



Terms of reference for the GNC Strategic Advisory Group

October 2021

1.0 Background

A Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) was introduced into the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) structure during the GNC Face-to-Face Meeting in January 2013. The interim SAG was tasked with the provision of strategic direction for, and oversight of, the activity of the GNC in key areas. The initial six-month Terms of Reference (TOR) was extended until February 2014, based on the outcome of the GNC Annual meeting in July 2013. During this one-year interim period, the SAG largely met its objectives and provided strategic support and guidance around specific issues for the GNC Coordination Team (GNC-CT). Based on this experience, the GNC Coordinator requested to set up a permanent SAG to guide and support activities, and in February 2014, the interim SAG membership was updated, with two previous members remaining in place to provide institutional memory.

Further reflections on the SAG's performance were raised by the GNC-CT and the GNC partners during the GNC Face-to-Face Meeting in September 2014. Considering the increased demands on the GNC-CT to deploy its staff to support multiple emergencies, the GNC-CT and the SAG agreed that the SAG TOR should be revised to reflect the SAG's role under both normal and extenuating circumstances. Priorities for the SAG's support are therefore reviewed every 6 months by the GNC-CT and the collective.

The GNC Strategy (2022-2025) includes major shifts of focus in its priorities, with an expansion of the GNC mandate from primarily support to coordination and Information Management (IM), to now including technical assistance support for Nutrition in Emergency (NIE) programming. The technical assistance work is under the remit of the GNC Technical Alliance (the Alliance), led by UNICEF Nutrition Programme Division and World Vision International. During the development of the GNC Strategy (2022-2025) and related governance review, it was decided that the SAG should extend its strategic advice to cover all the GNC's priorities, including technical assistance, thus holistically supporting the implementation of the GNC Strategy.

2.0 Role of the SAG

The role of the SAG is to ensure that the GNC partners benefit from strategies that are consistent with the public interest of the Nutrition Cluster members and the vulnerable populations we serve. The SAG should also provide strategic guidance for the delivery of the strategy by the GNC partners, GNC-CT and the Alliance partners in line with the defined Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives, and to support monitoring progress on the workplans.

In providing strategic guidance to the GNC Coordinator and the co-chairs of the Alliance, the SAG examines issues and solutions through different lenses to confirm that strategic decisions are made based on the best available information and in the best interests of the affected populations served by the GNC and the wider GNC partnership.

3.0 SAG responsibilities

General

The SAG will:

- Support, guide and provide feedback to the GNC-CT and the Alliance Leadership Team (LT) on specific issues that the GNC-CT or the Alliance LT identify as benefitting from additional strategic feedback. The SAG will take decisions, preferably by consensus or by majority vote if no consensus is found;
- Review and approve matters escalated by the GNC partners, the GNC-CT and the Alliance LT;
- Be accountable to the GNC membership, although the Alliance LT and the GNC-CT are responsible for formal communication to the members;
- Actively seek interaction with GNC partners and represent their issues and concerns to the other SAG members and GNC-CT and the Alliance LT. To ensure that GNC partners are more rigorously represented in SAG deliberations, each SAG member will be allocated a group of members with whom they will regularly engage. The modalities of this engagement will be discussed with the SAG members and agreed upon. The wider cluster membership, including observers, will maintain the right to approach any of the elected SAG members directly with issues of concern, which may be tabled at SAG meetings.

Strategy and workplan

The SAG will:

- Advise on global GNC strategic priorities; review and endorse the global GNC Strategy and provide guidance on the need to revise the GNC's strategic vision;
- Review and approve annual GNC work plans and agree amendments to the work plans as necessary during the year. In years where a new GNC Strategy and a work plan (WP) are to be developed, the GNC-CT and the Alliance LT, in collaboration with the SAG, are responsible for developing a Strategy and a WP (based on feedback and discussion at the GNC Annual Meeting, and from other feedback mechanisms for input from GNC partners and other stakeholders);
- Along with the GNC-CT and the Alliance LT, review, discuss and finalize WP activities for each strategic area. If substantial changes to activities are proposed, a written explanation is provided to partners when the final draft of the WP is circulated. Partners provide feedback to the GNC-CT, the Alliance LT and the SAG on the final draft. In consultation with the SAG, the GNC-CT and the Alliance LT will review any concerns or issues raised and are responsible for taking the final decision regarding WP activities;
- Advise the GNC-CT and the Alliance on potential opportunities for the creation of Working Groups and Global Thematic Working Groups;

- Participate in regular communications on monthly calls but also on ad-hoc online/face- to-face meetings and functioning of the group. SAG members alternate the role of chairing and taking minutes of these calls every three months;
- When visiting their programmes at country level, SAG members will assess the situation around nutrition coordination and share information and concerns with the GNC-CT and the Alliance;
- Support GNC evaluations and real-time and peer reviews with a demonstrable degree of interaction and involvement;
- Collaborate with the GNC-CT and the Alliance LT to define the objectives and specific outcomes of the wider GNC collective's meetings; develop the agenda (e.g. proposing resource persons, topics and materials, etc.) and provide additional content inputs as needed. SAG members will also co-chair sessions during the GNC Annual Meetings;
- The GNC-CT and the Alliance co-chairs are responsible for developing a Monitoring framework for the implementation of the GNC Strategy and the WP, and to update progress every three months to facilitate the discussion on the monitoring of the GNC WP with the SAG;
- The SAG supports the GNC-CT and the Alliance LT in monitoring progress on the GNC WP1; highlighting and suggesting actions if off track through quarterly regular review and ad hoc inputs as needed;
- The SAG advises on the best course of action if there are identified bottlenecks;
- When needed, the SAG/GNC-CT/the Alliance LT might seek external expert support on specific issues; these experts might not be members of the GNC, but nevertheless have technical knowledge on the issue at hand.

Advocacy and Fundraising

The SAG will:

- Prepare / comment on/input into key strategy, advocacy and fundraising documents as required;
- Approve funding proposals and partnership arrangements that directly or indirectly affect the GNC collective, to ensure that these are in line with the GNC Strategy;
- Provide inputs to single or multi-donor funding proposals developed by the GNC-CT or the Alliance LT as required.
- The GNC-CT and the Alliance LT will routinely update the SAG and GNC members on the funding situation during face-to-face meetings and when there

is new funding made available for the GNC WP through the collective GNC partners proposal or through the CLA.

- Although it is not foreseen that the SAG would function as a funding allocation committee, SAG would make recommendations to the holder of collective resources if such decisions should be required.

Communications

- The Alliance LT and the GNC-CT are responsible for formal communication to the GNC members.
- The SAG ensures that the GNC collective has in place effective two-way communication processes.
- The SAG reviews and approves the GNC's Annual and Mid-year reports.
- When important and time-sensitive statements or action are needed, the GNC-CT or the Alliance LT may decide to respond on behalf of the collective, even if consultation with SAG members has been incomplete or absent. If the statement made is deemed by the SAG to require further input and/or the review by the collective GNC members, the SAG and the GNC-CT and the Alliance LT will find a way to consult with the GNC partners on the issue.
- All key statements issued or underwritten by the GNC and its groups (i.e., Advocacy and Communications Working Group), such as joint statements, position papers and others are approved by the SAG on behalf of the GNC partnership. If time allows, GNC partners might be consulted for any red flag comments. Any such statement will be considered as endorsed by the GNC partnership if no substantial comments are received from the partners. Any GNC partner has the right to withdraw from a statement, which would be noted.

4.0 Composition and membership of the SAG

4.1 Composition of the SAG

Members of the SAG are exemplars of the GNC and its humanitarian values, acting with integrity, fairness and in the interest of affected populations. They maintain the GNC's focus on building inclusion, enrichment and trust for the benefit of people, stakeholders and the GNC partnership.

The SAG is composed of 12 permanent and elected representatives from:

- GNC Coordinator (permanent membership);
- GNC Technical Alliance NGO co-coordinator (permanent membership);
- UNICEF Programme representative (permanent membership, given UNICEF's role as Cluster Lead Agency);
- WFP Programme representative (permanent membership, given WFP's role in moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) prevention and management);
- UNHCR Programme representative (permanent membership, given UNHCR's role in refugee context);
- WHO Nutrition Programme representative (permanent member, given WHO regulatory role for Nutrition)
- Three NGO/operating agencies' representatives (to be elected by GNC partners);
- Two Country Cluster Coordinators, representing all CCs and IMOs (to be elected by CCs/IMOs);
- Two donor representatives (to be elected by GNC partners).

4.2 Criteria for membership

To be represented on the SAG, organizations must have been a GNC partner for 12 months or longer.

Permanent membership is assigned to an organization and not an individual. It is up to the organization to select who will represent them on the SAG, although it is usually the most senior staff involved in the GNC work.

Elected membership is based on the nomination and election process and is assigned for two years, after which the new nomination and election process is due. Given that seven out of 12 members of the SAG are elected members, the SAG will ensure that no more than four members are rotated in a year.

If no nominations are received to replace current elected members, they can be extended in the SAG for one more period of two years.

Individuals interested in being represented on the SAG should have significant relevant work experience at a strategic level, along with a solid understanding of the humanitarian aid sector. Selected individuals commit to represent the interests of the GNC and not their own agency's interests.

4.3 Nomination, establishment and duration of the SAG

The SAG membership will be reviewed and updated in the 1st quarter of every year. Four to five previous elected SAG members should be retained in order to maintain institutional memory.

- Interested organizations¹ are asked to submit an expression of interest and identify the individual who will fulfil this role on behalf of the organization. A brief outline of the added value of the organization's participation in the SAG (approximately one paragraph) and a short bio (no more than half a page) of the nominated individual should be submitted to the GNC Coordinator.
- If the individual is an independent, the short bio and brief outline of added value should be submitted to the GNC Coordinator.
- Country Cluster Coordinators who are interested in taking on this role may also put themselves forward and/or can be nominated by their peers. A short bio should be included along with the expression of interest.

4.4 Selection of SAG members

There will be a parallel selection process:

- SAG members will be elected by the GNC partners (each agency will have one vote).
- Country Coordinators will elect their representative from the selection of Country Coordinators nominated (one vote per country).

Voting will take place through an on-line survey. A vote will not be needed if there is only the required number of volunteers for each level of representation.

5.0 Implementation arrangements

5.1 Time commitment

Monthly SAG meetings/conference calls will be scheduled: SAG members would be expected to attend 80 per cent of the meetings. In addition, SAG members will be

¹ The "agency" means an entity or an organization that is the partner of the GNC with all its various sections.

required to engage on issues by email or conference calls between the monthly conference calls.

If needed, there will be a face-to-face SAG meeting around the time of the GNC meeting, as well as one additional face to face meeting around six months later; the remaining meetings will be organized online.

5.2 Chair and notetaker for SAG calls

The SAG Chair will be nominated by the SAG. The Chair position is to be rotated every three months. Any member of the SAG can chair the SAG as this would not be considered a conflict of interest.

The SAG call notetaker will be nominated by the SAG. The notetaker is to be rotated every three months.

5.3 Accountability and Transparency

- The GNC-CT and the Alliance LT, in consultation with the SAG, commits to share drafts and final drafts of all strategic documents as well as key decisions to be made with GNC partners for their input and feedback.
- SAG, GNC-CT and the Alliance LT should ensure that key strategic decisions are adequately discussed with GNC partners, when time allows.
- Decisions made by the SAG shall be taken to the extent possible based on consensus.
- Presence of at least 50 per cent of the SAG members at a meeting constitutes a quorum.
- Decisions will be recorded in minutes, to be circulated.
- SAG uses MS Teams as its primary communications tool.
- The SAG shall report to the GNC Annual Meeting on the accomplishment of its functions.

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