



Minutes TWG RYE Meeting

Participants

Group Members

- **Theresa Herbold**, *BMZ*
- **Alun Jones**, *CIHEAM*
- **Yessie Meyer**, *Enabel*
- **Anna Befus**, *FAO*
- **Audrey Sirvente**, *FAR*
- **Sven Braulik**, *GIZ*
- **Rahul Antao**, *IFAD*
- **Elisenda Estruch Puertas**, *ILO*
- **G.M. Schurink**, *the Netherlands*

- **Ji-Yeun Rim**, *OECD/DEV (Co-Chair)*
- **Genna Tesdall**, *YPARD (Co-Chair)*

GDPRD Secretariat

- **Maurizio Navarra**
- **Michelle Tang**
- **Alessandro Cordova**
- **Sierra Berardelli**
- **Monique Amar**

Agenda

ISSUE	ITEM	DETAILS
1.	Welcome and introduction	Ji-Yeun Rim/OECD
2.	Updates from the Secretariat	GDPRD Secretariat
3.	In-depth discussion: Enabel Approaches for Education, Training and Employment for the Agricultural Sector	Enabel
4.	Terms of Reference review	OECD/All
5.	Tour de Table and Miscellaneous	OECD/All
6.	Wrap up and closing	OECD/All

Key Highlights/Issues

1. Welcome and Introduction

- G.M. Schurink (Netherlands) joined the call for the first time.
- The TWG RYE Co-Chairs presented the topic and work of the group at a meeting of the EU Group of Heads of Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Union (HARDs) in April.

2. Updates from the Secretariat

PURPOSE OF SECTION:

The Secretariat provided an overview of ongoing Platform activities.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The GDPRD is in the process of developing a White Paper, as an informal input to key international events in 2025 on financing food systems, including the Fourth International Financing for Development Conference (FfD4), UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking (UNFSS+4) and COP30. The Paper is being guided by a High-Level Advisory Group (HLAG), under the chairmanship of IFAD and the European Commission. It highlights the urgency of financing agrifood systems and provides key action areas for attention by different actors (e.g., bilateral donors, IFIs, etc.) for catalytic solutions.
 - An application has been submitted for a side event at FfD4, which would be the official launch of the White Paper. Side event applications are also being submitted for the UNFSS+4 and the CFS53.
 - The White Paper will contribute to wider discussions on the evolution of Official Development Assistance (ODA), increasing momentum behind innovative and blended finance, private sector engagement and shifting horizons in the context of climate change, conflict, geopolitical uncertainty.
 - The inputs underscore the work of the Platform as an informal gathering space, through which members can strategically leverage to influence policy processes and contribute to important food and rural development dialogues.

Q&A and Discussion:

- Can the TWG submit a contribution to the White Paper for the HLAG's consideration regarding rural youth employment, or is the topic sufficiently considered in the current draft?
 - Yes, but given the short length of the Paper, it would need to be a shorter contribution to be incorporated throughout the messaging, rather than as a standalone paragraph.

3. In-depth discussion: Enabel Approaches for Education, Training and Employment for the Agricultural Sector

PURPOSE OF SECTION:

Yessie Meyer, Agriculture & Food Systems Expert presented Enabel's approaches to education, training and employment in agriculture.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Enabel operates in 20 countries (primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa and 72% in fragile contexts) implementing over 200 projects with a €357 million annual turnover, focusing on four global

challenges: socio-economic empowerment, climate/environment, demographic transitions, and peace/stability/democracy, with crosscutting themes including gender and inclusion, youth empowerment, digital transition, decent work and sustainability.

- Enabel's approach to rural youth employment focuses on skills for decent jobs through a demand-driven theory of change. This includes engagement with both formal and non-formal skills development, entrepreneurship, and job creation efforts, particularly in the agricultural sector.
- A 2023 internal study was conducted to identify best entry points and practices for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and entrepreneurship in agrifood across Enabel's intervention countries. Findings included that target groups and project aspirations are inconsistently defined, the importance of aligning monetary targets with local socio-economic contexts, project focus should align with local potential (resilience vs. job creation) and that approaches vary across countries, targeting different employment paths.
 - **Best practices** identified include to avoid labeling all youth as entrepreneurs; ensure financial viability and relevance of training; promote private sector linkages and tailor support to youth preferences; and adopt a long-term approach with realistic goals and sufficient coaching.
 - **Practices to avoid** include 'token training' (e.g., brief or minimal training sessions labeled as skills development); providing free start-up kits without co-funding or follow-up support; starting projects in regions lacking financial services or viable training institutions; investing in formal agri-technical education with low returns; and separating entrepreneurship and training.
- Enabel's Uganda "WeWork" project (2023–2028) aims to impact 20,000 youth and create 6,000 decent jobs via 9 vocational institutes and private sector partners, integrating lessons from the TVET study. The project uses youth personas and storytelling to help tailor interventions to the needs and aspirations of target groups and to support stakeholders in understanding their role/impact and the added value of the project. A value chain study was also conducted, selecting poultry and piggery based on social, environmental, and economic criteria. It emphasizes investing in the continuum of transitioning from training to work and entrepreneurship.
- Decent work is measured not just by income but through improvements in eight dimensions: income security, employment security, labour market security, social protection, work life balance and well-being, fair treatment, OHS, voice and representation. This approach is used to assess job quality in both wage and self-employment.
- There is an ongoing Team Europe Initiative focused on opportunity-driven skills and vocational education and training (VET) being implemented jointly with GIZ.
- A Decent Work Toolbox has been developed, aimed at helping integrate the various dimensions of decent work into programming. The toolbox is specifically designed for use in fragile and low-income contexts.

Q&A and Discussion:

- What does "matching" entail in Enabel's theory; is it just job placement or broader market alignment?
 - In middle-income countries, it focuses on aligning youth with specific company needs. In more fragile contexts, it emphasizes identifying viable self-employment opportunities with market demand (i.e., poultry farming in Uganda).
- What is the ratio of youth entering wage employment to entrepreneurship? There is a large gap between youth aspirations and available agricultural jobs, and the youth enterprise failure rate is high.
 - Approximately 10% of youth transition into wage jobs. Many youth are self-

- employed, but they rarely become employers of others. Entrepreneurship requires longer-term support including mentoring/coaching and incubation, which are often underfunded elements in programmes.
- The gap between aspirations and jobs is indeed a critical issue, and often agricultural labour pays significantly lower than youth ideal salaries expectations. Pilot initiatives are underway to improve wages and working conditions in agriculture to better align with youth expectations.
- Most youth aim simply to sustain micro-enterprises, and business failure rates are high; only one in five survive beyond five years. Current efforts are focused on enhancing business resilience and exploring social protection measures to mitigate risks.
- How do you address youth in areas without access to finance?
 - Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) are often used as an entry point, but in this case, many youth participate for general financial access rather than for agriculture.
- How is “decent work” defined and measured over time?
 - A multidimensional indicator is used, covering the 8 indicators mentioned in the presentation. This allows for tracking both immediate results and longer-term progress.
- How is the private sector being engaged in youth employment?
 - Engagement includes providing wage subsidies, evaluating working conditions, and co-developing job profiles. The objective is to align training with real labor market needs and support the creation of better-quality jobs. Additionally, soft skills training (i.e., communication skills and professionalism) are being developed in collaboration with the private sector, in response to employer feedback.

4. Terms of Reference review

PURPOSE OF SECTION:

To review and update the TWG's Terms of Reference (ToRs).

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- TWG Members reviewed the groups Terms of Reference (ToR), originally drafted in 2018 upon the groups' formation and last amended in April 2021. While the group remains informal with flexible participation, the revised ToRs emphasize the value of active engagement. Members are encouraged to shape the group's direction by contributing questions, insights and areas of interest to ensure its continued relevance and usefulness.
- A proposed amendment introduces a clause on membership, specifying that participation should be by invitation only and free of conflicts of interest.
- Members are encouraged to share written feedback on the ToRs with the Co-Chairs/Secretariat by 3 June 2025.

5. Tour de Table and Miscellaneous

- YPARD is working on a youth survey for the GEF food systems integrated program; all TWG members are encouraged to distribute the survey to their youth contacts.
- YPARD is simultaneously working on a project design a youth-oriented agroecology project, as well as on policy advocacy at global events such as UNFSS+4 and COP30.
- FAO's Status of Youth in Agrifood Systems report will be launched on 3 July 2025; all members are welcomed and encouraged to join, either in-person in FAO HQ, Rome or

online. The link to register will be shared in due course. Further events on the report will focus on findings relevant to the different regions. Preparations have begun for the 2025 World Food Forum, which will take place October 10th -17th, by FAO's newly created Office of Youth and Women. [Side event applications are welcome](#).

- FAO is implementing a project focusing on youth employment and empowerment in urban agrifood systems and is interested to connect with members on this thematic area. Further FAO is exploring the work area on enabling decent employment opportunities for youth with disabilities in agrifood systems.
- IFAD's Youth Action Plan will be launched in December 2025; IFAD would appreciate if an upcoming TWG RYE meeting could feature a presentation of the draft for feedback from the members.
- The UN Secretary General report on poverty, as well as IFAD's Governing Council 2026, will both strongly focus on youth.
- IFAD is working to promote youth-focused dialogue in various forums in 2025, including ECOSOC, the Africa Food Systems Forum, and UNGA.
- FAR is an international agricultural rural training network, which is a nonprofit French association founded in 2012. Most of the work is in Francophone African countries. There is a new impact assessment study for FAR, that would be interesting to present to the TWG RYE later this year.
- The TWG RYE held a webinar on 15 April on [“Investing in Youth: The Role of Development Banks”](#). The group will host another webinar in Q3; potential topics including green bonds or other finance-focused topics. Members are encouraged to share webinar topic ideas and speaker suggestions.
- The TWG RYE discussed applying for a side event at the UNFSS+4 but there was not ample availability and interest. The deadline for submissions has been extended to May 23. YPARD will monitor the results of the side event selection and are in discussion with others for an off-site event. The TWG RYE will be updated on any developments.
- By the end of the year, findings/results will be released from the JobAgri initiative in Ghana, which brings together AU, ILO, FAO, and CIRAD, which might be relevant both at the methodological level (measurement of decent work) and policy level (guidance for agricultural, employment and youth policy measures and programmes).
- ILO's [Rural Development Academy 2025](#) will take place from 15 September-3 October 2025, focusing on a just transition.
- Members are invited to join CIHEAM's international symposium on [“Women's empowerment through innovation in Mediterranean agro-food systems”](#) taking place from 10-12 June.

6. Wrap Up and Closing

- The next regular call will take place in September 2025, date and time TBC.

Summary of action points

ITEM	ACTION	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
1.	Members to provide feedback on amended TORs.	3 June 2025	All
2.	Members to share webinar topic ideas.	ASAP	All

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3.	Members to suggest topics for in-depth inputs and/or their availability to present own activities.	ASAP	All
3.	Provide event/publication updates to Michelle Tang/Secretariat for the TWG RYE website.	Rolling basis	All