

**Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) Strategic Plan 2014-2016**

**Final version July 2014**

**Background to the GNC**

As part of the Humanitarian Reform process, the Cluster Approach was initiated in 2005 as one way to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response through greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and partnership. UNICEF was designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) for Nutrition and established a Global Nutrition Cluster Coordination Team (GNC-CT) that was based in New York from 2006-20011 and then moved to Geneva from January 2012.

The first GNC meeting of partners took place in 2006. Currently the GNC represents a partnership of approximately 40 organizations and institutions from the UN agencies, NGOs, academia, donor organizations and public-private alliances (see Annex 1 for full list).

From 2006-2009, the GNC focused on four strategic areas: 1) coordination and networking, 2) capacity development, 3) resource mobilization and supplies, 4) stewardship, technical guidance, preparedness, and monitoring and evaluation. Significant achievements were realized during this period including the development of technical guidance and tools such as the Harmonized Training Package (HTP), Nutrition in Emergencies toolkit, Operational Guidance on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E), a review of the Management of Acute Malnutrition in Infants (MAMI), a supply and commodity tool kit and support to the update of the SMART survey tool and the Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) toolkit[[1]](#footnote-1).

While many guidelines and reviews were conducted during this period, in 2009 there was recognition that the GNC needed to re-organize to better support the roll out of these tools and general cluster activities at the regional and country levels. A vision and strategic framework was developed based on discussions in the 2009 annual meeting. This framework outlined key outputs for the GNC at global, regional and country levels.

In the July 2010 annual meeting, GNC partners agreed that the Strategic Framework should more explicitly reflect areas of priority activities for the GNC and thus 6 thematic pillars were identified to capture the work of the GNC moving forward: 1) coordination, advocacy and resource mobilization, 2) policy, standards and guidelines, 3) capacity development for humanitarian response, 4) preparedness, 5) assessment, monitoring and information management and 6) best practices and lessons learned. After this meeting, a new Strategic Framework (2010) with these pillars was developed[[2]](#footnote-2). This framework guided GNC activities until the end of 2013.

During this time, reviews from the humanitarian response in 2010 and 2011 were conducted by the IASC. It was documented that while emergency response capacity has been reinforced at the global level according to an agreed division of labor since the cluster approach was initiated, challenges still remain in deploying adequate leadership; putting in place appropriate coordination mechanisms at various levels and ensuring clear mutual accountabilities as evidenced by several major disasters over the past years. As a result, the Transformative Agenda**[[3]](#footnote-3)** was agreed in December 2011. It sets out six functional areas for the clusters at country level:

* 1. Supporting service delivery
  2. Informing strategic decision-making of the HC/HCT for the humanitarian response
  3. Planning and strategy development
  4. Advocacy
  5. Monitoring and reporting
  6. Contingency planning/preparedness

In 2013, in order to enhance performance of the GNC and align its focus with the Transformative Agenda (TA) and overall Humanitarian Project Cycle[[4]](#footnote-4) and other TA related guidance, the GNC conducted a governance review. Recommendations from this review included the development of a three-year Strategic Plan with revised focus to reflect the functional areas set out in the Transformative Agenda.

The following Strategic Plan draws from partner feedback during the governance review[[5]](#footnote-5), discussions in the GNC Annual meeting (July 2013)[[6]](#footnote-6), a strategic planning exercise conducted with the GNC-CT and the SAG (November 2013) and feedback provided in the GNC face-to-face meeting (February 2014).

**Vision and core purpose**

The **vision** of the GNC is to safeguard and improve the nutritional status of emergency affected populations by ensuring an appropriate response that is predictable, timely and effective and at scale.

The GNC is first and foremost a coordination mechanism. The GNC’s **core purpose** is to enable country coordination mechanisms to achieve timely, quality, and appropriate nutrition response to emergencies. The GNC supports country coordination in strategic decision-making, planning and strategy development, advocacy, monitoring and reporting, and contingency planning/preparedness[[7]](#footnote-7).

**Structure of the GNC**

The GNC is a large partnership. Each partner agency is unique and their contributions through identified agency focal persons enhance the diversity and richness of the GNC. The partnership is based around the principles of equality, transparency, responsibility and complementarity as outlined in the Principles of Partnership[[8]](#footnote-8).

There are three levels of engagement within the GNC: partner, observer and the Nutrition Cluster Coordinator (NCC) group (individual NCCs work for the Nutrition Cluster at country level). A Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) provides strategic guidance to the GNC Coordination Team (GNC-CT) and the affairs of the GNC. Additionally, specific task forces are established on an ‘as needed’ basis, to guide and support the implementation of the Work Plan[[9]](#footnote-9).

**GNC Partners** are entities (organizations, groups or individuals) committed to respecting fundamental humanitarian principles[[10]](#footnote-10), working in Nutrition in Emergencies, who are willing to actively help the GNC fulfill its role and who

* Support the fulfillment of the GNC Strategic Plan by collectively developing and contributing to the GNC Work Plan via funding contribution or in-kind person time (e.g. participation in task forces)
* Are signatories to a Conflict of Interest clause[[11]](#footnote-11)
* Support the monitoring of activities in the GNC Work Plan that they are actively contributing towards
* Contribute to GNC discussions through participation in GNC meetings and teleconferences
* Support a sense of equality and mutual respect for all other partners.
* Are mutually accountable
* Contribute to decision making[[12]](#footnote-12) in the best interests of the collective

Partnership will be re-assessed by the GNC-CT on an annual basis based on a list of criteria outlined in the SOP.

**GNC observers** choose not to contribute directly to the GNC’s work. They are interested to receive and share information where appropriate and may be invited to attend meetings. They have no voice or vote regarding GNC decisions.

**The NCC Group** is a special group of stakeholders of the GNC, constituting NCCs, Information Management Officers (IMOs) and Nutrition Sector Coordinators working at country level in emergencies. The GNC-CT ensures that there is widespread consultation with the NCCs through the NCC monthly calls (hosted by the GNC-CT) where individual NCCs/IMOs provide updates on their work and their opinion is sought on specific GNC issues. Any concerns or issues relevant to the NCC are highlighted by the GNC-CT in monthly GNC partner teleconferences.

Members of the NCC group also participate in GNC meetings, Task Forces and other specific consultations and activities as appropriate.

**GNC Coordination Team (GNC-CT),** led by the GNC Coordinator,provides leadership to the GNC in consultation with the SAG, GNC partners and NCC group. The GNC Coordinator has management decision-making authority. The GNC-CT also[[13]](#footnote-13)

* Supports fulfillment of GNC Strategic and Work Plans through activities in the GNC-CT Work Plan,
* Acts as the secretariat of the GNC,
* Represents the GNC at IASC meetings and contributes learning to IASC processes and guidance,
* Provides operational support to country clusters,
* Reports both to the CLA and GNC partners,
* Facilitates links and communications between various GNC groups, UNICEF as CLA, and other clusters,
* Monitors the GNC-CT Work Plan on a monthly basis, and
* Writes the annual GNC report.

The **Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)** is composed of representatives from four GNC partners, one NCC, and the CLA. The SAG

* Provides strategic support to the GNC-CT (GNC Coordinator and deputy) to guide direction of GNC affairs based on SAG TOR,
* Commits to working in fulfillment of the activities outlined in the annual meeting,
* Supports the GNC CT in monitoring the progress on the GNC Work Plan[[14]](#footnote-14), highlighting and suggesting actions if off track.

The SAG has a decision-making role only if delegated by partners (at meetings or via email).

The GNC also hosts a **Rapid Response Team (RRT),** consisting of five experienced nutrition professionals, available for rapid deployment of up to 3 months to support country-level cluster coordination and information management functions. RRT staff are operationally supported by four GNC partner agencies: Action Against Hunger—International, International Medical Corps, Save the Children—United Kingdom, and World Vision International with financial support from ECHO.

**Task forces** are composed of GNC partners and observers who volunteer to dedicate time to action specific work identified in the GNC Work Plan. Representatives from other Clusters could also be asked to join where relevant. Anticipated outputs and a clear time frame for task forces are agreed by the GNC-CT and SAG.

**Strategic pillars 2014-2016**

The GNC’s work from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2016 will fall under the following four pillars:

1. **Partnership, communication, advocacy, and resource mobilization**
2. **Capacity development in humanitarian coordination**
3. **Operational and surge support to country clusters**
4. **Information and Knowledge Management**

An overview of each pillar, expected results and priority activities are detailed below.

**Pillar 1. Partnership, communication, advocacy, and resource mobilization**

This involves fostering internal (among GNC partners) and external (GNC to other clusters, agencies, institutions, etc.) partnerships; communicating essential information to all relevant stakeholders at global and country level in a timely fashion; and advocating with key decision makers to ensure policies, coordination and funding mechanisms enable an efficient cluster response.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this pillar are

1. To strengthen existing partnerships and support the development of new partnerships to enhance accountability within a coordinated response,
2. To communicate effectively and transparently with partners and nutrition stakeholders through email, in teleconferences and in meetings,
3. To ensure that relevant advocacy messages are developed and appropriately communicated to enhance policies, coordination and response capacity, and
4. To strengthen capacity of partners and country clusters to mobilize resources for improved coordination and response.

**Expected results**

* + **Partnership**. Greater complementarity, ownership and mutual accountability is realized through the collective development and delivery of GNC Work Plan. Capacities are mapped and leveraged to enhance effective coordination at country level
  + **Communication.** Information is communicated in a timely, transparent and efficient manner to all stakeholders
  + **Advocacy.** Bottlenecks to effective nutrition coordination are identified and appropriate action is taken resulting in greater awareness, increased resources and enhanced coordination on the delivery of cluster accountabilities
  + **Resource mobilization.** Greater understanding among cluster partners at global and country level on different Humanitarian funding streams and how to access it

**Priority activities**

*Objective 1*

* Develop, cost and launch the **bi-annual costed GNC Work Plan**
* Revive **inter-cluster coordination**
* Develop **guidance on inter-cluster work** and accountability to affected populations
  + **Map country coordination structures** and GNC partner country presence

*Objective 2*

* Conduct **bi-annual GNC face-to-face meetings** of GNC partners, observers and NCCs
* Conduct **monthly teleconferences** with 1) GNC partners, 2) NCC and 3) the RRT
* Publish **bi-monthly GNC bulletin** to share global activities and provide a space for NCCs and IMOs to share experiences
* Identify and develop **quality communications structures for NCC/IMOs/RRT**s
* Produce a **GNC Annual Report**
* Develop a **global dashboard of indicators** to document global cluster activities to ensure accountability

*Objective 3*

* Develop an **advocacy plan** that addresses advocacy with external partners in nutrition (UNSCN/SUN/REACH) and inter-cluster linkages (WASH/Health/Food Security clusters)
* Participate in IASC policy and guidance discussions (and inter-cluster discussions)

*Objective 4*

* Develop **guidance on resource mobilization**
* Develop a **Fundraising Strategy**

**Pillar 2. Capacity development in humanitarian coordination**

This involves identifying specific capacity gaps hampering optimal cluster coordination, particularly at the country level; identifying and /or developing tools and resources to address those gaps; and training key staff (NCCs, Information Managers, standby partners and GNC partners) in the relevant knowledge and skills required.

***Note:*** The GNC will focus its capacity development efforts on skills most relevant to cluster coordination at the country level. Where there is a gap in technical guidance or technical capacity, the GNC-CT will share details of existing resources and mechanisms and will advocate for partners with this capacity to fill and/or address these gaps.

**Objectives**

The objective of this pillar is

* 1. To strengthen nutrition sector and cluster coordination mechanisms to ensure effective nutrition coordination functions are available at country level.

**Expected results**

* + NCCs, IMOs and standby partners working in these capacities have the required skills, competencies and tools to deliver on their responsibilities
  + NCCs, IMOs and standby partners working in these capacities have completed the necessary training on coordination functions and have the skills and knowledge to train partners in the same
* IMOs are trained in the use of the tools and are supported in developing, collating and sharing routine and other relevant information
  + GNC partners are aware of the cluster approach and are building capacity of their country level staff to support harmonized nutrition response in emergencies
  + Coordination capacities and systems in agreed priority countries are enhanced to deliver a coordinated response

**Priority activities**

* Develop **comprehensive competency framework** to share with standby partners
* Assess IMOs/NCCs in countries against the competency framework and identify gaps and mechanisms to fill these gaps
* Develop a **capacity development strategy** for the GNC
* Continue to **roll out the updated (Transformative Agenda) cluster coordination trainings** at regional and in-country levels for NCCs and partners
* Annually **prioritize a list of countries** to strengthen cluster coordination
* Develop **induction/orientation package** for NCCs, IMOs and standby partners
* **Translate Handbook** into French (and other languages if needed)
* Conduct **review of cluster transition plans/processes** and identify and address capacity gaps
* Host and update the Nutrition in Emergencies **HTP training package**
* Provide support to 15 cluster countries in organising programme coverage surveys, including conducting of capacity building activities for cluster partners
* Regularly update and share with NCCs and GNC partners an existing list of institutions / persons that could be available to GNC and NCCs for technical support
* Support one day of additional training for the NCC, based on information management toolkit and IMO training package
* Roll out the 5 day training according to the **IM training package**

**Pillar 3. Operational and surge support to country clusters**

This includes support to country clusters to ensure effective coordination functions on the ground through visits and/or the provision of additional staff (i.e. Rapid Response Team (RRT) members or standby partners).

***Note:*** The GNC will focus its support to country clusters on coordination functions. Where there is a gap in The GNC will focus its capacity development efforts on skills most relevant to cluster coordination at the country level. Where there is a gap in technical guidance or technical capacity, the GNC-CT will share details of existing resources and mechanisms and will advocate for partners with this capacity to fill and/or address these gaps.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this pillar are

1. To ensure effective, augmented nutrition coordination/IM support for emergency response
2. To enable country cluster staff to access required technical support

**Expected results**

* + Increased number of standby partners with capacity in nutrition, coordination and IM[[15]](#footnote-15)
  + Increased number of CMAM, IYCF and Nutrition Assessment readily available for surge support
  + Increased deployment of individuals to support country clusters at strategic times[[16]](#footnote-16)
  + Decreased number of nutrition cluster staffing gaps
  + Continuous funding of the RRT
  + Functional alert system for deteriorating nutrition situations in countries

**Priority activities**

*Objective 1*

* Maintain eight to ten Standby Partner (SBP) staff who have the capacity to provide nutrition coordination and IM surge support
* Deploy trained surge NCC/IMOs to country clusters to fulfill core cluster functions
* Advocate for and secure funding for RRT function (four NCCs and two IMOs)
* Support country clusters in the development of mid and long-term HR transition plans for cluster coordination/information management from surge
* Support the Cluster Performance Monitoring exercise at country level where needed
* Establish a system for systematically flagging the countries with potential deterioration of nutrition status
* Conduct evaluation of the RRT.

*Objective 2*

* Establish surge technical capacity in IYCF-E, Nutrition Assessment and CMAM (2 IYCF-E, 1 NAs and 1 CMAM)

**Pillar 4. Information and Knowledge Management (IM/KM)**

This includes managing appropriate nutritional and coordination information and the capturing, developing, sharing and using relevant knowledge and experiences.

The Nutrition Cluster IM/KM activities will build off of and contribute to the UNICEF-led inter-cluster IM/KM taskforce.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this pillar are

1. To ensure country level clusters have the harmonised tools and guidance required for effective information management
2. To strengthen systems and capacity for documenting and sharing information and knowledge/ learning in effective cluster response at country and global level

**Expected results**

* A toolbox of IM guidance and tools is developed
* Structures or mechanisms to support and facilitate information exchange among Nutrition Clusters are developed
* Key documents available in English, French and other languages based on demand
* Experiences and learning in nutrition coordination are documented and shared

**Priority activities**

*Objective 1*

* Finalise and endorse the GNC IM/KM strategy
* Develop, review and disseminate GNC IM Toolkit, including guidance on its use
* Translate IM toolkit into French and Arabic languages
* Finalise the Nutrition Cluster indicator bank (via NATF Humanitarian Indicator Registry project)
* Develop 5-day IMO training package

*Objective 2*

* + Conduct a scoping exercise among NCCs and IMOs and other IM/KM staff at global and country levels to identify their interest in sharing experiences and learning
  + Support NCCs/IMOs to capture and document their experiences and learning
  + Disseminate captured and documented experiences through multiple channels
  + Develop, launch and maintain an independent website for GNC (in alignment with other clusters)

**Monitoring and evaluation**

The performance of the GNC will be based on the progress made on the activities under each strategic pillar of the Work Plan. The GNC-CT, leading agencies on activities and Task Forces will report in a ‘traffic-lights’ format[[17]](#footnote-17) on progress highlighting activities that have stalled or stopped. This information, along with other key indicators of GNC progress, will be available on-line in the form of a dashboard on the website.

The GNC Coordinator will produce an annual report on the progress of the GNC.

The GNC will develop a new Work Plan at the end of 2015 and a new 3-year Strategic Plan in 2016.

The GNC costed Work Plan 2014-2015 outlines the cost for GNC activities during this period. The total cost of GNC activities for this two-year period is $5,126,763. This is broken down by pillars as follows:

**Resource requirements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Total cost** |
| **Pillar 1** | 1,189,000 |
| **Pillar 2** | $1,284,700 |
| **Pllar 3** | 2,219,300 |
| **Pillar 4** | 433,763 |
| **Totals** | **5,126,763** |

**Annex 1: GNC Partners and Observers for 2014 -2016**

The Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) is comprised of approximately 32 partners, 8 observers and a small team of dedicated staff within UNICEF.

Partners

Action contre la Faim (France)

Action against Hunger (UK)

Action against Hunger Canada SMART

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

CMAM forum

CRED

Concern

Department International Development (DFID)  
 Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN)  
 FAO  
 Food &Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA)  
 GAIN  
 GOAL   
 Help Age International  
 International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC)  
 International Medical Corps (IMC)  
 International Orthodox Christian Charities(IOCC)   
 International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Merlin

Nutrition Works

OFDA/USAID

Plan International

Samaritan’s Purse

Save the Children UK

Save the Children USA  
Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN)

UNICEF

UNHCR

Valid International  
World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Vision International (WVI)

Observers

CARE

ECHO

Helen Keller International (HKI)

Médecins sans Frontières

Micronutrient Initiative (MI)

International Commitee of Red Cross (ICRC)

The Earth Institute Columbia University

UCL Institute for Global Health

1. More details on the GNC can be found on http://www.nutritioncluster.net [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Strategic Framework 2010-2012 available on http://www.nutritioncluster.net [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For more information see http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The **Humanitarian Project Cycle** was defined to ensure greater coordination, information management and preparedness within humanitarian response. It articulates how and when humanitarian programming should address the areas of coordination assessment and needs analysis, strategic planning, resource mobilisation (flash appeal etc), implementation and monitoring, operational peer review and evaluation. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Global Nutrition Cluster Governance Review, Final report, October 2013 available at [www.nutritioncluster.net](http://www.nutritioncluster.net) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See GNC Annual meeting report, July 2013 available at www.nutritioncluster.net [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. As articulated in the Transformative Agenda, the GNC also supports country clusters to coordinate service delivery for nutrition. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org/ghp.html [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For more details on roles and responsibilities, see the GNC’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) available at www.unicef.org/nutritioncluster [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Including humanity, the humanitarian imperative, impartiality and independence along with the Principles of Partnership (http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org/ghp.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See the GNC’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) available at www.unicef.org/nutritioncluster [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Process outlined in GNC SOPs [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For greater detail see the GNC’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) available at [www.nutritioncluster.net](http://www.nutritioncluster.net) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Recognizing that the daily oversight and monitoring of the GNC Work Plan is the responsibility of the GNC-CT. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. ‘capacity in nutrition, coordination and IM’ defined as nutritionist, NCCs or IMOs available on their respective rosters [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See footnote 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Denoting activities with green, yellow or red markers to indicate progress [↑](#footnote-ref-17)