



Terms of reference for the GNC
Strategic Advisory Group
March 2026

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 and TOR was updated, with two previous members remaining in place to provide institutional memory. The latest version of these ToRs dated from October 2021. In 2024, the SAG met in London to review its ToRs in line with the new GNC strategy to write this current version.

The GNC Strategy 2026–2029 reinforces the GNC’s core coordination mandate and expands its focus through strengthened commitments to localisation, climate-sensitive Nutrition in Emergencies (NiE) action, and alignment with the broader Humanitarian Reset. It positions the GNC as a collective of actors jointly responsible for enabling timely, quality, and context-appropriate nutrition responses in emergencies.

Within this framework, the GNC maintains its dual architecture:

- The GNC Coordination Team (GNC-CT) continues to lead and support country-level coordination and Information Management (IM).
- The GNC Programme Team, continues to be co-led by UNICEF, as the Nutrition Cluster Lead Agency, and an NGO co-lead agency, which currently is Save the Children. The Programme Team supports operational partners through agile and demand-driven technical assistance, capacity strengthening, evidence generation, and learning. The GNC Programme Team provides oversight to the Programme arm and is composed of UNICEF, Save the Children and Action Against Hunger Canada. The Programme Team ensures shared leadership and inclusive governance.

Together, these structures operationalize the GNC’s expanded vision for strengthened leadership, localisation, climate responsiveness, and partner-driven technical support in NiE programming coordination, as articulated in the 2026–2029 strategy.

2.0 Role of the SAG

The purpose of the SAG is to ensure that the strategies and priorities of the GNC are consistent with the needs of the vulnerable population we serve.

The SAG provides **strategic advisory support** to the GNC Coordinator, Programme Team co-leads, and the broader GNC partnership. It offers advice informed by diverse perspectives and evidence, helping ensure that decisions are well-informed and people centred. SAG also supports the GNC-CT, and the GNC partners in delivering the GNC Strategy according to the agreed Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives, while tracking progress on workplans.

3.0 SAG responsibilities

3.1 General

The SAG will:

- Provide strategic advice to the GNC-CT and Programme Team on issues requiring high-level guidance, with decisions made by consensus or majority vote.
- Review and respond to matters escalated by the GNC partners, the GNC-CT and the Programme Team with a focus on current emergencies.
- Be accountable to the GNC membership, although the GNC Programme Team and the GNC-CT are responsible for formal communication to the members.
- Ensure meaningful and inclusive engagement, particularly of national and local actors, in SAG deliberations. 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.

3.2 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 suggest on the annual GNC work plans and subsequent amendments to the work plans as necessary during the year.
- Along with the GNC-CT and the Programme Team, review, discuss and finalize WP activities for each strategic area. In consultation with the SAG, the GNC-CT and the Programme Team will review any concerns or issues raised and are responsible for taking the final decision regarding WP activities.
- The SAG supports the GNC-CT and the Programme Team in monitoring progress on the GNC WP; 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. Develop its own work plan aligned with the GNC strategy and work plans.
- Participate in monthly SAG meetings but also on ad-hoc online/face-to-face meetings and functioning of the group. SAG members chair the SAG meetings on a rotating basis.

- When visiting their programmes at the country level, SAG members will assess the situation around nutrition coordination and share information and concerns with the GNC-CT and the Programme Team.
- Support GNC evaluations and real-time and peer reviews with a demonstrable degree of interaction and involvement.
- Collaborate with the GNC-CT and the Programme Team 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 serve as daily moderators and /or co-chair sessions during the GNC Global and Regional events.

3.3. Advocacy

The SAG will:

- Input into key strategy, advocacy, and fundraising documents as required.
- Support the GNC in discussions with donors and join donor facing calls as requested by the CT or PT.
- Support the GNC in identifying potential donors and/or mitigations where funding gaps exist and sharing information
- Elevate issues related to the Funding and Supplies pipeline, Level 2/3 emergencies, and partner priorities in SAG discussions and external engagement.

3.4 Communications

The SAG will:

- While the GNC-CT and Programme Team maintain formal communication responsibilities, the SAG advocates for nutrition cluster priorities within their respective organizations.
 - The SAG ensures that the GNC collective has in place effective two-way communication processes.
 - The SAG reviews and approves the GNC's Annual report.
 - When important and time-sensitive statements or actions are needed, the GNC- CT or the Programme Team 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 Programme Team 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.

3.5. Technical

The SAG will:

- Support the various working groups organised under the Programme Arm.
- Advise on technical priorities and identify needs for new working groups or expert inputs (e.g., WHO guideline implementation, moderate wasting, USG funding shifts).

3.6 National clusters

The SAG will:

- Support better integration of intelligence from national clusters.
- Define mechanisms to engage subnational and national clusters in SAG inputs
- Trigger joint discussions between global SAG and country teams at least twice a year.

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 14 permanent and elected representatives from:

- GNC Coordinator (permanent membership)
- GNC Programme NGO co-lead (permanent membership)
- UNICEF Programme co-Lead (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)
 - One local NGO representative (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 eight out of 14 members of the SAG are elected members, the SAG will ensure that no more than four members are rotating 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.

The SAG members will incorporate a **mentorship mechanism** and **frequent rotations** to support local actors' participation and capacity building.

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 previously elected SAG members should be retained in order to maintain institutional memory.

Interested organizations 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.

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. The quorum of partners has to be at 70% (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 will be scheduled: SAG members are expected to attend 80 per cent of the meetings. In addition, SAG members will be 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, the remaining meetings will be organized online.

5.2 Chair and notetaker for SAG calls

The Chair position of the monthly meetings is to be rotated every month following a rota. Any member of the SAG can chair the SAG, as this would not be considered a conflict of interest.

5.3 Accountability and Transparency

- SAG, GNC-CT, and the Programme Team 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.

March 2026, Geneva