



Global Donor
Platform for
Rural Development

GLOBAL DONOR PLATFORM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY AND APPROACH PAPER

A strategic approach to guide Platform priorities, decisions and coordination in a dynamic, global development environment.

2026-2030

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of this strategy and approach paper

This Strategy and Approach Paper provides a strategic foundation to guide the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD, or “the Platform”)’s work during a period of transition in international development. It sets out a strategic framework to inform annual workplans, support agile decision-making, and scale the Platform’s demonstrated value in a rapidly changing development landscape.

In a departure from previous Platform Strategic Plans, this paper adopts a more agile outlook rather than a prescribed set of activities over a multi-year horizon. It is designed to be adaptive, with regular review and annual updating, allowing the Platform to respond to evolving political, economic, and institutional dynamics.

At a moment when donor resources are under pressure, geopolitical dynamics are shifting, and expectations for aid effectiveness are increasing, the Platform remains a trusted, informal space where donors can align, learn from each other, and act with greater coherence. This document outlines how the Platform will build on its achievements, sharpen its focus, and continue to deliver value for its members in the years ahead.

1.2 Background

Since its establishment in 2003, the GDPRD has served as an informal yet influential donor-led convening mechanism for donors committed to rural development and food systems.

Over the past strategy period (2021–2025), the Platform has:

- facilitated cross-donor coordination ahead of major political moments (G7, G20, COPs);
- provided timely intelligence and analysis on emerging issues;
- supported member-driven Thematic Working Groups;
- created a trusted safe space for policy dialogue; and
- strengthened knowledge-sharing across diverse donor institutions.

With its long-standing experience and proven track record, the Platform is well positioned to support donors as they navigate this more complex and rapidly changing operating environment.

1.3 Context

The global development system is undergoing significant shifts, with major political, economic, and institutional changes. Donors face rising expectations to demonstrate impact and value for money, alongside heightened scrutiny of Official Development Assistance (ODA). At the same time:

- domestic fiscal pressures are constraining aid budgets;
- global agrifood systems are under stress from climate, conflict, and market volatility;
- new actors (emerging economies, philanthropic funders, private investors) are reshaping the development finance landscape; and
- multilateral processes demand coordinated and coherent donor positioning.

These dynamics raise the transaction costs of acting alone, and increase the importance of collective intelligence, policy alignment, and collaboration. As budgets tighten and geopolitical priorities shift, the demand for coordinated donor action increases, reinforcing the essential role of the Platform.

1.4 Rationale for the Platform

The GDPRD plays a unique role as a convener, knowledge broker, and facilitator in the global donor landscape. No other global platform is dedicated exclusively to donor coordination in rural development and agrifood systems in a **neutral, informal, and non-bureaucratic setting**. In an environment of constrained ODA and heightened scrutiny, the Platform converts limited resources into greater collective impact by:

- **Improving effectiveness and coherence:** enabling donors to align strategies, avoid duplication, and maximize the impact of their investments.
- **Reducing transaction costs:** offering members a neutral, efficient space to exchange information, coordinate positions, and access shared resources.
- **Amplifying donor influence:** supporting collective engagement in global political processes and ensuring rural development and food systems remain on the international agenda.
- **Facilitating strategic foresight:** helping donors anticipate emerging risks and opportunities through shared analysis and horizon scanning.
- **Connecting global debates with country realities:** linking high-level policy dialogue to operational experience and in-country coordination.

The GDPRD is a practical coordination mechanism for donors to navigate today's complex development environment more effectively. It provides members with opportunities to share intelligence, align their efforts, and strengthen the overall impact and visibility of their work.

2. Vision, mission, and strategic goals

This section defines the guiding framework for the Platform's work.

2.1 Vision and mission statements

Vision: Donors effectively catalyse change.

Donor investments enable transformation of sustainable food systems, that drive **equitable development, reduce poverty and hunger and promote environmental sustainability**.

The Platform envisions a future where all stakeholders work cohesively to foster food systems that are responsive to global challenges, resilient to shocks, and capable of locally ensuring food security and improved livelihoods for all.

Mission: Brokering donor collaboration for impact.

The Platform brings together donors, development actors, and stakeholders to promote **policy coherence, knowledge exchange, and strategic investments** that accelerate **food systems transformation and rural development**.

Through partnership and innovation, the Platform aims to address pressing global challenges, foster resilience, empower marginalized communities, and enhance the impact and accountability of international development efforts.

The Platform operates with a holistic approach bridging agriculture, climate, economic growth, and social inclusion, acknowledging the increasing complexity of the global landscape.

2.2 Strategic objectives

The Strategic Objectives remain anchored in the Platform's core functions: **Strategic Influencing, Knowledge-Sharing, and Networking and Convening**.

2.2.1 Objective 1: Strategic Influencing

The Platform will strengthen its leadership role in **advocating for policy coherence and alignment** across donors, ensuring investments are synergistic and mutually reinforcing. It will actively promote **harmonization of approaches, standards, and frameworks**, by:

- conducting horizon-scanning to identify emerging issues and opportunities requiring coordinated responses;
- convening high-level events and briefings to share the latest thinking and evidence;
- hosting an annual meeting of the Board's senior managers to guide strategic direction;
- supporting communication and alignment between donors in their preparations for bilateral engagements in key global forums and processes; and
- discussing key emerging issues during Annual General Assemblies.

These efforts will strengthen donor influence in promoting policies and practices that advance **inclusive, resilient, and sustainable rural development**.

2.2.2 Objective 2: Knowledge-sharing

The Platform and its Secretariat will expand and deepen its support for effective **knowledge exchange and collaboration** by:

- identifying donor policy and programming questions and facilitating peer learning;
- convening working groups, seminars and webinars on priority topics;
- organizing virtual briefings on emerging issues and new research;
- maintaining online resources with member's key policies, reports and evaluations;
- sharing insights through blogs and social media tailored to donor interests.

Strengthened knowledge-sharing mechanisms will support **evidence-based policymaking and programme design** across members.

2.2.3 Objective 3: Networking and convening

As a **neutral convener and trusted facilitator**, the Platform will strengthen its role in promoting coherence and alignment among donors and stakeholders by:

- maintaining an active network of focal points across all members;
- facilitating working groups, seminars and forums;
- brokering direct linkages between donors on request;
- promoting members' work through blogs, social media, news updates and mailings;
- hosting the Annual General Assembly, which provides a space for in-depth engagement between donors and other partners;
- maintaining up-to-date contact lists of donors.

An enhanced convening role reinforces partnerships that contribute to collective objectives in rural development and food systems.

2.2.4 Membership expansion and engagement

Membership engagement is the core of the Platform. Over the next five years, the Platform will leverage its established credibility to pursue a balanced strategy of **consolidation and expansion**.

- **Consolidation:** Deepening engagement with existing members, ensuring they see concrete value. This includes direct support for their priorities, rapid response to requests, and showcasing efficiency gains.
- **Expansion:** Outreach to underrepresented donors, especially from emerging economies, philanthropic foundations, and Development Finance Institutions. Expansion will happen in a way that maintains the Platform's original mission and does not undermine the safe space for informal and open debate. New members should bring added value, without diluting the Platform's focus.

3. Operational approach and governance

The GDPRD operates as a **neutral convener** rather than an implementing body. Its influence stems from convening diverse actors, sharing timely intelligence, and supporting alignment across members. Its governance structure aims to ensure **neutrality, inclusivity, agility, and accountability**, while avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy and duplication.

In a crowded coordination landscape, this approach enables the Platform to streamline action and reduce complexity. By prioritizing efficient processes and measurable outcomes, this model enables the Platform to adapt quickly to shifts in political or institutional priorities while ensuring steady and reliable support for its members.

3.1 Decision-making architecture

The GDPRD governance system consists of four pillars: the **Platform Board (and Senior Managers)**, the **Co-Chairs**, the **Secretariat**, and the **Thematic Working Groups**.

Platform Board and Senior Managers Meeting

The Board provides strategic oversight and consists of representatives from member organizations that contribute an annual membership fee (the amount of which is decided by the Board, currently standing at EUR 50,000 per year). Decisions in the Board are normally taken by consensus, with voting during Board sessions or pursued on a no-objections basis.

The Board's main functions include:

- Approving annual workplans and budgets.
- Setting strategic priorities.
- Monitoring performance and ensuring the Secretariat's accountability.
- Approving membership applications and overseeing expansion.
- Serving as stewards of the Platform's neutrality and strategic positioning.

The Board typically meets three times a year (typically in January/February, June/July and November/December), with additional ad hoc informal meetings, as needed.

In addition to the Board meetings, **Senior Managers of the Board** convene annually (typically in October/November) to provide strategic guidance and address emerging cross-donor issues.

Co-Chairs

Co-Chairs rotate every two years and serve as both procedural and political leaders, representing the Platform externally and supporting high-level engagement. They are selected *ad personam* among Board members, on a no-objections basis.

Secretariat

The Secretariat, hosted by IFAD, is responsible for coordinating the Platform's activities and supporting its members. Its core functions include:

- Organizing Platform events and meetings.
- Providing technical and analytical support to members.
- Coordinating the production of flagship products such as policy reports, white papers, and other core deliverables.
- Managing communications and external visibility.
- Supporting the work of Thematic Working Groups.
- Monitoring progress against KPIs and producing annual reports.

Thematic Working Groups (TWGs)

The Platform focuses on selected thematic areas that can directly contribute to a more comprehensive and holistic approach to sustainable rural development. These Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) gather donors to share knowledge, develop agendas and combine advocacy efforts. The TWGs are self-standing spaces which are focused on specific themes, and supported by the Secretariat. They are independent and member-led, operating on Terms of Reference that are agreed by the TWG members.

Current TWGs include the [Global Donor Working Group on Land](#), the [Rural Youth Employment TWG](#), the [Sustainable/Blended Finance TWG](#), and the [SDG 2 Roadmap TWG](#)¹.

TWGs are continuously monitored to ensure they remain **fit-for-purpose**. Each TWG is:

- Impact-oriented, using a workplan with clear outcomes, outputs and KPIs.
- Mandated to integrate cross-cutting themes (gender, digitalization, climate).
- Demonstrate linkages to global processes (e.g., contributing to COP negotiations).
- Build synergies with other TWGs to avoid silos.

3.2 Types of activities and modalities

The governance structure translates into specific modalities of engagement:

Annual General Assembly (AGA)

The flagship event of the Platform, bringing together leaders, technical experts, and partners, to review progress, debate emerging challenges, and set collective priorities.

Policy dialogues and briefings

Organized ahead of major events (G7, G20, COPs, UN Summits), enabling members to compare notes, align messaging, and identify opportunities for joint influence.

Technical seminars and webinars

Designed to share research findings, lessons learned, and innovations.

Informal roundtables and laboratories

Small, closed-door sessions for members to explore politically sensitive issues, allowing for candid discussion without the pressure of formal negotiations.

3.3 Funding model and resource mobilization

The Platform's funding model must ensure stability while remaining lean, with:

- **Core member contributions:** predictable annual funding covering Secretariat operations, knowledge products, and basic convening costs.
- **Earmarked contributions:** optional funds for specific initiatives, such as TWGs.
- **Partnership resources:** in-kind contributions from multilateral agencies, research institutions, or private sector actors (e.g., hosting events, providing data platforms).

To enhance transparency and predictability, the Secretariat will produce an annual narrative and financial report, and promote multi-year commitments.

¹ The SDG 2 Roadmap TWG is discussing restructuring and rebranding, as the current framing on SDG 2 is increasingly misaligned with the group's focus and current geopolitical context. As such, the group's name and ToRs will be updated in 2026.

3.4 Partnerships and collaboration mechanisms

Priority partnerships currently include:

- **Multilaterals:** FAO, IFAD, WFP, World Bank
- **Regional bodies:** AU/CAADP, ASEAN, CELAC
- **Private sector:** agribusinesses, impact investors, fintech companies
- **Research institutions:** universities, think tanks, CGIAR

Partnerships will be guided by clear value propositions and alignment with member needs, with a focus on reducing duplication and strengthening coherence.

4. Conclusion

This Strategy and Approach Paper provides a practical framework to guide the Platform's work over the next years. Although it outlines a direction for 2026–2030, it is intentionally designed to remain flexible. The economic, political, and institution global landscape is shifting quickly, and the Platform is prepared to adjust priorities and approaches as circumstances change.

This approach, supported by regular reviews and annually updated workplans, ensures the strategy remains agile. It positions the Platform as fully fit-for-purpose, enabling members to maintain coherence, stay informed, share intelligence, and coordinate action effectively, delivering continuous value even as external conditions evolve.