**Key Takeaways Notes from the Annual Meeting of the GAI**

**May 4, 2011**

Juan Jose;

It was a terrific meeting on Monday and Tuesday. There was great progress with the index, and in keeping people excited and building momentum with the staff and with the broader adaptation index scientific community. The GAIN Index has progressed well and the ability to have such a deep discussion on Tuesday was due to the nice work of the team on putting “meat on the bones”. The organization is taking shape nicely on the administrative side with Tim and Jessica on board.

Below are my overall observations, and also some more detailed notes from the meeting (organized in two buckets) that might be helpful in putting together your plan.

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

1. **Content is King**; The ability to engage thoughtfully with Adaptation Scientists is the result of having real content to share. The index is not complete, but having it populated, well structured and being able to create early results was successful in soliciting productive feedback and in being able to imagine how the results can best be used to improve lives of the most vulnerable.
2. **Creating the Content *Internally* was Critical**. While there is some elements of what the Institute will do that will be amenable to outsourcing (accounting, web design etc.), having internal capability to produce, manage, and develop cascading insights, papers, reports, and dialogs has been the key to the Institutes current success. Having Bruno, Mark, Ian and Davis deliver early content gave the Institute the credibility to stand on its own. It was also far more effective and efficient than using any of the other contractors considered.
3. **The Index is initially the core product of the institute.** If done well, the index will spawn countless opportunities to create insight, write papers, and extract permutations on which countries, geographies, states, regions, are vulnerable and on where investment in resilience will pay off. With that, it will create the authority to become THE adaptation portal. The Institute can become to go-to place for everyone who wants to know something about adaptation. The reason people will come to the GAI will be because we have created and are constantly improving the data around adaptation and because we have created insightful and provocative ideas, papers, and thinking that will spur policy makers towards action. But there must be a kernal, that is all ours; our proprietary .........{fill in the blank}
4. **The Institute can quickly seize the lack of other go-to portals for Adaptation.** While the index may be our core product, we have an easy opportunity to become the authoritative portal on Adaptation if we so choose. Suggestions in the meeting to build the Adaptation Glossary, to clarify what Adaptation is, to create links to other scientists and universities, to provide the compendium of authors and papers, to host articles and blog pieces on adaptation are all possible now. Combined with point 3 above, there is a clear rationale for building the team that can codify what we know, to publish thought pieces, and to build our website and to enhance outreach.
5. **There is uncertainty around the Pilot Projects**. I did not get a sense that Meister was clear what the objectives were, or what they were searching for. They seem lost.
6. **Strategy refresh might be a good topic for the next board meeting.** Given the progress of the last year, it might be a good time to open the conversation about what we have learned, where we can become indispensible and unique, what we would have to do to accomplish it, and how to build the organization to deliver it.

**NOTES FROM THE MEETING**

**The GAIN Index**

* The index needs a product development plan; a roadmap of how to build and roll out.
* Maintain Two-by-Two for time being . Develop single dimension after robust matrix is developed
* Create Causal links. Ensure they are reflected in the matrix components.
* More work needed on readiness dimension.
  + Readiness for what type of investment? Public funding on resilience, or private investment in industry and commerce?
  + Add the dimensions of climate readiness in the readiness axis . Create specific components that more adequately reflect climate readiness
  + Avoid a purely GDP measurement. Figure out a way to avoid this being a complicated proxy for GDP
* Involvement of the private sector is a distinguishing characteristic of the Institute. But there is confusion about what it means. Clarify the ideas of private investment vs. social adaptation investment.
* Create the “use cases” formulate the “abuse cases”
* It is beneficial to make the index more proprietary - Do we need our own data, and our own sourcing?
* Can we create a set of possible pilot projects that will be stimulated by the results of the index , not simply selected because they have some connection.
* Historical back-cast; Identify what components have explanatory powers
* Name of the matrix needs to change, to make it more accessible for the press and the general public
* Eliminate the arbitrary component weights, we certainly can always come up with logic that is better than arbitrary.
* Be careful on data sources. Scrub date and quality carefully
* Collect data and quote from original sources

**Long term Possibilities for the Institute (thoughts stimulated by the quality of the meeting)**

**(purposely provocative!)**

* Build up team of adaptation experts. Build the capability of the institute. No need for more consultants/advisors until we have the robust team on board.
* Create/refresh the Institute workplan. It is a good time to reprioritize our work.
* Build out a content rich ‘hypothetical’ website; what should it look like given our objective of becoming the authoritative source on Adaptation. What analogs of other successful institutes and indexes that we can pattern ourselves after?
  + create hypothetical titles for the papers, work backwards to develop the content for the papers. What publications do we wish to get published in?
  + Build the glossary of Adaptation, define key terms and clarify what we mean by using the terms
  + Create the bibliography and library of all relevant papers on the topic
  + Link to adaptation news (e.g. like Rockefeller foundation)
  + Sponsor authors to write (blog) on adaptation topics
  + Act as a portal for experts so that they can find opportunities to research and collaborate
  + Other?
* Hire the team: We are the only institute to be doing this ! – we could use 4 more capable associates right now, and have them busy tomorrow. Limit consultants, therefore build capability internally.
* Create an adaptation cost curve; how do we rank the greatest impact for the least cost will be.