

Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People Steering Group Terms of Reference

Background

1. Established in 2011, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) was born out of the need to strengthen the rights and voice of older people globally. The membership of GAROP is open to non-governmental organisations who support GAROP's mission, vision and values and comply with the relevant member application process.
2. GAROP's work is guided by the following Mission, Vision and Values:
 - a. GAROP's Mission is to support and enhance civil society's engagement at national, regional and international levels on the need for a new international instrument on the rights of older people. The main focus for this engagement is the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing process (OEWG).
 - b. GAROP's Vision is a world in which older people live free from discrimination and are able to fully enjoy their rights.
 - c. GAROP's Values are partnership with, inclusion of, and the promotion of participation by older people in decisions that affect their lives. We respect the rights of all persons regardless of age, race, color, disability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, political views, national or social origin, class and birth or property status.
3. In December 2016, a number of GAROP members volunteered to join an Interim Steering Group to guide GAROP through the next stage of its development with a view to moving towards a fully elected Steering Group in due course. The initial Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Interim Steering Group were replaced by those put in place from August 2018 to guide the transition. These TOR update those from October 2019 and will come into effect in October 2020.
4. GAROP is supported by a Secretariat that is hosted by one of its members. The Secretariat is accountable to the Steering Group of GAROP. A Memorandum of Understanding will be put in place between the hosting organisation and the GAROP Steering Group detailing expectations and responsibilities with regard to the hosting of the Secretariat and the management and implementation of external grants¹.

Principles

5. The Steering Group upholds the core values of GAROP, which are partnership with, inclusion of, and the promotion of the participation by older people in the decisions that affect their lives. GAROP respects the rights of all persons

¹ HelpAge International is currently the host organisation for the GAROP Secretariat and a Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed between HelpAge and GAROP.

regardless of age, race, color, disability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, political views, national or social origin, class and birth or property status.

6. The Steering Group is committed to the principle of transparency and will ensure that minutes of its meetings and other relevant working documents are made available to all GAROP members.

Mandate and responsibilities

7. The Steering Group's mandate and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Ensuring the effective governance of GAROP and providing oversight and guidance to the Secretariat.
 - b) Establishing and managing internal mechanisms to consult members, develop joint positions, fundraise, and ensure the effective functioning of GAROP.
 - c) Managing the effective representation of GAROP with external stakeholders and at public events.
 - d) Responding to short-term requests or opportunities to input to processes, such as those related to the UN, that are relevant to GAROP's mission, within the scope of existing and agreed GAROP positions.
 - e) Ensuring transparency and accountability to the wider GAROP membership.
 - f) Exploring and pursuing the attainment of an appropriate legal status for GAROP.
 - g) Providing strategic and tactical advice on how best to strengthen civil society voice and engagement with Member States and respond to policy influencing opportunities relevant to GAROP's mission.
 - h) Ensuring that members have the information and communications support necessary to facilitate their work at national, regional and international levels.
 - i) Supporting the growth of the GAROP network into a fully engaged global movement with particular emphasis on involving and supporting older people's representative organisations and promoting diversity, including among Steering Group election nominations.
 - j) Directing the work and receiving reports from the Secretariat.
 - k) Seeking resources for maintaining and expanding the work of GAROP, building a sustainable funding base, and pursuing ongoing viability for GAROP.

Structure and membership

8. The Steering Group will consist of nine members fully elected by the wider membership. In order to promote an inclusive process and a representative structure, the Steering Group commits to proactively nurturing and supporting diversity in the nominated candidates. This should include, but is not limited to, diversity in gender, age, geographical location, type of expertise or experience, and UN accreditation status of the candidates.
9. Members of the Steering Group should meet the following criteria:
 - a) Represent a member organisation of GAROP
 - b) Be able to take part in the regular work and meetings of the Steering Group including its Workgroups

- c) Contribute actively to the wider activities of GAROP
10. Steering Group members will serve for two-year terms and will be required to step down if they have served for two consecutive terms. A lapse of one term is necessary before a former Steering Group member may stand for election again.
 11. If a vacancy arises due to irreversible circumstances such as death or a Steering Group member permanently stepping down, this will not be filled if it is within six months of a scheduled election. If it is not within six months of a scheduled election, the Chair may nominate a candidate who meets the above criteria to serve for the remainder of the term to be approved by the Steering Group.
 12. If a Steering Group member has to step down for a temporary absence, for example due to parental leave, then with the Steering Group's approval the organisation they represent may propose a replacement representative to fill the vacancy for a fixed agreed period until the elected representative's return. If the member stepping down temporarily is a serving Chair, Co-chair or Deputy Chair, then the Steering Group will appoint a new elected member to serve in this role rather than the temporary replacement representative.
 13. If a Steering Group member's affiliation with the member organisation they represent ends during their term, then if the Steering Group agrees they may continue to serve and complete their term providing they can demonstrate affiliation to another member organisation that has been a member for at least six months. This organisation must provide a letter confirming this affiliation and their support for the member's position on the Steering Group.

Appointed members

14. Immediately following an election, or at any other appropriate time, the elected members of the Steering Group may decide to appoint up to two additional members to the Steering Group. Appointments will be made to fill any perceived gaps in, for example, regional diversity, gender balance, expertise and experience depending on specific organizational needs. Each elected member may nominate up to two people.
15. The appointed members must be representatives of GAROP members and may be selected from the lists of candidates who were not elected to office. The candidate for appointment must have the endorsement of his/her organization and cannot have any other affiliation that may give rise to potential conflicts of interest. Such endorsement should be reflected in the nomination form that the candidate either already submitted to run for election, or that the candidate will be asked to submit to be considered for appointment. The elected Steering Group members will aim to take decisions about such appointments by consensus if possible, or by a vote if necessary.
16. The appointed member will serve for one year from date of appointment. He/she may have the option to run for office before completion of the one-year term of appointment. If not elected, the appointed member may continue to complete his/her one-year appointment, subject to agreement of the newly elected Steering Group that begins its term of office on 1 October. After the completion of the one-year appointment, he/she cannot continue for a second term as an appointed member.

17. The appointed members will become full voting members of the Steering Group during their terms of office.

Observers

18. From time to time, the Steering Group may invite other individuals or organisations to contribute to its work as Observers for a specific purpose and period of time to be agreed by the elected Steering Group members. This may be to address a gap in skills or knowledge on the Steering Group, or to provide expert input to a particular task. These observers need not be representatives of GAROP members nor NGOs.
19. Observers will contribute to the work of the Steering Group in an advisory capacity and may participate actively in Steering Group meetings. They are neither full nor elected Steering Group members and therefore will not be eligible to vote in any decisions.
20. One Observer can be part of the Steering Group at any point in time. This is in addition to the host of the Secretariat, should this organisation be in an observer role².

Ex-officio Members

21. The Steering Group shall also include two standing Ex-officio members by virtue of their roles as representatives of the NGO Committees on Ageing in Geneva and New York whose mandates include (a) liaison with Member States at the global level; (b) participation through oral and written statements in global fora, events and processes; (c) collaborating with, and monitoring the work of, the organizations of the United Nations system and their respective intergovernmental bodies, in the context of advocating for an international convention to protect the rights of older persons; and (d) collaborating with other NGO Committees addressing global issues, which are most directly relevant to GAROP's mandate.
22. The Ex-officio representatives designated by the Chairs of the respective NGO Committees on Ageing will contribute to the work of the Steering Group in an advisory capacity and may participate actively in Steering Group meetings. They are neither full nor elected Steering Group members and therefore will not be eligible to vote in any decisions.
23. Up to two Ex-officio representatives, with no more than one from each of the two NGO Committees on Ageing named above, can participate in the Steering Group at any point in time.

Chair and Deputy Chair

24. The elected Steering Group members will appoint a Chair and a Deputy Chair from among their membership for a two-year term. The positions of Chair and Deputy Chair can be held for two consecutive terms. The Steering Group may instead consider appointing two Co-chairs.

² As per the terms currently set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between GAROP and HelpAge International.

25. Any member is eligible to stand for either position when there is a vacancy regardless of how much of their two-year term they have served. If a serving Chair, Co-chair or Deputy Chair chooses to stand down or is not re-elected during their two-year term, the Steering Group will appoint another elected member to the role with immediate effect.
26. The responsibilities of the Chair/Co-chairs, and the Deputy Chair as required, are to:
 - a) Oversee and coordinate the work of the Steering Group.
 - b) Convene the regular and any ad hoc meetings of the Steering Group and wider membership.
 - c) Ensure that the Steering Group and the Secretariat are meeting their responsibilities to the wider GAROP membership, including regular communication.
 - d) Communicate with key external stakeholders and partners on behalf of GAROP and the Steering Group.
 - e) Provide strategic line-management for the Secretariat regarding its work with the Steering Group and the wider membership of GAROP, including monthly meetings. As host of the Secretariat, HelpAge International will provide the necessary HR and duty of care line-management.

Nominations and elections

27. The Steering Group holds staggered elections each year to elect a number of its members who will serve two year terms for a maximum of two consecutive terms³.
28. The Steering Group will appoint an Election Committee to ensure the smooth running of the nominations and elections process in line with these Terms of Reference. This Election Committee will be made up of Steering Group members who are not standing for election.
29. Nominations will be invited from the whole GAROP membership. Candidates must meet the criteria set out in paragraph 9 and must have the support of their organisation. Their organisation must have been a member of GAROP for at least six months at the time of nomination. Each member organisation may nominate one individual for election to the Steering Group. There can be no more than one individual representing a member organisation on the Steering Group at any point in time. The details of the nominations and the candidates' statements will be shared with the membership in writing at least one month before the election opens.

³ The first Steering Group elections were held in September 2018 with five newly-elected members taking up their roles immediately for two-year terms. These Steering Group members are eligible to serve for the maximum two consecutive terms from September 2018 even if they served on the Interim Steering Group. The second Steering Group elections were held in September 2019 with four newly-elected members taking up their roles immediately for a two-year term. Any Steering Group member elected in September 2019 who also served on the Interim Steering Group will only be eligible to serve for one two-year term from September 2019

30. The Steering Group members will be elected through an online vote by GAROP members. All existing GAROP members on the members database on the date that the call for nominations is issued will be eligible to vote. There will be a limit of one vote per organisation. This one vote will entail ranking the candidates. In the event of a tie between any candidates, the Election Committee will decide on the most appropriate course of action.

Meetings

31. Steering Group members are expected to take part in Steering Group meetings, which will be held mostly by Skype or teleconference, but includes face-to-face meetings where possible.
32. Meetings will take place at least once a quarter or on a more frequent basis if required to be agreed by the Steering Group.
33. At such a time that progress is made with the registration of GAROP as an independent legal entity, then the Steering Group will update these Terms of Reference to include the procedures for an AGM and the selection of officer roles from among the Steering Group members.

Decisions

34. Any decisions taken within the Steering Group will be by consensus wherever possible. If a consensus is not possible, then decision will be taken by a simple majority vote of all members present. A quorum of two thirds of Steering Group members will be required for any decision or vote. In the event of a tied vote, the serving Chair will have the casting vote.

Representation

35. Where the Steering Group decides that it will be necessary for GAROP to have official representation at external events or meetings, the Steering Group will select either a Steering Group member or another GAROP member to fulfil this role. A short Terms of Reference for this engagement will be drawn up and agreed by the Steering Group in advance. This representation of GAROP is not contingent upon GAROP providing funding for the participation of the chosen representative.
36. The Steering Group may decide to appoint focal points to fulfil a specific requirement. Focal points will play a coordination role on behalf of a defined sub-set of GAROP members and liaise between this sub-set of members and the Steering Group. Dedicated Terms of Reference will be developed for such roles.

Workgroups

37. The Steering Group will agree on the formation of any necessary Subgroups or time-limited Taskgroups. The Steering Group will appoint leads for Subgroups and Taskgroups from among its own membership. Subgroups or Taskgroups will comprise members of the Steering Group only. The leads will report back to the Steering Group on a regular basis.
38. The Subgroups shall include the following:

- a. Engagement Subgroup to:
 - i. Monitor and coordinate GAROP's engagement in key events throughout the year between the OEWG sessions
 - ii. Oversee and support the development of advocacy tools, materials, messaging
 - iii. Guide the design and implementation of a process for developing joint positions
 - b. Funding Subgroup
 - i. Develop a process for inviting and managing voluntary member contributions
 - ii. Oversee and support the development of proposals and management of key donor relationships
 - iii. Build a plan for sustainable income flows for GAROP in the longer term
39. The Steering Group will oversee the work of groups established to support wider member engagement and joint working on particular issues, including agreeing Terms of Reference for these groups. Steering Group members will lead as necessary or be active participants in these groups, which will include the following:
- a. National Advocacy Work Group
 - b. Technical Groups (to work on normative content)

Review of TOR

40. These revised TOR (revised paragraphs for Appointed Members) came into effect on 29 June 2022.
41. These TOR will be reviewed annually or as otherwise required.