



GDLN Charter V 3.0

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PART A: INTRODUCTION

1. Definitions

In this document,

- a. “Charter” is this document;
- b. “GDLN” is the Global Development Learning Network;
- c. “GDLN Affiliates” are distance learning organizations that have been approved by a GDLN Regional Association, on the basis of a globally agreed set of criteria, as well as any additional criteria that may be determined by the applicable GDLN Regional Association;
- d. “GDLN Global Board” is the governance body established by adoption of this Charter;
- e. “GDLN Regional Associations ¹” are the GDLN’s regional governance bodies, with a central role in the accession of new members to the GDLN, facilitation of GDLN Affiliates engagement tracking and GDLN Affiliates performance management, as well as stimulating and facilitating the interactions of the GDLN Affiliates in the regions;
- f. “GDLN Global Secretariat” provides communication, coordination and implementation support for the GDLN’s global governance tasks;
- g. “Head of the GDLN Global Secretariat” is the individual leading the GDLN Secretariat; and
- h. “GDLN Global” is the global framework for GDLN defined by this Charter, including the GDLN Global Board, its advisory working groups, and the GDLN Global Secretariat.

2. Basic Understanding

- a. Established in 2000 by the World Bank, in thirteen years GDLN has evolved towards being a largely autonomous and mature network of learning institutions and partners in over 80 countries spanning all regions of the world.
- b. GDLN provides a platform for knowledge exchange and learning solutions for people and organizations working on international development.

¹ As of September 2013: Association of African Distance Learning Centers (AADLC), GDLN Asia-Pacific, GDLN Americas Foundation and the GDLN ECA Governance Committee.

- c. GDLN Global is a global governance and implementation mechanism created for addressing global and cross-regional issues within GDLN in an effective and legitimate way.
- d. The bodies of GDLN Global are:
 - i. The GDLN Global Board;
 - ii. The GDLN Global Secretariat; and
 - iii. Any advisory working groups established by the GDLN Global Board.

PART B: GDLN GLOBAL

3. Goals and Objectives of GDLN Global

- a. The overall goal of GDLN Global is to increase quality, usage and reach of GDLN and, in this way, to contribute to international development.
- b. This overall goal is reached in terms of four specific objectives:
 - i. **Objective 1:** GDLN Global contributes to the development of GDLN business at the global, regional and local levels.
 - ii. **Objective 2:** GDLN Global contributes to building a quality development learning network by developing GDLN membership standards and enabling a transparent environment for complying with these standards.
 - iii. **Objective 3:** GDLN Global contributes to quality of GDLN products and service delivery by promoting and supporting excellence.
 - iv. **Objective 4:** GDLN Global develops, promotes and protects the GDLN brand, in part by striving to make GDLN network communications consistent and coherent in content and design.
- c. The GDLN Global Board and the GDLN Global Secretariat will, cooperatively, seek to clarify respective responsibilities regarding the GDLN brand and GDLN affiliations.

4. GDLN Global Board Membership

- a. The GDLN Global Board has 12 members as follows:
 - i. Five members representing the GDLN Affiliates in each of the following regions: Africa, East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, South Asia. These regional members are chosen by the GDLN Affiliates in their respective region (or by GDLN Regional Associations representing these GDLN Affiliates) in accordance with this Charter and are expected to have well-defined mandates for speaking on behalf of all GDLN Affiliates in their region.

- ii. Two representatives of the World Bank, one representative may hold an “independent seat” (one of the four external experts noted in Section iii) on the Board.
 - iii. Four external experts proposed by any member of the GDLN Global Board and agreed upon by the GDLN Global Board at a meeting or on a no-objection basis. These external experts are selected and serve on the basis of their individual experience and expertise. This may reflect in some measure their institutional affiliation and networks, but their appointment is as individuals, not as representatives of organizations. If they are no longer able to serve, it will be the initiative of the Board, not their organizations, to select a replacement.
- b. The Chairperson of the GDLN Global Board is selected by the GDLN Global Board from among its external expert members.
 - c. The host organization of the GDLN Global Secretariat will be given one seat on the GDLN Global Board to ensure that the Global Secretariat is given full support by its host organization to uphold the work of the Global Board. The head of the host organization will nominate a candidate that is subject to approval by the Board.
 - d. The Head of the GDLN Global Secretariat has ex-officio observer status in the GDLN Global Board. In this capacity, he or she can attend and speak at GDLN Global Board meetings, but does not participate in GDLN Global Board decision-making.
 - e. The GDLN Global Board Chairperson can add further observers for specific meetings or on an on-going basis.
 - f. To ensure active involvement and participation board members are asked to step down if they miss two subsequent board meetings.

5. Responsibilities of the GDLN Global Board

- a. The GDLN Global Board has the following responsibilities:
 - i. Developing an effective global strategy to reach the overall goal and the objectives of GDLN Global;
 - ii. Establishing and providing guidance to advisory working groups for specific topics;
 - iii. Mobilizing and coordinating GDLN stakeholders, foremost GDLN Affiliates and GDLN Regional Associations, for implementing the global strategy;
 - iv. Detecting issues requiring cross-regional or global coordination and identifying or providing solutions to effectively and efficiently address them;
 - v. Supporting fundraising on the global, regional and national levels;

- vi. Ensuring the objectives and actions of the GDLN affiliation strategy are carried out, including:
- Overseeing the overall implementation of the GDLN affiliation strategy and
 - Reviewing and updating the GDLN affiliation strategy on a regular basis including with respect to the different recognized elements of the strategy (e.g., accession criteria, GDLN Affiliate engagement tracking, and GDLN Affiliate performance management).

6. Responsibilities of the GDLN Regional Associations

The GDLN affiliation strategy adopted by the GDLN Global Board in September 2012 represents an important shift towards a network and membership arrangement governed by the GDLN Global Board, with important implementation and management responsibilities for the GDLN Regional Associations, including a central regional role in the accession of new members to the GDLN.

The GDLN Regional Associations have the following responsibilities:

i. Coordination

- Providing regional and cross-regional coordination and foster cooperation among members
- Promoting and facilitating development of regional program offerings
- Monitoring and maintaining records of regional program deliveries
- Acting as the main point of contact with GDLN Global Secretariat
- Liaising with and participating in advisory working groups of the GDLN Board
- Organizing regional face-to-face meetings and virtual update meetings with GDLN Affiliates, including assisting the host and participants with logistics, managing the meeting agenda, coordinating participant lists and presentations
- Coordinating the scheduling, agenda, background documents and minutes of Regional Board (or Regional Governing Committee) meetings

ii. Communication

- Developing regional promotional materials
- Posting communications on GDLN Global Online (Ning)

iii. Governance

- Providing regional governance and oversight, especially on the development of a regional strategy
- Provide tools, procedures and support for GDLN Affiliates in their region, to ensure they use standardized procedures when preparing and delivering GDLN events

iv. Business Development

- Developing regional business, engage and build partnerships with key players

- Providing organizational support for contacting partners, donors, stakeholders and clients
 - v. Membership for New GDLN Affiliates*
 - Providing final approval of membership of new GDLN Affiliates, with decisions forwarded to the responsible regional representative of the GDLN Global Board
 - Sending official confirmation letters to applicants, together with official welcome letters signed by the Chairperson of the GDLN Global Board
 - Providing reports on membership status and on progress of the accession process in their respective regions for the GDLN Global Board’s Annual Meeting, including an overview of the Affiliates that joined during the past 12 months
 - GDLN Global can invite organizations to become affiliates of the network irrespective of regional associations.
- vi. Performance management*
- Tracking membership engagement and performance of the GDLN Affiliates in their region
- Reporting annually to the Global Board on performance of Affiliates in their region, including with a score-card on achievement of the minimum level of engagement expected of all GDLN Affiliates under the GDLN affiliation strategy
- Facilitating and stimulating open discussions on performance in the regions and between regions.

7. Responsibilities of the GDLN Global Secretariat

The GDLN Global Secretariat plays an administrative and external coordinating function for the global network, where it supports global governance issues, business development, branding and communications, internal communications, technology and quality. The responsibilities of the GDLN Global Secretariat include:

- i. Assisting the GDLN Global Board, including as specified in Sections 9.c. and 10.a. below;
- ii. Supporting implementation of the GDLN affiliation strategy, including participation in GDLN regional meetings;
- iii. Coordinating mapping of key South-South players and their initiatives in each country, and promoting country profiles;
- iv. Developing communication materials;
- v. Management of the external GDLN website (www.gdln.org) and GDLN Global Online (<http://gdln-global.ning.com/>);
- vi. Ensuring the introduction of activity tracking and performance management tools through various platforms, as planned in the GDLN affiliation strategy.

PART C: OPERATION OF GDLN GLOBAL

8. Proceedings of GDLN Global Board Meetings

- a. The GDLN Global Board may meet, adjourn and regulate its meetings as it sees fit and utilize remote meeting techniques for its meetings. The GDLN Global Board is expected to meet face-to-face at least once per year.
- b. GDLN Global Board members are expected to commit the necessary time to help fulfill the GDLN Global Board responsibilities.
- c. The GDLN Global Secretariat has the following responsibilities:
 - i. Giving all GDLN Global Board members at least four weeks' notice of GDLN Global Board meetings, in close consultation with the GDLN Global Board Chairperson;
 - ii. Preparing an agenda for each GDLN Global Board meeting, in close consultation with the GDLN Global Board Chairperson.
 - iii. Circulating minutes of all GDLN Global Board meetings to all GDLN Global Board members for approval; and
 - iv. Sending regular status reports to all GDLN Global Board members.

9. GDLN Global Board Decision-Making

- a. GDLN Global Board decisions are taken by consensus in meetings or by no objection through electronic processes managed by the GDLN Global Secretariat.
- b. For purposes of this Charter, consensus is a procedure for adopting a decision when no decision-making member blocks a proposed decision. It need not reflect unanimity. A dissenting decision maker that does not wish to block a decision may state an objection to be recorded in the meeting minutes. The GDLN Global Board Chairperson articulates the consensus view.
- c. GDLN Global Board members that cannot participate in a meeting can delegate their authority to another GDLN Global Board member or to a person attending the meeting as a replacement. The GDLN Global Board Chairperson should be informed of such delegation in writing prior to the meeting by the respective GDLN Global Board member.

10. GDLN Global Board Membership Rotation

- a. The appointment of the GDLN Global Board Chairperson will be for a 2 year period with one option for renewal by GDLN Global Board decision.

- b. The GDLN Global Board has agreed to set a period of 24 months as the term of its members, with the possibility of renewal, as follows:
 - i. Each regional representative to be reconfirmed or replaced by their respective Regional Association.
 - ii. Each World Bank member to be appointed by the World Bank.
 - iii. Each external expert to be reconfirmed or replaced by the GDLN Global Board, provided that if an external expert is not able to join two consecutive GDLN Global Board meetings, the GDLN Global Board may decide to replace such expert.
- c. GDLN Global Board member rotation should be staggered in order to ensure continuous institutional memory.

11. Amendments to this Charter

- a. This Charter may be amended by consensus of the GDLN Global Board. Such consensus may also be obtained electronically by affirmative written consent of each GDLN Global Board member, a decision by no objection not being sufficient.
- b. The GDLN Global Board will review the contents of this Charter regularly and amend or terminate it as considered appropriate.