

**Annual Meeting of the Grow Asia Governance Councils  
Minutes of the Meeting - 11 September 2023 14.00PM (UTC+8)**

**Time and Place**

The Joint Meeting of the Grow Asia Business Council and Partners' Advisory Council was held on Monday, 11 September 2023, at 14:03 hrs, at the Crescent Ballroom, Four Seasons Hotel Singapore, 190 Orchard Boulevard, Singapore, 248646.

**Attendance**

<b>Business Council Members</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
East-West Seed (Co-Chair)	Mary Ann Sayoc
Acre	Greg Brittian
Bayer Crop Science	Cherie Tan
Cargill	Colin D'Silva
Corteva Agriscience	Shoumo Mitra
Mars Wrigley	Kalpesh Parmar
PISAgro	Harry Hanawi
Syngenta	Chris Argent
Syngenta (observer)	Priscila Fagundes
Thai Wah	Hataikan Kamolsirisakul
Visa	Patsian Low
Visa (observer)	Nate Low
Wavemaker Impact	Marie Cheong
World Economic Forum / Food Action Alliance	Adam Gerstenmier

<b>Apologies</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Khmer Enterprise	Chhieng Vanmunin
Beanstalk AgTech	Justin Ahmed

<b>Guests</b>	
Amazon Web Services	Ashley Tan
Bain & Company	Aadarsh Baijal
COP28 UAE Presidency	Imelda Bacudo
EAT Forum	Gunhild Stordalen
Jollibee Group Foundation	Gisela Tionsgon
Milken Institute Asia	Holly Freishtat
Olam	Julie Greene
Terrascope	Lia Nicholson

<b>Partners' Advisory Council Members</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
ASEAN Secretariat (Co-Chair)	Kanchana Wanichkorn
AsiaDHRRA	Marlene Ramirez
CGIAR (observer)	Stephan Weise
CGIAR (observer)	Harold Valera
FCDO UK	Cristabel Sadgrove
IFC	Marta Bogdanic
MARD	Pham Hong Hanh
Mercy Corps	Andi Ikhwan
Save the Children	Mei-Ing Cheok
Save the Children (observer)	Fitria Manuhutu

<b>Apologies</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Australia DFAT	Fiona Lynn
GIZ	Nana Kuenkel
IDH	Hyunh Tien Dung
IDRC	Lacina Diarra
IFAD	Liliana Miro Quesada
Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund	Naoki Minamiguchi
Oxfam	Victoria Caranay
NTU	William Chen
Rainforest Alliance	Chandra Panjiwibowo
SDC	Mary Laure Crettaz

Swisscontact	Prashant Rana
Swisscontact (observer)	Ross Jaax

WOCAN	Nisha Onta
WWF	Kristina Anguelova

Secretariat Staff	
Beverley Postma	Grow Asia
Erin Sweeney	Grow Asia
Amy Chua	Grow Asia
Misha Rabat	Grow Asia
Reginald Lee	Grow Asia
Chrissa Borja	Grow Asia
Ken Maharani	Grow Asia
Lucy Turner	Grow Asia
Fanny Perdu	Grow Asia

Secretariat Staff (cont.)	
Paul Voutier	Grow Asia
Pranav Rastogi	Grow Asia
Angel Bautista	PPSA (Philippines)
Insan Syafaat	PISAgro (Indonesia)
Boreth Sun	CPSA (Cambodia)
Sarin Tey	CPSA (Cambodia)
Vaddhanak Ith	CPSA (Cambodia)
Nguyen Cam Thuy	PSAV (Viet Nam)
Ruthy Kusak	GrowPNG

The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Mary Ann Sayoc, Head of Partnerships and Alliances, East-West Seed – representing the Grow Asia Business Council; and Dr. Kanchana Wanichkorn, Director of Sectoral Development, ASEAN Secretariat – representing the Grow Asia Partners’ Advisory Council.

**1. Call to Order and Competition Law Statement**

The Co-Chairs opened the meeting, introduced themselves and welcomed all members, and declared that a quorum was present.

The Co-Chairs reminded all participants of Grow Asia’s Anti-trust policy and read aloud the Competition Law Statement:

*“All meetings of the Grow Asia Business Council, including this one, shall be conducted in accordance with the relevant competition and antitrust laws. Members shall not enter any discussion, activity or conduct that may infringe any applicable law.”*

**2. Approval of agenda**

The agenda was duly approved with no further amendment.

**3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting**

A motion to approve the Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Grow Asia Governance Councils held on 31 May 2023 was proposed by Save the Children, seconded by Syngenta, and carried.

**4. Actions arising from previous meeting**

AsiaDHERRA presented a report of its meeting with several Partners’ Advisory Council Members to consider how to involve and engage farmer organizations. Partners Advisory Council Members acknowledged the need to collaborate with various stakeholders to further this agenda, with a particular emphasis on the engagement with the Asian Farmers Association (AFA). AFA has also extended a warm invitation to Grow Asia to participate actively in the upcoming Asia-Pacific Farmers’ Forum, where AFA is chairing the Steering Committee with IFAD.

Furthermore, the Partners’ Advisory Council Members underscored the importance of recognizing the diverse capacities and unique requirements of different farmer organizations. It is imperative that we tailor approaches to accommodate the specific needs of these organizations. This consideration extends beyond geographic boundaries and includes engaging with sectors such as women and youth, acknowledging their vital role in agricultural development. Other Partners’ Advisory Council Members also provided recommendations of how they can support, such as leading technical assistance activities directed at farmer organizations, or linking farmer organizations with other support organizations.

## 5. Election of new Co-chair of the Business Council

In accordance with Grow Asia's Constitution, nominations for the Multinational Company Co-Chair were solicited from members of the Business Council in advance of the meeting. Following a discussion, the following nominees agreed to stand for election and ballot papers were distributed to all voting members: Bayer Crop Science, Cargill, Thai Wah, and Visa.

**RESOLVED:** Visa was duly elected as the MNC Co-chair by a majority vote.

## 6. Executive Director's Report

Grow Asia's Executive Director, Beverley Postma was invited to provide an overview of Grow Asia's progress since the last meeting.

### ● Membership and Governance

Members received an update on the status of Membership of Grow Asia's Councils, which according to Grow Asia's [Constitution](#), is capped at 25 entities per Council. Grow Asia welcomes Acre and Wavemaker Impact as the newest members of the Business Council. Members were urged to advise the Grow Asia Secretariat of organizations that might still wish to fill the remaining seats.

**ACTION:** Members will make recommendations and introductions to entities who may bring value to the Councils.

### ● Programs and Partnerships

The most notable highlight from last year's Grow Asia Forum was the unveiling of Grow Asia's four public-private impact funds. Grow Asia has received positive responses to these [public-private funds](#) for technical assistance and is grateful to donors and partners who have already contributed to these blended finance mechanisms. Ahead of this year's Forum, Members were shown a video version of this year's Annual Report and were briefed about Grow Asia's newest and most ambitious fund, GrowBeyond, which is designed to drive design and deployment of inclusive finance models to empower small businesses to accelerate climate change adaptation and resilience. GrowBeyond will be formally announced at the Grow Asia Investment Forum 2023, taking place on 12 September 2023.

As an Entity Associated with ASEAN, Grow Asia has been invited to speak at the 45th AMAF meeting from 2-4 October 2023. Grow Asia will present the new GrowBeyond Fund as a delivery mechanism for ASEAN priorities on carbon neutrality and sustainable agriculture. Grow Asia also participated in the ASEAN Business & Investment Summit 2023, where Executive Director Beverley Postma spoke on the panel on food security. Grow Asia is proud to be a member of the ASEAN Business Council Food Security Working Group, which has harnessed the expertise of seasoned business leaders to design joined-up solutions to measure and enhance food security in the region.

Grow Asia has been formally appointed as one of four regional delivery hubs of the World Economic Forum's [Food Action Alliance \(FAA\)](#). Grow Asia and the Forum renewed their Memorandum of Understanding, recognizing the catalytic role of the Forum in establishing Grow Asia, and ensuring collaboration between Grow Asia's governance and programs and the Forum's global initiatives, e.g., FAA, Food Innovators Network, Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA), and the First Movers Coalition for Food.

### ● Organization and Operations

The Secretariat has experienced significant growth in recent months, reflecting its expanding mission and reach. A new Head of Communications and a new Head of Programs have been

identified, who will enrich the Secretariat's capabilities and enhance its ability to address complex challenges in this domain.

## 7. World Economic Forum updates – Food System Transformation Priorities

The Councils received an update from Adam Gerstenmier, Executive Director of the Food Action Alliance (FAA):

The World Economic Forum's [Center for Nature and Climate](#) engages leaders from the private and public sector, civil society, international organizations, and academia to accelerate action through collaboration and build critical partnerships to drive innovation and transformation at scale, for the people and planet to thrive. Food and Water is central in this agenda in (i) aspiring to transform food and land use sectors toward regenerative systems, promoting inclusive, sustainable, and healthy food and water systems through leadership-driven, market-based, multi-stakeholder action and collaboration informed by insights and innovation; and (ii) galvanizing multisectoral leadership to support collective regional and country led action and advance global insights and policy, to accelerate food and water systems transformation to meet the needs of people and planet.

Within this Food and Water work, the FAA looks to accelerate collaborative, on-the-ground action and measurable impact at country and regional level in alignment with and contribution to the UNFSS 2030 Agenda. The Alliance works through three pillars of action: (i) Advancing national food systems strategies by bringing partners to support countries in delivery of national food systems priorities; (ii) Promoting knowledge sharing among partners, supporting collective advocacy on key issues, and giving visibility to progress, best practices, and solutions; and (iii) Identifying, facilitating, and scaling a portfolio of 'Flagship' initiatives that support the delivery of National Food Systems strategies and investment plans.

With 29 flagships and several emerging focus countries, the FAA will strengthen its portfolio with flagships that demonstrate alignment to its flagship criteria, thematic entry points, and leading countries' food systems priorities. Grow Asia has been working with partners in the FAA to scale up two flagships in Vietnam: (i) the Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture in Vietnam (PSAV); and (ii) Public-Private Partnership Task Force on Rice.

Major food system events to leverage in the remainder of 2023 include the UN General Assembly and SDG Summit (New York, September), World Bank Fall Meeting (Morocco, October), World Food Week (Rome, October), and COP28 (Dubai, November). FAA will play a global leadership role in the food systems pillar work for COP28, including integrating Food targets in NDCs and NAPs, with a group of high ambition countries leading the way by developing or enhancing National Food System Transformation Plans.

**ACTION:** Grow Asia will continue to support the delivery of FAA Regional Flagships in Southeast Asia and will seek additional project suggestions from Council members in the run up to COP28.

## 8. Grow Asia Programs and Impact Funds

Members received an update from Erin Sweeney, Grow Asia's Director of Programs. The following are key highlights from each of the four regional Programs and Impact Funds:

### **GrowBeyond – Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation**

On 29 May, Grow Asia and Bain & Co convened an investor roundtable to seek insights on a proposed public-private partnership (PPP) inclusive climate finance model for agri-MSMEs. Since then, Grow Asia and Bain have finalized a financial model, KPIs, and value proposition; submitted funding proposals; engaged investors (commercial, concessional, and TA); and designed pilot proposals in 2-3 value chains.

The target is to mobilize \$1 billion capital by 2030, which will enable over 200,000+ Agri MSMEs access fit-for purpose financial products and technical assistance; achieve 10-30% increase in net farm incomes, due to yield increase, cost savings, and productivity improvement; and 10-30% reduction in GHG emissions per farm through implementation of climate smart and regenerative practices.

#### **GrowVentures – Agri-Food Innovation**

Grow Asia is supporting the establishment of ASEAN's first Food Innovation Hub in Viet Nam in collaboration with Viet Nam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the World Economic Forum with funding from the Korean Government. In Viet Nam, the PPP Task Force on Rice is a leading example of a Regional Flagship under the Food Action Alliance. Bayer launched the first ASEAN Forward Farming initiative in ASEAN in Viet Nam in September, to improve rice quality and yield for export. The climate-smart rice innovations will be presented at COP 28. From 2024, the Project will expand to the Philippines and Cambodia. Next steps include Innovation Sprints and Pilots to solve challenges in the Rice and Coffee/Pepper Value Chains.

Grow Asia's latest Digital Learning Series on *Reducing Carbon Emission in Agriculture: The Role of Big Data and AI* drew an audience of 179 participants. The event highlighted how big data analytics and AI can help manage and measure carbon reduction in agri-food value chains. The Digital Learning Series provides a regular platform for the agri-food innovation ecosystem to share learnings and insights on how digital solutions can be developed and scaled for impact on smallholder farmers.

#### **GrowRight – Responsible Investing**

Grow Asia was an invited guest speaker at the ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit. At the Regional Investment Forum on Inclusive Business in Agriculture and Food Systems, hosted by ESCAP, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Indonesia's Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, Grow Asia moderated a panel on Investment Opportunities for Inclusive Agriculture & Food Systems and shared about our work to harmonize policy and practice across ASEAN.

Grow Asia launched the [ASEAN Academy on Responsible Investing](#) on 20 April with funding from the Government of Japan and Cargill. The program aims to equip professionals with the skills to design and implement more responsible and sustainable investments. The course is hosted by the Singapore Agri-Food Innovation Lab (SAIL) at the Nanyang Business School – a collaboration between NTU Singapore and Enterprise Singapore. The first 43 professional learners graduated from the Academy on 29 May 2023. Grow Asia plans to announce Cohort 2 by 2024.

#### **GrowHer – Women's Economic Empowerment**

The ongoing [ASEAN Green Recovery through Equity and Empowerment \(AGREE\) Project](#), supported by Grow Asia's long standing relationship with the government of Canada through IDRC, delivered four case studies featuring good practice in climate-smart gender-inclusive value chains. Grow Asia will next be testing pilot solutions in maize in the Philippines and vegetables in Cambodia.

GrowHer: Kakao is delivering gender-responsive, climate-smart training and access to market to 4,000 women farmers and SMEs in South Sulawesi. To date, partners have trained 50+ women champions on financial literacy, good agricultural and climate-smart practices, and village savings and loan groups. Women champions will train and engage women farmers in 14 villages. Grow Asia thanks GIZ and Mars for their contributions, and to the partnership with Save the Children.

In Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, Women's Empowerment Working Groups have been launched. GrowPNG held its inaugural Gender Working Group Meeting on 3 August, developing action plans and nominating public and private co-Chairs to drive progress and impact in the field. PISAgro hosted a FGD

on Women's Empowerment on 31 August, to share learnings and best practice from existing initiatives, with speakers from Mars, DFAT and the World Bank.

Following a brief discussion about these Programs, Ms Sweeney announced that she would be stepping away from Grow Asia after four years to relocate back to the US. The Co-Chairs thanked Ms Sweeney for her contributions to the organization and wished her every success for the future.

#### 9. **Updates from ASEAN Secretariat**

The following highlights were provided by Dr Kanchana Wanichkorn on behalf of the ASEAN Secretariat:

- **ASEAN Sustainability Agenda**

The ASEAN Secretariat is working on a (i) Framework for Circular Economy for the AEC; (ii) ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality; (iii) ASEAN Blue Economy Framework; and (iv) ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance. These frameworks and strategies aim to accelerate an inclusive transition towards a green economy, fostering sustainable growth and complementing national efforts as part of a regional collective effort.

- **ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA)**

Nine core provisions (Digital Trade; Cross-border E-commerce; Payments; Digital ID and authentication; Talent mobility and cooperation; Cooperation on emerging topics; Competition policy; Cross-border data flows and data protection; Online safety and cybersecurity) were identified for DEFA through various engagements and will supplement individual AMS efforts to strengthen infrastructure and connectivity; drive investment and innovation; and build talent.

- **Initiative on Supply Chain Resiliency (for Food Security)**

ASEAN is evaluating supply chain bottlenecks of 10 specific product groups comprising both food and energy related products. Recommendations are then being developed to improve the supply chain efficiency and resilience, in line with the Framework on ASEAN Supply Chain Efficiency and Resilience.

- **Development of ASEAN Post-2025 Vision**

Key discussion topics at the 44th HLTF-EI Retreat and Related Meetings include: Exploring economic corridors with prioritization on key infrastructure and cross-border commerce, logistics, and trade facilitation; Synergizing AEC agenda and national development; Attracting investment for strategic sectors; Ensuring strengthened connectivity; Reviewing the effectiveness and impact of existing AEC initiatives, including its FTAs; and refreshing the AEC processes.

- **Food, Agriculture and Forestry's Priority Economic Deliverables 2023 -2024**

2023 priority deliverables include:

- ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition, including in Times of Crises (Priority Economic Deliverables – Indonesia Chairmanship)
- AMAF Statement on the Reduction of Harmful Agro-chemicals in Production
- ASEAN Action Plan on the Implementation of the ASEAN Guidelines on Sustainable Agriculture
- ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Nature-based Solutions in the Agriculture and Forestry Sector
- Implementation of the JAIF Project on Mangrove Ecosystem Management in the ASEAN Region
- Supporting the Development of the ASEAN Carbon Neutrality Strategy
- Regional Marketing Tools for Social Forestry Products
- Facilitating SPS Negotiations for the FTA between ASEAN and Partners

2024 priority deliverables include:

- o ASEAN Action Plan on Sustainable Agriculture (Priority Economic Deliverables – Lao PDR Chairmanship)
- o ASEAN Guidelines on Crop Burning (Priority Economic Deliverables – Lao PDR Chairmanship)
- o Development of Post-2025 Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry

**10. Special remarks on Priorities for COP28 UAE Presidency**

COP 28's Food Systems and Agriculture Agenda has four pillars — focusing on non-state actors, scaling up innovation, finance, and national leadership. The first three pillars highlight the importance of private sector actors in reaching climate and broader sustainability goals. The last pillar emphasizes governments' role in setting the course for those businesses. Specifically, there will be a Leaders' Declaration on Food Systems, Agriculture and Climate Action where countries will promise to integrate food and agriculture into national climate agendas. Currently, most country-level strategies lack a coherent approach to food system emissions.

A second update is the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund's Window on Food Systems. This fund will provide \$350 million to help 126 nations implement national food system transformation pathways over five years. The funded projects will weave solutions for climate with hunger, nutrition, biodiversity, and social justice.

**11. Close**

There being no other business, the Co-chairs thanked Members for their time and declared the meeting closed at 17:32 hrs.