

COVERAGE MONITORING NETWORK

Governance structure



PREAMBLE AND MISSION STATEMENT

The Coverage Monitoring Network (CMN) is an inter-agency initiative designed to improve CMAM programmes through the promotion of quality coverage assessment tools, the identification and response to programme barriers and information sharing.

The CMN was initially conceived by a small group of NGOs who, based on recent developments in coverage estimation methodologies, saw an opportunity make these tools more widely available and integrated into routine M&E systems.

The CMN fits comfortably within the definition of a partnership¹ as;

“An on-going, working relationship characterised by equity, transparency and mutual benefit with a strong, supportive relationship in which the partners”

And can be characterised by the following:

- **Overlapping interests and agreed objectives**
- **Co-created projects and programmes**
- **Share of risks as well as benefits**
- **Mutual accountability**
- **Contribution of resources to the partnership**

During its first phase the CMN was characterized by a fast, flexible and responsive culture with only a few procedures to support administrative and financial obligations. This culture proved efficient in achieving its first objectives but meant a loose structure characterized by strong individual relationships and ad hoc co-ordination mechanisms rather than formal systems and procedures.

The CMN is now growing; new partners are joining and multiple projects are being designed. In order to maintain the relative effectiveness and efficiency of the group and to achieve its goals, the CMN has developed the present governance structure. This structure aims to bring a more regulated framework to the network whilst retaining the governance characteristics that have been present since the foundation of the network, including:

- Space for innovation
- Minimised bureaucracy
- Promotion of collaboration
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Accountability

The present document outlines a framework for the appropriate functionality of the CMN network. This framework will ensure that the CMN is a viable, transparent and accountable network which gives voice to all its partners at the right time and has the confidence of the beneficiaries on whose behalf it is working. The purpose of this governance structure is to put in place a formalised distribution of decision-making procedures and regulations for competing interests with emphasis on collaboration.

¹ As defined by the Partnering Initiative: <http://thepartneringinitiative.org/>

STRUCTURE

The structure of the CMN consists of (see annexe 1: organogram):

1. A **Strategic Board**; the governance and decision making body

And for each of its associated/branded projects,

2. **Project Team** comprised of: **Technical Advisory Group, Lead Organisation and Coordination Team.**
3. **Working Groups**

2.1 THE STRATEGIC BOARD

Formed by all partners, the Strategic Board will only meet in person on special occasions in order to make fundamental changes to the governance, structure or mandate of the Network, as well as to in order to dissolve the Network. Otherwise the Board will meet virtually twice a year chaired on a Rota basis. There will be no secretariat for the Strategic Board; therefore it will be the responsibility of all Board Members to maintain the network. An agenda of all meetings should be distributed prior to the meeting from the partner that is chairing the meeting, and minutes should be recorded and shared. Email and phone will be the primary modes of communication in addition to the online platform set in place to complement the CMN website.

All important decisions of the CMN projects will be shared with the Strategic Board. Members of the Strategic Board have access to all the information and documentation of the CMN.

I. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Build the Network: both by ensuring broad outreach and providing leadership in responding to events
- b. Active involvement in the Network: participation and commitment from all partners
- c. Participate in activities of the Network
- d. Attend Board meetings; in person and virtually. Meetings will be decided upon consensually by the board and chaired on a rotating basis.
- e. Setting goals for the Network
- f. Approving projects and appointing Technical Advisory Groups to lead the project. This approach is flexible and in some instances the order or events may vary.

II. Decision Making Process for the Strategic Board

Quorum: A quorum of 2/3 of the Board members shall be required for voting. Where there are 4 or 5 board members, the quorum is 3; where there are 6, quorum is 4; where 7 serving board members, the quorum is 5, and so on.

Method of Decision-Making: Consensus is the primary method for reaching decisions by the Team. To adopt a decision, the Team aims for consensus of those present. If there is no consensus, then a simple majority vote (more than half or 50% plus one-half) of those present can make decisions.

Each partner organisation will identify one representative to be present in the Strategic Board. The representative will be identified by name, organisation and e-mail address. Each partner may change their representative by simply notifying the Strategic Board. Membership to the network is discussed in the section "Membership, Eligibility and Exit" below.

A member may be dismissed for very serious misconduct, such as dishonest use of project funds, conflict of interest, persistent failure to attend meetings without a valid excuse, inability to carry out duties, conduct likely to bring the Network into disrepute, and advocacy of positions in direct contradiction to the Network's mission and principles.

2.2 PROJECT TEAMS

The CMN will implement different **Projects** in order to achieve its goals, each one with different funding mechanisms. In order to carry out these projects a Project Team will be assembled comprised of the following:

- A) The Technical Advisory Group: Comprised of all implementing partners (i.e. sub-grantees of the project) it will oversee project activities, takes part in the coordination for their specific organisation and technically advise the Coordination Team
- B) The Lead Agency: The organisation that is contracted with the donor and leads on project activities
- C) The Coordination Team: Sat within the Lead Agency, the Coordination team runs project activities in line with the objectives and results for the specific project.

2.2.1 TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUPS

The Technical Advisory Groups are the management and decision making bodies for these specific projects and grants.

I. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Facilitate Project activities and oversee the implementation of the Project agenda
- b. Provide technical support to the Coordination Team
- c. Ensure the project operates in adherence with the goals and principles of the network
- d. Evaluate & Approve Fundraising opportunities
- e. Approve work plans undertaken by the coordination team
- f. Serve as a representative of the Network
- g. Participate in and attend the required meetings and conference calls necessary to ensure the functioning of the project
- h. Elect the project Coordination Group
- i. Elect the project Lead Agency Partner
- j. Any other functions or responsibilities assigned by the Strategic Board

II. Composition and size of the Technical Advisory Group

The Technical Advisory Groups shall be composed of all implementing partners involved in the specific project or grant. Implementing partners may hire additional staff to implement its activities, always keeping the Coordination Team and the Strategic Board in place. Technical Advisory Group members will remain part of the Group as long as their organizations' Partners Status does not change. All members of the technical advisory group will be implementing partners and will be subcontracted by the **Lead Agency** to carry out activities assigned to them within the project aims and objectives.

III. Decision Making Process for the Technical Advisory Group

Consensus is the primary method for reaching decisions by the Group. To adopt a decision, the Group aims for consensus of those present. If there is no consensus, then a simple majority vote (more than half or 50% plus one-half) of those present can make decisions.

Decisions relating to major issues affecting the project shall be presented to absent Group members to allow them to register any objections or propose considerations. Issues of critical importance to the Network which require input will also be shared with Strategic Board members via e-mail for comment before a decision is taken.

Group members cannot send substitutes to represent or replace them for Group functions (meetings, conference calls, decisions, etc.). Changing the appointed representative by the corresponding partner is required prior to the meeting.

2.2.2 THE LEAD AGENCY

The Lead Agency will serve for the whole period of the project or grant and is elected by the Technical Advisory Group of the specific project. The procedures and rules of the Lead Agency will apply to the Coordination Team of the CMN. The Lead Agency will name a Lead Agency Representative (e.g. the Manager or Director of the department in which the project sits) to serve as a Manager of the Coordination Team, who will oversee its functioning and will attend Technical Advisory Group meetings if requested.

The Lead Agency shall also act as the lead contractor, meaning that they have a direct contract with the donor for the specific project.

2.2.3 COORDINATION GROUP

These teams constitute the Executive and Administrative branch of each project or grant. They shall have full power to deal with all matters relating to the project not reserved to the Technical Advisory Group or the Strategic Board, including the power to appoint task forces to projects and working groups, and enforce by-laws as they feel necessary to govern the activities of the project.

The Coordination Team will serve under contract within the lead agency. Its members will be selected by the Technical Advisory Group who will first approve the Job Descriptions. The specific composition of the Coordination Team will vary from project to project as per the needs identified by the Technical Advisory Group. Coordination Teams are likely to include the following posts;

I. **The CMN Coordinator**

Responsible for overseeing activities and obligations of the project, he/she will work together with the Technical Advisory Group to call and preside over all meetings. Although not a member of the Technical Advisory Group, he/she will attend all meetings. He/she is accountable to the Strategic Board and therefore must keep them informed. He/She is responsible for;

- a. Report writing, keeping deadlines, submitting proposals and coordinating all the project activities.
- b. Coordinating the everyday activities of the project and the necessary tasks to implement the project's work plan and meet project goals and targets
- c. Implement the decisions of the Technical Advisory Group and the Board
- d. Facilitate information-exchange among partners
- e. Facilitate communication between the different bodies of the Network
- f. Facilitate and support projects initiated by partners and approved by the Board
- g. Represent the Network at events, conferences and in other public forums
- h. Answer Partner and public enquiries
- i. Coordinate and monitor evaluations of the project
- j. Report to the Board and the Technical Advisory Group on actions and projects
- k. Ensure constant communication with field agencies

II. The CMN Project Assistant

He/she will be work closely with the CMN coordinator and will provide logistical support to the CMN activities.

III. The CMN Admin & Finance Coordinator

- a. Prepare the budget and provide day to day financial management
- b. Provide administrative support for the project
- c. Develop formal frameworks for managing funding, cost and other inputs
- d. Drafting Agreements
- e. Financial negotiations, budget developments, cost negotiations, issues such as VAT, overhead allowances, insurances, liabilities etc
- f. Specific issues of international work such as licensing, sub-contracting, international regulations compliance etc
- g. Monitor financial performance
- h. Ensure a transparent process

2.4 TASK FORCES

The CMN will have thematic **Task Forces** that decentralize Network activities, accomplish substantive work, and allow members to undertake joint actions. The thematic focus of the Task Force must correspond to the priorities set within the Network agenda, mission and goals and will be coordinated by the identified Technical Advisory Group. Examples are: development and adaptation of technical documents, specific thematic research (e.g. gender, health seeking behaviour, etc).

The guidelines for the formation and functioning of Task Force shall be set by the specific Technical Advisory Group under which the Task Force falls, and revised by the Strategic Board accordingly.

MEMBERSHIP, ELIGIBILITY AND EXIT

The CMN encourages Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), UN agencies, Academic Institutions, Donors, Private Sector Companies and inter-agency consortiums interested in improving programme quality and the collection and dissemination of nutrition information to join. Prospective partners should address expressions of interest to a chosen member of the Strategic Board who will then present it to all members for review. Expressions of interest should detail the organisation's activities in relation to the CMN, the countries and partner organisations they work with as well as why they wish to join the Network.

All partner organizations will participate in the CMN by playing a range of roles related to strategy, delivery and the peer review of CMN activities.

All partners should have the following criteria;

- a) Has proven technical expertise in the area of coverage assessment or has significant practical experience and presence in CMAM and coverage assessments, particularly in the CMN priority countries.
- b) Independence from any other member of the Network
- c) Commitment and adherence to principles and goals of the Network
- d) Active engagement in the promotion, advocacy and organizations of CMN projects
- e) Commitment to share and exchange information that advances the mission of the Network

Partners have the following rights:

- a) To present proposals on specific projects for the Network
- b) To participate in the Working Groups, including the right to vote on Working Group and Project activities and decisions, and the right to participate in other activities and structures of the Network
- c) To participate in the Strategic Board meetings
- d) To access information provided through and/or by the Network

Partners may voluntarily withdraw from the network through a signed letter and thus no longer be subject to duties and requirements of this network, provided that no other contractual obligations are due among the partners.

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

The CMN is not a legal entity but a network of partner agencies. The Lead Agency is accountable for the fiscal oversight of the specific project they are contractually tied to and takes the risk of any financial malpractice .i.e. the accountability for the public funds. However the responsibilities and the workload of the project should be shared by the Strategic Board.

The Lead Agency is often the main link among partners and donors, and to regularize those relationships there will be different types of administrative procedures. The Lead Agency will serve as Lead Contractor entering into contracts with the Network Partners, accept responsibility and liability for contract delivery, ensuring that contracts Information Sharing and confidentiality are both available, receive payments for donors and send payments to partners when due.

In this role the Lead Agency will develop

- 1) **Partnership Agreements (PA)** between the Lead Agency and the Agencies that work as Implementing Partners. Those agreements will details cost, outputs and responsibilities
- 2) **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the Lead Agency and other partners to define the objectives, scopes and boundaries of each activity.
- 3) **Contractual obligations with donors:** specifics of the projects will be captured in proposals and concept notes that will outline specific requirements and deliverables
- 4) **Employment Contracts** between the Lead Agency and its employees
- 5) **Terms of Reference (ToR)** in order to capture the objectives, desired process and requirements for external consultants and subcontracted parties

Security risks and appropriate behaviour in the field: The Coordination Team will guarantee this through the MoUs with field partners.

OWNERSHIP, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DATA PROTECTION

Two types of outputs are considered here;

- 1) Reports and technical briefings: The Coordination Team will be responsible for these publications respecting the MoU signed with the specific Field Partners to which these reports are linked to.
- 2) Academic publications and Policy papers: Detailed approval processes and timing for publications and dissemination will be shared with the Strategic Board.

Authorship:

The authorship of any published material will be based on the following provisions of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines:

- Authorship credit should be based on 1) substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and 3) final approval of the version to be published. Authors should meet conditions 1, 2, and 3.
- When a large, multi-center group has conducted the work, the group should identify the individuals who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript. These individuals should fully meet the criteria for authorship defined above and editors will ask these individuals to complete journal-specific author and conflict of interest disclosure forms. When submitting a group author manuscript, the corresponding author should clearly indicate the preferred citation and should clearly identify all individual authors as well as the group name. Journals will generally list other members of the group in the acknowledgements. The National Library of Medicine indexes the group name and the names of individuals the group has identified as being directly responsible for the manuscript.
- Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group, alone, does not justify authorship.
- Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.
- The order of authorship on the byline should be a joint decision of the co-authors. Authors should be prepared to explain the order in which authors are listed.

The CMN data and future use of it remains the property of the Network. Important decision regarding the data will be made by the Strategic Board and implemented through the Coordination Team.

The Coordination Team will also ensure that standard templates are updated and available.

SCOPE, ETHICS AND CONFLICT SOLVING

In case of conflict the Executive Director of the Lead Agency will arbitrate for a solution and provide a framework for resolving problems as well as in case of difficulties they will implement the necessary disputes mechanism within the specific project assigned to the agency.

Agencies codes of conduct of all the Technical Advisory Group organisations must be respected while implementing CMN activities provided that they do not present a conflict with other ethical codes. If so, the CMN coordinator and the Strategic Board must be contacted immediately.

The Technical Advisory Group will also be responsible for dealing with any grievances that may arise within a certain project. These grievances should be directed to the Project Coordinator who will present it to the Technical Advisory Group.

BRANDING AND VISIBILITY

For any external communications related to the Network, the CMN logo should appear with the organisation's logo whilst ensuring compliance with specific donor requirements. For further Branding Guidelines please refer to the resources section of the website (www.coverage-monitoring.org)

Governance Structure of CMN Network

