



Minutes TWG RYE Meeting

Participants

Group Members

- **Joe-Nkamuke Uzoamaka**, AfDB
- **Leonard Mizzi**, European Commission (Co-Chair)
- **Olga Stuzhinskaya**, EU
- **Marwan Benali**, FAO
- **Elisenda Estruch Puertas**, ILO
- **Oonagh Wallace**, Ireland
- **Elisa Pettinati**, Italy
- **Emily Mattheisen**, McKnight Foundation
- **Ji-Yeun Rim**, OECD/DEV
- **Pablo Suárez Robles**, OECD/DEV
- **Emily Coppel**, Rockefeller Foundation
- **Manfred Kaufmann**, Switzerland
- **Melissa Salazar**, UNDP
- **Genna Tesdall**, YPARD (Co-Chair)

GDPRD Secretariat

- **Sierra Berardelli**
- **Woojae Shin**

Agenda

ISSUE	ITEM	DETAILS
1.	Welcome and Introduction	Genna Tesdall/YPARD
2.	TWG Outlook 2026-2027	Genna Tesdall/YPARD
3.	Tour de table and miscellaneous	All
4.	Wrap up and closing	Genna Tesdall/YPARD

Key Highlights/Issues

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Leonard Mizzi (European Commission) joined the TWG as incoming Co-Chair alongside Genna Tesdall (YPARD) for 2026-2027.
- The Co-Chairs emphasized the importance of strengthening collaboration, coordination, and practical engagement on rural youth empowerment and employability, particularly in the current geopolitical and funding environment. The value of the TWG lies in its role as an informal exchange platform connecting foundations, bilateral donors, UN agencies, and youth organizations in a constrained funding environment. As such, the Co-Chairs have initiated an active outreach to new members who joined the call for the first time, including:
 - Joe-Nkamuke Uzoamaka (AfDB), Olga Stuzhinskaya (EU), Marwan Benali (FAO), Oonagh Wallace (Ireland), Elisa Pettinati (Italy), Emily Mattheisen (McKnight Foundation), Pablo Suárez Robles (OECD), Emily Copper (Rockefeller Foundation), Manfred Kaufmann (Switzerland) and Melissa Salazar (UNDP).

2. TWG Outlook 2026-2027

PURPOSE OF SECTION:

To present the draft outlook and proposed activities for the RYE TWG for 2026–2027 and gather member feedback and suggestions.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The [2026-2027 Work Plan](#) intends to remain flexible, member-driven and responsive to emerging priorities. The overall objectives include promoting evidence-based approaches and mutual learning, strengthening alignment with international policy processes, improving donor coordination and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and expanding knowledge-sharing and innovation exchange.
- The TWG's previous contributions to global processes include participation in the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit through an Independent Dialogue and submission of policy recommendations, contributions to the CFS Youth Policy Recommendations, submission of an independent memoranda for the post-Malabo CAADP Agenda, and contributions to GDPRD's White Paper for the 2025 Financing for Development Conference (FfD4).
- Looking ahead, the work plan includes four TWG meetings with in-depth thematic sessions, continuing the group's webinar series, continued engagement with international policy processes, expansion of the group's Knowledge Hub, collaboration with other thematic working groups, and hosting a dedicated session at the GDPRD's 2026 Annual General Assembly.
- Proposed thematic areas for future discussions include:
 - RYE and global food supply chains
 - Building resilient food systems through decent livelihoods
 - Youth in the informal economy
 - Youth migration and rural youth
- Members are encouraged to continue proposing themes and opportunities for collaboration and policy engagement throughout the year.

Q&A and Discussion:

- OECD's work over recent years has focused on the informal economy, including informal employment, including informal employment and the links between informality and social

protection systems. There would be much for the group to touch on regarding extending social insurance coverage to informal workers and the broader policy implications for taxation, fiscal space, and integrated social protection approaches, including for rural youth.

- Rockefeller Foundation is also focusing on the links between informal markets and social protection, particularly through school meals and homegrown school meal programmes connected to local supply chains and broader resilience building approaches, including in fragile contexts and middle-income countries. Current work also focuses on resilient local supply chains, regenerative and climate-smart agriculture, and climate investment linked to regenerative transitions and school meal systems, including ongoing collaboration with WFP and IFAD.

3. Tour de Table

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- OECD is also undertaking broader work on labour market transitions, demographic change, AI, environmental shocks and resilience in food systems, including sustainable agricultural transitions in Southeast Asia, climate resilience and household coping mechanisms.
- Current European Commission priorities relevant to the TWG include youth engagement under both the EU's internal Common Agricultural Policy framework and external cooperation programming, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The EU is part of the School Meals Coalition, and the TWG could further assess procurement-related issues in close collaboration with WFP. AI and digitalization are becoming increasingly important, including the role digital tools can play in improving connectivity, traceability, and access to networks and financing opportunities for youth across both formal and informal agrifood systems. The TWG should identify practical and scalable approaches in the context of shrinking ODA and growing reliance on private finance and innovative funding mechanisms, including through the webinar series and deeper engagement with concrete case studies, particularly in contexts that often receive less attention.
- ILO is continuing work related to transitions from informality to formality, rights-based approaches to youth employment, decent work in agriculture and related sectors, social protection, labour rights, and youth organization and representation. Current work also focuses on labour market transitions from school to work, improving the attractiveness of agriculture and related sectors for younger generations through better working conditions, safer practices, and improved income levels, including living wages, across agricultural production, forestry, and aquaculture.
- AICS noted that challenges remain across several programmes in partner countries, particularly in Africa, related to the limited attractiveness of agriculture for youth and the weak uptake of existing financing opportunities and support mechanisms for young people. Improving outreach, communication, and engagement strategies targeting rural youth is an ongoing challenge. AICS is also undertaking work on vocational and entrepreneurial skills development, youth-led advisory services, the use of AI and drone technologies in agriculture, and the role of youth organizations and locally embedded advisory systems in supporting rural youth livelihoods.
- UNDP is currently undertaking several [food systems initiatives](#), including the upcoming [Conscious Food Systems Summit](#) taking place from 31 August to 4 September 2026 in Bhutan, which will include a focus on youth engagement.
- Irish Aid's current priorities include food security and livelihood impacts linked to conflict, women's economic empowerment, nutrition-sensitive food systems, and rural livelihoods, including spillover effects linked to developments in the Gulf region.
- AfDB is currently developing its Enable Youth 2.0 strategy, which will guide future

engagement with young people in agribusiness while incorporating lessons learned from the first phase of the initiative. Rural youth development remains a core priority for the Bank given Africa’s demographic trends and the importance of youth inclusion across agrifood systems transformation efforts.

- FAO could contribute a future in-depth presentation to the TWG on the latest [Status of Youth in Agrifood Systems](#) report.

4. Wrap Up and Closing

- The next regular call will take place in July 2026, date and time TBC.

Summary of action points

ITEM	ACTION	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
1.	Members to suggest topics for in-depth inputs and/or their availability to present own activities.	ASAP	All
2.	Provide event/publication updates to the Secretariat for the TWG RYE Knowledge Hub.	Rolling basis	All