

Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network Steering Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE



1. Purpose

The Steering Group (SG) is the main decision-making body of the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network (SUN CSN). Its role is to ensure that the Network is well guided, supported, and enabled to deliver on its [4.0 Strategy \(2026–2030\)](#) and plans. The SG brings together the knowledge, perspectives, and priorities of SUN CSN members to inform key decisions, strategies, and flagship initiatives.

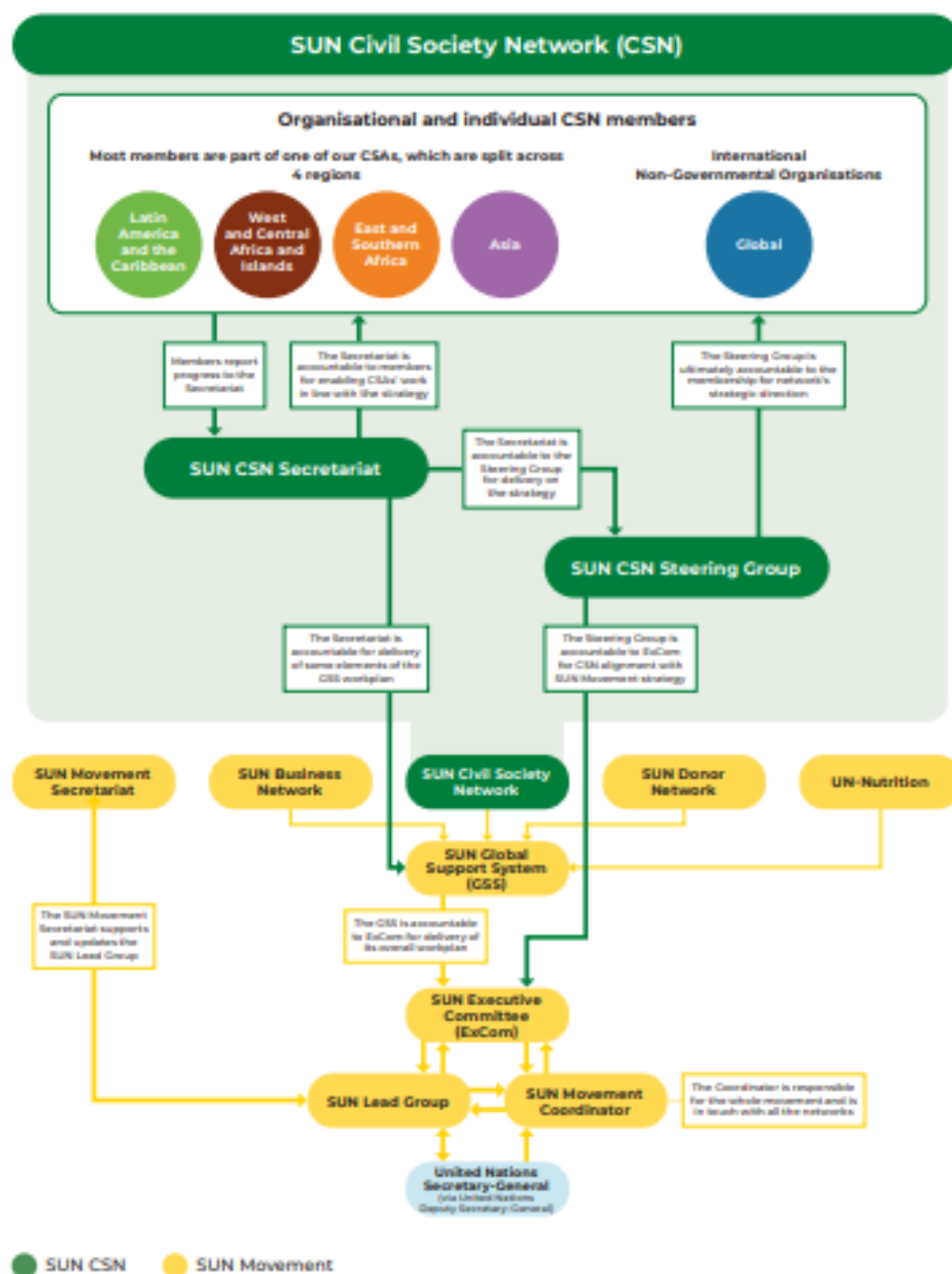
The Steering Group:

- Provides strategic direction and guidance to the Network
- Approves key decisions, positions, and projects
- Holds the SUN CSN Secretariat accountable for delivering its strategy
- Ensures that the Network is led by country needs and priorities
- Champions the principle of localisation across all SUN CSN work

2. Accountability

- The Steering Group is accountable to the SUN Executive Committee – via its SUN CSN representatives – and to the wider SUN CSN membership.
- The SUN CSN Secretariat is accountable to the Steering Group.
- The SG is responsible for ensuring that the Secretariat is supported and enabled to deliver the Network’s strategy effectively.
- The SG – and the Network as a whole – must always be guided by country-level needs and priorities.

SUN Civil Society Network accountability and governance



3. Roles and Responsibilities

The SG is responsible for the overall stewardship of the SUN CSN. Particularly:

1. Acting as the Network's primary governing body, overseeing the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the SUN CSN 4.0 strategy.
 2. Providing final sign-off on key network-level decisions, any new flagship projects, and policy positions, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the membership.
 3. Reviewing and approving the Secretariat's workplan and budget for each strategy period, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives and effective use of resources.
 4. Championing civil society and youth engagement, particularly in a context of shrinking civic space and reduced funding.
 5. Representing and promoting the SUN CSN and the nutrition agenda through members' own networks.
 6. Encouraging alignment between civil society strategies, programmes, and national nutrition plans.
 7. Supporting Civil Society Alliances (CSAs) to strengthen their governance, sustainability, and impact in multi-stakeholder platforms, according to areas of expertise.
 8. Championing the role of civil society within and beyond the SUN Movement, including in high-level global and national fora.
 9. Providing strategic and technical guidance to CSAs, according to members' areas of expertise.
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4. Meetings and Ways of Working

- The Steering Group meets virtually every two months.
- Members maintain ongoing communication between meetings.
- The SG aims to meet in person every two years, or alongside a major global event, funds permitting.
- Meeting agendas are set by the Chair and Vice-Chair in consultation with the Head of SUN CSN, and are informed by: issues raised by CSAs, input from the Secretariat, and relevant developments within the SUN Movement.

Decision-Making

- The SG strives to reach decisions by consensus.
 - For formal votes, a quorum of 50% of voting members is required.
 - Decisions are made by simple majority of those present and voting.
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5. Structure and Composition

The SG is a representative body, **elected through a transparent and democratic process.**

- The SG is led by a Chair and a Vice-Chair.
- Members serve a three-year term, renewable.
- The SG consists of up to 16 members, plus ex officio/observer members.
- Members are drawn from SUN CSN organisations and represent the diversity of the Network.

The membership includes:

- Regional representatives
- Civil Society Alliance representatives
- Youth representatives
- INGO representatives

During selection, the SG seeks to ensure:

- **Geographical balance** across all four SUN regions
- **Gender balance**, with at least 50% women
- **Age balance**, with at least two members aged 18–30
- **Sectoral diversity**: nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive sectors
- **Diversity of CSOs**, from local to international organisations.

Participation from CSAs and regional structures is encouraged and prioritised, including for the Chair role.

6. Criteria and Commitments for SG Members

Steering Group members must:

- Be members of the SUN CSN
- Be actively engaged in advancing the nutrition agenda
- Be elected as representatives of a constituency, not in a personal capacity. I.e.
 - **Regional representatives**: nominees should either serve as a member of the one of the four SUN CSN regional groups' executive committee or be an active member of a regional CSO.
 - **CSA representatives**: nominees should either serve as a CSA Coordinator or be an active member of the CSA's steering committee.
 - **Youth representatives (aged 18-30)**: nominees should have the mandate to represent a wider youth constituency (as opposed to individual youth leaders).
 - **International non-governmental organization (INGO) representatives** who have the legitimacy to represent their organisation.
- Commit to the SUN principles of engagement and Code of Conduct
 - Attend at least 70% of SG meetings: Missing more than 30%, or two consecutive meetings, triggers a discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chair
- Be able to cover their own participation costs for key events
 - Funds permitting, the SUN CSN Secretariat will aim to make financial support available for community-based organisations
- Respect and value the diversity of voices within the Network

The role is unpaid. Members should plan to dedicate approximately **1.5 days per month** over their three-year term.

7. Membership Review

SG members who are no longer able to fulfil their role, temporarily or permanently, should inform the Chair and Vice-Chair so that a constructive solution can be agreed.

8. Nomination and Selection

The selection process is open, transparent, and democratic. It is overseen by the Vice-Chair and the SUN CSN representative to the Executive Committee.

The process includes:

1. A network-wide call for nominations (4–6 weeks).
2. Applications outlining experience and commitment to the SUN CSN.
3. Shortlisting by the Secretariat.
4. Shortlisted applications submitted to the Vice-Chair and ExCom representative.
5. Depending on level of interest, either:
 - a) a recommended composition of the new SG will be put forward to the existing SG to vote on, in the event of not enough suitable candidates, or
 - b) present the shortlisted candidates to the current SG for a vote based on merit and representation criteria.
6. Online voting using a preference-based system. Candidates cannot vote for themselves.
7. Additional nominations if representation criteria are not met.
8. Induction and handover between outgoing and incoming members.
9. Election of the Chair by the newly formed SG.

The same process applies if a member steps down mid-term and no alternate is available.