

Membership Policy of the Global Health Cluster

Background

When emergencies occur coordination is necessary. Good coordination means less gaps and overlaps in the assistance delivered by humanitarian organizations. Created in 2005, the Global Health Cluster (GHC) provides a platform for organizations to work in partnership to ensure collective action results in more timely, effective and predictable response to health emergencies. Its vision is “to be the global health platform for minimizing mortality, morbidity and disability due to humanitarian emergencies, whilst promoting the well-being and dignity of affected populations”. With the mission of “minimizing the health impact of humanitarian emergencies”, GHC is currently composed of 48 international humanitarian health organizations.

Its guiding principles are commitment and voluntary cooperation; community participation and accountability to affected populations; support national authorities' coordination efforts, priorities and building capacities; adherence to humanitarian principles and the right to health.

The Strategic Framework 2014-2015 includes the following strategic objectives: 1) strengthen and expand the global capacity for effective humanitarian health action; 2) strengthen technical and operational support for country health clusters and coordinators; 3) improve the harmonization, quality and timeliness of humanitarian health information; 4) address strategic and technical gaps; 5) enhance the advocacy role of the GHC.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the Lead Agency and provides secretariat support to the GHC.

Criteria

GHC membership is open to organizations that bring the requisite skills, expertise and capacity needed to effectively prepare for and respond to the increasing number of health emergencies arising from a range of hazard. Such organizations can include intergovernmental organizations (including WHO and UN agencies), nongovernmental organizations, national authorities, consortia, academic or training institutes, foundations and donor agencies who meet the criteria below:

- Active or with strategic intent to provide or support health services in areas affected by or recovering from humanitarian crises.
- Willing to actively support the GHC fulfil its role and implement the GHC Strategic Framework and workplan.
- Committed to respecting the GHC guiding principles.

- Having the resources (human and financial) to participate in the activities of GHC, including attending the meetings.

Note:

- *Individuals cannot be part of the GHC.*
- *Organizations that do not support GHC guiding principles and Strategic Framework will not be considered for participation.*
- *Organizations that are related to the tobacco and arms industries will not be considered for participation, according to the WHO Framework of engagement with non-State actors.*

Categories of partners

GHC partners can have member, associate or observer status with the following responsibilities and benefits.

1. Member

Responsibilities

- Support the fulfilment of the GHC Strategic Framework by collectively developing and contributing to the GHC workplan via funding contribution or in-kind work.
- Support the monitoring of activities in the GHC workplan they are actively contributing towards.
- Contribute to GHC discussions through participation in Partner Meetings and teleconferences.
- Share knowledge and information with the GHC unit and other partners.
- Actively initiate and participate in collaborative activities with other partners.
- Keep their profile contact information up-to-date and participate in partners' surveys.
- Support a sense of equality, mutual respect for all other partners and mutual accountability.
- Mainstream health cluster policy and practice at all levels within their respective organization.
- Promote and advocate for the GHC.

Benefits

- Information and knowledge sharing – Receive all correspondence, products and material of the GHC.
- Networking and collaboration – Participate in Partner Meetings and in Task Teams of their interest; connect with other partners working on similar issues; and join other partners in Country Health Clusters.
- Participation – Influencing GHC work through participation in consultations and discussions.
- Resource mobilization – access funding and human resource opportunities through collaborative working and joint funding arrangements.
- Visibility – Be highlighted on website, publications, newsletter, use the HC logo, with approval by the GHC Coordinator.

- Collective advocacy – Increase awareness of a specific issue by advocating for it as a collective voice.

2. Associate

Responsibilities

- Support GHC efforts by sharing their particular expertise (e.g. specialist training, research capacity) to enhance the capacity of health cluster members at global, regional or country level.
- Attend Partner Meetings, upon invitation of GHC unit.
- Participate in the discussions of GHC Partner Meeting, upon invitation of GHC unit.

Benefits

- Information and knowledge sharing – Receive all correspondence, products and material of the GHC.
- Networking and collaboration – Participate in Partner Meetings and in Task Teams of their interest, upon invitation of GHC unit; connect with other partners working on similar issues; and join other partners in the Country Health Clusters.
- Visibility – Be highlighted on website, publications, newsletter.

3. Observer

Responsibilities

- Receive and share information on GHC activities.
- Attend Partner Meetings, upon invitation of GHC unit.

Benefits

- Information and knowledge sharing – Receive all correspondence, products and material of the GHC.
- Networking and collaboration – Attend Partner Meetings; connect with other partners working on similar issues; and join other partners in the Country Health Clusters.
- Visibility – Be highlighted on website, publications, newsletter.

Screening of applications

The secretariat screens the application according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Characteristics of the partner	Supporting documents
Credibility of the organization	Partner should be a recognized organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction form • Constitution/founding document • National or international affiliations If required by secretariat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of at least 3 referees
Technical and operational capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner should be active or with strategic intent to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of accomplishments in

	<p>provide or support health services in areas affected by or recovering from humanitarian crises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner should be willing to actively support the GHC fulfil its role and implement the GHC Strategic Framework and workplan. 	<p>providing or supporting health services in areas affected by or recovering from humanitarian crises and fragile states</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal of contribution to GHC workplan implementation. Contribution could be technical, human resources or financial.
Resources in place to support GHC activities	<p>Partner should have the legal structure and the means (human and financial) to participate in the activities of GHC, including participation in the meetings. Exceptions may be granted to organizations from low-income countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last financial report. • Declaration of intent to attend Partner Meetings on a regular basis. • Agreement from the supervisor to allow time to participate in GHC activities.
Alignment with the WHO Framework of engagement with non-State actors	<p>Partners should not be related to the tobacco and arms industries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclaimers in application form. • Constitution/founding document. • Last financial report. • Membership of decision-making bodies.

Process for application

- Applications for the status of member, associate and observer are presented in writing to the GHC secretariat at any time throughout the year.
- The secretariat screens each applicant against the abovementioned criteria, and, where necessary, carries a process of enquiry to establish the relevant credentials of the applicant. After that, the secretariat presents the application to the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) with a recommendation or not for its approval.
- If no written objection on the approval is received from the SAG, membership is confirmed and the secretariat informs the Partner Meeting. New GHC partners will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing by the GHC secretariat.
- In certain cases (i.e. project implementation, financial agreement, use of Health Cluster logo), WHO, as Cluster Lead Agency, may recur to a due diligence process and risk assessment process as it is deemed appropriate.

Termination of membership

- GHC membership status will be reviewed on an annual basis by the GHC secretariat. To do this, the GHC secretariat will track and review partners attendance at GHC meetings, participation in conference calls and engagement in activities of the GHC workplan. Whilst it is recognised that partners may not be able to attend GHC Partner Meetings, commitment and contribution to GHC discussions and activities must be demonstrated throughout the year to be considered a GHC partner.
- Any partner may terminate its involvement in GHC by providing written notice to the GHC secretariat. The GHC secretariat shall remove the organization from the list of partners and inform the Partner Meeting accordingly.
- The SAG can recommend the termination of the participation of any partner, based on the review of its compliance with membership criteria and responsibilities.