Terms of Reference

WHO Technical Advisory Group on Behavioural Insights and Sciences for Health

Behavioural insights and sciences can be applied to a variety of issues, fields and types of interventions to increase their impact, and are being increasingly adopted in government agencies and international organizations to ensure effective and impactful policies and programmes. WHO is undertaking a transformation process aimed at promoting health, keeping the world safe and serving the vulnerable. As part of this process, WHO recognizes the need to explore and understand the many factors affecting human behaviours and practices for the success of health policies and programmes aimed at helping people and communities live healthier lives.

The Technical Advisory Group ("the TAG") will act as an advisory body to inform the WHO’s behavioural insights initiative. The group will provide expert advice for: the development of a road map for WHO to define a mechanism to systematically include behavioural perspectives in its work across the three levels of the Organization; develop in-house capacity to provide technical assistance on incorporating behavioural insights and science in national health policies and programme planning; and a strategic road map for the pilot period of the behavioural insights initiative in the Department of Communications for a period of 2 years.

I. Functions

The TAG shall have the following functions:

1. Advise WHO on how to adopt behavioural insights and science perspectives to support WHO’s 13th General Programme of Work and how to identify priority areas for implementation within WHO and in Member States;

2. Make recommendations to WHO for the development of an operational framework for the mainstreaming of behavioural insights and sciences into WHO operations, particularly in the area of providing technical advice on national health policies and programme planning;

3. Advise WHO on potential challenges and risks for the Organization related to the recommendations made by TAG.

II. Composition

1. The TAG shall have up to 20 members, who shall serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of disciplines relevant to behavioural insights. In the selection of the members, consideration will be given to attaining an adequate technical distribution of expertise, as well as balanced geographical and gender representation.

2. Members of the TAG, including the Chairman, shall be selected and appointed by WHO following an open call for experts. The Chairman’s functions include the following:
   - to chair the meeting of the TAG; and
   - to liaise with the WHO Secretariat between meetings.

3. Members of the TAG, including the Chairman, shall be appointed to serve for a period of two years. Their appointment and/or designation as Chairman may be terminated at any time by WHO if WHO’s interest so requires or as otherwise specified in these TORs or letters of appointment.
4. TAG members must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO. In performing their work, TAG members may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to the Organization. They must be free of real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. To this end, proposed members/members will be required to complete a declaration of interest form and their appointment, or continuation of their appointment, will be subject to the evaluation of completed forms by the WHO Secretariat, determining that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

5. TAG members will not be remunerated for their participation in the TAG. However, in accordance with paragraph III. 10 below, WHO will cover their travel cost and per diem in accordance with the applicable WHO rules and policies.

III. Operation

1. The TAG shall normally meet at least once each year in a face to face meeting, with additional meetings being held on an as-needed basis as decided by the Director of the responsible Cluster. These additional meetings may be face to face, virtual using telephone or video-conferencing, and will be aimed at completion of business identified at the face to face meeting.

2. TAG meetings may be held in open and/or closed session, as decided by the Chairperson in consultation with WHO.

   a. Open sessions: Open sessions shall be convened for the sole purpose of the exchange of non-confidential information and views, and may be attended by Observers (as defined in paragraph III.4 below).

   b. Closed sessions: The sessions dealing with the formulation of recommendations and/or advice to WHO shall be restricted to the members of the TAG and essential WHO Secretariat staff.

3. The quorum for TAG meetings shall be two thirds of the members.

4. Representatives from intergovernmental organizations, as well as non-State actors in official relations with WHO, and members of other technical advisory groups of the WHO may be invited by WHO to attend open sessions of TAG meetings, or parts thereof. For the purposes of these terms of reference, such invitees will be referred to as “Observers”. WHO, at its discretion, may request Observers to complete a declaration of interests form prior to attending any TAG meeting. Observers shall attend meeting of the TAG at their own expense and be responsible for making all arrangements in that regard.

   At the invitation of the Chairperson, Observers may be asked to present the views and policies of their organization during the open sessions. Observers will not participate in the process of discussing, adopting decisions and recommendations of the TAG.

5. The TAG may decide to establish smaller working groups (sub-groups of the TAG) to work on specific issues. Their deliberations will take place via teleconference or video-conference. For these sub-groups, no quorum requirement will apply, as the outcome of their deliberations will be submitted to the full TAG for review at one of its meetings.

6. Members are expected to attend meetings. If a member misses two consecutive meetings, WHO may end his/her appointment as a member of the TAG. WHO may decide to appoint a member in replacement of that member.

7. Reports of each meeting will be submitted by the TAG to WHO (the Assistant Director-General of the responsible Cluster). All recommendations from the TAG are advisory to WHO, which retains
full control over any subsequent decisions or actions regarding any proposals, policy issues or other matters considered by the TAG. WHO also retains full control over the publication of the reports of the TAG, including whether or not to publish them.

8. The TAG will normally make decisions and recommendations by consensus. If, in exceptional circumstances, a consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached, minority opinions will be reflected in the meeting report.

9. TAG members invited by WHO may, in advance of TAG meetings, be requested to review meeting documentation and to provide their views for consideration by the TAG.

10. WHO will arrange and pay for any WHO-authorized travel and per diem of the members to the TAG in accordance with the applicable WHO rules and policies.

11. TAG meetings will be conducted in the English language.

12. TAG members shall not purport to speak on behalf of, or represent, the TAG or WHO to any third party.

IV. Secretariat

WHO shall provide the secretariat for the TAG, including any necessary scientific, technical and other support. In this regard, the WHO Secretariat shall provide the members in advance of each meeting with the agenda, working documents and discussion papers. Distribution of the aforesaid documents to observers will be dependent on their nature, as determined by the WHO Secretariat.

V. Information and documentation

1. Information and documentation to which members may gain access in performing TAG related activities will be considered as confidential and proprietary to WHO and/or parties collaborating with WHO. All proposed members will be required to sign an appropriate confidentiality undertaking and provisions on ownership.

2. TAG members and observers shall refrain from quotation from, and circulation and use of, TAG documents for any purpose other than in a manner consistent with their responsibilities under these Terms of Reference.