



Grow Asia Business Council Meeting

Wednesday 12 September 2018

Meeting Summary

The Steering Committee acts as the main oversight body for the Grow Asia Secretariat and its diverse representation is invaluable in defining Grow Asia's plans and addressing differing views and approaches while identifying priority areas to help Grow Asia meet its ambitious targets. Following the Grow Asia Forum in Hanoi, the in-person meeting of the Grow Asia Steering Committee shared updates and defined next steps on the joint action agenda to be taken through this multi-stakeholder platform. Key points are summarized below, as an input to the Steering Committee's on-going discussions.

Key Points from the Discussion

1. **Grow Asia Forum.** There was general agreement from the Steering Committee that the Forum was interesting, provided good learnings, enabled multiple new networks and had attracted a high-level audience.
2. **DFAT Mid-Term Review Response.** The Steering Committee approved Grow Asia's response to the DFAT mid-term review, and the appendix table attached to the Governance Council pre-read could be sent as a response to DFAT.
3. **Future Funding.** Grow Asia presented an update on funding-raising and communication with prospective donors. The Steering Committee raised no objection to Grow Asia exploring private sector funding options for the Singapore-based Secretariat. There was consensus that it is important to get the private sector to contribute so that they feel ownership of the network, while balancing private sector's interests towards policy with Grow Asia's principles of smallholder-focused and inclusiveness. In response to a question on how much of the central Secretariat funding requirement might be raised from private-sector stakeholders, Grow Asia estimates this to be 10%-25% based on experience of other institutions in Singapore. This opened a discussion of the direction of future donor funding for the balance, with the aim of DFAT continuing as the anchor donor for the Grow Asia network, surrounded by a constellation of junior donors.
4. **Country Partnerships.** The Country Partnerships are individually aiming to be self-financing, with the Indonesian partnership already fully self-financed, while the Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar partnerships potentially becoming fully self-financing over the next 3 years. As the Country Partnerships primarily rely on raising membership fees to support themselves, the private sector may focus on supporting the Country Partnerships while the Singapore-based Secretariat, which largely delivers public goods, is likely to need on-going donor funding.
5. **Papua New Guinea.** The Steering Committee raised no objection to Grow Asia exploring the establishment and support for a new Country Partnership in Papua New Guinea.
6. **ASEAN Secretariat Engagement.** Grow Asia's application to become an entity associated with ASEAN was discussed at the recent Special SOM-39th AMAF. Further deliberation will be made at the upcoming PrepSOM-40th AMAF in October in Hanoi. Continued engagement with key government delegates particularly where Grow Asia is operating is encouraged.

7. **Taking Grow Asia to the Next Level.** A member of the Steering Committee observed that Grow Asia has already succeeded in carrying out various roles in convening, learning, exchanging best practices and creating networks. The Committee member challenged the Grow Asia network to generate a bigger idea going forward, most probably in the digital space.
8. **World Economic Forum Rotation.** Sarita Nayyar, Managing Director of World Economic Forum in New York will be replaced by Dominic Waughray, Head of the World Economic Forum Centre for Global Public Goods.

Grow Asia's Response and Action

1. **Future Funding.** Grow Asia will continue to work with the Country Partnerships to put them on the path towards financial independence. At the regional level, Grow Asia will explore options for raising a portion of the central Secretariat's running costs from the private sector. This might involve fees, charges for learning events and co-funding of other activities. Grow Asia will also organize a Donor Roundtable meeting in mid-November, where an outline plan for moving the Grow Asia network into a position of greater self-reliance, autonomy and local funding will be presented. To-date, Grow Asia has reached out to 27 potential donors, including 6 private foundations.
2. **Taking Grow Asia to the Next Level.** Grow Asia will explore the prospects of generating a transformative concept out of the foundation of the existing digital program.

Meeting Participants

- Franky Widjaja, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food
- Kohei Sakata, Managing Director, Bayer Vietnam – on behalf of Co-chair Jens Hartmann, Regional Head of Asia Pacific, Bayer (South East Asia) Pte Ltd
- Fiona Lynn, Director, Agricultural Development and Food Security Section, Development Economics, Private Sector and Agricultural Branch, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Jared Brading, Head of Cooperation, Counsellor (Development), Global Affairs Canada
- Tran Dong Phuong, Director for Sectoral Development Directorate, ASEAN Secretariat
- Jennifer Bielman, Country Director, Mercy Corps Indonesia
- Jose Romeo Ebron, Cooperative Development Program Manager, Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development
- Harry Hanawi, Director, Corporate Affairs, Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food
- Grahame Dixie, Executive Director, Grow Asia
- Paul Voutier, Director, Knowledge and Innovation, Grow Asia
- Reginald Lee, Director, Partnerships, Grow Asia
- Jim Riordan, Centre for Global Public Goods, World Economic Forum