

# **GACSA Updates to members**

**June 2015**

The GACSA facilitation unit is now fully operational, with the coordinator of the unit having taken office on 01 June 2015. In addition to the briefing sessions between the Co-Chairs and the FU Coordinator during the second week of June (the detailed programme for the week was posted on the GACSA website) and the very successful GACSA symposium organized on June 12 as a side event to the FAO conference, we wish to further update GACSA members, partners and other interested parties on the following issues:

1. *GACSA Annual Forum*: The first GACSA annual Forum of GACSA has been scheduled for January 2016. The precise dates and a draft agenda of the Annual Forum will be discussed and decided upon at the next SC teleconference on July 22. The SC is invited to consider appointing a Task Team to work with FU in organizing the annual Forum.
2. *GACSA Strategic Committee meetings*: A series of meetings of the GACSA Strategic Committee have been scheduled ahead of the Annual Forum to enable proper preparations for the Forum. Three virtual meetings (teleconferences) will be held on 22 July 2015, 02 September 2015, and 18 November 2015. Two physical (face-to-face) meetings will be held in the Period 12-15 October 2015 (taking advantage of the CFS conference in Rome during this period) and in January 2016 prior to the Annual Forum. The exact dates of these physical meetings will be discussed and decided upon at the teleconference on 22 July 2015. A draft agenda for the 22 July teleconference is in preparation and will be sent to members by 08 July (two weeks before the meeting).
3. *GACSA Website*: The GACSA website is currently hosted at the FAO and there are some visible operational challenges as some FAO house style regulations are mandatory. It is worth mentioning that many other bodies hosted at the FAO are facing the same or similar challenges. Discussions on the matter are on-going between CFS and FAO and it is anticipated that whatever solution that would be found for CFS would also apply for GACSA. However, some GACSA members would rather see the GACSA website hosted by an independent provider. This matter will be further discussed by the SDC at one of its for-coming teleconferences.
4. *Alignment of the three Action Groups*: The three Action groups have finalized preparation of the Programmes of Work (PoW) and are now ready to go into implementation. Although the PoWs have been published on the GACSA website, they remain work in progress even as the implementation commences. Therefore members are still welcome with additional inputs to the work plans of the Action Groups.
5. *Communication and Outreach Strategies*: Communication and Outreach are very crucial for the external visibility of GACSA. Therefore a proper communication strategy is required. The facilitation Unit proposes to have two separate strategies for internal (among the members) and for external communication (with non-member stakeholders and the general public. FU is in discussion with FAO management for

using the services of a consultant engaged by the climate and Energy division for its CSA project. Depending on the ultimate outcome of this discussion and on the assessment of the practical needs on the ground, we may also consider hiring another consultant or requesting members for a seconded staff for developing the outreach and communication strategies.

6. Resource Mobilization: The Co-Chairs and FU coordinator intend to visit some strategic financial institutions and other funding bodies (Foundations / Agencies). These visits will be planned together with leaders of the Investment Action Group who should also be part of the team for the visits. The modus operandi of the visits and their schedule still have to be discussed. The concept will be tabled to SC for consideration.
7. Supporting Regional Work Alliances: FU Coordinator recently attended a Forum in West Africa where a West African Alliance was established and he will continue to engage the leadership of the West African Alliance on working together. FAO has provided funds for a Regional workshop on CSA in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is essentially an event of FOA coordinated by its Peru Office but it provides an opportunity for GACSA to contribute to the creation of LAC regional CSA alliance. The workshop will take place in September (dates to be confirmed) and FU is in conversation with FAO headquarters towards ensuring that GACSA features prominently at the event and that establishment of a regional CSA alliance should be one of the outcomes of the workshop. Meanwhile, a similar workshop was held in Bangkok in June 2015 where GACSA was presented by a delegation from FAO Headquarters. One outcome of the event was the establishment of a CSA Alliance for Asia and the Pacific Region. The report of the event was shared with FU and it will be posted on the GACSA website. Parallel to the Bangkok event was a high level Forum for CSA held in Bamako, Mali under the auspices of ECOWAS. GACSA was represented at the event by the FU coordinator. An important outcome of the event was the creation of the West African CSA Alliance. A report on the event is in preparation and it will be available on the GACSA website.
8. Staffing at the FU: Following the appointment of the FU coordinator, we are expecting an Associate Programme Officer seconded to FU by the US. We are also in the process of appointing a full-time Administrative Assistant (G4) to support the Coordinator. Meanwhile, the FAO G2 staff is now fully deployed to GACSA. We are currently having two part-time FAO staff in FU. We should bear in mind that staffing of the FU is designed to be thin, while members are encouraged to second staff to FU as the need may arise.
9. Travel funds policy: With the understanding that GACSA members have to essentially cover their own travel expenses for meetings and other activities as these would normally be activities that fall within their organizational mandates, we have not been considering a travel funds policy. However FU may be required to provide travel grants to some SC and AG members under certain circumstances. We therefore need appropriate policies to guide such support. Members are invited to make some suggestions/proposals in this regard, for discussion at the SC meetings.

10. Engagements with other Global Initiatives: The FU coordinator attended a seminar organized on June 25 2015 by the Swiss Federal Office of Agriculture (FOAG), FAO and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in the Swiss pavilion at the on-going Milan Expo on the theme “*Sustainable Livestock and Climate Smart Agriculture: Joint Action for Common Challenges*”. This event paved the way for news partnerships/collaboration of GACSA with the Global Research Alliance (GRA) and the Global Agenda on Sustainable Livestock (GASL). FU has been having follow-up discussions with GRA and GASL on possible ways of working together, including the possibility for these two to become members (even as observers) of GACSA. A more detailed report on the Swiss event is in preparation and will be available on the GACSA website.
11. Membership Growth. GACSA has continued to register a steady growth in its membership, with an increase in the number of members from 89 in May 2015 to 96 by 30 June 2015. The new members that have been received into the GACSA family include: Italy; Canada; Ghana Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security Platform (CCAFSP); Ecofys; Sustainable Food Lab (USA); India National Council for Climate Change Sustainable Development and Public Leadership (NCSSD); and Agri-Spectrum Development Network (ASDN) Pakistan;. Other potential members who have expressed interest in GACSA include: Thailand; the World Meteorological Organization (WMO); Resource Renewal Network (USA); Humana People to People (a network of independent NGOs); National Agraria University Nicaragua; and Inter-American Development Bank.
12. Upcoming events: A number of upcoming GACSA events have been scheduled, in addition to the SC meetings listed in item 2 above. We specifically draw your attention to the following:
- a. Teleconference of the Knowledge Action Group on 08 July 2015;
  - b. Teleconference of the Investment Action Group on 10 July 2015;
  - c. Side event associated with the CFS conference in Rome in the period 12 – 15 October 2015 (precise date to be confirmed by CFS conference organizers. This side event will feature the three Action Groups and highlight the progress in implementation of their work plans.
  - d. Side event associated with CoP 21 in Paris (November – December 2015). FU is still in discussion with various stakeholders on how best to register the side event, given the challenge that, as a non-member (not even with observer status) of UNCCC, GACSA does not qualify to directly apply for an official side event within the CoP 21 programme.