



# Minutes Board Meeting

## Participants

### Board Members

- **Tristan Armstrong**, *Australia (Chair)*
- **Nick Goetschalckx**, *European Commission*
- **Jouko Eskelinen**, *Finland*
- **Manon Bellon**, *France*
- **Ammad Bahalim**, *Gates Foundation*
- **Fabrizio Moscatelli**, *Gates Foundation*
- **Jan Brix**, *Germany*
- **Patrick McManus**, *Ireland*
- **Elisa Pettinati**, *Italy*
- **Bruce Campbell**, *Switzerland*
- **Naomi Sterk**, *The Netherlands*
- **Iris Krebber**, *United Kingdom*
- **Sung Lee**, *United States*

### Guests

- **Carin Smaller**, *Shamba Centre for Food and Climate*
- **Oshani Perera**, *Shamba Centre for Food and Climate*
- **Kamal El Harty**, *Shamba Centre for Food and Climate*
- **Lysiane Lefebvre**, *Shamba Centre for Food and Climate*
- **Christine Negra**, *United Nations Foundation*

### GDPRD Secretariat

- **Maurizio Navarra**
- **Michelle Tang**
- **Alessandro Cordova**
- **Monique Amar**
- **Sierra Berardelli**
- **Jim Woodhill**, *Senior Advisor*

## Agenda

ISSUE	ITEM	DETAILS
1.	Welcome and Introduction	Tristan Armstrong
2.	Follow-up to the 2023 Senior Managers Meeting and development of the 2024 Work Plan and Budget proposals	Jim Woodhill, Secretariat
3.	Presentation by UN Foundation	Christine Negra
4.	AOB and closing	Secretariat

# Key Highlights/Issues

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

- Jouko Eskelinen (Finland) and Elisa Pettinati (Italy) joined the GDPRD Board for the first time.
- Tristan Armstrong (Australia) chaired the call for the last time and handed over the Co-chairmanship to Bruce Campbell (Switzerland) and Iris Krebber (United Kingdom).

## 2. Follow-up to the 2023 Senior Managers Meeting and development of the 2024 Work Plan and Budget proposals

### PURPOSE OF SECTION:

*The Secretariat provided a summary of the proposed 2024 deliverables for the sustainable finance and donor coordination workstreams, based on feedback from the 2023 Senior Managers Meeting.*

### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The main report of the country-level donor coordination workstream, "[From rhetoric to reality: Donor coordination for food systems transformation](#)", provides guidance for actions that can be taken by donors to support food systems transformation. The final report makes a series of eight recommendations, two of which were considered during the Senior Managers' meeting for take up by the GDPRD in 2024.

**1) Complementarity of funding modes review.** There are increasing, fragmented and complementary modes of donor funding, but a limited overview of the merits and synergies of different modalities. The GDPRD Secretariat proposes to undertake a scoping review of the complementarity of different funding modalities, followed by an extended assessment, if warranted. The review would involve mapping and describing of the main funding modalities, stakeholder engagement to identify strengths, weaknesses, and synergies among different funding modalities, and recommendations for donors on optimizing modalities of development finance. The review could lay foundations for the 2024 Annual General Assembly (AGA), with a theme of "Financing Food Systems Transformation and Rural Revitalization – Opportunities and Challenges", including a series of seminars leading up to the AGA (i.e., introduction to development financing, directions of climate finance and implications for food systems and rural development, and mobilizing private sector investment). *[Jim Woodhill]*

### Discussion and Q&A:

- The Global Alliance on Food Security (GAFS), the World Bank and IFAD (through their 3FS initiative) and the Global Network Against Food Crises are doing similar work; it will be critical to ensure coherence and that efforts are not duplicated. *[European Commission, Ireland]*
- The G20 commissioned a comprehensive report with IFIs, looking at traditional and non-traditional funding streams and mechanisms, which could provide a foundation to this review. *[United States]*
- Would the seminars be open to a wider audience, or just to Board members? *[France]*
  - The seminars would be open to all, unless there are specific topics that are deemed to only be appropriate for the donor audience. *[Maurizio Navarra, Jim Woodhill]*
- Is there an agreement of what constitutes financial flows, such as the CRS codes?

***[Ireland]***

- The codes are not fully agreed upon, and this will likely emerge during the review and may feed into the recommendations portion. ***[Jim Woodhill]***

- 2) Enhanced and regular donor coordination mechanisms at the global level.** The GDPRD can support its membership in holding informal coordination meetings ahead of global events/forums or in response to emerging crises, on an ad hoc basis. The objectives of the meetings include: (1) more aligned engagement across a range of global governance mechanisms; (2) informal exchanges and cross-fertilization of ideas and positions; and (3) promote better coordination at the country and subnational levels. The outcomes are that donors: (1) are better informed about other agencies' positions and stances ahead of global events; (2) may find points of commonality and convergence; and (3) may be able to strategically inform and potentially influence the work of official delegations.

It is proposed that convenings would be initially open to Board member agencies only, and Board members would be bilaterally consulted ahead of the convening to collect areas of focus and additional information. The convenings would take place at least 2.5 months in advance of the related event, in a 2-hour virtual format, not in conjunction with regular Board Meetings. The convenings would be chaired by one or both of the Co-chairs and could begin with a senior-level 'thought-leader' to present the key focus areas of the proposed event and frame the discussion. Potential events for 2024 would be the G7 Summit, G20 Summit, UNFCCC COP 29, and the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health (AFSH) Summit. ***[Maurizio Navarra]***

**Discussion and Q&A:**

- The convenings should initially be restricted to Board member agencies only, to allow frank and informal discussion. ***[France, Germany, Switzerland, United States]***
- At the beginning of the year, Board members should collectively decide which events are most relevant to target. ***[United States]***
- If a collective position is to be conveyed, the meetings targeted should be those where agricultural development is not discussed enough, such as the climate change COP. However, it will be difficult to convey unified positions on specific topics. ***[France, Germany]***
  - No collective GDPRD positions would be developed; rather, individual donors could be informed of and better align their own positions with other donors. Board members are encouraged to invite colleagues within their agencies who would be best suited to participate. ***[Maurizio Navarra, Jim Woodhill]***
- Will the workstream activities include specific thematic areas of focus? ***[Italy]***
  - The [Platform Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#) outlines thematic areas of focus for the GDPRD. It also mentions the need for an annual horizon-scanning process to identify emerging and priority issues for donors, which will be relevant when deciding upon the global events targeted. ***[France, Jim Woodhill]***
- Many Board members are members of G7/G20 and involved in other convenings leading up to global events. Therefore, the first convening should be a pilot-test to ensure there is added value. ***[Australia, Germany]***
- What would be the follow up to the convenings? ***[Switzerland, Netherlands]***
  - This will be developed further in the TORs with the incoming Co-chairs and presented to the Board for endorsement. The convenings are proposed as virtual to allow flexibility in holding more or less depending on availability and

requirements. *[Maurizio Navarra]*

- The summary of the enquiry on sustainable and innovative financing for food systems, "[Unleashing the Catalytic Power of Donor Financing to Achieve SDG2](#)", includes three recommendations that were considered during the Senior Managers Meeting:
  1. Establish a **multi-donor working group on innovative/blended finance**, to share data and knowledge for better collaboration around blended finance. The group would be hosted by the Platform, with receive organizational and logistic support from the Secretariat. Membership and participation would be open to technical specialists in donor agencies and other stakeholders actively engaging in sustainable finance (not limited to GDPRD Board Members), and would be led by two Co-Chairs of the participating organizations.
  2. Develop a **data repository on the performance of agri-food SMEs loans** from donors, which could in turn be used to support the multi-donor working group. The data repository would serve as a body of evidence/data not shared in the public domain, which can strengthen donor blending by allowing them to compare their own portfolios of agri-food enterprise loans with those of other donors and DFIs. The database can build on the design and experience of the [Council on Smallholder Agricultural Finance \(CSAF\)](#) and [MIX Market](#).
  3. Host a series of **knowledge sharing seminars and roundtables** to promote and showcase the findings of the enquiry and provide a platform for knowledge exchange between experts and actors in the agriculture and rural development space. Co-organizers could include relevant agencies such as CSAF, SAFIN, and IFAD, who are also working on the intersections of agriculture and sustainable finance. *[Maurizio Navarra]*

#### **Q&A:**

- Will preparations for the database include a conversation with Nadia from SAFIN, who is already doing important work in this same area? *[United States]*
  - Yes. SAFIN is aware of the proposal, and is enthusiastic about working together *[Maurizio Navarra, Carin Smaller]*
- Will the working group be part of the overall finance workstream or is it a separate space? There may not be capacity for added meetings and commitments. *[European Union]*
  - The workstreams are the main activities of the Platform, whereas Thematic Working Groups are independent and choose their own activities and schedules. *[Maurizio Navarra]*
  - The working group would ideally include blended finance specialists of Board members' agencies and other actors, rather than the same Board members who attend other GDPRD meetings. *[Carin Smaller]*

#### **DECISION POINT:**

- The Secretariat will develop detailed TORs for each workstreams' next steps, to be presented in the next Board Meeting for endorsement.

### **3. Presentation by UN Foundation**

#### **PURPOSE OF SECTION:**

*Christine Negra, Senior Advisor of Energy, Climate & the Environment at the UN Foundation, presented the*

recent policy brief, [Empower climate-resilient smallholder agriculture by investing in African research and innovation](#).

#### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- The UN Foundation convened a series of roundtables with 15 African experts representing the African agriculture space (i.e., CGIAR, universities, regional networks, producers' associations). These 15 experts formed a co-author group and developed three recommendations for enhanced investment for resilience smallholder agriculture in Africa:
  - Investing in capacity: ensuring that a greater share of resources going to African-led research and innovation enable resilience, commercially viable agricultural production;
  - Collaboration in context: allocating funds to a wide variety of mechanisms that increase connectivity across upstream and downstream research, between public and private sectors, and among research and policy communities; and
  - Continuity across investments: investments will function better and be more effectiveness with enduring support for non-commercial funds, right-size patient capital, and more explicit handoffs.
- Short-cycle project funding has not been beneficial to smallholders, which is critical in this moment of strained public budgets and urgent humanitarian crises. Using concessionary funds to stimulate private sector investment (i.e., blended finance), is key to increased effectiveness, particularly in the short-term.
- There are significant co-investment opportunities to address the significant unmet search and innovation needs for smallholder resilience in Africa. Such opportunities for donors could include: funding in-region R&D and data development, de-risking pre-financing to SMEs, and funding improved transport and storage infrastructure.
- The 15 co-authors are open and available to work with donors, including by participating in dialogues and public events of the GDPRD. **[Christine Negra]**

## **4. AOB and Closing**

#### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- The AU Fertilizer and Soil Summit is tentatively scheduled for April or May 2024. **[United States]**
- The next Board meeting will be scheduled in the beginning of 2024, date and time to be announced in due course.