



Structures and Terms of Reference

1. Preamble

Following the establishment of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), Task Teams (TT) and Working Groups (WG) in 2019, the GPC SAG decided to reinvigorate its structures and refine their Terms of References and working modalities.

This document defines the purpose, functions, membership, and ways of working of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Structures. This document replaces the SAG TOR of December 2019. This document will be revised periodically, and at least every two years, to reflect the evolving operating environment.

2. Global Protection Cluster Structures

The GPC is mandated by the Inter Agency Standing Committee, coordinated by a Global Coordinator, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), governed by a Strategic Advisory Group, and serviced by a multi-partner Operations Cell. The GPC contributes to and benefits from the broader IASC system, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), various human rights treaty bodies and key development and peace building and peacekeeping actors, and through building partnerships with international financial institutions and the private sector. The GPC unites members, partners and communities working on the full gamut of protection activities through Areas of Responsibility: Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Housing, Land and Property and Mine Action, and through thematic Task Teams: Information and Analysis, Cash for Protection, Advocacy, Human Rights Engagement, Anti-Trafficking and Law and Policy.

The cluster approach results from the Humanitarian Reform Agenda that was introduced in 2005¹. The IASC Principals designated global cluster leads for nine sectors or areas of activity², among which the Global Protection Cluster.

The Global Protection Cluster is collectives of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which has clear responsibilities for coordination, according to the main sectors of humanitarian action. At country level, each cluster is accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) through the Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) as well as to national authorities and to people affected by crises. The GPC work is defined by its strategic framework and benefits from the following structures to direct and organise its work:

¹ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/about-global-cluster-leads>

² <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/what-cluster-approach>

1. **Strategic Advisory Group:** Governs and strategically directs the work of the GPC.
2. **Operations Cell:** conducts operational support, advocacy, and guidance with and for national protection clusters.
3. **Task Teams and Working Groups:** Time bound and permanent teams and groups that develop standards and guidance and support national protection clusters.
4. **Policy and Standards Setting Body:** Technical group that ensures fit-for-purpose process for quality control of GPC policies, guidance and standards.
5. **Information Sharing Platform:** Open forum for information sharing and operational updates on protection.

All GPC structures are inclusive of the Protection Cluster Areas of Responsibility and alternate protection cluster lead agency that are mandated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and have their dedicated governing structures and field support teams.

2.1. Strategic Advisory Group

The SAG is the main body for the strategic governance of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) representing the members of the GPC. The SAG embodies a culture of shared and collective leadership and accountability, and ensures the inclusive, participatory, and accountable governance of the GPC, under the overall leadership of the GPC Coordinator.

Roles and Responsibilities: The GPC Strategic Advisory Group provides strategic direction and advice to the GPC on strategic processes and monitors progress of the implementation of the GPC Strategic Framework.

The SAG fulfils two critical functions: i) providing strategic direction and advice to the GPC and ii) monitoring the implementation of the GPC strategic framework and annual work plan.

In support to the GPC Coordinator and Operations Cell, the SAG assumes the following roles and responsibilities on behalf of the members of the GPC:

- Develop, adopt, review, and monitor achievements and impact towards meeting the GPC Strategic Framework strategic objectives.
- Review and endorse the terms of references and workplans of the GPC Operations Cell, Working Groups and Task Teams, Policy and Standard Setting Body and Information Sharing Platform and advise on the creation and/or transitioning out of these for a.
- Support the work of the GPC, including through mobilisation of technical support, staffing and financial contributions.
- Advise, plan and mobilize resources for collective operational support
- Advise on and organise joint field missions on behalf of the GPC.
- Provide leadership and advice on strategic issues including related to the GPC's position in the IASC, ICCG, and other relevant interagency platforms
- Integrate and develop strategies to mainstream and implement policies related to protection developed by IASC.
- Ensures that GPC and AORS have a harmonised approach to mainstreaming and other cross-cutting issues
- Leads and advise on operationalising protection related recommendations from peer reviews and humanitarian mechanisms and ensure that coordination architecture and modalities are fit for purpose
- Endorse GPC policy, guidance and standard-setting products submitted by its Standards and Policy Body.

- Define and endorse the strategy and working modalities of the GPC Task Team on Advocacy as well as its annual strategic focus.

Membership and composition: The SAG is composed of 26 members. It includes 7 permanent members as follow: GPC Coordinator, NGO Co-chair, 4 AoR Coordinators, UNHCR as Cluster Lead Agency. The SAG also includes 19 non-permanent members consisting of: 8 UN Agencies, 8 NGOs and 3 Networks.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a standing invitation to the SAG as observer. The SAG will be supported by a secretariat composed of the Deputy GPC Coordinator and a Rapporteur from the Operations Cell.

Mandate and commitment: Each SAG Member will nominate one Senior staff to represent them on the SAG. Members serve on the SAG for a mandate of two (2) years as volunteers contributing their time and expertise without compensation or advantage.

Membership is conditional on attending all meetings as well as regular and timely contribution to the work of the SAG and the GPC. The SAG may suspend or remove a member in the case of repeated or critical failure to carry out the above. In case of removal, the SAG will request the GPC Operations Cell to proceed with a call for expression of interest and the election of a new member. SAG members may also resign from the SAG by providing a 2-month written notice to the GPC Coordinator who will proceed with a call for expression of interest and election of new SAG members.

Eligibility and election process: Only non-governmental and United Nations entities may apply for membership of the SAG. Membership is open to organizations and not to individuals. The election process is facilitated and managed by the GPC Operations Cell. Each candidate organisation should submit its candidacy in writing. GPC SAG Members must fulfil one or more of the following conditions to be eligible:

1. Operational, advocacy or policy engagement on advancing protection outcomes and the implementation of the Centrality of Protection, including through its membership, at global level or as a Humanitarian Programme Cycle partner in field protection operations or active participation in field clusters; and
2. Contribution to GPC activities including GPC Strategic Framework workplan, leading or actively contributing to the work of TT/WG, or supporting the Operational Cell through secondments; and
3. Dedicating human, technical or financial resources to support the GPC.

Ways of working: The SAG is chaired by the GPC Coordinator and an NGO co-chair elected by the NGOs from the SAG for a 2-year mandate. The GPC Operations Cell ensures the secretariat functions, organises the meetings and takes the minutes.

Regular half day meetings shall take place quarterly: February: Presentation of Annual Report; June: Defining strategic focus for following year; September: Annual planning for following year; and December: Strategic thematic discussion and governance review. The annual plan of the regular meeting will be disseminated in the last quarter of the previous year. Regular meeting agendas and documents will be shared 10 working days prior to the meeting. Extra-ordinary meetings for strategic discussions and exchange may be called upon request from a SAG member.

Decisions are taken by consensus of the members. In case of disagreement and where a decision is required, the GPC Coordinator will make the final decision and communicate the rationale to the SAG.

Accountability and Communications: The SAG is accountable to the members of the GPC and is expected to ensure a regular and two-way flow of information with its broader cluster membership. Members are expected to represent their respective constituency and as such, should actively seek to consult with and ensure the SAG is informed of various positions and perspectives in order to take informed collective decisions.

2.2. Operations Cell

The Operations Cell is the main body for supporting national protection clusters in fulfilling their 6 cluster functions. The Operations Cell is hosted in the Cluster Lead Agency, UNHCR and is led and managed by the Global Protection Cluster Coordinator.

Roles and Responsibilities: The GPC Operations Cell supports National Clusters in fulfilling their 6 core functions: Operations support through helpdesk, guidance and support missions; Advocacy and resource mobilization support for and with national protection clusters; Trainings and capacity building to national protection clusters; Information and analysis support to operations.

The Operations Cell organises a number of standard meetings and events on annual basis with the support of the SAG, Task Teams and Working Groups: Global Protection Forum – Technical segment in Q1; Mid-Year Review Thermometer Event – June; Global Protection Forum – Public Segment in Q2; End of Year GPC Event – December.

The Operations Cell produces a number of standard reports on annual basis with the support of the SAG, Task Teams and Working Groups: Global Protection Updates – Quarterly; Mid-Year Review Thermometer Report – June; GPC Annual Report – February.

Membership and composition: The Operations Cell benefits from a team composed of UNHCR staff, Partners staff formally deployed to UNHCR, and Partners staff dedicated from their organisations on full time basis as part of the day-to-day Operations Cell work.

Accountability and Communications: The Operations Cell is accountable to the GPC SAG. The leads of the Task Teams and Working Groups update the SAG members on progress, achievements and/or challenges on specific policy, guidance and standard setting.

2.3. Task Teams and Working Groups

The GPC Operations Cell is complemented by relevant permanent Working Groups and Time Bound Task Teams, currently: Information and Analysis Working Group; Advocacy Task Team; Law and Policy Task Team; Anti-trafficking Task Team; Cash for Protection Team and Human Rights Engagement Task Team.

Roles and Responsibilities: The GPC Working Groups and Task Teams provide support mainly in developing policy, guidance and tools, building capacity of national clusters and undertaking field support, as relevant to their thematic mandates

Membership and Ways of working: Each Task Team and Working Group are led by one or more organisation and has a Terms of reference and workplan that is endorsed by the GPC SAG. Task teams members meet on a periodic basis and report on annual basis to the GPC SAG. They may be invited from time to time to support technical discussions, as required.

The Leading/Co-leading Agencies will be jointly responsible and accountable for achieving the objectives and tasks of the Task Team. As such, their responsibilities will include:

- Designating a dedicated representative to lead / co-lead the Task team
- Good management and facilitation of the Task team
- Tracking progress, updating, and revising the Task Team ToR/ Work Plan.
- Fostering linkages with other Task Teams and other initiatives/ processes to ensure synergies and avoid duplications.

The Task Team and Working Group members are expected to actively contribute to the work and objectives of the Task Team, including by:

- Identifying a designated focal point for the Task Team.
- Representing their organizations and ensuring that their directors are regularly briefed on the Task Team's work and progress.
- Contributing to the work of the Task Team through technical, financial or human resource modality.

Accountability and Communications: The Task Teams and Working Groups are accountable to the GPC SAG. The leads of the Task Teams and Working Groups update the SAG members on progress, achievements and/or challenges on specific policy, guidance and standard setting. The Task Teams, which are time-bound, and Working Groups meet once a month. Extra-ordinary meetings may be called by the chairs or upon request from a member.

Participating organisations are encouraged to take up leadership of different activities and to contribute to the work of the Task Team and/or Working Group through active collaboration with one another.

2.4. Global Protection Cluster Policy and Standards Body

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Policy and Standards Body is the main mechanism for reviewing policy, guidance and standard setting developed by GPC members, Task Teams and Working Groups on behalf of the GPC.

Roles and Responsibilities: The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Policy and Standards Body supports the work of the Global Protection Cluster by reviewing if policies and guidance have gone through a consultative process and are in line with the overall IASC framework.

Working closely with the GPC Coordinator and Operations Cell, the GPC Policy and Standards Body assumes the following roles and responsibilities on behalf of the members of the GPC:

1. Provide advice on GPC policy, guidance and standard setting and ensure positioning within the IASC, ICCG, and other relevant interagency platforms when required.
2. Review, discuss, and recommend appropriate action related to gaps and trends in protection policy, guidance and standard setting.
3. Review GPC policy and guidance and ensure the quality check and sign off on key policy, standards and tools on behalf of the GPC.
4. Submits GPC Policies and Guidance, where required for GPC SAG endorsement, with the body's recommendations.

Membership and Composition: The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Policy and Standards Body is composed of no more than 5 members. UNHCR as cluster lead agency; 2 UN Agencies; 2 Non-Governmental Organisations. Members are elected by the GPC SAG on its first meeting.

Ways of working: The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Policy and Standards Body is co-chaired by 2 organisations that are elected by the GPC SAG.

The body can trigger a GPC development of or contribution to a policy or guidance by notifying the GPC Coordinator. The body can convene the SAG to discuss priority policy and guidance contributions.

In case of Guidance and Policy in process, upon receipt of a guidance or policy note, the co-chairs will organise the review of the document based on criteria established by the SAG. The body can organise a clarification meeting with the key drafters of the guidance or policy. The body will provide its feedback to the drafters of the guidance or policy.

The body will decide based on the established criteria after review if it endorses the policy or guidance or otherwise submits it to the GPC SAG for endorsement.

Accountability and Communications: The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Policy and Standards Body is accountable to the GPC SAG. The co-chairs of the Policy and Standards Body update the SAG members on progress, achievements and/or challenges on specific policy, guidance and standard setting. Upon request, the co-chairs of the Technical and Standards Body can update the SAG members on progress on specific policy and standards.

2.5. Information Sharing Platform

Roles and Responsibilities: The GPC Information Sharing Platform serves as a space for operational updates, policy updates, showcasing good practices, innovative initiatives and current progress and future developments in the protection area of work.

Membership and Composition: The GPC Information Sharing Platform is an open forum leveraging field and global expertise, taking advantage of the diversity of the profiles of both protection and non-protection practitioners.

Ways of working: The GPC Information Sharing Platform is chaired by the GPC Deputy Coordinator and the GPC Strategic Advisory Group Co-Chair. The GPC Operations Cell ensures the secretariat functions, organises the meetings and takes the minutes. Meetings are online and take place once every six weeks.

The meetings dates will be predetermined every 6 months and meetings' agenda will be open for contributions by all participants as per the following structure: GPC Operations Cell Updates; Operations Updates; Policy Updates; Projects and practices showcasing

Meeting's agenda will be shared 10 working days prior to the meeting.

Accountability and Communications: The GPC Information Sharing Platform meetings will be recorded and made available on the GPC website. These meetings will also be supplemented by email communications through an open email list.