

# GODAN Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes  
14<sup>th</sup> February 2019

## Participants\*

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## Apologies

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## Agenda

Items for discussion:

1. Welcome, introductions, and adoption of the agenda
2. Review of 26 July 2018 meeting & decisions
3. 2018 DFID Annual Review
4. Other matters related to DFID's proposed support
5. Request for hosting proposal result
6. Proposal: GODAN Advisory Council – introducing concept and discussion
7. Conclusion and next steps

## Summary of Key Decisions:

- 1 The meeting registered support for the GODAN hosting selection process and the acceptance of the Montreal International bid as the best option. The Secretariat's move to Montreal later in 2019 was accepted.
- 2 Agreement to introduce the 'GODAN Community Council' to advise and support the Steering Committee, Secretariat and GODAN mission.
- 3 In light of the expansion of the GODAN network and of the creation of the advisory body, discussions on GODAN governance will be included in the next meeting's agenda.
- 4 The name of the Steering Committee should be changed to '*Donor Committee*'

## 1 Welcome, introductions and adoption of the agenda

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming two new DFID representatives to the Steering Committee. Apologies were received from members who were not in attendance. The meeting's agenda was adopted without changes.

## 2 Review of the 26 July 2018 meeting & decisions

During a review of the minutes of the July 2018 meeting it was agreed to make the following amendments to the text of the minutes and reflect the changes in the final version posted on the GODAN website: reference to the members "support" of GODAN activities would be replaced with "partners appreciated the presentation" of the GODAN Business Plan. Similarly, the word "analysis" of legal issues should be replaced with "considered".

## 3 2018 DFID Review

Highlights of DFID's annual review of the GODAN Secretariat and GODAN Action programme (2018) were presented. According to the review it had been the best year so far for GODAN, with gradings from A to A\*\* recorded. All objectives were assessed to have been met, most exceeded; mention was made of the rapidly expanding GODAN footprint, and positive comments were made in relation to value for money. Other donors concurred with this general assessment and expressed their appreciation to GODAN for its performance, and for DFID for this very comprehensive review. In turn DFID representatives invited other donors to also share/circulate such evaluations when performed, the principle was agreed by everyone.

#### **4 Other matters related to DFID' s proposed support to GODAN (2019-2021)**

Moving forward DFID will be stepping up its open data for agriculture activities and it sees a good fit with GODAN – through a new programme called eDIAL which will enhance the effectiveness of open data for impact in agriculture.

Partnering with the Gates Foundation the ambitious programme plans to build on and replicate initiatives such as the Nairobi Declaration, to reach and involve up to 27 countries in Africa & Asia, with a special attention given to fragile states.

The logframe being developed with the Secretariat also includes a growing involvement of the private sector, and gradually building up other operating income sources, including the development of fee-based activities.

In broader discussions it was advised that Steering Committee members should play an active role in introducing and endorsing GODAN to other funders in order to bring new resourcing opportunities to the programme.

Members were pleased that the DFID relationship will continue for another 3 years; other members stated they were at this time looking for the continuation of support opportunities from their side as well. DFID offered to continue to share its plans with members of the steering committee and stated that complementary support and cost-share proposals would be welcomed.

#### **5 Request for proposal result & hosting selection**

As GODAN is about to complete the last year of its first programmatic cycle, a request for proposals (RFP) was released in September, inviting interested parties to submit funding and hosting offers for the coming transition/transformation period (2019-2022)

Nine hosting proposals were received, most offering some in-kind contribution, two adding a significant financial component to their offer. No separate funding offer was received as a consequence of the RFP during this period (although parallel discussions took and continue to take place).

The evaluation of the proposals was made by a committee composed of three senior members of the Secretariat. The exercise consisted of a quantitative analysis based on the evaluation matrix announced as part of the RFP, followed by a qualitative review of the proposals. In order to allow for the completion and comparability of the proposals, clarifications were sought from the bidders and final results were shared with the Steering Committee members in the course of January.

Montreal International's consortium, composed of the City of Montreal, Governments of Canada and of Quebec, and McGill University, demonstrated to have a programmatic and financial edge on other proposals, so it was retained as the best offer. It was assessed that McGill offered a very high capacity both in terms of agriculture as well as data, while the combined efforts of the Governments provided for significant tax incentives along with direct financial contributions.

It was therefore considered to be the best bid and the recommendation to accept this offer was endorsed by Steering Committee members.

Appreciation for the hard work required to manage the selection process, set against a tight deadline and conducted while other activities were continuing, was noted.

The time required to arrange all required administrative, legal and logistical arrangements for the relocation of the Secretariat is estimated to be approximately six months.

## **6 Proposal: GODAN Advisory Council – introducing concept and discussion**

For some time, the Steering Committee, in light of the exponential growth of the GODAN network, has been discussing ways to provide a broader range of inputs to the Steering Committee. While experiments had been tried (such as inviting guests to the SC meetings) in the past, none had been conclusive.

This is why a new proposal, introduced in the July 2018 meeting, has now been fleshed out: the constitution of an advisory body composed of GODAN champions (opinion leaders trained and passionate on open data for ag and nutrition). This body should be called '*GODAN Community Council*' in order to avoid possible confusion with the Steering Committee, the latter will from this point onwards be referred to as the '*Donor Committee*'.

The advisory body, GODAN Community Council's main mission is to provide valuable recommendations/suggestions to the Steering Committee, and to ensure visibility, recognition and coordination between GODAN Champions across the network. It would not be a substitute to the Steering Committee, nor would it have financial or policy authority. Rather, it would be an additional tool in assessing results and providing policy/programmatic recommendations.

A report further elaborating on the above, was presented, and in principle, adopted by the Committee, subject to comments to be sent to the Secretariat within two weeks of the release of these minutes.

## **7 Conclusion and next steps**

A suggestion was made for the Steering Committee to meet more frequently, possibly quarterly, as things appear to be changing faster than in previous years. There were no dissenting remarks to this suggestion.

Further to this the Chair summarized the decisions taken during the discussions, and adjourned the meeting.