

## Terms of Reference for Ukraine NGO Forum

### Purpose

The NGO Forum for NGOs operating in Ukraine was established in mid-2014 to facilitate information sharing, coordination and advocacy activities in order to positively increase the impact of humanitarian and recovery activities in Ukraine. The NGO Forum for Ukraine works closely with Ukrainian and international NGO's, agencies, departments and offices of the United Nations and Ukrainian Government, as well as non-traditional humanitarian actors. The NGO Forum is committed to working with existing coordination mechanisms in Ukraine.

The NGO Forum has an important role to play in minimizing gaps and duplication in humanitarian activities, including support and management functions performed.

### Objectives

- Facilitate operational-level discussion amongst actors responding to the crisis in Ukraine, including issues related to access, security at the field level, policy matters affecting program implementation, other;
- Share information as part of open discussion and resolution of issues affecting agencies' ability to respond, including registration, legislation, coordination, funding;
- Build capacity of national NGOs through various seminars and workshops;
- Advocate on behalf of the NGO community on agreed strategic and urgent issues related to humanitarian action.

### Membership

The NGO forum is open to any International and National NGO responding to the humanitarian crisis and recovery needs in Ukraine. NGOs willing to apply for the membership should approach the Forum Secretariat with an official request and submit a signed Code of Conduct (*see appendix I*).

NGO Forum Members Commit to:

- Actively participate in the work of the NGO Forum through regularly attending coordination meetings and proposing agenda points;
- Actively participate in different thematic working groups created by the Forum Secretariat at the request of the NGO Forum Steering Committee (SC) or the Forum members;
- Assist the Secretariat in its coordination and information sharing efforts through providing requested information or keeping the Secretariat informed on relevant updates/developments;
- Actively engage in providing feedback to the Secretariat and the SC on the quality of the delivered service;
- Accurately pay membership fees on a six month basis. Initial two months membership is free.

### Steering Committee (SC)

The Steering Committee is delegated by the NGO Forum members to provide strategic and principled guidance on their behalf with the objective to support and steer the NGO Forum and the NGO Forum Secretariat. SC is accountable to the NGO Forum members. SC consists of five

members elected for a six month period.

The SC meets at least once on a monthly basis. The meetings are called and organized by the Secretariat, minutes are distributed among members and records are kept by the NGO Forum Secretariat. Wherever possible, the SC takes its decisions by consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved, a decision can be taken by a vote of the simple majority.

SC members/alternates who fail to attend two consecutive meetings (face-to-face or via skype) of the SC and/or who fail to respond to SC communications over the period of two weeks, will be potentially asked to step down due to their inactivity.

At any given time, the SC may request an ad-hoc extraordinary NGO Forum meeting to discuss an issue of significance.

The Steering Committee:

- Sets the overall strategic direction for the NGO Forum and assists in the preparation of the work plan and strategy developed on a half-year basis by the Secretariat;
- Approves the NGO Forum work plan, strategy and budget as presented by the NGO Forum Secretariat;
- Ensures that the NGO Forum fulfils its objectives as outlined in the work plan and strategy;
- Attends the Forum coordination meetings regularly, prepares for and contributes appropriately and effectively;
- Prioritises activities and selects specific focus areas to guide advocacy work as suggested by the Secretariat;
- Assists the Secretariat in developing the NGO forum policy/advocacy documents (i.e. letters, statements, etc), project proposals and advocacy initiatives;
- Appoints the NGO Forum Senior Coordinator and approves the creation of any new positions supporting the Secretariat;
- Assesses performance of the NGO Forum Senior Coordinator.

### **Elections of the SC Members**

Elections are conducted on a half-year basis. Two weeks before the elections date, the NGO Forum Secretariat requests official nominations for the SC membership.

Those wishing to join the SC will be required to do so by submitting a brief Expression of Interest document to the Secretariat, indicating their interest, merits, and anticipated contribution, appended by support letters from two international and one local Forum member organizations.

All documents will be brought before the Forum members on the day of elections. The candidates will be given an opportunity to make brief speeches, outlining their strategic vision of the Forum, evidencing good understanding of the humanitarian context in Ukraine, specifically, issues faced by the humanitarian NGO community, and demonstrating strong commitment to devote the necessary time and effort to their role.

SC members will be elected through the Single Transferable Vote system, i.e. the Forum members will rank candidates in the order of preference. Two SC members out five should be representatives from national NGOs. The Secretariat is to ensure transparent process of vote counting with participation of volunteers from the Forum.

Elected SC members nominate their alternates at the Deputy Head Level.

### **The NGO Forum Secretariat**

Under the overall supervision of the NGO Forum SC, the Secretariat:

- Facilitates transparent coordination between the NGO Forum members including regular sharing of information between members, and to external stakeholders;
- Represents and advocates to external stakeholders in close collaboration with the NGO community, and along with the NGO SC, represents the NGO Forum at high-level meetings;
- Represents NGOs at HCT, Inter-Sector Coordination Group, and ad hoc coordination groups, meetings and initiatives;
- Develops the Forum six month work plan, strategy and budget for further approval by the SC and Forum members;
- Ensures collection of membership fees and manages the overall budget of the Secretariat;
- Seeks additional funding and contributions for the NGO Forum personnel and services;
- Provides information, briefings, presentations on the function and structure of the humanitarian NGO community in Ukraine;
- Encourages bilateral and multilateral cooperation and exchanges between the Forum members based on its knowledge of members and their interests and sectors and geography of operations;
- Develops productive relationships with key individuals in relevant government as required in close collaboration with the NGO Forum SC, including ministries, civil society, counterpart institutions, the foreign and national NGO community, UN agencies and offices, Government of Ukraine, diplomatic missions, and donors;
- Schedules NGO Forum meetings and NGO Forum SC meetings, invites external speakers, ensures that meetings are sufficiently documented;
- Ensures the SC elections are well organized and conducted in transparent and fair environment;
- Encourages non-NGO Forum Ukrainian NGOs providing humanitarian aid to participate in the NGO Forum and share information of their activities and observed humanitarian and recovery needs;
- Builds capacity of national NGOs through identifying needs, organizing and conducting various seminars and workshops.

### **Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)**

In HCT the NGO Forum is represented by the Forum Senior Coordinator and the National Coordinator as an alternate. SC members are entitled to help the Senior Coordinator to prepare agenda points to be raised at the HCT on behalf of the Forum, so that the NGO Forum interests are adequately represented and advocated in the HCT. Senior Coordinator is responsible to ensure that the Forum members are informed on the nature and conclusions of the HCT discussions.

### **Frequency of Coordination Meetings/Chairing**

Coordination meetings are held in Kiev, bi-weekly on Fridays, in the same week as the HCT and OCHA general coordination meetings. Meetings are chaired by the Forum Secretariat. SC members help the Secretariat to lead the meetings by suggesting agenda points and through proactive participation.

Invitations are distributed by the Secretariat two days prior to the meeting. Meeting minutes are distributed no later than within three working days after the meeting.

**Review of the Terms of Reference**

The NGO Forum Secretariat should review the Terms of Reference of the NGO Forum at least every six months, taking into account any recommendation from the SC and/or the Forum members. The SC may at any time ask the Secretariat to consider a recommendation for changes or modifications to the Terms of Reference.

The Terms of Reference is approved by the NGO Forum at the coordination meeting by the simple majority vote.