

Summary of the Strategic Committee teleconference

08 September 2016

Participants: Co-chair Martin Bwalya, France, India, Canada, YARA, FAO, USDA, North America Alliance, GFAR, CGIAR, World Bank, National Conservation, Costa Rica, Ireland, DFID, Netherlands.

1. **Opening session:** The co-chair, Mi Nguyen, opened the teleconference and presented the meeting objectives: to wrap up the Annual Forum (14-17 June 2016) and to prepare the substantive discussions for the Strategic Committee meeting in October. The annotated agenda that was prepared to that end was approved.
2. **Follow-up to the Annual Forum and last SC meeting:** The co-chair, Mi Nguyen summarized steps to wrap up the Annual Forum and steps taken on the work plans:
 - a. Annual Forum
 - A survey was launched to evaluate the annual forum but the response was very low – members were encouraged to fill the evaluation in time for the SC meeting, so they can feed into the discussions and preparations for the next Annual Forum.
 - Highlights of the Annual Forum were prepared and disseminated in English, French and Spanish.
 - The full report of the Annual Forum was shared with members. The Executive Summary has now been added to the report and it is ready for dissemination.

Next steps:

- *Members to complete the Annual Forum evaluation by October 3.*
 - *Full report and executive summary of the Annual Forum to be disseminated.*
 - *An email will be sent to previous and prospective participants of the Annual Forum task team to start preparations for the next AF, including a possible meeting during the CFS week (17-21 October). Previous team facilitator (World Bank) is open to lend support but not be involved to the same extent.*
- b. Work plans
 - Notional guidelines on individual work plans for the three AGs and ad hoc teams were developed by the co-chairs to encourage consideration of Annual Forum's outcomes and further coherence and synergies amongst the various actions groups and task teams, as well as to ensure that cost implications for the GACSA budget be reflected.
 - Individual work plans were developed by each AG, the Membership Engagement Team, and the Regional Alliances Team. . They fed into the GACSA's strategic direction and overall workplan, as well as the role and mandate of the FU and its workplan and budget.
 - The individual workplans are meant to be living documents. A call took place on 26 July amongst the leads of the various groups, and discussions are ongoing since. The action groups are discussing which activities to develop on how best to support building countries' capacity to mainstream CSA into national development planning and budget, including plans and pipelines on implementing their NDCs presented at COP22.

- Clarification was sought on the relationship between the ad hoc teams and the Facilitation Unit and the rationale for separate work plans, in particular with respect to communications and regional alliances:
 - It was explained that ad hoc teams are established on a needs-basis, which work is not performed exclusively or mainly by the FU but by a team in which the FU participates and lends support; they are distinct from the Action Groups which form part of GACSA's formal structure.
 - With regards to the regional alliances, given that most of them are not GACSA members so far, an initial informal consultative dialogue was needed first, necessarily on an ad-hoc basis. This will evolve towards more formal relations (e.g. through Action groups) once linkages with, and memberships of, the regional alliances (and associated regional economic communities most often) will be further developed.

Next steps:

- *The issue of the relationship amongst the various groups (AGs, task teams and FU) will be discussed at the Strategic Committee meeting in October, including examining the suggestion made at the Annual Forum to create a new action group on Gender given the importance of this issue to scaling up CSA.*
- *Members were invited to contact the facilitators of each Action Group or task team for comments or questions on their activities or individual work plans.*

3. GACSA Overall work plan: Mark Manis explained that the overall work plan is meant to be a concise document that provides the strategic direction of GACSA in the near future, incorporating the GACSA vision and mission, outlining its core components (delivery model) and areas of focus, based on the objectives of each Action Group and ad hoc task team. Members were invited to provide inputs to the overarching GACSA work plan so that the document can be finalized before the Strategic Committee meeting in October.

Some comments / questions raised include:

- mitigation seems to be absent from the Vision statement
- creating additional action groups such as youth and gender
- communications and regional alliances should be reflected as part of the FU and not as separate
- ensuring that while GACSA and CFS share some similar strengths (multi-stakeholder), GACSA should position itself as to avoid CFS weaknesses

Next steps:

- *Mark Manis will send the work plan to SC members for comments and circulate a revised version to be discussed during the October SC meeting.*
- *A list of the key substantive outcomes of the Annual Forum will also be prepared to facilitate the discussion on GACSA's strategic direction.*

4. GACSA Financing and Resources: Marijke explained the activities developed after the AF on financing issues, including developing a concept note for the task team, holding a call with FAO

financial team to clarify the financial oversight and developing a workplan. The focus of the team is on the GACSA financial set up, financial planning and management; FU operation models; and resource mobilisation. Comments made include:

- While the FU clarified that no deficit is expected at the end of the calendar year (2016), it was pointed out that there needs to be a realistic and sustainable financing and resourcing plan, based on an accurate understanding of what GACSA does (and does not do);
- Considering that 75-80% of funds allocated to staff costs (hard commitments), and that travel costs are also important, there may exist options to optimize resource allocation and mitigate operational costs.
- Given the current differing funding cycles within GACSA depending on donors' contributions, it would be useful to determine what should be GACSA's financial year, considering also the timing of the Annual Forum.

Next steps:

- *The ad hoc Finance task team will produce a document outlining issues for immediate consideration and presenting recommendations in terms of resource allocation and resource mobilization, for discussion and decision by the SC Committee in October.*
- *To this end, the Finance task team will consult with the FU to clarify any financial questions that may be pending.*

5. FU Work plan and Budget: FU Coordinator presented the FU work plan and budget as the FU's proposal on its role and the activities it should undertake. Kyle presented some points on the GACSA trust fund analysis. These documents serve as a basis to entertain a broader discussion on the role and value-added of the FU during the October Strategic Committee meeting. Members asked for an organigram of the FU (its organizational structure). It was commented that if possible, it would be helpful to have some of the documents translated in French and Spanish for the SC.

Next steps:

- *The FU will prepare a document on its organizational structure (organigram).*
- *The FU will inquire about the costs to translate key documents for the next SC meeting or other translation options, if any.*

6. Next steps: Many members expressed the need for a two-day meeting of the Strategic Committee in October. The doodle poll indicated that the dates of 20-21 October as most suitable for the majority of participants. In this occasion the agenda will be focused on GACSA's overall strategic direction (GACSA overall work plan and outcomes of the Annual Forum), the various groups and relationships amongst them, the role of the Facilitation Unit (Work plans and Budget), , financial and resourcing issues, and the organization of the next Annual Forum.