

Role and ways of working of the interim civil society participants in the GAFSP Steering Committee

Introduction

The Steering Committee of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme administered by the World Bank will include three non-voting civil society participants, one from the north and two from the south.

Selection of the interim northern participant is being facilitated by Interaction, Concord, and CCIC. Selection of the interim southern participants is being facilitated by the Facilitator of the Pan African Farmers' Forum, Mamadou Cissokho, in a separate and autonomous process. The southern participants will come from organizations/networks representing small food producers in Africa and Asia. The selection should be concluded by end May/early June.

It has been agreed among CSOs following the GAFSP process that these participants will be selected initially on an interim basis for a period of 8 months (June 2010 – January 31). In December 2010 OR during the latter part of 2010 (TBD), an evaluation of the GAFSP's initial operations and of civil society participation in the process will be conducted as a basis for strategic reflection and engagement.

Basic principle underlying CSO participation

The primary civil society stakeholders concerned by the GAFSP are the organizations representing small food producers and other vulnerable groups in the south whose members will be directly affected by GAFSP investment programmes. Priority should be given to ensuring that their voices are brought to bear on the GAFSP. Participation by other CSO constituencies – including NGOs in the north and in the south – should be supportive of this objective.

Basic objective underlying CSO participation

To influence GAFSP policies, practices and investment programs such that they are continually and appropriately responsive to the needs of small producers and vulnerable groups in the south affected by food insecurity and the need of increased agricultural investments.

Role and ways of working

The interim civil society members of the Steering Committee will be act on a volunteer basis with no remuneration. The travel and per diem costs of the southern participants will be covered by the GAFFSP. The interim civil society members of the Steering Committee will act as focal points whose role it is to facilitate inclusive and effective civil society impact on the GAFSP, rather than representing their own organizations, networks or constituencies. The northern and southern civil society representatives will work as a team, complimenting each other, and will benefit from input and support from the broader group of CSOs following the GAFSP.

The interim civil society members will:

- Act as focal points for civil society communication with the Steering Committee and the World Bank secretariat administering the GAFSP;
- Strongly advocate that preconditions for meaningful civil society participation are met, e.g.: agendas of SC meetings and documents for discussion are available in En/Fr/Sp at least a week before the meetings; southern CSO participants are assisted to obtain visas and tickets in good time to attend meetings; resources are made available to support civil society consultation in the south; all finalized documentation relating to the GAFSP – including project documents – is posted transparently on a central website;
- Share information/documentation on the work of the GAFSP and its Steering Committee as broadly as possible among concerned civil society organizations;
- Solicit input from civil society organizations prior to Steering Committee meetings and report back to them on the outcome of GAFSP SC decision-making;
- Put forward to the Steering Committee any common positions that the broader civil society group may have developed, and the range of views and positions of CSOs when there is a lack of consensus – not only the position of their own organization, network etc;
- Advocate and verify inclusive involvement of civil society – with particular attention to organizations of small food producers and other vulnerable sectors of the population – in the identification and formulation of the “country-led” programmes that are submitted to the Fund;

- Advocate for the establishment of a CSO delegation to the GAFSP to support the work of the permanent CSO representatives to better communicate with and solicit a broad range of NGO expertise in matters that arise in board discussions and decisions;
- Report to the broader civil society group at the end of their assignment, providing their assessment of the GAFSP and of the effectiveness of CS participation.