at risk.
- Data are regarded as an asset and, unless "owners" are rewarded, often remain siloed.
- Often the data are not analysed, either because their potential is unrecognized or because there is no-one available with the necessary skills.
- Decision makers are often unaware of the existence, breadth and relevance of available data.

Directing money where it can do most good

As we strive for food systems transformation, the **Country Budget Tool** is being designed to help us achieve the 2030 Agenda and implement climate agreements. It will track how much financing is going to which parts of the food system, and to what extent it meets needs. It will track three financial flows: public finance; official development assistance, other official flows and philanthropic finance; and private finance. This will help donors identify – and address – the many gaps.

What remains to be done?

Participants concluded that there was a need to:

- Invest in human capital to develop the necessary skills in low- and lower-middle-income countries.
- Create a global legal framework to enable policymakers to access food and nutrition data.
- Improve data governance to create common standards at all levels.
- Plug the gaps in national and subnational data about nutritious food availability and pricing.

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3. Where do data connect?
Looking at data complementarities

Making up shortfalls in traditional statistics

Donors are trying simultaneously to develop policies that address climate change, to reshape food systems and to improve social inclusion. That's a very complex agenda.

To achieve it, donors need to know about small-scale farms and their activities, and then to understand how these interact with the environment and our societies. In Africa, data shortfalls are enormous. One organization trying to fill the gaps with standardized and comparable data is **World Agriculture Watch**, an umbrella programme hosting more than 20 country-specific data-gathering projects.

But what should we do with the data? The **Hand-in-Hand Initiative** uses data to identify and prioritize opportunities for high-impact investment in food and value chains. Covering more than 60 countries, it has its own data lab to seek out data on agricultural production, while producing its own maps of regions and districts where people are vulnerable.

This process has already identified opportunities for some large-scale investments – and highlighted some data shortcomings. Artificial intelligence and automation may help to plug the gaps.

From numbers to understanding

But the struggle to achieve a unified picture using disparate data is compounded by the diversity of sources from which data must be integrated. Bringing together data from governments, product traceability systems and environmental, social and governance (ESG) analysis, to name but three relevant potential sources, introduces enormous integration challenges, and requires clear and common rules for data formatting and entry.

Many organizations are working on using big data to solve agricultural development problems. The potential benefits from digital innovation in food systems are vast. But their development has to be funded, and some organizations are now offering grant funding to technologists seeking to solve food system challenges.

But which research projects deserve funding? Again, data analysis can be used to identify gaps in research where funding can help provide missing answers.

What are the lessons for donors?

To improve food security and farming, donors need to:

- Improve coordination in terms of initiatives, but also in terms of taking stock and identifying who is doing what, what is available...and what is not.

- Increase data sharing, and also search more creatively for data. Sometimes we think data are not findable, but that can be because they are not made available.

- Facilitate coordination and sometimes create incentives for sharing, recognizing the synergies and benefits of sharing and avoiding duplication of efforts.

To get better data, donors need to:

- Work together on data governance and to promote data-smart agriculture.

- Press for greater political willingness to use data for agricultural policymaking.

- Be involved in more than financial contributions – by which we mean taking advantage of donor countries' experience and expertise, which can be hugely beneficial for target countries. Partnerships could extend to technical resources and the global data agenda.

Available data can be used to greater effect by capturing complementarities, including by:

- Complementing quantitative data with qualitative data, which play a valuable role in complementing traditional methods of data production.

- Addressing critical gaps in data production, for example on gender, small family farms, climate and the environment.

- Combining diverse data sources to answer policy questions, generating a more cohesive narrative.

- Ensuring data skills and know-how are available within countries, so that the data can be used to good effect.

Keep in mind that:

- Coordination failure is commonplace. Donors and institutions need to identify common objectives. The purpose of data gathering and analysis is to address these objectives in a rigorous way. It is important to take time to think (about what the question is).

- Data can be political: some data holders have incentives to share data (public sector). In the private sector, some data that could contribute to the common good are not shared.

- Some big tech companies are gathering data – for example by mapping – that could be quite transformational because those data will be plotted and put in the public domain.

- Some new data gathering by private companies is being driven by new regulation. For example, traceability – knowing where your pr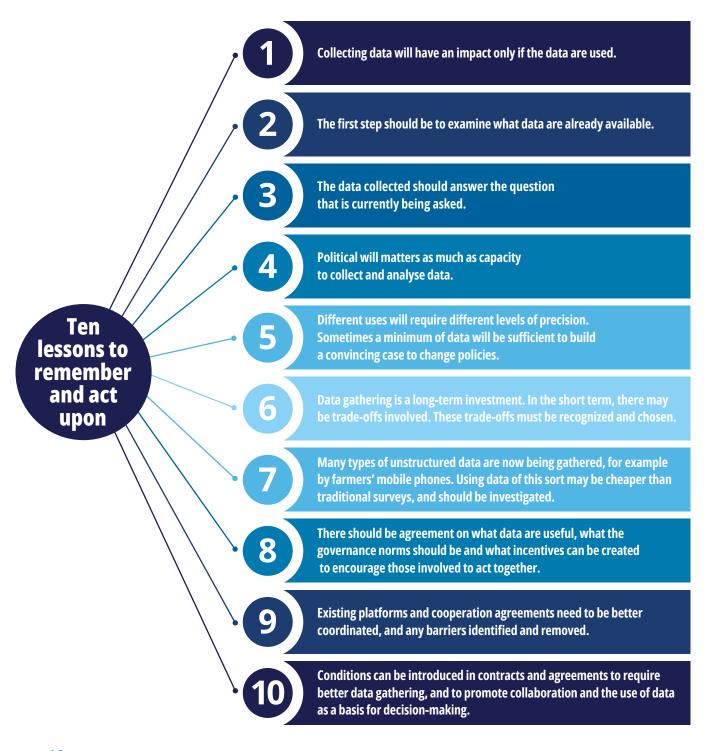oduct comes from – is spurring the gathering of a trove of information about agriculture, forestry and supply chains. ESG initiatives and carbon accounting are also creating vast new databases.

- We need to think more about end-users. What information do they want?

- The merging of private data with household data and government data may prove a huge innovation with far-reaching repercussions.

Key findings

Among participants:

- **More than half felt that we have too much data.**
- **Many agreed that data collection has become cheaper.**
- **Less than half thought that coordination between donors and international organizations has improved in the past half-decade.**

Ten lessons to remember and act upon

1. Collecting data will have an impact only if the data are used.

2. The first step should be to examine what data are already available.

3. The data collected should answer the question that is currently being asked.

4. Political will matters as much as capacity to collect and analyse data.

5. Different uses will require different levels of precision. Sometimes a minimum of data will be sufficient to build a convincing case to change policies.

6. Data gathering is a long-term investment. In the short term, there may be trade-offs involved. These trade-offs must be recognized and chosen.

7. Many types of unstructured data are now being gathered, for example by farmers' mobile phones. Using data of this sort may be cheaper than traditional surveys, and should be investigated.

8. There should be agreement on what data are useful, what the governance norms should be and what incentives can be created to encourage those involved to act together.

9. Existing platforms and cooperation agreements need to be better coordinated, and any barriers identified and removed.

10. Conditions can be introduced in contracts and agreements to require better data gathering, and to promote collaboration and the use of data as a basis for decision-making.

Annex

In this annex, we provide details of 11 initiatives our donors are involved in that seek to address data gaps. These initiatives will help provide the information the world needs as it seeks to develop healthier and more sustainable food systems. Many are fast becoming valuable sources of information for those involved in designing policies and programmes, seeking information about development or simply wanting to better understand the world in which we live.

DATA INITIATIVES FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

INITIATIVE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	KEY PARTNERSHIPS
50×2030	• Work with countries to contribute to improving rural livelihoods and food security through increased data availability and usage • Transform the data systems of 50 countries by 2030	• Provide technical assistance for data production and use • Conduct capacity development for data production and use • Cofinancing • Leverage partnerships at all levels	• Builds on the mandates/core activities of the three implementing agencies (FAO, World Bank and IFAD) to promote data-smart agriculture in participating countries • Works with regional and national institutions on capacity-building activities
Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics	• Transform country capacities for increased production and dissemination of statistics • Foster improved use of innovative statistical tools • Promote capacity development strategies • Strengthen governance and leadership	• Support country strategic data planning • Offer training in agricultural statistics • Facilitate adoption of effective survey methods • Assist in the analysis and dissemination of data	
ReSAKSS (AKADEMIYA2063)	• Provides data and knowledge products to facilitate the benchmarking, review, dialogue and mutual accountability processes of CAADP • Promotes CAADP mutual accountability processes by providing technical support to the CAADP Biennial Review (BR) process	• Develop and refine BR indicators, support country BR training, data collection, compilation, analysis, reporting and validation • Provide targeted technical and backstopping support in 10 target countries to improve BR data quality and capacities, and fill data gaps • Train African Union Member States on the eBR and manage the eBR – a web-based BR data entry and management tool used by African countries, regional economic communities and the African Union Commission • Develop a Decision Support Tool – a web-based tool using BR data to examine relationships between policy and outcome variables	• African Union Commission and African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, regional economic communities, African Union Member States • International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) • CAADP Non-State Actor Group (e.g. PolicyLINK, ActionAid, TrustAfrica) • Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation • United States Agency for International Development

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

INITIATIVE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Food Prices for Nutrition DataHub	• Build a global system to monitor change in food prices for the purpose of improving nutrition
	• Measure food prices to match the aspiration of food security
	• Provide indicators on the cost and affordability of healthy diets to inform action to address food insecurity around the world
	• The indicators can be used to:
	  • Guide food systems and agricultural interventions
	  • Monitor progress towards a global food system that brings healthy diets within reach of all people at all times
		• Provide access to data used by *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* report and beyond
		• Provide users with interactive charts and maps to further explore the data
			Based on a partnership between Tufts University, the World Bank and IFPRI, with diverse collaborators in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania and other countries around the world

Food Security Portal	• Contribute to better-informed policies to improve food security and nutrition, and enhance resilience to shocks • Ensure users, particularly in Africa, are equipped with increased capacity and improved food security information, policy research and analysis	• Provide a hub for early warning and food crises risk information • Make available data and policy analysis tools to inform decision makers and support food security analysis • Provide a platform for policy dialogue and capacity development	• Food Security Information Network (FSIN) • Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC) • Agricultural Market Information Systems (AMIS) • International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) • Global Agricultural Monitoring (GEOGLAM) Crop Monitor • NASA Harvest (University of Maryland) • University of Sheffield • Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office of the United Kingdom • United States Agency for International Development (USAID) • African Growth and Development Policy Modeling Consortium (AGRODEP) • European Commission

Country Budget Tool for Food Systems Transformation	• Provide governments, donors and stakeholders with much-needed evidence for smart investment decisions, including on the following questions:
	  • How much financing goes towards the food system?
	  • To which parts of the food system is financing going?
	  • Does financing target the areas and people most in need of food systems transformation?
		• Provide a methodology and tool to help countries measure public and private financing for food systems transformation
		• The tool will:
		  • Offer evidence to inform targeted investment decisions
		  • Present a comprehensive picture of resource allocation vs. countries' food systems transformation priority areas
			Partnership between IFAD and the World Bank

DATA COMPLEMENTARITIES

INITIATIVE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	KEY PARTNERSHIPS
Ceres2030/ Hesat2030	• Ceres2030 is being transformed into Hesat2030: A global roadmap to end hunger equitably, nutritiously and sustainably. Building on the success of Ceres2030, Hesat2030 is united by a common goal to scale up existing commitments and solidarity across food and agriculture that respond to a changing world. At the same time, Hesat2030 embarks on new efforts to integrate outcomes focused on climate change, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, women's empowerment and social inclusion into donor and international agency policies, programmes and strategic plans • Hesat2030 is a partnership driving innovations in research to achieve equitable, sustainable and nutritious agriculture and food systems with the following objective: • Strategic investment in evidence-based solutions are fundamental to ending world hunger equitably, sustainably and nutritiously. We are collaborating to produce research, cost modelling and advocacy in the symbiotic fields of agriculture, food systems, nutrition, and climate mitigation and adaptation. Together, we will create a roadmap charting a course for policymakers and donors to make high-impact decisions and investments driven by data and building on the Ceres2030 recommendations	Still to be defined for this new initiative. A soft launch of the project will take place this autumn	Hesat2030 is a coalition of organizations with the purpose of creating a global roadmap to end hunger sustainably and nutritiously. Its goal is to identify innovative solutions that focus on climate change, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, women's empowerment, and social inclusion, and integrate them into donor and international agency policies, programs, and strategic plans. Core project members include University of Notre Dame; Shamba Centre for Food & Climate; FAO of the United Nations; University of Chicago; IFPRI; CABI; Global Donor Platform for Rural Development; Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN); and Global Center on Adaptation
World Agriculture Watch	• A global and country-specific umbrella programme that aims to promote fine-tuned investment and policy measures for family farmers • Implement a harmonized methodological framework to establish coherent global and local information systems that will provide proper information on the structure and performance of these diverse farms • Use a system approach to develop a dynamic information system on farms in their natural and socio-economic environment, in close partnership with all stakeholders, particularly farmers' organizations	• Organize stakeholder consultations to contextualize the agriculture development challenges, define the priority subjects and territories, and identify the most-needed information on family farms as both producing and living units • Support capacity building in farmers' organizations so that then can be partners in data management • In geographical areas of interest, identify existing and / or collect new data on farms characteristics, performance and challenges, analyse them, and produce farm typologies based upon their current structure, functioning and perspectives of evolution • Produce strategic investment proposals adapted to each type of farm • Establish national observatories to monitor family farm transformations and produce a common international methodological framework • Establish and maintain a web-based information-sharing platform • Facilitate policy-dialogue among stakeholders at the national and regional levels (including South-South cooperation), in particular through face-to-face technical meetings	• Farmers' organizations (worldwide, regional and national levels) and Agri Agencies • Research, vocational training and extension institutions • Ministries of Agriculture (in priority services dealing with statistics, planning, monitoring and evaluation)

DATA INITIATIVES FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

INITIATIVE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Digital and Data Innovation Initiative	• Foster digital transformation in agriculture
	• Use big data to solve agricultural development problems faster, better and at greater scale
		• GARDIAN system:
		  • Provide access to 190,000 publications and 38,000 datasets
		  • Offer researchers a secure analytical environment in which to find data and collaborate
		  • CGIAR expert finder enables discovery of CGIAR research expertise
		• Convene alliances for collective action, which:
		  • Foster communities of practice for digital research innovation
		  • Build capacities in big data approaches
		  • Have 6,500 members
		• Issue grants for digital innovation in food systems:
		  • 500 applications submitted
		  • 28 grants awarded
		  • Three rapid grants issued to mitigate COVID-19 impacts
		  • US$3.2 million issued in grants
		  • US$600,000 raised from external donors	

Hand-in-Hand Initiative	• Support countries to identify and prioritize the biggest opportunities in agriculture and food, and to bring in investments to reduce poverty and improve food security and nutrition
	• Use advanced geospatial modelling and analytics, and a robust partnership-building approach, to accelerate the market-based transformation of agrifood systems to raise incomes, improve the nutritional status and well-being of poor and vulnerable populations, and strengthen resilience to climate change
		• Provide three tools to give access to data from a variety of sources:
		  • The Geospatial Platform – federated data and analysis (for soil, land, water, climate, fisheries, livestock, crops, forestry, trade, economics, etc.)
		  • The DataLab – data scraping, intelligence and analysis
		  • A dashboard – progress and investments	

Committee on Sustainability Assessment	A leading neutral consortium whose global networks are committed to accelerating agricultural sustainability by: • Providing intelligent guidance and easy-to-use tools • Simplifying the complexity of sustainability with standardized metrics to measure what matters • Balancing science-based rigour with pragmatic approaches	• Provide world-class insights using the best available technology • Guide businesses and organizations to transform how they engage farmers interactively for accelerated learning and desirable local impacts • Facilitate the development, measurement and monitoring of SMART indicators • Offer data and visualization tools to facilitate decision-making	Public sector: GIZ, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, International Coffee Organization, UN agencies, Digital Integration of Agricultural Supply Chains Alliance (DIASCA), various governments Private sector: segment-leading companies and brands such as Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Nespresso, McCain, Pepsico and Mars

The donor community came together with some key organizations involved in data initiatives on 13 February 2023 in Rome to take stock of current data initiatives on agriculture and food security, and to assess where we stand. Expert insights were presented, with engaging discussions around how to work better together to increase the use of data for decision-making and for greater impact.

The event was jointly organized by the European Commission, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD). It was hosted by IFAD.