World Health Organization

Terms of Reference

WHO CSO Commission Working Group on Mechanisms for thematic interactions with civil society

Background

According to the Terms of Reference of the WHO Civil Society Commission (Section V, page 2) the Commission will, among other objectives, "advise and provide recommendations for WHO Secretariat's consideration on the elaboration and implementation of a WHO engagement strategy with nongovernmental organizations, including grassroots community organizations, civil society groups and networks, faith-based organizations, professional groups, disease-specific groups, and patient groups as well as of indicators and targets for a results framework for the strategy".

Objectives of the working group:

- Identify and advocate for WHO mechanisms facilitating thematic interaction with civil society (including focal points, task teams, engagement mechanisms, and working groups) in alignment with WHO's CSO engagement strategy.
- Evaluate existing and potential CSO working groups to enhance engagement with technical WHO management.
- Provide guidance on strategies to enhance social participation in thematic discussions at both international and regional levels, fostering partnerships between WHO and CSOs.

Scope of work

The scope of work for the working group:

- A mapping exercise: run a survey within WHO's different departments to understand which are the exisiting CSO thematic WGs, what worked, what didnt, how to build on their stories of success and how they would like to work with the CSO Commission.
- Look back in time to understand better how these WGs were initatated and how to learn from past mistakes.
- The scope of work shall focus at global and regional levels

Initial task /project and deliverable

- Mapping of participation spaces. A survey within WHO of the existing spaces of participation in WHO and regional instances.
- A thorough assessment of the current WGs

WHO Civil Society Commission - WHO network

- A guidance note on how to establish new and improve on existing thematic CSO working groups and enhance Civil Society Commission members participation, interaction and engagement in WHO's thematic discussions.

Size and composition

The working group will consist of Civil Society Commission members. The size of the WG, while influenced by the extent of interest of the CSO Commission participants, is limited to up to 20 representatives of CSO Commission member organizations to secure its manageability by the co-chairs and the Secretariat. Working group membership is personal, not institutional.

If needed, the working group invites relevant experts, in particular WHO staff engaging with civil society or civil society members who are involved in one of the WHO mechanisms for engaging with civil society to contribute to its work, subject to the WHO rules and regulations.

The WG can be broadened by new members throughout the mandate, which upon the establishment of the WG will be managed by the co-chairs.

Engagement & expertise

WG members will commit to regular meetings, with the frequency to be determined by the needs of the group but at least quarterly, to follow up on the progress and to conducting group activities in-between the meetings to secure the output in line with the workplan.

Versatile expertise will be required to deliver on the objectives of the WG, including but not limited to the experience in participation in civil society engagement mechanisms, conducting desk-research, or (semi)structured interviews.

Internal governance

The WG is organized according to section 6.2 of WHO CSO Commission ToR, with an initial two-year tenure and possibility of extension, based on the evaluation by the WG & SC of its relevance & effectiveness.

The WG is initiated and initially led, until the first meeting, by a Core Group composed of members of the CSC Steering Committee and mandated by the SC.

During the first meeting, the WG will be constituted based on the WG ToR and two Co-Chairs will be nominated for confirmation by Secretariat, upon which the WG will self-organise.

Co-chairs

Co-chairs will convene the group, moderate meetings, represent the group, and be responsible for the link between the group and the Steering Committee and Secretariat. They will provide overview, propose activities and projects, and provide guidance and feedback to project teams.

Project teams

Project teams may be formed as subgroups of the WG to implement the concrete activities or projects, and report back to the WG.

Working Tools

The WG will use regular group calls / meetings for steering, sharing, planning and group decisions.

Managed by co-chairs, a mailing list will be developed and using a platform deemed most convenient for the members and a repository or workspace established for sharing and co-creation of group's documents.

Resources

The working group will identify the necessary resources, such as budget, personnel, and technology, required for successful implementation, and propose to the Steering Committee and the Secretariat, if necessary.

Reporting & accountability

The working group shall provide regular bi-annual verbal and written reports of working group progress containing the outcome of the reviews conducted and proposed recommendations to WHO Secretariat to the Steering Committee and the Secretariat as well as an annual report on the progress at the General meeting of the Commission

In addition, to secure accountability and timely delivery:

- draft work plans and project outlines will be submitted to SC for approval;

- draft outputs will be shared in advance with SC for review and approval.

Confidentiality & data use and protection

Members to maintain confidentiality of sensitive or personal information shared during the working group discussions and activities.

Members shall not share any information or data gathered and used in the working group. The Steering Committee jointly with the Secretariat will make public information on the working group and the details or results of its work, if so decided by them.

To ensure data protection, working group members should not share details of the working group members outside the working group without their express agreement.