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## GACSA End of Year Brief

January – December 2016

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### Overview

The Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture ended the year with more than 135 members. The Alliance increased by more than 60 members in 2016 and the gains in membership have occurred in each of the stakeholder groups. Membership in the Alliance spans the globe, with members working in more than 110 countries. The Alliance was able to glean this data because of the voluntary GACSA Member Survey that was released in early 2016 by the GACSA Member Engagement Team.

GACSA held the 2016 GACSA Annual Forum in June 2016. This Annual Forum brought the CSA world together in Rome to have substantive discussions about Climate-Smart Agriculture. The theme of the Forum was “CSA in Action.” The theme is indicative of a growing Alliance focused on solutions. The GACSA Annual Forum demonstrated the significant progress that the Alliance has made in its short existence. The Alliance showcased the work of the three Action Groups, ad hoc teams, and GACSA’s work with the Regional Alliances. At the Annual Forum, Ms. Mi Nguyen was elected GACSA Co-Chair to replace the outgoing Co-Chair Mr. Inge Herman Rydland.

The GACSA Facilitation Unit has coordinated two in-person strategic committee meetings in 2016. It has also been a part of numerous gatherings throughout the

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world, including GFIA, SBSTA, Adaptation Futures, WFO General Assembly, UN Climate Week, CFS 42, Annual Forum of the African CSA Alliance, and COP22.

The three GACSA Action Groups have generated some significant results that support the CSA activities of countries and Alliance members. Significant among these are the seven CSA practice briefs and a Compendium, Climate-Smart Agriculture & Extension, produced by the Knowledge Action Group and the six country case studies, overseen by the Enabling Environment Action Group. The Enabling Environment Action Group, with support from the other two Action Groups conducted the case studies in cooperation with six countries. The emerging lessons from these studies were shared at the Annual Forum in June 2016.

The greatest challenge GACSA has been facing is the Facilitation Unit' s operational capacity. At the end of 2016, the GACSA faced a significant budget shortfall. This necessitated a streamlining of the FU structure, with no extension of existing contracts. By the end of 2016, the Facilitation Unit was reduced to four staffers. The current makeup of the unit is being sustained by non-trust fund support. This somewhat masks the cost of supporting the Facilitation Unit.

At the end of 2016, two countries pledged additional funds to GACSA. Ireland and Netherlands both contributed to the GACSA Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

While these new contributions are deeply appreciated, the ad hoc Finance Committee soon identified the urgent need to elaborate a fundraising strategy to assist in resource mobilization efforts that would pave the way for more sustainable funding for the Alliance.



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## Activities and Areas of Focus

### **Membership**

The membership of the Alliance increased by about 50% over a period of one year to more than 135 members. The increase, however, has been skewed towards private businesses, NGOs, and research/academic institutions, with very little increase in the number of countries or farmers' organisations.

### **Communications**

With the support of a communications consultant hired for the purpose, GACSA developed a comprehensive communication strategy in the first quarter of 2016 for both internal communication among the Alliance members, and for external communication with other stakeholders outside the Alliance.

This strategy was well received by the whole of the GACSA membership and has seen the revamp of the GACSA website, development of social media communication channels, and the production of a newsletter.

Alongside the communication strategy, stakeholder-customised communication material was also developed for advocacy and outreach to various constituencies.

## Events

GACSA was represented by the Facilitation Unit or the GACSA Co-Chairs at many events in 2016. This gave more visibility to the Alliance and allowed the Alliance to be in greater dialogue with a wide range of members. The events attended by the Facilitation Unit or Co-Chairs included GFIA, SBSTA, Adaptation Futures, WFO General Assembly, UN Climate Week, CFS 42, Annual Forum of the African CSA Alliance, and COP22.

GACSA organized two side-events at COP22. The first side-event on *"Innovative Investment Opportunities for scaling up CSA"* (12 November 2016, Italy pavilion, Blue zone), developed in partnership with the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land, Water and Sea, focused on identifying opportunities to attract investment in CSA which can more effectively benefit farmers. The second side-event, *"Climate smart farmers: scaling up rural women's innovative practices for impact"* (16 November 2016, Green Zone), developed in partnership with the Climate Change Sustainable Development and Public Leadership (NCCSD) initiative in India, aimed at highlighting successful approaches to engaging rural women in climate-smart adaptation and mitigation practices. GACSA was actively engaged in other side-events to highlight its key role and achievements in upscaling CSA and mainstreaming the approach in climate discussions at global and regional levels<sup>1</sup>. GACSA also held a number of informal meetings, including one with farmers' representatives, to discuss how to strengthen farmers' participation in activities

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<sup>1</sup> Including: The G7 follow up side-event on "International Agricultural Research Cooperation for climate change" (10 Nov.); the ASEAN side-event on *"Common Challenges, common solutions: Collective actions to enhance resilience of South East Asian Agriculture"* (11 Nov.); the side-event on *"Youth engagement in CSA"* organised by CCAFS in the Africa pavilion (15 Nov.); the high-level side-event on *"Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Losses and Waste"* (Italy pavilion, 16 Nov.).

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of the Alliance. GACSA's participation at COP22 led to integrating some of the trending issues in GACSA's work programme for 2017 (e.g. integrated systems approaches, gender and youth, farmers at the centre).

### **Action Groups and Ad-Hoc Teams**

The three GACSA Action Groups, Knowledge, Enabling Environment, and Investment, produced and implemented their inception year work plans in 2015 and 2016. The major outputs of these plans were presented at the Annual Forum in June 2016. Of particular significance are the CSA practice briefs developed by the Knowledge Action group, and the country case studies conducted in six countries under the leadership of the Enabling Environment Action group. Four of the case studies were conducted in developing countries with financial support provided through a supplementary grant given by the USDA FAS.

Subsequent to the 2016 Annual Forum, the GACSA Action Groups have prepared follow-up work plans for implementation in 2016-2017 with the aim of building greater synergies amongst their activities and building on the trending issues highlighted at the Annual Forum. These led to the adoption of a two-page Overall Strategic Work Plan 2016-17.

In the run-up to the 2016 Annual Forum, ten webinars were organized to showcase the six country case studies and the work of the Knowledge Action Group. The webinars each attracted about 50 participants on average during the live events, and generated much more interest thereafter.

In addition to the Action Groups, ad hoc task teams were established to support the Facilitation Unit and the Strategic Committee in achieving some specific activities of the Alliance, namely communication, member engagement, finance, and organisation of the Annual Forum.

## **Regional Engagements**

In recent years, different multi-stakeholder CSA alliances and platforms have been established at the regional level, and sometimes at the national level, through bottom-up and independent processes. While this emergence of CSA alliances and platforms worldwide is a positive and strong signal to the international community of the willingness to scale up CSA, no relationship was existing among those alliances. Building upon the first ever joint meeting of the CSA regional alliances and platforms at the GACSA Annual Forum, the Facilitation Unit has developed a dedicated work program to deepen ties to and between regional alliances across the world. The regional alliance work generated essential communication pieces about the various regional CSA organizations in the run-up to the Annual Forum. Information sheets on each regional CSA alliances and platforms have been generated and made available on the GACSA website, providing members with precious information prior to engaging in a specific region or with a specific regional CSA alliance or platform. As part of GACSA' s work program dedicated to the regional CSA alliances, GACSA participated in the Annual Forum of the African CSA Alliance (ACSAA), convened by NEPAD on 11-13 October 2016, and supported dialogue between CSA alliances for Africa, West Africa (WACSAA), and East Africa (EACSAP). Engagement with the various regional entities have continued and this engagement has been prioritized by the GACSA Strategic Committee.

## **Resource Mobilisation and Funds Management**

Due to financial constraints, an ad hoc GACSA Finance Committee was established by the Strategic Committee at its May 2016 meeting in Rotterdam. The Finance Committee has a three-part mission:

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- To support/enhance financial transparency and reporting
- To support/enhance solid financial planning and management and develop a long-term financial strategy based on the core functions of GACSA and the Facilitation Unit (FU)
- To strengthen resource mobilisation and identify fundraising opportunities

The Finance Committee established a set of recommendations in 2016 that were endorsed by the Strategic Committee. This set of recommendations included further oversight and reprioritization of spending. The GACSA Facilitation Unit and Finance Committee began the process of developing a GACSA Fundraising Strategy during 2016.