

Global Technical Assistance Mechanism for Nutrition



Advice | Guidance | Expertise | Learning

QUARTERLY DIGEST | Q3: 1 Aug – 31 Oct 2019

The Global Technical Assistance Mechanism for Nutrition (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. It is co-led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Vision International (WVI), in collaboration with a core team (GTAM-CT) consisting of Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) as the knowledge management (KM) partner, the GNC and the Technical Rapid Response Team (Tech RRT). 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 guidance (through Global Thematic Working Groups (GTWGs) and normative agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), and provide specialised technical expertise. Wherever possible and appropriate, the GTAM seeks to leverage existing technical support mechanisms. For further information, visit: <http://nutritioncluster.net/resources/global-technical-assistance-mechanism-nutrition>

SUMMARY

During this quarter of 2019, the GTAM-CT continued to develop and document operational ways of working for the GTAM as part of the 'build' phase. GTAM processes were further detailed; in particular, the process for escalating requests for technical advice to GTWGs (informed by specific experiences with the Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IFE) Core Group). The Nutrition Information Systems (NIS) GTWG and the Cash Reference Group were fully operationalised, with membership and workplans in place, and initiated production of specific pieces of guidance (for conducting Nutrition Analysis for Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Cash in Emergencies for Nutrition respectively). Under the Technical Expertise Pillar (TEP), 12 vetted consultants were added to the consultant roster and six advisers were deployed.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. GTAM Processes and Governance

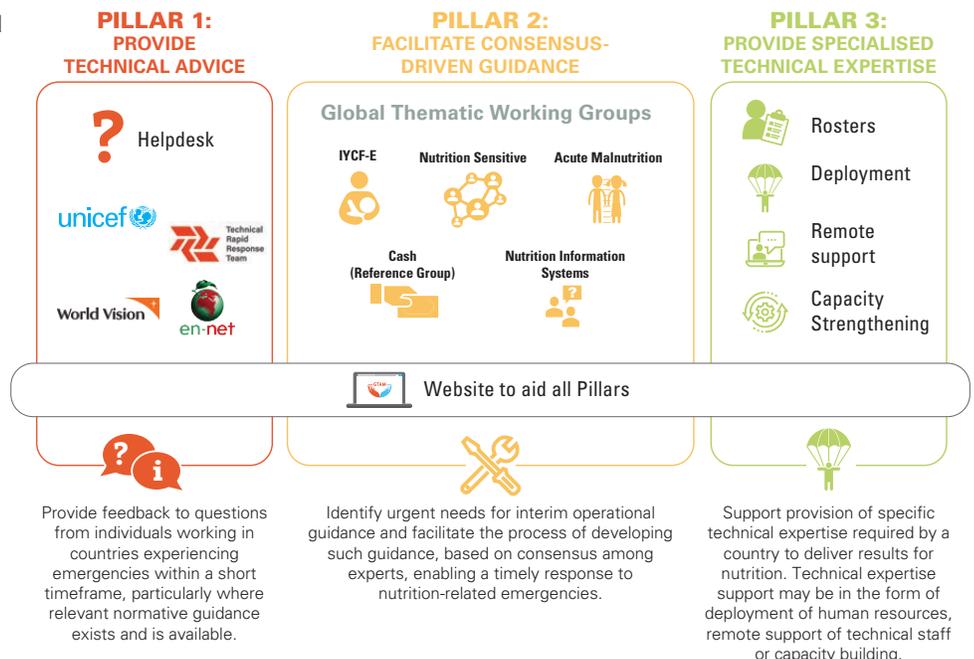
During this formative period, the GTAM-CT engaged through fortnightly coordination calls (co-chaired by WVI and UNICEF) and an extended virtual team meeting held to review and refine the GTAM's workplan for 2020. GTAM-CT functions and overall management, ways of working with GTWGs and the

process for developing interim guidance were a focus of discussions. Taking on board comments by stakeholders during the 2019 GNC meeting, the GTAM logo and branding guide for GTAM products were finalised. GTAM progress updates were also given during several meetings, including the IFE Core Group Annual Meeting (28 – 30 October, Oxford) and the INGO Nutrition Forum (28 – 29 August). A frequently-asked-questions (FAQ), based on the 2019 GNC Annual Meeting group work, was developed for inclusion on the GTAM website. The

launch of the GTAM website, which will be the online service platform, is planned for the first half of 2020.

2. Formation of Global Thematic Working Groups (GTWGs)

During this quarter, both the NIS GTWG and the Cash Reference Group became fully operational GTWGs (see key above), in addition to the Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) GTWG. Progress of the GTWGs in each priority technical area is as follows:



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Progress in Establishment of GTAM GTWGs



Key: *100% – fully operational, with co-chairs in place, clear membership, terms of reference (TOR) agreed, workplan developed. 75% – co-chairs in place and clear membership, ways of engagement/TOR agreed, no WP developed yet but some meetings held. 50% – co-chairs in place, group formed with clear membership and TOR development ongoing/ways of engagement being discussed. 25% – no formal engagement yet, but tentative agreement with potential leadership and/or membership identified.

Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies: The IFE-Core Group formally took on the role of GTAM GTWG on IYCF-E in the second quarter of 2019. A costed workplan to deliver on priorities identified in the GTAM Technical Baseline Needs Assessment Report¹ has been formulated and included in GTAM resource mobilisation documents. Several IFE-Core Group members contributed to the development of a case study (see Section 6 – Knowledge Management) on responding to a request for technical advice that had been escalated to them by a GTAM service portal. Lessons learned and key recommendations were presented by ENN at the IFE Core Group Annual Meeting to inform discussions on the group’s ways of working with the GTAM, during a session dedicated to the GTAM.

Nutrition Information Systems: This quarter, the NIS GTWG was fully operationalised. Members and co-chairs were put in place (namely Action Against Hunger and UNICEF), regular meetings are held, and an interim Terms of Reference (TOR) was agreed. The NIS GTWG also developed a workplan based on the gaps identified in the GTAM Technical Baseline Needs Assessment Report, which will be costed during the next quarter.

Cash (Reference Group): During quarter two, it was decided to form a time-bound reference group (rather than a GTWG) to work with a consultant on a Cash in Emergencies for Nutrition position paper and case studies. The TOR for the Cash Reference Group was

shared with partners in mid-October and the group formed, led by the Cash Adviser (housed by the GNC, funded by NORCAP) and consisting of GNC partners and selected experts from outside the GNC (such as CashCap and the Cash Learning Partnership). The Cash Adviser started individual conversations with group members to shape the work and promote engagement of the different organisations in developing a guidance note on cash and voucher assistance in Nutrition in Emergencies (NiE).

Nutrition Sensitive: In June 2019, Intercluster Nutrition Working Group (ICNWG) members agreed to take on the function of the GTAM Nutrition Sensitive GTWG on a trial basis to examine whether the group can fulfil the needs of the GTAM. Co-chairs are in place (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Vision) and the GNC Integration Helpdesk (in place since August 2019) will support the group. The ICNWG’s role as a GTAM GTWG was further discussed during the ICNWG’s face-to-face meeting, held 21–22 August in Rome. During this meeting, the group explored how best the ICNWG can support the GTAM, what capacity is currently lacking, and how the group would engage with Nutrition and Food Security expertise compared to Health and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) expertise.

Acute Malnutrition: A call for nominations for membership and chairing of the Acute Malnutrition group was issued this quarter. A number of GNC partners volunteered to be members

of the group and several expressed interest in chairing. A first call to discuss the structure and TOR of the group was scheduled for next quarter.

3. Technical Advice Rapidly answer technical questions from the field, where relevant guidance or experience exists

Based on the recommendations of the GTWG case study, the GTAM-CT made progress in further defining the process whereby technical requests from the field will either be answered by the GTAM’s first-line service portals² (where sufficient guidance exists), or escalated to the relevant GTWG where existing guidance is insufficient to answer the specific question. Forms to facilitate this process, which will be part of the GTAM website, were also developed. Existing technical support mechanisms (Tech RRT, GNC Helpdesk, World Vision International and UNICEF HQ Nutrition Advisers), which will be integrated into the Technical Advice pillar, continued to provide technical advice as usual, in addition to seeking offline support from the GTAM and its GTWGs when necessary.

4. Consensus-driven Guidance Facilitate the development of interim, consensus-driven guidance, where needed, in response to questions from the field

This quarter, a process document for developing Interim Operational Guidance was drafted for review and adoption by GTWGs. Progress in this area includes:

1 <http://nutritioncluster.net/resources/gtam-baseline-technical-needs-assessment-report-2019/>

2 The GTAM’s first line service portals are the GNC Technical Helpdesk, UNICEF HQ, World Vision International and en-net.

Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies:

FAQ on Programming for BMS-dependent Infants initiated by UNICEF was discussed at the IFE Core Group meeting, alongside a request for the GTWG to help develop suggested responses for questions which cannot be answered by applying existing guidance. Within the broader technical gap guidance for the management of BMS-dependent infants in emergencies (as identified in Baseline Technical Needs Assessment Report), the IFE Core Group identified the need for IYCF recommendations in the context of Ebola virus disease (EVD) and Ebola vaccination as a priority. Efforts are ongoing to capture knowledge and lessons learned to feed into this operational guidance, and to coordinate with normative guidance development underway with WHO.

Nutrition Information Systems: The NIS GTWG started the development of guidance for conducting nutrition analysis for Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO).

Cash (Reference Group): In preparation for the development of a guidance note on Cash in Emergencies for Nutrition, a review of key documentation and interviews with key stakeholders were started by the cash adviser. An outline for the guidance note will be finalised in the next quarter.

5. Technical Expertise

Support provision of specific technical expertise for deployments, remote support and capacity building

The TEP aims to match needs for technical expertise with available resources more effectively by coordinating with an expanded pool of expertise and agencies referred to as TEP partners. A survey to take stock of available capacity among TEP partners was conducted. Eleven organisations responded, providing information on the technical areas of expertise and deployable staff available in their organisations which could support the GTAM. The survey also highlighted gaps in some types of expertise which will inform further efforts to secure technical support options. Information on the TEP partners will support countries requesting technical assistance to select a supplier best suited to their needs.

Rosters: Rosters are being developed to enable non-governmental agencies and UN agencies working in emergencies to rapidly access technically vetted consultants on request. The rosters cover five technical areas: Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), IYCF-E, Micronutrient Supplementation in Emergencies, Integrated Nutrition-Specific and Nutrition-Sensitive Interventions, and Needs Assessment & Analysis for Nutrition Outcomes. The Roster Manager was recruited and technical clearance of consultants for the rosters was started by ACF Canada (Assessment roster only), the Tech RRT and UNICEF. Eight IYCF-E consultants and four micronutrient consultants were selected and review of applications to the CMAM, Integration and NIS rosters initiated. Applicants will be updated on status during the next quarter. The roster will be formally launched in January 2020. For more information, please contact the Roster Manager at gbellocq@unicef.org

Deployment: This quarter, the Tech RRT facilitated four completed deployments: assessment advisers to the Central African Republic (CAR) and Ethiopia; IYCF-E Adviser to Jordan; and NiE Adviser to Mexico. At the end of the quarter, an additional two deployments were in process (CMAM support to Ethiopia and Angola) and two deployments were in preparation (Assessment and CMAM support to Zambia).

Remote Support for Nutrition Causal Analyses (Link NCA) in Pakistan and Bangladesh was provided by the Tech RRT Assessment Adviser (ongoing at the end of this reporting period).

Capacity Strengthening: The rollout of the Integrated Training Package for Nutrition Outcomes by the ICNWG continues, with a training successfully delivered in Chad in October by the GNC Integration Helpdesk and two members of the ICNWG (from Action Against Hunger and the Global Food Security Cluster). The training aimed to strengthen the capacity of country cluster/sector coordinators and partners in nutrition-sensitive, multisectoral programming for improved nutrition outcomes. In addition, a capacity-strengthening

webinar series was undertaken as a joint initiative between the Tech RRT, Save the Children and the IFE-CG on Programming for the Non-Breastfed Infant. This included three webinars with technical presentations and case studies on relactation, wet or shared nursing, and safer breastmilk substitute programming, with 75 participants on average at each session. Recordings and slides from all three webinars can be found here: <http://techrrt.org/resources/#webinars>.

6. Knowledge Management

The results of a review of technical questions posted on the most-used thematic areas of the en-net forum (conducted by the Tech RRT) were released as a *Field Exchange* article³ in this quarter. Areas covered include assessment, prevention and treatment of severe acute malnutrition, prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, and IYCF interventions. As part of its knowledge-management partner role in the GTAM, ENN documented a practical example of engagement with the IFE Core Group as a GTWG for the provision of technical advice in a case study. The case study outlined the request for technical advice from Zimbabwe on handling a large donation of breastmilk substitutes during the response to Cyclone Idai. Findings will be more widely shared in early 2020 to inform the establishment of ways of working for further GTWGs.

Two other pieces are being developed with support of ENN in its knowledge-management partner role: a technical brief and a case study. One of the technical gaps identified in the Baseline Technical Needs Assessment Report was the lack of clarity amongst practitioners on Mother Baby Areas and similar models of intervention, despite the existence of some guidance. In response, ENN began mapping available resources to inform the development of a Technical Brief on Supportive Spaces for IYCF-E. Needs to capture learning around nutrition programming in the context of EVD were also examined, with agreement reached for ENN to develop a country case study on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) experience of supporting non-breastfed infants during the EVD response in the next quarter.

³ www.enonline.net/fex/61/technicaldiscussionennet