

Terms of reference

Contact tracing implementation guidance

Technical Working Group

Background

The overarching project goal is that contact tracing strategies are determined, adapted and set up in a timely manner during outbreaks limiting the spread of outbreaks.

The objectives are:

1. To develop and disseminate an evidence-based disease-agnostic contact tracing guideline
2. To facilitate the application of contact tracing strategies through the development of implementation guidance

In 2023, the Surveillance Systems department started developing a disease-agnostic contact tracing guideline; a guideline steering group was brought together, a guideline development group was recruited, and a systematic literature review was conducted. In September 2024, the guideline was approved by the WHO Guideline Review Committee (GRC). The guideline is expected to be published in English at the end of the year 2024. Translations into five additional official WHO languages will be published in the first quarter of 2025. While this guideline proposes three recommendations that aim at making contact tracing strategies the most effective, one important aspect of it is that it is the first WHO normative document that establishes the key definitions and concepts of contact tracing.

In order to encourage the application of these concepts and definitions, as well as the uptake of the recommendations, a practical implementation guidance will be developed.

The implementation guidance will be divided into four sections: methods for contact person identification, methods for contact person monitoring; methods for measuring the performance of the contact tracing strategies; and minimum set of variables needed for contact tracing. Each section will be published independently and as a whole, in English.

To support the development of this guidance, a review will be done. It will include leveraging existing reviews done in the past (including the systematic literature review that was conducted in 2023), and the consultation of various stakeholders involved in contact tracing, to identify methods used to identify and monitor contacts, and evaluate the contact tracing performance, in alignment with the recommendations of the guideline.

A technical working group will be convened to guide the review methodology and input technically into the guidance' sections. In between monthly meetings, the TWG will be requested to review draft sections.

TWG composition

The TWG will be composed of approximately 20 members.

Members will be external (National public health agencies, Ministries of Health) and internal (WHO, including country office representatives) **experts with experience in contact tracing from decision-making to implementation levels.**

Their expertise will cover the following domains:

- Field epidemiology
- Community engagement and risk communication
- Emergency coordination
- Health economy
- Public health policy
- Public health workforce
- Operational research

TWG members' function

The members' functions include:

- Attending TWG meetings (at least 70%).
- Providing input into the TWG's technical discussions.
- Supporting the project team in the comprehensive review by reviewing the methodology.
- Supporting the project team in developing the implementation guidance, by reviewing and contributing to sections of the guidance.

TWG members' outreach and selection process

Membership will be targeted towards ministries of health and National public health agencies, national public health agencies, and other relevant local public health structures, as well as towards WHO country office staff.

Potential and interested members will be asked to send an expression of interest, which will be reviewed by the project team to select the final 20 members.

Attention will be given to geographic and gender representation.

TWG application

To be considered for the TWG on contact tracing implementation guidance, candidates will be requested to submit the following no later than **Sunday 15 December 2024 23:59 Geneva time (CET)** to contacttracing@who.int using the subject line "*EOI for TWG on Contact Tracing implementation guidance.*"

- A cover letter, indicating their motivation to apply (maximum 1 page). Please note that, if selected, membership will be in a personal capacity. Therefore, letterheads or other identifications of employer should not appear;
- An up-to-date curriculum vitae (maximum 3 pages);
- A signed and completed Declaration of Interests (DOI) form for WHO Experts, available at <https://www.who.int/about/ethics/declarations-of-interest>; and
- A signed and completed [Confidentiality Undertaking form](#)

TWG duration and meeting frequency

The TWG will remain in place for the duration of the development of the guidance, namely all of 2025.

Meetings will be held virtually on a monthly basis (1-2 hours). Additional *ad hoc* meetings may be planned. TWG members will be expected to review documents which may take no longer than 2 hours monthly.

TWG members' expectations

No member of the TWG shall receive, directly or indirectly, any salary, compensation, or emolument for this work.

Active contribution implies attendance (>70%) and participation in meetings, as well as contributions. The project team may request a member to withdraw if such requirements are not met. Only active contribution will be acknowledged.

Members are expected to have a high level of personal and professional integrity, work inclusively, and bring a broad perspective to issues rather than solely that of a particular partner.

If any conflicts of interest arise for members during their involvement with the TWGs, these should be declared to the project team (contacttracing@who.int).

Withdrawing from the TWG

If a TWG member is no longer able to contribute to a TWG and wishes to withdraw, they are requested to notify the project team by email (contacttracing@who.int).

Information and documentation

All documents used, managed, and produced by the project team shall be stored in a dedicated area on a shared folder and shared with all TWG members. TWG members are encouraged to openly share information that may be useful for TWG's work. TWG members should advise colleagues in the TWG if any information should be treated as confidential. Confidential documents will have their access restricted to TWG members only.