

Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture
(GACSA)

Minutes

Fifth STRATEGIC COMMITTEE MEETING

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GACSA Series Document 15

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1 Opening Session

1.1 Opening Remarks

Chairing the meeting, Mr. Martin Bwalya (GACSA co-chair) welcomed participants to the meeting and invited Ms. Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director General – Coordinator of Natural Resources, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to open the meeting.

In her opening remarks Ms. Semedo reminded members that action is needed for implementation of the Paris Agreement, noting that GACSA can provide several tools to its members to this effect, and that this is what the alliance should be selling. She appreciated some achievements that GACSA should be proud of, such as the CSA compendium and Practice briefs that have been produced, as well as the case studies, the CSA metrics, etc. She invited the SC to assess these achievements and make use of GACSA's comparative advantage to determine what the alliance can offer to its members and the public, using the available instruments.

Ms. Semedo further pointed out some challenges that need to be addressed, key among them being sustainable funding, growth and balance in the membership, and stronger involvement of the civil society. She expressed the need for a clear strategic direction in order to remain relevant. This would require assessing the current position of the alliance in relation to the initial aspirational goal; identifying areas for improvement; and defining GACSA's added value to its members, and its role in supporting country-level implementation of CSA.

In conclusion, Ms. Semedo pledged the continued support of FAO to GACSA and its willingness to continue hosting the Facilitation Unit as well as to contribute to filling the current momentum gap, in the hope that current financial difficulties would be short-lived.

1.2 Adoption of the Agenda

Discussion point: Co-chair Martin Bwalya introduced the draft agenda with the following adjustment:

- i. Discussion of the communication and Advocacy plan (part of item 9) under items 6 – GACSA work plan and budget.
- ii. Agenda item 9 would only focus on upcoming events, with emphasis on participation at CVOP22

Decision: To approve the Agenda of the 5th Strategic Committee meeting with the adjustment noted above.

Discussion point: The co-Chair introduced the minutes of the SC teleconference on 08 September 2016 and invited comments. With no further comments the minutes were adopted as last corrected by email iterations

Decision: To approve the minutes of the Strategic Committee teleconference of 08 September 2016.

2 Issues from last SC Meetings and Annual Forum

Discussion points: Co-chair Mi Nguyen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to Rome-based UN agriculture organizations, introduced the main issues emerging from the SC teleconference of 08 September 2016 and the trending issues from the GACSA Annual Forum in June 2016. In response, the members expressed the following views:

- i. The list of trending issues is too long. GACSA needs to focus on a few priorities
- ii. The Research and development component seems to be missing

- iii. There is no feeling that farmers are really at the centre as claimed, because GACSA has not yet clearly defined CSA and how it is different from the conventional agricultural practices which some farmers' groups are not quite in favour of – farmers need to be convinced of the added value of CSA.
- iv. Membership needs to be balanced – CSOs need to be brought on board but they are currently not interested and GACSA should find out why they are not interested, and deal with the problem.
- v. There is an impression that GACSA is drifting away from the focus on action to support farmers as stated in the framework document – there should be more action on the ground than the learning and sharing.
- vi. The private sector should also be at the centre of actions, alongside the CSOs.
- vii. The Vision/Mission statement does not speak to the framework document.
- viii. The narrative about CSOs should not sound negative because some of them are very willing, although others are quite critical – CSOs and farmers' groups need to actually get involved in reshaping GACSA in a way that can best serve their interests.
- ix. GACSA is not getting feedback on what is happening on the ground – some members are getting things done at the grassroots level and this needs to be fed back to the global community. Bottom-up feedback from the farmers should be encouraged.
- x. The Action Groups should directly support farmers in actions on the ground – to make a meaningful impact there should be funding support.
- xi. GACSA members should all work as a team and play their individual roles in promoting activities in their respective constituencies.

3 GACSA Vision and Mission (GACSA overall Strategic Direction)

Discussion points: Mark Manis, Chair of the Committee for the overall GACSA work plan, presented the revised strategic direction for the alliance, including a statement of the GACSA Vision and Mission (*Document SC5_4*). He explained that the objective of the document was to provide an overview of what GACSA is, with an outline of the overarching areas of work for the Facilitation Unit, Action Groups and Task Teams in 2016-2017. In response to the presentation, the SC members expressed the following views:

- i. Some words need to be added to the Mission statement to reflect the role of catalyzing actions on the ground.
- ii. The vision statement should include the element of enhancing farmers' communities.
- iii. The framing of the mitigation element in the vision/mission statement is too narrow and needs to be expanded to include other solution pathways such as soil carbon sequestration.
- iv. The word 'Adaptation' is missing in the text – this is an important keyword to be stated in the vision and mission of the alliance.
- v. The vision and mission statements should include the explicit expression of both aspects of adaptation and mitigation.
- vi. Clarity is needed on how this document relates to other policy documents, as well as to the structural discussions that have been going on.

- vii. The use the term '*Advocacy*' in the context of GACSA can be problematic since this is an Alliance and the members are not advocates. A better alternative term to express the intended function would be '*Empowerment*'.
- viii. The '*advocacy*' (empowerment) mechanism needs to be spelled out, e.g. capacity building to empower members for further advocacy on the ground, technology transfer to groups of small holder farmers, support to small partners, whether forecasting, etc.
- ix. A distinction should be made between modern and traditional farmers as different kinds and levels of support are needed by the two types of farmers.
- x. GACSA should not only focus on its members, but should also consider how it can support non-members, especially at country level, particularly in the developing countries.
- xi. The underlying principles should be action-focused and everything else would be based on this. The action enabler role of GACSA should be expressed – support for actions, i.e. supporting those who are doing the actions on the ground.
- xii. GACSA should define its role in influencing policies to ensure that agriculture is appropriately prioritized.
- xiii. A GACSA stakeholder analysis is needed in order to know who is who in the alliance.

Decision: Mark Manis to revise document based on the comments and views expressed, and re-submit to the Committee for approval before close of the meeting.

4 Action Groups and Task Teams

4.1 Finance Committee Report

Discussion point: The Finance Committee leader presented a memorandum that analyzed the current financial situation of the alliance and recommended some actions/decisions (*document SC5_5*). The Committee concluded that GACSA is not sustainable financially and does not have sufficient funds to sustain current activities. The general recommendation was for a restructuring of the Facilitation Unit to retain a minimum number of staff with effect from 01 January 2017, and to cut down activities to critical functions until new funds are secured. Members were requested to reflect on the recommendations of the finance committee in preparation for discussion and decisions the following day.

4.2 Membership Engagement Team (MET)

Discussion point: The MET leader presented the proposed work plan of the group for 2016-2017 which focuses on three major objectives targeting three key outcomes (*Document SC5_6*). The primary purpose of the MET is to grow and sustain a balanced membership. The team appealed to all GACSA members to provide in-kind contributions towards the success of GACSA.

In recognition of the language barrier as a possible deterrent to some of the under-represented communities, it was recommended to reach out to various constituencies in languages that they can understand.

4.3 Investment Action Group (IAG)

Discussion point: Joining the meeting by telephone David Howlett, co-convener of the IAG, presented the 2016-2017 work plan of the action group which aims to deliver a number of outputs under four main objectives (*Document SC5_7*).

4.4 Knowledge Action Group (KAG)

Discussion point: Federica Matteoli, co-convenor of the KAG, presented the group's 2016-2017 work plan which is organised in five thematic subgroups (*Document SC5_8*). The KAG aims to develop CSA metrics at two levels: biophysical metrics on what CSA is, or is not; and investment metrics on how to mobilise resources for CSA. The work of the KAG will be achieved through voluntary in-kind contributions by its members. At the end of 2016 FAO will step down as co-convenor of the KAG but continue as a facilitator in the group and a new co-convenor will be appointed/elected.

4.5 Enabling Environment Action Group (EEAG)

Discussion point: Mark Manis, co-convenor of the EEAG, presented the group's 2016-2017 work plan which focuses on two main issues (*Document SC5_9*) namely: analysis of the six past case studies after completion of the peer review; and implementation of a growing list of new case studies, some of which may require some financial and technical support.

4.6 Regional Alliances

Discussion point: Marwan Ladki, the FU staff responsible for liaison with the regional alliances presented a specific work plan for this purpose, as part of the overall work plan of the Facilitation Unit (*Document SC5_10*). The emphasis is on developing win-win collaboration between GACSA and the regional alliances. GACSA is well placed to support the regional alliances with global knowledge and innovations on CSA, as well as on resource mobilization approaches. On their part the regional alliances can assist in better outreach to communities, and to mobilize and strengthen participation of CSOs, many of which are supportive of the regional alliances. GACSA will also be expected to support some regions like Central America, which are struggling to set up an alliance.

4.7 General Discussion on the work plans and GACSA strategic direction

Discussion points: Following the presentations by respective team leaders, the SC members responded with the following comments:

- i. The work plans should include a strategy for reaching out to non-members, especially those who need help – need to focus on areas where CSA is not yet operative.
- ii. The member-driven nature of GACSA's activities makes the alliance to be more opportunistic than directive.
- iii. Attention should also be given to catering for the interests of the aged as well as to the challenges of women and of small holder farmers. The concept of inclusivity should go beyond gender and youth.
- iv. Collaboration with regional alliances should contribute to placing the farmer at the centre of actions.
- v. Adaptation strategies should target specific climate conditions and should be relevant to specific agro-climatic conditions - Climate resilient actions should be given priority.
- vi. A cash value should be attached to the in-kind contributions made by Action Group members in order to better appreciate the overall GACSA leverage.
- vii. The IAG should establish a link between its work and that of the CFS, and should show how it can contribute towards achieving the NDCs of countries.
- viii. The KAG practice briefs should also incorporate aspects of the CSA metrics in order to give them real added value.
- ix. Participation in the AGs e.g. the KAG, is mostly limited to the elite organizations while CSOs, NGOs and farmers who are making valuable contributions on the ground are not listed, hence not recognized in the AGs. They need to be mentioned somehow, to ensure

confidence and to give them a sense of ownership. This type of recognition should be extended to the regional alliances as well, and some of them have clearly expressed the need for support from GACSA.

- x. The AGs need to be properly integrated, and should not be working in silos.
- xi. Gender and youth should be a cross-cutter in all the action groups, rather than be boxed into a separate action group. Alternatively it can be handled by the EEAG as a focus area activity (preferred option). GFAR suggested that EEAG use the Gender in Agriculture Partnership (GAP) and the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) networks for delivering joint activities.
- xii. The KAG should consider developing a catalogue of funded CSA projects and the associated levels of funding (budgets).
- xiii. The KAG should not only focus on scientific and technical knowledge products, but should also include other types and aspects of knowledge.
- xiv. Farmers need to be supported with resources to help them tell their stories.
- xv. It would be useful to know how the external constituencies appreciate the work of GACSA and what they might be expecting.
- xvi. A matrix should be developed for tracking the progress of members' efforts to achieve their objectives.
- xvii. There should be a standing list of GACSA activities to keep the momentum, e.g. webinars through which regular communication is kept to show that GACSA is active, and to present what it is doing.
- xviii. Importance of modeling of scenarios to inform policy choices. It is crucial that the perspectives on tradeoffs and win-win scenarios on productivity and emissions mitigation is captured in the KAG and EEAG work on this topic.
- xix. Involvement of Country Representatives of FAO for sensitizing countries which are not prioritizing CSA in their national policies.
- xx. Resource Constraints are bound to be decided for the first five years. Hence current framework of Facilitation Unit should not be reduced and continuity of leadership should not be affected

5 Structure and Role of the FU

Discussion points: The FU coordinator presented the staff structure and functions of the unit (*Document SC5_11*) after which the meeting participants responded with the following comments/suggestions:

- i. The primary focus should be on the core functions proposed in the memorandum presented by the finance committee (*document SC5_5*), before considering human resources required to perform the functions. Some of the functions can be taken up by the members – determine which of these core functions really need staff support in order to be performed, and assess the level of balance between the support provided by FU and the functions that members perform voluntarily.
- ii. In determining the ultimate size of the FU the principle of keeping a light governance structure should be considered, especially bearing in mind that other similar bodies have fewer staff. However, it should be noted that in reducing the size of the team the same level of output cannot be achieved by simply shuffling tasks around.
- iii. A medium - long-term plan is needed on the way forward with the structure and role of the FU. Some ideas are already emerging on how to deal with some of the immediate actions.

- iv. The core functions presented here should be considered when looking at the critical functions recommended by the finance committee, e.g. facilitation of SC meetings should be included in the finance committee recommendations.
- v. The FU should include in its functions, the provision of strategic guidance to regional and national initiatives.
- vi. An expert is needed for communication since this is a critical aspect of the activities of the FU, especially as it can support fund raising by showcasing achievements. The function of communication needs to be unpacked since it involves several different components which may require different types of skills and expertise.

6 FU Work Plan and Budget

Discussion points: The co-chair invited Committee members to comment of the FU draft work plan and budget (*Document SC5_12*) that had been circulated and the following suggestions/comments came up:

- i. The work plan should indicate the amount of staff time required for each of the functions or activities
- ii. There should be one aggregated GACSA work plan and budget incorporating the activities of FU as well as those of the Action groups and Task Teams.
- iii. Outcome 3.2 on '*Wide and inclusive engagement with the general public*' should also include environmental benefits. This outcome should cover all three pillars of CSA.
- iv. The draft work plan presented should actually be the work plan building into the future, not just for 2017.
- v. The work plan should be backed with a balanced budget - some priority activities should be teased out of this plan and costed against available funds to have a balanced budget in the short term. To do this the "must have" column should be further split into "can have" (what is doable with the available funds) and "should have" (what would be necessary to do if funds are available).
- vi. Despite the current funding constraint, planning of the Annual Forum should continue, in anticipation that some funds will be generated to cover the cost (a process is underway to secure funds for the annual forum for the next three years).
- vii. There should be a breakdown of the travel costs to show who was supported and for what purpose.
- viii. The draft memorandum presented by the finance committee includes proposed guidelines on the best use of financial resources.
- ix. The proposed work plan does not make any provision for strengthening of regional alliances.

7 Resource Mobilization

Discussion points: Based on the presentations in the earlier sessions, the committee members were invited to reflect on what can be done to raise funds and on how to best market GACSA. The following suggestions emerged:

- i. The in-kind contributions of members should be costed so that funders can better appreciate what is happening on the ground.
- ii. The budget should also reflect some activities that farmers' organizations and CSOs are, or would carry out to support CSA and GACSA.

- iii. The commitments of member countries in various projects and programmes should be tracked to see how some of these commitments could be re-directed to support CSA and GACSA.
- iv. Specific funding pools that are relevant to specific activities should be targeted, e.g. the KAG can attract funding for projects from knowledge development funders. Specific sources such as GCF, BRICS, EU, etc. should be explored.
- v. Adequate documentation that would attract funding from willing donors should be provided. A sales package summarizing the achievements thus far, and presenting what could be achieved with more funding would potentially be attractive to funders – repackage the available information into a short compelling document. Proper packaging requires a particular set of skills.
- vi. A proper case for presentation to funders should be prepared, indicating measurables that funders can see the impact of. However, this would require a lot of effort since GACSA does not do product delivery projects.
- vii. Targeted donors should be associated with some GACSA activities that would enhance their visibility and promote their strategic interest.
- viii. The argument for attracting investments should not be limited to Climate Change, but rather be expanded to cover the three pillars of the SDGs in general.
- ix. A donor cycle should be created and catalytic funders identified – donors like to leverage donors by working together and aligning their objectives and programmes.
- x. Resource sources should be identified and flow trends of these resources established in order to develop a proper alignment.
- xi. Given the importance of the personality of the porter of a funding request, a team of credible people in influential positions should be established to lead the resource mobilization.
- xii. Resource mobilization should target leveraging both from external donors and from within the GACSA membership.
- xiii. The approach should not be to sell to donors what GACSA has, but rather sell how GACSA can deliver on the objectives of the donors – approach each donor in their own terms. This requires confidence building as a partner that can deliver.

8 2017 Annual Forum

Discussion point: The co-chair presented a brief overview of the 2016 Annual Forum and invited meeting attendees to discuss the planning of the next annual forum in terms of when it should be organized, how it should be organized, and what to show. In response, the following suggestions were made:

- i. It may be useful to consider the schedule of other major events around which the Annual Forum could be organized, e.g. the FAO annual conference, or the CSA Science conference (the next one will be in South Africa in 2017).
- ii. A counter proposal is to move the AF around the regions and this could actually be cheaper than having it in Rome. So offers to host it out of FAO should be encouraged, especially if part of the cost can be covered by the host. Furthermore, there may be better focus and visibility if the AF is organized as a stand-alone event, independent of other major events. Besides, considering the potential duration of the AF (about 3 – 4 days) it would not be realistic to piggy-back on another long duration event such as the FAO annual conference, in addition to the risk of not having the right people at the event.

- iii. An important consideration in deciding on the schedule of the AF should be the goal that is intended to be achieved, e.g. attraction of new members – what is the target constituency from which new members need to be attracted. The objective of the AF should first be defined before considering the possible venue and potential partners to co-host the AF.
- iv. The AF may be co-hosted with a regional alliance and this could add value in reaching out to many stakeholders at field level. However, this should not mask the distinct need to have meetings with, and among the regional alliances.
- v. Consideration should also be given to other on-going programmes and activities that align with the intended goals of the annual forum.
- vi. It may be more productive to organize the AF as a package of small outreach events (including webinars), as opposed to one big event in one location. It is more critical to have forums and platforms for members to meet, than to have a big event of the magnitude of the Annual Forum every year – it may be more meaningful to have the “annual forum” every two years and in the alternate years, organize other forms of meetings. A counter argument against this suggestion is that the Framework document makes provision for an Annual Forum in the true sense of an annual event so the real issue should be at the level of defining what needs to be achieved at the event, e.g. building momentum on the implementation of the Paris agreement.
- vii. In summary, a team is urgently needed to start the planning of the AF, the starting point being the definition of the specific value of the event in terms of what needs to be achieved (e.g. membership, fund raising, positioning, alignment with global agendas, etc.). The team should be representative of all constituencies and stakeholder groups. The Strategic Committee would decide what the AF should be about, and then assign the task team to implement it. The nucleus of the task team was constituted from among the members present, under the leadership of Marc Sadler. Other members would join the team later.

9 Participation in up-coming events

Discussion point: The FU coordinator expressed the need for the Committee to provide guidance on the level and nature of GACSA’s participation in events. Various options on nature of participation may range from organizing sessions or side events and/or exhibitions singly or in partnership with other stakeholders, to taking a speaking slot at an event. The level of participation would depend on the type of event, and for this, guidance of the SC is required. Discussions focused specifically on the events planned at COP22. Following a presentation of proposed GACSA programme at COP22 (*Document SC5_13*) by Olga Trynkova, FU officer responsible for planning these events, the following comments were made by meeting participants:

- i. The Netherlands has a pavilion in the Green zone where GACSA has a space for exhibition. There is also a possibility (to be confirmed) to take some slots in the space provided for speaker’s corner.
- ii. Contrary to what has been reported, the meeting with the private sector is not organized by The Netherlands but the space provided for speakers’ corner can possibly be used for this purpose.
- iii. Italy (Ministries of Environment and Agriculture) and FAO, in collaboration with Morocco, are organizing a side event on food losses and waste on 16 November and this would be of interest to GACSA.

- iv. In addition to the joint exhibition with GACSA, NCCSD is organizing four side events and all GACSA members are invited. GACSA is offered a speaking slot at the side event on indigenous peoples.
- v. Participation at COP should be strategic, with a clear indication of the messages to be communicated. The role of GACSA and its members at the side events should be made clear to all GACSA members to help in deciding on participation. Reports of the events should be produced, highlighting the outcomes in relation to the objectives. Also, a catalogue of all CSA events at COP should be established and shared with the members.
- vi. Information about speakers at organized side events, including their institutional affiliations and positions should be made public as soon as they are confirmed as this would influence the decisions of the target audience to attend the events.
- vii. Operating procedure for organizing and/or participating in events is needed so as to avoid spending too much time on debates.
- viii. In principle, GACSA should be present in a big way wherever a discussion on agriculture is happening – there is no point in economizing on events such as COP because these events present several opportunities, including recruitment of new members, and attracting potential funders.
- ix. Consideration should be given to groups that may be willing to get involved but are financially constrained. Such groups need to be supported. Otherwise, only the financially capable members will be attending GACSA events while farmers and NGOs will be largely left out. There should be an inclusive strategy based on a procedure consisting of identifying candidates according to the event and its goals, ensuring the level of participation that would achieve the desired results.
- x. The Action Groups should be involved in the side events, especially as speakers on specific technical topics.
- xi. At the request of one member and in the interest of all, clarification was provided relating to the cost of participation at COP22. The cost is limited to travel expenses for one FU staff and the cost of producing marketing material. All other activities will be at no cost. By the same approach a side event during the NY climate week was organized at no cost to GACSA – all the costs were covered by the partners.

10 Key Decisions/Actions and Next steps

The full decisions and actions agreed to at the end of the meeting are presented separately in Annex 1. These can be summarized as follows:

Decision: Mark Manis to incorporate the suggestions made on the “GACSA Strategic Direction” document and circulate to members by 28 October 2016 for a final round of feedback and eventual endorsement by email iterations.

Decision: To endorse the recommendations of the finance committee with incorporation of the comments and suggestions made by members.

Decision: To reconstitute the Annual Forum Task Team under the leadership of Marc Sadler, with a nucleus consisting of volunteered members present, while others would join later. The composition of the team should ensure representation of all constituencies and stakeholder groups.

Decision: To add the focus action on gender and youth to the mandate of the Enabling Environment Action Group. This focus task will be specifically championed by GFAR.

11 Any other Business

Discussion point: none.

12 Wrap up and Closing

In concluding the proceedings the co-chairs thanked participants for the commitment and enthusiastic engagement in the discussions, and expressed their conviction that the outcome of the meeting would strengthen the alliance despite its current financial turbulence. They expressed gratitude to the FAO for its commitment to continue hosting the FU and supporting its operations and those of the alliance as a whole.

Annex 1: Decisions and Actions agreed to at the 5th GACSA SC meeting.

Agenda Item	Decision issue and Decision	Related action (who, when, etc...)
1. GACSA Strategic Direction: GACSA Vision and Mission	a. Endorsing revised version of the GACSA Vision and Mission (i.e. input/comments from Day discussions incorporated)	Document will be prepared by Mark Manis taking in to account comments by 28 October and circulated to the SC and virtually endorsed asap
2. Financial status and implications on next steps (Recommendations of the Finance Ad Hoc Committee)	<p>2.1 Endorsing the GACSA Ad hoc Finance Committee Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and agree on the revised version (adjustments based on input from Day 1 discussions) <p>2.2 Prepare a comprehensive GACSA Work Plan and Budget taking into account (a) adopted Vision-mission statement and priority areas; (b) recommendations of the Finance Ad hoc committee and (c) suggestions from Day discussions – as follows:</p> <p>a) Transition (interim) GACSA Work Plan and Budget (Oct. 2016-June 2017) – including reallocation of resources including staff time to allow GACSA/FU to continue to function optimally)</p> <p>b) Comprehensive 2017-2018 GACSA Work Plan and balanced Budget (with activities/deliverables and budgets of both FU and AGs included – reflecting the value of in-kind contributions and products)</p> <p>c) Prepare a 2-3 pager generic profile of GACSA and its value which will compliment the various donor interests in pitching for GACSA financing support. This could include more specific concept notes. (FU)</p>	<p>endorsed</p> <p>Finance, FU</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Outcome of A will guide this step</p> <p>FU</p> <p>Finance</p>

Agenda Item	Decision issue and Decision	Related action (who, when, etc...)
	d) Resource mobilisation strategy: (Finance Committee) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development the strategy and necessary documents - Friends of GACSA 	
3. Other decisions	3.1 Acknowledge the MET work plan 3.2 Annual Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Task team b) Establish purchase and specific value (what do we want to achieve with the 2017 AF) 3.3 New Task Teams/Action Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Gender and Youth (GFAR will facilitate GACSA/EEAG linkages with GAP and YPARD to identify joint activities, with inputs from all action groups) 	Acknowledged Ad-hoc team reconstituted Contact GAP and YPARD in preparation of COP 22 side-events and for further collaboration.