

Terms of Reference - WHO Guideline Development Group – Food Fortification with Micronutrients

The Guideline development group (the “GDG”) will act as an advisory body to WHO through development of evidence-based recommendations and inputs to support WHO’s efforts and work in food fortification.

I. Functions

The GDG will support WHO in:

- Providing input into the scope of the guideline and in the development of key questions in PICO (Population, Intervention or Exposure, Comparison, Outcome) format;
- Choosing and ranking priority outcomes;
- Examining 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;
- Formulating recommendations, including direction and strength;
- Reviewing the preliminary version of the recommendations in the guideline document before submission for WHO executive clearance process for publication and further dissemination.

II. Composition

1. The GDG shall have up to 12 internationally renowned experts as members¹. Led by two co-chairs, the GDG members shall serve in their personal capacities^{2 3} to represent a broad range of multidisciplinary technical knowledge, skills and experience in fortification and food system interventions for improved public health.
 - Technical experts with professional experience and scientific excellence evidenced by publications in peer-reviewed journals in the areas of food fortification, nutrition, and food systems.
 - Technical experts with experience in chemistry and technology of edible oils and fats, medical experts specializing in non-communicable diseases, micronutrient status assessment at population level including for vitamin A and D in laboratory settings

¹ While members with experience in WHO guideline development processes would be desirable, we encourage participation from experts who have not participated in guideline development process but have strong expertise in context of this call.

² 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. No honoraria will be provided to any GDG members for their services or otherwise.

³ The members of the GDG are not commissioned and do not receive any financial compensation other than for direct expenses associated with their work on the guideline

- Experts in ethics, equity, human rights and gender in public health
- Experts on processes and methods for developing evidence-based guidelines
- Health economists
- Epidemiologists
- Food scientist/technologists
- End-users who will adopt, adapt, and implement the guideline, including public health professionals, health professionals, including providers at the primary, secondary and tertiary health care setting, programme managers
- Representatives of groups most affected by this guideline

The selection of members of the GDG will be based on the following criteria: technical expertise, experience in international and country policy work, 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, and for gender diversity.

2. Two co-chairs shall be selected and appointed by the WHO Steering committee agreed upon by the members of the GDG. Their functions include the following:
 - Help maintain the group's focus on the agenda;
 - Ensure that GDG members can present their viewpoints;
 - Ensure all relevant issues are discussed in a respectful and efficient manner;
 - Reflect on and summarize the opinions of GDG members;
 - Raise issues that could inform the decision process; and
 - Manage the group discussions so as to achieve consensus.
3. Each curriculum vitae will be reviewed to assess whether the applicant meets the qualifications and has relevant expertise in the subject matter areas listed above. Declaration of Interest forms will be reviewed⁴. Any potential or perceived conflicts of interest based on the declared information in the Declaration of Interests form will be considered in the selection process. As per WHO handbook for guideline development, representatives of commercial organizations cannot serve as members of a GDG⁵.
4. GDG members do not receive any remuneration from the Organization for any work related to the Guideline development. However, when attending in-person meetings at the invitation of WHO, their travel cost and per diem shall be covered by WHO in accordance with the applicable WHO rules and policies.
5. GDG members will be appointed for two years.

⁴ GDG members should have no significant academic or financial conflict of interest that would impair their neutrality, independence or objectivity in the guideline development process.

⁵ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548960>

III. Operation

1. The GDG will meet twice a year, virtually or in-person.
 - First meeting is expected to be scheduled in July 2022 with the objective of introducing the process, reviewing, and ranking PICO questions for fortification of edible oils and fats.
 - Second meeting is expected to be scheduled in December 2022 with the objective of developing recommendations based on the findings of the evidence profiles and implementation considerations.

The working language of the meetings will be English.

2. GDG members should notify the responsible technical officer of any change in relevant interests to allow the declaration of interests forms to be updated on a regular basis.
3. Prior to the first GDG meeting, a plan delineating decision making process will be formulated by the steering group and agreed upon by the two co-chairs. The plan will be presented to GDG members at the beginning of this first meeting, with the opportunity for questions and discussion.
4. The purpose of the first GDG meeting is to finalize the scope and the key questions for guideline development. GDG members will have the opportunity to review the questions before the meeting.
5. The purpose of the second meeting is to develop recommendations. A summary of the evidence along with the GRADE⁶ evidence profiles (summaries of the quality of the evidence for each outcome) will be presented by a representative of the systematic review team. A summary analysis of technical considerations for implementation will be presented by the lead author.

Prior to each meeting, an agenda will be circulated detailing the purpose, specific objectives, decisions and outputs expected from the meeting.

6. Relevant materials will be sent to GDG members ahead of each meeting to allow adequate time for review.
7. Each recommendation should be linked to a summary of the evidence (e.g. a published systematic review or the systematic review in an online annex), the GRADE evidence profiles and the evidence-to-decision tables. A recommendation should include a justification as to why it is strong or conditional and why it is for or against a given intervention.
8. The recommendation should also contain a set of remarks explaining the conditions and context in which the recommendation applies and the points to bear in mind regarding implementation.

⁶ Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE)

9. Any disagreements with respect to the strength and direction of a recommendation, will be managed as per WHO rules.
10. Factors to be considered to determine the direction and strength of a recommendation include (but not limited to):
 - Quality of the evidence
 - Values and preferences
 - Balance of benefits and harms
 - Resource implications
 - Priority of the problem
 - Equity and human rights
 - Acceptability
 - Feasibility

IV. Secretariat

The WHO Secretariat shall provide the members in advance of each meeting with agenda, working documents and discussion papers. Distribution of the aforesaid documents to the Observers will be determined by the WHO secretariat.

V. Information and Documentation

1. Information and documentation to which members may gain access in performing GDG related activities shall 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. GDG members and external review group shall not quote from, circulate or use GDG documents for any purpose other than in a manner consistent with their responsibilities under these Terms of Reference.
3. WHO retains full control over the publication of the reports of the GDG, including deciding whether or not to publish them.