



Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Climate-Smart Agriculture: Promoting Collaboration and Matchmaking between GACSA Members

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research paper is to provide inputs for a matchmaking strategy for the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA), hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. For this a literature review was performed and nine interviews with members of the alliance conducted. Additionally, two representatives from alliances that are not members of GACSA but work in a similar field were interviewed, in order to create case studies on communication strategies and alliance's structure. The data collected was analyzed exhaustively and led to the conclusion, that while GACSA's work is successful in many parts, improvements can be made in terms of structure, communication strategy and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships. Finally, policy recommendations were designed in order to enhance the work of the alliance.

Keywords: cooperation, collaboration, climate-smart agriculture, GACSA, Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, multi-stakeholder partnership, Sustainable Development Goals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research paper has been created in the context of a Regional Academy on the United Nations project. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors. Mentoring was provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. The paper aims to provide inputs for a matchmaking strategy for the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA). This alliance fosters Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) for Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), a concept that seeks to increase the sustainable productivity of agriculture while simultaneously mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and making agricultural production more resilient to climate change. The paper aims to answer the following research questions:

- What are currently the enhancing factors and barriers for existing collaborations and creating new ones in MSP of GACSA members?
- How does inclusiveness affect MSP?
- How could knowledge, good practices, and strategies be shared between GACSA members, and between the Facilitation Unit and members?
- What other platform(s) does the literature review and do GACSA members suggest for better knowledge sharing opportunities, communication, and networking, and how are CSA practices implemented by stakeholders?

A combination of qualitative methods was employed, including nine semi-structured interviews with GACSA members as well as representatives of regional alliances for CSA. The interviews were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis. Also, a literature review provided background information and additional findings. Finally, two case studies on alliances operating in a similar field as GACSA were carried out. The methods were employed separately and combined in a discussion.

It showed that there are different perceptions of GACSA's role, benefits, tasks and work among members. Success of MSP was found to depend upon common goals, expected benefits, structure, leadership, (financial) resources, trust, group spirit, inclusiveness, and political context. While joint research can enhance MSP, language and bureaucracy can pose barriers. While matchmaking between GACSA members is challenged by finding a partner and establishing contact, barriers for new members to joining GACSA are visibility and the public image of CSA. Also, communication and knowledge management are pivotal for GACSA, yet, face the triple-challenge of (1) different members having different media access, (2) constrained resources, and (3) internal and external exchange between various stakeholders and levels of governance. While members employ a broad spectrum of communication tools, GACSA primarily uses webinars, newsletters, social media and mailings.

A set of policy recommendation was derived, which suggests for GACSA to increase clarity about its goals and structure, increase efficiency and availability of (financial) resources, improve communication and knowledge management by encouraging members to make use of tools and feedback opportunities, guide requirements for communication tools, and explore social media. Also, GACSA could improve its visibility and public image, initiate more meetings, and address barriers arising from language or bureaucracy. Finally, specific ideas were collected for cooperation with the three stakeholder groups of private actors, academia, and civil society.

“A sustainable agriculture is one which depletes neither the people nor the land.”

Wendell Berry

TABLE OF CONTENTS

IMPRINT	1
ABSTRACT	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
ABBREVIATIONS	6
1. INTRODUCTION	7
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS	8
2.2. GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE	8
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	9
3.1. AIM OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	9
3.2. METHODOLOGY	10
3.3. METHODS	10
3.5. LIMITATIONS	11
4. RESULTS	11
4.1. LITERATURE REVIEW	11
4.2. PERCEPTION OF GACSA	12
4.2. BARRIERS AND ENHANCING FACTORS TO MSP	13
4.3. BARRIERS AND ENHANCING FACTORS FOR CREATING NEW MSP	16
4.4. TOOLS TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE, GOOD PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES	16
4.5. OTHER PLATFORMS SUGGESTED FOR BETTER KNOWLEDGE SHARING, COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES	17
5. DISCUSSION	18
6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	19
7. CONCLUSION	21
BIBLIOGRAPHY	22
ANNEXES	25

ABBREVIATIONS

CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
DCO	Development Coordination Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FU	Facilitation Unit of the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture
EU	European Union
GACSA	Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Partnership
RAUN	Regional Academy on the United Nations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Climate-Smart Agriculture: Promoting Collaboration and Matchmaking between GACSA Members

WAKOUNIG, DALLINGER

1. INTRODUCTION

In the year of its 75th anniversary, the UN launched the initiative UN75 to create a year of dialogue to exchange ideas, knowledge, and solutions to today's most urgent problems (UN, n.d. a). Many of these are linked to ensuring food security for a rising number of people under changing environmental conditions in a socially just way. To address this challenge, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has created the approach of climate-smart agriculture (CSA).

CSA seeks to integrate sustainability goals into agricultural practices. It is based on the three goals of (I) sustainably increasing productivity and related incomes, (II) adapting and building resilience to climate change and, if possible, (III) mitigating climate change by reducing or removing greenhouse gas emissions (FAO, 2020a).

Furthermore, FAO hosts the Global Alliance for climate-smart agriculture (GACSA) to facilitate partnerships for this approach. GACSA believes that especially multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP) across different sectors are important for overcoming challenges ("SDG Knowledge Platform", n.d.). The UN stresses the importance of MSP "for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources" ("Multi-Stakeholder partnerships", n.d.).

GACSA is currently exploring ways to enhance MSP for CSA and develops a matchmaking strategy to establish new ones. This research project aims at informing GACSA's strategy of facilitating matchmaking and cooperation. Therefore, the research questions ask about supporting factors and barriers for existing collaborations and the creation of new MSP between GACSA members. The questions furthermore integrate the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and strategies, as well as the platforms used for exchange. As MSP are not an undisputed issue, this paper furthermore aims at helping GACSA investigate how inclusiveness can influence MSP.

The following paper will provide an overview of the theoretical framework and background research first. Afterward, the methodology, methods, and research design are explained. This is followed by a presentation of the results of the applied methods. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn, and policy recommendations will be given.

The relevance of this paper shows when looking at the SDGs addressed with it, most importantly SDG2 (Zero Hunger), SDG6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG13 (Climate Action), SDG14 (Life Below Water), SDG15 (Life on Land), and SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Hence, this research project not only leads to insights for GACSA but also helps to inform many of the broader goals of the UN and therefore be valuable for the UN75 dialogue.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

2.1. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following section defines key terms used in this research project, namely CSA, collaboration, cooperation and MSP. This is necessary to establish a common basis of understanding for the further findings. To begin with, CSA is a concept developed by the FAO for transforming agricultural practices to ensure food security in the face of climate change. This paper adopts the CSA definition of the FAO, which is based on the three goals of (I) sustainably increasing productivity and related incomes, (II) adapting and building resilience to climate change and, if possible, (III) mitigating climate change by reducing or removing greenhouse gas emissions (FAO, 2020a). In other words, CSA seeks ways to improve productivity and income for farmers, fishers, and herders, helps agriculture adapt to a changing climate, and contributes to the mitigation of greenhouse gases (GHG). Farmers are encouraged to achieve as many of the three pillars as possible, and achieving all three is labeled “Triple Wins” (FAO, 2018).

Turning to collaboration and cooperation, there is a variety of conceptualization of these two related terms in academic literature, and often they are used without a clear definition (Hord, 1981). Usually, they appear in the context of people or organizations working together (Carnwell & Carson, 2005). The Cambridge Business English Dictionary (n.d.) defines collaboration as “the act of working together with other people or organizations to create or achieve something” and cooperation as “the act of working together with someone or doing what they ask you”. This paper uses collaboration and cooperation interchangeably for describing the act of working together.

Finally, partnership is a related, yet distinct concept to collaboration. As with collaboration, exact conceptualizations of partnerships in academic literature often set a different focus. The Cambridge Business English Dictionary (n.d.) briefly describes them as “an agreement between organizations, people, etc. to work together”. For the UN, partnerships are “voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, [...] in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits” (“Partnerships for the SDGs”, n.d.).

Furthermore, MSP are a special type of partnership, which involves actors of different sectors, usually public as well as private ones. However, there is no unified definition of what these partnerships involve, e.g., concerning their time frame or level of institutionalization (Treichel et al., 2015).

In the context of this research project, MSP will refer to partnerships between two or more partners of different sectors based on the UN understanding of partnerships. Sectors are defined in terms of GACSA’s categorization of its members list (FAO, 2020b). It includes the sectors of governmental and development agencies, inter-governmental groups, non-governmental groups, farmers’ organizations, research and academia, NGOs, civil society, and regional alliances (GACSA, 2020).

2.2. GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE

Next, more background information on GACSA is provided to contextualize this research project. GACSA was founded in 2014 during the UN Secretary-General Climate Summit in New York by a

coalition of 14 governments, 32 organizations and the FAO with the aim to create a global platform to scale up CSA initiatives (IISD SDG Knowledge Hub, 2014). GACSA serves as an “inclusive, voluntary, and action-oriented multi-stakeholder platform on CSA” (“GACSA”, 2020). GACSA members can join three groups: The Knowledge Action Group (increasing and promoting knowledge), the Enabling Environment Action Group (identification of technical, policy and investment conditions needed to scale up CSA) and the Investment Action Group (Improving effectiveness of investments that support the three pillars). Also, a facilitation unit was created (FU) as a secretary for GACSA, which is involved in strategic planning and budgeting (FAO, 2020c). Currently, the FU is also developing a new matchmaking strategy for MSP. By November 2020, GACSA has 500 members plus 15 observers. Participation and joining the alliance is voluntary, free of charge, and does not create any binding obligations (GACSA, 2014).

GACSA’s vision is to foster collaboration to ensure that the world’s agriculture can sustainably nourish humanity and secure livelihoods in the face of climate change (GACSA, 2014). However, there is also criticism, especially from NGOs, faith-based organizations, and scientists. It is problematized that the technical focus leaves aside the political dimension (Rampa, 2016). Furthermore, in a 2015 issued open letter, 355 international and national organizations opposed the concept of CSA and urged decision-makers to support agroecology instead. Also, CSA was accused of being supported by agribusiness, fossil fuel companies, and multinational corporations, and for helping them to greenwash their agenda (Holland, 2015; Woodward, 2015). Besides, the definition of CSA is criticized for being vague and therefore easy to misinterpret in such a way that more pesticide use, land grabbing, and exploitation can be justified (Corporate Europe Observatory, 2015). La Via Campesina sees CSA as a cover-up to use chemicals, biotechnology, and GMOs (Henrich Böll Stiftung, 2018). Also, GACSA was accused of distracting the public from the need of more radical measures (CIDSE, 2015). The FAO reacted to the criticism by stating that agroecology techniques can be one of the tools of CSA, given they facilitate climate change adaptation or mitigation. Also, CSA practices are applied according to regional and societal needs (Hayduk, n.d.). Concerning GMOs, CSA has a neutral standing but does not contradict their use as long as they align with national legislation.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. AIM OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper aims to inform GACSA’s strategy for enhancing MSP and matchmaking strategy, which is currently getting developed. However, the findings of this paper may also inspire organizations in fostering MSPs for their mission. Hence, this paper is relevant for a broader audience and contributes to the existing body of literature on organizational science and MSP. The following questions guide the research of this paper:

- Research Question 1: What are currently the enhancing factors and barriers for existing collaborations and creating new ones in MSP of GACSA members?
- Research Question 2: How does inclusiveness affect MSP?

- Research Question 3: How could knowledge, good practices, and strategies be shared between GACSA members, and between the Facilitation Unit and members?
- Research Question 4: What other platform(s) does the literature review and do GACSA members suggest for better knowledge sharing opportunities, communication, and networking, and how are CSA practices implemented by stakeholders?

3.2. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodological approach was chosen to allow for an explorative, open, and reflexive research process. Also, an inductive strategy was applied, which means that empirical findings stand first and might lead to theoretical conclusions. This aligns with our research question, which asks about so far unknown factors. Although inspiration was taken from literature, this does not imply a deductive paradigm, since no specific theory was applied or tested for.

The choice of methods was guided by the research question and combines a literature review (existing knowledge) with semi-structured interviews (insider perspective) and two case studies (external perspective) to add informed insights to the current state of the art.

3.3. METHODS

The literature research serves multiple purposes in this paper, and draws from a variety of materials. The main purposes are delivering background knowledge, finding interview partners and suitable case studies, and informing their interpretation if necessary. Therefore, the literature review marked the starting point of the research but was again referred to at a later stage of the process when required. Sources were academic literature as well as organizational websites or reports.

Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect primary data. The interviewing technique allows for flexibility during the interview, while still guiding the topic around the research interest and ensuring comparability between interviews (Bryman, 2012). The interview questions are attached in Annex 2, yet, sometimes additional questions were added when appropriate. Interviews were conducted with nine GACSA members and two non-GACSA members. The interviewees were jointly selected with employees of GACSA's FU and contacted by them via email. Afterward, communication and interviewing were taken over by the research team. Interviews were transcribed individually with dictation software and subsequent manual correction, following the strategy of Dresing and Pehl (2011). Transcription was done word by word, yet, grammatical errors, unfinished sentences, or misspoken words were corrected. Also, punctuation was added.

The nine interviewed GACSA members were ASEAN-CRN; Cornell University; the regional government of Emilia Romagna in Italy; the NACSAA; the NCCSD; the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; the Rural Women Initiative; the World Business Council for Sustainable Development; and the WACSAA. These interviews were analyzed in a Qualitative Content Analysis after Mayring (2014). The inductive technique of summarizing was chosen, where each interview gets divided into units of meaning for which paraphrases have been found. Afterward, paraphrases that were irrelevant to the research questions were dropped. A more concise formulation of the remaining paraphrases, where similar ones were brought together, resulted in a set of categories

for each interview. This step was done by one researcher individually and subsequently reviewed by the peer. Afterward, the categories were compared across interviews and grouped according to their themes, while duplicates were dropped. The Qualitative Content Analysis allows to deal with the amount of information by giving structure and helping to extract important aspects. Some of the findings are presented in a thematic map in Annex 3, following the suggestion of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Apart from that, the two non-member interviews were conducted with the World Banana Forum (WBF) and the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE). The results of these interviews were further integrated into two separate case studies, which can be found in Annex 1. Since case studies allow to combine multiple methods and data sources (Yin, 2003), the interviews were combined with a literature research, and a review of the organizations' website and publications.

3.5. LIMITATIONS

Turning to the limitations to this research project, limited resources only permitted for a small number of interviews and case studies. Also, it could have been rewarding to not only investigate best practices but also less successful ones, which are more difficult to find. Besides, the nine selected members for interviews tend to be more actively involved in the work of GACSA compared to the "average" member, which could lead to a bias in the results.

4. RESULTS

The results section begins with findings from the reviewed literature. Next, the results of the interviews are presented, starting with the perception of interviewees of GACSA, followed by barriers and enhancing factors for existing as well as new MSP, findings on information sharing, and potential other platforms that could enhance knowledge sharing, communication, or networking.

4.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review was carried out independently of the interviews to get additional information on MSP. The UN stresses the importance of MSP "for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies, and financial resources" ("Multi-Stakeholder partnerships", n.d.). AtKisson (2015) and Dodds (2015), who both collected findings of existing literature on MSP for sustainable development, agree that MSP play a crucial role in realizing the SDGs. Accordingly, MSP are now seen as an integral part of multilateral cooperation since they allow to integrate all sectors in the process – including the private actors. which play an important role according to Dodds (2015).

Yet, critics fear that MSP could lead to "lowest common denominator solutions" (Schäferhoff et al., 2007: 31), fragmentation in the political system, and the undermining of weaker partners (Treichel, 2015). In this context, Treichel et al. (2015) conclude that whether or not MSP serve the purpose of the SDGs does not depend on *if* they exist but on *how* they are implemented. Also, MSP should not serve as a substitute for governmental action but as additional instruments (Dodds, 2015).

Dodds (2015) states that successful MSP have (a) good governance structures, (b) a monitoring system with feedback mechanisms, and (c) clear targets. Further enhancing factors are (a) accountability, (b) participation and inclusion, as well as (c) equity. If these are missing, MSP might fail to result in an impact on the ground. MSP can improve collaboration and resource mobilization if knowledge-sharing functions well, both internally and externally (AtKisson, 2015). According to AtKisson (2015), the most common shared knowledge in MSP is (a) topical news and information, (b) analysis such as reports, and (c) news of partners. Channels include (a) website and publications, (b) newsletters, and (c) live meetings or conferences. Also, innovative solutions are databases of tools (workshop manuals, presentation slides, etc.), open data platforms, and collaboration software. Besides, social media can increase outreach and flexibility of many MSP, which can enhance resource availability. Currently, MSP often struggle to keep up with fast-changing digital technologies (Dodds, 2015).

4.2. PERCEPTION OF GACSA

Turning to the interviews, interviewees' perception of GACSA helps to contextualize findings. It was structured into four main themes that are also presented in Figure 1 (Annex 3), namely the individual reasons for joining the alliance, the value or benefit of GACSA, the role of GACSA and the tasks of the FU. Interviewees often used the terms GACSA and FU interchangeably, therefore the last theme only includes tasks that were specifically assigned to the FU.

Starting with the individual reasons for joining GACSA, reasons were often in line with the three pillars of CSA, e.g., reaching emission reduction in agriculture; the importance of agriculture being stressed in the Paris Agreement; supporting climate policy in a country or region; making agriculture climate resilient; increasing climate resilience of farmers; ensuring livelihoods of farmers; or connecting stakeholders across the value chain. Furthermore, reasons outside of the scope of the three pillars of CSA were the access to an (international) network; the access to research findings; the opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives; and increasing the awareness about possible challenges in CSA. These findings are visualized in Figure 2 (Annex 3)

Secondly, stated benefits of joining GACSA are multifold and often tied to the above stated reasons. One main benefit is the network, which bridges across countries and sectors. Also, members value the publications on CSA and the opportunity to access knowledge and expertise. Besides, GACSA allows to develop partnerships that go beyond exchange during single events, such as the Conference of Parties (COP) and its side-events. Lastly, many members value the opportunity to mobilize financial resources and funding for their projects. Although GACSA neither charges membership fees nor finances projects from its own sources, it is part of their framework approach to consult projects in accessing funding and improve investment into CSA (GACSA, 2014).

Turning to the role of GACSA, the alliance is mostly seen as an enabler and facilitator of MSP. Also, GACSA should focus on global partnerships, whilst regional alliances should focus on regional MSP. Besides, GACSA's role was seen in the organization of events like meetings and the annual forum, the support of the working groups, the facilitation of communication, and in keeping members engaged. Also, members expect GACSA to make sure that they have access to the right tools and information for realizing projects. Lastly, some interviewees urged GACSA to define a long-term strategy.

Finally, many interviewees saw it as the task of the FU to make sure that GACSA fulfills its role and functions as a network. The FU is seen as the body that establishes the first contact with potential project partners. Afterward, the FU can show financing opportunities. Besides, its tasks also include the organization of events and the provision of tools for collaboration.

4.3. BARRIERS AND ENHANCING FACTORS TO MSP

Turning to enhancing factors and barriers to MSP, many of the enhancing factors were also identified as a barrier if absent. In the following, each point in the list is analyzed separately. Table 1 (Annex 3) gives an additional overview.

The first factor to mention is the political context, which is largely out of the influence of GACSA and the FU. MSP benefit if their agenda is in line with the general political strategy, most importantly at a national level. Yet, if the political environment is not in favor of MSP's goals, this can pose barriers. Besides, political obstacles can arise due to a lack of coordination, e.g., different international standards for trading agricultural products. However, GACSA - or more generally, MSP - can also have a role in contributing towards a more enabling policy context. A joint strategy in negotiations could increase the weight of all partners, and support stakeholders that otherwise find it more difficult to make their voice heard. One interviewee reported about one of the regional alliances that "the greatest impact of this network is that it created a way that agriculture as the united front [...] can give common positions, negotiate within UNFCCC and negotiate for itself".

Next, common goals as an enhancing factor summarize a set of related aspects that interviewees referred to, including a similar agenda or shared ideology. It was mentioned that the goals have to be established at the beginning of a project or partnership, and that these goals can increase their impact if they are trackable. Also, MSP profit from a clear strategy on how the goals can be achieved. On the other hand, lacking common goals pose a barrier that could appear in more obvious ways like conflicting interests, but also in less obvious ways like different priorities. Further, partners might bring different ontologies and ideologies to the table. One interviewee pointed out the danger of polarization between the more and the less strict sustainability advocates. However, many interviewees also raised the question of what are and should be the goals of GACSA. While some interviewees explicitly stated that this is not clear to them, the lack of clarity also showed indirectly in the different and often contrasting ideas about the role, tasks, and benefits of GACSA. One interviewee suggested an interactive procedure to develop a joint agenda, while another interviewee suggested that the FU should take over leadership when it comes to the establishment of goals. Yet, these two opinions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, since strong leadership can still allow for a participative approach. Furthermore, trust was mentioned as an important enhancing factor, fostered through transparency and openness in a partnership. One interviewee mentioned how including all constituents already at the beginning of the collaboration and regular communication contributes to this. Furthermore, in the case study with the World Banana Forum, it was mentioned by the interviewee how trust also takes its time to develop (Appendix 1).

Another factor was the availability of resources, including non-financial resources like human resources or technology. These were frequently referred to, yet, financial resources are usually their precondition.

Besides, innovation requires financial resources but also attracts new investment, and thus might lead to either a positive or negative feedback loop. Clarity about financing is required for creating a long-term plan and lasting impact. Lacking financial resources were often declared a major obstacle for members, regional alliances, and GACSA. To access financial resources, the private sector was regarded as key by some interviewees. Another idea was to leverage more resources from FAO, either in financial terms or by increasing the use of their non-financial resources, like the country offices or the translation capacities. Another suggestion were the funds that some countries, development banks, or international organizations make available for sustainable development, such as the Green Climate Fund. Apart from that, pooling resources and sharing knowledge were mentioned as ways to reduce the financial costs of CSA.

Also, interviewees named structure in terms of coordination, leadership, and clear responsibilities as an enhancing factor. MSP can often flexibly define their structure and operate at different levels of government, yet, guiding principles should be in place. Ideally, these are established together with a strategy in the beginning of the collaboration. Additionally, risk management was mentioned as a success factor. The absence or vagueness of structure was a frequently listed barrier. Concerning GACSA, it was mentioned that the working groups could be improved by re-examining their purpose and avoiding overlaps. Besides, it was suggested to remove inactive members from working groups and improve onboarding for new ones. Alternatively, collaboration could be structured in different group settings, where members would partner up according to their objective, field or sector. Which group(s) members are interested in could be asked for at the application process or established later on, e.g., in workshops. Inspiration could come from the World Banana Forum (Appendix 1), where members group up according to their interests and work out their own strategy proposal. GACSA's new format 'Members' talks', which is an open and interactive setting for members to present their work or share skills, could be an opportunity to explore possible group settings. Concerning the regional level, opinions diverged: One interviewee suggested "an in-depth analysis so that we can find the best way of partnering and collaborating within the region" and "a kind of secretariat or FU at the continental level or maybe at the regional level". Yet, another interviewee perceived the current model of an informal regional alliance as a success. However, it is worth noticing that this regional alliance also emphasizes group spirit, which could be an advantage for collaboration within this informal setting. Besides, collaboration also has to be facilitated between different regions. Several interviewees pointed out the opportunities for learning and saving resources through international exchange. Finally, one interviewee gave to consider that frequent changes of the organizational structure could lead to confusion. Therefore, as suggested for defining goals, leadership and clear communication of re-structuring processes is required from the FU. Yet, developing ideas in an interactive setting with members could ensure clarity and legitimacy.

Next, the inclusiveness in MSP was referred to as a potential success factor as well as a barrier. Cooperation at equal level can unlock the contribution of knowledge and perspectives of all partners, as it can increase participation of weaker members and create a sense of ownership. GACSA should be aware of problems connected to financial dependencies to be able to counteract them: Firstly, donors' conditions on grants could undermine the perspective of their partners. Secondly, projects might have a weak or short-term impact if some partners only join because of the financial benefits.

One interviewee described that “sometimes [...] people are doing things because they just want that partnership or they wanted that funding but that is not what is working for them. And then the result is that immediately when that partnership is over, there will be nothing to show because people never identified, they never owned that project, they never owned that process”. Moreover, fewer resources can create disadvantages in accessing expert advice and defending their position in negotiations or with International Organizations. The CARE case study (Appendix 1) shows that power imbalances come naturally to partnerships, yet, adverse effects on projects can be avoided by localization of leadership to the people who realize the project, transferring capacities and resources, targeted empowerment, and mutual respect.

Turning to factors that were only made explicit as enhancing for MSP, several interviewees explained that stakeholders need to expect benefits from the cooperation. Rewards could, for example, include financing and technology, or the partner’s knowledge and perspective.

Joint research is a success factor because it can lead to strategy alignment by setting the same findings as a base for policy design. Also, research can analyze relevant aspects to improve project outcomes. Interviewees mentioned that research within GACSA is especially important to make CSA technology available, which is often developed by the private sector. Besides, MSP with the private sector play a particularly relevant role in a less supportive context for CSA research, where public funding is unavailable because of lacking resources or political reasons. Furthermore, joint research saves resources, since it is more efficient than individual effort. A potential role model is the Réseau de Prévention des Crises Alimentaires (RPCA), where the secretary receives a new mandate and the necessary resources every year to research on a joint topic of interest for its members. In the case of GACSA, it might be feasible to transfer the mandate to one of their members in the academic sector. Several enhancing factors were summarized under the category of group spirit, including voluntary commitment, fun, active engagement, and a positive interpersonal relation. The last two aspects could be strengthened through spending time together, regular communication and meetings. These should preferably be held in person, yet, could be replaced by virtual meetings if necessary. Besides, creative measures can increase fun and engagement, e.g., storytelling in written communication and entertaining activities during or after conferences. One regional alliance with a focus on these factors tries to “really making it fun and rewarding for anyone who wants to take part. I think that [...] the advocates and the champions we have had were there because we established a very good familiarity with one another. In fact, all our meetings start with the recognition that we are a family; there is very much a personal touch”.

Also, education can enhance MSP for CSA by creating awareness for the role of CSA and sustainable agriculture. Also, education could create a foundation for the implementation of CSA, e.g., with training on technology use. This can prevent cases where available technology cannot be employed in practice, and it might attract investment into technology.

In contrast, language and bureaucracy can create barriers. The language barrier was especially relevant for civil society stakeholders or farmers that speak neither English nor other common languages, like the six working languages of the UN. For translation, it was suggested for GACSA to turn to the FAO regional offices, since auto-translators can lead to misunderstanding. Besides, bureaucracy can be a particular barrier for stakeholders with fewer resources or less experience. Similarly, technical language

is more problematic for stakeholders with a lower level of language command or general education. Suggestions were to employ simple language or images. Apart from that, bureaucracy was criticized more generally for slowing down processes.

Finally, both communications as well as knowledge management can be a success factor or barrier for MSP. Both will be treated in more detail in section 4.4 and 4.5.

4.4. BARRIERS AND ENHANCING FACTORS FOR CREATING NEW MSP

Next, enhancing factors for new collaborations between current or potentially new GACSA members are explored. Starting with current members, availability of contact information was requested, which, however, is impossible for data protection reasons. So far, contact details of other members can be solicited at the FU. Apart from that, a suggestion to facilitate matchmaking was to have more meetings and workshops as well as the already mentioned option to group up members according to specific interests. One regional alliance also applies a game format for matchmaking and allows new members to pitch their collaboration ideas at the annual meeting.

Turning to the attraction of new members, the WBF case study shows that higher numbers of members could start a self-enforcing dynamic in attracting additional members. Firstly, the dynamic is created through a network effect. Secondly, the increased influence into the sustainability discourse and politics that comes with more members makes it more meaningful for new ones to join. A certain number of desired members could be set as a trackable goal in the long-term strategy. The annual forum could be used to attract external organizations and alternative forms of memberships could be explored. Besides, GACSA's visibility could be increased through more frequent or more efficient communication. Finally, one interviewee also referred to the reputation of GACSA as a barrier for getting more members, stating that "the agroecological interest groups have essentially chosen not to participate and they hold up the example that GACSA is dominated by the agro-industrial organizations and businesses, which is not true". Another interviewee therefore suggested to replace the term CSA with a different concept, e.g., focusing more on a regenerative agro-ecological perspective and farmers' livelihoods.

4.5. TOOLS TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE, GOOD PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES

GACSA needs communication for connecting sectors, allowing for knowledge exchange, and spreading ideas to a broad external audience. Moreover, GACSA communicates at different levels, including the FU, Regional Alliances and the members. Table 2 (Annex 3) gives an overview of communication tools that are used by GACSA or its members. Physical meetings allow to connect personally and exchange information during the formal program or informal side events. Personal exchange with farmers also enhances interpersonal relations and communication. Physical meetings are particularly important in the beginning of partnerships. Digital technologies, such as webinars,

social media, and email, can complement communication. Since some stakeholders are constrained in their access to digital tools, print material, radio, or mobile phones might be an alternative (and might be particularly relevant during COVID-19).

Although some members expect the FU to provide the tools for communication, it is constrained in its resources. One regional alliance approaches this challenge by pointing out key tools that all members should make available. This way, members could channel their resources to this tool and increase resource efficiency. Also, concerning online applications, investments made by GACSA could profit all members that have the infrastructure in place. Room for improvement concerning the structure of GACSA's website was identified by an interviewee.

It was emphasized that the FU should lead GACSA's knowledge management, which includes sharing as well as collecting knowledge. Members could be encouraged to give feedback or pass on information. In one regional alliance, every member has a designated contact person for this purpose. One interviewee also had the idea of "creating a basket where [GACSA] can harvest what the members are doing".

Some interviewees proclaimed that GACSA lacks regular communication and visibility, which exist to keep members engaged, and to attract new members. For example, the frequency of the newsletter could be improved, and social media activity could be increased to reach an external audience.

Apart from that, policy papers and presentations could be enhanced through a common ontology and less technical language. Furthermore, several interviewees emphasized case studies and best practice examples to transfer practices that function well in one geographic area to another one. Also, GACSA can help resource constrained members to get in contact with role models and to receive expert advice.

4.6. OTHER PLATFORMS SUGGESTED FOR BETTER KNOWLEDGE SHARING, COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Currently, GACSA primarily shares knowledge and information via publications on the website and the monthly newsletter. While some interviewees were satisfied with these channels, others pointed out deficits. Several ideas were brought forward for additional platforms to reach a broader audience and increase the visibility of CSA.

For networking, scaling up social media could increase the effectiveness of the alliance to reach a broader audience. While GACSA already uses Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram for knowledge and information sharing, some members employ additional platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Moreover, the features of social media were suggested as an inspiration to build an own platform for GACSA. In that regard, GACSA could create a platform that combines several features of Facebook, including postings, groups, direct messages, and profile creation. On this platform, GACSA could tell stories of members and "highlight[...] different organizations at different times and then organizations are able to link up". As a reference, the SDG Kenia forum was named. Furthermore, according to an interviewee, members could fill in their interests at their profile or through a template and consequently receive targeted content. In addition, such a platform would also allow potential partners to establish connections on a more informal basis. Independent of this paper, GACSA decided to use Facebook's business platform Workplace starting 2021, most importantly for

the purpose of sharing information, or commenting on it. Yet, since Workplace also makes the above-mentioned features available, GACSA could explore to make use of them. Also, GACSA could apply for access to the advanced version free of charge, which is possible for Non-profit organizations and gives access to 1TB file storage per person instead of 5GB (Facebook, 2020).

Apart from that, other digital platforms suggested by the case studies are wikis and share-points. These tools enable partners to access knowledge and cooperate in research and projects. These enable efficient knowledge sharing and collaboration opportunities, yet, also need specialists to facilitate them. Besides, one interviewee described the establishment of a digital trading platform with the specific goal of sharing information about food products as a future task for GACSA. It should allow farmers to “transfer food to where they can receive better prices [...] which can only happen if we have terms played in favor of farmers”. Therefore, it was suggested that GACSA should be involved in negotiating the trade conditions on this platform. Suggestions for tools of communication in regions with limited access to digital technologies include the creation of booklets that can be circulated, e.g., to inform small-holder farmers about climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Apart from that, it was also suggested to foster the education of experts in the field of CSA in order to reach out to a younger audience as well as future decision makers. Examples include Master’s studies in CSA and topics connected to this theme, such as the program of NUI Galway, of University Abdou Moumouni of Niamey Niger or of Yezin Agricultural University in Myanmar.

Furthermore, it was mentioned by some interviewees that the COVID-19 pandemic brought many lessons to the communication strategy of their network and to GACSA. While it made clear that many meetings can be easily substituted by the usage of digital platforms, some meetings need to be conducted physically. Especially in the agricultural nexus by supporting farmers on the ground, digital technologies are often unable to address the needs of a project. At the beginning of a project, physical meetings play an important role in order to establish a personal connection between the stakeholders. One interviewee suggests that in order to make those meetings more fruitful, fun and engaging activities should be at the core of such events.

5. DISCUSSION

Starting the discussion of the results of the first research question, many of the enhancing factors were also identified as a barrier if absent. Common goals as well as a clear structure enable MSP, yet, GACSA could improve on these two. This was reflected in the variety of expressed ideas about the main purpose and benefits of GACSA as well as the FU. In defining goals and structure, interviewees expected the FU to lead the process and expressed different ideas, including to group members according to their interests or sector. Secondly, lack of (financial) resources was identified as a major obstacle, which gives rise to further ideas. Next to potential sources of funds - including the private sector, FAO, or funds from country donors, international organizations and development banks - efficiency improvements through resource pooling or making use of FAO facilities were suggested. Moreover, collaboration at an equal level can enhance participation, diversify perspectives, ensure a long-term effect and avoid adverse effects of dependencies. Therefore, imbalances need to be actively countered through targeted support for affected members. This includes addressing barriers

stemming from foreign or technical language and bureaucracy. Further success factors were education and training, expectation of rewards, joint research and group spirit.

Turning to the creation of new projects, challenges in matching GACSA members included contacting other organizations and finding a suitable partner. For new members, obstacles for joining GACSA, were its visibility and a problematic image of CSA.

Finally, communication and knowledge management faces the triple-challenge of (1) different members having access to different media, (2) constrained financial resources, and (3) the need to consider interactions at different levels between the FU, the regional alliances, the members and an external audience. Interviewees wanted GACSA to provide or guide the tools needed for communication. So far, members employ a broad spectrum of different media for communication. Particularly social media - as well as some of their specific features that could be integrated into GACSA's own platform - might be an opportunity to improve communication. Finally, GACSA also has to facilitate feedback loops and the collection of information.

6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy recommendations were concluded from the findings presented above:

1. Strategy

- a. **Coordination:** GACSA has a variety of promising approaches, ideas and tools in place, yet, needs to make sure they are employed in a coordinated in order to fulfill its full potential. GACSA needs to have clarity about its goals and structure, which would include the definition of trackable long-term goals. The FU should take a leadership role in the coordination process, yet, should ensure transparency and could facilitate participation by its members.
- b. **Awareness among members:** Also, awareness for GACSA's strategy among the members needs to be created, as there is a mismatch between the tools that GACSA actively uses (communication platforms, papers, reports etc.) and the members' awareness of them. Hence, GACSA should actively promote the existence and availability of these resources. In particular, members need convenient feedback opportunities and should be encouraged to use them to make sure innovative potential is captured.

2. Financial resources

- a. **Availability:** GACSA should focus on leveraging financial resources in order to treat the root cause of many barriers. One of the options mentioned by interviewees is accessing external funding. For example, GACSA could try to meet requirements for becoming a Green Climate Fund member. Also, attracting more private sector members could increase resource availability and innovation. It might be reached through pointing out the rewards of MSP for them, potentially including ideas,

knowledge, outreach, moral benefits, as well as positive marketing with customers and (future) employees.

- b. **Resource efficiency:** Resource efficiency could be reached through pooling capacities, i.e., for joint research or technology development, as well as through smooth cross-regional knowledge transfer, which could be fostered through strengthening knowledge exchange between regional alliances. Moreover, GACSA could benefit from using non-financial resources from key GACSA members, such as office space, translation services or expertise.
- c. **Long-term plan:** A financial long-term strategy should be developed in order to enable planning security for other activities. Potentially, exploring opportunities to provide project funding from own resources could enable GACSA to help members to overcome resource constraints.

3. Communication

- a. **Tools and inclusiveness:** Many members issued their desire for GACSA to provide communication tools, which could include soft- as well as hardware. If the resource constraint makes this impossible, the FU could instead release a guideline on which tools are commonly required by members. Also, for inclusiveness, a focus should be set on providing support for members with less capacities, either for allowing them to use the common tools through funding and training, or by enabling them to join the conversation based on other tools that are more feasible. Moreover, GACSA could reach some stakeholders through providing material on CSA in local and non-technical language. For example, GACSA could provide information to farmers on how to meet product standards for agricultural exports, as well as how to cope with bureaucratic requirements if needed.
- b. **GACSA's time-to-shine:** GACSA could increase its internal as well as external visibility by more regular communication. The appearance could be polished through the presentation of success stories and an updated website. Also, it could explore if there is potential for improvement in its employment of social media, which has the advantage of being free of charge and engaging, as well as a possible way to promote the platform to an external audience. Looking into strategies for professional social media management can, for example, provides insights about how to be most time efficient (e.g. connecting different platforms), when and at which frequency to post ideally (e.g. checking statistics about followers' engagement) or how to increase outreach (e.g. adding the right amount of relevant hashtags). To reach out to the next generation, GACSA could collaborate with programs for students. This could include talks, teachings, supervising thesis or other collaborations (like RAUN).
- c. **Sustainability discourse:** Apart from that, GACSA should consider the associations linked with CSA and find a way to employ a concept that keeps up with the changing discourse on sustainability, including biodiversity. Possibly, this could include replace the term CSA overall. Intensified collaboration with civil society actors could help GACSA to move away from an image of over-emphasizing businesses. Additionally,

GACSA should find a way to even keep up a conversation with organizations that refuse to become members out of ideological reasons in order to be aware of their perspective and avoid polarization.

- d. **Meet, meet, meet:** More frequent meetings would help to keep up a dialogue between members, match fitting partners and foster group spirit. Physical meetings are preferred, yet, could be complemented (or replaced if necessary and feasible) by online calls, workshops or seminars. Covid-19 should be taken as an opportunity to explore these channels.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper had the aim to identify GACSA's enhancing factors and barriers for existing as well as potentially new MSP. Additionally, a focus was set on how GACSA could share knowledge, good practices and strategies, as well as on what other platforms are suggested for better knowledge sharing, communication and networking. Therefore, a triangulation of the following methods was employed: To begin with, nine semi-structured interviews with GACSA members as well as representatives of the regional alliances for CSA were conducted and analyzed using a qualitative content analysis. Also, a literature review provided background information as well as additional findings. Finally, two case studies on alliances operating in a similar field as GACSA were carried out. The methods were employed separately and finally combined in the analysis.

It showed that the interviewees had many and often different perceptions of the main purpose and benefits of GACSA as well as the FU. Also, many of the enhancing factors were identified as a barrier if absent, including common goals, structure, leadership, (financial) resources, cooperation at equal level. Further enhancing factors were education, expectation of rewards, joint research, and group spirit; other barriers resulted from language skills and bureaucracy. Turning to the creation of new projects, matchmaking between GACSA members as well as the attraction of new members have to be considered. Increasing visibility, improving the image of GACSA as well as easier ways to get in contact could scale up CSA projects. Finally, communication and knowledge management face the triple-challenge of (1) members' unequal media access, (2) constrained resources, and (3) different levels of interactions between the FU, the regional alliances, the members and an external audience. It was found that information needs to be able to flow between all the constituents into both directions. Also, it was explored how GACSA could meet interviewees' request to provide tools.

Based on these, policy recommendations were formulated for GACSA.

Looking ahead, further research about GACSA could start at looking at the organizations suggested as role models by the interviewees. Furthermore, changes made in the strategy of GACSA should continue to be monitored for their success. Also, more in-depth research on findings made in this paper could look at how to leverage financial resources, as well as how to best build capacities for including all partners into MSP. Finally, the discourse on sustainability should be investigated in order to figure out how to keep the concepts employed by GACSA up to date and make sure the arising associations fit GACSA's purpose.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX I – Case Studies

World Banana Forum

The World Banana Forum (WBF) is a MSP platform with the purpose of cooperation in order to achieve consensus on best practices for sustainable trade and production of bananas. It was initiated by the FAO in 2009 and has since been joined by actors out of the sectors of production, retail and trade as well as research institutions, civil society organizations and intergovernmental organizations. According to an interviewee of the WBF, the need for the commodity specific global MSP platform arises because bananas are an important industry - worth about 10 billion USD a year according to the FAO (2020d) - with interests of several stakeholders across the globe involved. Also, the production of bananas is linked to many sustainability challenges, e.g. concerning workers' rights or the use of chemicals. Additionally, the narrow focus on one good was pointed out as an advantage by an interviewee of the WBF because it allows to deal with specific matters that are particular to the banana industry, e.g. diseases particularly affecting bananas.

Turning to the coordination of the cooperation, the WBF is organized into three working groups that are dealing with 1. Environmental Impact and Sustainable Production, 2. Value Distribution and 3. Labor Rights. According to the interviewee, members are assigned to a working group that is in line with their individual interest. Afterwards, the participants of one working group aim to agree on a shared agenda on the aspect(s) of sustainability they are focusing on.

Communication within the WBF relies largely on exchange of spoken word, i.e. during calls or meetings. These happen on a regular basis with varying frequency, depending on the organizational entity - for example, the secretary meets at least once a month in a call with every working group and twice a year with the steering committee. The topics dealt with are often to be treated confidentially, hence much of the communication within the WBF is not publicly accessible. Yet, results of internal solution finding processes are often published once they have been concluded. Also, on the WBF's website, some information is shared externally, e.g. through reports, webinars or a platform for best practice examples. In some cases, the WBF tasks an external organization with writing reports and posts a link on their website. Apart from that, the WBF also hosts conferences that are open to the public; so far in 2009, 2012 and 2017 (FAO, 2020d).

During the interview, several success factors of the WBF were mentioned: First of all, the role of trust building was emphasized. Trust is key for accumulating a critical mass of members in order to be able to have an impact on the industry. Trust arises over time but is also actively strengthened through expertise, effective leadership and institutional memory to learn from past experiences. Moreover, a neutral position is required, which equally considers the perspective of all stakeholders. For some actors, i.e. from civil society, this can also mean to help them build the capacity to express and represent their position. Apart from that, common objectives that also align with the interests of all partners

have to be established for beneficial cooperation. Also, including the perspectives of all constituents of a particular matter helps to find practical solutions that finally work for everyone involved. Current challenges for the WBF include making sure that operating costs are covered in the long term. Additionally, the WBF's main problem-solving strategy is often a lengthy process according to the interviewee, since it relies on asking for the perspective of all stakeholders involved and on providing data on the matter of dispute. Hence, the interviewee sees room for improvement in speeding up bureaucracy in the WBF as well as the UN system in general.

Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere

Founded after World War Two as “Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE)” (CARE, n.d.). CARE's initial mission was the provision of food packages to regions devastated from the war. In the following decades CARE evolved to a global organization that provides assistance and relief for people living under precarious circumstances. Furthermore, CARE seeks to defeat poverty to enable dignified and secure livelihood. An additional focus is inclusion of women and girls and strengthening their rights. CARE's principles include the promotion of empowerment, working with partners and seeking sustainable results. One of the program outcome areas is concerned with food and nutrition security. As (a) the sector of work matches with GACSA's and (b) cooperation with its members is one of its pillars to succeed in its mission, CARE was selected as one of the case studies for this research project. For this a representative of CARE was interviewed.

The selected interviewee sees partnership across different sectors, and thus MSP, as one of the pillars of today's humanitarian work. MSP is critical, as it gives access to additional resources that increase the effectiveness of the involved parties. While the interviewee highlights the benefits of MSP, he also urges to talk honestly about trade-offs. Rarely, all partners benefit equally and sometimes partners even lose capacities in the process.

Strategies to grow the network of CARE include the deliberate engagement with NGOs and social movements. A special focus is put on the latter, as social movements express the needs and wishes of the people on the ground. These social movements can have global and local character alike. CARE values regular meetings, communication and task sharing to foster cooperation. This is accompanied by sharing of knowledge as well as information, giving guidance and consultation. Barriers for MSP are primarily seen in the lack of resources.

At the heart of CARE's strategy to share and communicate ideas as well as knowledge are IT based approaches, such as wikis and share-points. These enable access to knowledge for its partners by collaboration through information access. Likewise, these databases absorb capacities and need specialists who facilitate them. IT based approaches also enable more efficient virtual communication for projects. These virtual meetings do not replace physical meetings, which are crucial for successful partnerships, but serve as an additional tool.

Power imbalances come naturally to partnerships, according to the interviewee. To avoid adverse effects on the project, localization of leadership and transfer of capacities and resources are

recommended. Further, the value of empowerment and mutual respect is crucial in resolving or avoiding conflicts.

The interviewee expresses his concern about the creation of too many alliances, as this results in the marginalization of smaller organizations, who do not have the resources to participate properly. The interviewee suggests having a clear and transparent structure to ensure proper management and facilitation of the alliance. As big alliances often struggle with information leakage from the bottom to the top, the interviewee suggests implementing a stronger link between these two entities.

ANNEX II – Interview Questions

Interview questions for GACSA members

1. When did you join GACSA?
2. Why did you join GACSA?
3. What does partnership mean to you?
4. In your experience, what are the crucial factors for successful cooperation and/or the most important barriers to cooperation with other organizations?
 - a. What would you need if you wanted to establish a new CSA collaboration?
5. What is the best partnership you have established with another institution or GACSA member and why?
 - a. If this is in the GACSA context, how is the collaboration and how does / could the Facilitation Unit help?
 - b. In case you would like more information, please consider these follow up questions:
 - i. How is the communication working?
 - ii. Does the project rather absorb or create capacities?
 - iii. Do you or your partner profit from each other's knowledge?
 - iv. How did you agree on your common goals?
 - v. How is the division of responsibilities working?
 - vi. Were ground rules established in the beginning/throughout the process/still unclear?
 - vii. How is the trust between you and your partner?
 - viii. Did differences in moral/political convictions become obvious?
 - ix. Were there any difficulties due to the geographic context, e.g. different legal requirements? Different cultural expectations?
6. Have you encountered multi-stakeholder partnerships that function poorly and what do you believe the problems were?
7. What role do you see for GACSA when it comes to establishing partnerships for project implementation?
 - a. What could the Facilitation Unit do in order to establish new partnerships between GACSA members?

- b. What could GACSA do in order to make these partnerships successful regarding the CSA goals ?
 - c. Do you know any examples of platforms that could be used by GACSA to improve this process?
- 8. Would you like to partner with organizations from other sectors?
 - a. Where do you see the benefits of partnering up with organizations from other sectors?
 - b. Where do you see the difficulties in partnering up with organizations from other sectors?
- 9. Do you have any further remarks on how partnerships for CSA within GACSA could be strengthened?

Interview questions for secretariats of (non-GACSA) alliances

1. What role does partnership play in your organization/alliance?
2. How do you define MSP?
3. What were/are your main strategies to grow your network?
4. Did you lose members in the past and if yes, what were the stated reasons?
5. Did the contact established through your alliance lead to a common project outside of your alliance? If yes, which ones?
6. How do you facilitate collaboration within your alliance/network?
 - a) How do you keep members engaged in collaborating with each other?
 - b) How is communication for organizational purposes facilitated?
7. How do you facilitate the sharing of knowledge with your members?
 - a) Are best practices shared amongst your members and with external stakeholders?
 - b) Do you have main channels for communicating knowledge with your members and a platform/s for exchanging ideas and discussions?
8. Where do you see barriers and what could be some of the opportunities to establish stronger partnerships within your organization?
9. Has your alliance/network faced any internal and/or external criticism? If yes, how do you treat it?
 - a) How do you balance out power relations between unequal partners?
 - b) Have you faced any conflicts between partners? If yes, how did you address them?
10. Do you have recommendations for creating more collaborations between organizations of different sectors within your cooperation?
 - a) Where do you see the benefits and difficulties of establishing partnerships between organizations from different sectors?
 - b) Do you have recommendations for making MSP more successful in reaching the goals of your alliance?

Interview questions for Regional CSA Alliances and GACSA members who are also alliances

1. What brought about the establishment of the regional alliance? For example, was this demand driven, because of a resolution from a meeting, partners that came together?
2. What role does partnership play in your alliance?
3. How do you define MSP?
4. Did the contact established through your alliance lead to a common project? If yes, which ones?
 - a. If this is in the GACSA context, how is the collaboration and how does / could the Facilitation Unit help?
5. How do you facilitate collaboration within your alliance/network?
 - a) How do you keep members engaged in collaborating with each other?
 - b) How is communication for organizational purposes facilitated?
6. How do you facilitate the sharing of knowledge with your members?
 - a. Are best practices shared amongst your members and with external stakeholders?
 - b. Do you have main channels for communicating knowledge with your members and a platform/s for exchanging ideas and discussions?
7. Where do you see barriers and what could be some of the opportunities to establish stronger partnerships within your alliance?
8. What role do you see for GACSA when it comes to establishing partnerships for project implementation?
 - a. What could the Facilitation Unit do in order to establish new partnerships between GACSA members, including the Regional Alliances?
 - b. What could GACSA do in order to make these partnerships successful regarding the CSA goals?
 - c. Do you know any examples of platforms that could be used by GACSA to improve this process?
9. Do you have any further remarks on how partnerships for CSA within GACSA could be strengthened?

Figure 1

Interviewees’ perception of GACSA according to the Role, the Value or Benefit, the Tasks of the FU, and the Individual reasons for joining. The mind map is analyzed in the text.

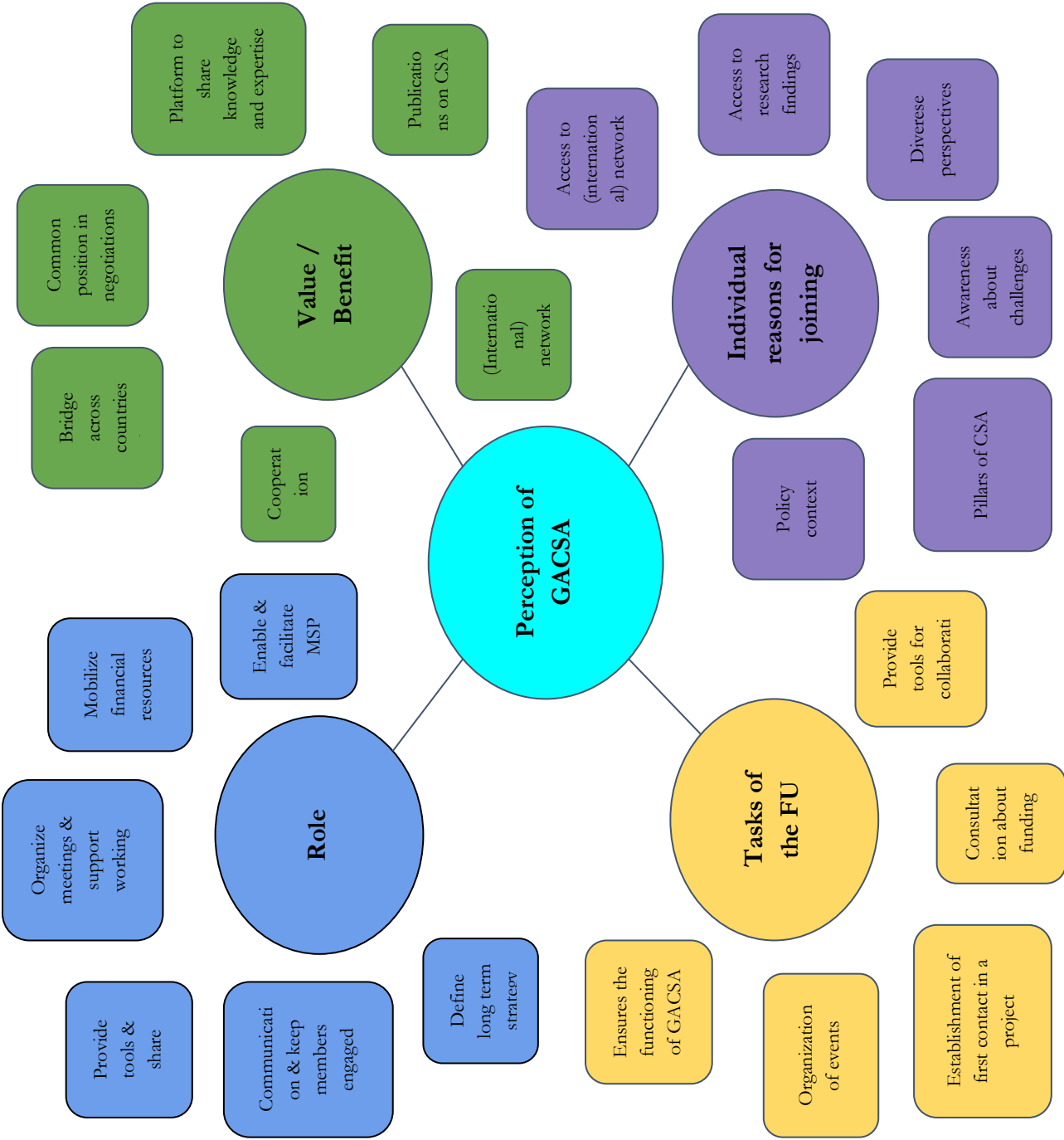


Figure 2

Individual reasons to join GACSA as stated by interviewees, presented in context with the context of the three pillars of CSA.

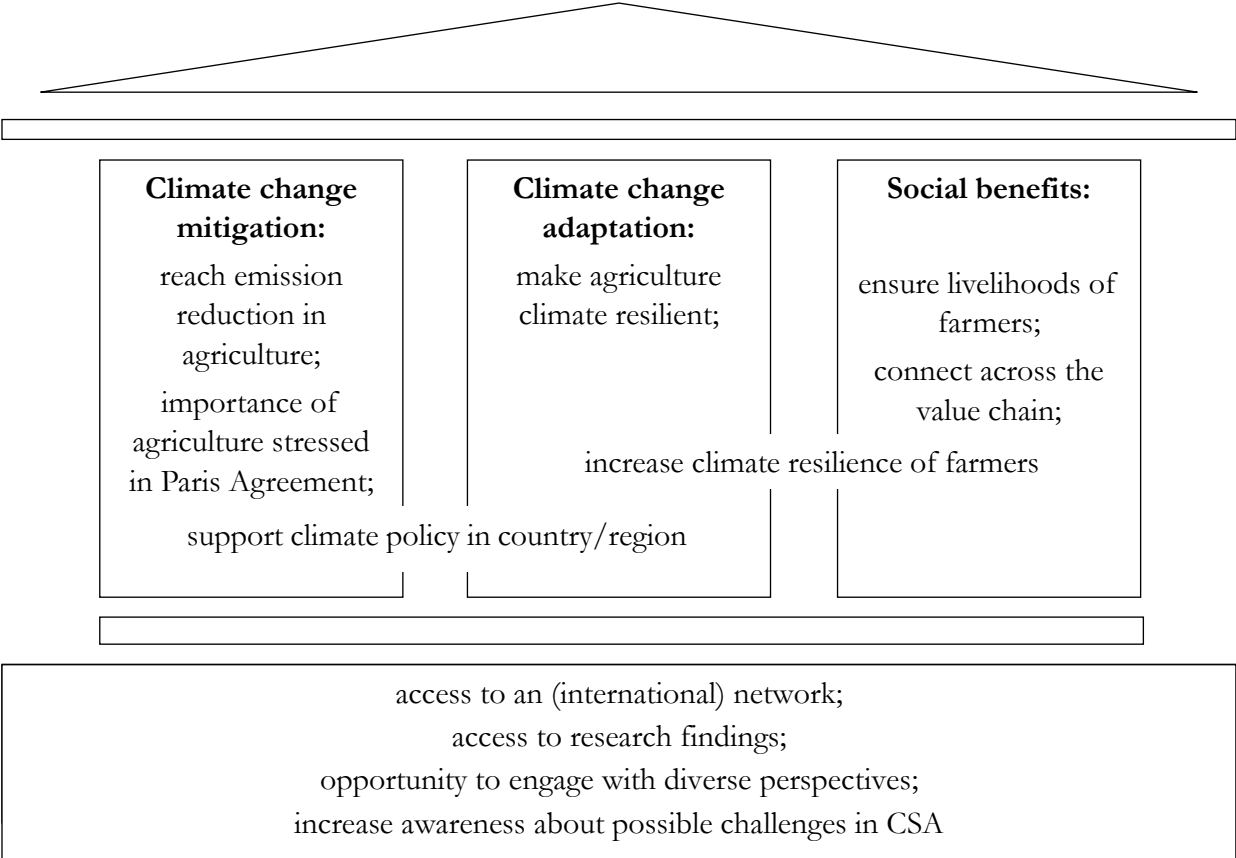


Table 1

The table shows all the important enhancing factors and barriers that were mentioned in the interviews. Factors between both columns were mentioned as both enhancing factors as well as barriers, depending on their concrete characteristics and whether they are absent or present. Factors in the left column were only mentioned as enhancing factors, while factors in the right column were only mentioned as barriers.

Enhancing factors	Barriers
Political context	
(Lack of) common goals	
(Lack of) trust	
(Lack of) financial resources	
(Lack of) leadership	
(Lack of) structure	
(Lack of) communication	
(Lack of) knowledge management	
Cooperation at (un)equal level	
Expectations of rewards	
Group spirit	
Joint research	
	Language barrier
	Bureaucracy

Table 2

Analysis of the types of tools mentioned in the interviews and the literature research. The type of usage was primarily identified via the information from the interviewees. Also, the table shows which tool is used by GACSA, not its regional alliances, in order to identify new opportunities for communication.

Type of tool	Used by interviewees for				Used by GACSA
	Knowledge sharing	Information exchange	Work on project	Networking	
Best practices	✓		✓		✓
Booklet	✓	✓	✓		✓
Collaboration platform	✓		✓		✗
Databases	✓	✓			✓
Direct work on the ground	✓		✓		✗
Email	✓	✓			✓
Flyers	✓	✓		✓	✓
Forum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Group mailings		✓		✓	✓
Online meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mobile phone (Applications, SMS, calls, etc.)	✓	✓	✓		✗
Landline phone calls		✓			✓
Newsletter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical Meetings	✓	✓			✓
Publications	✓				✓
Radio	✓	✓			✗
Social Media		✓	✓	✓	✓
Webinars	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓