



GDPRD ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024

Financing Food Systems Transformation and Rural Revitalization: Opportunities and Challenges

CONCEPT NOTE

November 26 - 27, 2024

IFAD Headquarters, Rome, Italy

Zoom registration [link](#)

1. Background

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD, or “the Platform”) is a network of 40 bilateral and multilateral donors, international financial institutions and foundations that share a common vision on the role of agriculture and rural development in reducing global poverty and combating hunger and malnutrition. The Platform is committed to achieving increased and more effective aid for agriculture and rural development through evidence-based advocacy and knowledge sharing.

Every year, the Platform holds its Annual General Assembly (AGA), an event that provides Platform members, partners and invited guests with an open space to debate emerging topics in agriculture and rural development. AGA participants benefit from the core services of the Donor Platform: knowledge sharing, strategic influencing, and networking on key development issues and strategic directions that affect lives in rural spaces. AGAs are based on topical, thematic areas. Past examples include the 2023 AGA on “20 Years of rural development and aid effectiveness: Where are we now and where are we going?”, and the 2022 AGA on “Implementing National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation to Accelerate Progress Towards the SDGs in Times of Crisis and Conflict”.

To maximize participation and reach diverse audiences, GDPRD Board Members and Secretariat have decided to hold the 2024 AGA in a hybrid in-person/online format. It will take place over two days, on 26-27 November 2024, under the theme **“Financing Food Systems Transformation and Rural Revitalization: Opportunities and Challenges”**.

2. Rationale for the 2024 AGA Theme

Despite official development assistance (ODA) increasing to its highest level in 2023, at US\$223.7 billion¹, the world remains off-track in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is facing escalating costs due to conflict, natural disasters, and increased migration.

While food systems transformation is central to addressing climate change, tackling poverty and protecting biodiversity, ODA to the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors amounted to only US\$14.1 billion in 2022 and has remained flat since 2017 at 5-6 per cent of total ODA². Climate finance amounted to approximately US\$1 trillion in 2022, yet less than 4 per cent of this financing is directed towards agriculture³, and less than 1 per cent supports small-scale agriculture⁴. Meanwhile, the hidden annual costs of agrifood systems, including their negative impacts on society, health and the environment, are estimated at US\$12 trillion, amounting to more than the global gross domestic product (GDP) of the food sector (estimated at US\$10 trillion, or 12 per cent of global GDP).⁵

This situation calls for a profound rethink of how limited ODA resources can be best used.

Funding fragmented individual projects can only have a marginal impact and will not lead to the scale of systemic change needed to transform food systems. Financing for food needs to be more robust and innovative relative to the emerging scale of the challenge of putting the SDGs back on track and creating a just and resilient response to climate change for the long term.

Over the last several years, growing attention has been drawn to the challenge of financing food systems transformation. Most recently, the 2024 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report, "*Financing to End Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition*" focused entirely on this subject, with innovative definitions and strategies for addressing this complex and fragmented issue. The SOFI includes reference to a 2024 report by the GDPRD and the Shamba Centre for Food and Climate, "*Unleashing the Catalytic Power of Donor Financing to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal*", which investigated how donors, philanthropic organizations, public funds and blended capital funds can make their funding act as an incentive for achieving SDG 2. Underlying the debate about finance is the importance of effective donor coordination, as articulated by the 2023 GDPRD report "*From Rhetoric to Reality: Donor coordination for food systems transformation*". This theme will remain of focus in coming years, with the forthcoming IFAD 2025 Rural Development Report on this same subject.

3. AGA Topics and Objectives

This year's AGA will be an informative and participatory event, where donors and others (including representatives from partner/developing countries, private sector and foundations, civil society, among others) will engage in a series of thought-provoking questions and discussions. These conversations will be built around the themes of **innovative financing for food systems transformation and rural development, coordinating donor approaches to increasing the volume, efficiency and effectiveness of financial flows, and harmonized stakeholder engagement**. Overall, will AGA will build the GDPRD's capacity to strategically influence international food systems transformation and rural development agendas.

¹ [Official development assistance \(ODA\) - OECD](#)

² [OECD Data Explorer • Aid \(ODA\) by sector and donor \[DAC5\]](#)

³ [Global-Landscape-of-Climate-Finance-2023.pdf \(climatepolicyinitiative.org\)](#)

⁴ [Climate Policy Initiative](#)

⁵ [The State of Food and Agriculture 2023 \(fao.org\)](#)

Specifically, the AGA will seek to:

1. Identify the **key constraints and opportunities for using ODA more catalytically** to drive larger-scale investments in transforming food systems and rural development.
2. Explore lessons and opportunities for **incentivizing private sector investments** toward food systems transformation.
3. Investigate **the range of financing institutions, modalities and mechanisms** that donors can use in complementary and coordinated ways to **enhance their catalytic potential**
4. Consider how progress on **critical thematic foci (i.e., land governance, rural youth employment, data for SDG2)** can support broader food systems transformation
5. Identify **how the GDPRD and its stakeholders can strategically contribute** to food systems transformation and rural development agendas.

At the end of the session, participants are expected to:

1. Understand the merits and synergies of different funding modalities which can be used to advance food systems transformation and rural development;
2. Pinpoint critical factors hindering or facilitating the effective utilization of donor resources;
3. Identify best practices for incentivizing private sector in food systems transformation;
4. Recognize how different development financing models can be used in various situations, including innovative approaches (e.g., the use of blended finance, climate finance);
5. Outline actionable steps for meaningful collaboration at the global and national level.

4. Organizational Arrangements

The AGA will be held over 1.5 days, on 26-27 November 2024, at the IFAD Headquarters in Rome, Italy. Participants will be invited to a hybrid event, allowing for in-presence participation at IFAD HQ, as well as virtual attendance on Zoom.

Members of the Platform, its Board and representatives from the GDPRD's Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), as well as other key partners, will be invited to attend in-person. Participants will include representatives from all geographic regions, including governments, international organizations, agribusiness companies, academic and research organizations, think tanks, NGOs, civil society, farmers' organizations and others. Special attention will be given to the representatives of women and youth organizations.

The GDPRD Secretariat will organize the AGA under the leadership of the Platform Board, which will contribute to the event's design and organization. This includes mobilizing participants and speakers, reviewing background documents to facilitate dialogue at the event, identifying authoritative individuals as possible speakers and panellists, and various other contributions.

The event will also provide an opportunity for the Platform's thematic working groups to design sessions around their specific topics, with linkages to the overall financing theme. There will be a blend of high-level plenary sessions and technical panel discussions, along with special breakout working sessions, a format that will maximize opportunities for dialogue and participation.

An event page and selected video recordings of the AGA will also be available on the GDPRD website.

5. Provisional Agenda

DAY 1 – Tuesday 26 November 2024

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| Morning | Catalytic Development Finance for a Sustainable and Resilient Future <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Opening and keynote address- Funding modalities of donor finance, with SOFI 2024 and IFAD RDR 2025 authors- High-level panel on mobilizing catalytic financing |
| Afternoon | Challenges, Opportunities, and Examples of Sustainable Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Breakout sessions on critical financing gaps and opportunities- Interactive reporting back session- Financing for rural youth (session by the RYE-TWG) |

DAY 2 – Wednesday 27 November 2024

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| Morning | Thematic Priorities for Financing the Future of Food Systems Transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Land Governance and Tenure (session by the GDWGL)- High-level synthesis panel- Discussion on strategic directions for the GDPRD- AGA closing |
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Annex: Key Background Documents

Arora, R.U. & Sarker, T. (2023). *Financing for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond*. Eur J Dev Res 35, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-022-00571-9>.

Buchner, B., et al. (2023). *Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2023*. Climate Policy Initiative.

Davies, S. & Palacin, J. (n.d.) *Innovative Financing Mechanisms and Solutions*. (Policy Brief) United Nations Economist Network.

FAO. (2023). *The State of Food and Agriculture 2023. Revealing the true cost of food to transform agrifood systems*. Rome.

FAO. (Forthcoming). *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024. Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition*. Rome.

FAO, UNDP & UNEP. (2021). *A multi-billion-dollar opportunity – Repurposing agricultural support to transform food systems*. Rome, FAO.

International Development Committee. (2023). *Investment for development: The UK's strategy towards Development Finance Institutions*. House of Commons.

OECD (2022), *Multilateral Development Finance 2022*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9fea4cf2-en>.

OECD (2023), *Development Co-operation Report 2023: Debating the Aid System*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f6edc3c2-en>.

Ruggeri Laderchi, C., et al. (2024). *The Economics of the Food System Transformation*. Food System Economics Commission (FSEC), Global Policy Report.