

# **Global Interagency Security Forum**

## Terms of Reference

April 2020

### **1. Background**

1.1 The Global Interagency Security Forum (hereinafter **GISF**) is an independent network of Security Focal Points which represent not-for profit NGOs operating internationally.

1.2 GISF was initially established in late 2006 in the form of an *ad hoc* alliance between security managers from several European NGOs to share security information. GISF has since grown to include a diverse membership of Full and Associate Members and GISF Affiliates. The GISF Secretariat is supported by several full-time staff members, led by an Executive Director, and is hosted by one of GISF's Member organisations, Host Agency. The strategic direction of GISF is overseen on behalf of the Members by a Steering Group.

### **2. Mission**

2.1. GISF is an NGO network for security focal points and is a global centre of excellence for humanitarian security risk management. Humanitarian security risk management allows greater access to, and impact on; crisis-affected populations through the protection of aid workers, programmes and organisations.

### **3. Objectives**

3.1. GISF's strategic objectives are to:

- Act as a peer to peer support network to facilitate and encourage information sharing and networking.
- Be a global centre of excellence on humanitarian security risk management.
- Be the voice for SRM practitioners within the aid sector and more broadly.
- Build security risk management capacity across the global international aid sector.

### **4. Structure and Composition**

GISF is composed of Full Members, Associate Members, GISF Affiliates, the Steering Group (SG), and the Secretariat. GISF and the Secretariat are supported and hosted by a Host Agency (HA).

#### **4.1. Full and Associate Members:**

4.1.1. Full and Associate membership is open to organisations that satisfy GISF's membership criteria.

4.1.2. Full GISF Members must meet the following criteria:

- a) Registered not-for-profit NGOs which:
- b) Directly manage, and are responsible for, staff and significant humanitarian or international development programmes in several countries;
- c) Are committed to the Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief;
- d) Have a security focal point who can represent them within GISF;

- e) Are sponsored by two existing members of GISF
- f) Agree to abide by GISF's Information Sharing Policy and Protocols.

4.1.3 Associate Membership is extended to those organisations which meet at least criteria b) to f) above, or who do not wish to undertake full-GISF membership but share similar interests to GISF members regarding safety and security of staff in multiple countries. For example:

- a) Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement agencies with a presence or activities in several countries;
- b) Relevant donor security focal points;
- c) Not-for-profit humanitarian and international development representational networks, forums or lobby groups;
- d) Not-for-profit organisations implementing Human Rights-based programmes with a presence or activities in several countries.

4.1.4 All new applications for Full and Associate Membership must be reviewed and approved by the GISF Steering Group, and subject to an annual review.

## **4.2 GISF Affiliates:**

4.2.1 GISF Affiliate status is available to individuals and organisations with specific experience and focus on supporting NGO security risk management. For example:

- a) Independent consultant, not-for-profit and for-profit service providers who work principally within the humanitarian and international development sector. (Affiliate Service Provider)
- b) Subject Matter Experts and academic institutions, research bodies and coordination networks with whom GISF shares a common objective to improve sharing and knowledge transfer and collaboration for the benefit of the sector and humanitarian security risk management. (Affiliate)

4.2.2. All GISF Affiliate applications must be reviewed and approved by the GISF Steering Group, and subject to an annual review.

4.2.3 GISF Affiliates must agree to abide by GISF's Information Sharing Policy and Protocols.

## **4.3 The Steering Group:**

4.3.1 The Steering Group (SG), composed of no more than 9 members, defines the overall aims and objectives of the GISF in accordance with the member needs and establishes the overarching strategy and subsequent policies to guide its activities.

4.3.2 Typical duties of SG include:

- a) Provide strategic guidance for GISF development.
- b) Review and comment upon the development of GISF;
- c) Advise on the implementation of GISF's projects and events, and fundraising opportunities;
- d) Review and approve Membership and Affiliate applications;
- e) Approve GISF annual budget and expenditure;
- f) Promote and represent GISF at specific events;
- g) Supporting the GISF Executive Director in the identification of appropriate financial, human, information, and other resources to assist in GISF's successful implementation.

4.3.3 SG Members serve in their individual capacity and not as representatives of any organisation but may be listed on official literature with their organisational title. The SG must, however, fairly represent the diversity of GISF membership, both Full and Associate Members.

4.3.4 SG Members are committed to acting, as far as feasible, as representatives of the broader humanitarian and development security community, but without prejudice to their specific capacities, priorities and skills.

4.3.5 The SG should meet at least every 6 months, for example, prior to or just after the GISF bi-annual Forum and participate in an annual strategic planning meeting. An extraordinary meeting may be called at the initiative of the Executive Director and upon agreement of the SG.

4.3.6 The SG must appoint a Chair. The SG Chair is selected on an annual basis at the first SG meeting of the year. Nominations for the Chair should be made at the last SG meeting of the preceding year, including for the existing Chair if they wish to continue. The SG Chair can be replaced at any time, if required, on a vote of 2/3 of the SG members.

4.3.7 The SG Chair will conduct regular discussions with Secretariat on progress, help identify key decisions, and provide general support to the Executive Director. The chair is also responsible for conducting Bi-annual performance reviews of Executive Director.

4.3.8 Full and Associate GISF members can become a member of the SG. Potential applicants should notify their interest to SG members or the Secretariat. The SG will select new members to ensure organisational and individual diversity and will confirm acceptance with the broader membership.

4.3.9 SG members are committed to active, constructive and regular participation in the Steering Group and should be available to commit for a minimum of 12 months.

4.3.10 A minimum of 5 out of the 9 SG members must be present to constitute a formal SG meeting capable of taking decisions.

#### **4.4 The Secretariat:**

4.4.1. The GISF Secretariat is supported by several full-time staff members, led by an Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible to the SG Chairperson but works independently and is selected upon agreement of three quarters of the SG members and with no veto from the HA.

4.4.2. When funding allows, the Secretariat can establish other positions in-line with GISF objectives.

4.4.3. The main duties and responsibilities of the Secretariat and the Executive Director are to respond to the needs of the GISF Membership identified through the bi-annual Forums, workshops, member's surveys and direct member consultations. Key objectives and activities include:

- a) Active peer to peer support network
  - o Organise two member forums per year and specific workshops/seminars as required.
  - o Provide ad hoc support to members on issues related to good security and risk management practice.
  - o Develop and maintain information-sharing tools and processes and online member chat facilities.
  - o Strengthen and diversify GISF membership base.
  - o Engage with existing humanitarian networks, organisations and other stakeholders to stimulate greater coordination between humanitarian actors and initiatives.
- b) Global centre of excellence on humanitarian security risk management
  - o Maintain a comprehensive website and library of humanitarian security risk management resources.

- Identify key policy issues and research opportunities on security risk management in the aid sector.
  - Undertake original research on relevant issues identified by the GISF members.
  - Produce regular articles tackling gaps in the implementation of security risk management in the aid sector.
- c) Voice for SRM practitioners
- Represent GISF members at external forums and events and provide feedback to members.
  - Maintain an active social media presence and implement GISF's communications strategy to maintain GISF visibility and credibility.
- d) Building security risk management capacity
- Organise regular workshops and events for members and other invited stakeholders on security risk management topics.
  - Developing practical guidelines and tools to support security risk management.
- e) Functioning GISF Secretariat
- Develop and implement GISF funding strategy (networking with donors, submitting proposals, implementing Business Partnership Programme).
  - Manage the institutional structure of the GISF and its daily activities.
  - Manage membership network (maintain up to date members' list and obligations; offer suggestions for membership extension and restriction).
  - Support the GISF SG (organising SG meetings, following-up action points, maintain the agenda and minutes).
  - Maintain financial accounts for GISF income and expenditure in liaison with the HA.
  - Facilitate the regular monitoring and evaluation of GISF's objectives and outputs.

4.4.4 The Secretariat in fulfilling their responsibilities is dependent on the willingness of its members to cooperate and share information in the area of security risk management and to support the Secretariat and the GISF in delivering their objectives.

#### **4.5. The Host Agency:**

4.5.1. The Host Agency (HA) is responsible for administrative, logistics and human resources support to the Secretariat, up to a reasonable level. It also facilitates funding of GISF by different donors.

4.5.2. The HA must be a Full GISF Member and a European-based international NGO.

4.5.3. The HA acts as a service provider to the Secretariat and has no more right to influence or benefit from the Secretariat and GISF than other GISF members.

4.5.4. The HA keeps an unreserved individual right of veto regarding any decision or action from the Secretariat or SG that compromises, in its exclusive opinion, the physical or legal integrity of the HA or its staff. Notification of the exercise of veto must be provided to the SG in writing, including a detailed justification for it.

## **5. Monitoring implementation**

5.1 The GISF Executive Director is responsible to, and reports to, the SG Chairperson. The Executive Director updates the SG of GISF's activities through SG meetings.

5.2 The SG maintains an oversight of the GISF budget and expenditure, for this purpose the Executive Director will provide financial up dates at the bi-annual SG meetings and provide annual accounts for approval no later than four months after the end of the financial year.

5.3 GISF will maintain a contingency fund to cover at least four months full operating costs, in case of an unforeseen funding shortfall.

5.4 The Steering Group is responsible for ensuring continual feedback from, and accountability to, GISF members.

5.5 GISF members are encouraged to share any critique, complaint or suggestion for improvements to the SG members or directly to the Executive Director.

## **6. Membership Fees:**

6.1. The Annual membership fee for Full and Associate Members is calculated based on organisational annual income. Special rates for “family members” of the same organisation is available.

6.2. Annual fees for GISF Affiliates is dependent on the individual/organisation’s legal status, and their annual turnover.

6.3. GISF reviews its membership and affiliate fees on an annual basis and to reflect the planned operating costs, the level of donor support for the period and number of members. The SG is required to approve any changes to the fees. Members and affiliates are informed of any changes in fees on an annual basis and a detailed list of fees for the different membership and affiliate categories is available on the GISF website.

6.4. Invoices will be sent to members and fees should be paid within 8 weeks of receipt. Members who are unable to pay the fee or who wish to query the applicable level must apply in writing to the Executive Director. The decision to adjust the fee must be approved by the SG.

6.5 The SG reserves the right to withdraw membership or deny access to GISF’s services (e.g. attendance at forum meetings and workshops) to those members that who have not timely and/or fully paid the agreed membership fee.

## **7. Authority and Amendments:**

7.1. These Terms of Reference have been reviewed approved by the SG members and the HA.

7.2. Temporary or permanent additions, amendments or deletions must receive the approval from the majority of the SG members.

7.3. Requests or suggestions for amendments from GISF members must be made, in writing, to the SG via the Executive Director.