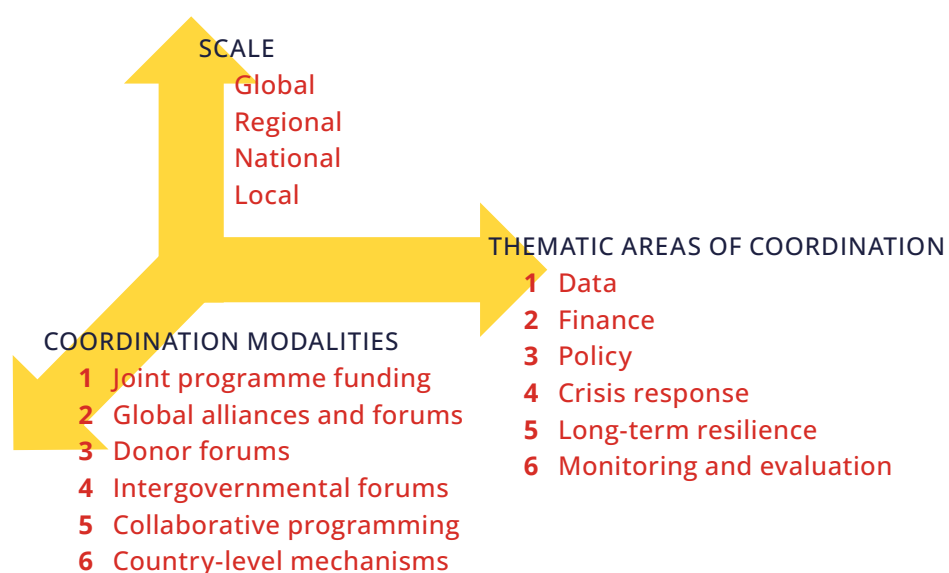




5 UNDERSTANDING THE DIMENSIONS OF DONOR COORDINATION

Donor coordination is a complex process and requires the close alignment and coordination of donors and governments to determine where donor involvement, support and resources would be most effective and impactful and would best support in-country priorities, plans and programmes. In this report, we outline three key dimensions of coordination: (i) scale, (ii) coordination modalities, and (iii) thematic areas of coordination (see FIGURE 3).

FIGURE 3 DIMENSIONS OF COORDINATION



SCALE

Determining the dimensions, scale and modalities of donor coordination at the country level is critical to understanding where donor coordination, in terms of resources, technical assistance, support, etc., would best align with national priorities and pathways. In the context of donor aid, for example, it has been noted that coordination can typically be grouped into the following dimensions:

“geographic (international coordination on general issues versus recipient country-specific [issues]); **content** (policies, principles and priorities versus procedures versus practices); **degrees of intensity/commitment** (general consultation versus cooperation at the strategic level versus collaboration at implementation level); **national issues versus sector and sub-sector issues**; at **geographic/regional level** within a given country; and **along functional lines** (technical assistance versus general balance of payments support, for example).”⁹

These are useful guiding principles and provide a framework for donors to determine how and where their resources can be most useful. Sufficient dialogue and cooperation between donors and countries’ governments and other actors is fundamental to determining the appropriate scale for coordination and ensuring donor support is provided where it is most needed.

Donor resources are increasingly being pulled in different directions due to competing crises and national priorities. At the same time, at the country level, governments must contend with multiple donors trying to make investments in similar areas but through different modalities and mechanisms, which are often not in step with country priorities. In a context where resources are increasingly limited, more effective country-level coordination among donors becomes critical. When it comes to donor coordination mechanisms, there are several ways in which donors can pool their resources - financial, technical or other. Outlined below are a few examples of joint programming, financing and coordination mechanisms used to leverage investments by donors in food systems and rural development for greater impact.

⁹ Disch, A. (2000), *Aid Coordination and Aid Effectiveness* (Oslo: ECON Centre for Economic Analysis).

COORDINATION MODALITIES

1 Joint programme funding

This involves investing in large global or regional programmes, including multi-donor trust fund programmes, and joint programmes at the country level. This modality enables donors to leverage large-scale integrated programmes by pooling resources for greater impact through integrated project investments at the national level. Examples of joint programmes include the [Global Agriculture and Food Security Program \(GAFSP\)](#) and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. These programmes were originally developed with an agricultural focus; however, since the UNFSS they have been geared towards a wider food systems approach. This modality is also used in other sectors; for example, the [Global Partnership for Education](#) and [The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#) have called for more effective collaboration between the health and education sectors.

EXAMPLE OF DONOR COORDINATION

GLOBAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

An initiative of the G20 launched in response to the 2007-2008 food crisis, GAFSP is a multilateral financing platform working towards improving food and nutrition security globally. It is a financial intermediary fund hosted by the World Bank, which serves as a trustee and hosts a coordination unit within the Agriculture and Food Global Practice supporting the GAFSP Steering Committee. GAFSP works with a range of partners including donors (the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Australia, Canada, Germany, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States), development partners (such as the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Finance Corporation, WFP and the World Bank), civil society organizations and producer organizations. GAFSP also partners with the Global Alliance for Food Security, co-convened in 2022 by the World Bank and the German G7 Presidency.

2 Global alliances and forums

Donors jointly support a range of initiatives aimed at bringing a range of different stakeholders together in relation to specific issues. While not administering large-scale programme funding, these approaches serve to build collaboration and coordination between multiple actors to leverage resources and promote action to achieve impact at scale. To date, such initiatives have been particularly focused on nutrition, for example the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems

for Nutrition. Other examples include commodity roundtables such as those on palm oil and sugar.

EXAMPLE OF DONOR COORDINATION

THE SCALING UP NUTRITION MOVEMENT

The SUN Movement is a country-driven initiative led by 65 countries and four Indian states, collectively known as the SUN countries. It includes thousands of stakeholders from across society. Launched in 2010 by the United Nations Secretary-General, the movement has four networks: the SUN Civil Society Network, the SUN Business Network, UN Nutrition and the SUN Donor Network. The SUN Movement Secretariat facilitates the SUN Movement, which is led by the SUN Coordinator. The country-driven SUN Movement Lead Group and SUN Executive Committee provide governance and stewardship. The SUN countries are supported by the SUN Global Support System, formed from the staff of the four SUN networks and the SUN Secretariat. The SUN Movement works to support coordinated responses to issues related to nutrition at the country level.

EXAMPLE OF DONOR COORDINATION

THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION

GAIN is a Swiss foundation launched by the United Nations in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with governments, businesses and civil society, it aims to transform food systems so that they deliver more nutritious food for all, especially the most vulnerable. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, GAIN has offices in countries with high levels of malnutrition: Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. To support work in those countries, GAIN has representative offices in Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. GAIN is supported by a number of donors and plays an active role in supporting coordinated responses at the global and country levels.

3 Donor forums

These forums provide specific mechanisms for donors themselves to share information and experiences to help improve coordination. The main example of this in the area of food systems and rural development is the GDPRD, which brings together a range of bilateral and multilateral donors, development agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs), foundations and international donors together to exchange information, advocate, dialogue and engage on food security and rural development issues. The platform's thematic working groups focused on rural youth and employment, land governance and the SDG 2 roadmap provide members with opportunities to engage with each other and collaborate in specific thematic areas. The platform works to broker donor collaboration, with the objective of enhancing the impact of donor policies, investments and programmes on food systems and rural development. Similarly, the European Commission's Heads of Agriculture and Rural Development group provides an informal coordination platform for EU Member States.

4 Intergovernmental forums

A range of mechanisms exist at the global level to support global responses to agriculture, food and nutrition issues. Food security and food systems issues are generally important in the G20 and G7 processes, with key initiatives - including, for example, GAFSP - arising from these meetings. Established in 1974, [the Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#) serves as a platform within the United Nations system bringing together representatives of governments, civil society organizations, international organizations, businesses, etc., to discuss and engage with each other on issues related to food policy globally. The CFS produces consensus-based voluntary guidelines and policy recommendations for all these actors. The CFS's [High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition](#), established in 2009, provides the CFS with independent, scientific and knowledge-based advice and analysis. More recently, the Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS) was launched in 2022. Convened by the G7, under the German Presidency, and the World Bank, it seeks to catalyse an immediate and coordinated response to the global hunger crisis. GAFS seeks to “bring countries and institutions together to support and leverage existing structures, mechanisms, and programs to respond with urgency to the surge in food prices”.¹⁰

5 Collaborative programming

This includes specific joint funding initiatives of donors, such as Ceres2030 and the 50x2030 Initiative, which mobilize funding and partnerships around specific issues and thematic areas.

Ceres2030. Funded by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ceres2030 is a partnership between Cornell University, the International Food Policy Research Institute and the International Institute for Sustainable Development that is working towards developing a cost estimate for achieving SDG 2. Drawing on available data and economic modelling, the initiative seeks to provide donors with data, information and evidence to enable them to make informed investment decisions.

50x2030 Initiative. The 50x2030 Initiative is a multi-partner programme supported by the United States Agency for International Development, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank and IFAD. It seeks to tackle the issue of the agricultural data gap at the country level and aims to produce the largest-ever collection of data on agriculture development across 50 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America by 2030. The 10-year programme aims to increase the capacity of countries in these regions to “produce, analyze, interpret and apply data”¹¹ to facilitate decision-making in the agriculture sector. The programme is implemented

¹⁰ World Bank (2022), “Joint Statement: G7 Presidency, World Bank Group establish global alliance for food security to catalyze response to food crisis”, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2022/05/19/joint-statement-g7-presidency-wbg-establish-global-alliance-for-food-security>.

¹¹ <https://www.50x2030.org/sites/default/files/resources/documents/2021-02/50x2030%202020%20Brochure%202021.pdf>.

through a partnership between the three agencies: FAO, IFAD and the World Bank. It is funded by a multi-donor trust fund at the World Bank.

6 Country-level mechanisms

These mechanisms bring development partners together at the national level. A range of such mechanisms exist to promote coordination around overall development cooperation and in specific sectors, including agricultural development. They include mechanisms that enable dialogue between donors, partner governments and other development partners, in addition to those for coordination between donors themselves. In a growing number of countries, the food systems agenda is now being anchored by the office of the prime minister or at the level of a senior coordinating ministry such as a national planning commission. At the country level, donors often form groups of development partners that bring together bilateral and multilateral agencies under one umbrella to facilitate dialogue with partner governments in support of national development plans and priorities. The United Nations also plays an important role at the country level in driving intersectoral coordination between different agencies, and between agencies and partner governments, around specific areas that align with country development plans and priorities.

THEMATIC AREAS OF COORDINATION

There are thematic areas around which donor coordination is particularly important, requiring alignment from the global level to the local level. For the areas listed below, without coordination it is impossible to deliver development cooperation that is efficient and effective.

1 Data

Data, and the associated research that delivers it, is critical for guiding and prioritizing effective development interventions. It is necessary for generating evidence of what works for policy, implementation strategies and financing. However, the availability of data on food systems at the country and local levels remains limited. At the country level, the availability of data, information and statistics and the sharing of data are critically important for donor coordination. In many countries, data are unavailable, scattered, of poor quality or available only in formats that make them difficult to use. The lack of usable data makes it that much harder for partner governments, donors and development partners to determine where they are best placed to make investments (geographically and sectorally), or where these are likely to have the most impact. Gathering and collating data in a way and form that make them usable is expensive. At the country level, bilateral donors and other stakeholders can work jointly towards supporting efforts to improve the availability of data and build in-country capacity. At the global level, initiatives such as Ceres2030 and the 50x2030 Initiative are working towards addressing the data gap and providing donors and partner governments with more information and evidence-based analysis to inform their investments and actions in the area of food systems. As a follow-up to the Ceres2030 initiative, the Hesat2030 initiative, involving the implementation of a global roadmap to end hunger sustainably, nutritiously and equitably, is being led by the FAO, the Shamba Centre for Food & Climate and the University of Notre Dame. The initiative is using data and artificial intelligence to carry out

economic modelling and data to build an evidence base for increasing both the quantity and the quality of overseas development assistance for agriculture and food systems to achieve the SDGs.

In February 2023, the European Commission, IFAD, the GDPRD and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data hosted a dialogue in Rome between donors and organizations working on data-gathering initiatives to take stock of current data-gathering initiatives in agriculture and food security.¹² The dialogue emphasized the need for better coordination on both the demand for and the supply of data on agriculture and food systems. At the high-level dialogue on donor coordination held in Rome on 27 June 2023, the discussion emphasized the need for donors to rethink how they invest in obtaining data and move away from simply investing in collecting data on topics that they are interested in to investing in gathering them where evidence is really needed. In working to better align donors' and partner governments' priorities, it is important to prioritise gathering data and evidence.

2 Finance

Donor coordination necessitates the coordination of not just policies, programmes and initiatives but also financing. Global economic uncertainty, recessionary trends, and rising inflation and debt burdens in some countries and regions have meant that governments around the world are increasingly less able to invest in building resilience and responding to crises and shocks in the long term and in a sustainable manner. Focusing on the collective actions and responses addressing the underlying drivers that are preventing progress in strengthening food systems and achieving the SDGs is critically important. The misalignment of country and donor financing mechanisms and the frequent incompatibility between the financing, budgeting and reporting cycles of different donors often make it challenging to coordinate the delivery of donor support but also place a considerable burden on partner governments that must comply with different systems and processes.

There are a range of funding modalities at the country, regional and global levels. Financing for food systems transformation requires the coordination of different types of financing, principal among which are domestic public finance, international development finance and private sector finance. It is equally important to balance short-term investments with long-term financing. It is also critical to look at which types and modalities of financing are working well and which are not and determine how they can be coordinated more effectively to maximize impact. Data and financing are also intricately linked to the issue of improving coordination. Tracking data on financing can help governments make better investment decisions. For example, the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub, IFAD and the World Bank have developed the first country-level budgeting tool for food systems transformation. The Food Systems Financing Tool (3FS prototype) helps countries track financial flows to food systems and provides governments, donors and other stakeholders with evidence for making better

¹² GDPRD (2023), "Assessing the Data 'Quantum' Leap in Agriculture and Food Systems", <https://www.donorplatform.org/featured/assessing-the-data-quantum-leap-in-agriculture-and-food-systems/>.

investments.¹³ Finally, it is critical to build alliances and partnerships between different stakeholders, including the private sector, foundations, philanthropic organizations, non-traditional donors and civil society, to facilitate better and more effective coordination around financing. For example, the United States Government's flagship programme the [Feed the Future initiative](#) is partnering with 12 African countries to focus on economic growth and improved food security and nutrition. The initiative places an explicit emphasis on partnerships for success, which has been embedded in its overall approach.

3 Policy

Food systems transformation requires policy-level shifts in legislation, rules and regulations around food, agriculture and health, financing, public investment, etc. In the context of the current food crises, policy shifts are needed in several areas, including agriculture subsidies, agricultural practices and policies, investment, trade and value chain policies, and policies for social inclusion and protection. At the country level, as governments seek to adopt a food systems approach, there is a need for guidance on how to transform legislation and policies over time and deal with the trade-offs and synergies across different areas and how governments can best manage these. While often a neglected area, support and funding for transition agendas at the country level is important. For example, the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers' (CGIAR) [National Policies and Strategies](#) initiative is focused on working with countries to identify and build stronger policies and strategies with greater coherence and more capacity to address current and future policy and development needs. The initiative is working to develop a policy coherence dashboard and a framework for food, land and water policy coherence, as well as a mechanism to improve policy coherence.

4 Crisis response

Aligning donor coordination efforts around crises is an area that has garnered a lot of attention in recent years. Globally, we are seeing an environment where crises and emergencies (food, energy, climate, financial, conflict, etc.) are multiplying and overlapping. On the one hand, this creates a challenge for coordination, as there are multiple perspectives on the crises and how to tackle them, making it difficult to find a common narrative for coordination. On the other hand, the crises also present an opportunity to think about new and innovative approaches to coordination and collaboration. As donors and governments navigate emerging crises, it is critical to ensure that resources and funding coming into a crisis situation are well coordinated and that there is sufficient knowledge and understanding of where funds, support and resources are most needed.

There are now numerous instances of coordination around crisis response that indicate not only the need for supportive structures and institutions on the ground but equally and also the importance of sound information, data and communication mechanisms, as well as the need

¹³ The tool proposes a roadmap for the financing of food systems through investments in five key areas: agricultural development and value chains; the infrastructure of food systems; nutrition; social assistance, including emergency food assistance; and climate change and natural resources. It also emphasizes the need for coordination among stakeholders for a full systems approach.

for donors to work proactively together and with partner governments to identify where support is needed. Furthermore, it is well established that partner governments' ownership and leadership is key. Some examples of efforts emerging around crisis response include the G7 GAFS, which is a platform for coordination that seeks to catalyse an agile and immediate coordinated response to the global food security crisis. A key output of GAFS is the Global Food and Nutrition Security Dashboard, launched in 2022. The dashboard presents up-to-date data on the severity of the food crisis, tracks global food security financing, and makes research and analysis available to improve policy coordination and financial responses to crises. The goal of the dashboard is to inform a more coordinated global food crisis response and support medium- and long-term food security interventions. Similarly, the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM) initiative by France, is an umbrella initiative focused on addressing short- and medium-term food security and nutrition and longer-term sustainable and resilient food systems in multiple areas, including international trade, humanitarian responses and development.¹⁴

5 Long-term resilience

There is growing recognition of the tension between responding to and investing in short-term crisis response and investing in the longer-term policies and reforms needed to build resilience and avoid constant cycles of crisis. This implies investing in food systems transformation processes that will address the root causes of failures. Building on the national pathway processes, donors and development partners have an opportunity to co-invest in long-term resilience strategies that support partner governments to make the kinds of structural changes required at the institutional and normative levels.

6 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is critical to effective donor coordination and must be done as a package. However, in practical terms, establishing common monitoring and evaluation and data collection frameworks among donors and between donors and governments is challenging, as is coordinating joint monitoring and reporting efforts. Given the added complexity of a food systems framing, donors can work together effectively to invest in building monitoring and evaluation tools and approaches that apply a systems lens and that can factor in the complexity of different actors and stakeholders engaging in the food systems in-country. As far as possible, it is important to avoid recipients of donor resources having to report back to different donors in different ways with different indicators. Progress has been made on this issue in recent years, in part due to the creation of related Development Assistance Committee standards; however, it does remain a significant issue for many recipients of donor funds.

¹⁴ IFAD (2022), "Update on IFAD Activities Related to the Global Food Crisis Response", <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/136/docs/EB-2022-136-R-2.pdf>.