

**GODAN Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
Berlin, September 28, 2017**

Participants*

In Berlin		
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Rapporteur

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Agenda Overview

- 1- Opening of the meeting by the Chair.
- 2- Adoption of the agenda
- 3- Introductions
- 4- Review of the June 26 minutes and decisions
- 5- Presentation of activities/developments that took place since the last SC meeting

- 6- Presentation of activities remaining for 2017
- 7- Discussion of GODAN future
 - a. Remaining financial and in-kind support for GODAN Secretariat
 - b. Looking beyond 2018 and the evolution of GODAN
- 8- AOB.
- 9- Tentative dates and venue for next SC meeting.
- 10- Closure of the meeting.

Summary of Key Decisions:

Restated acceptance of the previous SC meeting minutes as amended subsequent to the meeting.

List of 2017 events should be presented with a greater focus on what was achieved versus what was done. Use of headline metrics and/or infographics is encouraged.

Discuss how to promote the PUSH work and the donor policy and practice work next spring:. Some opportunities if we work far enough in advance to get the high level university personnel involved.

Complete GODAN partnership assessment surveys as they are a vital component in us understanding the needs and the ' offer' from our partnership

Develop a strategic action model for the next interpretation of GODAN Secretariat strategy. Should include:

- 1) Exploring the multiplier effect; how to get greatest impact through sectoral/political/other associations as key partners
- 2) Business model
- 3) Adjustment of resource allocations/expertise required
- 4) Exploring the balance of Advocacy versus Strategic Partnerships

Evaluate GODAN' s legal status and of pros and cons of continuation of this model for the next phase. What are the options?

Evaluate the possibility of championing a UN Treaty on Open Data for Ag and Nutrition

Promote communications and interactions to/from/between partners supported by toolkits.

Prepare interim report on programme next steps by end January for informal consultation within SC.

Agenda Items 5 and 6: Activities since last SC/until the end of 2017.

The discussion began with the review of 2017 as scheduled in the GODAN inception plan

The list of activities and events carried out per quarter during the year was reviewed. Events of perceived greater importance, such as the Nairobi Summit/declaration (15 African ministers approving) and the Burkina/Francophone Summit (15 French African countries represented in this new open data federation) were especially underlined in light of their high political visibility and strategic importance for GODAN. Efforts being carried out with Donors and Academia were also emphasized, as were Private Sector Events in UAE and Utrecht, confirming the Secretariat's sustained action within different categories of membership.

While appreciating the advocacy/visibility triggered by these events, members discussed how much effort should be spent in advocacy versus 'strategic involvement' with key groupings/associations as proposed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat emphasized that being now mid-way into its initial 5 years plan/existence, and after having had a true exponential growth, it is time for GODAN to reflect and see how best to adjust to the next phase of its action. Advocacy will continue to play a major role in the coming period but with a re-evaluation of time budgets to deliver meaningful strategic involvement and good documentation of impact.

Members also suggested that as impressive as the list of 2017 events is, the list/document could be improved by focusing on what was achieved at each event giving more headline metrics and infographics as per the Summit report. It was agreed that more of the formal progress would be documented in the formal 2017 Annual Reporting with DFID.

Agenda Item 7: GODAN future

The discussion began with a review of ongoing/pending financial and in-kind commitments from current donors. It was noted that as DFID had begun donating one year before USDA (the second major donor) next year would be the last full year for both donors, unless there is a new commitment from DFID to continue. While there was a general expression of support for GODAN to continue (with possible amendments - for example CTA welcomed a special focus on only supporting travel around CAFDO and follow-ups to the Nairobi declaration), the need to translate this support into firm pledges was emphasized in order not to be put in contingency mode in the later part of next year.

The Secretariat emphasized that while an increase in partner numbers may reflect a very good achievement in terms of increasing the awareness and the general support towards open data in Ag and Nutrition across the globe, it made it more and more difficult for the small Secretariat team to continue to interact with the same intensity with individual members, hence the need to reflect that reality on the approach we take. Options discussed included:

- a) *Phasing out*: If GODAN was to stick to the initial plan envisaged before its creation some years ago, it should start to wind down next year, gradually replacing its physical advocacy efforts with either or both technology (website, social media) and association with other sister organisations that could eventually carry the flag. In the light of recent interest in more donors in joining GODAN (notably the German and Chinese Governments) this option was not at the moment favored by the SC.
- b) *Status quo*: As mentioned above, if the Secretariat pursues its mission, it has to do it factoring in new practices, more closely meeting the needs and capacities of its network (NB a partner assessment is currently being carried out by the Secretariat). This could involve a much more significant use of electronic media for advocacy and the strategic involvement of GODAN staff in institutions or networks in the membership base that have in turn a significant reach (e.g. PUSH, GEO, NNEDPRO, AAPARI, etc). This could also mean revisiting the Secretariat's interactions with the network and the skillset needed to engage with them. The Secretariat should also continue to accelerate development of advocacy tools for the partners: presentations, how to guides, FAQs, videos, presentation templates, key messages, etc. Secondments to the Secretariat while very useful need to be supported by core funding to team staff and direct costs for events, policy focussed research commissions, additional communication costs, etc. In light of what has been stated above, this option requires securing core funding at least throughout 2019 and preferably beyond; the GODAN Secretariat ED is now focussing on fundraising for core functions in the short term.
- c) *Expansion*: GODAN has triggered a wave of interest in open data for agriculture and nutrition worldwide. We are regularly asked for opinion, advice, guidance and participation in various committees, activities and events across the globe. It is becoming very difficult to meet this increasing level of interest without increasing resources allocated to it. While technology will help, a realignment of our efforts as well, we believe that a fresh, new financial commitment would provide for a longer term view required for GODAN.

Based on the discussions, it appeared that either options *b* or *c* would be preferred by the SC.

Additionally, the SC suggested that a business model (exploring a range of options including member fees, multiple small donors, large donors, and private sector inputs) be developed and submitted for discussion early next year.

In all cases there appeared to be a consensus that the SC does not see phasing out to be desirable at this time (noting that 'the work is not yet done'), but rather, the need for the Secretariat to adapt to changes; adjust its ways of working as needed and for donors to

reflect this adjustment in their support. A greater strategic steering role for the Secretariat, an option made possible by the footprint and credibility established by GODAN so far seems to make sense. The fact that its opinion/voice is more and more being sought is a great indicator of its credibility.

The Secretariat discussed the role of Geospatial and Satellite data and emphasised the need to interface with both GEO and GODAN Action's work in weather data.

The scope of the donor open data policy and practice research paper was outlined. In its final form it will be released on 13 October. A joint donor statement (DFID, USAID & BMGF) presented at CFS side event #91 on 13 October will accept the report, recognise its value and call for the establishment of cross donor dialogue and collaboration around open data for agricultural research. The CFS event will involve high-level representation including Dan Gustafson (DDG-FAO) and representatives of all three donors. This will be a soft launch of the joint statement and its presentation will be used as a catalyst to invite other donors to join in the common commitments the three will make.

This work has direct interfaces with the work with PUSH to improve opendata policy and practice in their network. We should consider the PUSH spring event in Illinois as a possible opportunity to present the research and the statement to that audience.

Agenda Item 8: AOB

Discussion on who are the drivers for change in the sector; donors or institutions:

DFID feels that at the moment it is hard to push specific resources towards open access before full review of their policy (in next 6 months); whilst on the other hand there is a broad acceptance that they should already be helping and providing capacity to make it happen. There are resources that encourage data plans to be built into proposals at bid submission, but getting that understanding accepted across key stakeholders (in DFID and beyond) remains a problem. Gates in contrast have a different pot of money to help researchers comply with opendata policy which helps grantees build capacity. Their thinking is fairly well advanced but they like other donors don't always fully police compliance.

CABI stated that the Ithaca S+R survey about the changing information needs of agricultural researchers in key institutions in the USA revealed that they experience particular difficulty with managing their data; generic information *discovery* is not a problem in well resourced institutions, but *finding, managing and publishing research data* is. The need for capacity building is latent.

A discussion on the need to think beyond donors was had. We should aim to partner with champion institutions in a few universities; getting them to build proposals for capacity building locally as well as in developing countries. The PUSH proposals are already moving in this direction as need for improved capacity has been seen in the US.

The timing is really good here to look at organizations that fund domestic research. Perhaps the European Commission and Research Councils? Could we work with academics for research grants for opening data? Would we be able to support this within GODAN?

There is merit in grants for publishing important datasets openly, the Wellcome trust is doing this, they provide grants not for research but to publish and curate existing data, and then fund projects around those significant datasets and this would fit in the remit, maybe go back to Wellcome trust to discuss this, they would help. (Action Secretariat).

Additional countries (above China mentioned above) have recently expressed some desire to join GODAN as donor, and also the SC, for example Argentina and Mexico.

Agenda Item 9: Next meeting

There should be an informal consultation end January on the preliminary report decided above (see decisions). This consultation will be virtual and possibly by email.

The next SC meeting will be virtual, tentatively in March or April 2018 (TBD).

On this the meeting was adjourned.