Call for Experts

Infection Prevention and Control of Epidemic- and Pandemic-prone Acute Respiratory Infections Guideline Development Group

Issued on: 20 March 2024

Deadline: 10 April 2024 24:00h CET

The World Health Organization (WHO) is seeking experts to serve as members of the Infection Prevention and Control of Epidemic- and Pandemic-prone Acute Respiratory Infections Guideline Development Group. This “Call for Experts” provides information about the guideline development group in question, the expert profiles being sought, the process to express interest, and the process of selection.

Background

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) are central to public health emergencies, including outbreak response and containment. IPC also constitutes the foundations of safe essential health services and resilient communities and health systems, ensuring quality care, and protecting against healthcare associated infections and anti-microbial resistance. The success of ensuring IPC measures are implemented for outbreak response, in health facilities and communities, is dependent upon maintaining IPC operational readiness to rapidly respond to cases and putting in place at least the IPC minimum requirements at the national and health care facility levels as soon as possible.

Over the past decade, the landscape of respiratory viruses has evolved significantly, exemplified by the profound impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the WHO Health Emergencies Programme (WHE) IPC and WASH team is undertaking an update of the 2014 guideline titled, Infection prevention and control of epidemic-and pandemic prone acute respiratory infections in health care. Updating of this guideline will adhere to the highest international standards for guideline development, including the use of Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) and the evidence to Decision making process.

This guideline will be developed by a panel of experts, termed the Guideline Development Group (GDG), which is composed of specialists alongside a patient representative and/or other civil service representatives, with support from the WHO secretariat.
Functions of the *Infection Prevention and Control of Epidemic- and Pandemic-prone Acute Respiratory Infections Guideline Development Group (IPC-ARI-GDG)*

The role\(^1\) of the IPC-ARI-GDG is to:

- Provide input into the scope of the IPC-ARI-GL;
- Assist the steering group in developing the key questions in PICO\(^2\) format;
- Choose and rank priority outcomes that will guide the evidence reviews and focus the recommendations;
- Examine the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) evidence profiles or other assessments of the quality of the evidence used to inform the recommendations and provide input;
- Interpret the evidence, with explicit consideration of the overall balance of benefits and harms;
- Formulate recommendations and good practice statements by considering benefits, harms, values and preferences, feasibility, equity, acceptability, resource requirements and other factors, as appropriate; and
- Review and approve the final guideline document before submission to the guideline review committee.

Operations of the *Infection Prevention and Control of Epidemic- and Pandemic-prone Acute Respiratory Infections Guideline Development Group*

Each participating member is expected to attend meetings (up to 3-hours), read and synthesize presented material (representing 2 to 3 hours of work before GDG meeting), and actively contribute within their areas of expertise. The working language of the group will be English.

Member contributions should be provided actively and promptly through email and planned teleconferences. If the member is unable to attend, the secretariat should be made aware in advance. The anticipated time commitment will vary depending on the stage of guideline development but is estimated to be around 5-6 hours per month, on average.

Appointments will be for a term of at least 1 year to ensure continuity and allow for maximum participation, with possibility of extension if required.

**Who can express interest?**

The *Infection Prevention and Control of Epidemic- and Pandemic-prone Acute Respiratory Infections Guideline Development Group* will be multidisciplinary, with members who have a range of technical knowledge, skills and experience. The GDGs composition should be balanced with respect to region and gender of members.

Approximately 10-20 may be selected.

WHO welcomes expressions of interest from relevant technical experts, such as:

\(^1\) Extracted from the [WHO handbook for guideline development, 2nd edition](https://www.who.int/health_info/guideline_dev/en/)

\(^2\) PICO: Population, Intervention, Comparator, Outcome/Exposure
• IPC practitioners;
• Infectious disease specialists;
• Microbiologists/virologist;
• Water, sanitation, and hygiene, engineers;
• Aerobiologists;
• Guideline end-users, such as programme managers and health and care workers, or occupational health professionals;
• Representatives of groups most affected by the recommendations in the guideline, such as service users and civil society representatives;
• Experts in assessing evidence and developing guidelines informed by evidence; and
• Health economists or experts on equity, human rights and gender.

** Submitting your expression of interest**

To register your interest in being considered for the *Infection Prevention and Control of Epidemic- and Pandemic-prone Acute Respiratory Infections Guideline Development Group*, please submit the following documents by April 10th 24:00h CET to WHEIPC@who.int using the subject line “Expression of interest for the *Infection Prevention and Control of Epidemic- and Pandemic-prone Acute Respiratory Infections Guideline Development Group*”

- A cover letter, indicating your motivation to apply and how you satisfy the selection criteria. Please note that, if selected, membership will be in a personal capacity. Therefore, do not use the letterhead or other identification of your employer;
- Your curriculum vitae (including your nationality/ies) and
- A signed and completed Declaration of Interests (DOI) form for WHO Experts, available at [https://www.who.int/about/ethics/declarations-of-interest](https://www.who.int/about/ethics/declarations-of-interest).

After submission, your expression of interest will be reviewed by WHO. Due to an expected high volume of interest, only selected individuals will be informed.

**Important information about the selection processes and conditions of appointment**

Members of WHO GDG must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. To this end, applicants are required to complete the WHO Declaration of Interests for WHO Experts, and the selection as a member of a GDG is, amongst other things, dependent on WHO determining that there is no conflict of interest or that any identified conflicts could be appropriately managed (in addition to WHO’s evaluation of an applicant’s experience, expertise and motivation and other criteria).

All GDG members will serve in their individual expert capacity and shall not represent any governments, any commercial industries or entities, any research, academic or civil society organizations, or any other bodies, entities, institutions or organizations. They are expected to fully comply with the Code of Conduct for WHO Experts ([https://www.who.int/about/ethics/declarations-of-interest](https://www.who.int/about/ethics/declarations-of-interest)). GDG members will be
expected to sign and return a completed confidentiality undertaking prior to the beginning of the first meeting.

At any point during the selection process, telephone or online interviews may be scheduled between an applicant and the WHO Secretariat to enable WHO to ask questions relating to the applicant’s experience and expertise and/or to assess whether the applicant meets the criteria for membership in the relevant GDG.

The selection of members of the GDG will be made by WHO, considering the following (non-exclusive) criteria: relevant technical expertise; experience in international and country policy work; communication skills; and ability to work constructively with people from different cultural backgrounds and orientations. The selection of GDG members will also take account of the need for diverse perspectives from different regions, especially from low and middle-income countries, and for gender balance. Names of participants and their respective organizations will be made publicly available for a period of 2 weeks, according to the WHO Compliance, Risk and Ethics policy and Conflict of Interest Policy. WHO retains the final say in determining the level of incorporation of the results of discussion in public guidance and recommendations.

If selected by WHO, proposed members will be sent an invitation letter and a Terms of Reference. Appointment as a member of the GDG member will be subject to the proposed member returning to WHO the countersigned copy of these two documents.

WHO reserves the right to accept or reject any expression of interest, to annul the open call process and reject all expressions of interest at any time without incurring any liability to the affected applicant or applicants and without any obligation to inform the affected applicant or applicants of the grounds for WHO's action. WHO may also decide, at any time, not to proceed with the establishment of the GDG, disband an existing GDG or modify the work of the GDG.

WHO shall not in any way be obliged to reveal, or discuss with any applicant, how an expression of interest was assessed, or to provide any other information relating to the evaluation/selection process or to state the reasons for not choosing a member.

WHO may publish the names and a short biography of the selected individuals on the WHO internet.

GDG members will not be remunerated for their services in relation to the AG or otherwise. Travel and accommodation expenses of GDG members to participate in GDG meetings will be covered by WHO in accordance with its applicable policies, rules and procedures.

The appointment will be limited in time as indicated in the letter of appointment.

If you have any questions about this “Call for experts”, please write to WHEIPC@who.int well before the applicable deadline.