



# Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action

## Mid-Term Review Executive Summary

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# Executive Summary

GAGGA was launched as a five-year programme in 2016 under the policy framework “Dialogue and Dissent” of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MFA). This policy framework represents a shift in the Ministry’s relationship with civil society organizations (CSOs), from a focus primarily on the more traditional development sectors (health, agriculture etc.) to one that better recognizes and enables the original role of CSOs as independent entities able to represent a diversity of groups. The Dialogue and Dissent policy framework is supporting CSOs “*to effectively voice alternative or dissenting views in a dynamic and increasingly global context*” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands (MFA)).

The programme is facilitated by a consortium led by [Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres \(FCAM\)](#), based in Nicaragua in collaboration with [Mama Cash](#) and [Both ENDS](#), both based in the Netherlands. The consortium works closely with strategic allies - the [Global Greengrants Fund](#) (GGF) and [Prospera](#) and a wide range of women’s rights and environmental justice funds, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots groups that work at local, national and regional levels in more than 30 countries across three regions – Latin America, Africa and Eurasia.

This Mid Term Review (MTR) involved an assessment of the continued validity of GAGGA’s Theory of Change (ToC) and progress made at the mid-point of GAGGA’s programme implementation. More specifically, the MTR’s Terms of Reference proposed the following questions:

1. *Is GAGGA on track towards:*
  - a. *Strengthening the capacities of grassroots groups to conduct Lobby & Advocacy (L&A) on women’s rights and environmental justice?*
  - b. *Supporting Direct L&A on women’s rights and environmental justice led by grassroots groups, as well as by women’s and environmental funds and NGOs in support of grassroots groups?*
2. *To what extent is GAGGA contributing to cross-movement alliance building, collaboration and ownership between women’s rights organisations and environmental justice organizations?*
3. *To what extent has GAGGA implemented the interventions it intended (as per the Programme Document)? What were the significant factors facilitating or impeding the delivery of these interventions? What was the relationship between the interventions, the significant factors, and the obtaining of expected and unexpected outcomes?*
4. *What have we learned and what needs to change in the way GAGGA works? Are there particular activities or approaches that should be bolstered or others that should be let go of?*

As a learning- and utilization-focused evaluation, the primary users of this MTR are the GAGGA Alliance Members, Strategic Allies, and Partners. This MTR is informed by primary data and secondary data from GAGGA's M&E system. Data used was both qualitative and quantitative, and included the perspectives and opinions from GAGGA partners and stakeholders. Data collection approaches and tools included documentation review, regional meetings, interviews and an online survey used to gather stories of changes in lobbying and advocacy (L&A) from grassroots groups.

From the MTR findings, there can be little question around the relevance and importance of GAGGA's work around strengthening cross movement collaboration in order to enhance the role of grassroots groups in lobbying and advocacy for environmental justice and women's rights. Global and regional trends identified indicate that the challenges that partners supported by GAGGA are growing in importance and urgency across multiple parts of the world. These include the escalating impacts of industries and industrial growth on women (often as a result of weak natural resource governance regimes) – demonstrated by the losses in lives in human rights defenders (HRDs) as well as other trends such as natural resource conflicts and political instabilities. Alongside the exponential growth of the footprint of industries, spaces for civil society voice and engagement in decision-making is shrinking and patriarchal mind-sets continue to dominate power spaces. Amidst these destructive developments, there is a growing voice and engagement of women, trans people and other minority groups – whose importance in terms of global environmental justice and women's rights agendas is increasingly being recognized. As such, the resources that GAGGA makes available to enable this important work is critical and timely, particularly in light of the growing challenges in accessing appropriate forms of financial support for women's rights and environmental justice.

Today, the Alliance comprises of partnerships including over 300 grassroots groups across 30 countries. This has emerged as a result of 3 Alliance Members, 2 Strategic Allies, 18 Women's and Environmental funds and 35 NGOs working together to catalyze *"the collective power of the women's rights and environmental justice movements towards realizing a world in which women can and do exercise their rights to water, food security and a clean, healthy and safe environment"* (GAGGA, September 2015). In 2016 and 2017, the grassroots groups in the GAGGA Alliance received a total of EUR 3.49million through a total of 476 grants, with the majority (49%) in Latin America, 30% in Eurasia and 21% in Africa. In addition, 65 grants (EUR 3.72million) have gone to NGOs in the same period (43% of which were in Eurasia, 28% in Latin America and 26% in Africa). The observed distribution is the result of the regional demand and the Alliance's initial agreements on how to allocate the available funds among the regions.

Multiple positive changes are starting to emerge as a result of this Alliance in terms of capacity building, lobbying and advocacy as well as cross-movement alliance building. The experiences to date have also generated important lessons for GAGGA as it moves forward.

Across GAGGA, there is a growing recognition that engaging in the intersection of the agendas is not "business as usual" and requires particular insights/perspectives, skills,

knowledge, networks/relationships etc. in order to do so effectively. As such, while the importance of funding support was fully recognized by all that contributed to the MTR, there was also a majority view that funding, in itself, is insufficient. Accordingly, all of the GAGGA actors described ways in which they had strengthened their capacities for grassroots L&A in the intersection of the agendas. Funds, particularly in Africa and Eurasia, have made significant investments in and strengthened their organizational capacities and infrastructure to support grassroots groups and funds from all three regions emphasized the importance of sustained funding to strengthen engagement in the intersection of the agendas. NGOs adopted more of a ‘learning by doing’ approach, strengthening their own capacities through the implementation of different initiatives, including research – similar to the Strategic Allies and Alliance Members. Capacity strengthening support to the grassroots groups was provided by NGOs and some funds, through a variety of different ways with training and supporting the establishment/strengthening of relationships with influential actors amongst those most commonly mentioned. As a result of the capacity strengthening actions and support provided to grassroots groups, a number of positive changes were identified by those contributing to the MTR, including:

- Increased confidence of women to voice their opinions, stand up for their rights, participate in decision making processes and become agents of change;
- Improved land use/natural resource management practices;
- Increased engagement in new sustainable income generating activities;
- Strengthening/establishment of new coalitions/movements with other women and environmental organizations; and
- The emergence of new champions playing a leadership role in the movement.

Direct L&A is also starting to take place across GAGGA at multiple levels targeting decision makers and influential actors (including traditional leaders and ancestral authorities) with identified topics including: Land and Natural Resources; Industries; Financing Institutions; Funding Agencies and Climate justice (in most cases addressed in relation to industries, particularly the extractives). All of the individuals contributing to the MTR felt strongly about the importance of L&A being carried out by grassroots groups themselves and the MTR identified a number of examples of impressive achievement as a result of these L&A efforts. However, it was also highlighted that they cannot do so alone and that these efforts could be much more effective if carried through a better-orchestrated multi-level approach. These could take the form of different partners engaging actors in different scenarios in a coordinated manner around a common cause. Examples of L&A achievements include:

- Overturning conservation or development decisions by local government in favour of women’s groups;
- Halting destructive and unsustainable economic development initiatives that would damage the lives and livelihoods of women;
- Successfully influencing impact assessment and safeguard policies at the national level;
- Influencing Financing Institutions to strengthen their policies and safeguards; and
- Strengthening the direct engagement of grassroots groups in influencing climate finance (such as the Green Climate Fund).

GAGGA also engages directly with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an important global influencer. From the MTR interviews, the wealth of experience and knowledge that GAGGA has access to has the potential to help it be an even more influential player assisting the Dutch Government in strengthening the extent to which they integrate women's rights and environmental justice. For the Government and the Ministries in particular to benefit more meaningfully from GAGGA, more regular engagement on the part of the Ministries with GAGGA is necessary.

Individuals contributing to the MTR were unanimous in their views around the importance of engaging in the intersection of the agendas between women's rights and environmental justice. The majority stated that they had already recognized the significance of doing so and "GAGGA enabled them to take this forward". However, with the exception of grassroots groups (who, it was felt, "live the intersection of the agendas"), many of the GAGGA actors continue to grapple with what engaging in the intersection actually means and how one goes about it in practice. This was more prevalent in Africa and Eurasia than in Latin America, where it would seem that there is a longer history of doing so.

Cross-movement alliance building is a core focus of GAGGA – one that is felt to be highly innovative and much appreciated both within GAGGA as well as outside of the Alliance. Within GAGGA, the complexity of cross-movement alliance building is also increasingly recognized with multiple lessons for GAGGA's initial intervention hypothesis. These include the assumption that cross-movement alliance building would take place organically as a result of simply bringing the different entities together. However, experiences to date demonstrate that more intentional support is required to enable alliance building (such as that provided by the linking and learning budget).

Underpinning the implementation of GAGGA are the coordination structures and mechanisms. Overall, coordination is on track with no major concerns raised with regards to performance. Underlying factors behind the positive performance of GAGGA identified by the MTR include: The high levels of commitment, professionalism and dedication of the individuals involved in the leadership and coordination of GAGGA; the diversity of cultures of the organizations involved; and breadth of experience and expertise the organizations and individuals collectively bring to GAGGA. Individuals contributing to the MTR expressed appreciation for the GAGGA's coordination team as a whole, but particularly to the role-played by the Programme Coordinator. Individuals contributing to the MTR also identified a number of challenges in coordinating GAGGA – which are likely to become more substantial as the Alliance matures and grows. Most of these challenges seem to be related to an underestimation of the requirements of navigating an Alliance with the needs and complexities of GAGGA. This includes the level of time, human and other resources (including structures and guiding procedures as well as budgetary resources for staff and associated costs for coordination actions, such as travel) necessary for coordinating and carrying out implementation as well as the time necessary to create and maintain strong working relationships across very different organizational cultures.

GAGGA is the only southern-led partnership supported by the Ministry to date. This poses both tremendous opportunities as well as challenges. Today, there is considerable research around north-south partnerships – particularly with regards to implications for sustainable development (see, for example (Ashman, 2001)). There is also increasing recognition of the negative impacts on partnerships caused as a result of the power imbalances created in situations where northern partners hold the accountability to donors for developments taking place in the south. A southern led partnership, such as GAGGA, provides an important opportunity for development partners to gain new perspectives around how to engage organizations of the south. However, this does require a deliberate approach to building the partnership – learning about how to engage with cultural differences as well as working rhythms and standards.

The experiences of the Alliance to date give rise to a number of lessons for GAGGA as it moves forward into its second half of implementation and beyond. These include actionable options to consider for building on successes and addressing challenges related to the following (\*for further detail on options identified, please refer to Section 4 of the MTR Final Report):

- The configuration and engagement modalities of the Alliance – ensuring that there is a shared understanding of the core functions of the Alliance and an alignment of the Alliance structures and operational mechanisms with these core functions;
- Developing an Alliance-wide capacity development strategy to support GAGGA actors in addressing capacity gaps that they themselves identify, in a manner that is context and culture specific;
- Building on existing experiences to facilitate/enable the identification of Alliance-wide L&A priorities, adopting a more focused, coordinated and targeted approach to L&A. This would need to include further attention and support to rights defenders, ensuring that Alliance Members, Strategic Allies, funds and NGOs are sufficiently prepared for threats and dangers that grantee partners may face;
- Strengthening the level of intentional support for the development of the thinking around the intersection of the agendas as well as to build on and strengthen the current organizational processes taking place around cross-movement alliance building. For example, through the creation of (physical and virtual) spaces for inter and intra-regional cross pollination of ideas and developments emerging from within as well as beyond GAGGA (theoretically and pragmatically);
- Ensuring that the capacities of the existing coordination model are better aligned with the coordination needs to mitigate the risks associated with the overload of responsibilities of the individuals involved. These include capacities for effective communication as well as monitoring, evaluation and learning functions;
- Regularly investing in team and partnership/relationship development processes with a view to deliberately engage in building on existing strengths and addressing challenges. This may entail first agreeing on shared principles for the partnership or characteristics that all partners feel are important for a functional partnership;
- Consider strengthening the current communication modalities and approaches, with particular attention to enhancing direct communication flows between

GAGGA partners, particularly in the region. This would also require increased collaboration and communication between Alliance members at the regional level

- Consider strengthening the M&E system to better capture different perspectives from multiple levels and add value to the Alliance as a whole (i.e. learning, evidence for L&A, visibility for its work, achievements and struggles).