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Wasting and Stunting Technical Interest Group Membership and Governance Updated April 2023¹

Background

In 2014, ENN published a review of the financing architecture underpinning the scale up of CMAM programming and within this, called into question the marked separation between how wasting and stunted are understood and approached globally across policy, programmes, research and financing.

To explore whether the separation was justified by physiological and programmatic evidence, ENN established a small Wasting-Stunting (WaSt) Technical Interest Group (TIG) which comprises experts in the field of child growth, health and nutrition, epidemiology, research and from the policy and programme arenas. The WaSt TIG has grown since this time to a membership of 40+ experts who are the creative and driving force behind the WaSt work. The WaSt TIG is coordinated by ENN technical staff whose main role has been to harness the skills and enthusiasm of the TIG and facilitate a large number of influential areas of work. The backbone of the expert group is the maintenance of a creative, transparent forum to scrutinise and explore the relationship between wasting and stunting, allowing it to serve the nutrition and wider humanitarian and development sectors as a hub for evidence and expert opinion which is *free from organisational agendas*.

The WaSt TIG is now entering its fifth phase of work which will run between May 2023 and April 2025. As with previous phases, the priorities and workstreams have been defined through engagement at the bi-annual WaSt TIG meeting (held in June 2022) and builds on previous phases of work. A two-year workplan provides the framework under which the WaSt TIG is supported by ENN to make progress on agreed areas of focus. This document sets out the guiding principles for members of the WaSt TIG and has been updated for Phase Five.

¹ To be reviewed every 2 years to reflect any changes to membership and governance

Guiding Principles

There are no formal criteria for being a WaSt TIG member, rather, throughout the past 8 years, we have been guided by evolving core principles that have served the WaSt work very well and are summarised below;

- Bringing technically creative ideas, enthusiasm and academic rigour to the group
- Ensuring the technical focus of the work has relevance to policies and programmes
- Maintaining objectivity and being evidence led, rather than directed by agency agenda
- Commitment to disseminating and promoting uptake of the group's outputs to influence policy, research and programme change

Terms of engagement

The way we work in the WaSt TIG has also avoided a very formal based structure. Instead, we have relied on broad terms of engagement which support our ability to function well and deliver high-quality outputs as summarised below;

- Being open to and respecting a wide range of thinking and ideas
- Providing timely comments/inputs/review and sign-off on draft documents, peer review papers and other outputs from the WaSt TIG and/or SWGs as per agreed timelines.
- Participate in WaSt TIG meetings and workplan development.
- Represent the WaSt TIG at fora where our work can have influence
- Members agree to ENN listing their name as a WaSt TIG member in presentations describing the work of the group and on the ENN website and communications.

Defining the groups direction

The nature of the work of the group is exploratory therefore direction has been defined iteratively, so that questions emerging as a result of the work can be further explored and so that opportunities in the wider context (such as related research initiatives) can be capitalised on. Every 2 years the group takes stock of the work (during a face-to-face meeting) to determine the direction of the group and workplan for the next 2 years. ENN drives the implementation of that workplan in their coordination role.

Membership

Membership of the WaSt TIG is based on the premise that individual member engagement respects their capacity to contribute in terms of time and specific area of expertise. For members who are not allied to an institution or organisation, ENN seeks to provide resource to facilitate their engagement in WaSt TIG activities. Having more than 1 person from any individual organisation or institution has been avoided in order to keep the WaSt TIG to a manageable number of members whilst ensuring a good range of backgrounds and experience.

Currently, the TIG is made up of 42 people

<https://www.ennonline.net/ourwork/researchandreviews/wast/wasttigmembers> and draws

on a wide range of experts from both wasting and stunting communities spanning academia, policy, and programme development and including individuals from institutions in both the Global North and Global South. Some members have been part of the TIG since the beginning as there is no limit on the length of time members can engage. New members are announced when the ENN WaSt TIG Coordinator sends quarterly WaSt TIG email updates.

Over the last 2 years ENN has actively sought out members from national institutions in the Global South to help strengthen the WaSt work and forge mutually beneficial partnerships for further growing the evidence-base and for understanding the policy and programme implications of the work. Members have also joined the WaSt TIG via collaborations on specific activities in the workplan, including authors who have shared their data for analysis by the group, reflecting their shared interest in our objectives. In this fifth phase, we envisage a continuation of these membership drivers.

WaSt TIG Workstreams

A key way of working which has been immensely successful over the years has been the organisation of members of the WaSt TIG into sub-working groups (SWGs) to enable an energy and focus on specific themes/technical issues. These SWGs are typically small (4-8 members) and time/output bound so once work is completed, they disband. The SWG membership is voluntary, based on areas of expertise, availability and interest. In most cases, a chair for the SWG is assigned or the role taken on by one of the ENN team. Where a SWG member is not in a paid role, ENN seeks to find the financial resources to cover their time and thereby, ensure their participation. We will continue to operate this way of working as it helps ensure the delivery of quality and timely outputs.

Acknowledging contributions

The WaSt TIG works on the basis that whenever a member has contributed to an output, be it signing off on a collective published technical review, a peer review publication or any other output, they are fully acknowledged as a contributor. Authorship order on publications will be agreed at the start of output development. We will always ensure anyone's contribution is fairly and openly acknowledged as this is one of the significant strengths of the group. The outputs are not ENNs but represent the WaSt TIG members.

ENN's role and commitment

ENN's approach to coordinating the WaSt TIG is to be respectful and mindful of people's time, expertise and interests whilst facilitating the WaSt agenda so that the work is visible and relevant and to ensure progress in this critical subject area is being made.

ENN is responsible for raising the funds for coordination, for meeting organisation, and for specific areas of work including data analysis and interpretation (including consultancy inputs where required), writing papers, preparing policy and programme briefs and in influencing through attendance and presentation at global events and meetings. ENN is

directly accountable to the donors who support the WaSt TIG work and reports to them on deliverables and achievements. However, this ENN role does not preclude other members from seeking finances to support the WaSt TIG agenda or specific activities.

ENN plans, convenes and facilitates meetings with the WaSt TIG which are held in-person where feasible, shares email updates every 2-3 months on developments within the TIG and sets up and coordinates the work of the different WaSt TIG sub-working groups. In Phase Five, ENN commits to continuing to ensure we do not overload members with information but find the right balance between keeping members connected and respecting the time and energy members can bring given demanding professional jobs.