

TERMS OF REFERENCE
OF
ANAEMIA ACTION ALLIANCE
(20 September 2023)

This document sets out governance arrangements for the Anaemia Action Alliance (hereinafter ‘the Alliance’).

It describes 1) the mission and vision, structure, outreach approach, functions, and requirements of its Core group members and participants of the Stakeholders’ Forum, as well as principles for interactions between its various entities; 2) the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the Alliance’s entities; and 3) the principles of engagement, engagement processes for different entities, and avoidance/management of risks including conflict of interest.

To best reflect the priorities and collaborative nature of the Alliance, this organizational structure is designed to ensure inclusive and transparent decision-making, priority setting, and interpretation of findings. The document reflects the Alliance's commitment to work with all relevant stakeholders in a benevolent approach, which is grounded in evidence and human rights-based approaches and avoids and/or manages risks including conflict of interest in its work.

I. Vision, mission and goal

The Alliance seeks to address a key World Health Assembly (WHA) global nutrition target (reduction of anaemia) as part of the WHO *Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition*, endorsed by the WHA in resolution WHA65.6 (2012). The Alliance brings together a broad group of actors to achieve a collective vision (Box 1). All actors have a public health interest in addressing anaemia, working in various sectors in governments, intergovernmental organizations, and eligible non-State actors¹.

Anaemia is a public health problem globally, particularly among young children, menstruating adolescent girls and women, and pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries. Multiple factors cause anaemia, most notably nutritional deficiencies, infections (e.g. malaria, schistosomiasis, hookworm), inherited blood disorders and various other conditions (e.g. gynaecological conditions in women, gastrointestinal disease, chronic diseases). The lack of significant progress in reducing anaemia may derive from the primary focus on delivery of iron interventions, and their inadequate coverage in areas of need, a neglect to address other causes of anaemia in a coordinated or integrated manner, and inadequate attempts to address the underlying factors associated with anaemia (e.g. gender inequities, education, poverty). The slow decrease in anaemia prevalence calls for a different approach and a substantial commitment.

The Alliance’s mission is to foster accelerated and coordinated efforts to reduce anaemia, including through implementation of the WHO *Comprehensive framework for action to accelerate anaemia reduction*. The Alliance will seek to leverage support for integrated, multisectoral country action, fostering the development of a global integrated research agenda, and mobilizing global and domestic investments to reduce anaemia in women, adolescent girls, and children.

¹ Definition of non-State actors as per WHO Framework of engagement with non-State actors, WHA69.10, http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/wha69/a69_r10-en.pdf

Box 1: Collective vision

- **Vision:** A world where all women, adolescent girls, and children are empowered and enabled to benefit from appropriate and timely actions for the prevention and management of anaemia.
- **Measurable Goal:** Reduction in the prevalence of anaemia in women, adolescent girls, and children. The goal will be aligned with the WHA global nutrition target of a 50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age by 2025.

II. Status

The Alliance is an informal network for stakeholders committed to supporting Member States in reducing anaemia. The Alliance is hosted by WHO working in close collaboration with UNICEF². Relevant sectors and expertise are represented on the Alliance, which builds on the strengths of each Core group member while supporting integrated, aligned and collective action. The Alliance is not a separate legal entity.

III. Governance and structure

The structure of the Alliance (see Fig. 1) reflects varying modes and levels of engagement and consists of a Core group, Working groups for various workstreams, Steering committee, Secretariat, and a Stakeholders' Forum (hereinafter 'the Forum'). The governance and structure of the Alliance is designed to facilitate coordination of activities, to ensure activities align with the Alliance's overall mission and objectives, while avoiding risks including conflict of interest. The Alliance is a network of stakeholders and not a decision-making body for any of the entities participating in the Alliance, nor does it have any bearing over the work and activities of these entities that occur outside the Alliance.

3.1 The Core group

The Core group consists of government organizations, including technical institutions, intergovernmental organizations, and eligible non-State actors (i.e. non-governmental organizations, philanthropic foundations, and academic institutions). The private sector entities including business associations, and groups representing private sector interests are not eligible as members of the Core Group but may participate in the Forum through their constituencies (see below).

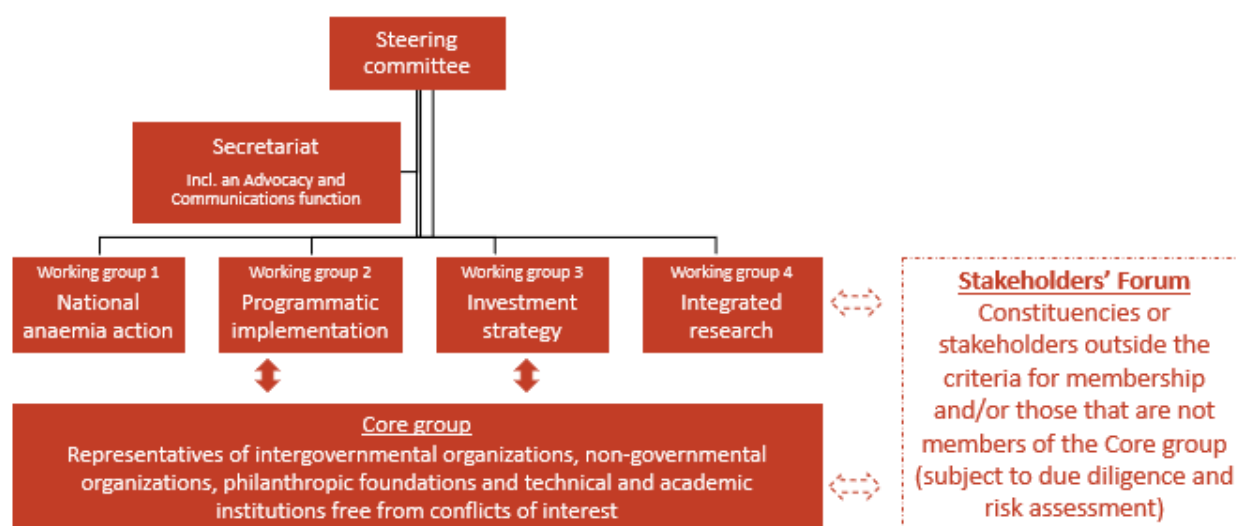
All entities seeking to apply as a Core group member of the Alliance must meet the following criteria:

- The aims and purposes of the entity should be consistent with the WHO constitution and conform with policies of WHO and UNICEF;
- The entity should contribute significantly to the advancement of public health and to the objectives, vision and goal of the Alliance, and demonstrate documented support for anaemia;
- The entity should respect the decision-making authority of Member States;
- The entity should be actively working in a field related to the prevention, diagnosis or management of anaemia with proven experience and expertise in the subject matter for at least

² WHO's rules and regulations on collaborative arrangements set out in the WHO Manual and [Policy on WHO engagement with global health partnerships and hosting arrangements](#), and the provisions of the [WHO Framework of engagement with non-State actors](#) will apply.

- 3 years;
- The entity should have an established structure, constitutive act, and accountability mechanism;
 - Have the capacity to contribute to the Alliance;
 - Commit to the Alliance's principles of engagement (see below);
 - Be free from conflicts of interest (see below);
 - The entity, if a membership organization, should have the authority to speak for its participants and have a representative structure;
 - If a non-State actor is applying to participate, the entity is required to provide the following additional information and documents: name, objectives and mission of the entity, copy of the legal status (such as bylaws, constitution), governance structure, names and affiliations of the participants of main decision-making bodies (such as Board, Executive Board), the assets and funding sources (list of donors and sponsors), main relevant affiliations and website address. The entity will also sign the tobacco-arms disclosure statement without alteration.

Fig. 1 Alliance structure



3.1.1 Core group applications

A standardized form and online application process will be developed by the Secretariat. Membership approval will be based on an assessment, due diligence process, and review of submitted documents, in accordance with the eligibility criteria stated and in accordance with the rules and policies of WHO. All membership applications will be approved by WHO and UNICEF, considering the advice of the Steering Committee. Following this, applicants will be notified of their membership approval (or otherwise) by WHO.

3.1.2 Risk assessment

Other entities not meeting the requirements for the Core group, but which have specific expertise and added value in the development and/or production of interventions or devices related to anaemia

prevention or management, may be invited as and when appropriate to participate in the Alliance's Forum (see below).

All prospective members of the Core group or participants to the Alliance's Forum that are non-State actors will undergo due diligence and risk assessment in line with WHO's policies including the Framework of engagement with non-State actors ([FENSA](#)). The risk assessment and review process is to be conducted by WHO in consultation, as appropriate, with UNICEF. Any decision will be communicated to the Core group for information. WHO, in consultation with UNICEF, will be responsible for the final decision on membership.

3.1.3 Principles of engagement

All members of the Core group and participants to the Alliance's Forum will commit to the following Principles of engagement:

Any engagement must:

- Demonstrate a public health benefit to the goals and objectives of the Alliance;
- Conform with the constitutions and mandates of WHO and UNICEF, the WHO *Comprehensive framework for action to accelerate anaemia reduction*, and the Alliance's workplan;
- Respect the intergovernmental and multisectoral nature of the Alliance and importance of country impact;
- Support and enhance, without compromising, the scientific and evidence-based approach that underpins the work of WHO, UNICEF and the Alliance;
- Protect the Alliance, WHO and UNICEF from any undue influence, in particular on the processes in setting and applying policies, norms and standards;
- Not compromise the integrity, independence, credibility and reputation of the Alliance or WHO and UNICEF;
- Be effectively managed, including by, disclosure of conflict of interest upon initial engagement and at any point when new conflict of interest arise, and where possible avoiding conflict of interest and other forms of risk to the Alliance, WHO and UNICEF;
- Support gender equity and equality, including through the empowerment of women and social norm change;
- Promote a multisectoral approach to addressing anaemia; and
- Be conducted on the basis of transparency, openness, inclusiveness, accountability, integrity and mutual respect.

3.1.4 Exclusion of engagement

The Alliance does not engage with the **tobacco industry** or with entities that work to further the interests of the tobacco industry. The Alliance does not engage with the arms industry.

The Alliance will exercise particular caution, especially while conducting due diligence, risk assessment and risk management, when engaging with private sector entities and other non-State actors whose policies or activities are negatively affecting human health and are not in line with WHO's and UNICEF's policies, norms and standards, in particular those related to noncommunicable diseases and their determinants.

The Alliance does not engage with organizations having ties to or any financial or other relevant interest in **manufacturers or distributors of breastmilk substitutes**.

3.1.5 Responsibilities

The Core group members can participate in consultations organized by the Steering Committee / Secretariat and will be asked to review and provide feedback on strategic priorities and the workplan developed by the Steering Committee and outputs developed by the various Working groups. In addition, at any time, Core group members can inform the Steering committee or the Secretariat in writing about their opinions, needs and priorities.

Each Core group member of the Alliance must:

- Adhere to the Terms of Reference of the Alliance;
- Actively participate in and support the Alliance, its purpose, goals, objectives, guiding principles, work and activities;
- Attend and actively participate at the Alliance's various annual and ad hoc meetings;
- Take responsibility according to the division of labor, and make meaningful contributions, in connection with the work and activities of the various Alliance working groups;
- Share knowledge and information with other Core group members (such as resources, data, case studies, experience etc.);
- Act in the best interest of public health in alignment with WHO and UNICEF policies; and
- Ensure effective communication with the Secretariat and Steering Committee related to activities relevant to the Alliance's mission and vision.

3.1.6 Meetings

The Core group meets biannually.

3.1.7 Termination and withdrawal

Each Core group member has the right to withdraw from participation in the Alliance, at any time, subject to providing one month written notice to the Steering Committee, through the Secretariat and to the orderly conclusion of any ongoing activities.

If a member does not attend two successive biennial Core group meetings, without appropriate written explanation to the Steering Committee, or does not attend at least 60% of the Alliance working group meetings without appropriate written explanation, the member will be deemed to have withdrawn from the Alliance.

WHO, in consultation with UNICEF, also has the right to terminate the membership of any Core group member at any time, upon providing written notice thereof to such member. Without limiting the foregoing, the participation of any entity in the Alliance shall terminate if and when such member: (a) no longer subscribes or adheres to the goals, objectives and/or guiding principles of the Alliance, as described in these Terms of Reference; (b) engages in activities that are not compatible with the policies of WHO and UNICEF, and/or (c) ceases to meet the membership criteria for the Alliance, as set forth in these Terms of Reference. In such instances, the decision to terminate involvement of a Core group member will be made by WHO in consultation with UNICEF and the Steering Committee.

WHO, in consultation with UNICEF, reserves the right to withdraw from administration of the Alliance at any time, subject to providing the Alliance Core group members with at least three (3) months' prior written notice and to the orderly conclusion of any ongoing activities. WHO, in consultation with UNICEF, shall also have the right, to close the Alliance, to terminate any membership, its Steering Committee and/or to terminate any Vice-Chairmanship, in each case, at any time upon providing written notice thereof to the member(s) concerned.

3.2 Working groups

Four Working groups may be established based on the Alliance workstreams (details on proposed workstreams in Box 3), with the possibility of additional Working groups being established subject to the approval of WHO in consultation with UNICEF and the Steering Committee. The purpose of the Working groups is to bring together Core group members with similar interests and expertise, to share information and collectively work on specific activities that align with the Alliance's overall mission and objectives. Each Working group will have an area of focus with corresponding workplan, that is approved by the Steering Committee, which outlines its objectives, key outputs, priorities and methodology.

A Chair and co-Chair will be appointed in each working group by WHO in consultation with UNICEF. They are responsible for:

- Developing and overseeing implementation of the workplans of the working group in collaboration with the Steering Committee;
- Coordinating working group meetings and activities;
- Facilitating communication within the group, ensuring balanced participation of its group participants;
- Providing reports of working group progress to the Secretariat and the Steering Committee.

Box 3: Proposed workstreams

- **National integrated anaemia action**, to support countries that commit to accelerating progress on anaemia reduction by putting into practice multisectoral anaemia programmes and policies.
- **Programmatic implementation**, to support operationalization of existing recommendations on the assessment of anaemia and its risk factors, and evidence-based interventions on the prevention and management of anaemia.
- **Anaemia investment**, to foster global and domestic investments and encourage more governments and different donors, including philanthropic foundations, to invest in anaemia research and the development and implementation of comprehensive approach to the prevention and management of anaemia.
- **Integrated research** to address biological, assessment and programmatic issues that constrain progress in anaemia reduction in countries.

3.2.1 Responsibilities

The Alliance's Working groups are responsible for developing and executing the workplans relating to the established Alliance workstreams. The initial terms of reference for each Working group are developed by the Steering committee and further elaborated by the Working groups themselves who will also develop the workplans of the workstream, guided by the WHO *Comprehensive framework*

for action to accelerate anaemia reduction. Coordination between Working groups is the responsibility of the Working group leads supported by the Secretariat.

Working group members will participate in Working group meetings to discuss planning, execution and progress, and evaluation of the technical work as defined in the respective workplans. All Working group members are expected to make considerable technical or strategic contributions to the products of the group. Working group members are expected to contribute their time to the Alliance as part of their existing professional responsibilities. Depending on the defined activities and the level of engagement, the Working group, supported by the Steering committee, may identify external funding for particular deliverables, however, the receipt of such funding shall be subject to the policies, rules and regulations of the Secretariat. Before starting any work, Working group members shall agree on responsibilities and output.

3.2.2 Meetings

The frequency of Working group meetings will be decided by the Working group leads. The Chair and co-Chair of each Working group will report on their progress to the Steering Committee on a quarterly basis, and to the Core group biannually.

3.3 Steering Committee

In addition to WHO and UNICEF, the Steering Committee comprises of 8-10 members of the Core Group (see below), who are appointed by WHO and UNICEF. The Steering Committee will consist of members from intergovernmental organizations (2), government technical institutions (3), and eligible non-State actors (i.e. nongovernmental organizations, philanthropic foundations, and academic institutions (3). These institutions should represent the multiple sectors that have a role in the prevention and management of anaemia. As representatives of private sector entities including business associations, constituencies and groups representing private sector interests are not eligible as members of the Steering Committee.

With the exception of both WHO and UNICEF, the duration of the term of service of the Steering Committee members shall be for an initial term of two (2) years, with the possibility of renewal once. The Steering Committee will be co-chaired by WHO and UNICEF.

The selection process will strive for balanced representation of the Alliance Core group members, with respect to gender, age, geographical area and organization type.

3.3.1 Responsibilities

The Steering committee is responsible for establishing and maintaining the Alliance. Specifically, key responsibilities of the Steering Committee are as follows:

- Provide overall strategic direction, for the operative work of the Alliance. This includes supporting development of the overall Alliance workplans and strategies;
- Jointly coordinate with the Secretariat the meetings of the Core Group, including development of relevant documentation and logistical support;
- Advise WHO and UNICEF on membership applications for the Core group;
- Coordinate the establishment of working groups and approve their workplans; and

- Monitor and evaluate activities and processes of the Alliance, proposing amendments as necessary to WHO and UNICEF, to optimize Alliance functioning and impact.

3.3.2 Meetings and decision-making

The Steering committee meets quarterly, with meeting notes shared with the Core group. With the exception of decisions relating to membership and participation in the Alliance that are of the sole responsibility of WHO in consultation with UNICEF, Steering Committee decisions shall be reached by consensus of Committee members. If consensus cannot be reached after considerable effort, a decision will be made by WHO in consultation with UNICEF.

3.4 The Secretariat

WHO serves as the Secretariat of the Alliance. Subject to the availability of sufficient human and financial resources for this purpose, Secretariat support and coordination for the Alliance will be provided by WHO.

The role of the Secretariat is to oversee the day-to-day management of the Alliance's work, reflecting the guidance and advice of the Steering committee, including coordination of discussions across stakeholders on priorities and gaps, preparation of draft work plans of the Alliance and its respective Working Groups, along with administration and budget management.

More specifically, key responsibilities of the Secretariat are as follows:

- Serves as the interface between the Alliance and its Core group members and Forum participants;
- Support the Steering Committee and Working Groups in the planning, preparing, and reporting of internal meetings;
- Facilitate communication and coordination among the Working groups;
- Selects and manages the Alliance membership, in consultation with UNICEF;
- Coordinates the development, implementation and maintenance of the Alliance advocacy strategy and workplans in consultation with the Steering Committee;
- Coordinate correspondence with Alliance Core group members and Forum participants, as required, to facilitate participation and collaboration of all participants;
- Coordinate the biennial meeting of the Alliance Core group, in collaboration with the Steering Committee, including development of relevant documentation (e.g. agenda) and logistical support;
- Coordinate external meetings, events, and webinars;
- Develop a quarterly newsletter for public distribution, particularly to the Forum and the general public who has an expressed interest in anaemia;
- Develop a central repository for the Alliance to house all relevant documents and resources; and
- Develop and regularly update the Alliance website (hosted by WHO).

The Secretariat reserves the right not to implement any Alliance Steering Committee or Working Group recommendation or activity which it determines gives rise to undue financial, legal or reputational liability or is contrary to the policies, regulations and procedures of WHO.

IV. Accountability and Transparency

The Alliance's Core group, Steering Committee, Working groups, and Secretariat shall operate according to clear and mutually agreed roles, responsibilities, and goals.

While respecting individual privacy and institutional confidentiality, all Alliance Core group members will operate with full transparency through the disclosure of the principles of engagement, decision-making processes, delineation of roles, responsibilities, and contributions, membership, funding sources, and the nature and scope of activities, including outcomes of consultations or other engagements.

V. Stakeholders' Forum ('the Forum')

Participants of the Forum may consist of different entities and stakeholders, including private sector entities and business associations through their constituencies, that do not meet the criteria or those that are not members of the Core group. Representatives of these entities may participate in the Alliance through the Forum mechanism if they have specific expertise and bring added value in the development and/or production of interventions and devices related to anaemia prevention or management. Participation will be subject to relevant WHO policies, including due diligence and risk assessment for non-State actors in accordance with FENSA. Each participant has the right to withdraw from participation in the Alliance at any time and should inform the Secretariat promptly.

The Secretariat also has the right to terminate participation at any time, upon providing written notice thereof to such participant. Without limiting the foregoing, the participation of any entity in the Alliance shall terminate if and when such participant: (a) no longer subscribes or adheres to the goals, objectives and/or guiding principles of the Alliance, as described in these Terms of Reference; (b) engages in activities that are not compatible with WHO and UNICEF Policies, and/or (c) ceases to meet the criteria for participation in the Forum, as set forth in these Terms of Reference.

WHO, in consultation with UNICEF, shall also have the right, to close the Alliance, to terminate any participation to its Forum, in each case, at any time upon providing written notice thereof to the participant concerned.

5.1 Responsibilities

Forum meetings will be held annually or biannually to provide regular updates on the work of the Alliance. Participants of the Forum may also be invited to contribute to consultations on specific topics by the Working groups. However, they will not be members of the Core group and cannot participate in decisions regarding the agenda, priorities, and workplan of the Alliance and its Working groups.

VI. The Alliance evaluation

The Secretariat, in consultation with the Steering Committee, will evaluate the overall processes and outcomes of the Alliance on a biennial basis, with the aim of assessing whether WHO and UNICEF should continue to lead the Alliance.

VII. Communications

7.1 Visual Identity

To ensure that the Alliance is deliberately communicating with one voice to external parties on topics

of substance (principles, priorities, standards, plans and actions, funding, and all confidential information, etc.) any communication in the name of the Alliance will take place through the Secretariat.

The Alliance may develop a visual identifier such as a logo which will help identify the network to its audience. The right to use the logo, including on publications, may be granted to Core group members on a case-by-case basis with prior written approval of WHO, in consultation with UNICEF as relevant and appropriate. Members of the Core group and participants of the Forum shall not use WHO's or UNICEF's name, acronym and emblem. This includes, inter alia, the display of the WHO or UNICEF logo and name on any premises, equipment, as well as on any communication and/or training materials, training certificates, social media tools or publications.

7.2 Publications

The Alliance shall only produce publications approved by WHO and UNICEF, in consultation with the Steering Committee. Any publication by a Core group member that refers to Alliance activities shall contain appropriate disclaimers as decided by WHO and UNICEF, including that the content does not reflect the views or stated policy of the member organizations.

Core group members must ensure that the work of the Alliance is not misrepresented, and appropriate disclaimers are included where necessary. The Alliance activities may include the development of documents or briefs, such as those summarizing published WHO or UNICEF norms and standards, best practices on the implementation of such norms and standards, and knowledge gaps. However, the Alliance shall not develop normative documents.

7.3 The Alliance website

The Alliance has a webpage that is housed within WHO's domain. The webpage may include a list of Core group member entities (not their visual identity), subject to their consent. Non-State actors should not use their participation for promotion or commercial purposes.

VIII. Finance

Core group members and Forum participants will be responsible for their own expenses in relation to all Alliance activities (including participation at meetings), unless agreed otherwise by the Steering Committee. If Core group members receive third party funding to support participation in Alliance meetings and activities, this must be disclosed to the Secretariat and Steering Committee.

The Secretariat support and related day to day operations of the Alliance will be financed by voluntary contributions from the Alliance Core group members. The Secretariat working with members of the Steering Committee, individually or collectively, may also raise funds from other sources to support the work of the Alliance, in accordance the rules and procedures of WHO. Working group chairs and co-chairs will be responsible for assisting in fund-raising for their respective workplans, and, if needed, adjusting their workplans according to the amount of funding available. All funds for the Secretariat shall be received, administered and acknowledged in accordance with the receiving organization's policies including its financial regulations, rules, and practices. However, grant applications made by the Alliance Core group members for raising funds in the name of the Alliance require consultation with and endorsement by WHO and UNICEF to ensure alignment with the goals and principles of the

network and the rules, policies and procedures of the Secretariat. WHO and /or UNICEF reserves the right to require that the Alliance name not be used in such grant applications. Contributions by Core group members or Forum participants including donations (in cash or in kind), will be acknowledged by the Secretariat in accordance with the organization's applicable rules, policies and practices.

IX. Confidentiality

Depending on the agenda item being discussed, each Alliance Core group member and Forum participant may be required to abide by confidentiality obligation and sign a standard confidentiality undertaking using the form provided by the Secretariat for this purpose.

X. Amendments

These Terms of Reference may be amended from time to time by WHO and UNICEF.