



The Global Shea Alliance
Golf Hotel
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
General Assembly Meeting (Annual)

Minutes
25th March 2014
2:00 p.m.

Agenda

- I. Welcome Remarks from Global Shea Alliance Executive Committee
- II. Review of GSA Strategic and Operational Plans
- III. Presentation of GSA 2013 Activities and Accomplishments
- IV. Review and Approval of GSA 2013 Annual Report and Financial Report
- V. Presentation of GSA Sustainability Program Proposal
- VI. Member Discussion and Vote of Sustainability Program
- VII. Presentation of GSA Quality Standards Proposal
- VIII. Member Discussion and Vote of Quality Standards
- IX. Presentation of GSA Membership Principles (Replacing Code of Ethics)
- X. Member Discussion and Vote of Membership Principles
- XI. Reauthorization of Quality and Sustainability Working Groups and Solicitation of Volunteers
- XII. Closing Remarks from GSA Executive Committee

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 2:35 by Moumouni Konate, Vice President of the Executive Committee, followed by welcome statements and introductions of the Executive Committee.

II. Agenda Item: Review of GSA Strategic and Operational Plans

Joseph Funt, managing director of the GSA presented the Strategic and Operational Plans of the GSA. The four areas of strategic focus, established in 2012, include Sustainability Impact, Value Chain Competitiveness, Market Expansion, and Policy Advocacy. The operational plan, which guides the activities of the GSA, includes Sustainability Promotion, Quality Standards, Industry Promotion, and National Association Support.

III. Agenda Item: Presentation of GSA 2013 Activities and Accomplishments

The results of the GSA against the operational plan are presented in the Annual Report. Results highlighted included the development of sustainability and quality proposals, international conference attendance, and collaborative field-level trainings with the national associations. The financial report of the GSA was also presented, and pages directly from the 2013 Financial Audit were included in the annual report.

IV. Agenda Item: Review and Approval of GSA 2013 Annual Report and Financial Report



Discussion

- Request for membership certificates.
- Asked for clarification, who are the members of the advisory committee? Response from the GSA that the advisory committee is made up of core funders that contribute at least \$50,000 USD annually the GSA and also agree to serve on the committee. The only member of the advisory committee is currently USAID.
- Requested that promotion efforts focus on domestic publications in addition to international publications.
- Request for clarification on the selected partner association in Ghana. Response from the executive committee that the GSA works with Shea Network Ghana because it represents the most stakeholders in the country.
- Request for a list of the locations where the cosmetic training took place in Nigeria.
- Request for information why there were so few activities in Mali. Response from the executive committee that the development of a national association is underway. They will elect their board and develop a strategy in the next few months.
- Request for a list of the locations where the quality trainings took place in Benin, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria.

Motion to pass the 2013 Annual Report.

The Global Shea Alliance 2013 Annual Report is unanimously approved.

V. Agenda Item: Presentation of GSA Sustainability Program Proposal

The Sustainability Working Group chair, Anna Perinic, presented the Sustainability Program Proposal. The proposal contains sustainable guidelines for members, and three proposed projects that meet these guidelines. The first project of the group is to construct warehouses that will be donated to women's groups. The second project is a continuation of the warehouse project, where participating women will receive business development training. The third project focuses on the production of the women, improving safety of the women's groups and reducing water and water consumption during processing. Preservation of shea trees is also a key requirement, and the Sustainability Working Group will continue to research for a proposed project to address this area of sustainability. The second part of the proposal is the adoption of voluntary sustainability guidelines that are organized by stakeholder category. The guidelines are to be available for all members and stakeholders and also are utilized to developed all GSA sustainability projects. Finally, qualification and benefits to sponsor the program were described to members. Organizations can participate through monetary donations or undertake their own projects and report to GSA on the results.

VI. Agenda Item: Member Discussion and Vote of Sustainability Program

Discussion

- Request for definitions on sustainability and ages for what is considered child labor. Response from sustainability working group that GSA outlines sustainability best practices for shea in the guidelines. The GSA also acknowledges the International Labor Organization definition of child labor which is referenced in the guidelines.
- Suggested that researchers are consulted in better defining a shea ecosystems strategy. Response from working group that the World Agroforestry Center is a member of the working group and we will hire in consultant in 2014 to consolidate research and make recommendations.



- The quality training should take place in more countries throughout West Africa, specifically in Nigeria. Response from the Executive Committee that the funding source was restricted, but in future planning, we are planning to consider expanding funding to other countries.
- In regard to the warehouse project, the financial constraints of the groups to access the nuts must be addressed. The women are in need of cash resources at the time of collecting, solutions such as pre-financing, microfinance, and VSLAs should be added to the project. Response from the Sustainability Committee that this has been addressed with the second project proposal on Business Development. Both the question and answer were echoed by other members.
- Suggested that the youngest generation of women are not interested in collecting shea nuts, so it should be promoted as a business for both genders. It is also important for processors to have improved resources for processing, including machines and wells.
- In regard to the Decent Labor Conditions project proposal, how will you enforce these guidelines in the field? Response from the Sustainability Working Group that the program provides a set of guidelines. The program is not intended for certification or control.
- In rural areas, some warehouses are not being used effectively. How will the GSA sustainability program address this issue?
- Request for clarification on the role of the national associations. Response from the working group that national associations will collaborate with GSA on the implementation of the program.
- Members from Guinea Conakry requested more support from the GSA to receive quality trainings and capacity building.
- Cote d'Ivoire requested the support of large manufacturers.

Motion to vote on passing the Sustainability Program Proposal.
The Sustainability Program is unanimously approved.

VII. Agenda Item: Presentation of GSA Quality Standards Proposal

Senyo Kpelly presented the Quality Standards Proposal on behalf of the Quality Working Group. He went through the proposal page by page, highlighting the specifications for each grade of nuts. The standards were developed to meet the needs of the cosmetic and confectionary industries. The second part of the standards proposal addresses how to obtain high quality nuts. The GSA will use these standards for guidance on quality training programs. Individual members may decide to awarded premiums for higher quality nuts based on the standard.

VIII. Agenda Item: Member Discussion and Vote of Quality Standards

Discussion

- In a country like Mali, utilization of jute sacks is a bit difficult. In Mali, we have use plastic to prevent insect infestation. Response from the Quality Working Group to check if this is a countrywide problem, or only in a specific location.
- Requested that the working group take into consideration the various constraints in different countries, specifically the oil content of the nuts. Response from the working group that the standards are based on industry needs and not producer potential.
- Raised the issue that there is no member from Nigeria, therefore, the Quality Working Group should be reformed, an issue that was echoed by other members. Response from



Quality Working Group members that there was a member from Nigeria, but they failed to attend. They are welcome to join next year's working group. A follow-up complaint that another member from Nigeria was not contacted after volunteering.

- Requested that the lack of water should be considered for quality. Rural areas do not have access to enough clean water to process shea kernels. Response from the Quality Working Group that the standards include a processing method that requires less water than traditional processing methods.
- Member asked if it is possible for a woman collector to determine her grade of shea nuts. Response from quality working group that the issue should be discussed next year.
- Member congratulated the working group on the clarity of processing steps. Requested that buyers supply a machine that will reduce time spent washing nuts. Response from the Quality Working Group that it is not cost effective to supply machines.
- Suggested that the Grade A 50% maximum oil content is too high. Response from working group that 50% is achievable.
- On the implementation schedule, May 2013 should be May 2014.

Motion to vote on Quality Standards Proposal.

The Quality Standards Proposal is approved. One member voted against, and four abstained.

IX. Agenda Item: Presentation of GSA Membership Principles (Replacing Code of Ethics)

The proposed GSA Membership Principles will replace the Code of Ethics. A few changes in the document were noted. The Principles are now consistent with other stakeholder groups, and include annexed sections such as dispute resolution and membership categories.

X. Agenda Item: Member Discussion and Vote of Membership Principles

- Raised the question of why membership categories were added. Secretariat response to facilitate communication on GSA members and projects.
- Request to remove section 1.2 in annexes. Response from executive committee that 1.2 is best practices. However, GSA will confirm 1.2 with experts prior to publication.
- Where do national associations fit in the membership categories? Response from the secretariat that national associations can be registered non-profits, and if so, should be included as supporters. The individual members of the national association are in a different categories based on their involvement in the shea value chain.
- Language should be consistent. The document uses collectors and pickers. Response from secretariat that the GSA that we will make those changes.
- The translation of Annex 1.2 isn't translated correctly into French. Response from secretariat that the GSA that we will make those changes.
- Regarding the complaint and dispute resolution process, a member raised the issue that provisions like these already existing in certain countries, and there are already bodies that can settle disputes. Is the GSA above settling these disputes? Response from the secretariat that the principle is that all disputes should be resolved locally first, and then it should be brought to the attention of the GSA only as a last resort.
- Request that the GSA set a minimum price so that a premium price can be determined. This was echoed by several members. Response from Executive Committee that the price depends on various factors and it is beyond the control of the GSA.



Motion to vote on Membership Principle Proposal with translation and review of Annex 1.2.
The Membership Principles are approved. No members opposed, one member abstained.

XI. Agenda Item: Reauthorization of Quality and Sustainability Working Groups and Solicitation of Volunteers

The executive requested members to reauthorize the quality and sustainability working groups.

Discussion

- The current members should be asked to volunteer again.
- Suggested to allow each country to have representation on both working groups.

Motion to reauthorize the Quality and Sustainability Working Groups.

The Quality and Sustainability Working Groups are reauthorized, and volunteers were recorded by GSA staff.

XII. Agenda Item: Closing Remarks from GSA Executive Committee.

Moumouni Konate provided closing remarks on behalf of the GSA Executive Committee.

XIII. Motion: Meeting adjourned by the General Assembly at 6:20 p.m.