



2016 Global Shea Alliance Executive Committee Meeting
November 5, 2016
Accra, Ghana

1. Introductions and GSA Governance

The meeting started at 9:00am with introductions from the executive committee and secretariat staff. All executive committee staff and secretariat management staff were present at the meeting.

The president Moumouni Konate welcomed all executive members and thanked them for their continued service and efforts to promote the GSA.

Presentation: The secretariat summarized the adopted strategic plan including four strategic focus areas of improved competitiveness, policy advocacy, market expansion, and sustainability impact. The secretariat also summarized the GSA's three current initiatives that achieve the strategic focus areas including market expansion, the GSA sustainability program, and quality practices and procedures. All 2015/16 results and proposed 2016/17 activities relate to the strategic objectives and current initiatives.

Discussion/Action: Not applicable

2. 2015/6 Performance Review

Presentation: The secretariat summarized the results of the July 2015 – June 2016 approved executive committee work plan. The work plan was provided to EC members with a summary of results by each activity. The main results for the period included:

- International conferences and exhibitions held in Accra, Brussels, Washington, DC, and Lagos. More than 650 members and stakeholders including the President of Ghana attended the events.
- Recruitment of 32 new members from 10 countries including chocolate manufacturers Barry Callebaut and Cloetta. The total for GSA membership now stands at 400 members from 31 countries.
- Recruitment of 35 new sustainability program partners bringing the total to 76 implementing partners.
- Completion of 20 warehouses for women's groups through a public private partnership with GSA members and USAID.
- Completion of quality trainings for 20,000 women beneficiaries in collaboration with National Associations in Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria.
- Ongoing advocacy for US and India chocolate initiatives
- Established US and EU staffing/offices and developed promotion and fundraising activities that are proposed in the 2016/17 work plan.
- Raised \$13.2 Million USD for sustainability and promotion activities, including the USAID Sustainable Shea Initiative.



- Increased website traffic by more than 45% compared to the same period last year.
- Completion of 2015 financial audit and annual report.
- Completion of General Assembly at Shea 2016 including the adoption of the 2016 annual report.

Discussion: Members requested more detailed information on the status of the US Chocolate Initiative. The secretariat provided updates of the multi-part advocacy strategy that includes engagements with public and private sectors in the US. The members requested an approximate timeline for the processing of the petition and completion of the project.

Members requested an update on the Sustainable Shea Initiative and specifically the monitoring and evaluation activities. The secretariat provided details on the 5 year, \$13 M initiative including the matched grant component with sustainability partners. Members expressed a concern that the GSA undertake adequate monitoring and evaluation of these activities to ensure high quality services for women's groups and protection of the GSA brand. The secretariat provided an overview of the monitoring and evaluation activities for the USAID 20 pilot warehouse initiative, including an independent study that will be performed in 2017. Additionally, the secretariat gave details on the monitoring and evaluation approach under the Sustainable Shea Initiative including the recruitment of a program director that has an auditing background.

One member expressed concern there was not enough member participation in the development and approval of GSA activities. At the request of the President, the secretariat reviewed the responsibilities of the secretariat, working groups, executive committee including sub-committees, and general assembly in regards to the development, fundraising, operations, and governance of GSA strategy and activities per the adopted guidelines. The secretariat explained the responsibilities and activities for each body have remained the same for the past five years. The president expressed he didn't have a concern in this regard and requested all members to comment. No other members stated a concern.

One member expressed concern that the GSA activities were not adequately reaching East African countries and also stakeholders in Togo. The secretariat provided an update of new membership in Togo including Alaffia and also a meeting that was held with the chamber of commerce and stakeholders to support the development of a national association. While the GSA does have East African membership and activities, the majority of members and activities are concentrated in West Africa due to the concentration of GSA members and associated export activities in those countries. Specific East Africa outreach and development efforts would require approval in the work plan and an associated budget.

Action: The secretariat will produce an estimated timeline for the completion of the US chocolate initiative. The secretariat will share results of monitoring and evaluation activities of sustainability program activities with the executive committee.

3. 2016/7 Activities and Budget Approval - Promotion Activities

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- International Conference

Presentation: The secretariat presented the proposed July 2016 – June 2017 work plan and associated budget for the review and approval of the executive committee. Once the documents are approved, the secretariat undertakes activities throughout the year according to the plan and budget and the executive committee provides governance and oversight of such activities. The secretariat proposed the following conferences and exhibitions for discussion and approval:

- The international conference was proposed in Cotonou, Benin on March 13 and 14 under the theme “seeds of change,” to reflect the transformational activities the GSA is undertaking to promote shea internationally and sustainability of supply in Africa. The sub-themes were proposed as market expansion, women’s empowerment, sustainable land management, and public private partnerships. Alternative central themes were proposed as “Sustainable Expansion” and “Breaking Barriers.”
- The EU conference was proposed in London on April 3rd as a side event to the In-Cosmetics trade show.
- The US conference was proposed in Washington, DC on May 15th.
- The African Cosmetics Exhibition was proposed in Johannesburg, South Africa in August and Ifrane, Morocco in September 2016. (These activities were previously approved by the Executive Committee but were included here to ensure completeness of the work plan)

Discussion: Members asked for clarification if other countries had submitted proposals to host the international conference and the secretariat justification for proposing Benin. The secretariat explained they had also received an application from Nigeria. Upon review, the application of Benin was more complete and responsive to all information requested in the request for proposals. Also, the national association in Benin has an active secretariat that can assist with the organization of the conference.

Members commented they approved of the proposed conference theme “seeds of change” and felt that it could create a good marketing opportunity for the upcoming conference. They also liked the alternative theme “breaking barriers” and asked the secretariat combine the theme with the sub-theme “market expansion.”

Members stated that Mali should also be considered as a potential host because the Shea 2016 conference was scheduled in the country but was canceled due to security concerns.

The representative of Nigeria withdrew their application stating that they prefer to apply in a subsequent year.

Members decided that they should vote between Mali and Benin to host the 2017 international conference.



Members felt the proposal for the host country was too late in the year and requested the secretariat to advance the 2018 international conference selection process in time for completion by the Shea 2017 conference.

Action: Members voted to host the 2017 international conference in Benin by a vote of 5-4. The theme “seeds of change” was adopted along with the sub themes proposed with one modification. All other conferences and exhibitions were approved as proposed. The secretariat will publish call for proposals for the 2018 conference in advance of the Benin conference and present the proposed selection to the Executive committee.

The president called for a 30 minute break at 11:30am.

4. Promotion Activities - Cosmetics Research

Presentation: The meeting resumed at 12pm and the secretariat presented the following promotion activities for approval:

- Cosmetics research – the secretariat proposed a research initiative through North Carolina State University that will test shea properties in reducing inflammation on the skin.
- US Generally Recognized as Safe Initiative – the secretariat proposed to submit a petition to modify the current regulation to include whole shea butter and other fractions besides shea stearin.
- US Chocolate Initiative – the secretariat proposed to continue advocacy efforts to modify the US chocolate standard to include shea based ingredients up to 5%.
- US/EU member engagement – the secretariat proposed continued outreach through international events and private meetings. One specific initiative is with AAK USA that will engage cosmetic companies to promote shea, GSA membership, and participation in the sustainability program.
- International events – the secretariat proposed to participate in a variety of international events to promote industry, membership, and sustainability program.
- WeConnect Partnership – the secretariat proposed the development of a new partnership with WeConnect to promote utilization of shea in food and cosmetic products.

Discussion: Members requested clarification as to why the specific cosmetic research topic was proposed. The secretariat explained they held a meeting with cosmetic suppliers and brands at the US conference and this was the consensus need described. Anti-inflammation is an important benefit to address skin ailments such as sun burn and eczema. Additionally, the research could establish a link between the quantity of shea in a product and a particular functional benefit. This could drive increased use of shea in cosmetic products.

Members commented that much of the research around shea in cosmetics is proprietary to companies and this kind of public research will be very helpful to GSA members.



Members expressed concern that the focus on consumer preference in chocolate was too limiting and GSA should focus on food products generally. The secretariat explained that 90% of exported shea is utilized in confectionary products and is largely recognized as a substitute in such products. However, there is evidence that suggests shea improves the consumer experience in confectionary and the study would help to improve the value of shea in its key market.

Members asked for clarification on the status of research into shea butter health benefits in food products and why the Generally Recognized As Safe initiative was prioritized. The secretariat explained the head of research of the USDA Beltsville MD facility made a presentation to members at the US conference on the research options. The members expressed the GSA should focus on Generally Recognized As Safe and then begin health research once the whole shea butter is approved for consumption in the US.

Members asked if the AAK new member engagement meetings would be attended by secretariat staff and if the documentation would be approved by the secretariat. The secretariat explained that all documentation would be approved by both parties and the GSA US representative or managing director will attend the meetings.

The secretariat commented that expenses related to the consumer preference study, cosmetics research, and generally recognized as safe initiative must be raised from member sponsorship, as no grant funding is currently available. Sponsoring members will want certain benefits such as input into the research design and proprietary access to the research for a defined period before the document is published and distributed to members. Executive committee members commented that there should be an option for small businesses at lower sponsorship commitment and also the proprietary period should be as short as possible. Members asked the secretariat to proceed with private fundraising and provide the Executive Committee updates.

Action: The Executive Committee approved the proposed promotion activities. The secretariat will begin fundraising for the new research and policy initiatives and provide updates to the Executive Committee on the results. The secretariat will make best efforts to keep proprietary periods to a minimum.

The president called for a one hour lunch break at 13:30.

5. Sustainability Activities

Presentation: The meeting convened at 14:30. The secretariat presented the following proposed activities in the work plan related to the expansion and implementation of the GSA sustainability working group.

- Working Group – the meeting is proposed in Tamale on November 7 and 8.
- Sustainability Partner Reporting – the secretariat proposed to complete the second cycle of reporting on the implementation of the sustainability guidelines and work streams.



- Implementation of USAID Matching Grant – the secretariat proposed to form collaborations of members, sign agreements with partners, and provide monitoring and evaluation of work stream activities.
- Partner Recruitment – the secretariat proposed to recruit additional sustainability partners at international events and private meetings to expand implementation of the guidelines and work streams.
- Country Level Strategies – the GSA proposed to collaborate with national associations to hold multi-stakeholder workshops in Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, and Burkina Faso to promote the sustainability program, establish country level objectives, engage bi-lateral donors, and forge new public private partnerships.

Discussion: Members asked for more information and updates on the USAID matching grant that is part of the Sustainable Shea Initiative. The secretariat explained they developed a call for proposals and then an expression of interest to solicit member participation in the project.

To date, the GSA received 51 responses from 7 countries totaling \$6,104,226 private funding and \$5,440,661 other donor funds that will be leveraged to utilize the USAID funding. Based on the expressions of interest, 15 collaborations were in the process of being formed. Each collaboration will submit a formal proposal to GSA for funding. The secretariat in collaboration with USAID staff will then formally review and score each proposal and make recommendations for funding. The secretariat staff will then negotiate signed agreements to ensure compliance with all USAID regulations. USAID will approve all agreements prior to funding.

Members requested more information on the composition and activities at the sustainability working group meeting. The secretariat explained there are 25 participants attending the event, representing all stakeholder categories. They will discuss biodiversity in shea parklands, best practices in community engagement, and the group will also undertake site visits to view warehousing and tree planting initiatives. GSA will also hold a press event at the SWG to announce the USAID collaboration.

One member stated national associations should be involved in the sustainability projects. The secretariat explained several associations are involved in the projects but they must apply along with all other sustainability partners.

One member stated it’s important for women to be involved in the sustainability program. The secretariat explained several women’s groups are represented on the working group and several more are making applications to implement the Sustainable Shea Initiative. Additionally, women’s groups are involved in all sustainability program activities. They are the primary beneficiaries of each activity.

Action: The members approved all sustainability activities for the period as proposed in the work plan.



The president called for a break at 15:45.

6. Quality Standards

- Working Group
- Implement Quality Standards Road Map

Presentation: The meeting resumed at 16:00. The secretariat proposed the following quality activities for the implementation of quality standards:

- The secretariat proposed to engage sustainability partners to implement quality trainings instead of separately funded initiatives.
- The secretariat proposed to continue advocating for the GSA kernel standard in regional and nationally recognized standards.

Discussion: Members raised the concern that quality practices aren't outlined in the sustainability program and therefore couldn't be mandated in sustainability agreements. Members agreed the secretariat could encourage partners to implement the activities.

Members expressed the need for the quality working group to meet again to better address the implementation of the road map and address quality concerns related to shea butter.

Action: The secretariat will convene the quality working group at the Shea 2017 conference to address the issues raised by the Executive Committee.

7. Administrative

- Financial and Operations Manuals Approval
- Audit

Presentation: The secretariat proposed the following administrative activities during the work plan period:

- The secretariat proposed to hire an auditor to conduct 2016 audit and prepare financial statements.
- The secretariat proposed to produce an annual report of activities for presentation at the General Assembly.
- The secretariat proposed fundraising activities that will focus on country level sustainability activities and policy initiatives.

Discussion: The secretariat reviewed the budget for the proposed work plan, explaining the associated grant funding and general fund allocations for each activity. The members reviewed the budget and commented that it is 50% greater than last year which shows the increased value to members.

Action: The executive committee approved the administrative activities as proposed along with 2016/7 budget.



8. Subcommittees and Any Other Business

- Formation of EC Finance and Audit Committee
- Formation of EC Policy Committee
- Any Other Business

One member requested clarification on the role of the women's group representative in the Executive Committee. The secretariat explained the role was established to ensure the women's group stakeholder category was always represented in the governance of the GSA such as at today's meeting.

The president reminded the secretariat to ensure any secretariat job postings are sent to the Executive Committee at the start of a recruit. This was agreed at a previous meeting.

One member suggested the secretariat undertake a project that involves all national associations. The secretariat commented that shea policy initiatives are a good role for national associations.

The president notified the Executive Committee that the Ghana national association had withheld funds they raised on behalf of GSA during the 2016 conference. He stated he would meet with the secretariat and executive committee to resolve the matter and the issue shouldn't affect other national associations.

The president requested vice-president Shannon Hess to offer concluding remarks. The vice president thanked the members for the continued volunteer efforts. She was very happy to be a part of such a committed group working for the shea industry.

The meeting was concluded at 17:15.

Executive Committee and Sustainability Working Group Dinner

1830 – 2000 Wooden Restaurant (Walking Distance to Hotel)