# **Cash Working Group (CWG) Programmatic Co-Chair Election Guidance**

# global Cash Advisory Group (gCAG)

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# Introduction

This document aims to support Cash Working Group (CWG) co-chairs in establishing a fair, transparent, and effective election process for the programmatic co-chair(s) of CWGs. CWG programmatic co-chairs complement non-programmatic co-chairs in IASC settings (i.e. OCHA) and programmatic co-chairs in refugee settings (i.e. UNHCR) by bringing in technical expertise and operational implementation experience, while supporting their counterparts to ensure effective, predictable, and accountable cash coordination. CWGs should contextualize these provisions. CWGs are encouraged to discuss and agree their election procedures and document the process to ensure a fair, transparent, and rotated leadership that avoids disruption to ongoing activities.

In IASC settings, OCHA is responsible for ensuring the non-programmatic co-chair function. In refugee settings, UNHCR is accountable for cash coordination and will be a programmatic co-chair. In both IASC and refugee settings, at least one additional programmatic co-chair should be in place and Co-Chairs should support the increase of participation of local partners and/or governments (where applicable) as co-chairs.

# Guiding Principles of the Election Process

The following are guiding principles that should be applied in any CWG election process:

* Transparency: the announcement, application, and election processes must be communicated openly to all CWG members, ensuring due access to information, involvement, and accountability to all CWG group members.
* Local leadership: the election process must be open to all eligible organizations with an emphasis on inclusion of eligible local organizations or governments (where applicable). Sitting CWG Co-Chairs should encourage local actors to nominate themselves for the Programmatic Co-Chair role and unpack expectations.
* Participation: The election process should be participatory and enable all CWG members to have a voice in the selection of Programmatic Co-Chair(s)
* Impartiality: the rules and mechanisms for the election must be agreed on by CWG members and be designed to promote transparency and impartiality.
* Communication and Timing: the process, rules and mechanisms for the election, the results and all related acts should be initiated by CWG chairs in consultation with CWG members and be widely disseminated, including in the local language, providing enough time for organizations to consult internally before nominating themselves for election and voting for programmatic co-chairs, as required.
* Organisational representation: The Co-Chair roles are held by their organisations, not specific staff members. Hence, organisations should put themselves forward for Co-Chairmanship, and if a Co-Chair staff member changes organisation, the Co-Chair role remains the responsibility of the elected organisation.
* Rotation: Rotational arrangements are encouraged for Co-Chair roles to ensure agile CWG leadership. CWG members will decide the duration of Co-Chair terms, but it is recommended a minimum term of 12 months is served to avoid disruption (taking into consideration available funding.)

# Organizational Eligibility for Programmatic Co-chairs

Eligibility criteria for programmatic co-chairs can be adjusted based on context, but it is recommended the following is considered:

* Any active Cash implementing organization is eligible to nominate themselves for Programmatic Co-Chair
* Candidates should: 1) have active operational Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programming (either directly implemented or through partners); 2) be present in country[[1]](#footnote-1) have relevant and recent experience in the context (or a similar context) for at least 2 years [[2]](#footnote-2); 4) have relevant technical capacity in CVA; 5) have a dedicated staff member with the required technical skills to act as programmatic Co-Chair (or have a plan including funding in place to identify such a staff member).
* To promote local actors and governments (where applicable) as co-chairs, it is desirable for organizations that have deep knowledge and understanding of the context, affected people’s needs, social protection policies, labour regulations and other state provided assistance to be considered as Co-Chairs.

# Voting Process

The following are recommended good practices for managing a fair and transparent election process:

* Sitting Co-Chairs should communicate with all CWG partners at least 2 months before a planned election and provide at least 2 weeks for eligible organisations to express their interest in the Co-Chair role.
* Organisations should express interest to the sitting CWG Co-Chairs in writing.
* CWG Co-Chairs should communicate via email and in a meeting with the CWG organizations that declared interest, outlining the voting process, clear timelines for responses, and opportunities for candidates to briefly describe their offer.
* There shall be one vote per organisation.
* For an organisation to be eligible to vote, they must be an active member of the CWG with CVA implementation experience.
* Organizations must assign one registered voter to participate in the election process by means of sharing the name and email of the authorized voter in writing to the existing CWG co-chairs.
* All nominated organizations including existing/sitting co-chairs are allowed to vote, but limit of one vote per organization is enforced. Co-chairs and candidates are allowed to vote for their organizations.
* To ensure that the election process outcome is representative and valid, the following provisions should be applied:
	+ At least 50% of all eligible voting agencies[[3]](#footnote-3) (international and local organizations) must cast a vote AND
	+ At least 50% of all eligible local organisations must cast a vote.
	+ If both thresholds aren’t reached after the voting deadline has elapsed, a re-election is to be held, the outcome of which will determine the selected member with the highest number of votes.
* The Voting period must be open for at least 5 working days.
* The selected co-chair will be determined by the member receiving the highest number of votes.
* Organizations may vote remotely or by delegation by contacting sitting co-chairs in advance.
* Voting results should be announced during CWG meeting, and shared in writing, and endorsement on a ‘no-objection' basis will mark the start of the term of the programmatic co-chair elected organization(s).
	+ Objections can be raised where guiding principles are not followed. Upon discussions a re-election may be triggered when necessary.
* Where needed and requested by CWG members a neutral election administrator (non-cash implementing agency) within the humanitarian coordination structure may be tasked with administrating the election process to ensure impartiality, transparency, and secrecy of voting.
* In the absence of interested organizations, sitting co-chairs may continue in the role on a no objection basis by the CWG members.

# Second Round Voting

* In addition to the provisions and criteria detailed in the voting process above, in case two or more candidate organizations receive the same number of votes for any of the programmatic co-chair roles, the following applies:
	+ In elections where local organisations are running and received the same number of votes as an International Organization or International NGO, local organisations are given preference and selected as co-chair without holding a second round of voting.
* In elections where no local organisation is running, the CWG should proceed to hold a second round of voting to select one of the organizations that received a tied number of votes in the first round. Whichever organisation receives the highest number of votes in the second round should be considered as selected.

# Early Election Triggers

CWG members may trigger an early election based on one of the following provisions:

* At least 51% of active CWG members request an early election at any given point in time.
* CWG determined to be under-performing according to upcoming CWG KPIs to be published by the gCAG.

In such instances, to ensure neutrality, CWG members may request that the election is administered by the Inter-Cluster (IC) or Inter-Sector (IS) coordinator or a delegated neutral party.

* Changes in the context requires a change of approach that the sitting organization may not be best suited for.

# Complaints and Redress

If CWG members have complaints relating to the election process, they are advised to raise according to the following escalation route:

1. Inform co-chairs to remedy the situation by means of a written communication then,
2. Inform IS or IC coordinator to mediate/remedy then,
3. Raise to HCT copying the gCAG Chairs

Complaints related to elections should be addressed within ten working days by sitting co-chairs, after which the next escalation level is triggered.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Note: this provision does not apply in sudden onset emergencies [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Eligible voting agencies: are defined by organizations with CVA implementation experience in addition to participating government counterparts (as applicable) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)