# Engaging Global Thematic Working Groups to Meet Country Technical Needs in Nutrition in Emergencies

## Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to outline the general Terms of Reference for the Global Thematic Working Groups (GTWGs) in the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) Technical Alliance (the Alliance). It is intended that each GTWG tailor the general Terms of Reference to best suit their needs and ways of working.

## What is the GNC Technical Alliance?

The purpose of the Alliance is to support practitioners to improve the quality of nutrition preparedness, response and recovery, by enabling and providing coordinated, accessible and timely technical support through multiple channels. Support from the Alliance is available to all practitioners, particularly local and national organizations working in humanitarian preparedness, response or recovery, in settings including emergencies, humanitarian or protracted crisis, fragile and conflict-affected contexts, and areas where there is a high burden of malnutrition or risk of nutritional deterioration. The Alliance is led by UNICEF, co-led by World Vision International and supported by a leadership team that includes Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN), International Medical Corps (IMC) and the GNC Coordination Team.

The Alliance enables practitioners to access:

1. Technical resources, country learnings and capacity-strengthening tools via the GNC Technical Alliance website.

2. Technical support from a group of experienced nutrition advisors in the technical support team, who answer questions on various technical areas or provide more in-depth support (remote or in-country).

3. Expert consensus-driven guidance and advice for emerging technical areas and/or challenging contexts that cannot be met by 1) and 2).

Rapid interim consensus-driven guidance and expert advice will be sought from GTWGs related to specific thematic areas based on identified field needs. In line with the key principles of the Alliance of maximizing existing capacities at all levels (national, regional and global levels), the Alliance will work with already existing and willing global technical thematic groups to meet technical requests coming in, ensuring these needs cannot first be provided by a) existing capacities at national and regional levels, b) through peer to peer support on En-net, or c) through signposting to existing technical guidance documents. In cases where there is no GTWG for a thematic area where technical guidance is being sought, or such group is not able to incorporate support to the Alliance into their existing plan, the Alliance will work with the GNC partners (and other relevant stakeholders) to facilitate the formation of one as relevant. Existing priority thematic areas for the GNC Technical Alliance (for which GTWGs have been set up) include: infant and young child feeding, wasting, nutrition information systems and nutrition and cash/voucher assistance. As noted previously, possible new GTWGs may be set up based on emerging needs.

## What is the role of the GTWGs?

Where technical gaps in guidance, or its translation in challenging contexts, are identified via questions coming into the GNC Technical Alliance website, GTWGs will be engaged to:

- **Provide technical advice where technical guidance** is existing but the translation to practical implementation requires further expert interpretation of guidance
- **Develop or coordinate the development of new interim consensus-driven guidance** in response to a pressing technical gap in their respective area of expertise or as relevant, flag an area where WHO normative guidance should be developed
- **Bring to the attention of the Alliance any important unaddressed technical issues** that are coming up within their network

- **Identify research priorities in their areas of work** where additional research is required
- **Collaborate with the Alliance in identifying knowledge management (KM) and learning needs** and facilitating the subsequent development of key technical KM products for practitioners within their thematic area as well as providing technical inputs to relevant KM products developed within the Alliance
- **Collaborate with the Alliance in identifying and facilitating country-to-country sharing** of experiences on particular technical issues where there are questions as well as collaborating in the implementation of webinars to promote inter-country/region/partner learning
- **Periodically update the Alliance and GNC partners on their work**, achievements, lessons learned and challenges

## How does the Alliance work with GTWGs?

Anyone can ask a technical question or request support by registering their interest on a 'Request Form' found on the GNC Technical Alliance website. The Alliances' technical support team will answer the question based on relevant guidance, tools and experience after checking that existing national, regional and headquarter sources of advice have been tried, and suggest sharing on en-net if appropriate. If there is a clear emerging technical gap in guidance or particularly challenging context where existing technical resources are not applicable (i.e. the question cannot be sufficiently answered), the Alliance will consult the relevant GTWG chairs to determine if the question should be escalated to the broader GTWG or an appropriate sub-working group who are able to convene and answer the individual question or develop a piece of interim consensus-driven guidance to address that gap. Once this interim consensus-driven guidance or expert advice has been developed, feedback will be channeled back to the practitioner who posed the question and if appropriate, a summary of the question and response will be published online via the GNC Technical Alliance website and En-net so that the wider community can benefit. ENN will consult WHO where there is an identified need to develop further normative guidance or where these processes could also feed into normative guidance under development.

## What does the Alliance offer to the GTWGs?

- Summarises technical requests that have been submitted to the Alliance, specific to their thematic area, which may be useful to inform the broader workplan for these groups.
- Updates on GTWGs work and any guidance produced will be promoted and shared through the Alliance website, the GNC newsletter, ENN's platforms (such as Field Exchange), and other global channels.
- Provides a field lens (via the GNC) on existing guidance available in their thematic area and the extent to which it is sufficient and appropriate for field needs.

## What are the criteria for membership?

The membership is open to organisations and individuals (UN agencies and NGOs, academics, donors, philanthropic foundations). To be represented in a GTWG, individuals (both from organisations or independent) must have a strong technical expertise in the thematic area of the GTWG and significant relevant work experience in the relevant thematic area at strategic, norm-setting or managerial level along with a solid understanding of the humanitarian aid sector. Their experience may be in different areas related to the thematic area such as research, policy, advocacy, implementation. GTWGs will aim to include representation from global, regional and country levels. Selected individuals commit to represent the interests of the technical community working in the relevant thematic area and not their own organisational interest. A mapping of membership expertise and experience should be conducted periodically to identify additional areas of expertise that may need to be sought by expanding the membership. Identification of workstreams/ sub-working groups will also inform membership needs.

## What is the nomination process and duration of GTWG membership?

Initial nominations to GTWGs are typically done as follows:

- Interested agencies are asked to submit an expression of interest and identify the individual who will fulfil this role  (agencies may be allowed to submit details of one other individual who can cover should the selected individual not be able to attend meetings etc.) Ideally, no more than two people per organisation should be represented within a GTWG.

- Nominated individuals should email GTWG chairs detailing the added value of their participation in the GTWG as well as a short bio (ideally no more than 350 words) outlining their experience in the relevant thematic area.

- Group members are to serve for a minimum of one year.

- Membership will be reviewed on a yearly basis to identify if any additional individuals and/or organisations that should be individually approached to participate in the GTWG, particularly exploring the extent to which membership includes country and regional representation.

## What are the commitments for GTWG members?

Members are expected to contribute to the GTWG strategy, work plan development and delivery. Members are expected to attend 80% of meetings scheduled and in addition, members may be required to engage on technical discussions by email or conference calls between the monthly conference calls. An estimated time commitment to GTWGs is approximately three to four days per year- this includes time for monthly calls and the contribution to collective areas of work identified in the GTWG workplan. Sub-working groups may require additional commitments on a case-by-case basis.

## What are the chairing processes and commitments?

A chair will be elected by the group for the period of one year, a co-chair may also be elected should the group deem a co-chair valuable. Ideally, there will be a combination of UN and NGO representation if there are co-chairs elected to lead the GTWG.

Responsibilities of a chair/ co-chair include:

- Setting up and chairing monthly meetings

- Coordinate/ delegate coordination of sub-working groups

- Overseeing the development of a workplan by the members

- Coordinate the appropriate answering of questions posed through the GNC Technical Alliance website, when escalated

- Managing the membership of the group to ensure it represents a broad range of expertise and opinion

- Overseeing a rapid consensus-driven process of developing interim guidance in identified technical gap areas

- Overseeing the production of any GTWG 'products' (including guidance, resources and webinars)

- Support the 'sense checking' of any final GTWG 'products' with field-level practitioners to ensure they are useful to guide implementation of nutrition interventions.

- Represent the group in any key external fora

- Potentially support the technical support team to identify relevant people to offer remote or in-country technical support to countries where the technical support team has not been able to identify any appropriate resources through its usual channels

- Report on activities of the group, emerging KM needs or gaps and any issues arising related to the functioning of the group in its role as a GTWG to the GNC Technical Alliance leadership (ENN in their oversight role).

For further questions or comments, contact: Tanya Khara (tanya@ennonline.net) or Natalie Sessions (natalie@ennonline.net), within the GNC Technical Alliance leadership team.