

**The structure of the Nutrition Cluster**

**Nutrition Cluster Coordinator Handbook Chapter 2.2.2**

It simply is not possible to involve every single Nutrition Cluster partner in all aspects of strategic planning, setting standards, and compilation of information. A management structure composed of three complementary working groups (Table 6) is recommended, in particular in cases when there are more than 20 cluster partners and/or 30 individuals.[[1]](#footnote-1)The Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) enables decision-making to be taken on behalf of the larger group through representation of stakeholder groups. The Technical Working Groups (TWG) is established on a needs basis and develops and agrees upon minimum standards, and formulates the most appropriate technical practices with which to attain those standards. The Information Management Working Group (IMWG) ensures timely sharing of reliable and relevant evidence through joint information systems. The NCC is responsible for identifying that there is a need to establish these subgroups (generally related to the scale of the emergency), and each mechanism is accountable to the Nutrition Cluster through the NCC.

These mechanisms are not needed for every emergency, and can be counterproductive in particular when the membership of the three groups involves the same people who are effectively being asked to participate in more meetings. Members should self-select from within their stakeholder groups, e.g. not be chosen by the NCC. There should be no more than twelve to fifteen members in each group. Membership in each of these groups can change with time. Members can choose to step down from these groups, but should ensure that a replacement from the same stakeholder group is appointed.

In linking the SAG, TWGs, and IMWG work to the larger Nutrition Cluster group, regular brief updates by the working groups to the Nutrition Cluster at coordination meeting can be helpful. At the same time, there may be a need to allocate additional time to check in with the Nutrition Cluster as a whole with a longer presentation and discussion, in order to gather feedback and generate support for the outcome.

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| **Table 6: Overview of structures in the Nutrition Cluster**d | | |
| **Group** | **Role may include to:** | **Membership** | |
| **Strategic advisory group** (SAG)  To enable decision-making on behalf of the larger group through representation of stakeholder groups.  The national authority should co-chair if possible, with the NCC or other Nutrition Cluster members available to act as chair on a rotational basis.  It is the responsibility of the NCC to ensure outputs of the SAG are communicated to the Nutrition Cluster, as well as relevant authorities and other stakeholders. | * Develop the TOR/SOP for the Nutrition Cluster, in recognition of national authority policies and structures, and ensure routine review and update of the TOR/SOP; * Formulate the Nutrition Cluster response strategy and action plan, and ensure their routine review and update; * Provide strategic oversight of implementation of the Nutrition Cluster workplan; * Establish, oversee, and close TWG as needed; * Formulate the Nutrition Cluster advocacy strategy; * Provide strategic oversight to resource mobilization and allocation; * Provide strategic oversight to incorporation of cross-cutting issues in Nutrition Cluster action; | Major stakeholders, which may include:   * National authority focal points * NCC * Donors * International and national * National NGOs * IFRC, ICRC, Red Cross/Red Crescent National Society * Early Recovery Cluster and representation from other cross-cutting issues * Coordination focal points from other relevant clusters * OCHA Inter-Cluster Coordinator * Military Liaison (where applicable) |
| **Technical working group** (TWG)  To develop and agree upon minimum standards, and formulate the most appropriate technical practices with which to attain those standards.  TWGs are established for specific needs, and should be disbanded when the output is finished.  Ideally this is chaired by a Nutrition Cluster partner, or co-chaired with the national authority, with support from the NCC as needed. The NCC ensures that theNutrition Cluster is engaged strategically through the development process. | * Ensure relevant technical standards are formulated and agreed within the terms of reference and deadline set by SAG; * Advise SAG on compliance issues connected with application of the agreed standards; * Strategically update the Nutrition Cluster on status of work-in-progress and present final outputs/recommendations of the TWG to Nutrition Cluster stakeholders in oral and written form for feedback and comment; * Ensure that theTWG membership is representative of the wider Nutrition Cluster stakeholder groups, and ensure that relevant technical skill-sets are appropriate and available (and advise the NCC if this is not the case); * Set up Sub-Working Groups as required; * Ensure all Nutrition Cluster stakeholders have the opportunity to feedback into the work of the TWG prior to presentation to the Nutrition Cluster in plenary. * If a formal procedure exists to endorse the material as being a Nutrition Cluster material, TWG outputs should follow it. | Composition should be self-selected from the Nutrition Cluster, depending on available technical skills, interest and capacities. Ideally, UN agencies, NGO, national authority, academic sectors and others will be involved. |
| **Information management working group** (IMWG)  To ensure timely sharing of reliable and relevant evidence through joint information systems.  Ideally this is chaired by the IM manager, or if possible co-chaired with the national authority IM specialist. | * Ensure consistent usage of common datasets between clusters; * Identify those most in need; * Track trends in coverage and access over time against routine monitoring indicators and key performance indicators; * Highlight the need for mutual cooperation in adapting on-going programmes to the evolving needs and priorities of others; * Captures relevant information from other clusters. Makes use of, and manages content through dedicated IT and web-based resources. | Composition should be self-selected from the Nutrition Cluster, depending on available technical skills, interest and capacities. Ideally, UN agencies, NGO, national authority and academic sectors will be involved. |

1. IASC Principals’ meeting of February 2011 and DFID’s Humanitarian Emergency Response Review of March 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)