

# Global Alliance on Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA)

## Co-Chairs consultations synthesis Report

June 2016

*“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”* Mahatma Ghandi

### **Introduction: Scope and rationale**

1. This is a synthesis of the [views and observations](#) from an extensive and inclusive consultation exercise with GACSA members and interest groups - done during the period January to May 2016. The exercise involved:
  - A consultation retreat held in Rome in January 2016 (members attended physically and some joined by teleconference)
  - Written submissions by several members and interest groups, and
  - One-on-one dialogue with some members
  - Consultations with Permanent Representatives to FAO in May 2016.
2. Primary rationale for the consultations exercise was to facilitate open and candid reflections on GACSA’s inception year experiences – achievements, weakness and challenges - and therefore “setting-the-stage” to embrace lessons in the planning for GACSA’s Year 2. It is expected that focus in Year 2 will be to consolidate and demonstrate GACSA’s unique value addition
3. The synthesis is a record of the observations, views and expectations of GACSA members and interest groups. A detailed synthesis of the consultations will be shared at the Annual Forum with the intention to enable an informed and focused discourse and decisions on GACSA’s Year 2 priorities and operational thrust

### **Synthesis of the key insights from the consultation exercise**

The synthesis is presented under five key issues, namely:

- GACSA value addition and governance
- The GACSA Framework document
- Engaging the CSOs, Private sector and other constituencies/processes
- Adaptation Vs mitigation Vs productivity
- Communication and advocacy

#### **1. GACSA Value Addition and Governance**

- i. This is an important issue and reflection on it should be on-going as part GACSA’s ability to be continually responsive to members’ needs
- ii. 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 (and its relationships to livelihood and prosperity, environmental resilience and sustainable development). The primary value of GACSA is in its form as an open and voluntary platform, bringing different actors and interest groups together to co-create new knowledge, foster common globally accepted aspirations on CSA and inspire each other for local action. GACSA has a lot of value to its membership as a global knowledge hub on CSA
- iii. While fostering inclusiveness and equal opportunity platform, GACSA’s governance structures needs to remain flexible and more about enabling the “movement” features of GACSA. The strong and popular view is that GACSA operations (especially in AF and SC) places less emphasis on governance issues, i.e. to focus

more on “delivering the GACSA value addition to scaling up CSA” than on internal (in-ward looking) structural and governance issues

iv. Institutionalising and building heavily formal organisational structures and processes will be incompatible with GACSA’s purpose and value proposition and will simply bring GACSA into a space where several institutions already exist (and GACSA will not be adding any comparative value)

v. However, it is important to ensure open and regular and consistent communication flows among the membership. Keeping members informed in a timely manner is an essential requirement for healthy collaboration and partnerships/ platforms. Total transparency is critical, even though this does not necessarily mean everybody directly involved in everything.

vi. The functional organs of GACSA:

- a) The Facilitation Unit (FU) – presents GACSA’s operational ability. Its capacity and modus operandi needs to grow and realign as GACSA transforms. This includes aspects such as transparency and how members could play roles in delivering on the GACSA work plan. There have been challenges – e.g. GACSA still does not have its own web site and efforts has taken time to structure. However, there is now substantive progress on that side. The question is how FU can be even more effective in catalyzing actions in behalf of GACSA. Getting this element right is cardinal in rallying direct and pro-active support to the GACSA membership
- b) The Action Groups: They are key partners of the GACSA’s delivery model. This is the means by which GACSA members play a direct role in delivering on GACSA’s value addition. However, AG members including the co-convenor have to do this largely out of their free time. This poses critical challenges, except in cases where Action Group members/co-convenors get to do this task as an integral part of their day job. This issue will need to be examined in the interest of consolidating the functioning of the AGs. This includes looking at how the FU and AGs could interact within their different roles and responsibilities to ensure optimal functioning of the AGs. This is especially important to sustain the growing momentum for CSA as a realistic approach to address poverty reduction, gender issues and equity.

Based on the work of the Action Groups in the inception year, there may be value in a continued dialogue within in Alliance on how to best access and disseminate strategic information and knowledge on transformational change processes.

vii. GACSA Membership:

- a) It will be critical for GACSA to invest in growing its membership of farmers and farmer organisations as well as private sector. GACSA can already consider numerous joint activities to reach more farmers on CSA, including facilitating farmer-to-farmer sharing and learning. This efforts will ensure our appreciation of and responsiveness to needs and aspirations of different categories of farmers
- b) Membership criteria may need to be examined including what being a member means to a system that is essentially a voluntary platform.
- c) Broad membership is essential for the legitimacy of GACSA. The strategy to attract and grow membership should build in defining value addition at regional, national and local levels.
- d) Within the principle of multi-sectorialism – the Alliance should strive for a balanced membership between the North and the South, Governments, CSOs and Private Sector. Consideration should also be given to the interactions necessary across different government ministries and departments.

- viii. Linkages and mutual interaction with Regional CSA Alliances and Networks:  
The Regional CSA Alliances and Networks are not branches of the GACSA. However, GACSA will pursue collaborative mutual relationship with the Regional CSA Alliances and Networks (Asia, South-East-Asia, Africa, North America, Latin America, European, etc.).
- ix. Other governance related issues:
  - a) Ensure a clear delineation between GACSA and the UN systems including the COP processes. In the Alliance, everyone have the same right to voice their opinion. In addition, the Alliance is an action oriented platform.
  - b) The current, seemingly open-endedness of GACSA in its various elements, e.g. membership, decision making – in the name of inclusiveness – is a challenge both to building the sense of belonging as well as to effective decision making.
  - c) Should “number of members” be held as a performance indicator for GACSA – an open platform; is membership the same as number/who is participating in GACSA activities?

## 2. The GACSA Framework Document (FD)

- i. Revision of FD:  
Revising the FD, at this point in GACSA’s life cycle, will most likely only distract from the emerging momentum and progress in bringing into the Alliance increased focus on practical and more substantive issues on scaling up CSA. Therefore, an exercise to revise the FD is not recommended.  
  
However, it is acknowledged that some issues in the FD will be well served by further articulation and/or refinement to reflect new knowledge and understanding. This addresses GACSA’s agility to respond to lessons and learning building shared understanding of the issues and aspirations of GACSA and CSA. The most practical and constructive way at this stage, is to address such issues in GACSA’s work plan.
- ii. Issues which could be dealt with through the Annual Work Plan are:
  - a. *The threat of climate change to global food security.* Securing adequate food supply at all levels is in the core rationale for CSA.
  - b. *Focus on the smallholder farmers.* This includes women small holders as well as youth in terms of their special needs as well as indigenous people.
  - c. *What is and what is not CSA.* Having agreed standards in order to determine “climate smartness” is necessary and this is, at the moment, work in progress. Again, the ultimate application will be context specific
  - d. *Interactions with and the role of the private sector.* How can CSA investments secure a green bottom line for companies willing to invest? How to advance public-private partnerships? What does business expect from governments and donor community?
  - e. *Strengthening early warning systems and local climate hubs.* Need to develop permanent systems for adaptive research considering the climate conditions in each specific micro-climate zone.
- iii. Annual work plans:  
In this second year, the Alliance is moving from focus on governance and structure to action. The annual work plans must reflect this transition, by being the instrument to embracing new knowledge and experiences and supporting context specific innovations. The Annual Work Plan must in this case focus on concrete issues that favor applications and regional, national and local levels. Important that the Annual work plan reflects new-won knowledge and its inherent opportunities.
- iv. Branding:  
Consolidating the GACSA as a brand (identity) is essentially a political process that will require broad membership participation over time.

### 3. **Engaging the CSOs, Private sector and other constituencies/processes**

#### i. Community based organisations:

Engagements with CSOs will offer more value-for-money if done through a communication and advocacy plan. GACSA recognizes the value of a broad based platform. An informed dialogue on both perceptions and facts held by the CSOs about CSA in general and GACSA in particular is an asset to the Alliance. How to make that happen must be an integral part of the Annual Work Plan. This approach can catalyse specific action-orientated dialogue and sharing of issues of public interest, e.g. farmer rights, climate justice, women farmers etc. (see Pont 5 below for more on Communication and advocacy).

#### ii. Engaging with the UN processes:

GACSA will not aspire for formal links to the UNFCCC processes. However, our interactions and exchange will play an important role in supporting GACSA members and countries to implement their SDGs and COP21 Commitments. The question is how GACSA best can support the 25 countries that referenced CSA in their INDCs. The SDGs and COP21 Agreements will have critical implications for GACSA's cause, purpose and priorities. Examination could include how to align GACSA's strategic thrust, priorities and programmes. Further, it may be useful to 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 CSA and GACSA

#### iii. Engaging private sector:

Small and large corporations, multi-nationals and domestic enterprises have equal voice in reflecting and sharing on private sector issues in pursuit of scaling up CSA. The underlining issues for GACSA is to demonstrate the benefit for private sector in a climate smart approach. Equally important, to dialogue through members for regulatory frameworks where necessary that will secure predictability and an investment friendly environment for CSA.

### 4. **Adaptation Vs mitigation Vs productivity**

#### i. Context specificity:

Implementation of CSA is always context and circumstance specific. The GACSA debate and knowledge-information support should enable members are able to determine the primary/priority "entry point" – recognising that in reality the three CSA pillars are mutually inclusive.

#### ii. Relevance of the three pillars:

The three pillars in the definition of CSA remains relevant and most appropriate. CSA is an overarching concept to be domesticated in different agro-ecological zones and geopolitical circumstances. In some countries, dealing with mitigation may be the most important consideration (e.g. Ireland). In others, it will be adaptation (e.g. Malawi). For some crops it may be mitigation as more important (rice), others will be adaptation (beans). We see no point in opening the discussion on the three pillars – the crucial thing is that context matters. For instance, countries like Malawi may declare to focus on adaptation and perhaps considering mitigation as a co-benefit. But in the same country, in high-input rice production, mitigation cannot be called a co-benefit; it is the prime objective. The bottom line of the global model is that if we want to achieve no more than a 1.5 degree warmer world (and even two degree), the current and projected future emissions from agriculture will have to be part of the solution. Thus, while expecting emissions from the agricultural industry to increase as agriculture develops, CSA can be viewed as the way to realise a lower emissions agricultural growth pathway.

#### iii. CSA and GMOs and high-input farming:

GACSA has an opportunity to catalyse and support informed and constructive dialogue on this; essentially to support members (governments) to make informed decisions.

## 5. Communication and Advocacy

### i. Value added communications:

Communication and Advocacy is one critical accessory to GACSA and its business model. Many submissions underline communication and advocacy as defining issue. Robust, demand/tailor-made messages and pro-active advocacy strategies should be developed, and resources secured to make that happen.

### ii. Advocacy plan

The Communication and Advocacy Plan will stimulate and facilitate dialogue in the membership and beyond, with the aim to get an informed public on CSA and GACSA. This is more than a question-and-answer session with the CSOs. With focus on specific tailor-made messages, a vigorous and comprehensive plan will help GACSA to be clear on what outcomes CSA should be judged by examples of practice, based on discussions in a non-political, informal platform of common interest.

At the moment, these may include:

- Sharing information on climate financing including aspects such as the Special Climate Fund (CFS), the Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF). Important to seek ways to financing/co-financing for CSA; CSA financing as an add-on to a regular portfolio or a freestanding project/programme or both; what would be the basis to decide? Does CSA makes investments more expensive or do countries get away with the same budget for a CSA-able project in comparison to a regular project of sustainable agriculture?
- A discussion on the Green Climate Fund and readiness finance for the Pacific (<http://www.greenclimate.fund/-/cook-islands-becomes-first-pacific-state-to-receive-gcf-readiness-funding>), which was accepted by the board prior to COP21. What does this mean for the next round of proposals? What needs to be done to get countries/Ministries of Agriculture ready to prepare programmes to be submitted? What is the future of readiness finance for CSA or agriculture at large?
- Integrating CSA-considerations into national/domestic programmes, except for the technical issues which should be left to FAO, CGIAR/CCAFS etc.

## 6. Summary:

- Consultations have been broad, with a variety of views being brought forward. This has been a learning process for the Co-chairs. It is our aspiration that the issues raised will trigger new perspectives on how to transform GACSA from its initial focus on administrative issues to a strong platform for action.
- Consultations captured two important global trends – reiterated in the Finance for Development Conference in Addis Ababa, the 2030 Agenda and the Cop21. First, change is necessary in order to establish a food secure planet. Second, strategic partnerships across sectors and professions are called for to bring about transformational change.
- We believe GACSA with its commitment and diverse membership, is uniquely placed to address issues of food security in the face of climate change. In our view, the broad membership of GASCA heralds new opportunities for a planet that is severely shaken. Let's grab these opportunities.