



Second meeting of the WHO Foodborne disease burden epidemiology reference group 2021-2024 (FERG2)

Concept note and agenda

1. Background

Foodborne diseases are a major cause of human morbidity and mortality. According to the first-ever global estimates^{1,2} produced by the WHO Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (WHO FERG)³, foodborne diseases caused 600 million illnesses, 420 000 deaths, and 33 million Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in 2010.

WHO FERG was established in 2007 after the launch of the WHO initiative to estimate the global burden of foodborne diseases in September 2006. FERG is a technical advisory group that advises WHO primarily on the methodology to estimate the burden of foodborne diseases. Its work now also includes advising methods and indicators to monitor global progress in food safety. The resolution (WHA73.5)⁴ in 2020 mandated WHO to monitor regularly and to report to Member States on, the global burden of foodborne and zoonotic diseases at national, regional, and international levels, and in particular to prepare, by 2025, a new report on the global burden of foodborne diseases with up-to-date estimates of global foodborne disease incidence, mortality and disease burden in terms of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs).

In 2021, 26 new members of the FERG were appointed to serve for 3 years in 2021-2024 with the specific terms of reference.⁵ The first meeting was held in July 2021, to situate FERG's work in the context of related WHO's work in food safety, including the Global Burden of Disease (GBD), global food safety strategy development and its monitoring and evaluation, country support for estimating the national burden of foodborne diseases; to outline objectives of the FERG2 (2021-2024); to agree on the short and long term objectives of the FERG within and beyond 2024; and to agree and establish a process to develop a workplan within the next 6 months.

This second meeting is a virtual meeting among all appointed experts to meet and continue to discuss the scope of their work during their 3-year term from 2021 until 2024.

2. Aim of the meeting

¹ WHO estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases: foodborne diseases burden epidemiology reference group 2007-2015: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565165>

² PLOS ONE collection, special issues on WHO estimates of the global burden of foodborne disease: <https://collections.plos.org/collection/ferg2015/>

³ WHO FERG Group page: [https://www.who.int/groups/foodborne-disease-burden-epidemiology-reference-group-\(ferg\)](https://www.who.int/groups/foodborne-disease-burden-epidemiology-reference-group-(ferg))

⁴ WHO resolution: Strengthening efforts on food safety (WHA73.5) https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_R5-en.pdf

⁵ WHO FERG 2021-2024 Terms of Reference: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/food-safety/call-for-experts/tor-for-reference-ferg-31aug2020.pdf?sfvrsn=b0a3d1f_8

Advance the development of the 3-year strategic workplan for the FERG 2021-2024 towards finalization by December 2021 for the following activities: 1) global estimation of the burden of foodborne diseases, 2) development and validation of global food safety indicators and targets, and 3) country support for estimating the national burden of foodborne diseases.

Specific objectives are to:

1. Agree on the updated FERG governance model, including structure, roles, functions and COI policy
2. Share a progress update from all FERG taskforces and WHO
3. Discuss required or beneficial collaborations within and beyond WHO
4. Agree on the template and a detailed plan of action toward developing the complete workplan by December 2021, including the objectives and scope
5. Discuss the need and plan to commission work externally
6. Discuss and agree on the outline of the computational framework
7. Define objectives and scope of the respective taskforces, including a clarification if estimation of economic burden of foodborne diseases should be part of the scope

3. Expected outcomes

- Achieve consensus on the FERG structure, operation, role, functions and expectations
- FERG workplan drafted, outline agreed
 - Achieve consensus if estimation of the economic burden of foodborne diseases is part of FERG's workplan
 - Plan for commissioning external work further advanced
 - Draft computational framework discussed, and outline agreed
 - Scope and objectives of respective taskforces further defined and agreed
- Recommendations on indicators and targets concretized

4. Date/Time (CEST)

The next FERG meeting will be held over 19, 21, 26, 28 October and 2 November 2021.

Date	Time
Tuesday 19 October	11h00 – 14h00 CET (3hrs)
Thursday 21 October	11h00 – 14h00 CET (3hrs)
Tuesday 26 October	05:00 – 08:00 CET (3hrs)
Thursday 28 October	05:00 – 08:00 CET (3hrs)
Tuesday 2 November	22:00 (2 Nov) – 00:00 (3 Nov) CET (2hrs)

5. Nature of the meeting and participants

This is a closed session and participation in this meeting is restricted mainly to FERG members and relevant WHO staff. Other resource advisory experts will participate based on WHO's invitation.

6. Language and the mode of connection

The meeting will be conducted in English through the zoom connection (to be provided separately).

7. Meeting report

WHO will publish the meeting report afterwards and Dr Rebecca Irwin will participate as an official rapporteur to take notes of key discussions and decisions.

8. Proposed meeting agenda – draft (meeting time is expressed as CET)

19 October 2021, Tuesday – Day 1 (11h00 – 14h00 CET)		
11:00 – 11:15	Opening remarks from the Unit Head, Multisectoral Actions in Food Systems, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety, WHO	Dr Luz Maria De-Regil
11:15 – 11:30	Agenda and objectives of the meeting 1. Housekeeping 2. Adoption of the agenda 3. Introduction of rapporteur 4. Declaration of interests	Chair Ms Charlee Law
11:30 – 12:10	WHO presentation on the updated FERG governance structure and operation, Conflict of Interest management in relation to FERG activities	Ms Yuki Minato
12:10 – 12:30	20 min break	
12:30 – 13:40	Report back on activity since first FERG meeting by taskforce chairs, including 1. Overall progress 2. Status of progress towards 2021-2024 timeline, required by December 2021 (all TFs) 3. Key outcomes, actions or developments (all TFs) 4. Updates on list of hazards and outcome list per hazard, general strategy for updating and extension of the estimates (EDTF, PDTF, CTTF) 5. Updates on identification of immediate actions for data collection (EDTF, PDTF, CTTF)	Chair Respective taskforce chairs (10 min max. for each TF)
13:40 – 14:00	Initial reactions toward activities of the FERG TFs	
14:00	End of Day 1	
21 October 2021, Thursday – Day 2 (11h00 – 14h00 CET)		
11:00 – 11:05	Housekeeping, Recap of Day 1 and objective of the day	Chair
11:05 – 11:55	Presentations on: 1. Outline of FERG workplan (20 min) 2. Computational framework (20 min) 3. Collaboration within and beyond WHO (10 min)	Ms Yuki Minato Dr Brecht Devleesschauwer Ms Yuki Minato
11:55 – 12:40	Plenary discussions on the items presented above	
12:40 – 13:00	20 min break	

13:00 – 13:50	Breakout group discussion 1. EDTF 2. PDTF 3. CTF 4. SATF	Respective TFs (CTF members to join across 4 other TFs)
13:50 – 14:00	Plenary – quick report back from breakout group discussions	Chair
14:00	End of Day 2	
26 October 2021, Tuesday – Day 3 (05:00 – 08:00 CET)		
05:00 – 05:10	Housekeeping, Recap of Day 2 and objective of the day	Chair
05:10 – 06:10	Continued breakout group discussion, including details on commissioning work externally 1. EDTF 2. PDTF 3. CTF 4. SATF	Respective TFs (CTF members to join across 4 other TFs)
06:10 – 06:40	Report back to the plenary and further discussion (aims to further develop the workplan, identify areas that require further clarifications or discussions for finalization, and tangible plan to finalize it by December)	Chair
06:40 – 07:00	20 min break	
07:00 – 08:00	Presentations on: 1. FERG1 Country Studies work (15 min) 2. Moving forward with country support work (15 min) Plenary discussions and Q&A	Dr Rob Lake Ms Charlee Law
08:00	End of Day 3	
28 October 2021, Thursday – Day 4 (05:00 – 08:00 CET)		
05:00 – 05:10	Housekeeping, Recap of Day 3 and objective of the day	
05:10 – 05:50	1. An overview of the handbook for national burden estimation – an overview (10 min) 2. WHO update and presentation on indicator and target development (20 min) Plenary discussions and Q&A	Dr Sara Pires Ms Yuki Minato
05:50 – 06:20	Breakout group discussions 1. CSTF 2. IMTF	
06:20 – 06:40	20 min break	
06:40 – 07:20	Breakout group discussions – continued 1. CSTF 2. IMTF	
07:20 – 08:00	Report back to the plenary and discussion	Chair
08:00	End of Day 4	

2 November 2021, Tuesday – Day 5 (22:00, 2 Nov – 00:00, 3 Nov CET)		
22:00 – 22:10	Housekeeping, Recap of Day 4 and objective of the day	
22:10 – 23:00	Agree on actions to be taken by respective taskforces for next 3 months towards developing a concrete workplan by December 2021 and outsourcing of activities	
23:00 – 23:10	10 min break	
23:00 – 23:45	Continued plenary discussion	
23:45 – 00:00	Closing remarks from the Director, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety, WHO	Dr Francesco Branca
00:00	Meeting adjourns	