

ALLIANCE COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, Des Moines Iowa

Tuesday 8 September – Friday 11 September

Meeting Report

OVERVIEW

The fifth Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (Alliance) Council meeting took place from Tuesday 8 September to Friday 11 September 2015 in Des Moines, Iowa at the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates. It included field trips to Du Pont and to Iowa State University research hubs.

Dr Catherine Woteki, incoming Chair of the Alliance Council, opened the meeting on Wednesday morning and welcomed all delegates to Des Moines.

The Netherlands (Dr Ruby Rabbinge), outgoing Chair, chaired the Tuesday morning session and then handed over the Chair to Dr Woteki. Secretariat support was provided by Deborah Knox and Meredith Stokdijk.

This report is a summary of the key discussions and outcomes from the meeting.

PARTICIPANTS

The meeting was attended by 57 representatives from 21 countries and other invited guests:

- **Alliance Members attending:** Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Spain, Thailand, United Kingdom, Uruguay, the United States of America, Viet Nam.
- **Alliance Members observing:** Australia.
- **Alliance Members unable to attend:** Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Honduras, Italy, Malaysia,

Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, and Tunisia.

- **Invited Partners attending:** World Bank, CGIAR-CCAFS, and FAO.
- **Other invited organisations attending:** CABI, European Commission, GASCA, GODAN and WAF

Refer to Appendix 1 for a full participant list.

QUORUM

With the 21 Alliance members attending a quorum was not achieved. The Secretariat confirmed that the procedure for confirmation of decisions would be as for the 2014 Council meeting; that is:

- Consensus decisions would be taken by Members present at the Council meeting on the items before it;
- The Secretariat would email these decisions to all Members as part of the meeting report; and
- Members would have three weeks to respond. A nil response from Council members would be taken as support for the decisions.

KEY OUTCOMES OF MEETING AND ACTION POINTS

Outcomes	Action	By when
Council		
The Netherlands handed over Council Charing responsibilities to the USA.	Completed	
Mexico confirmed as the Vice-Chair of the Alliance Council.	Completed	
Members asked to complete a voluntary annual report on their Alliance activities.	Secretariat to prepare a standardised template for Members voluntary annual reports.	For circulation ahead of 2016 Council meeting
<i>Members to work towards creating/updating country webpages</i>	The Secretariat to work with Members.	Ongoing
Development of a 5 year strategic plan for the Alliance.	Working Group of member Countries with Secretariat support to complete initial draft.	Initial draft circulated in 6 months. Final version approved at 2016 Council meeting

Partners Process document finalised. Partners template to be completed for current Partners	Secretariat to circulate the finalised version and complete the template for information on current Partners.	November 2015
Review of the Communications Policy	Completed, no changes recommended	
Outgoing Chair to support the current Chair and Vice-Chair and progress the continuing work of the Alliance.	Chair and Vice-Chair to request support of outgoing Chairs as required	Ongoing
Research and Cross-cutting Groups		
Establishment of a new Integrative Research Group – and the dis-establishment of the current two Cross-Cutting Groups;	All Co-Chairs liaise to establish the structure and governance of the new Research Group and networks	November 2015
	Secretariat to update Alliance website and presentation materials	November 2015
Further develop a proposal for a GRA International Research Consortium.	Secretariat and Research group Co-Chairs to discuss with the EC.	November 2015
Agree to submit a detailed proposal on a 2017 Science Conference.	The Secretariat and Research Group Co-Chairs to consider logistics and prepare a proposal.	For 2016 Council meeting
Research Group Leadership Strategy approved as Guidelines.	The Secretariat to circulate the amended Guidelines.	November 2016
	Co-Chairs to send out survey for feedback on the Groups and leadership of the Groups.	For discussion at 2016 meetings of the RGs
Partners		
WAF to become an Alliance Partner.	The Secretariat to follow up with WAF on the issues raised by Members.	Completed
	Members to confirm the Partnership decision.	November 2015
CABI to become an Alliance Partner.	The Secretariat to follow up with CABI on the issues raised by Members.	October 2015
	Members to confirm the Partnership decision.	November 2015
The Alliance to invite the CCAC as a Partner.	The Secretariat to action this decision.	November 2015
Secretariat		

New Zealand to continue as Secretariat until 2019.		Until June 2019
The role and function of the Secretariat to be enhanced.	Secretariat to ensure that there is regular reporting on enhanced Secretariat activities	Ongoing
Trial period for a representative role as part of the enhanced Secretariat.	New Zealand to circulate a terms of reference and name and CV of the prospective representative to Council Members	November 2015, with position to start in 2016.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

OPENING REMARKS

1. Dr Catherine Woteki, Under-Secretary Research, Education, Economics and Chief Scientist, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), opened the Council meeting and welcomed all participants to the fifth Alliance Council meeting held at the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates in Des Moines, Iowa.
2. Dr Woteki noted that a great deal of work has been accomplished in the last few years – the Alliance had shown itself a leader and pioneer in bringing the science community together to reduce the intensity of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, to limit carbon and nitrogen loss, and to transfer that research knowledge to farmers. The Research and Cross-Cutting Groups were unique in terms of the work that they did and the results that were being seen.
3. She urged the Alliance, as a whole, to take advantage of increasing global interest in the challenges of food security, climate change and sustainability. She noted the need for the Alliance to leverage and collate resources, to access further funding, to re-engage and reach out to its Members, and to pioneer relationships with new entities to achieve the adoption of greenhouse gas mitigation practices by the world’s farmers. The Alliance Council meeting provided an opportunity to chart the future of the Alliance and ensure that it continues to be of relevance and to provide evidence to underpin policy and technological development.
4. Dr Ruby Rabbinge, outgoing Chair, also welcomed delegates to the Alliance Council meeting noting the significance of holding the meeting at the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates. He was pleased to be associated with an organisation that brought together scientists and policy makers to work on global food security issues. In the Alliance, Members and Partners have come together to share their expertise and knowledge. He noted that it was also important for the Alliance to have contacts with the private sector, given that the scientific research of the Alliance needs to have an impact.
5. Dr Rabbinge recalled the five objectives that the Netherlands had when he became the Chair and what has been achieved over the course of the last year:
 - 1 Strengthen the constituency of the Alliance – membership has increased 40% but membership in Africa is still too low.

- 2 Encourage network meetings to strengthen the activities of the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups – there are now about 3000 scientists involved in Alliance activities.
- 3 Find ways for the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups to have more impact and bridge the gap between science and implementation.
- 4 Strengthen regional engagement – there have been workshops in Poland and Tunisia, and a further workshop planned for Turkey.
- 5 Strengthen ties between the private sector and the Alliance – there have been discussions with Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Platform, research programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS) and CGIAR.
6. Dr Rabbinge noted that the Netherlands had contributed to these objectives over the past year and he was hopeful that the impact of the Alliance had increased because of this contribution. He was confident that this work would continue under the leadership of the USA. He finished his remarks by noting the continuing need to increase the visibility of the Alliance and its work, especially in the lead up to Paris later this year.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES AND PROPOSED AGENDA

7. The Secretariat provided an overview of the minutes of the previous Council meeting in Den Haag, the Netherlands, including the fact that because there was not a quorum at the previous Council meeting, the decisions had been circulated for approval by email. There had been no comments. The minutes were adopted.
8. Those present also approved the agenda as circulated.

NEXT CHAIR AND HOST OF THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

9. Mexico confirmed that it had accepted the position of Vice-Chair and would host the 2016 Council Meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES

10. **China** announced that in May 2015 it had released a national sustainable agriculture development plan 2015 – 2030. This identified options for mitigation and adaptation including water management, soil fertility improvement, halting the increase of fertiliser and pesticides, manure management, grassland improvements, straw use and carbon sequestration.
11. **France** reported that the French government would like to launch a new initiative on soil carbon sequestration at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties meeting in December (COP21). The 4/1000 initiative had links with the work of the Alliance. Further details would be provided later in the meeting.
12. **Ghana** noted that its interest has been in further research into measurement following the publication of its National Communication to the UNFCCC. It was looking to identify additional people to get involved in the work of the Research Groups.

13. **Indonesia** provided an update of its work on adaptation, mitigation and water management. It was working with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from rice production through integrated crop management. The funding had been provided by the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture as part of the National Development Plan. It had also organised an international workshop on data monitoring under the auspices of the Livestock Research Group. It also endorsed the importance of private sector involvement in the Alliance.

14. **The Netherlands** reported that it was organising a regional Alliance engagement workshop in Turkey later this year. They also encouraged greater involvement of the private sector in the activities of the Alliance.

15. **New Zealand** reported on the World Farmers Organisation study tour held in New Zealand last year and announced that another of these tours would take place in Argentina later this year. New Zealand was sponsoring farmer representatives from South Africa, Japan and New Zealand to attend. The benefit of this type of study tour was to get research to the farm level.

16. New Zealand also alerted other Member countries to the proposal put forward by New Zealand, Ireland, Costa Rica and Tanzania for an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on agriculture, food and climate change. New Zealand encouraged other Alliance Members to support this proposal during discussions at future IPCC meetings.

17. The **United Kingdom** noted that it was leading work on the Global Research Alliance Modelling Platform (GRAMP- gramp.org.uk) under the Croplands Research Group, including the hosting of webinars. It requested that other Members get involved in the hosting and maintaining of the website, which has been designed to connect researchers across all Alliance Research Groups. It also encouraged those interested in animal health to get involved in the Livestock Research Group animal health and greenhouse gas network.

18. The **United States** announced that in the past year it had established regional climate hubs. These centres were designed to take 30 years of research investment on the impacts of climate on agriculture and produce decision tools and information for farmers, including how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These centres were in the process of producing regional vulnerability assessments which were due mid-September. The US had also been working with Canada to build greenhouse gas research collaborations and it was looking to extend these types of bilateral collaborations to increase capacity in other countries. The US also introduced Dr Marlen Eve as the US Inventories and Monitoring Cross-Cutting Group (I&M) representative, noting that this will be a new role for USDA involvement.

19. **Uruguay** provided information on the regional council on climate agricultural issues that it co-ordinates for the purpose of strengthening the connection between policy and science. Uruguay wanted to increase the co-operation between the Alliance and PROCISUR so as to give local strength to the work of the Alliance.

20. **Viet Nam** reported that the Viet Nam government had set a national target to respond to climate change. Viet Nam was involved in a Livestock Research Group project on inventory and mitigation. It was also working with IRRI and CCAFS on a climate smart village

programme in remote areas. Viet Nam hoped to have wider international collaborations to assist its work.

21. Ambassador Kenneth M Quinn, President of the **World Food Prize Foundation** also briefly welcomed delegates to the venue and provided insights into the work of the Foundation.

RESEARCH AND CROSS CUTTING GROUP ROADMAP PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

22. Martin Scholten, Co-Chair of the Livestock Research Group, presented on behalf of the joint Research and Cross-Cutting Group Co-Chairs. The presentation brought together key issues that the Co-Chairs believe the Council need to focus / take action on for the Alliance to go forward and meet its potential. The presentation was intended as an input into the Council's strategic discussions.

22. The presentation noted that the Co-Chairs:

- Strongly supported the proposal set out in the Group Leadership Strategy document but would prefer that these be classified as a set of very useful guidelines to support the leadership of the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups as set out in the Alliance Charter.
- Proposed a change in the structure of the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups to provide greater flexibility and increase the efficiency and coherency of the work across the Groups. They proposed that the Cross-Cutting Groups be merged into one *Integrative Research Group* that would include the work of the two Cross-Cutting Groups and take over leadership of some of the current networks in the other Research Groups (for example, the grasslands network, carbon and nitrogen modelling, farm systems).

23. The Co-Chairs also requested:

- More active support for the Alliance and in particular, improved links between Council and Research and Cross-Cutting Group representatives in each country.
- Greater promotion of the Alliance, noting that the Council and its Members are the Alliance ambassadors responsible for promoting the work produced by the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups.
- Development of stronger links with industry and a stronger industry/policy/science interface. Greater engagement with Partners was needed at Council level.
- That Council Members consider providing annual written engagement reports to Council outlining actions undertaken by that Council Member to support the Alliance, their interest in and contribution to the work of the Research Groups (and the Council) and where they saw opportunities for engagement. This would help the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups better understand the perspectives of Members and would also perhaps help raise the profile of the Alliance within countries (because of the sign-off process that such reports would require). In line with this request, they also asked that Members update their country activities on the new Alliance website.

24. Martin Scholten also reported on the inter-action between the Alliance and Global Alliance on Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA) noting that the Research Groups had already had meetings with the representatives of GACSA. The Co-Chairs believed that they could develop collaborations with the GACSA's Knowledge Action Group and recommended that the Alliance's engagement with the GACSA be kept at the Research Group level, exploring how the Alliance structure and capacity could combine and share resources with the GACSA.
25. Martin Scholten also noted that the work that the Alliance was doing on soil carbon and food security fit well with the activities of the 4/1000 initiative to be launched by the French at COP21, which will be supported by an international research programme.
26. The Co-Chairs noted the need for resourcing to support the work of the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups and their networks, both for participating in the meetings and for future planned activities. They also noted the importance of additional resourcing for capability development at multiple levels (for example, technician, PhD and post-doc) and across Alliance Member countries.
27. In regard to the need for increased resourcing the Co-Chairs proposed that the Council consider endorsing a mechanism for resource collaboration between countries; that is, countries combine national resources together to fund joint research activities in a manner similar to the current European Commission Joint Programming Initiative on Food Security Agriculture and Climate Change (FACCE-JPI) mechanism. The Co-Chairs noted that the European Commission already had a mechanism that could be utilised for this process and that it had been successfully used to establish collaborative research projects for human health.
28. The representative from the European Commission provided further detail on this mechanism, known as an International Research Consortium (IRC), stating that it was a soft co-ordination mechanism for international collaboration and its success comes from the budgetary commitments of members and that the mechanism was outcome focussed. Each member puts in money and identifies key activities. The European Commission was about to support the launch of such an IRC on animal health. From the European Commission's perspective the Alliance already has the community and elements of governance required to launch a similar initiative; it was mostly the governance documents and guidelines that would need to be put in place.
29. The presentation reminded Member country delegates that the sub-groups and networks within the Research Groups are useful in achieving impact because they are topic or regionally based. But there was a need for the Alliance as a whole to better demonstrate that impact. In this regard, and in line with the desire by the Co-Chairs have improved links between Council and Research Group representatives in each country, the Co-Chairs proposed that the Council bring together all the Research Groups at an Alliance science conference in 2017. This science conference would include a Council meeting and could also include a high-level Ministerial meeting.
30. The Co-Chairs noted that each of the Research Groups have their own strategic plan and they wanted to see a similar Strategic Plan for the Council as a whole. They were in support of the proposal on the development of such a plan that would be discussed later in the meeting. The Co-Chairs did not see a need to be involved in the development of such a plan as the direction of the plan needed to be set by the Council in the first instance. But they would be interested in reviewing the draft document.

40. On the issue of open access data, the position of the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups was to support open access to data where possible, but noted that any policy must allow for partners and funders who have the right to direct the use of that data.

41. Finally the Co-Chairs, recalling that the Communications Policy was on the agenda, said that the current policy worked well for the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups and they saw no need to revise the policy.

Discussion on Proposal for Integrative Research Group

42. On the second day of the Council meeting, the Co-Chairs further explained the rationale behind their proposal to merge the two Cross-Cutting Groups into a single new Research Group with a focus on integrative research, and transfer some of the existing networks in other Research Groups to this new Research Group. The Co-Chairs noted that the assigned mandate of the existing Cross-Cutting groups is not flexible and does not easily allow the Cross-Cutting Groups to take on new activities.

43. The proposed new Research Group would have integrated networks based on the needs of Members and Research Groups, and it was intended that there would be co-ordination between the networks. Such networks were necessary to assemble expertise and resources. There would be issue focused leadership of the networks and the proposed Group as a whole would co-ordinate and identify potential network areas. The other advantage was that there would only be one group for Members to participate in rather than the two Cross-Cutting Groups.

44. The Research and Cross-Cutting Group Co-Chairs highlighted the implications of such a merger and re-organisation:

- Some of the challenges identified by the Research Groups would remain even with the merger of the two Cross-Cutting Groups.
- Active participation by Members is still essential for the proper functioning of the new Group.
- Representatives would have a vital but challenging role. They would need a broad knowledge of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and agricultural systems. They would need to be able to “see the forest, not the trees” and have the ability to build connections because the sum was in this case bigger than the parts.
- Related to this, those involved in this proposed Research Group would also need to make a commitment to connect diverse country expertise and resources within each of the networks.

45. The Research and Cross-Cutting Group Co-Chairs requested a Council decision on this proposal so that clarity could be provided as soon as possible and representatives could be selected.

46. The co-chairs laid out a possible structure for the Integrative Research Group but emphasised that this needed to be discussed further. It would have three themes: 1) models and inventories improvement; 2) soil carbon sequestration focus; and 3) farm systems. Within that there could be up to eight networks (based on current networks):

1. Emissions and mitigation.

2. Impacts and adaptation.
3. Inventories.
4. Carbon sequestration potential and practices.
5. Monitoring and soil carbon.
6. Grasslands.
7. Mixed systems.
8. Agro-forestry.

47. It was made clear that the Research Group Co-Chairs would welcome suggestions for other networks. In response, Brazil suggested that the new Research Group could also investigate socio-economic issues related to the reduction of the emissions intensity of agriculture. This might be a component of the farm systems work area; that is, using the tools to understand how farmers perceive and implement greenhouse gas mitigation practices. Following some discussion, the Chair requested that the Co-Chairs report on the socio-economic work that the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups were already undertaking as part of current activities so that the Council could have a further discussion on this issue next year.

48. Council Members present were in favour of establishing a new Research Group and dis-establishing the two Cross-Cutting Groups as proposed by the Research Co-Chairs. It was seen as a rationale and effective re-alignment that would help avoid duplication of efforts between the Research Groups.

49. There was some discussion about how the new Research Group would function and, in particular, interact with stakeholders. There was also acknowledgement that this new structure would not make the challenges identified by the Research Groups disappear.

Decisions

- Agree to the establishment of a new Research Group – the Integrative Research Group – and the dis-establishment of the current two Cross-Cutting Groups;
- Request the Co-Chairs of the dis-established Cross-Cutting Research Groups and other Co-Chairs to work to establish the structure and governance of this new Research Group as soon as practical.
- Request the Research Group Co-Chairs to prepare a report detailing the socio-economic work that the Research Groups are undertaking for discussion at the next Council meeting.

Actions

- Secretariat to re-work Alliance website and other presentation materials to reflect new structure.

Discussion on Proposal for Alliance Utilisation of the European Commission International Research Consortium Mechanism

50. The United States in responding to the Co-Chairs presentation noted that they were interested in opportunities to develop joint research calls. The US was currently holding discussions about funding research in the food, energy, water nexus in the USDA with the opportunity to get wider support within the US for this activity.

Decisions

- The Secretariat and Research Co-Chairs will progress discussions with the EC to develop a further paper for consideration by Council Members, which if agreed to will lead to the establishment of a working group.

Actions

- The Secretariat will contact the EC and discuss the development of this proposal.

Discussion on Proposal for an Alliance Science Conference in 2017

51. There was interest and general support for the idea of an Alliance Science Conference in 2017. It was acknowledged that decisions needed to be made before the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups set dates for their 2017 meetings. It was noted that that it was an opportunity to further cement global interest in the issue of reducing the emissions intensity of agriculture.

Decision

- Agree that a more detailed proposal be submitted for consideration to the 2016 Council meeting.

Action

- The Secretariat to work with the Research and Cross-Cutting Group Co-Chairs on the logistics of a 2017 science conference and to prepare a proposal for consideration at the next Council meeting.

Discussion on Proposal for Increased Member Reporting on Activities that support the Alliance

52. Members were sympathetic to the request of the Research and Cross-Cutting Group Co-Chairs for greater information about how Members are supporting the Alliance and where the Members saw opportunities for engagement. They appreciated that it would help the Research Groups to better understand the interests and perspectives of Members.

53. It was suggested that Members could, on a voluntary basis, prepare an annual report on their Alliance activities etc. and that this be trialled on a pilot basis. Members were also encouraged to update their country profiles on the new Alliance website, with the Chair noting that the voluntary annual report would assist Members in preparing and keeping such a profile up-to-date.

Decisions

- Encourage Members to prepare an annual report on their Alliance activities etc. on a voluntary basis for circulation to other Members and to the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups and that this reporting be trialled on a pilot basis.
- Request that Members update their country profiles on the new Alliance website as part of efforts to raise the profile of the Alliance and its activities.

Actions

- The Secretariat to prepare and circulate a standardised reporting template for the voluntary annual reports.
- The Secretariat to work with Members to update the country profiles as part of its work as the enhanced Secretariat.

Discussion on Alliance involvement in the UNFCCC COP21 and the proposal French “4/1000” soil carbon initiative.

54. After a brief discussion, there was agreement in principle to have an Alliance presence at COP21, and the Secretariat was requested to ensure that this interest was registered with the organisers of COP21.

55. Following further information from the French representative, there was a brief discussion on the Alliance’s potential involvement in “4/1000” soil carbon initiative. Given that most Members had not yet considered their individual country positions in relation to this initiative there was a reluctance for the Alliance to endorse the initiative. However, Members agreed in principle that there was a role for the Alliance in respect of this initiative and requested that the Research Groups follow up with this initiative and identify possible opportunities to align research activities.

NEW PARTNERS DISCUSSION

World Agricultural Forum (WAF)

56. The WAF expressed interest in being a partner of the Alliance at the 2014 Council meeting.

57. Dr Kenneth Baker presented on the vision, objectives, workings and achievements of the World Agricultural Forum. He noted that the WAF was focused on finding ways to turn research results into meaningful products to benefit society and in particular to feed an increasing global population. The WAF has a major congress every two years with smaller events regionally at the request of partners. He noted that with the growth of the internet, access to research results had improved dramatically but there was still a need to improve the uptake of that research into useable policies and products. That needed interaction and discussion. The WAF aimed to turn research into results by increasing the awareness of the importance of sustainable agriculture. He noted that the Alliance held a side event at the last WAF conference in Hyderabad. Dr Baker believed that the WAF would be a useful conduit to promote the achievements of the Alliance and to transfer the knowledge and results from Alliance activities to a wider audience so as to influence policy.

58. In the closed session it was acknowledged that WAF had approached the Alliance on the question of a partnership with a letter outlining the benefits and opportunities of this partnership circulated to the Alliance Council in August 2014. It was also noted that several Members and Research Group Co-Chairs had attended the last WAF Congress in Hyderabad and presented on the Alliance. This had been a valuable opportunity that has resulted in broadening agricultural research links.

59. After the discussion in the closed session, Council Members believed that a partnership with WAF would be valuable for the work of the Alliance. There were some issues on which Members wished to have clarification before a final decision on partnership:

- 1 Reciprocity – during the WAF presentation (under next steps for an Alliance/WAF partnership) there was mention of “reciprocal arrangements”. This was understood that this included Alliance representation on the WAF board or involvement in developing future Congress’. Members wanted to have further clarification about this remark and to confirm that they had understood the point correctly.
- 2 Regional opportunities – Members wanted to know what regional opportunities for engagement there were between the Alliance and WAF, especially what opportunities might there be for this partnership in South East Asia.

Decisions

- Agree to partner with WAF subject to satisfactory answers from WAF on the issues raised by Members.

Actions

- The Secretariat to follow up with WAF on the issues raised by Members and, if possible, to include the response from WAF with this meeting report so that Members can confirm the decision above.

CABI

60. Dr Patricia Neenan presented on behalf of CABI. She noted that the Executive Council of CABI had already accepted the Alliance as an affiliate member and had invited the Alliance to attend the CABI conference in the UK in June/July 2016.

61. Dr Neenan noted the origins of CABI and that it is best known for producing scientific publications and the science publications database (CAB abstracts). But the focus of CABI has turned to finding ways to put research to use. This included research knowledge management repositories (open access and development of research databases); research knowledge synthesis both for policy makers and for farmers (using tools such as short SSM/text messages to build capacity on the ground); and turning research into use which provided new research insights. Dr Neenan provided several examples of CABI’s work - Plantwise and the African Soil Health Consortium. It works with communication specialists to tailor science information for farmers working with key partners in the field to identify key messages and develop appropriate materials.

62. Dr Neenan noted that a gap in CABI’s work was in relation to agricultural greenhouse gas mitigation and that the Alliance’s research and databases would increase the body of knowledge that CABI could disseminate through its partners. Dr Neenan also noted that while CABI and the Alliance shared Member countries, CABI had a presence in Africa that the Alliance lacked and conversely the Alliance had a presence in Latin America that was missing in the CABI networks.

63. After discussion in closed session, Council Members believed that a partnership with CABI would be valuable for the work of the Alliance. There were some issues on which Members wished to have clarification before a final decision on partnership:

- 1 Branding of materials – what was CABI’s policy on using dual branding on publications; that is, including the Alliance logo on joint collaborations?
- 2 Translation of materials – does CABI have the ability to translate information into other languages, specifically Spanish.
- 3 Further information on the regional opportunities for engagement between the Alliance and CABI and, in particular, what opportunities there might be for this partnership in Latin America.

Decisions

- Agree to partner with CABI subject to satisfactory answers from CABI on the issues raised by Members.

Actions

- The Secretariat to follow up with CABI on the issues raised by Members and, if possible, to include the response from CABI with this meeting report so that Members can confirm the decision above.

Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Platform

64. Dr Martin Scholten (Co-Chair Livestock Research Group) spoke on this issue. He noted that the Council had received a partnership proposal from SAI in 2014. At that time, the Council decided not to move ahead with the partnership but instead decided that the most appropriate way to proceed was co-operation between the Livestock Research Group and the SAI. This has resulted in the publication *Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Livestock: Best Practice and Emerging Options*, which has received considerable praise.

65. As a result of this collaboration the SAI is interested in developing a similar cooperation with the Paddy Rice Group and the Livestock Research Group has been invited to participate in SAI scientific meetings and work with SAI in organising a global science workshop on practical applications.

66. There was no new request from SAI to the Council on partnership, as SAI is satisfied with cooperation with GRA at Research Group level. It was agreed that the relationship should continue at the Research Group level and through the Council Chair and Vice-Chair.

Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)

67. Dr Harry Clark (Co-Chair Livestock Research Group) spoke to the Council about the relationship with CCAC. There was no request for a partnership at this time but CCAC are interested in the possibility. The CCAC had an agricultural component in its work in 2013. Since that time it has worked with the Paddy Rice and Livestock Research Groups and funded specific projects from the CCAC trust fund. The CCAC is not a traditional research funder but rather looks to catalyse action on the ground to make a difference to farmers. Mark Mannis (USDA) noted that the Alliance had brought an agricultural perspective to the broader work of the CCAC and that the work of the two organisations overlapped rather than competed.

68. It was agreed that the Alliance Council would invite the CCAC to become a partner of the Alliance.

Decisions

- Agree to invite the CCAC to become a partner of the Alliance.

Actions

- The Secretariat to action this decision.

DISCUSSION ON STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

69. It was noted that “strategic relationships” in this context were situations where it would be productive for the Alliance to maintain a good working relationship and open dialogue with a specific organisation. There were organisations where there was potential for complementary actions with the Alliance but also potential for overlap and duplication. Such organisations could become Partners in the future.

Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN)

70. Dr André Laperrière presented on behalf of GODAN. He started his presentation by reminding Council members of the three overlapping challenges that the world faces in feeding an increasing population – food security/nutrition, climate change and water availability. With these challenges, he argued that collectively we will need to change the way we think about data – food security used to be about national security and commercial competition; now it had to be about world security and international collaboration. In this world, access to open data was important.

71. Dr Laperrière explained GODAN’s core activities – advocacy and encouraging access to data to ensure the greatest possible impact and innovation to benefit everyone. GODAN is a new organisation – although established in 2012 it has some 138 members (countries, organisations and private sector companies). A partnership with GODAN would involve accepting the GODAN partnership principles.

72. Following the presentation Council Members noted that it was clear that GODAN’s work had relevance for the Alliance and that further interaction may result in a partnership between the two organisations in the future. Members encouraged the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups to have discussions with GODAN and develop a relationship at this level.

Decisions

- Note that Members discussed the presentation from GODAN.
- Encouraged further development of the relationship between the Alliance and GODAN at the Research and Cross-cutting Group level and noted that the Alliance should consider the issue of the relationship with GODAN again at a future Council meeting.

Actions

- The Secretariat to inform GODAN of the Council decision.
- Research and Cross-Cutting Groups to engage with GODAN to develop the relationship further so as to ensure minimisation of overlap and duplication of effort.

Global Alliance on Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA)

73. Inge Ryman, Norway, provided the Council with an outline of the GACSA describing it as a multi-stakeholder platform utilising a scaling up of knowledge approach to climate

smart agriculture. The presentation noted that the agendas of the Alliance and GACSA were complementary and the challenge was to find ways to work together.

74. Andrew Achuo Enow, head of the facilitation unit of the GACSA provided further information on the three action groups of the GACSA: Knowledge, Investment and Enabling Environment. He informed the Council that country case studies were being developed that looked at the state of play at the intersection of these three activities. Mr Enow explained that the Alliance and its Research Groups were ideally placed to contribute to the Knowledge Action Group and that the GACSA could assist in disseminating Alliance research information and facilitate uptake of that information on the ground through its broad community of members. The GACSA could also help identify future research needs based on what on the ground practitioners needed. In addition, Mr Enow noted that the Alliance and GACSA could work together to address key research questions, develop outreach and training on climate smart agriculture and together address the UN sustainable development goals.

75. There was a discussion on the GACSA's focus – absolute reduction of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions or reduction on an emissions intensity basis. Mr Enow commented that the language GACSA used was “reduce or eliminate where possible” noting that it was possible for technologies to be developed that could eliminate agricultural emissions entirely. In response to another question, Mr Enow also commented that GACSA wanted to support national priorities but given that it was a loose voluntary coalition of stakeholders any support that the GACSA could offer was based on what the stakeholders were willing to provide.

76. It was agreed that the Alliance should continue to develop the relationship with the GACSA at a Research Group level (linking into the GACSA's Knowledge Action Group) and through the Chair and Vice-Chair.

DISCUSSION ON THE GLOBAL RESEARCH ALLIANCE STRATEGY 2015 -2020

77. The Chair, Dr Woteki, introduced this session by outlining the main points from the paper prepared for the Council on this issue. She noted that this paper (and the others prepared for this part of the meeting) were the starting points for the development of a strategic plan. Such a strategic plan would need to take into consideration the needs of each Member country in the Alliance. It would not replace the Charter but rather identify specific objectives and achievements for each of the next five years.

78. There was agreement by Member countries present to the development of a strategic plan. Discussion then turned to other aspects and elements not identified in the prepared paper that it would be useful to capture in the strategic plan. These included the need:

- For greater recognition of the research that the Alliance has facilitated and its impact on greenhouse gas emissions;
- For greater private sector involvement in the work of the Alliance;
- To develop a story about the work of the Alliance that had resonance with developing countries and the development community where greenhouse gas emissions are not

the top priority but productivity is. This means that identifying co-benefits will be important in any outreach work that the Alliance does.

- Increase representation in Africa.
- To find ways to develop the Research Group activities to take account of adaptation – the co-benefit of mitigation work.

79. The non-bureaucratic nature of the Alliance and the flexible way it responds to issues and gathers resources was noted as a key strength of the Alliance. But Members also confirmed the assessment of the Alliance’s weaknesses as outlined in the circulated paper, particularly the need for more representation from Africa. It was suggested that the Alliance consider more regional groupings of members and also that the Research Groups consider work on adaptation with co-benefits for mitigation.

80. There was a brief discussion on the “story” that the Alliance uses to communicate its work to others, especially non-Member countries. It was noted that a “increased productivity with co-benefits in terms of reduction of environmental impact and contributions to health and social circumstances” was more attractive than a “reduction in the emissions intensity of agriculture” message.

81. There was a longer discussion on the suggestion of greater links between research and policy-making with several countries noting the Charter is clear that the Alliance is focussed on research activities and that the Alliance should not move away from the provisions of the Charter. There were several comments that the Alliance was not intended to be an instrument of policy implementation or recommendation – these were the prerogative of national governments to use the knowledge base and research out of the Alliance as they best fit national priorities. Others however noted that it was not intended that the Alliance involve itself in the development of national policies. Rather the Alliance is about building the evidence base that can be used to inform and support national policy development. Uruguay commented that the work that the Research Groups had produced had greatly assisted Uruguay in developing its intended nationally determined contributions (INDC). It was also noted that it was often policy ministries that allocated funds for research activities and therefore it was important that the Alliance could demonstrate that it was producing policy relevant research.

Decisions

- 1 Agree to the development of a 5 year strategic plan for the Alliance. An initial draft would be developed in the 6 months following the Council’s agreement and the final draft would be presented for approval to the next Council meeting.
- 2 Agree to the formation of a working group of Member countries to assist in the preparation of the strategic plan.
- 3 Note that the following Member countries volunteered to be part of that working group – Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Thailand, Uruguay and the USA.
- 4 Request that other Member countries wishing to join the working group contact the Secretariat.

Actions

- Member countries to contact the Secretariat if they wish to be part of the working group assisting in the preparation of the strategic plan.
- Secretariat to organise a teleconference on the initial draft of a strategy plan so that countries can comment before the final is drafted.

Future of the Secretariat

82. New Zealand presented its proposal on the future of the Secretariat. It confirmed that New Zealand was able to continue hosting the Secretariat until 2019 if other Members were agreeable. New Zealand noted that the idea of an enhanced Secretariat as set out in the paper was a way of raising awareness of the Alliance, arguing that the Alliance needs to be better recognised for the work it is doing and be more visible if it is to attract greater funding for its work. The enhanced Secretariat would work with current and prospective Members and Partners, and work to raise the profile and standing of the Alliance. In this regard, New Zealand was proposing to establish a representative role in the Secretariat on a pilot basis. This person could speak at international events on behalf of the Alliance. The representative would work closely with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

83. There was widespread support for New Zealand continued role as the Secretariat until 2019. There was also support for enhancing the role and functions of the Secretariat to improve relationships with Partner organisations and to support the Chair and Vice-Chair. On the issue of a representative role there was support for such a role but a number of questions were raised as to the selection process, term of the pilot and transparency of the actions of the representative.

84. New Zealand said that it would provide the Council with a terms of reference for the role drawn from the paper that was circulated. It said that the representative would work closely with the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Secretariat could alert Council Members in advance to the events at which it proposed having the Alliance representative (or Chair/Vice-Chair) present at. It also made sense for the representative to provide regular feedback to Members thus increasing the flow of information and engagement across the Council. New Zealand thought that a two year period for the trial would make sense, with the Council discussing the merits of the position at that time. Finally, New Zealand said that it was giving careful thought to who would be selected and would like to suggest a person for the role. It would send its recommendation to Members for their consideration.

Decisions

- 1 Agree to New Zealand continuing as Secretariat till 2019.
- 2 Agree to an enhanced role and function of the Secretariat as outlined in the paper presented to Council by New Zealand.
- 3 Agree in principle to the creation of an Alliance representative role as part of the enhanced Secretariat on a two year pilot basis (beginning 2016) subject to :
 - a) Council prior agreement to a terms of reference for the position (which will be drawn from New Zealand's paper); and
 - b) Council endorsement of the person that New Zealand proposed for the role.

Actions

- New Zealand to circulate a terms of reference and provide Council Members with information about the person New Zealand is proposing for the role.
- Once representative is in place, Secretariat to alert Council Members to events it was proposed that the representative (or Chair/Vice-Chair) would present at on behalf of the Alliance.
- Secretariat to ensure that there is regular reporting on the activities of the enhanced Secretariat, including the representative.

Partner Process Strategy

85. The Secretariat briefly introduced this document. It noted that the Partners Process would help ensure that new partnerships are more active from the outset and it also provided a framework for strengthening existing partnerships.

86. There was general agreement that this document and the process it outlined was necessary to ensure that the Alliance had effective partnerships and it would assist the Secretariat in its enhanced role. It was reiterated that the objectives of prospective partners should be clearly aligned with the objectives of the Alliance so that the work of the Alliance and the partner complemented each other. There was some discussion about the length of the relationship between the Alliance and any partner. There was also clarification that there were two levels of partnership – that with the Council, the subject to this process document; and that between individual Research and Cross-Cutting Groups and different organisations.

87. While there was general agreement that Council Partners should be global and have significant reach and scope to assist in the work of the Alliance, it was acknowledged that there were exceptions; for example, in Africa where regional organisations might be quite important (see item on African Engagement). The proposed template allows for the Council to receive this information and make the appropriate decisions.

88. There were some amendments to the document and template requested by Member countries to better reflect the language of the Charter and to provide clarity on the difference between Council and Research Group partnerships.

Decisions

- 1 Agree in principle to the Partners Process with the amendments proposed to the process document.

Actions

- The Secretariat to circulate a copy of the amended Partners Process document.
- The Secretariat to complete the template for current Partners and circulate this for information to the Council.

Research Group Leadership Strategy

89. The Chair briefly introduced this document noting the Research and Cross-Cutting Group Co-Chairs had indicated support for the document but recommended that it be regarded as guidance to the Groups. She reminded Member countries that the Alliance was a voluntary organisation and needed to make the best use possible of those willing to take up the role of Co-Chair. The tradition of having two Co-Chairs for each Group was a good

practice; but there was also an acknowledgement that it would be a good idea for the proposed new Research Group to have three Co-Chairs.

90. There was general agreement that the concept was very useful but because of the provisions already in the Charter it should be agreed as 'guidelines' for use by the Research Groups. There was some confusion about the reference to individual term limits (bullet point 3 in the document) and after some discussion it was decided to remove this bullet.

91. There was a request that the Co-Chairs send out a survey to their Groups and get feedback on how the Groups (and leadership of the Group) was working. There was some discussion about the desire for balance in Co-Chairing positions between developed and developing countries and whether or not it would be appropriate to limit the term of the Co-Chairing role.

92. There was also discussion about the wording in the proposal regarding "adequate resourcing". There were requests to alter this language so that "members should carefully consider the resources necessary before undertaking the role".

Decisions

- 1 Agree that the Research Group Leadership Strategy be changed to Guidelines and subject to minor changes in the wording of the Guidelines be approved as such.

Actions

- The Secretariat to circulate a copy of the amended Research Group Leadership Guidelines.
- Co-Chairs to survey their Research Groups and to get feedback on how the Groups (and the leadership of the Groups) is working.

Communication Policy Review

93. The review of the Communications Policy is a standing item for the Council agenda. This year there was the additional question of whether the Communications Policy should be updated to reflect the enhanced role for the Secretariat.

94. It was agreed that the Communication Policy should remain as currently drafted as it was not limiting the work of the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups. Paragraph 10 of the policy on the actions of the Secretariat was a positive list and does not prevent the Secretariat undertaking other actions. In addition, it was noted that the Charter allows the Secretariat to perform other duties as directed by the Council. In light of the previous discussion and the fact that there will be a terms of reference for the Alliance representative role it was noted that Council agreement for this would allow for the enhanced Secretariat activities as proposed.

Decisions

- 1 Note that the Charter allows for the Secretariat to undertake further activities as directed by the Council and therefore the future work of the enhanced Secretariat does not require changes to the Communication Policy.
- 2 Agree that the Communications Policy should remain as currently drafted.

Proposal for a Chairing "troika" model

95. Dr Rudy Rabbinge presented his proposal that the outgoing Chair continue to have a role for the purposes of supporting the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair in the same way that a “troika” model worked in other international science organisations.

96. There was agreement that there would be benefits in having continuity in the governance of the Alliance and that additional support for the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair would be useful. However, there were questions about the burden that an additional year of commitment might mean for the attractiveness of the Chairing role. Members agreed that such a troika model would be in the nature of a guideline. It was noted that such a “troika” model could not be a formal arrangement given the provisions of the Charter.

Decisions

1. Agree that, when required, the current Chair and Vice-Chair utilise the expertise and experience of the outgoing Chair to progress the continuing work of the Alliance.

RESEARCH AND CROSS-CUTTING GROUP PRESENTATIONS

97. Each Research and Cross-cutting Group prepared two reports for Councils consideration – the normal six-monthly report and a summary of individual Group activities over the past twelve months. These were supplemented by presentations from each Research and Cross-Cutting Group at the Council meeting. The Co-Chairs had met the day prior to the Council meeting and as a result of those discussions had prepared a “roadmap” presentation so as to provide the Council with their views prior to the Council’s discussion on strategic issues (see above).

Croplands Research Group

98. The presentation from the Croplands Research Group was given by Alan Franzluebbbers (USDA-ARS) as the Brazilian Co-Chairs were not able to attend the Council meeting. The Cropland Research Group focuses on the management of croplands systems including the sequestration of carbon in soil and quantifying these changes. The emphasis is on developing technologies and management practices that can reduce emissions of agricultural greenhouse gases (CO₂, N₂O and CH₄) but also on understanding the effects of management practices such as climate conditions, tillage and crop rotation on the condition of the soil.

99. Dr Franzluebbbers noted that at its annual meeting the Croplands Research Group (held at Embrapa in Brazil) had identified the following ambitions for the coming year:

- Continue developing collaborative research;
- Cultivate effective partnerships;
- Improve the lines of communication with stakeholders; and
- Identify synergies to mitigation agricultural greenhouse gases and adapt to climate change.

100. Dr Franzluebbbers noted that the Croplands Research Group had struggled to identify funding opportunities for its three high level work programmes. It had produced some results but these were the minimum of what was possible. The Group had relooked at its structure so as to best utilise networks and regional synergies. But Dr Franzluebbbers noted

that work themes were more important than regional groups. These had been refreshed to encompass:

- Agroforestry systems;
- Conservation agriculture;
- Integrated crop-livestock systems;
- Integrated nutrient management;
- Irrigation efficiency;
- Landscape management of agricultural systems;
- Modelling carbon and nitrogen fluxes;
- Peatland management; and
- Small farm resource management.

101. The Croplands Research Group had developed a Facebook page for increasing the interaction and communication between colleagues and other researchers.

102. Dr Franzluebbers also provided the Council with an update of work with partners:

- CCAFS – there are continuing opportunities to work together.
- CABI - the Croplands Research Group will continue to explore ways to work with CABI to ensure the publication of agricultural greenhouse gas mitigation summaries.
- International Fertiliser Industry Association (IFIA) – there is interest from the IFIA in partnering with the Croplands Research Group nutrient management network. The Croplands Research Group will be exploring what collaboration is possible.
- Field-to-market – this private sector organisation produces sustainability indexes. The Croplands Research Group will explore collaborating on the organisations Fieldprint Calculator.

103. Finally, Dr Franzluebbers noted that the next meeting of the Croplands Research Group would be in the margins of the American Society of Agronomy conference in November 2016, commenting that participation at the Research Group meeting over the past five years was steady with 18 regular participants and a number who attended on a semi-regular basis when funding was available.

Livestock Research Group

104. Dr Martin Scholten and Dr Harry Clark, Co-Chairs of the Livestock Research Group presented on the Group's activities over the past 12 months. They noted that the Group has tried to have activities that address each of the six work areas in each theme/network. Key achievements for the past year include:

- A variety of capability building with regional projects and engagement programmes, including an African inventory and monitoring workshop that the Group hopes will lead to the establishment of a regional hub in South Africa.
- Increased connections with partners to impact on farmers and supply chains. An example is the SAI Platform collaboration with the Livestock Research Group on a

brochure, *Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from livestock: Best practice and emerging options*, copies of which were available to those present at the Council meeting.

- World Farmers' Organisation study tour – including farmers in discussions about increasing efficiency and productivity.
- Raising the profile of the Alliance – Livestock Research Group brochure.
- Active member participation – research networks are taking on their own activities – setting up own meetings, Italy to lead a Mediterranean research area.
- Collaborative research – CCAC agriculture and enteric fermentation programme, CCAC are looking to the Alliance for project focus areas and expertise – resources for joint projects with the Alliance and others.

105. The Council was also informed of the challenges facing the Livestock Research Group. These included:

- Securing resourcing – and the proposal to establish an international research consortium.
- Co-ordination issues within countries – there is a need to strengthen the science-policy interface and increase communications between those involved in the Alliance within countries.
- Packaging information in a way that is useful to farmers and to policy makers.

106. The Livestock Research Group had set the following goals for the coming year:

- The development of regional networks.
- A flagship soil carbon project.
- Working with the GACSA at the research group level.
- Involvement in the ERA-NET multi-partner call.
- Increasing the profile of the Group and its achievements.

107. The Co-Chairs noted that the long term vision of the Group was to be recognised for its expertise, maximise participation and increase regional scope.

108. The Co-Chairs summarised the support that the Livestock Research Group wished to receive from Council. Many of these points echoed the Research Group Co-Chairs Roadmap presentation (see above). There was a need for greater promotion and communication of the work of the Alliance. It was noted that the message needed to be production focused because that is where there will be greater engagement especially from developing countries. As in previous years, the Co-Chairs reiterated the need for greater funding for research, increased participation of researchers in Research Group meetings and for capacity and capability building. Finally, they emphasised the need for more active support for the Alliance by Member countries and in particular, improved links between Council and Research Group representatives in each country.

109. The Livestock Research Group was received a great deal of praise both for the progress they had made and, in particular, for the communications documents that they had produced and that were available to participants. There was a request for the latest

research results to be shared as soon as possible – it was the kind of information that could be used to brief Ministers about the progress that is being made in the Alliance and why continued commitment is important. There was a question as to whether or not the Alliance was connected to the G20 Agricultural chief scientists on animal health, the details of this meeting will be passed to the coordinators of the Livestock Research Group's Animal Health and Greenhouse Gas Intensity Network.

The Paddy Rice Research Group

110. Dr Kazuyuki Yagi presented on behalf of the Paddy Rice Research Group. He noted that the Group is the smallest Research Group with the highest proportion of developing countries, but they have made good progress over the past year nonetheless. He reminded the Council of the five action areas for the Group: standardisation of measurements, database of sites, increasing country participation, conducting a pilot multi-country experiment and establishing an adaptation and mitigation network.

111. The membership of the Group is split into two regional sub-groups - America and Asia – as the rice production systems in these two regions are quite different. Nonetheless the two sub-groups share and agree on common work plans. The Co-Chairs attend meetings of both sub-groups to ensure that linkages are maintained. Dr Yagi expected six Member countries and three observers to attend the Paddy Rice Research Group meeting the following week in Nanjing, China. The Group partners with IRRI, CIAT, CCAFS, MARCO, PROCISUR, FluxNet and also collaborates with CCAC.

112. The Paddy Rice Research Group had focused this year on creating a database of research results from experimental sites. This is a collaboration with the Croplands Research Group Managing Agricultural Greenhouse Gas emissions network (MAGGnet) modified for the Paddy Rice Group. Dr Yagi also provided information on the results of a pilot multi-country project (MIRSA) for South-east Asia that started in 2013. That project was focused on alternative wetting and drying water management techniques and demonstrated it was possible to achieve a 30% reduction in methane. A similar project is being contemplated for Latin America. There is already a research project underway in Southern Brazil that has demonstrated around 50% reduction in methane. There were also similar projects in Uruguay and Colombia (the latter under the auspices of the CCAC). But it was noted that alternative wetting and drying was riskier for farmers and there was a need to look at other methods that might produce co-benefits for farmers.

113. The Group also reported that they had just published standardised measurement guidelines. This was published on the NIAES website August 2015 (http://www.niaes.affrc.go.jp/techdoc/mirsa_guidelines.pdf).

In terms of forward actions, the Paddy Rice Group was looking to increase country participation but some countries did not have research capacity as yet. They would also be looking for funding for a further multi-country project. The Council was also informed that Viet Nam would be leading a discussion on mitigation and adaptation synergies in the coming weeks with the view to developing a list of activities to progress.

114. In the long term, the Paddy Rice Research Group had the following goals:

- Standardising monitoring, reporting and verification;
- Increased international research projects and capability building; and

- Increasing membership so that all countries with relevant rice production and expertise were involved in the Research Group.

115. The Paddy Rice Research Group also requested that the Council assist with the greater mobilisation of resources especially assistance for researchers to attend meetings. The Group wanted to see the two sub-groups strengthened including expansion to include other Asian countries such as India, Bangladesh and Cambodia. They wanted assistance to link to the projects of CCAFS and other partners and greater capacity building activities in Africa.

116. There was a brief discussion on how to increase membership of the Paddy Rice Research Group.

Inventories and Monitoring Cross-Cutting Group

117. Dr Brian McConkey started his report to Council by informing Council of the successful joint meeting between the Inventories and Monitoring Cross-Cutting Group and the Croplands Research Group in Brasilia. The Groups held both joint and separate sessions and this format was useful in increasing participation and increasing understanding of joint activities.

119. The Inventory and Monitoring Cross-Cutting Group have four work areas:

- Understanding how to use remote sensing and earth observations to improve inventories, with a completed stocktake of Member Countries using this technology;
- Quantifying mitigation strategies in inventory, activities under this topic include a workshop held in March 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand and a joint workshop CCAFS alongside the Climate Smart Agriculture science conference in March 2015.
- Improving national inventories, a stocktake of inventory improvements has been completed, and New Zealand hosted an African inventory workshop in July 2015, improve activity data and emission factors.
- Measurement of soil organic carbon stocks – monitor over time and measure effects of management practices/changes. A Post-Doctoral Fellow is undertaking a meta-analysis of available literature and this work will feed into the development of further activities for the grasslands network.

120. There were three challenges identified for the Group: increasing active participation in the Group and related to that increasing the involvement of practitioners in inventory and climate change, and thirdly, engagement by agricultural scientists in inventory activities.

121. The Groups' long term ambition was to add value by addressing inventory and monitoring issues at the Alliance level rather than at an individual country level. The Groups' goals for the next year were focused on logical next steps for each activity level, namely:

- Remote sensing.
- Improve capability to quantify adaptation and mitigation options at farm level.
- Sharing knowledge and facilitating collaboration on inventory methods to improve sustainable adaptation including case studies.

- To produce best practice guidance on monitoring soil organic carbon stocks over space and time.

122. The Group was also interested in linking scientists and policy makers into the development of national inventories.

123. In summary, the Group noted that its ambitions exceeded its capacity. This being the case, they were taking a more targeted approach and restricting work areas to those with active participation. The stocktakes that the Group had undertaken had increased interest and involvement and, more importantly, had identified collaborative research opportunities. The connections to UNFCCC reporting were being strengthened. Finally, Dr McConkey noted that meeting in conjunction with another Research Group had been very successful.

Soil Carbon and Nitrogen Cross-cutting Group

124. Dr Jean-François Sousanna reminded the Council that the Soil and Nitrogen Cross-Cutting Group worked in collaboration with other Research Groups, focusing on modelling soil carbon for the purposes of assessing mitigation and adaptation options and the potential for soil carbon sequestration.

125. The Cross-Cutting Group had three activities:

- Modelling the inter-comparison for greenhouse gas emissions and testing mitigation options;
- Modelling the inter-comparison for climate change impacts on agricultural greenhouse gases and adaptation; and
- Planning for a soil carbon sequestration network is underway.

126. On the last point, Dr Sousanna provided an explanation of the French “4/1000” initiative, noting that there was an opportunity to sequester carbon in soils. Over half of the world’s agricultural soils are currently degraded and soil carbon sequestration was important for food security purposes. Dr Sousanna noted that it was both sensible and appropriate for the Alliance to host this research programme and work alongside the FAO, AGMIP, UNEP, CGIAR, Global soil partnership etc. All of these organisations would like to see an improvement in estimates of base soil carbon stock through improvement measurement techniques. At its Lodi meeting the Group discussed developments of site data and practices, models for soil carbon sequestration potential and cost/benefit analysis.

127. France provided further information on the “4/1000” initiative and confirmed that it was France’s intention that this initiative be launched at COP21 in December 2015. New Zealand proposed that the Council should decide to formally present at the COP21 agriculture day.

128. There was a brief discussion on how the Group worked across different types of grassland systems with Dr Sousanna noting that that the work had started with temperate grasslands and was now moving into tropical grasslands with Brazil and Australia leading new work in this area.

ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

129. Dr Rudy Rabbinge spoke to Council on this issue noting that countries from Africa are under-represented in the Alliance. He provided the Council with an outline of how African agriculture is developing, noting that the growth in agricultural production globally outpaces the growth in global population but in Africa the situation is reversed. Population growth in Africa is still outpacing food production.

130. There had been analysis to understand why this was the case. It was a complicated situation with a range of factors combining to make agricultural production lag. This included old soils (good agricultural land is not widespread in Africa), a wide range of different farming systems, little investment in agriculture (less than 1% of total investment), low agricultural research capacity, lack of access by women farmers to credit and the absence of political will to change the situation.

131. The situation is changing, as documented in a series of reports over the past 10 years and there is increasing investment (such as from the Gates Foundation) into agricultural improvements. In 2014, AGRA produced a report on the state of African agriculture and the consequences of climate change, setting out seven high level recommendations to address the issues. Dr Rabbinge noted that the impacts of climate change were already being seen in Africa.

132. Dr Rabbinge told the Council that African commitment to the Alliance would only grow if the Alliance had something to offer. He suggested that the Alliance explore collaboration with AGRA and other regional organisations. The Alliance also needed to work more closely with Ghana and other African contacts. He concluded by noting that Africa was different from other regions and therefore the Alliance needed to change its approach if it wished to be effective in Africa.

133. The subsequent discussion agreed with this last point noting that it would be useful for the Alliance to work very closely with Partners who were already working in Africa. Potentially there was a bigger impact to be made through this route than through individual Member countries.

APPENDIX 1: Participants List

Country	Attendees
Alliance Member Countries	
Argentina	Maximiliano Moreno: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (maxmor@magyp.gob.ar) Jose D. Molina: Agricultural Counsellor(jdmmolina@gmail.com) Dario Polski: Embassy Secretary (dzw@mrecic.gob.ar)
Australia	<i>Observer - Peter Grace: QUT (pr.grace@qut.edu.au)</i>
Belgium	Sylviane Thomas : Directorate-General for Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment (sylviane.thomas@spw.wallonie.be)
Bolivia	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Brazil	Gustavo Mozzer: EMBRAPA (gustavo.mozzer@embrapa.br)
Canada	Robert Patzer: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (robert.patzer@agr.gc.ca) Brian McConkey: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Brian.McConkey@agr.gc.ca)
Chile	<i>Unable to attend</i>
China	Bo Li: Ministry of Agriculture (kjszyhjc@agri.gov.cn) Hongmin Dong: Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (donghm@ieda.org.cn) Yue Li: Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (liyue@caas.cn) Feng Liu: National Development and Reform Commission (liufeng@ndrc.gov.cn)
Colombia	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Costa Rica	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Denmark	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Dominican Republic	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Ecuador	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Egypt	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Finland	<i>Unable to attend</i>
France	Pierre Schwartz: Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries (pierre.schwartz@agriculture.gouv.fr) Robert Habib: INRA (robert.habib@avignon.inra.fr) Jean-Francois Soussana: INRA (Jean-Francois.Soussana@paris.inra.fr)
Germany	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Ghana	Regina Sagoe: Ministry of Environment, Science & Technology (rsagoe50@gmail.com)
Honduras	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Indonesia	Agung Hendriadi: Indonesian Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (hendriadiagung@yahoo.com) Saliem Handewi: Indonesian Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (handewipurwati@gmail.com)
Ireland	Richard Howell: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (richard.howell@agriculture.gov.ie)

Italy	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Japan	Mie Kasuga: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (mie_kasuga@nm.maff.go.jp) Kazuyuki Yagi: National Institute for Agro-Environmental Sciences (kyagi@affrc.go.jp)
Lithuania	Vaidotas Ašmonas: Attaché for Commercial Affairs and Agriculture of Lithuania to the United States (vaidotas.asmonas@urm.lt)
Malaysia	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Mexico	Carlos Vasquez: SAGARPA (cvazquez.sagarpausa@verizon.net) Luis Martinez Senties: SAGARPA (lmartinez.sagarpausa@verizon.net)
Netherlands	Rudy Rabbinge: Wageningen UR (rudy.rabbinge@wur.nl) Johan Gatsonides: Ministry of Economic Affairs (j.r.gatsonides@minez.nl) Martin Scholten: Wageningen UR (martin.scholten@wur.nl) Ineke Lemmen: Ministry of Economic Affairs (c.j.m.lemmen@minez.nl)
New Zealand	Chris Carson: Ministry for Primary Industries (chris.carson@mpi.govt.nz) Harry Clark: NZAGRC (harry.clark@nzagrc.org.nz) Matt Hooper: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (matthew.hooper@mfat.govt.nz)
Nicaragua	Jose Miguel Obando Espinoza: INTA (mobando@inta.gob.ni)
Norway	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Panama	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Paraguay	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Peru	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Philippines	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Poland	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Republic of Korea	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Spain	Isabel Artime: Embassy of Spain; Office of Agriculture, Food & Environment (iartime@magrama.es)
Sri Lanka	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Sweden	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Switzerland	<i>Unable to attend</i>
Thailand	Akarapon Houbcharaun: Unit of Agricultural Natural Resource Economics Research (akaraponh@gmail.com) Napat Ouicharoen: Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (napatoui@outlook.com)
Tunisia	<i>Unable to attend</i>
UK	Adele Hulin: ADAS UK Ltd (Adele.hulin@adas.co.uk)
Uruguay	Walter Oyhantacabal: UACC-MGAP (woyhantcabal@gmail.com) Gonzalo Zorrilla: INIA, (gzorrilla@inia.org.uy)
USA	Cathie Woteki: USDA (Catherine.Woteki@osec.usda.gov) Alan Franzluebbbers: USDA-ARS (alan.franzluebbbers@ars.usda.gov) Mark Manis: USDA (Mark.Manis@fas.usda.gov) Tawny Mata: USDA (Tawny.mata@osec.usda.gov) Jaime Adams: USDA (Jaime.Adams@osec.usda.gov) Sally Schneider: USDA (sally.schneider@ars.usda.gov) Jane Johnson: USDA (jane.johnson@ars.usda.gov)

	Lauren McGraw: USDA (Lauren.McGraw@osec.usda.gov)
Viet Nam	Nguyen Tuat: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (vantuat55@vnn.vn ; tuat2005@gmail.com)
Other Participants	
<p>Ademola Braimoh: World Bank (abrainmoh@worldbank.org) Lini Wollenberg: CGIAR-CCAFS (Lini.wollenberg@uvm.edu) Jean-Charles Cavitte: EC (Jean-Charles.Cavitte@ec.europa.eu) Francesco N. Tubiello: FAO (Francesco.Tubiello@fao.org) Andrew Achuo Enow: GACSA - Facilitation Unit (Andrew.Enow@fao.org) Inge Herman Rydland: GACSA (inge.rydland@mfa.no) Kenneth Baker: WAF (ken.baker@worldagforum.com) Patricia Neenan: CABI (p.neenan@cabi.org) André Laperrière: GODAN (alaperrier@aol.com)</p>	
Secretariat: Deborah Knox (deborah.knox@mpi.govt.nz), Meredith Stokdijk (meredith.stokdijk@mpi.govt.nz)	