Guidelines for CCIC Working Groups

English Version 2.0

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These Guidelines are considered an "evergreen" document, subject to ongoing changes based on member feedback and evolving practice for CCIC Working Groups
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What are CCIC Working Groups?

CCIC Working Groups are inclusive communities of practice where CCIC members work together and connect to share learnings, develop best practice and maximize collective influence, drawing on member diversity to attain joint objectives. Working Groups are CCIC member led and driven; members set joint agendas and organize and resource activities with some level of support from CCIC. CCIC provides backend resources to facilitate the work of working groups, notably through the CCIC Online Members' Portal, and promotes these on its website, in line with our commitments to inclusion and transparency. Members can access the Members' Portal to engage in discussions, share information and organize meetings and events. Working group activities must be in line with the principles of the CCIC Code of Ethics. All CCIC members are encouraged to join and participate in working groups.

Structure

Working groups

All working groups should identify their primary activities and at least one joint group objective. The Terms of Reference, key objectives, and chair's /co-chairs' name(s) must be available on the group's page on the online CCIC Members' portal. A description of all Working Groups will also be maintained on the CCIC website. Working groups must be transparent, inclusive and accessible with clear information available about the group, its leaders and opportunities to engage for all CCIC members made available on CCIC's online members' portal.

CCIC Working groups are required to:
- Be committed to work on issues relevant to CCIC's mission and to its membership
- S/elect at least one chair to lead the group and/or a steering committee
- Hold meetings (face to face, phone or online) at least 3 times a year
- Develop and update Terms of Reference for the group
- Develop a simple work plan an annual basis – to be shared with shared with CCIC in order to facilitate planning and support by the CCIC team.
- Produce at least one output (e.g. submissions, papers, blogs, dialogue session, etc.) a year
- Report back to CCIC on the group activities and objectives on an annual basis
- Follow the CCIC Code of Ethics

We recommend groups generate a solid body of evidence before engaging in advocacy activities. Working Groups are committed to informing CCIC of any materials or formal communications which will use the CCIC logo. Further information on this is provided below.

Subgroups

Groups may wish to establish subgroups to work on specific areas or processes linked to their main activity and area of work. Subgroups must be accountable to the parent group and feed back to the main group on activities and outcomes.

Subgroups may wish to formalize their structure selecting a chair and steering committee. Subgroups will also be provided a space on CCIC's online members' portal.

Establishing and closing groups

New groups should have a clear purpose and a unique focus which cannot be addressed by an existing group.

All CCIC members can suggest new working groups; however, CCIC must be informed of members' intention to establish any new working group. In exceptional circumstances, CCIC may refuse to allow the formation of a new working group.

To maximize their relevance, CCIC recommends that new groups aim for the broadest possible area of work (i.e. avoid areas that may be too specific and only of interest to a few CCIC members). CCIC requires that at least **five member** organizations be interested in actively contributing to a group's activities to set up a new group / subgroup. Members should express interest in forming a new group by submitting an email to CCIC, indicating the objective of the proposed group, and copying at least five member organizations who have agreed to participate in the group.

The starting expectation is for the life-cycle of a CCIC group to be one year, after which the group will evaluate whether the group is still relevant or if the main activity of the group needs to shift.

Groups can exist for as long as their members wish them to exist. However, CCIC reserves the right to terminate groups that are identified as inactive over a period of more than six months. This will happen only after consultation.

Membership

CCIC groups are primarily for CCIC members. However, there is the option of inviting non-CCIC members (e.g. academics, independent consultants and business) if the need to access external expertise, or include key external stakeholders is expressed by group members. The objective of bringing in expertise and perspectives from outside is to foster innovation and cross-sector partnerships. Non-members will be added to the online member portal by CCIC staff upon request of group (co)chairs.

Working groups may be:
- *Open*: any CCIC member can join.
- *Moderated*: new members need to be approved by the group chairs
- *Closed*: group chairs reserve the right to invite members based on their expertise

Membership requirements to join a group should be clearly explained on the Group online page. Because CCIC is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, this is particularly important for moderated and invitation-only groups, which need to demonstrate clearly what criteria and rationale is used to select/reject participants.

CCIC role and support

CCIC maintains overall oversight of all groups and is committed to ensure a relevant, lively and engaged set of communities. The CCIC Community Network Advisor is the first point of contact for groups in the CCIC Team.

Depending on capacity and budget CCIC can provide advice and support on:
- *Community administration*, including supporting chair election process
- *Promotion and networking*: CCIC can promote the work of groups through its public communication platforms and connecting to other groups
- *Members area (Portal)*: The online community platform on which groups can start discussions and share events. All group communication **must** be posted on this space to facilitate the communication between groups and with CCIC.
- *Blogs / news stories*: CCIC groups are invited to suggest ideas for blogs for the CCIC website. CCIC can provide some editorial support.
- *Events:* CCIC has capacity in-house to support event organization, should groups wish to organize events open to the public. Please contact CCIC well in advance to check availability.
- *Reports:* CCIC can support groups in producing reports, including design and publishing. Please contact CCIC as soon as possible to discuss ideas and suggestions.
- *Policy and advocacy*: CCIC is keen to work with groups to maximize the impact of their advocacy activity, ensuring that CCIC and its groups' advocacy is co-ordinated. If a group wants to work on advocacy, they should contact CCIC for advice from the policy team.
- *Financial Services*: on a case by case basis, CCIC may provide financial services (banking, accounting, etc.) for WGs who wish to fundraise for a specific project. Examples where this might be appropriate could include a dedicated research project funded by voluntary contributions of WG members, or the funds for holding an event).

Approval for CCIC-branded products

Working Groups are committed to seek CCIC approval for any materials or formal communications which use the CCIC logo. The purpose of CCIC's approval is to ensure coherence of content and/or targeting with other CCIC-branded products, and ensure CCIC is aware of reports being published by groups, especially those where there is less direct involvement of CCIC staff. This applies to products including:

- Working papers, background papers and policy position papers
- Letters to Government / Parliamentary targets (including written evidence to inquiries)
- Events

Groups are asked to notify CCIC of their intention to produce a product as soon as possible. CCIC must receive a draft version of each paper/letter/report at least **two weeks (one week for letters)** prior to the group's deadline to allow CCIC to sign off, if appropriate. We understand there may be occasions (e.g. in reaction to unforeseen events) where this timeline is not possible. If CCIC does not need to sign off individual products we will advise accordingly.

In the case of letters to **senior Government targets**, please notify CCIC of an intention to write to/contact the individual in question as early as possible, so we can identify where the same individual may be being approached by different CCIC groups simultaneously. **Letters to political figures on behalf of a Working Group cannot be sent without CCIC's sign off.**

Papers/reports intended to be **printed** should be professionally designed. CCIC may provide financial support towards design and printing on an ad hoc basis, therefore groups should contact CCIC well in advance. Please allow at least four weeks for the whole process.
CCIC can provide in-house support to design papers/reports produced for **online** circulation only. Groups should check CCIC's availability in advance.

Groups are not allowed to use the CCIC logo and brand without CCIC's permission.

Governance
CCIC groups are led by at least one chair and, depending on their size, a steering committee to support the chair(s).

Group chairs/co-chairs
Group chairs lead the direction of the group in consultation with its members. They are the lead people and the point of contact between the group, CCIC and key stakeholders. Depending on the group, the chair role may involve a personal commitment equivalent to take around 1 to 2 days per month.

Chair specification
- Someone who works for a CCIC member organization
- Someone who has substantial experience and expertise around the issue(s)
- Someone who can dedicate the time and has the enthusiasm necessary to lead
- Someone who has good facilitation and communications skills

Chair(s) responsibilities
Communications
- Maintain regular communication with group members and ensure the space on the CCIC Member portal is up to date.
- Coordinate communications outputs such as official letters, submissions, reports, etc., with CCIC

Governance
- Oversee the life cycle of the group and ensure group activities are carried out
- Supervise the formal structures which the group has chosen to put in place
- Ensure that any subgroups are accountable to the main group, and share common principles and objectives.

Planning
- Organize and minute group meetings at least twice a year; and, if applicable, organize meetings with the steering committee.
- Plan and organize meetings with other key audiences as appropriate in collaboration with CCIC
- Produce annual work plan in consultation with the wider group and steering committee

Reporting
- Monitor and report progress to the wider group and to CCIC on a yearly basis.

S/election of chairs and co-chairs:
Group chairs and co-chairs must be s/elected on an annual basis and can be identified by:
- Selection, if the number of candidates equals number of chair roles.
- Election, if there are more candidates than chair roles. A representative from CCIC can facilitate the election process if required.

There is no maximum term. Group chairs must be approved by CCIC and confirmed to meet the requirements listed in these guidelines.

Steering committee members
The role of the steering committee members is to support the work of the chair(s), and, when needed, to take the lead on specific work streams the group decides to take forward. Establishing a steering committee is not compulsory but CCIC encourages groups to identify members who wish to be actively involved in groups activities.

Steering committee member specification:
- Someone who works for a CCIC member organization.
- Someone who has substantial experience and expertise around the issue(s)
- Someone who can dedicate the time and has the enthusiasm necessary to support the chairs and take on specific tasks.

Responsibilities
Taking forward specific pieces of work through and reporting back to the chair(s), steering committee and membership on these pieces of work:
- Acting as a contact point for members to input into steering committee decisions
- Acting as a clearing house for suggestions on group activities from the group's membership
- Reviewing the communities' formal structures each year
- Rotating minute-taking responsibilities

Selection
Members volunteer to join the steering committee.

ANNEX 1 : Template Working Group ToRs

Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)

Working Group [INSERT NAME]

Terms of Reference (ToRs)

Date reviewed: _____

Background

CCIC groups are communities of practice where CCIC members come together to connect with each other, share learning and maximise influence to jointly deliver their objectives. Groups are led by CCIC members: they are responsible for driving the group's agenda and organize their activities with some level of support from CCIC. All CCIC groups are hosted on an online space on the CCIC website, where members can share information, start discussions and organize meeting and events. All CCIC members can join any CCIC group, both online and in person.

These Terms of Reference (ToRs) serve to identify the objectives, operating terms, and membership criteria for the _____ Working Group.

Objectives for the Working Group

The _____ Working Group seeks to discuss, share best practice and advance the interests of the international development and humanitarian sector in the areas of ….

In particular the Working Group aims to:

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-
-
-

Working Group Membership

The Working group is open to the staff persons of all members of CCIC.

OR, in unique cases:

The Working Group is moderated / closed[1]. The following criteria are agreed by all group members to form the basis of membership requirements:

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[1] See CCIC Working Group Guidelines for definition of "moderated" or "closed" groups

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Operating Terms for the Working Group:

In line with the "CCIC Working Group Guidelines", the Working Group is committed to the following operating terms.

- Once a year, s/elect at least one chair to lead the group and a steering committee.

  - Name(s) of Chair or Co-Chairs: _____

  - Names(s) of Steering Committee members: _____

- Hold meetings (face to face, phone or online) at least 3 times a year
- Use the CCIC Members' Portal to save group documents and ensure centralized access
- Produce at least one output (e.g. policy submissions, papers, events, blogs etc.)
- Complete an annual review of the Terms of Reference for the group
- Complete an annual work plan;
- Report back to CCIC on the group activities and objectives on an annual basis.

ANNEX 2 : Template Working Group Annual Plan

CCIC will work with the first Working Groups transitioning to create an Annual Plan.

This will serve as a template for Working Groups joining after to use when creating their Annual Plans.

Key considerations:
- Major planned activities for the year
- Responsible persons
- Signaling where CCIC team may be needed (ex. event, research, writing)
  - Confirmation CCIC has been consulted and confirmed
- Progress tracking

CCIC Working Group Annual Plan Name: Year:				
Activity	Responsible	Resources/Support of CCIC	Consulted CCIC	Status

ANNEX 3 : Questions and Answer

- *Can we provide input on these guidelines?* – yes CCIC members can provide feedback on these guidelines at any time. In Spring 2020, CCIC consulted on a first draft of the guidelines and invited feedback. Note it is expected that the guidelines will always exist as a 'evergreen document', subject to modification as required by experiential learning and circumstances.

- *Can non-CCIC members participate in Working Groups? Does this present a 'free-loader' issue where participation of non-members is 'subsidized' by paying members?* – CCIC members in good standing have access to any working group they wish (some exceptions may exist). There is the option of inviting non-CCIC members (e.g. academics, independent consultants and business) if Working Group members identify the need to access external expertise or include key external stakeholders. The objective of bringing in expertise and perspectives from outside is to foster innovation and cross-sector partnerships. Non-members will be added to the online member portal by CCIC staff upon request of group (co)chairs. Working Group participation of non-CCIC members will need to be reconfirmed on an annual basis.

- *Could working groups limit participation of CCIC members if this is deemed appropriate?* – Fairness principles dictate that the point of departure should be one of openness for all CCIC members to participate in all working groups. However, some contexts may indeed justify an invitation-only model (ex. sensitive topics). If clear and objective parameters are provided and justified to CCIC, these will be considered. The Working Group guidelines presently allow for this possibility and further assessment will inevitably be required on a case-by-case basis. The reasons why an invitation-only group has been formed will need to be clearly explained in the online portal description of the group. The CCIC Board may be called upon to review decisions to create an invitation-only group and may choose to intervene if they feel it is required.

- *Can working groups undertake policy and advocacy initiatives?* – Yes, absolutely. The Working Group model leaves such initiative to the discretion of working groups. As in all things, balance and context will be required when CCIC considers supporting policy positions of individual working groups. Some cases may present real challenges in this regard, however. When policy positions are being taken, groups need to consult and update CCIC. While working groups can develop and discuss their own positions, they also represent CCIC, which means that policy and Government Relations initiatives must be coordinated. Any formal position taking (ex. letter to a Minister) shared in the name of a CCIC Working Group must be reviewed and approved by CCIC.

- *What if CCIC and Working Group members disagree on a policy tactic or position?* It is possible that CCIC and the membership of a Working Group disagree on appropriate policy engagement steps, or messages. Any formal position taking (ex. letter to a Minister) shared

in the name of a CCIC Working Group must be reviewed and approved by CCIC. However, individual member organizations are always free to act independently of CCIC and its formal Working Group structure.

- *What support does the CCIC Community Network Advisor provide? –* This role provides support for the setting up of Working Groups and is the main point of contact between CCIC and the Working Groups.

- *Will this completely change how the current Working Groups operate?* This transition will allow for the working group members to take the lead in the discussions, convening and objectives of the working group. Before any group gets started, the Working Group will have to provide a signed and completed Terms of Reference form and basic Annual plan back to CCIC for approval.

- *What is the timeline for launching the member portal and signing up to access it?* CCIC is launching the beta testing of the portal September 17th 2020 by onboarding one working group. This group is an active participant in helping CCIC perfect the online experience. All pre-exiting CCIC working groups will be have joined the member portal by January 1st 2021, at which point new groups will be invited to join CCIC.

- *Will groups be provided with a video communication system to facilitate hosting meetings?* Yes, Zoom will be integrated into the portal and groups will be able to convene on their own time and schedule.

- *Will groups be provided with budgets to allow them to host events and activities?* It is CCIC's longer term objective to provide a funding envelope to support the work of the Working Groups which could cover expenses related to report writing/publishing, translation and events. Such a provision is expressed in the WG Guidelines, however we do not yet have such funds available and will need to make do with offering WGs access to resources and events that are part of CCIC's ongoing operations.

- *Will CCIC still provide support in connecting groups to Global Affairs Canada?* Yes, CCIC will continue to work with the working groups in providing a connection with Global Affairs Canada where this is appropriate and called for. CCIC has created a position of "Policy Analyst and GAC Liaison" that will be available to engage and support WGs in this area. CCIC may choose to channel WG engagements with GAC through some of its regular annual convenings (ex. conferences).

- *Will there be opportunities for groups that are currently external to CCIC to become CCIC working groups?* Yes. CCIC will have to ensure there are no groups currently formed on the same theme and will gladly discuss the potential for integrating work done through other networks into the online members platform and CCIC Working Group model.