

Membership engagement policy

The Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (HMHB) Consortium's mission is to improve maternal nutrition through collective action by Consortium members in order to accelerate availability and effective use of MMS in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

The HMHB Consortium will provide a dynamic, impartial, and transparent platform for stakeholders active in the area of maternal nutrition and specifically those working to accelerate the use of MMS in LMICs. Through collective action, the Consortium will support global and national stakeholders in their respective roles working to overcome the multiple barriers in adoption of MMS and accelerating country-level MMS implementation.

The purpose of the Engagement Policy is to provide a transparent policy for the Consortium's engagement with its stakeholders / members. The process for application to become a Consortium member will be transparent, fair, equitable, and as simple as possible. The HMHB Consortium's principles of engagement are based on existing UN principles of engagement and the Micronutrient Forum principles of engagement. Candidate members will be provided with the Consortium's principles of engagement, asked to commit to these principles (as well as to make certain acknowledgements and provide certain descriptive information that reflects how they may advance the Consortium's strategic objectives. The Consortium's Steering Committee reviews and determines membership eligibility on the basis of information requested of and provided by applicants.

The Consortium seeks to be inclusive. The aim is to have a broad representation of organizations including but not limited to research and knowledge institutions, country decision making authorities (national and subnational) and implementers (professional associations), nongovernmental technical organizations, UN agencies, private sector companies, funders that support the adoption of MMS and acceleration of MMS implementation—such as bilateral, multilateral organizations and philanthropic foundations. The Consortium will consist primarily of individual members who represent organizations that play an active role in MMS advocacy, or supply and delivery (eg. manufacturing, distribution, marketing, sales), and who commit to contributing actively to advancing the common MMS agenda, not only with financial resources, but with their skills and expertise. Organizations that are not able to join as members but are active stakeholders in the field and whose work and priorities need to be taken into consideration (non-signatories), are encouraged to join the HMHB Consortium as an observer and will be invited to consortium meetings as observers. The Engagement policy describes the benefits and responsibilities of participation in the Consortium and principles of stakeholder engagement.

BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Participation in the HMHB Consortium has several benefits. Consortium members will have an opportunity to provide input into the Consortium's strategic vision and its annual operational plan. Stakeholders will have direct and timely access to information shared by other Consortium members, be invited to Consortium meetings, interact with experts who are Consortium members, and potentially access the networks of other Consortium members. Consortium resources may be used to help drive participating organizations' activities, such as co-organizing advocacy events, technical meetings, and communications. Membership in the HMHB Consortium is free.

Organizations and individuals who apply for membership in the HMHB Consortium are expected to commit to the following:

1. Acknowledge the governance structure of the HMHB Consortium and comply with the HMHB Consortium's:
 - HMHB Membership Engagement Policy (and Principles of Stakeholder Engagement, noted in the next section)
 - HMHB branding guidelines
2. Contribute to the formation of the Consortium's approved mission, strategic framework, and annual operational plans.
3. Commit to applying their competencies and resources to work independently (or in collaboration with other partners/stakeholders) to accelerate the use of MMS in LMICs consistent with the strategic framework and annual operational plans of the Consortium.
4. Share progress, knowledge, and accomplishments with the Consortium, and contribute to efforts to disseminate information through the contribution of stories, activities, and updates related to best practices, reports, projects, events, and news related to maternal nutrition and MMS.
5. Act according to its own organization's Code of Conduct or in the absence of an organizational Code of Conduct work to abide by internationally accepted best practices in these areas.

PRINCIPLES OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The HMHB Consortium is committed to working in partnership to support and catalyze stakeholders' action for real progress in maternal nutrition and notably in MMS introduction, supply, implementation, and effective use. The following principles of engagement guide Consortium members, the Steering Committee, and the Secretariat.

1. Relevance to and strategic alignment with the Consortium's mission

All stakeholders will be consulted regarding the development of the Consortium's mission, strategic objectives, and annual operational plan. All collaborative activities with stakeholders must be relevant to and supportive of achieving the Consortium's mission, strategic objectives, and annual operational plan.

2. Value-add of and benefits for Stakeholders

All Consortium activities shall benefit the mission of the Consortium. Stakeholders should anticipate that they can bring value to the Consortium and/or derive benefits that they are unlikely to attain on their own, including but not limited to access to and contribution to expertise that advances the mission of the Consortium, opportunities to share experiences and lessons learned among stakeholders pertaining to the mission and strategic objectives of the Consortium, access to and contribution to the formation of consensus materials and tools that support awareness-raising, consensus-building, and MMS policy/program formation, opportunities to use or contribute to the formation of expert consensus policy and guidance documents to be made available to all, and opportunities to share in each others networks and build cross-partner relationships with other stakeholder organizations that can serve to accelerate adoption and use of MMS.

3. Evidence-based, independence and impartiality

All engagements by and between the Consortium (or its Secretariat) and individual or a combination of stakeholders shall be based primarily on: i) sound, evidence-based, public health nutrition practice; and ii) their potential to advance the mission of the Consortium. The pursuit of the public health goal shall take precedence over any individual stakeholder's interests in the Consortium. Throughout all engagements, the Consortium and its Secretariat shall maintain objectivity, integrity, independence, and impartiality.

4. No endorsement and no exclusivity

Participation in and collaboration by stakeholders with the Consortium will be open to all interested non-for-profit and for-profit parties on an equal basis. The Consortium or its Secretariat shall not grant any unfair competitive advantage to any stakeholder and shall safeguard a level playing field for all. Participation in the Consortium does not imply or provide endorsement or preference of any individual organization, its products, or services by the Consortium or any of its stakeholders.

The use of the HMHB logo or name in public communication, announcements, or press-releases requires prior approval of the Secretariat and must comply with the HMHB branding guidelines.

5. Accountability and Transparency

The Consortium, the Steering Committee, and the Secretariat shall operate according to clear and mutually agreed roles, responsibilities, and goals.

While respecting individual privacy and institutional confidentiality, the Consortium, the Steering Committee, and the Secretariat will operate with full transparency through the disclosure of the principles of engagement, decision-making processes, delineation of roles, responsibilities, and contributions, membership, funding sources, and the nature and scope of activities, including outcomes of consultations or other engagements.

6. Diversity and inclusiveness

The Consortium and its Secretariat shall strive for inclusivity and a diverse and broad representation of all constituencies, ensuring a balanced stakeholder engagement by proactively seeking out membership from country decision-making and implementing bodies engaged in and committed to improving maternal nutrition and exploring adoption of MMS.

APPLICATION PROCESS

All eligible organizations and individuals that apply to become members or observers of the HMHB Consortium shall be processed as follows:

Step 1: Any organization (or individual as the circumstances dictate) seeking membership or observer status in the Consortium shall complete an application form and sign a Statement of Agreement (to be found on the HMHB Consortium's website).

Step 2: The Consortium's Secretariat will undertake the initial processing of each application and present their recommendations pertaining to all applications to the Steering Committee. The review process of each application is intended to assess whether an organization's work and services (or additionally for private sector entities: their products):

- Are compatible and consistent with the mission of the Consortium.
- Provide meaningful added value to the advancement of the collective MMS agenda. Do not present any undue risks ¹ to the Consortium's ability to execute its mission or to the Consortium's reputation.

¹ Examples of the kinds of risk that the review process might take into account include, but are not limited to:

The initial processing will be done according to a list of eligibility criteria that can be found on the HMHB Consortium's website.

Exclusion criteria: The Consortium will not accept applications from private sector entities, that produce or sell infant formula, alcohol, firearms, or tobacco (or tobacco-related products), nor from the gambling or pornography industry. Individuals employed by non-eligible companies are not able to join the Consortium either.

The Consortium will consider whether the policies of any entity seeking Consortium recognition are deemed to support the promotion of human rights, child protection, fair labor practices, avoidance of human trafficking, and responsible environmental practices. The framework used by the consortium can be found on the Consortium's website.

The Steering Committee may seek to engage in dialogue with any applicant prior to acting on the applicant's request to be recognized as a Consortium Stakeholder; and the Steering Committee may request further information of any applicant to assess whether acceptance of the applicant poses an operational, financial or reputational risk.²

Step 3: The Consortium's Steering Committee shall vote to approve or disapprove membership applications to the Consortium; approval requires an affirmative vote by a simple majority of the quorum of Steering Committee members present. If an applicant is approved, the Secretariat will notify the applicant's contact and extend an official letter of acceptance as a member of the HMHB Consortium.

Other: Stakeholders may be separated from the Consortium if they do not fulfill their obligations to the Consortium.

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- The risk that an entity's activities may be deemed incompatible with the advancement of good public health practice,
 - The risk that the entity may not be able to fulfill its obligations under the terms of stakeholder engagement,
 - The risk that an entity's reputation may seriously impede the Consortium's ability to maintain membership and/or execute its strategic or operation plan.

Risk assessment will be done in a due diligence using a checklist of questions relating the different risks and ESG criteria. This process will be developed by the Secretariat; reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee. and will be made available through the Consortium's website.

² Additional information may include but is not restricted to a request for the entity's corporate social responsibility policy and practices, illustrative examples of the organization's leadership in area of public health and nutrition, or documentation pertaining to a specific entity's policies related to human rights, child protection, fair labor practices, avoidance of human trafficking, and/or environmental practices.

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