



WORLD ALLIANCE FOR BREASTFEEDING ACTION

THE WABA WORKING PRINCIPLES

22 July 2020

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of organisations and individuals concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide. WABA's action is based on the Innocenti Declaration, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the Global Strategy for Infant & Young Child Feeding. WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). WABA is registered in Malaysia as World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action Bhd. (847762-P), a non-profit company limited by guarantee.

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1. ABOUT WABA

- 1.1. The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding. WABA's actions are based on the principles of the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding (1990), the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future, Action for the 21st Century (1996), Global Strategy for Infant & Young Child Feeding (2002), and the Innocenti Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding (2005).
- 1.2. The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action Berhad is the legal body of WABA that is registered under the Companies Act 1965 in Malaysia. The WABA Board of Directors is the local management body for the Berhad, established according to the legal requirements of its registration in Malaysia and subsequent revisions of the Act¹.

2. GOAL

- 2.1. WABA's goal is to foster a strong cohesive breastfeeding movement that will act on the various international instruments to create an enabling environment for mothers, thus contributing to increasing exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding after six months together with appropriate complementary feeding.

3. MANDATE

- 3.1. WABA's mandate is to work towards this goal by:
 - a) Advocating for optimal breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding;
 - b) Building a worldwide alliance of individuals and organisations working to protect, promote and support breastfeeding;
 - c) Targeting outreach to emerging organisations and movements, and increasing the number of partners to work with internationally, regionally, and nationally;
 - d) Stimulating development of international, regional, and national level networking, information exchange, and collaboration;
 - e) Complementing existing efforts to build capacity through education and training within the network.

4. OPERATING STANDARDS

- 4.1. WABA does not accept funds, gifts, or sponsorship from manufacturers or distributors of breastmilk substitutes, related equipment such as feeding bottles and teats, and industrially processed complementary foods.
- 4.2. WABA does not allow its logos to be used on products or in a context that is contrary to its principles and aims. No manufacturers or distributors of breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles, and teats may use any of the WABA logos including the WBW logo.

¹ Memorandum and Articles of Association, The Companies Act 1965, Malaysia – World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action Berhad, Company No. 847762-P, incorporated on the 24th day of February 2009.

No individual or organisation may use “WABA” in their name or use WABA’s logo without prior authorisation of the WABA Steering Council (SC).

- 4.3. As WABA is a facilitating and enabling alliance, participation in it shall be through: (a) an unequivocal commitment to its goal and (b) collaborative actions to support its goal.
- 4.4. No organisation or individual shall speak on behalf of WABA unless specifically authorised to do so by the WABA Steering Council.
- 4.5. The Working Principles are accompanied by [Rules of Engagement](#), which explain the criteria, conditions, responsibilities, privileges, and fee structure.

5. WORKING METHODS

- 5.1. In carrying out its activities, WABA shall be guided by the following:
 - a) WABA ensures geographical and cultural diversity in its structure and activities;
 - b) WABA respects the independence and autonomy of the participating organisations and individuals, and ensures that they are given credit;
 - c) WABA seeks to complement and reinforce, not replace, existing formal and informal structures at local, national, regional, and international levels;
 - d) WABA fosters the development of local, national, regional, and international organisations and networks, and links them with other partner organisations and their activities;
 - e) WABA facilitates consultation, consensus, and common actions, including statements, on international campaigns, advocacy, fundraising, and training for these. When necessary, WABA facilitates the allocation of roles and responsibilities between Affiliates, Partners and other allies.

6. AREAS OF ACTION

- 6.1. WABA uses a human rights approach in accordance with its Strategic Plan to work in the following ten (10) key areas:
 - a) Social mobilisation: supports social mobilisation towards a breastfeeding culture – especially during the World Breastfeeding Week (WBW);
 - b) Information exchange: expands the availability of information on breastfeeding at the local, national, regional, and international levels;
 - c) Research: disseminates research findings relevant to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding, and prepares briefing papers;
 - d) Healthcare practices: promotes appropriate healthcare practices in hospitals, other health facilities, and in the community to protect, promote and support breastfeeding according to the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding (GSIYCF);
 - e) Education and training: coordinates and facilitates education and training in the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding;
 - f) Parental support: enables networking between mother and father support organisations worldwide to work together to provide care and support;
 - g) Women and work: facilitates strategies to address the special needs of women in employment, through new legislation and advocacy;

- h) Gender equality: promotes gender awareness and mainstreaming within the breastfeeding network and encourages men's involvement;
- i) Youth participation: mainstreams youth perspectives in all programmes and encourages greater involvement of youth through collaboration with youth organisations and networks;
- j) Code compliance: supports the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (1981) and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions in collaboration with Partners.

7. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

7.1. There are six (6) levels of WABA's organisational structure, which are described below in the following order:

- a) Affiliates;
- b) Partners;
- c) Local Governance Council (LGC);
- d) Steering Council (SC);
- e) International Advisory Council (IAC);
- f) WABA Secretariat.

7.2. Affiliates

- 7.2.1. WABA Affiliates will be individuals or organisations who wish to join WABA, and who sign the WABA Endorsement Form including a Conflict of Interest (CoI) Declaration and a Confidentiality Statement as determined by the WABA Steering Council (SC).²
- 7.2.2. The WABA Secretariat will follow standard operating guidelines and criteria when approving Affiliate applications as determined by the WABA Steering Council (SC).
- 7.2.3. Affiliates will be required to pay the annual dues as determined by the WABA Steering Council (SC) to participate in WABA.³
- 7.2.4. Affiliates can make nominations from their region for election to the WABA Steering Council (SC). Nominated individuals must themselves have been Affiliates for at least six (6) months.
- 7.2.5. Only Individual Affiliates can stand as candidates for election to the WABA Steering Council (SC). Organisational Affiliates cannot as such stand, but can participate in nomination.

² Those who are interested in WABA's work and wish to remain in contact but cannot join as affiliates are referred to as supporters. Supporters do not have privileges or rights but receive information and communication. They may later apply to become an affiliate.

³ Honorary Affiliates (see Article 7.6.3) are not required to pay dues.

7.3. Partners

- 7.3.1. Partners are organisations that are committed to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding as all or part of their work, and who want to collaborate with WABA. They are required to agree with WABA's goal and mandate. They must become Affiliates, and enter into a Partnership Agreement with WABA to undertake a programme of work for a specified period of time. The agreement is drawn up by the Secretariat and a prospective Partner and then approved by the WABA Steering Council (SC).
- 7.3.2. Partners may be Global Partners, Regional Partners, or Country (or National) Partners.
- 7.3.3. Global Partners are organisations that work internationally, and for which breastfeeding protection, promotion and support may be all, or only part of their work, but has a significant influence.
- 7.3.4. Regional Partners are organisations that work regionally and that want to collaborate with WABA on a program of work in that region.
- 7.3.5. Country partners may work in all or only part of a country. There may be more than one (1) organisation in a country that acts as a distribution centre or as a facilitator of WABA activities. No single organisation or individual is necessarily the exclusive representative of WABA in any country.
- 7.3.6. WABA will aim to facilitate a physical meeting of Partners at least once every two (2) years to exchange information and coordinate activities globally. Such a meeting will be hosted by WABA or can be held in conjunction with other meetings organised by Partners. Virtual meetings may be organised when funding and time are not available for physical meetings.
- 7.3.7. WABA may engage appropriately with other relevant organisations, agencies, and individuals who cannot become Affiliates to amplify the reach and impact of the work.

7.4. Local Governance Council (LGC)

- 7.4.1. The WABA Local Governance Council (LGC) is a local body in Malaysia to serve the legal requirements of the registration and operation of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action Berhad in Malaysia.
- 7.4.2. Members of the WABA Local Governance Council (LGC) are WABA Affiliates who are eminent people residing in Malaysia involved in issues relevant to Infant and Young Child Feeding and willing to give some of their time voluntarily to WABA, without conflict of interest.
- 7.4.3. Members of the WABA Local Governance Council (LGC) are appointed by the WABA Steering Council (SC) in consultation with the Executive Director (ED). They are appointed for a term of three (3) years, after which they retire or are renewed by mutual agreement for one more term. They can be reappointed again to serve another term after a break of 3 years.

- 7.4.4. The WABA Steering Council (SC) appoints the Chair and Co-Chair of the WABA Local Governance Council (LGC).

7.5. Steering Council (SC)

- 7.5.1. The WABA Steering Council (SC) has the following principal functions:

- a) To provide policy guidance to WABA and to be its main decision-making body;
- b) As members of the Board of Directors of WABA Berhad, to be responsible, among others, for managing WABA's funds and properties;
- c) To appoint an Executive Director and to determine the terms and conditions of appointment;
- d) To oversee and support the WABA Secretariat and to advise and assist as needed in the preparation of its Strategic Plan, Position Papers, Partnership Agreements, and the formation of Working Groups when needed;
- e) To facilitate the growth and development of WABA's work internationally, and to identify more organisations and individuals to become involved;
- f) To monitor and report on developments related to breastfeeding internationally, to identify areas of need for WABA's work, and to represent the concerns of WABA to appropriate authorities in their region.

- 7.5.2. The WABA Steering Council (SC) will consist of a total of 11 members, all of whom are Individual Affiliates, or are from Organisational Affiliates serving in an individual capacity. They are:

- a) Seven (7) Regional Members representing the seven (7) WABA regions; Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, the Middle-East and North Africa, Southeast Asia, and East Asia and the Pacific:
 - All Regional Members must be Individual Affiliates;
 - They can be nominated by Organisational Affiliates but must serve in an individual capacity and not represent another organisation either inside or outside the network;
 - They are entitled to vote at WABA Steering Council (SC) meetings.
- b) Four (4) additional members:
 - The Chair of the WABA Local Governance Council (LGC);
 - Two (2) members of the WABA International Advisory Council (IAC); the Chair and one (1) member with special expertise selected by the WABA Steering Council (SC);
 - One (1) youth member as defined by the UN (under 40 years of age), selected by the WABA Steering Council (SC) from the WABA youth group;
 - All must be WABA Affiliates, and all are entitled to vote at WABA Steering Council (SC) meetings.

- 7.5.3. Members of the WABA Steering Council (SC) will all be members of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action Berhad Board of Directors and will, accordingly, vote in elections.

- 7.5.4. The Executive Director (ED) of WABA shall also be an ex officio member of the WABA Steering Council (SC) but will have no voting power.

- 7.5.5. The Regional Members of the WABA Steering Council (SC) must be a resident in the Region they represent. They are nominated by the WABA Affiliates from their own region. The WABA Secretariat reviews nominations according to agreed criteria.
- 7.5.6. One candidate nominated from each region will be elected by a simple majority vote of the WABA Board of Directors and the WABA Local Governance Council (LGC).
- 7.5.7. The WABA Steering Council (SC) will elect a Chairperson and up to two (2) Co-Chairs from among its members to serve for three (3) years until the next election.
- 7.5.8. Members of the WABA Steering Council (SC) will serve for three (3) years, with the possibility of one consecutive renewal decided by mutual agreement. They may stand for re-election after a break of 3 years. The Chair and Co-Chair will remain in an advisory non-voting capacity for six months to ensure continuity.
- 7.5.9. In the event of a vacancy occurring during a term, the WABA Steering Council (SC) will appoint a replacement for the remaining period of the term of office.
- 7.5.10. The WABA Steering Council (SC) Chairperson and the WABA Local Governance Council (LGC) Chair shall constitute as ex officio Executive Council (EC) to assist the Secretariat in day-to-day management decisions on the Steering Council's behalf when it is not possible to assemble a full Steering Council (SC).
- 7.5.11. Twelve (12) months before the end of a term, invitations for nominations for the upcoming vacant WABA Steering Council (SC) regional positions will be announced.
- 7.5.12. The WABA Steering Council (SC) will aim to meet physically at least once a year and may invite to their meetings other individuals and organisations with special interests and expertise as and when required. Virtual meetings will be held on a quarterly basis.

7.6. International Advisory Council (IAC)

- 7.6.1. There is a WABA International Advisory Council (IAC) of up to 50 outstanding individuals involved with issues relevant to breastfeeding in different regions of the world. They will be appointed by the WABA Steering Council (SC), ensuring geographical, gender, and cultural diversity, for a term of three years, which may be renewed by mutual agreement.
- 7.6.2. The role of the WABA International Advisory Council (IAC) is, through association with WABA, to bring prestige to WABA and, by their knowledge and wisdom, to contribute to WABA's development on request or on their own initiative.
- 7.6.3. Members of the WABA International Advisory Council (IAC) must be WABA Affiliates, and accordingly are entitled to nominate candidates for the WABA Steering Council (SC). The International Advisory Council (IAC) members are Honorary Affiliates.

7.7. WABA Secretariat

- 7.7.1. The WABA Secretariat is led and managed by the Executive Director (ED) who is appointed by the WABA Steering Council (SC). The Executive Director (ED) is

responsible to the WABA Steering Council (SC) and on its behalf to the Chairperson of WABA and the Executive Committee (EC) for urgent organisational and management matters. The Executive Director's work is subject to annual assessment and review by the Executive Committee (EC).

7.7.2. The Executive Director (ED) seeks advice and assistance from the WABA Steering Council (SC) and refers to them for decisions as needed and regularly reports to the Steering Council (SC), but retains responsibility for coordination and implementation, including:

- Developing and executing the Strategic Plan and policy in collaboration with the WABA Steering Council (SC);
- Coordinating World Breastfeeding Week and other campaigns/programs;
- Project and financial management;
- Recruiting, appointing, and managing staff and consultants;
- Organising Partner Agreements and programmes of work with Partners;
- Planning and organising events and meetings;
- Fundraising.

7.7.3. The role of the WABA Secretariat is to coordinate information exchange across the Alliance and to implement WABA activities according to the Strategic Plan. It shall operate in accordance with the Management Operations Manual (MOM) approved by the Steering Council (SC).

7.7.4. The Secretariat, in consultation with and approval of the WABA Steering Council (SC), will constitute "Working Groups" drawn from the Affiliates as and when needed to fulfil specific tasks or functions with clear Terms of Reference outlining roles and responsibilities, including a timeline.

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE WORKING PRINCIPLES

8.1. The Working Principles will be reviewed as necessary, at least every five (5) years.

8.2. They can be amended by the WABA Steering Council (SC) and with the approval of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action Berhad Board of Directors in accordance with its Memorandum & Articles of Associations (M&A).