

**GODAN Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2020**

Participants:

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Agenda:

- 1: Meeting to open with comments from out-going Chair, and handover to the new Chair.
- 2: Short introduction of GODAN Board to the Steering Committee by Board Chair, Mr. Amir Dossal.
- 3: Review of the minutes of September 2, 2020.
- 4: Overview of the current financial situation of the Secretariat.
- 5: The list of current prospects, invitation to the donors to join the projects that are in their interests;
 - i: Executive Director will inform the meeting about the situation the professional Secretariat is now in.
 - ii: Executive Director provides updates about the prospects and what extent the projects are granted.
 - iii: How to ensure projects are effectively linked with the donors and they are invited to participate in the projects.
 - iv: Donors can indicate the interest they have in specific projects proposals
- 6: Providing an orientation which GODAN occupies in the development arena.
Accepting that open data has gained much interest, the need now for GODAN to add value and clearly articulate its engagement with open data.
- 7: AOB, including date of next meeting

Summary of Key Decisions:

A: Board and SC members to provide any suggestion on the GODAN Governance paper (circulated) shall any improvement be possible between its various bodies.

B: Board and SC members to review funding opportunities available now or planned for 2021, which could be suitable to support GODAN activities, and revert to the Secretariat.

C: At his request, the Secretariat to provide FAO Rep. with existing GODAN proposals submitted to the FAO for follow-up.

D: Members of the GODAN Board of Directors will share additional thoughts on potential new activities (programs/funding) with the Secretariat and Steering Committee members.

E: Next meeting tentatively planned for December.

1: Handover between the out-going chair and incoming-chair

The outgoing Chair, Ms Jaime Adams opened the meeting by welcoming all members of the donor steering committee and GODAN board of directors. She reminded the SC of her reasons for stepping down and expressed her gratitude for everyone's contributions since GODAN's inception in 2015.

In accepting the new role as Chair, Mr Sjoerd Croque thanked Ms Adams' for her leadership over the last years, expressing his gratitude for her commitment and efforts. He thanked for the committee for the trust they had placed with him and reminded the meeting he undertook this responsibility in his own personal capacity, which was approved by the Dutch Government.

The GODAN Secretariat stated its appreciation for the hard work and commitment demonstrated by the departing Chair, appreciation which was further shared by other participants.

2: Introduction to GODAN Board of Directors

The Chairman of the GODAN Board was invited to explain his views on the role of the board and its relationship to the SC. Members were directed to the governance papers provided to the meeting, which described the Board's role. In basic terms, the Board is established to help grow GODAN's mission. In more specific terms, the Board is committed to development, investment and funding for GODAN.

He added that while the COVID 19 pandemic has caused delays in GODAN's transition plans, the Board is moving ahead with US based funding mechanisms, be it with businesses or foundations.

Simultaneously, the Board is also looking at other sources of funding and support outside the US.

3: Review of the previous Steering Committee minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved without amendments.

4: Overview of the present financial situation

Observing that the DFID grant had been prematurely ended, the GODAN Secretariat had been strenuously prospecting for new donors. While there is, as yet, no replacement for the core funding provided by DFID, the following were close to being confirmed:

- Digital Africa (France), with a programme that could provide at least 2 years of new funding
- AFD (France), assessing a proposal for Burkina Faso and Niger. The former proposal was at the final stage of decision-making with the later to be considered against a successful commencement of implementation in Burkina Faso.
- Swiss – this is a food security for Africa proposal that had been well received by the donor but was awaiting approval.
- Canadian Government emergency funding support – due the present pandemic the Federal Government had confirmed its willingness to receive a request from GODAN to support the organisation during the next 3 – 4 months. The final decision to confirm support and transfer funds to GODAN was expected imminently.
- Canadian wage subsidy – to offer further targeted support GODAN was successful in being awarded a small subsidy that support some salary costs. Although much appreciated, neither of the two Canadian grants could be considered the holy grail – they would keep operations open until the new year, but it gave time for AFD, the Swiss or other donors to hopefully confirm the commission of new projects.

In addition the GODAN team was scouting the market for other new and relevant calls.

The participants were reminded that GODAN's first four years were focused on carrying out advocacy, while (per its approved business plan) in 2019 GODAN embarked in a transformation phase, gradually shifting its activities towards more direct partner support; this required tapping in the broad expertise within the GODAN alliance, carrying out projects that prove/demonstrate the effectiveness of open data for smallholders and others – it is now a much more 'hands-on' period, where it triggers a much more immediate impact.

Additionally, this transformation period (due to last until 2022) involves expanding the GODAN funding base towards the private sector and foundations on one hand and assessing the possibility of requesting membership fees. Meanwhile the Secretariat and its staff are going through very difficult sacrifices in order to maintain its operation while alternatives to DFID funding are being sought.

There was discussion about a series of new initiatives that supported this new direction. For example, GODAN is supporting FAO in the design of platform that consolidates its traditional AMIS platform with the GODAN developed Data Cube (geodata based). This approach is also discussed with colleagues of the World Bank, also interested in this project.

GODAN had established a donation facility on its website. It was being tested and linked to GODAN social media platform, and while only in an early stage had been receiving individual donations during the testing period.

During the last weeks GODAN had secured intellectual property assets, particularly securing GODAN Action and CTA training manuals and knowledge projects within GODAN online repositories. The Secretariat is now in a position to transfer these valuable products to another entity, should GODAN operations have to close in the near future.

5/6: The list of current projects and how SC members can help. Orientation of GODAN development role

The Chair wished the meeting to consider more long-term plans and explore ways members could help GODAN secure new funding. The meeting was asked what specific areas could they help with.

The Montreal International representative asked about the Government assistance contacts he had provided and if they had proved useful. This was confirmed and appreciation expressed for that practical and very important advice and links provided to GODAN

The FAO Rep. sought greater information about proposals GODAN had recently submitted to his organisation. He then offered to coordinate with colleagues in HQ and follow up on these proposals.

Meanwhile the FCDO (UK) Rep. offered to convey the situation to his team in London.

In thanking members for their contributions the chair asked if he could draw more fully on their knowledge of joint initiatives or programmes, which GODAN could be directed to. He also sought members' commitment to report on any new programmes, either in their own institutions or partner donors, so as to increase the level and quality of GODAN's proposals.

The members were asked by the chair to consider more intensive relationships between themselves, the GODAN Board of Directors and the Secretariat. He sought that SC members provide more practical inputs into GODAN development plans than had previously been the case.

The discuss turned to members experience in data technology and their willingness to help GODAN prospect for projects in this specialist area:

The chair concluded this discussion by reminding participants that GODAN has embarked in an important, but delicate transformation phase, which requires everyone's support. Therefore it was asked for everyone to keep an eye out for developments in their own areas of action and to coordinate with the Secretariat and the Board of Directors on potential new programmes of relevance to GODAN such as:

- Projects that address the stress to the food supply chain caused by COVID 19. GODAN can help governments solve problems related to food stocks, disruption of supplies, improving yields and working with farmers to accelerate delivery of food to markets
- Improving food quality and safety. GODAN can work with food toxins and solutions to improve food safety, particularly in tropical climates.
- Use of Geodata for precision agriculture, precision irrigation, crop forecasting, crop insurance, infestations control.
- Increasing the opportunities for African intellectuals to lead and participate in sustainable ag and nutrition initiatives on the continent.
- Continuing to develop materials and provide capacity building in the use of open data for agriculture and nutrition.

There followed a discussion related to the areas of expertise of GODAN and on the ongoing list of projects the Secretariat is working on.

7: AOB & Conclusion

Thanking SC members for their contribution and support to GODAN, the incoming Chair summarized the discussions and encouraged members to support GODAN's prospecting and proposal developments efforts. The next meeting was proposed for the first week of December 2020, to be focused on activities for 2021-2022. Having no other matters, the Chair closed the meeting.