



22 October 2025

# Minutes Senior Managers Meeting

## Participants

### Senior Managers and Board Members

- **Leonard Mizzi**, *European Commission*
- **Camilla Fusato**, *European Commission*
- **Celia Chambelland**, *France*
- **Ammad Bahalim**, *Gates Foundation*
- **Fabrizio Moscatelli**, *Gates Foundation*
- **Kordula Mehlhart**, *Germany*
- **Jan Brix**, *Germany*
- **Ron Hartman**, *IFAD*
- **Max von Bonsdorff**, *IFAD*
- **Elisa Pettinati**, *Italy*
- **Mark Montgomery**, *Ireland*
- **Thijs Woudstra**, *The Netherlands*
- **Stineke Oenema**, *The Netherlands*
- **Lisa van Nieuwkoop**, *The Netherlands*
- **Bruce Campbell**, *Switzerland*

### Guests

- **Boudewijn Vandebossche**, *Belgium*
- **Carol Durieux**, *Belgium*
- **Maarten de Groot**, *Canada*
- **Nikita Eriksen-Hamel**, *Canada*
- **Isabel Szollosy**, *Canada*
- **Anders Aabo**, *Norway*
- **Ola Moller**, *Sweden*

### GDPRD Secretariat

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

## Agenda

ISSUE	ITEM (DAY ONE)	DETAILS
1.	Welcome and Introduction	Co-Chairs/Secretariat
2.	Recent achievements and upcoming working priorities (Q4) for the Platform	Secretariat/Jim Woodhill
3.	Status update on G7 Canadian Presidency <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- G7 FSWG meeting in Ottawa</li></ul>	Global Affairs Canada
4.	International context and implications for the Platform	Co-Chairs/All
5.	Strategic Plan 2026-2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Feedback on the draft GDPRD 2026-2030 Strategic Plan</li><li>- New proposed workstream on Artificial Intelligence</li></ul>	Secretariat/Jim Woodhill
6.	AOB and Closing	Co-Chairs/Secretariat

# Key Highlights/Issues

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

- The Co-Chair (Switzerland) welcomed representatives from Board organizations, as well as guests (Belgium, Canada, Norway, and Sweden) to the 2025 Senior Managers Meeting.
- The Co-Chair (Switzerland) opened by emphasizing the importance of participants' input for the continued success of the Platform, and acknowledging the rapidly changing geopolitical context reshaping donor priorities. The Platform's recent achievements have underscored that as traditional multilateral mechanisms weaken, the GDPRD's informal and collaborative nature is becoming increasingly important for strategic donor cooperation.

## 2. Recent achievements and upcoming working priorities (Q4) for the Platform

### PURPOSE OF SECTION:

*For the Secretariat to provide an update on activities and achievements since last Senior Managers Meeting.*

### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

#### Recent and Upcoming Achievements

- Since the Senior Managers Meeting last year, the Platform has:
  - Hosted events including the [2024 Annual General Assembly](#), an [official side event at FfD4](#), and multiple thematic webinars;
  - Published flagship products including the [2024 Annual Report](#), the [AGA report](#), and the [White Paper on Financing Agrifood Systems for People, Planet and Prosperity](#), which was guided by a [High-Level Advisory Group](#) comprised of experts from across the donor community, development finance institutions, and food and nutrition organizations;
  - Published flagship products including the [2024 Annual Report](#), the [AGA report](#), and the [White Paper on Financing Agrifood Systems for People, Planet and Prosperity](#);
  - Participated in the G7 Food Systems Working Group, the CFS Collaborative Governance Dialogue, and Building Bridges;
  - Developed the [food systems architecture database](#); and,
  - Facilitated the activity of all four [thematic working groups](#).
- Platform communications have been highly active, with:
  - A 15% increase in website visitors, and a 73% increase in LinkedIn followers;
  - The publication of 14 interviews and 8 podcasts;
  - 12 news/op-ed articles;
  - 3 newsletters.
- The Platform remains active during the last quarter of the year, with [two official side events at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Plenary of the Committee on World Food Security](#), numerous speaking [engagements](#), and continues its a financing for rural youth-focused [webinars](#).

#### Annual General Assembly (AGA)

- The European Commission has generously offered to host the AGA in Brussels, Belgium on Friday, 12 December. All Board members are strongly encouraged to attend in person.
- The AGA theme will be *Future of Investing for Agrifood Systems Transformation: Options and directions in a new era of development finance*. The AGA will focus on value for money, financial architecture reforms, and effective collaborative financing.

- There will be a joint session between the Rural Youth Employment thematic working group and the Global Donor Working Group on Land.
- During the week of 15<sup>th</sup> December in Brussels, the EU Agri-Food Days will also take place, which may represent a good bridging opportunity for participants.
- The AGA concept note and agenda will be shared in the coming weeks. Board members are encouraged to provide their feedback and speaker suggestions with the Secretariat and the EU.

#### **Co-Chairmanship Rotation**

- The Co-Chairmanship between Bruce Campbell (Switzerland) and Federica De Gaetano (Italy) will end in December 2025. Their leadership and support were highly appreciated by the Secretariat as well as by all Platform members.
- All Board members are encouraged to consider the putting forward their candidacies for Co-Chairmanship of the Platform in the next rotation (2026 – 2027), and are welcome to contact either the Secretariat or the current Co-Chairs for more information.
- The Secretariat will circulate an email to the Board with the official request for candidacies.

#### **Q&A and DISCUSSION:**

- On 15 – 17 December in Brussels, Belgium (just after the AGA), the EU will host its annual flagship event, EU Agri-Food Days, on the theme of "[Securing Europe's Food and Agriculture.](#)"

### **3. Status update on the G7 Canadian Presidency**

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

*For colleagues from Global Affairs Canada to present an update on the G7 Canadian Presidency, and particularly the recent G7 Food Systems Working Group (FSWG) meeting.*

#### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Across the G7 Presidency, Canada has focused on economic security, innovation and technology, and securing partnerships of the future. The latter is aimed at reviving development partnerships.
- The objectives of the FSWG were to: (1) give new momentum to G7 partnership dialogue; (2) explore common themes for future collaboration in a changing development landscape; and (3) improving the transparency of G7 financial reporting.
  - One of the goals of theme 3 was to gain consensus on a standard definition of food systems financing, and establish a DAC code to capture the efforts to address the root causes of hunger. The report is upcoming, and can be shared with interested members.
- Theme 2 is highly relevant for the GDPRD. There was significant attention to food systems convergence themes, including a strong commitment of G7 members on sustainable food systems, private sector financing, innovative financing and the need to reinforce multilateral fora. There were positive signals for more joint collaboration, coherence, and partnerships, presenting an opportunity for the GDPRD to act as a space for convergence and support collective donor coordination.
- Discussions also addressed the fragmented governance of global food systems, with calls to improve transparency, accountability, and alignment across the food, climate, humanitarian, and trade domains. The GDPRD is well positioned to help bridge these policy and knowledge gaps.

- As in the GDPRD, conversations at the FSWG meeting arose on the shift from traditional donor-partner relationships toward more investment-oriented partnerships, as well as the use of AI in development and agriculture for analysis and action.

#### **Q&A and DISCUSSION:**

- Given that the use of taxpayer funds for development will be increasingly scrutinized and debated, convincing communication is needed to reflect the high returns and benefits of food systems investment.
  - The GDPRD might consider concentrating some work on coordination on the fragility-peace-security nexus, and on crises, crisis hotspots, etc.
- This is a period of evolving partnership models. There is strong complementarity between the G7 and the GDPRD. While the G7 offers a smaller forum for major donors to develop ideas, the GDPRD provides a broader, inclusive platform to test and advance ideas among a wider group of national, multilateral, and private-sector partners.
- It is a challenging time for most actors in the sector, but could also be an opportune moment to reassess priorities and co-develop a plan of action.

## **4. International context and implications for the Platform**

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

*To have a frank and open discussion on challenges for multilateralism and how the community needs to continue prioritizing ARD, and coordinate for better impact, cost reduction and improved effectiveness.*

#### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- In the current global context, geopolitical divides are sharper, trust in institutions is eroding, and development finance is under strain. ODA is shrinking, and emerging economies are becoming key donors. The food systems agenda is being overshadowed by short-term crisis management and domestic priorities. Donors are being asked to do more with less money, trust and time.
- With this current context, there is a strong need for coordination spaces that reduce duplication and transaction costs, support value-for-money strategies, and feed into formal processes (e.g., G7, G20, UNGA). The GDPRD operates well in this space, to connect donors' political imperatives with reality, evidence, and results, making cooperation more visible, efficient, and strategic.
- The Platform's mandate, since 2003, is to be an informal space for donor alignment, a broker of evidence and innovation, and a convener for collective influence. It is therefore critical for the Platform to continue pursuing efficiency and working to reduce transaction costs for donors, avoiding duplication and fragmentation, and identifying opportunities for joint delivery.

#### **Q&A and DISCUSSION:**

- Food systems are a significant challenge for small donors facing budget cuts, since priority is on investments in climate, health, and stability. Integrating food systems into broader humanitarian and climate financing, as well as sharing of best practices, is particularly useful for small donors.
- Even private philanthropy is affected by the political broader context. High risk, high reward interventions to achieve stronger impact are critical, as is partnering on innovation, and becoming increasingly attractive to achieve transformational momentum. The Platform could consider a role in aligning donor interests on scale and/or prioritization in such focus areas.

- Migration, stability, and engagement with the private sector are key focus areas for many donor countries. Even for countries which strongly prioritize food, nutrition, and rural development, budgets are decreasing, and focus is moving toward humanitarian, health, and defence spending.
- It can be difficult for donors to be present in all relevant global fora, particularly with increasing budget cuts. As such, the Platform could consider playing a role in coordinating “burden sharing”; aligned messaging across international platforms would be extremely useful.
- It would be useful to build coalitions around the narrative of food systems as levers for stability, growth, and peace. This will require sharpening the narrative and evidence around food systems' role in enabling other objectives, such as gender and climate.
- As NATO has a clear food security track and a food security task force, members might consider how food systems development could fit into committed NATO funding.

## 5. Strategic Plan 2026-2030

### **PURPOSE OF SECTION:**

*For Members to give feedback on the draft 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan, providing guidance to the Platform on its future orientation.*

### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- The Platform's new Strategic Plan (2026-2030) was developed throughout 2025. However, given the rapidly changing global context, it has been revised and adjusted constantly, and all three of the Board meetings in 2025 discussed the development of the draft.
- The Strategic Plan is designed to be a living document, so that it is able to evolve as priorities, contexts, and donor landscapes shift. Flexibility and responsiveness are key. The Secretariat will collect member feedback to assess progress and relevance every year, ensuring that activities remain aligned with members' needs and emerging global trends.
- Although this has always been a focus for the Platform, the new Plan will prioritize a clear value-for-money approach. Therefore, the Plan's guiding principles are: (1) value for money, (2) adaptability, (3) shared ownership, (4) evidence-based influence, and (5) transparency.
- The Secretariat has gathered input from Members on key topics to guide the next five years. Accordingly, these topical focus areas are: (1) donor alignment, (2) innovative financing, (3) AI and digital technology, (4) climate-resilient agriculture, and (5) gender equality.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Workstream:**

- The Platform started discussing AI two years ago within the SDG 2 Roadmap Working Group, showcasing a pilot AI initiative that was being used by colleagues from Global Affairs Canada. Since then, AI usage has expanded dramatically and emerged as a topic of prominent interest at the 2024 Senior Managers Meeting. There are massive opportunities for its transformative potential in development and food systems, but also significant risks.
- This workstream will help establish the GDPRD as a space for donor coordination and knowledge exchange on AI in food systems. The key goals are to: (1) Coordinate donor investments and reduce duplication; (2) Strengthen knowledge on pilots and innovations; (3) Support governance and policy alignment; and (4) Catalyse partnerships across sectors.
- The work will start in early 2026 with a scoping and launch, including a webinar with experts and a mapping study and use case repository. It will continue with a focus on knowledge and governance, with 3-4 thematic workshops, contribute to developing donor principles on responsible AI, identify 2–3 areas for collaborative action, and engage with global debates (UN, G7/G20, OECD).

### **Q&A and DISCUSSION:**

- The GDPRD should strongly focus on strategic influencing, which is present in this draft. Food systems transformation, financing, and the food-climate nexus are all highly relevant.
- While AI does have strong transformative potential for development and food systems, the Platform must be extremely clear on the purpose of this engagement, especially related to the geopolitical and governance implications.
  - The AI work will be with an iterative and pragmatic approach. The initial focus will be technical and practical, such as mapping what AI tools already exist in the donor community that can support decision-making, portfolio analysis, and coordination.
- The language on concrete, coordinated tasks and investments must be carefully considered.
  - The aim is not to coordinate donors' AI work, but to explore how AI can enhance coordination, harmonization, and efficiency among donors, helping reduce duplication, streamline processes, and save costs, especially benefiting smaller donors.

### **ACTION POINTS:**

- The Secretariat will incorporate the above comments into the draft Strategic Plan. Final approval for the Plan is sought for either the December 2025 or February 2026 Board meeting.

## **6. AOB and Closing**

- The final Board meeting of 2025 is being scheduled, date and time to be announced in due course.