IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group
Terms of Reference – 2016-2017

1. Background to Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group

The IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group (GRG), serves as the voluntary community of practice to provide technical expertise to the IASC Working Group and its members on the means of integrating gender equality and women's empowerment into the global coordinated humanitarian system.

Following the GRG's recently completed review of the IASC's 2008 Policy Statement on *Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action*, the IASC Working Group has tasked the GRG with:
- o Updating the policy to reflect the current humanitarian landscape – including the changes developed through the Transformative Agenda and the adoption of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.
- o To develop an accountability framework to monitor compliance with the commitments contained within the updated policy.

In addition, the GRG will continue its work as the gender in humanitarian action community of practice, providing a resource to the IASC Principals, Working Group and EDG and the subsidiary bodies in order to provide systematic support to mainstream gender in all of their activities and outputs.

2. Working Methods

Co-chair arrangement
The GRG will be directed by two elected co-chairs – one UN, one non-UN.

Responsibility of Co-Chairs
The work of the GRG will be facilitated by the co-chairs who will have the overall responsibility for coordinating and delivering on the GRG's work-plan defined activities. The Co-Chairs will also be responsible for reporting and liaising with the IASC Working Group, the WG Sponsor, the IASC Secretariat and the other subsidiary bodies and Task Teams.

Specific activities include:
- In consultation with its members, develop work plan and monitor its implementation.
- Convene and chair meeting teleconferences of the GRG and the annual face-to-face meeting.
- Set meeting agendas based on priority issues, circulate minutes from meetings, and ensure follow through on action points and advocacy items.
- Work with the GRG sponsor in the Working Group to ensure gender is fully integrated in the Working Group deliberations.
- Liaise with the corresponding co-chairs of the other IASC subsidiary bodies and task teams to keep them abreast of the work of the RG, and be a regular resource and expert advisor to ensure that appropriate consideration for gender is included in their outputs.
- Liaise with the IASC Secretariat to ensure that the RG is compliant with the latest IASC processes, structures and priorities.
- Keep the Secretariat informed on progress made towards the annual work plan
- Represent the RG at high-level meetings, as appropriate

Term of Co-Chairs
Each term is two consecutive years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. An organization must wait one term before it can serve again as co-chair. Every effort will be made to ensure that the terms of the co-chairs are staggered by one year to ensure continuity in leadership.

Nomination and Selection of Co-Chairs

The co-chair position belongs to the organization, not the person, and it is rotational among agencies/organizations who are Core members of the GRG. Any agency that is a Core GRG member can nominate a staff member.

Only Core members can vote for the co-chair positions.

Secretariat
The function of the GRG Secretariat's tasks are shared amongst the co-chair agencies.

The GRG's Secretariat coordinates the substantive implementation of the work plan as per decisions by the GRG. The tasks undertaken by the Secretariat include:
- Supports the Co-Chairs in drafting the annual work plan for discussion and agreement by the GRG;
- Maintains an e-mail distribution list of participants
- Convenes meetings of the GRG at the request of the Co-Chairs and is responsible for venue arrangements and related logistics;
- Drafts and distributes the agenda and minutes and keeps a participants' list for each meeting;
- Prepares materials for distribution to the GRG and facilitates the flow of communication;
- Works closely with the IASC Secretariat to ensure that the IASC website and calendar are updated with information relevant to the GRG.
- Monitors progress towards AWP obligations and compiles quarterly and annual report.
- Additional tasks and functions can be added depending on resources raised or made available by GRG or UN Women on agreement with UN Women.
- Facilitate the humanitarian crisis Gender Alert development process – including chairing ad-hoc tele-conference, drafting body of text, collating inputs from collaborators and disseminating finished product.
- Monitor use of E-learning tool.

Participation
Participation in the *GRG* is open to all interested humanitarian organisations, bringing together NGOs, UN, IOM, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and other international organisations. Participants are expected to contribute actively to the work of the GRG and take on responsibilities to advance its work.
The GRG will work on a two-tiered Membership:

Core Membership – Core membership is open to humanitarian agencies committed to forwarding and promoting the cause of gender equality and women's in humanitarian action. Both NGOs and UN agencies will be encouraged to make up the Core Membership.   - Core membership will require a written commitment from a member of the agency's senior management that their participation will be active and the agency's designate/s will be able to contribute up to 10% of their TORs/deliverables.   - The Core Membership will also commit to delivering on their obligations contained within the Accountability Framework [once established].   - Core membership will afford the agency the opportunity to participate in Task Teams, working groups, committees etc. tasked with formulating the key agreed deliverables of the GRG.   - Core members will have full voting rights for the decision making processes of the GRG.   - Core members will be eligible to stand for a co-chair position.
Associate Membership – Associate membership is open to humanitarian agencies interested in contributing to the output of the GRG, but for whatever reason, do not have the capacity to provide sustained and ongoing support to the ongoing work of the GRG.   Associate members are able to attend and contribute to the regular meetings of the GRG but will not have voting rights on final decisions.

- Associate members will be included in the mailing list of the GRG, keeping them abreast of developments and progress towards the key deliverables.

- At the annual strategic meeting *Associate Members* can request *Core Membership* based on their ability to commit to the workload of the GRG as demonstrated by their participation in the 12 months prior.

- Similarly, *Core Members* status can also be reviewed if their ability to commit to the work of the GRG has changed and their membership will revert to that of being associate members.

- Participants (Core and Associate) represent their organisations and, where applicable, ensure that their Working Group and/or Emergency Director's Group representatives or Principals are regularly briefed on the Task Team's work and progress.

- Experts, donors, and/or member states may be invited as participants, contributors, observers etc. to provide technical input or to discuss strategic relevant issues, when deemed appropriate.

- The GenCap Project, may nominate one member (plus an alternate) of its Support Unit and one GenCap Adviser (plus alternate) to participate as observers and ensure that the GenCap is kept abreast and engaged in the decision making processes of the GRG (and vice-versa).

Task Teams:
When specific deliverables are identified, the GRG will form time-bound, task-specific Task Teams, which will work on a voluntary basis, to specific timelines. They will be recruited from the Core membership. Provision will be made for the inclusion of Associate Members or outside-bodies when specific expertise is required.

The Task Teams will nominate their own chair and establish a work plan towards delivery of the identified piece of work.

Task Teams will report to the GRG on progress towards their deliverable and will present their work to the GRG for finalisation through approval by the Core Membership.

Decision-Making:
Wherever possible, decision making processes for the GRG is done on a consensus basis with motions tabled, discussed and voted on at the monthly/annual RG meetings after due notice and information has been shared amongst all full members.

A decision requires a quorum of five active Core members.

It is essential that once decisions are accepted through the normal decision making channels that this is respected by the wider GRG so that the group can progress. If members feel that they have a legitimate grievance or reason to appeal, this should be discussed with the co-chairs rather than being raised in usual business meetings or through bilateral lobbying.

Annex: The Role of IASC WG Sponsors

The term 'Sponsor' is a new designation at the IASC. In essence, a Sponsor is a Working Group member who oversees and advocates for a particular priority, and ensures that policy development for the said priority is aligned at all levels – from designation by the Principals, through discussion at the WG, and through elaboration at the Task Teams. In some cases, the Sponsor will also be a Co-Chair of a Task Team (TT)/Reference Group (RG); where this is not the case, the Sponsor should ideally be from the same organization as the Co-Chair of the relevant TT/RG.

More precisely, the functions of WG Sponsors are as follows:
- Act as a manager, or focal point, for the IASC priority;
- Ensure a liaison function between the TT/RG and the WG;
- Advocate for the priority or the TT/RG's work vis-à-vis the WG, when necessary;
- Facilitate the TT/RG getting items on the WG agenda for discussion and decision, when necessary;
- Provide strategic guidance to the TT/RG; and
- Work closely with the TT/RG (Co-)Chairs to ensure accountability of the TT/RG to deliver on the expected results within the set time frame.

As the IASC Secretariat closely follows each of the IASC subsidiary bodies, the WG Sponsors can call upon the IASC Secretariat to support them in the above functions.