

# Global Technical Assistance Mechanism for Nutrition



Advice | Guidance | Expertise | Learning

## QUARTERLY DIGEST | Q2: 1 April – 4 July 2019

GTAM is a common global mechanism endorsed by over 40 Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) partners to provide systematic, predictable, timely and coordinated nutrition technical assistance in order to meet the nutrition rights and needs of people affected by emergencies. The GTAM is co-led by UNICEF and World Vision International (WVI) in collaboration with the Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN), the Tech Rapid Response Team (Tech RRT) and the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC). When country and regional capacities are exhausted, unresolved technical issues can be escalated to the GTAM. Depending on the issue, the GTAM will provide technical advice, facilitate the development of consensus-driven global guidance or provide specialized technical expertise. Wherever possible and appropriate, the GTAM seeks to leverage existing technical support mechanisms.

### SUMMARY

During the second quarter of 2019, the GTAM-Core Team (GTAM-CT<sup>1</sup>) concentrated on creating operational ways of working and specifying the practical details of the GTAM as part of the “build phase”. During this critical period, it has been imperative to ensure that these details are reflective of the GTAM guiding principles, as collectively conceptualised and endorsed by the GNC collective. Delays in the development of the GTAM IT Platform prevented the online service from being launched this quarter as planned. However, the significant progress made in defining how the GTAM will work (including with Global Thematic Working Groups (GTWGs)) mean that it is otherwise set to become operational. Under the Technical Advice and Consensus Driven Guidance Pillars, priority technical gaps were pinpointed and processes begun to address them. Under the Technical Expertise Pillar (TEP), significant headway was made (with the involvement of interested partners) in defining ways of working in a Standard Operating Procedures

(SOP) document and developing a concept note which can be used to seek resources for the TEP. Closing the quarter was a GTAM-focused day at the Annual GNC Meeting, during which the GTAM-CT updated the collective and sought inputs from GNC members.

### SECOND QUARTER ACHIEVEMENTS

#### 1. GTAM Processes and Governance

With the aim of translating into practice the concept of the GTAM as already endorsed by GNC partners in 2017, an Internal Governance SOP<sup>2</sup> was developed. This SOP details the working modalities of the Core Team and how technical issues will be received, triaged and addressed (including through escalation to GTWGs and other relevant entities, as needed). During this formative period, the GTAM-CT continued to engage regularly through fortnightly coordination calls (co-chaired by WVI and UNICEF) as well as a 3-day face-to-face team meeting held in Germany in May 2019. External communication about the GTAM this quarter included the development of a

communications and branding package (to be finalised in Q3), the development and dissemination of a one-pager about the GTAM<sup>3</sup> as well as the sharing of progress updates during Day 3 of the GNC Annual Meeting<sup>4</sup> in Brussels at the start of July 2019. During the meeting, participants voted on a logo concept which was then further refined into a final logo by the GTAM’s communication firm and GTAM-CT. Participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions about the functionality of the GTAM; the numerous questions generated during this interactive session will inform a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the GTAM’s website to further support communication about the mechanism. Work was also started on conceptualising the IT Platform, however contractual issues with the developer pushed back the expected launch of the GTAM’s online service to the second half of the year, with a knock-on effect of hampering advancement in other areas of work.

1 UNICEF, World Vision, Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN), Tech RRT, GNC Coordination Team and GNC Technical HelpDesk

2 This document will be available on the GTAM Website once it is launched

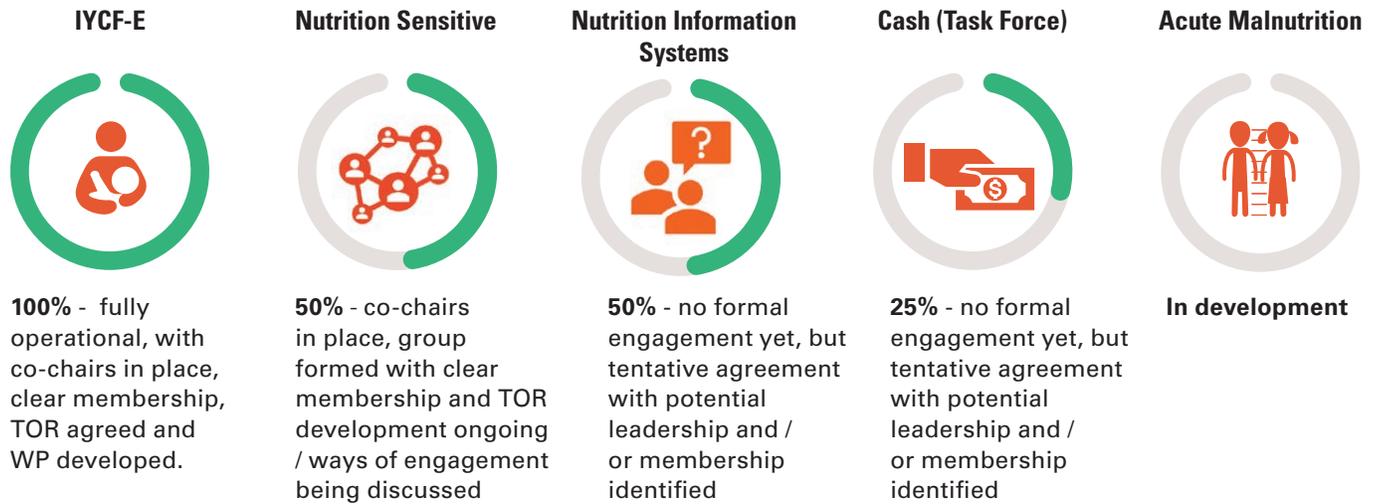
3 <https://www.ennonline.net/resource/gtamfornutrition>

4 <http://nutritioncluster.net/2019-gnc-annual-meeting/>

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## Progress in Establishment of GTAM GTWGs



### 2. Formation of Global Thematic Working Groups (GTWGs)

During this quarter, the GTAM-CT continued to solidify working relationships with existing Global Thematic Working Groups and to facilitate the creation of new groups where a gap exists in identified priority areas (as depicted below). A document outlining principles of engagement<sup>5</sup> for GTWGs with GTAM was developed. The release of the Baseline Technical Needs Assessment Report<sup>6</sup> this quarter allowed for focused discussions on which technical gaps can potentially be addressed by GTWGs, and therefore included in their workplans. Progress in each priority technical area is as follows:

#### Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E):

the well-established IFE-Core Group has agreed to work with GTAM. This quarter, GTAM-related tasks were included in the IFE-CG workplan and are currently being costed.

**Nutrition Sensitive:** The Intercluster Nutrition Working Group (INCWG) is already in place and in favour of supporting GTAM, however their focus is mostly on Nutrition and Food Security integration. Further clarity is needed on the time-investment required by GTAM; a trial period is currently ongoing.

**Nutrition Information Systems:** Three co-chairs (UNICEF, ACF Canada and ACF UK) have been selected to lead a small group of key agencies; a discussion on priority technical gaps to address was started at the GNC Annual Meeting.

**Cash:** A decision was taken to form a time-bound task force (rather than a GTWG) to work with a NORCAP consultant on a Cash in Emergencies for Nutrition position papers and case studies.

**Acute Malnutrition:** With the current shifts occurring in this area of programming, the most appropriate and effective means to engage or form a GTWG continues to be explored.

### 3. Technical Advice

This quarter, it was defined how existing service platforms (such as the GNC Technical Helpdesk, UNICEF HQ and en-net) will be integrated into the GTAM's *Technical Advice Pillar* so that requests for technical support from these services can be consolidated through the GTAM IT Platform and monitored for emerging technical issues. This working modality will be operationalised in the second half of the year once the IT System is launched. In the meantime, these service platforms continued to function and provide technical advice

as usual, in addition to being able seek offline support from the GTAM and its respective GTWGs when necessary. For example, the GNC Helpdesk – in consultation with the IFE Core Group (IYCF-E GTWG) – provided technical advice on the appropriate management of breastmilk substitute (BMS) donations following a request for technical support from the Zimbabwe Nutrition Cluster.

### 4. Consensus-Driven Guidance

Based on priority technical gaps identified in IYCF-E, Assessment and CMAM that were articulated in the GTAM Baseline Technical Needs Assessment Report (see Section 6 below), discussion is currently underway with respective GTWGs to establish which of these gaps require the development/updating of technical guidance. Prior to the publication of the report, a number of technical gaps had already been identified and plans put in place to address them through the development of position papers and/or practical guidance in collaboration with various initiatives. Their status is as follows:

- **Estimation of the number of deaths as a result of untreated SAM** – TOR and Governance agreed upon

<sup>5</sup> This document will be available on the GTAM Website once it is launched

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.enonline.net/resource/baselinetechnicalneeds2019>

- **Update on the estimation of the number of children with acute malnutrition** – under consideration in the NIS GTWG workplan
- **Cash in Emergencies for Nutrition** - NORCAP consultant identified to lead work on Cash & Voucher Assistance for nutrition in emergencies, GNC partners have been invited to form a technical working group.
- **Programming for BMS Dependant Infants**- FAQ document on non-breastfed infants under development by UNICEF

## 5. Technical Expertise

Coordinated by the Tech RRT and World Vision as part of their role in the GTAM-CT, the *Technical Expertise Pillar* (TEP) focus this quarter was to define the areas of work i.e. technical expertise (deployment & remote); competency assessment & capacity strengthening; consultancy rosters, along with establishing an expanded pool of TEP members (currently at 18) who will provide technical expertise in response to country requests. A working modality SOP<sup>7</sup> was developed to define ways of working with partners. A concept note was drafted which can be used by TEP partners to seek resources for this pillar of work. A total of 178 candidates were shortlisted for the consultant roster and the GTAM-CT agreed on a pre-vetting process for the candidates. Agreement was also reached that the Tech RRT will coordinate the TEP once it becomes fully operational. In the meantime, the Tech RRT continues to function as usual: this quarter, Assessment, CMAM and IYCF-E Advisers were deployed to Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Sudan respectively (total of three deployments). The GTAM also supported the filling of several additional requests for technical expertise, including requests from Venezuela and Malawi for SMART survey support and the identification of a Portuguese speaking Nutrition in Emergencies expert to support the Idai Response in Mozambique.

## 6. Knowledge Management

ENN developed a preliminary Monitoring Framework which will be used to

1) collect key information required for decision making about the GTAM  
 2) identify emerging technical gaps for action and to 3) report on the functioning of the GTAM service against its objectives. Following a series of interviews with GNC partners who have been involved with the development of the GTAM, an article was developed on the History of the GTAM for publication in Field Exchange (FEX) in the next quarter. ENN also supported the Tech RRT to write a FEX Article documenting the results of a review of en-net's four most commonly used online forums (assessment, prevention and treatment of severe acute malnutrition, prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, and IYCF interventions). This analysis was amongst the first of a series of processes undertaken to better understand the challenges commonly faced by practitioners at field level and to identify potential gaps in knowledge or guidance for the GTAM to address. These processes and their findings are summarised in a Baseline Technical Needs Assessment Report<sup>8</sup> which aims to document how priority technical gaps included in the GTAM's initial workplan were identified. Key findings were presented at the GNC Annual Meeting and are informing discussions with GTWGs on appropriate actions to be undertaken in response to identified priority gaps.

## 7. Fundraising

A top-line estimation of financial resources required by the GTAM for the coming 2 years was presented at the GNC Annual Meeting. This quarter, a TEP-specific concept note was developed as well as an overall concept note to facilitate coordinated resource mobilisation in quarter three and beyond. As a functioning mechanism, the Tech RRT experienced a high workload this quarter. Funding was made available by UNICEF to allow for the recruitment of a consultant to alleviate the Tech RRT workload and temporarily support the advancement of the *Technical Expertise Pillar* under leadership of the Tech RRT.

## PLANS FOR THE UPCOMING QUARTERS

- ✎ Hold a second **GTAM-CT meeting** to accelerate progress, build operational ways of working and resource mobilisation.
- ✎ Outline a proposed structure for the **Acute Malnutrition GTWG**.
- ✎ Launch the **GTAM IT Platform (website)**, which will facilitate easy access to technical resources and act as a central service point for receiving and responding to requests for technical advice and technical expertise.
- ✎ Continue to convene GTWGs to put in place the financial and human resources required to deliver on **priority pieces of work** (e.g. IYCF recommendations in the context of Ebola Virus Disease)
- ✎ Conduct a **TEP Partners Survey** to obtain an in-depth understanding of the current capacity of each partner. This will be used to maximise the use of existing resources and to identify any gaps where supply currently outweighs demand.
- ✎ Activate the **monitoring framework** in order to detect emerging technical gaps and priority areas for guidance and knowledge generation amongst requests coming into the IT Platform.
- ✎ Publish an **article** which tells the story of how and why the GTAM came to be, as well as a second article documenting a review of en-net, as carried out by the Tech RRT to identify key learning, gaps in guidance and evidence (research) needs as experienced by programmers.
- ✎ Continue **communication, advocacy and fundraising** efforts to leverage existing global, regional and country capacity and match them with country-level technical needs.

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8 <https://www.enonline.net/resource/baselinetechnicalneeds2019>