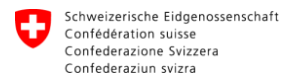




# GACSA 2030 AND BEYOND

## GACSA Strategic Plan 2022-2032

The Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture is financially supported by:



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## Introduction

This “GACSA 2030 and Beyond” Strategic Plan 2022-2032 describes a vision for the future of GACSA and sets out game-changing objectives that Alliance members aim to achieve.

Scaling up the implementation of climate-smart agricultural practices is urgent as our world is changing quickly around us. Innovations spring up daily like seedlings in spring, but this expansion is not without consequence: despite our progress, more than 700 million people live in hunger, around 3 billion people could not access healthy diets in 2019<sup>1</sup>, and 1.6 billion suffer from nutrition-related diseases. Many existing technologies and innovations are not yet accessible, affordable and adaptable for all farmers worldwide. The dots do not connect: 1/3 of food produced globally is wasted, but children are still hungry?

We can produce more food than ever before, but biodiversity and hectares of arable land are decreasing. COVID-19 has plunged the whole world in the biggest crisis of recent history. Notwithstanding all our technologies and innovations, viruses can derail our supply chain, severely risk our food security and leave communities vulnerable. It is clear that the shortcomings of our global food systems have been laid bare. We need to transform food systems, to ensure livelihoods and food security, while taking urgent action on climate change.

Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) was developed in 2010. As a concept, it aimed at integrating the need for adapting and mitigating climate change in agriculture within the broader context of sustainable agriculture. Since the establishment of the concept, we have seen much advancement in the understanding of the need and possible means of adapting to climate change and enhancing resilience of agricultural systems and livelihoods, as well as the potential means of reducing emissions and enhancing sequestration. The interlinkages between climate change, biodiversity, environment, nutrition and agriculture have been and are discussed at high-level political meetings including COP26 in 2021. At the same time, new concepts emerged including nature-based solutions and the food systems paradigm has been embraced as key to achieving sustainable agriculture that ensures decent livelihoods, nutritious and affordable foods and environmentally sound management of natural resources.

Climate-smart agriculture should also incorporate One Health in work on food security, sustainable agriculture, food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), nutrition, animal and plant health, fisheries, and livelihoods. Ensuring a One Health approach is essential for progress to anticipate, prevent, detect and control diseases that spread between animals and humans, tackle AMR, ensure food safety, prevent environment-related human and animal health threats, as well as combatting many other challenges. The application of a One Health approach is critical for achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These discussions show that more thinking is required on firmly placing CSA in the food systems discourse, realizing interlinkages between other concepts around sustainability and food security, such as agroecology, nature-based solutions and agrobiodiversity. These approaches, while distinct, may share metrics particularly at the field level, which should be considered from the viewpoint of achieving results towards sustainably increasing farmers’ incomes and productivity, climate change adaptation and resilience, and mitigation.

Building on these insights, we are poised to move ahead and take action in a massive effort to transform food systems. CSA provides an integrated vision of agricultural adaptation and mitigation within the broader context of food systems transformation as well as a platform for taking action. This is more important than ever, and where GACSA is playing a key role.

The Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA) is strategically placed to drive forward CSA thinking to action, as a multi-stakeholder platform with an extensive membership base, ranging from governmental organizations to NGOs, farmers organizations, private sector organizations, universities and academia, among others. It assembles a growing platform of members as the backbone of the next generation of actors to shape sustainable agriculture and sustainable food systems. In particular, the CSA Regional Alliances offer important opportunities to share experiences and translate global development to implementation. GACSA's objectives support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 12.3 (reduce food loss and waste), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 12.2 (sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources). The Alliance confronts the multiple challenges for sustainable agriculture caused by climate change including higher average temperatures, greater differences in water availability and distribution, and increasingly fluctuating and severe weather events.

Addressing food systems challenges will likely involve increasing agricultural productivity in sustainable ways that are resilient to climate impacts, enhancing social protection that builds productive assets, and reducing inequalities in food access, among other things. As countries are updating their Nationally Determined Contributions, this is an opportune moment to involve all key stakeholders in transforming food systems in the context of climate change. CSA can play a vital role in middle- and long-term national agricultural and climate change strategies.

GACSA's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan envisioned three core action-oriented functions of the alliance, including Convening, Connecting and Communicating. Its three strategic objectives are: 1. voluntary and inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms to foster dialogue and learning that lead to action, 2. leveraging multi-institutional action to generate problem-solving knowledge and partnerships and 3. purpose-built CSA Knowledge Management support system. Through its Strategic Plan 2022-2032, GACSA aims to increasingly focus its activities on the SDGs, NDCs and other relevant frameworks to leverage CSA as a tool towards achieving national and local policy strategies. GACSA members will identify events, capacity building opportunities and potential publications and projects related to the policy frameworks most relevant to the country/countries they work in. This Strategic Plan can only be effectively implemented if a more diversified resource base for GACSA is achieved. Particularly, for the sustainability of GACSA, multi-donor support is important.

Because future increases in hunger are projected to come mostly from Africa, a particular focus on Africa will be needed. Moreover, the countries that are experiencing conflict and fragility are where hunger is rising the fastest, motivating paying special attention to humanitarian contexts and fragile, conflict-affected settings. Simultaneously, a large share of the global population is not eating a healthy, balanced diet – and about 3 billion people cannot currently even afford to purchase one<sup>2</sup>. Improving access to nutritious foods and making them the preferred option will require addressing three main barriers to

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/cb5409en/cb5409en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/cb5409en/cb5409en.pdf>

access: price (i.e., how to make nutritious food cheaper and nutrient-poor foods relatively more expensive), purchasing power (i.e., increasing purchasing power via social protection, wages, etc.), and perceived affordability (i.e., changing how people value nutritious foods relative to their price).

As the sole global multi-stakeholder apolitical platform for CSA, and by using an integrated knowledge-intensive approach, GACSA seeks to catalyze collaborative action to accelerate the scaling up of CSA through its members' initiatives, engagements and programs. The CSA approach is designed to identify and operationalize sustainable agricultural development within the explicit parameters of climate change. Achieving the transformations required for CSA and meeting these multiple objectives requires an integrated approach that is responsive to specific local conditions. Coordination across agricultural sectors (e.g. crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries) as well as between sectors including energy and water is essential to capitalize on potential synergies, reduce trade-offs and optimize the use of natural resources and ecosystem services.

Since 2014, GACSA has been raising awareness about the scale and impact of major agricultural challenges in the context of climate change. GACSA promotes climate-smart solutions that governments, farmers (including herders, pastoralists, fisherfolk, foresters), businesses, and civil society actors can adapt and adopt. Members of the Alliance recognize the urgent need to act at scale and to contribute towards three aspirational outcomes:

- I. Sustainable and equitable increases in agricultural productivity and incomes;
- II. Greater resilience of food systems and farming livelihoods;
- III. Reduction and/or removal of greenhouse gas emissions associated with agriculture (including the relationship between agriculture and ecosystems), where possible.

To achieve its goals, GACSA is launching this 2022-2032 Strategic Plan. This strategic plan proposes to focus the strategy on accelerating multi-stakeholder actions, recognizing the central role of farmers, and mobilizing resources to offer solutions at local and country level. This document illustrates guiding principles for GACSA's work, as well as strategic themes the Alliance will focus on from 2022 to 2030 and beyond, as an umbrella for reaching game-changing objectives.

## **Agenda 2030 and beyond: The GACSA Strategic Plan 2022-2032**

We have a roadmap to a more just and sustainable future: Agenda 2030 with a series of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Objectives that, if reached, can help us end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy good health, peace and prosperity. These detailed calls to action provide a framework and direction—but we must act quickly and boldly if the Goals are to be achieved.

GACSA's greatest strength lies in its global inter-sectoral network and partnerships of multiple actors working as one. The Alliance brings together governments, farmers, scientists, businesses, civil society, and regional and international organizations to ensure combined multi-stakeholder and multi-institutional efforts and actions. GACSA is a membership-based alliance with a growing number of registered entities and strong collaborations with several regional CSA alliances.

Our current Strategic Plan 2018-2022 is arriving to its completion, and the "GACSA 2030 and Beyond" vision proposes:

- i. “A ten-year journey”: positioning GACSA to accelerate actions to implement the 2030 Agenda and beyond
- ii. The Annual Forum will direct implementation of the ten-year Strategic Plan, mandating steps through:
  - “Shaping the journey: a mid-term review in 2026” in order to adapt and prioritize shifting priorities; and
  - Adopting a year-by-year work plan for 2022-2023 to ensure we are making it happen.

## **Key transformations suggested in this strategic plan**

The following sections describe guiding principles and three thematic areas for GACSA’s work. This new direction aims to catalyze GACSA’s potential to help transform food systems. Key transformations suggested in this document include:

### **Guiding principles for GACSA’s work are:**

- The central role of farmers in food systems;
- Increase and promote knowledge, research and development into technologies, practices and policy approaches for climate smart agriculture;
- Improving effectiveness and accessibility of public and private investments and funds that support the three pillars of climate smart agriculture;
- Engaging in partnerships outside the agricultural sector, including energy, insurance, banking, rural infrastructure and digital connectivity sectors as well as broadening and strengthening partnerships between sectors as well as with private sector, farmer organizations, research institutions and universities;
- Addressing global challenges through strategic opportunities, including identifying the technical, policy and investment conditions needed to scale up climate smart agriculture;
- Inclusivity

### **Thematic focus areas of:**

1. Sustainable agriculture: addressing climate change in a multi-dimensional food system;
2. Innovation and new technologies for climate-smart agriculture; and
3. Resiliency and climate change adaptation;

### **Highlighted recommended objectives including:**

- Disseminating knowledge and good practices; amongst others through opening a CSA knowledge portal for farmers and practitioners to exchange knowledge and good practices on CSA crops, innovations, policies and models to scale up;
- Supporting capacity building, amongst other through launching a GACSA Academy aimed at training Young Farmers to address capacity development needs; and
- Supporting farmers to access finance, affordable innovations, and microcredits by providing innovative and supportive matchmaking platforms to shape sustainable food systems at the global level.

# Guiding Principles

## The central role of farmers in food systems

Farmers (including herders, pastoralists, fisher folk, foresters) are central to food systems and therefore central to the work of GACSA's members. As actors in all agricultural sectors, they have key roles to play and insights to share on sustainable food system transformation. The quantity, quality and varieties of foods available to consumers – including farmers themselves - depend on farmers' priorities and capacities and their economic and environmental opportunities. They experiment, adapt and innovate, most often as family and small-scale businesses sensitive to their own constraints, to climate change, to transformations in the market and to the evolution of demand from consumers and business. The multiple functions of agriculture are reflected in farmers as multi-faceted entrepreneurs, both reacting to challenges and profiting from new technologies and new skills to generate new products and services across value chains. They care for our landscapes and biodiversity and are at the frontline of major global issues: climate adversity, pollution, water scarcity and quality, rural poverty and health.

Agriculture is evidently dependent on the climate, as well as a major factor in influencing the climate. People in agriculture face the challenge of attaining a decent livelihood in the context of the effects of climate change. They have always needed to be “climate-smart”, yet growing uncertainty in weather conditions is adding to the challenge of farming especially for smallholders and family farmers who form the majority of producers. The pace of changes in climate, in growing populations with increasing demand for meat, fish and dairy, and in technologies at multiple levels including monitoring of fields and even individual plants, and weather patterns and predictions, have had immense impact. As innovators, farmers worldwide have become better informed and often better educated, and are ever more connected to education and research through public and private institutions. Farmers' knowledge is paramount, and farmers are invited to have participative extension and collaboration with research for exchanging advice, experience, information and techniques.

In order to make food systems more sustainable, it is vital to go beyond the predominant “take (now)-and make-waste (in haste)” model of Economy. Circular economy and bio-economy models emphasizing environmental sustainability and economic equity have become imperative to ensure an enduring and fair share of access to, and use of, resources as well as a future for our planet and upcoming generations. This renewed vision of food systems decouples economic activities from non-renewable, non-recyclable consumption of limited resources towards:

- a) compiling, designing and implementing innovative strategies focusing on the (incentives and conditions necessary to enable farmers to value) better use and management of resources;
- b) fostering partnerships between farmers and other actors in the food system (e.g. consumers, value chain participants) in a shared vision of agriculture as a producer of not just food but also decent livelihoods and sustainable management of natural resources under a changing climate; and
- c) a new modality of investment in agriculture that recognizes the new vision of agriculture's role in the food system under a changing climate. This vision includes farmers, their value chains and business environment, their potential, capacities and results.

The GACSA “2030 and Beyond” vision places small-scale farmers at the center of our food systems. It is paramount that discussions and projects related to our food systems start “with and by” farmers, as they:

I. **Contribute to local economies and livelihoods:**

Increased incomes and profits among small-scale farmers and their businesses are invested back into local economies, where they create jobs and equitable growth. This is crucial for creating opportunities for rural youth to live and thrive in their home communities.

II. **Are more environmentally sustainable:**

Small-scale farmers often have greater levels of attachment to local landscapes and ecosystems.

This kind of farming is also a rich source of traditional knowledge, offering solutions for balancing food production, livelihoods and the natural world.

Yet, many small-scale farmers are operating in a policy and incentive environment that should offer more opportunities for recognizing the value of environmental sustainability. It is important to put policies and institutions in place that value farmers’ knowledge and enhance their ability to realize such knowledge – and eliminate policies and incentives that generate perverse incentives.

III. **Sustain vulnerable communities’ food security and nutrition:**

Small-scale farms are especially critical for the food security and nutrition of vulnerable groups. These farms serve predominantly domestic and local markets, including communities that modern supermarkets do not reach. They are of particular importance in developing countries: for example, they produce more than 70 per cent of the food calories in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and South and East Asia<sup>3</sup>.

GACSA recognizes the urgency in providing farmers with access to funding opportunities, and accessible and affordable innovative technology in order to drive food systems. For this reason, GACSA as a global multi-stakeholder platform and its membership is uniquely positioned with governments, private sector, NGOs, and research institutions to facilitate transformational partnerships for farmers through delivering on core, action-oriented discussions and projects with farmers at the center of the food systems. GACSA’s global multi-stakeholder membership has tremendous expertise and resources for promoting adaptation and mitigation in agriculture within the broader context of sustainable agriculture.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/blog/small-scale-farmers-can-help-build-resilient-food-systems-in-a-post-covid-19-world>



## Broadening partnerships between sectors

Scaling up CSA also requires connecting to other key players. For example, in order to help farmers access finance, it is crucial to partner with the financial sector. Broadening partnerships also catalyzes the potential of CSA to contribute to addressing wider challenges. Connecting with actors in the One Health field for example, may provide important opportunities to respond to the interlinkages between the health of animals, people, plants and the environment.

Therefore, a guiding principle for GACSA's work is partnering between sectors. Beyond agriculture, other relevant sectors may include energy specialists, insurance, banking, (rural) infrastructure, health, and digital connectivity for example. GACSA aims to diversify its membership towards these stakeholders, and GACSA members are encouraged to engage with other relevant sectors in order to create linkages to scale up CSA throughout food systems.

## Addressing global challenges through strategic opportunities

Fostering and facilitating transformational partnerships as described in the previous section requires realizing strategic opportunities at the global, regional, national and local levels. The Paris Agreement, the UN Food Systems Summit and other global developments open doors to transformative change. GACSA, as a global alliance with a wide membership and collaborating with several regional alliances, has a unique role to play in recognizing and engaging with relevant strategic opportunities, and fostering new ones. These may include processes related to policies such as Nationally Determined Contributions and national adaptation plans (NAPs), major global funding opportunities, and all contributions of CSA programs to the Sustainable Development Goals. GACSA's non-state members have great potential to support governments in reaching their middle- and long-term agriculture and climate change targets. In all these efforts, it is crucial to build the capacity of local policymakers in order to understand local needs and opportunities to provide an enabling environment and implement CSA.

It is time for GACSA's membership to implement CSA programs in the context of major global policy dialogues and current and new organizational and policy frameworks, including seizing opportunities to work with partners at country-level (including the UN Rome-based agencies). In these efforts they may build on a wealth of relevant knowledge products, such as the FAO 2021 publication on CSA and the SDGs, which recognizes that: "Climate-smart agriculture actions can support the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. As such, CSA offers the possibility for helping countries to achieve the SDGs and their nationally determined contribution objectives. In addition to advancing climate, food security and income objectives, when a CSA approach is well-designed, it can also contribute to priority goals ranging from gender and social equality, to urban development, education and employment, and forest and ocean health, to name a few."<sup>4</sup> To this range of potential key contributions by the CSA approach, we can add the potential to contribute to conservation of biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems.

## Inclusivity

In order to reach results towards CSA's three pillars, it is crucial to adopt an inclusive approach. Throughout the process of CSA implementation - including evidence building, implementing policies, building capacities of institutions, enhancing financing options and implementing practices – the knowledge and views of youth, women, indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups should be taken into account. GACSA aims to engage and empower all CSA stakeholders and recognizes the key value of their experiences and major contributions throughout food systems. In its activities, GACSA aims to provide platforms for its diverse membership and spaces for respectful and constructive dialogues to foster more sustainable food systems. Inclusivity is a guiding principle for GACSA's work and underpins its work. Through specific activities, GACSA can raise the voice of particular groups in the CSA debate and contribute to capacity building. The GACSA Academy, aimed at training young farmers and described under the Innovation thematic focus area, is an example of a potential platform GACSA may offer for an exchange of expertise between young farmers and the international community.

## Thematic Focus

For the period of the GACSA Strategic Plan 2022-2032, the Alliance, recognizing the central role of farmers in food systems, will focus its work on three interlinked strategic themes: sustainable agriculture - addressing climate change in a multi-dimensional food system, innovation and new technologies for climate-smart agriculture, and resiliency and climate change adaptation.

This re-focusing of the alliance's work, supported by sufficient funding, ensures that GACSA remains fit-for-purpose in a context of significantly expanded membership and ongoing international debates on the SDGs and food systems.

- 1. Sustainable Agriculture: Addressing Climate Change in a Multi-Dimensional Food System**
- 2. Innovation and Technologies for Climate-Smart Agriculture**
- 3. Resiliency and Climate Change Adaptation**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/ca6043en/CA6043EN.pdf>

## 1. Sustainable Agriculture: Addressing Climate Change in a Multi-Dimensional Food System

Agriculture supports the livelihoods of more than 2.5 billion people globally. Given its inherent connection to the environment, its direct reliance on natural resources for production, and its significance for national socio-economic development, urgent and ambitious action is needed to build more sustainable food systems. Moreover, viewing CSA as broader than agricultural production and rather part of food systems offers important opportunities to expand the scaling up of CSA. These opportunities include addressing post-harvest losses, recognizing the impact and opportunities caused by rural-urban migration – including urban farming –, providing climate-related services to farmers, connecting consumers to sustainable agriculture through agro tourism, and implementing crosscutting practices such as agroforestry, among others.

In GACSA, agriculture is recognized as a vital part of wider food systems, which should be transformed due to global challenges including climate change. FAO's definition of a sustainable food system is "A sustainable food system is one that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generation is not compromised. This means that it is *profitable* throughout, ensuring economic sustainability, it has broad-based *benefits for society*, securing social sustainability, and that it has a *positive or neutral impact* on the natural resource environment, safeguarding the sustainability of the environment<sup>5</sup>."

It is abundantly clear that the world needs efficient and sustainable food systems. The challenge of feeding a growing population calls for adequate food production technologies, efficient resource use, and responsible and sustainable value chains, within supportive business environments. The agriculture and food system sectors are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, necessitating immediate and effective actions to increase the resilience of the sector in providing food, livelihoods and ecosystem services. At the same time, significant cuts in emissions from the agriculture and food system are essential to meeting the Paris Agreement. The need for immediate and effective adaptation and mitigation from the agriculture and food system sectors dictates major shifts in the policy, technical and investment approaches to achieving sustainable agriculture.

CSA has a vital role to play in achieving sustainable food systems in a holistic manner, which will unite interests of all stakeholders, foster collaborations between them and through those partnerships support end-to-end interventions and linkages (linking production to marketing and consumption). CSA simultaneously addresses agricultural, economic and social development including gender equality and youth empowerment while sustaining environmental systems and their integrity. Practices and technologies, many of which already exist, need to be profitable and socially beneficial while reducing the impact on the environment and climate, and coping with climate trends, events and change at local and national levels. Food systems should contribute to ecosystem restoration, including soil restoration after extreme weather events, and ecosystem services delivery. We have to make tools and technologies more accessible, affordable and adaptable for all farmers worldwide.

Building on the Alliance's work since 2014, GACSA galvanizes its members and stakeholders (governments, businesses, farmers' organizations and producer organizations, civil society groups, research bodies and intergovernmental entities) to promote and strengthen multi-stakeholder and multi-institutional efforts that lead to positive change, producing more with less.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fao.org/food-systems/en/>

## Recommended objectives for GACSA's membership

GACSA will undertake multi-disciplinary approaches and expand its outreach efforts to engage in innovative discussions on global food systems with actors working in the range of areas closely related to agriculture. These include actors working on (one) health and nutrition, decent rural employment, youth employment, and agricultural heritage.

In addition, GACSA aims to capture existing and new funding opportunities from different sources (international, public and private), while building on existing knowledge, technologies, and principles of sustainable agriculture. Considering the synergies and trade-offs between productivity, adaptation, and mitigation, this thematic area will re-position CSA as a champion of supporting farmers to implement sustainable food production systems.

Highlighted recommended objective for this focus area:

**Opening a CSA knowledge portal for Farmers and practitioners** to exchange knowledge and good practices on CSA crops, innovations, policies and models to scale up, recognizing the role of CSA in food systems:

GACSA's Knowledge Portal helps countries to accelerate climate-smart action by providing quick and easy access to data, tools, guidance, good practices, and funding opportunities.

The Knowledge Portal draws together the most relevant resources from partners and other leading institutions.

GACSA convenes expertise to generate an operational knowledge sharing platform on innovative practices, policies, administrative and delivery frameworks, to generate the evidence to inform decision-making processes for future investment.

GACSA enables farmers to access and use the portal.

### Recommended objectives include:

*Evidence – GACSA will address gaps in knowledge and technology, and investments needed to support uptake and adoption of CSA practices and technologies through:*

- Providing technical support in identifying the synergies and trade-offs between sustainable food production, adaptation, and mitigation.
- Mainstreaming, documenting and upscaling traditional and local knowledge in agricultural practices
- Undertake a review of the potential of carbon credit system for farmers as related to CSA
- Analyze business policies/practices that promote sustainable practices (liaise with benchmarking alliances).
- Map out good practices to create direct links between communities/organizations and companies.
- Map, support and disseminate good practices regarding the use and end-of-life management of plastics in agriculture to promote bioeconomy and circular economy.

*Field-level work – GACSA will pilot good practices for CSA adapted to local circumstances:*

- Facilitation of bankable projects that help key actors to co-design and co-implement CSA programs related to GACSA members expertise such as soil restoration and climate services.
- Strengthening institutional capacities to drive, improve and develop local skills and foster communication so that stakeholders can make informed development choices (e.g. the GACSA Youth Academy).
- Exploring opportunities to scale up good practices in CSA through the Alliances’ Membership and in particular the Regional CSA Alliances.
- Global and regional CSA Alliances that contribute to the success of members and partners in developing a pipeline of bankable proposals.
- Stimulating and promoting a holistic, multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder approach to ensure that traditional knowledge, modern science and technologies are integrated into research and innovation.
- Promoting mechanisms to blend and coordinate matchmaking of funding from different sources, including public, private, agricultural development, and climate financing to support climate-smart agriculture (including the GCF and Adaptation Fund).

*Outreach - GACSA will facilitate dialogues to reflect on the need for coherent and comprehensive approaches for developing sustainable food production:*

- Organize periodical discussions on progress towards this theme amongst members as well as between regional alliance and action groups.
- Build a cohort of “CSA champions” and a coordinated approach to advance climate-smart solutions, taking advantage of opportunities and overcome challenges in food systems.
- In collaboration with the global and regional alliances, support global, regional, and national climate change and sustainable food production action partnerships, including the public and private sectors, community groups, and non-governmental organizations and including in the context of NDCs and NAPs.
- Initiate and promote lesson-learning processes (establishing coherence of issues from Local to Global), to establish effective CSA responses through specific tools, in particular developing strategies and best practices.
- GACSA will significantly increase its partnerships with actors from sectors beyond agricultural production by: mobilizing professional chefs, educators and food influencers to foster novel, creative ideas for new produce and products for smallholder farmers and entrepreneurs.

*Conclusion*

Sustainable agriculture that incorporates the adaptation and mitigation aspects imposed by climate change and that contributes to the overall objectives of decent livelihoods, nutritious and accessible food for all and sustainable environmental outcomes is achievable. That is, provided locally and regionally adapted sound technologies and practices, and development of mechanisms and enabling conditions including a business environment that minimizes risks, which is one of the alternatives to reduce the

negative environmental footprint of food systems.

Food systems must become climate-smart to ensure sustainability. Under these themes, GACSA will play a key role in driving the enablers of change through innovative CSA actions that mainstream the three pillars (productivity/adaptation/mitigation) effectively.

## 2. Innovation and Technologies for Climate-Smart Agriculture

We are really lagging behind on the implementation of Agenda 2030, its development goals and the Paris Agreement. GACSA offers new ways achieve significant results transforming the dynamics of agriculture and climate change.

The world's growing population is increasingly dependent on vulnerable food production as changes in climate undermine longstanding agricultural practices. Innovative climate-smart technologies, practices, policies and funding mechanisms are urgently required and should be accessible to improve food security and drive economic growth.

With our current technologies, we can only deliver 20-40% of the needed reduction in GHGs from agricultural emissions. It is crucial to raise global ambitions for transformative climate action on all levels through innovation in new technologies, policies, data-driven decision making and partnerships. In addition, as young people around the world demand climate action, innovation and new technologies provide an arena to stimulate youth expertise in food systems. Climate-smart innovations can enhance existing approaches and deliver new ways to sustainably increase agricultural productivity, improve livelihoods, conserve nature and biodiversity, adapt and build resilience to climate change, and reduce GHG emissions in food systems.

Scaling up CSA innovations requires collaborations between sectors, including agricultural and finance sectors. It also requires conversations and actions towards inclusive dissemination, enhancing financing options and ensuring enabling policy frameworks, including at the local level. With this context in mind, GACSA will support developing and sharing innovative climate-smart agriculture practices. It will source climate-smart technologies and approaches to improve food security from members representing diverse stakeholders. GACSA will promote climate-smart agricultural innovations in order to accelerate the global scaling up of CSA through research and development as well as knowledge sharing.

### Recommended objectives for GACSA's membership

Innovation is a window of opportunity to explore adequate ways of combining knowledge, organizing events and implementing projects for GACSA members. It is an entry point for scaling up practices in agriculture through inspiring their application and adaptation. GACSA will bring new energy to the global arena on agriculture and climate change by developing and promoting innovative CSA approaches with emphasis on attracting youth.

Highlighted recommended objective for this focus area:

**Launching the GACSA Academy aimed at training Young Farmers** to address members' capacity development needs and build on their innovation capacity:

Young farmers will learn UN-inspired civic skills (i.e. negotiation, group and public speaking, how to advocate, interact and influence with high-level actors from government and private sector) on partnerships and processes from various stakeholders (i.e. Committee on World Food Security (CFS), UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP)). This program will be implemented in close partnership with future donors.

The GACSA Academy will be composed by a group of young farmers from GACSA member organizations worldwide. Each edition of the programme lasts for 24 months and the young farmers meet at least twice per year on the occasion of international conferences related to agriculture, so to gain an exposure to the reality of the global negotiations on agriculture. The first edition of the programme will start in Jan 2022 and end in 2024 with a graduation ceremony at the GACSA Annual Forum (FAO headquarters in Rome).

**Recommended objectives include:**

*Evidence – Strengthen partnerships with research institutions, universities, private sector and farmer organizations through:*

- Co-develop mechanisms with the Regional Alliances to promote the development of new CSA innovations and implement existing ones.
- Create roundtables with private sector.
- Sharing knowledge on national (local), regional and international CSA practices and technology development.
- GACSA will stimulate application of a multi-functional approach to agricultural initiatives that increase members' capability in research, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- GACSA will convene diverse actors to foster new forms of innovation, where research institutions are closely connected to other stakeholder groups in innovation platforms that deliver creative solutions to CSA problems.
- Working closely together on research and development, including digital agriculture. Living labs on CSA.

*Field-level work – GACSA members will work together to:*

- Building a private sector strategy.
- Promote research and community outreach programmes on indigenous and other promising crops, livestock and fish to increase access to nutrient dense foods to reduce the burden of all forms of malnutrition.
- Improve farm-level access to climate-resilient farming practices such as drought-resistant crops.
- Upscale proven research and outreach programmes that are yielding results at community/field level.
- Build user-friendly technologies for farmers.

*Outreach – GACSA will convene food system actors to promote CSA innovations by:*

- Organize periodical discussions on progress towards this theme, including GACSA Talks to provide

- the opportunity to share and develop ideas amongst GACSA member institutions.
- GACSA will showcase a dedicated platform for “Innovation and New Technologies” members, partnering with Young Farmers, Startups and Innovative companies.

### *Conclusion*

Innovation and the development of new technologies are major contributors towards sustainable food systems. GACSA’s global multi-stakeholder network provides a unique opportunity to share best practices for innovations, policies and funding mechanisms. It is paramount to develop climate-smart agricultural innovations, however it is equally important to provide access to these innovations for governments, private sector and farmers worldwide. GACSA, as the only global platform for scaling up CSA, can be a major catalyzer in making innovation more accessible to its members, and notably deliver solutions by and for youth. Providing support to members from research institutions, universities, farmer organizations and governments will accelerate their collaboration.

## 3. Resiliency and Climate Change Adaptation

Smallholder farmers are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As more than 2 billion people worldwide depend on small farms for their livelihoods, it is urgent to increase their climate resiliency. Farmers rely on their direct natural environment for their income and are hard hit by climate-induced disasters and slow-onset events. Climate change affects food security, rural poverty and displacement. Addressing climate change is therefore crucial throughout the humanitarian – development – peace nexus.

GACSA’s broad and diverse membership can stimulate large-scale projects that integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The GACSA network can play a pivotal role in understanding underlying causes of rural communities’ vulnerability and in scaling up locally appropriate resilience-building activities and plans.

GACSA is uniquely placed to promote multi-stakeholder dialogues that lead to actions that combine the strengths of all stakeholders to improve farmers’ climate resiliency. Through co-designing and co-implementing projects, public, private and civil society sectors can jointly reduce vulnerability combining legal, economic, social and environmental aspects. Working closely together, GACSA members can share and generate practical knowledge that will feed directly into projects at scale, targeting smallholder farmers.

### Recommended objectives for GACSA’s membership

GACSA will take action along the three areas of evidence, field-level work and outreach, addressing gaps and capitalizing on best practices to improve resiliency of smallholder farmers.



Highlighted recommended objective for this focus area:

**Support Farmers to access finance, affordable innovations, microcredits** by providing innovative and supportive matchmaking platforms to shape sustainable food systems at the global level and increase resiliency:

The GACSA Matchmaking platform will play a strategic role as a “broker”, linking good ideas and implementers interested in investing in CSA scale-up, and ease access to finance for small farmers.

Promoting mechanisms to blend and coordinate matchmaking of funding from different sources, including public, private, agricultural development, and climate financing to support climate-smart agriculture (including the GCF and Adaptation Fund).

**Recommended objectives include:**

*Evidence – GACSA’s members, supported by the GACSA Academy, will bring together:*

- Organize regular engagement to share information on CSA (best) practices and lessons learnt
- Involve the Regional Alliances in all Action Group activities
- State-of-the art findings from projects on climate risks, climate services, and early warning for early action.
- Research findings on how adopting climate-smart practices affects the vulnerability and climate resilience of (smallholder) farmers.
- Universities leading on agriculture and climate change to share knowledge on improving farmers’ resilience with global, regional and local policy makers, private sector and civil society.
- Gather and disseminate for validation ongoing innovations by farmers, including smallholders, to reduce vulnerability and increase their risk resilience.

*Field-level work – GACSA will identify opportunities and facilitate significant multi-stakeholder projects through:*

- Designing a co-conceived and co-implemented approach including meaningful youth and women’s participation and empowerment.
- Through the Regional Alliances, directly applying food and nutrition security information, early warning systems and other climate-related services, leading to better preparedness for disaster response to improve resilience of ecosystems and livelihoods to shocks and disasters through the application of good practices, processes and technologies.
- Partnering with other relevant alliance to facilitate projects on climate-smart practices.

*Outreach – GACSA will engage members to reach new audiences with state-of-the-art resilience information:*

- Organize periodical discussions on progress towards this theme.
- GACSA, through its Membership, will facilitate high-level political dialogues on climate resiliency in food systems.
- Provide opportunities for members to reach a wide multi-stakeholder audience and get feedback from this audience.

*Conclusion*

Improving the resiliency of food systems is at the heart of the work of GACSA’s membership. The Alliance will foster practical knowledge generation and sharing, leading to concrete multi-stakeholder action to make a significant contribution to climate resiliency at the global, regional and national level.

## Cross-cutting themes: women, youth, finance

Recognizing the importance of engaging and empowering women and youth in order to scale up CSA in an inclusive manner, GACSA members are encouraged to mainstream these themes in all their work. GACSA-related objectives should include a related analysis and plan concrete actions and best practices to empower women and youth.

GACSA-related objectives should take into account (access to) finance as a crucial theme that affects any CSA activity and may range for example from access to finance for farmers, research, GACSA's Regional Alliances and Action Groups. In this regard, GACSA work will include:

- Increasing literacy of GACSA members so that they can access financing for CSA projects;
- Matchmaking, which include facilitating public/private partnerships to fund CSA (connecting, capacity building, sharing good practices);
- Increasing coherence between lending requirements and CSA practices; and
- Enhance national funding initiatives for CSA.

## Implementing the GACSA 2030 and Beyond Vision

The vision set out in this draft strategic plan responds to global challenges on local, national and international levels. Implementing this vision in an inclusive manner requires strong engagement from GACSA's membership, supported by a fit-for-purpose GACSA Facilitation Unit. It may also require additional ways of working. This section describes a potential new implementation model, as well as membership and funding needs and opportunities.

### GACSA's Implementation Model

This Strategic Plan forms the basis for implementing actions to scale up CSA. To transform the vision into actions, GACSA engages with its membership. GACSA member institutions deliver on three key CSA success factors associated with GACSA's action groups (knowledge, enabling environment and investment). GACSA offers robust clearinghouse capacity to generate relevant information, knowledge and analytical skills for all stakeholder needs.

GACSA will work on delivering further resources to support delivering on these objectives, and the need to better include members at the grassroots level, for project implementation and increased understanding of local priorities and needs.

GACSA should strengthen the role of Regional Alliances to create tools and platforms to foster better connection with actors from local to regional level as well as with the other Regional Alliances and the GACSA Action Groups, and to foster knowledge-sharing, including:

- Better communication channels;
- Consolidate information resources;
- Leveraging existing coordination platforms;
- Knowledge exchanges; and
- Outreach to farmers and farmer communities.



*Diagram 1: GACSA's implementation model*

Regional Alliances, with support of GACSA, should serve as facilitators to bring different actors together on CSA dialogues, and to provide guidance for national governments on shaping their national policy frameworks.

With the support of GACSA, Regional Alliances should offer support to local actors to access resources, including climate funds and expert knowledge.

The Annual Forum has called for strong collaboration between the Action Groups and Regional Alliances, based on fit-for-purpose tools and sufficient resources and support from GACSA, to support improved coordination for GACSA members and prioritization of activities.

In line with this Strategic Plan, the Action Groups mandates may be further clarified and their structure may be revised by the Strategic Committee if this is deemed beneficial.

GACSA's Annual Forum further highlighted the importance of inclusivity to the membership and to farmers in general, including through the promotion of multilingualism.

## Broadening Membership and Funding Basis

The recommended objectives in this strategic plan are based on an assumption of a significant increase in funding. Since its creation, GACSA has received financial support from a number of member governments, including Norway, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Ireland, Switzerland, and the United States of America. These financial contributions to GACSA's budget, mostly through a multi-donor trust fund, have been complemented by in-kind contributions (mostly staff secondments) from France, Italy, the United States and the Netherlands. These resources have largely been depleted and need replenishment, also avoiding dependency on one or two donors. In case a more diversified resource base is not achieved, GACSA is at

risk of not being financially sustainable. Sufficient funding for the Facilitation Unit is a requirement to enable GACSA members to meet the recommended objectives set out in this vision.

The global challenges and opportunities, including those related to the SDGs, in the agriculture and climate change spheres are enormous. GACSA can play a significant role in a transformation if it plays a stronger role in catalyzing change through facilitation. Helping GACSA's members reach their objectives is the primary goal of GACSA's Facilitation Unit. It may convene action groups, support members as GACSA champions and work closely with regional alliances while implementing a global matchmaking platform, if it is sufficiently funded.

It is paramount that GACSA:

- 1) Secures high-level political and financial support of key members to unlock the human and financial resources required for effective coordination;
- 2) Is seen as a very powerful platform for contributing to the implementation of the landmark Paris Agreement. GACSA should focus on catalyzing action by all key stakeholders to help countries achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions in the agriculture sector. By scaling CSA practices, it can overcome challenges to achieve its ambitious goals. This will only be possible with stronger institutional backing and financial support from member organizations committed to its success; and
- 3) Strengthens its collaboration with Rome-based UN agencies and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).
- 4) Diversifies its membership in recognition of the opportunities of collaborating with key actors beyond the agricultural sector, including the financial and insurance sectors.

## Way forward for GACSA

Sustainable food systems are achievable in the context of current and expected climatic conditions. GACSA can play a crucial role in driving change through innovative CSA actions that effectively mainstream the three pillars (productivity/adaptation/mitigation). GACSA's global multi-stakeholder network provides a unique opportunity as a way forward to share best practices for innovative practices, policies and funding mechanisms.

GACSA's growing membership calls to improve food security, nutrition, and resilience in the face of climate change by adopting a holistic, multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder approach to ensure advances in knowledge and technologies integrated into sustainable food systems. The game-changing objectives presented in this strategic plan represent what it takes to bring the potential of CSA to scale. Guided by the central role of farmers in food systems, seizing strategic opportunities at the global and national levels, and an inclusive approach, GACSA can reach significant results in the field of sustainable agriculture, addressing climate change in a multi-dimensional food system; innovation and new technologies for climate-smart agriculture; resiliency and climate change adaptation. Game-changers may include opening a CSA knowledge portal for farmers and practitioners, launching a GACSA Academy for youth, and supporting farmers to access finance, affordable innovations, and microcredits through matchmaking platforms.

Reaching these objectives requires long-term investments by governments and other partners in CSA programmes and in a Facilitation Unit to connect, convene and communicate in order to ensure partnerships. The goal is to achieve a collective agenda for sustainable food systems: the “GACSA 2030 and Beyond” Vision.

As we enter an era of climate transformation, novelty and uncertainty, it is crucial to scale up feasible climate-smart options and innovations for agriculture and provide ready access to these innovations to governments and farmers worldwide. The Alliance ensures constructive, multi-stakeholder engagement to face the challenges of our future, together.

### **Our Actions are our future**

Rome, November 2021

