

Country-based Pooled Funds - NGO Dialogue Platform

Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Country-based Pooled Fund NGO Dialogue Platform (hereafter, the Platform) is to provide an open and inclusive forum for regular dialogue between OCHA and NGOs to inform the strategic direction and management of CBPFs¹.
2. The Platform is established in response to the need identified by NGO partners for a strong partnership with OCHA vis-à-vis CBPFs and to complement the dialogue between OCHA and NGOs that is already taking place at the country level.

Background

3. The Country-based Pooled Funds are a key financing mechanism in today's humanitarian architecture, and a pillar of OCHA's humanitarian financing mandate. Since piloting the first Fund in Angola in 1997 the number of Funds has risen to 19 at the end of 2020, supported by increasing contributions from a diverse range of donors. Local, national and international NGOs are critical partners of CBPFs, which focus on meeting humanitarian needs through front line actors.
4. In recognition of the expansion of CBPFs and the important partnership with NGOs, OCHA's Pooled Fund Management Branch and the NGO community have identified opportunities for promoting mutual understanding and technical collaboration to optimise impact. CBPFs are seen as a humanitarian financing mechanism able to ensure independence and impartiality in decision-making, and to increase the predictability, timeliness and flexibility of funding for humanitarian responses.
5. Whilst the lead role in establishing partnerships with NGOs and other stakeholders at country level is played by the respective Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), clusters / sectors and OCHA Country Office, the Platform provides a space at the global level to consider policy, operational, and advocacy issues that affect all CBPFs.
6. The Platform contributes to the deliberations of the Pooled Fund Working Group (PFWG), the global advisory body for CBPFs, and feeds into the work of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Results Group 5 on Humanitarian Financing as deemed relevant.

Scope and Objectives

7. The Platform is a consultative forum that provides input, feedback and suggestions on policy, operational and advocacy issues, to advance the relevance, reach and effectiveness of the CBPFs and inform best practices. It draws on NGOs' knowledge and engagement with CBPFs, and facilitates and coordinates the sharing of experiences and ideas with OCHA. The Platform is also a space for OCHA to consult with NGOs, disseminate information, and gather suggestions for improvement.
8. The Platform has three main objectives:
 - i. Policy* – contributing to the development of CBPF global policy and guidance, to ensure that it is reflective of the experiences and views of local, national, and international NGO partners.
 - ii. Operations* – strengthening effectiveness, accountability and transparency of CBPFs, through improved practices drawing on experiences of NGOs, including challenges faced.
 - iii. Advocacy* – developing joint advocacy between OCHA and NGOs in support of CBPFs, where appropriate.

Governance of the Platform

9. The Platform is co-chaired by OCHA, on a permanent basis, and a designated NGO, on a rotational two-year basis.
10. The NGO co-chair is selected by members of the Platform's Advisory Group and OCHA for a period of two years. Before the end of its tenure, the current NGO co-chair and OCHA will open a process to identify

¹ The Platform will also cover dialogue related to Regionally-hosted Pooled Funds (RhPF).

and select the next NGO co-chair, calling for expressions of interest. The following criteria will be used to inform the selection process:

- i.* Engagement with CBPFs:
 - a. Number of countries with active CBPF grants
 - b. Membership of one or more CBPF Advisory Boards
- ii.* Commitment for the full two-year period – while the commitment is organizational, expressions of interest should include the intention to assign a named individual to the role throughout the period of tenure, in order to ensure continuity and consistency
- iii.* Previous / active experience and participation in CBPF-related forums (PFWG and/or Platform Advisory Group).

11. Secretariat functions will be shared by OCHA and the NGO co-chair by mutual agreement.

12. The NGO co-chair will be responsible for liaising with the NGO community in order to:

- i.* Facilitate the development of meeting agendas.
- ii.* Manage communication with, and consultation of the NGO community before, after and in between meetings through its country and regional hubs, national and regional NGO consortia, and other formal and informal networks as relevant.
- iii.* Play a liaison role, as needed, between NGOs and OCHA on matters concerning global guidelines and other policy or advocacy initiatives.
- iv.* Effectively represent the voices and interests of NGOs as co-chair .
- v.* Foster synergies with other NGO initiatives and working groups (e.g. Grand Bargain, IASC, NGO networks.).
- vi.* Co-organise and co-chair Platform meetings.

13. OCHA will be responsible for:

- i.* Facilitating the NGO co-chair’s access to up-to-date contact lists (e.g. Advisory Board members, GMS registered users).
- ii.* Consulting the NGO Platform when producing/revising global guidelines and developing other policy or advocacy initiatives.
- iii.* Co-organising and co-chairing Platform meetings.

Membership structure

14. Membership of the Platform is open to all NGOs interested in CBPFs. The participation of local and national NGOs with direct experience of CBPFs is highly encouraged. NGOs interested in the topics on the agenda can participate in the meetings and are required to identify participants with the relevant expertise to contribute to the discussion. Inclusiveness and diversity will be promoted through ongoing dialogue and communication with the NGO community in between meetings.

15. Due to the increasing number of CBPF NGO partners globally, a three-level membership structure will allow for effective representation and constructive dialogue among NGO members and with OCHA:

	Objective	Membership	Functioning	Meetings
Informational level (up to 6,000 members)	Two-way information sharing	Includes all NGOs registered on GMS at any given point, from both the country and global level, as well as interested NGOs that register with the Platform directly. Most of the members of this group have limited interaction with each other at the global level.	The Platform’s co-chairs use a global mailing list to share new guidance, policies, and documents that have a global reach with this group. Likewise, the Platform’s co-chairs can reach out to members of this group to gather their feedback on specific initiatives and issues, for example through online surveys.	This group meets virtually on an ad-hoc basis when the co-chairs believe it is important to present new policies, guidance and initiatives to a large global NGO audience. Members of this group can contact the Platform co-chairs at any given time through existing channels, including to suggest topics for meetings.

<p>Consultative level (up to 50 members at time)²</p>	<p>For the Platform co-chairs to engage in consultations with NGOs.</p>	<p>Includes both INGO and NNGO members of Advisory Boards (ABs) across CBPFs, including representatives from NGO forums in those countries if they sit on the AB. Members of the Advisory level (see next point) are also invited to join, combining country experience with global perspectives.</p>	<p>The co-chairs of the Platform can request this group, or a subgroup, to organise consultations on specific topics of interest across all CBPFs, or to discuss specific regional or thematic issues.</p>	<p>Due to its geographic spread, this group also meets virtually, although there is no regular schedule for meetings (these can be organised ad-hoc as needed).</p>
<p>Platform Advisory Group (six members)</p>	<p>To organise and solicit input from the Platform members and contribute to OCHA's initiatives on behalf of NGO partners.</p>	<p>Comprises a group of six NGOs with significant policy experience. Other NGO representatives can be invited on an ad-hoc basis, depending on the theme and scope of the consultation.</p>	<p>The Platform co-chairs engage with this group to discuss specific policy or operational issues where guidance is required.</p>	<p>This group (PAG) meets twice a year, preferably in advance to the regular meetings of the PFWG. Ad-hoc meetings can be organized as needed.</p>

16. Engagement with the various levels of the Platform happens throughout the year, aligned with discussions happening at the PFWG, when possible.
17. At each level, the goal is for discussion during meetings to be open, frank and constructive and aimed at producing concrete outcomes that OCHA can use to inform CBPF policy. Minutes of the meeting are circulated whenever relevant.
18. Ongoing communication between meetings is ensured through emails and conference calls.

² Members of the ABs are automatically part of this group. When a meeting of the group, or of a subgroup of it, is called, members are invited to actively participate.