

Co-chairs' consultation on lessons and insights from GACSA's Inception Year

Rome

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Outcomes on the Key reflections:

The Co-chairs have initiated a consultation process on the future of GACSA. The purpose of this process is to

- *reflect on the experiences from the first year of operations of the Alliance.* We see the need to gather impressions of where we are in order to better understand what issues to pursue in more depth for the second year of GACSA.
- *explore how these experiences and aspirations can set the stage for the Annual Forum and build an even stronger Alliance.* GACSA is a dynamic platform for strengthening global adaptation of climate smart agricultural practices, and peer learning is its central feature. The ongoing country case studies underline this approach.

Below follows a summary of key issues raised during the consultation.

1. GACSA – the Platform

- GACSA is a platform, a non-bureaucratic establishment with primary purpose to offer a “neutral space” for non-political dialogue, consultations, peer-learning as well as advancing common understanding and the co-creation of new knowledge on CSA. GACSA should resist moving towards heavy formal structures
- There are differences of opinion on the way forward for the Alliance, we need space for debate and disagreement, we need time to get it right and settled, we need a safe space for dialogue and this takes time
- Aspire to be and remain demand driven; need to hear what farmers and civil society have to say; Examine what the Alliance has done, from a farmer's perspective; Need a deliberate plan to address small business and small farmers
- One value of the Alliance is its all-inclusive nature and that it is action oriented
- Need an Alliance vision document
- Need less emphasis on governance; however, critically important that there is open and regular/ timely and consistent communication across the membership. Keeping members informed in a timely manner is an essential requirement for healthy collaboration and partnerships/ platforms
- CSOs are worried about lack of governance of the Alliance, i.e. anything goes and can have the imprimatur of the Alliance
- Alliance needs to clarify what it stands for and what are its core elements; need to be clear about what the Alliance is and what it is not
- What will be the modalities to reflect /adapt the lessons – (a) is it by revising the Framework, for example to strengthen the emphasis on food security, adjustments to the governance (role of different stakeholder groups, associations not companies should be represented, tighten governance through the establishment of an executive committee); (b) form and nature of the GACSA Year-2 Work Programme – priorities and delivery model and strategies

- There is increased interest in CSA but not in the Alliance: why?
- Alliance is a platform for all, no 'us' vs. 'them'
- Unlike SDGs and COP processes, in the Alliance everyone has the same voice and opinion, also the Alliance is action oriented

2. GACSA value proposition and purpose:

- Worldwide there is progress on climate change, agriculture and food systems over the last two years, with expressions of interest and many working together, these matters are complex and there is a need for situation specific solutions
- First-and-foremost, how members and the public perceive and express what GACSA is, is important
- Livelihoods, on one hand, and resilient agricultural systems is at the core of GACSA's purpose and value addition. Specific emphasis on gender and nutrition is important to CSA and to GACSA
- GACSA should aspire to remain a "learning establishment" - continuously examining what the it stands for and what its priorities should be, thereby ensuring to remain relevant to the cause to scale up CSA
- Sustainable productivity increase and greater prominence to adaptation are central GACSA values.
- GACSA can and should aspire to play an important role in support countries to implement their SDGs and COP21 Agreement Commitments; how can the GACSA support those countries that referenced CSA in their INDCs - 25 countries mentioned CSA in their INDCs. The SDGs and COP21 Agreements will have critical implications for GACSA's cause, purpose and priorities. A very specific examination of these implications should be undertaken including what, as a result would be the necessary adaptation in GACSA's thrust, priorities and programmes. It will be useful to also pay attention to regional development frameworks, e.g. Agenda 2063 in Africa. Other initiatives such as the 4 per 1000 initiative launched by the French will also be important spaces for GACSA
- However, the Alliance should not directly become involved in the UNFCCC
- Climate, cities, energy and infrastructure should intersect with the Alliance;
- To link GAGSA whit other efforts in the field of Sustainable Consumption and Production; other issues that GACSA could relate to (in terms of members' needs) include: strengthening early warning systems and local climate hubs; developing permanent systems for adaptive research considering the climate conditions in each specific mirco-climate zone.
- Need to look at the real costs of different practices: link health, nutrition, climate change, environment and sustainability
- Going into 2016 (i.e. GACSA's 2nd Year), and within the context of reaffirming its value addition, it is important that GACSA reflects on its VISION and MISSION in the light of experiences and lessons from the Inception Year. Definition of CSA is critical part of what defines the GACSA. It is also useful to boldly and objectively to reflect on the definition of CSA - benefiting from increased

knowledge to better reflect the realities on what is CSA especially the aspect of “increased productivity”

- Alliance needs to emphasize those that are most vulnerable; there is a need to scale up nutrition to support poor countries, reduce the prominence of developed countries and industry and focus on LDCs, the Alliance needs to make space for those most impacted and make them feel more comfortable in and about GACSA
- GACSA should elaborate on how delivering the GACSA value addition as a means to scaling up CSA; Clarify / refine GACSA's delivery model; How does the Alliance work through its members; How does the Alliance help CSA happen
- Be clear about what CSA is to GACSA and GACSA to CSA; Alliance should stress positives and real value added
- Would like to see and experience GACSA as a knowledge hub
- Concern about the meaning of CSA: what is different between CSA and non-CSA; Concern about greenwashing
- What can we do in 2016 to recharge the Alliance as an instrument for change: we have two major opportunities: Annual Forum and the next Strategic Committee meeting
- We do need more dialogue, but more importantly we need action; Now is the time for action, the case studies must prove that the Alliance makes a difference
- Seek to have governments, CSOs work together and share without polarizing
- There will always be differences: no one belief is better than another, the GMO issue is a red herring; Allow space for differences to be aired – a key value of GACSA as a platform
- Alliance has successes, they need to be highlighted and communicated; GACSA's work on the country Case Studies is important. It is critical that those interested in climate change and food security become aware of the case studies
- To identify the interest and expectations of every kind of GAGSA member and how it is possible to develop a network for helping each other

3. GACSA Membership

- The members is GACSA's chief asset. Reaching out to all members and beyond is a crucial and necessary priority for the proliferation of the GASCA objective.
- The drive to “grow” membership should be based, first-and-foremost, on being clear and concrete on what is the value/incentive for someone to join/participate
- Membership criteria is at the moment too open; do we need criteria for membership
- GACSA may need to examine the criteria for what in the Alliance membership entails in a system that is essentially functions as a platform. The larger issue is that of how accountability is brought into the Alliance, without challenging it open-to-all movement profile.

- GACSA needs to invest in growing membership of farmers and farmer organisations – based on clear articulation of “what value does the Alliance offer to farmers and farmer organisations”. Joint activities that inform farmers on CSA including facilitating farmer-to-farmer sharing and learning should be explored. It is necessary to be sensitive and respond to the different needs and aspirations of farmers, paying attention to the special circumstances and needs of smallholder farmers and women farmers
- GACSA strategy to attract and grow membership should be based on articulating and demonstrating GACSA value addition. Number of members or interest groups subscribing to GACSA activities and programmes will be an important performance indicator of the Alliance.
- GACSA places high value on the role private sector can play in agriculture throughout the value chain. The strategic approach to make that happen is a matter of high importance for the Alliance; Not only do CSOs have concerns about the Alliance, but CEOs (private sector) also have concerns; Need to engage with the World Business Council
- GACSA must ensure balance in membership between the North and the South countries; Governments, CSOs and Private Sector. It is important to have an increased number of countries /governments participating
- We need to review the original membership pledges
- Alliance should welcome others but no onerous membership requirements
- Alliance needs to define its principles of engagement: what are the members committed to do, and it has to be transparent and inclusive and well communicated
- Facilitation Unit work programme should pay more attention to members and facilitating GACSA value addition and spend less time on internal (organisational inward looking) processes
- We need to work with communities from all parts of the world, need to be sensitive to different contexts
- We need to know who our members are. This might be best served through an on-line membership directory populated with fundamental information such as: name of member; primary contact person; web site; description of mission; synopsis of CSA work underway; etc.

4. GACSA Governance

- The GACSA governance structure is defined in the Framework Document of the Alliance. During the constituent meeting, December 2014, it was decided that the Alliance should have an open governance structure. While full transparency is critical, it does not equal that everybody directly involved in everything
- There is too much inertia in the Alliance
- GACSA’s openness in membership, decision making, all in the name of inclusiveness, is a challenge both to building the sense of responsibility and to establishing an effective decision making process on issues such as annual plans and budget commitments.
- GACSA needs to define its relationships with regional CSA networks and alliances.

- GACSA should set an unambiguous footprint with her members. Growing and consolidating the characteristics of the Alliance is essentially a political process that will require time and participation from the members and interest groups
- Emphasis on transparency in governance; there is no place for a small cabal to set an agenda in secret; moving forward should be based on trust fostering mutual and collective responsibility
- Run GACSA like a bottom up association, not a top down agency; that requires maintaining close communication with members and making decisions based on member needs
- Maintain closer and regular communication between the FU and the GACSA Strategic Committee; e.g. a bi-weekly "updates"

5. Linkages and mutual interaction with Regional CSA Alliances and Networks

- GACSA will need to highlight and place more pro-active focus on collaboration with sub regional linkages (Asia, North America, Africa, Latin America); launching of the Central American Alliance at the COP21 in Paris is an important development
- Engage the Regional Alliances and Network to have common understand of the relationship based on mutual value addition. It is important that this is clear and transparently clarified – e.g. are the Regional Alliances sub-units of GACSA; Is this a hierarchical relationship
- GACSA providing value in connecting and facilitation exchange and sharing across Regional Alliances and Networks

6. Key underlining (cross-cutting) issues

6.1 Communication, Outreach and Advocacy: This is an overriding and recurrent issue which needs to be addressed with urgency. With a communication specialist in place, there is a pressing need to accelerate and expand the GACSA communication and advocacy activities. Important immediate actions include establishing dissemination strategies – and dissemination of tailor made messages.

- Need a communication plan; Communications should be a priority for year 2, regular updates are essential
- GACSA can learn from and even use the outreach tools WFO is using, including Monthly newsletters, National workshops and seminars, for example there is a workshop in May 2016 in Zambia
- Need a core message and actions contemplated for year two
- Dissemination of information is critical
- What are messages that we need to communicate and how should they be presented for different audiences and how widely
- Consider measures such as publicly accessible FAQs in the means to communicate more including to clarify misinformation and/or misunderstanding; also see World bank work on 'myth busters'
- Communication needs to be targeted; should be proactive but not defensive
- Communicate examples of concrete Alliance achievements/actions to date; sound examples of how the Alliance has made a difference
- Tap into mainstream media as a collaborative approach
- Alliance is a clearing house: ensuring that information is accessible and usable and can be transformed, sees the Alliance as a vital resource

- As a matter of urgency, put a simple member communications program in place; this might include producing and disseminating a low cost, quarterly e-newsletter spotlighting progress, new members, and information of value to our members. Keep it focused on our members and what they need; not on GACSA as an entity
- Feature members in action on the GACSA web site. GACSA is about them and we need ways to highlight their work and facilitate member-member sharing.

6.2 Definition of CSA:

- Necessary to consider the views/criticism on the definition of CSA. There may be need to precise more and better the concept of CSA. CSA is about results and measurable outputs – it is not a prescriptive way to manage inputs. Further, it's not an agricultural religious belief.
- It is of utmost importance to dedicate efforts to communicate what is CSA as much as what it is not. In that respect, GACSA can highlight practical demonstrations of what it is
- CSA is an integrated and complex approach (productivity, mitigation, adaptation, resilience, competitiveness, food security and nutrition). How incorporate the climate variable in the decision making process in agricultural sector
- There is a huge expectation about what CSA is, and how CSA can be a solution toolkit in the agricultural sector
- The link of CSA to GMOs and use of pesticide needs to be explained; finding a constructive way to dialogue on aspects such as GMOs, pesticides and inorganic fertilizers – that ultimately farmers and practitioners have access to evidence-based information and can make informed decision
- It is necessary more discussion for a common understanding about what CSA is (case studies can help).
- Some aspects that would be useful to consider in the reflections on the definition:
 - Adaptation is the neglected pillar, we need more clarity around resilience and community based approaches to reduce risk
 - Anxious about the perceived overemphasis on productivity in the definition of CSA
 - Need to address inequities in terms of how we deliver climate information, a technical brief on this subject would be useful and it needs to be pushed outwards
 - CSA compatible with agroecology
 - CSA is based on outputs, it is not prescriptive, practices alone is not the issue, results is the issue

6.3 Issues raised by the CSOs:

- A specific set of CSOs has been highly critical of GACSA
- The main issues of concern raised can be classified in three categories, namely (a) legitimate areas of concern; (b) misinformation or factually incorrect or even simply deliberate propaganda; and (c) clear areas of disagreement in beliefs, understanding or interpretation
- GACSA has spent a considerable time engaging with these CSOs; should reflect on how to take this forward in a mutually productive manner
- Communication and other initiatives to appropriately deal with the issues raised; legitimate areas of concern such how GACSA promotes agricultural practices such as GMO, use of biochemical fertilizers, pesticides and how safeguards are accounted for by its member; pro-

active public information support and advocacy to address misinformation or dissemination of factually incorrect information; and engagement on issues of disagreement

7. The 2nd Annual Forum

- We need a substantive review of the Alliance in the Annual Forum
- Annual Forum: 5 days is too long, two days plus one day of action; May is too early
- Annual Forum
 - is critical for the Alliance, we need to get it right;
 - it is about content and value added
 - We will need to hire a conference organizing company
 - Field visit is about CSA in action
 - There will be important front end work prior to the meeting, i.e. webinars in advance for six case studies
 - Meeting is not necessarily for ministers, more for actions and practitioners
 - Case study presentations along with different stakeholder groups
 - Interactive: partnerships in action
 - Call to action vis a vis SDGs and Paris Agreement
- For now, GACSA should prioritise to deliver a valuable and worthwhile Annual Forum. Ensure pre-planned strategy on how to act on the outcomes of the Annual Forum. Many times, a lot of good ideas were lifted up, in such meetings, but no follow-up action

8. Next steps and Actions

- 8.1 The Co-chairs will continue with the consultations exercise through teleconferences and asking for written submission. The final synthesis report will including outcomes form all the consultations and submissions including the above. The exercise is scheduled to conclude at the end of February 2016
- 8.2 CCFAS has examined every issues raised in the CSO letter and is preparing a response to every issue raised
- 8.3 Agroecology is being addressed by the KAG, it is not contrary to CSA. Outcome will be shared in GACSA
- 8.4 Reaching farmers: GFAR and CGIAR has a major meeting planned in early April: harness country consultations and feed them into the Annual Forum
- 8.5 Countries in the Balkans are interested and seek to participate in the Annual Forum
- 8.6 World Bank is working with CARE to operationalize the CSA source book for the African Alliance