

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND POLICY WORKING GROUP (SEPWG)

Terms of Reference

Mandate: Pursuant to the vision, mission and strategic plan for CanWaCH, the Stakeholder Engagement and Policy Working Group (SEPWG) will:

1. Translate sector and member generated evidence and experience on strategic priorities, resource allocation and reporting requirements into policy recommendations to the Government of Canada and other priority international forums (as determined by the work-plan). This includes:
 - Provide advice on CanWaCH policy positions and review of core policy documents for update as needed
 - Participate in key Government of Canada and International consultation processes and reactive individual policy products (e.g. International Assistance Review, Federal Pre-Budget Submission)
2. Provide thought leadership, review, expertise and advice on the political strategy and tactics for CanWaCH engagement in key Canadian and International opportunities to advance women, adolescent and children's health. This includes:
 - Annual update to CanWaCH's policy and political strategy
 - High-level letters to influence policy direction, leadership and investments around women, adolescent and children's health (e.g. letters to Ministers or PMO)
 - CanWaCH flagship events, as appropriate
3. Provide input on briefing material for the CanWaCH Board of Directors and Executive Director to inform their engagement with senior stakeholders both within and outside government on behalf of CanWaCH Members.
4. Support CanWaCH policy and advocacy issue coordination at events by acting as policy and advocacy 'ambassadors' within the Partnership.
5. Engage directly, on behalf of CanWaCH and as appropriate, with key stakeholders to advance policies to improve women, adolescent and children's health.
6. Provide input to the CanWaCH Public Engagement Working Group (PEWG) on content related to CanWaCH's public engagement activities and to the Metrics Working Group (MWG) on data-driven advocacy including areas of focus.



Date Established: September, 2012

Last Revised: June, 2021

Report To: **Director, Strategic Partnerships & Gender Equality** (CanWaCH)

Functions and Responsibilities: Develop, review and advance shared policy positions based on a strong understanding of current political dynamics and the evidence and experience of network Members in improving the health of women, adolescents and children.

1. The CanWaCH Secretariat will be responsible for drafting positions, proposing strategies and coordinating the SEPWG based on the input, guidance and expertise of the SEPWG.
2. The CanWaCH Secretariat will also be responsible for advancing the policy agenda with external audiences, with, wherever possible, the participation of SEPWG members.
3. New policy positions or strategies may need to be approved by the Board of Directors. Once approved, approval of subsequent material that draws on established positions will be within the purview of the Secretariat and the Executive Director, seeking input from the SEPWG.

Terms of Working Group: The SEPWG meets monthly or more frequently if needed.

Chairs: The Chairs of this working group change from time to time. Please consult CanWaCH's website for names of the current Chairs.

Membership: The membership of this working group changes from time to time. Please consult CanWaCH's website for names of the current membership.

Meeting Schedule: Monthly (last Wednesday of every month)

Meeting Duration: 1 hour

Meeting Frequency: Monthly when no key events are approaching; weekly during key moments

Meeting Format: Videoconference; In-person where necessary and feasible

Working Group Membership Process

Background:

Membership in the Stakeholder Engagement and Policy Working Group (SEPWG) (previously the Stakeholder Engagement Working Group (SEWG)) has been relatively constant since its inception in 2012. The function of the group is described in the TORs and reflects the forward-looking functioning of the SEPWG.

Member Responsibilities:

Members are responsible for participating on SEPWG calls on a regular (monthly) basis.

Members are also responsible for providing input on material prepared by the SEPWG and by the Secretariat. In keeping with the mandate of CanWaCH, the role of the SEPWG is to produce and/or give input on 'consensus based' recommendations for external stakeholders. Thus, members are expected to contribute to building consensus, inherently accepting the compromise required therein.

Members may also have the opportunity to represent the CanWaCH network in meetings and events with external stakeholders.

Eligibility:

All organizations who are members of CanWaCH will be eligible to nominate staff to participate in the SEPWG. Every effort will be made to have a balanced profile of membership on the SEPWG (NGO, Academic and Professional Association, size and geographic representation).

Members will be required to have the following skills:

1. Experience engaging with the federal government in the area of policy development and or government relations.
2. Ability to knowledgeably engage in discussions regarding women, adolescent and children's health issues in developing countries from a policy perspective.
3. Knowledge of programming experience of their organization in women, adolescent and children's health.
4. Active participation in international networks addressing women, adolescent and children's health issues is a strong asset.

In order to achieve an appropriate level of breadth and balance of representation, an individual will not both serve on the Board of Directors of CanWaCH or any other CanWaCH working group and the SEPWG.

Duration:

Membership will last 3 years. Membership is linked to the CanWaCH member organization and not the individual. Thus, in the event of a departing individual, the organization may delegate its spot on the SEPWG to another appropriate individual from the organization.

Size:

The SEPWG will count no more than 14 individuals representing 14 organizations not including CanWaCH Secretariat representation.

Succession:

Three organizations will cede their place on the SEPWG per year. This will allow for renewal of the SEPWG while maintaining continuity. Should less than three new members from the Network manifest interest in joining the SEPWG, all ceding members will be given the option of remaining members of the SEPWG for another three-year term. Should the number of organizations wishing to remain on the SEPWG exceed the number of spots available, a blind draw will determine who will remain. The appendix to this document proposes an order for succession of existing members.

Previous members can apply to rejoin the SEPWG after one year leave. Applications will be assessed on merit though priority may be given to organizations that have not been members.

New Member Application and Selection Process:

Organizations wishing to nominate an individual to be a member of the SEPWG will be invited to do so annually in **March or April** and will be required to submit an application online.

Selection of new members will be made by the chairs of the SEPWG and the representative(s) from the CanWaCH Secretariat based on the applications submitted. Applications will be scored on the established criteria.

New members will be announced in May.

Co-Chair Selection Process and Succession

The SEPWG has two co-chairs. Below is an outline of the role of the chair and the selection of the persons who serve in these roles.

Chair Responsibilities:

Chairs are responsible for leading SEPWG calls (confirming the agenda, moderating the discussion and confirming decision points).

One of the two co-chairs should be present on all calls. From time to time, exceptions may be necessary.

Chairs may from time to time be requested by the CanWaCH Secretariat to participate in Board of Director meetings on behalf of the SEPWG.

Chairs may also be requested to represent CanWaCH at senior level external meetings.

Duration:

A chair will serve for a maximum of two years.

Succession:

Chair-personship is individual rather than organizational. Therefore, should an individual leave their role as chair either temporarily or permanently, a new chair will be selected by the members of the SEPWG.

Should no other working group member show interest in assuming a co-chair role, the current serving chair will be invited to continue in their role for one year (May to May).

In the event of a mid-year transition, the new chair will serve for two years from the forthcoming May.

Eligibility:

Working group members who have been active participants in the working group for one year and occupy a senior role in their organization can put their name forward to take on the role of co-chair.

Expression of interest will be solicited in March or April followed by a vote. Transitions will occur in May.

Selection:

Selection of the co-chairs will be made by blind vote by the members of the working group.