

## Fourth meeting of the WHO foodborne disease burden epidemiology reference group 2021-2024

### Concept note and draft agenda

Version 28 October 2022

#### 1. Background

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

In 2020, a resolution (WHA73.5)<sup>4</sup> was adopted to request WHO to monitor regularly and report the global burden of foodborne and zoonotic diseases at national, regional and international levels. The resolution particularly requests WHO to prepare an updated report by 2025 on the global burden of foodborne diseases with up-to-date estimates of incidence, mortality, and disease burden in terms of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). Given this mandate, NFS reconvened a new membership for the WHO technical advisory group, “Foodborne Diseases Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG)” in 2021, where 26 new members of the FERG were appointed to serve for 3 years in 2021-2024 with a specific Terms of Reference.<sup>5</sup>

The FERG has convened for three expert meetings across the period 2021 and 2022. The first meeting held virtually in July 2021 situated the 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, outlined objectives and established a process for developing a workplan for the next six months. At this meeting, a Chair was appointed, and taskforces were formed as follows:

1. Enteric Disease Taskforce (EDTF)
2. Parasitic Disease Taskforce (PDTF)
3. Chemicals and Toxins Taskforce (CTTF)
4. Computational Taskforce (CTF)
5. Source Attribution Taskforce (SATF)
6. Impact Measurement Taskforce (IMTF)
7. Country Support Task Force (CSTF)

---

<sup>1</sup> 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>

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

<sup>3</sup> 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))

<sup>4</sup> Resolution WHA73.5. Strengthening efforts on food safety. In: Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly, Geneva, 18–19 May 2020. Resolutions and decisions, annexes. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 ([https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA73/A73\\_R5-en.pdf1](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_R5-en.pdf1), accessed 28 May 2022).

<sup>5</sup> 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](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/food-safety/call-for-experts/tor-for-reference-ferg-31aug2020.pdf?sfvrsn=b0a3d1f_8)

The objectives of the FERG were agreed upon, and discussions were held on a strategy to perform the estimates, including agreement to develop a road plan.

At the second meeting virtually held in October 2021, the FERG achieved consensus on the FERG structure, operation, role, functions, and expectations. Discussions and agreements were made on the FERG workplan, including gaining consensus to look at the economic burden of foodborne diseases, and advancement on a plan for commissioning external work. The draft computational framework was discussed and outline agreed, the scope and objectives of respective taskforces were further defined and agreed, and recommendations on indicators and targets were concretized.

The most recent meeting, held virtually in April 2022, discussed technical and budgetary requirements for the three work areas of the FERG including 1) estimation of the global burden of foodborne diseases; 2) supporting countries to estimate the burden of foodborne diseases; and 3) developing the methodology to measure impacts for food safety. The FERG also discussed the commissioning of work to produce systematic reviews and other studies, including analyses for source attribution, literature reviews on disease targets and indicators, case series on use of indicators by countries (particularly lower-middle income countries), and research and publication on economic burden estimates.

After forming a consensus, the FERG agreed to adopt a time trend analysis methodology, and therefore a new computational infrastructure. It was aimed to finalize the estimation process by the end 2024, and finalize the development of WHO publications and external journal publications in 2025. Given the ambitious timeline, the FERG agreed on an aim to report the first batch of results in 2025 focused on 31 original hazards and four metals, and to report the estimates by including more hazards after 2025.

Agreements were made for WHO and the FERG to collaborate with internal and external departments and create further partnerships to support the work of the FERG, and minimize duplication of efforts. WHO is also starting to develop a plan on country engagement into the estimation process, whereby countries shall approve input data and the final estimates.

This fourth meeting is planned on 15-18 November 2022, to continue the plan of actions towards 2025 reporting on the updated global estimates of the burden of foodborne diseases, the plan for country support activities as well as the development on the impact measurement framework.

## **2. Aim of the meeting**

Continuation of the strategic workplan for the FERG 2021-2024 on 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:**

- a) To share a progress update from all FERG taskforces and WHO
- b) To discuss needs and priorities for the above-mentioned activities, including:
  - Roadmap towards 2025 reporting on the updated global burden of foodborne diseases
  - Publication plans and journals
  - Commissioning systematic reviews

- Country support activities
- Roadmap for developing the impact measurement framework
- c) To provide time for Taskforces to connect and advance workplans
  - Enable CTF and SATF to interact with EDTF, PDTF and CTTF
  - Enable EDTF, PDTF and CTTF to work in-depth on tasks
  - Enable FERG members to convene as CSTF and IMTF
  - Enable interactions between TFs and WHO departments
- d) To connect and meet with collaborating departments, which may include:
  - Regional advisors for food safety in respective WHO Regional Offices,
  - Department of Nutrition and Food Safety (NFS)
  - Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)
  - Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals (IVB)
  - Dr Bochen Cao, GHE lead (DDI/DNA/MFI)
- e) To connect and meet with external groups whose work is relevant to multiple TFs

### 3. Expected outcomes

Expected outcomes include:

- a) Advancement of the FERG workplan
  - Country support activities discussed and advanced
  - Impact measurement activities discussed and advanced
- b) Roadmap towards 2025 reporting advanced
- c) Advancement on publications including commissioned systematic reviews
- d) Engagement with collaborating departments (i.e. WHO Steering Group)

### 4. Date/Time (CEST)

The fourth meeting of the FERG will be held on 15-18 November 2022.

Date	Time
Tuesday, 15 November	9:00 – 17:00 CET (8 hours)
Wednesday, 16 November	9:00 – 17:00 CET (8 hours)
Thursday, 17 November	9:00 – 17:00 CET (8 hours)
Friday, 18 November	9:00 – 12:30 CET (3.5 hours)

### 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 staffs. 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, and it is an in-person meeting. Experts who are unable to join will be invited to connect virtually (to be provided, separately).

## 7. Meeting report

Rapporteurs assigned to take note for the plenary sessions and breakout sessions will summarize the discussions and finalize the report in collaboration with WHO. The final report will be published on WHO website.

## 8. Draft agenda

There is a pre-session planned on Tuesday, 8 November 2022 at 9:00 – 10:30 (CET) to provide virtual presentations on WHO updates.

Day 1: Tuesday, 15 November 2022 (9:00 – 17:00 CET)		
9:00 – 9:10	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Opening remarks from WHO Department of Nutrition and Food Safety</li></ul>	Dr Elaine Borghi, Unit Head
9:10 – 9:20	Agenda and objectives of the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Housekeeping</li><li>Adoption of the agenda</li><li>Declaration of interests</li></ul>	FERG chair, Dr Rob Lake
9:20 – 9:50	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Q&amp;A on the presentations given at the pre-session</li></ul>	Ms Yuki Minato
9:50 – 10:20	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Presentations on taskforce activities: progress to date since the last FERG meeting held in April 2022</li></ul>	Respective taskforce chairs
10:20 – 10:40	Coffee break	
10:40 – 12:30	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Computational taskforce presentation</li><li>Q&amp;A and discussions</li></ul>	Dr Mirjam Kretzchmar
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00	<i>Breakout session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Group discussions respectively by EDTF, PDTF, CTF, CTF and SATF</li></ul>	
15:00 – 15:20	Coffee break	
15:20 – 17:00	<i>Breakout session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Group discussions respectively by EDTF, PDTF, CTF, CTF and SATF</li></ul>	
17:00	End of Day 1	

Day 2: Wednesday, 16 November 2022 (9:00 – 17:00 CET)		
9:00 – 9:15	Housekeeping, Recap of Day 1 and objective of the day	FERG chair
9:15 – 10:20	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report back from breakout sessions on Day 1 (including items related to progress on the workplan; data needs; identify any other commissioned work; disease models, clear understanding on CTF requirements)</li> </ul>	EDTF, PDTF, CTF, SATF
10:20 – 10:40	Coffee break	
10:40 – 12:30	<i>Breakout session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussions respectively by EDTF, PDTF, CTF, and SATF</li> </ul>	Respective taskforces
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00	<i>Breakout session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussions respectively by EDTF, PDTF, CTF, and SATF</li> </ul>	Respective taskforces
15:00 – 15:20	Coffee break	
15:20 – 16:00	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interaction with other relevant WHO teams</li> </ul>	TBC
16:00 – 17:00	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation from IHME</li> </ul>	IHME rep
17:00	End of day 2	
17:00 – 19:00	Reception at the WHO cafeteria (approximately 90 min, no more than 2 hours)	
19:30	Group dinner (optional)	

Day 3: Thursday, 17 November 2022 (9:00 – 17:00 CET)		
9:00 – 9:15	Housekeeping, Recap of Day 2 and objective of the day	FERG chair
9:15 – 10:20	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report back from breakout sessions on Day 2</li> </ul>	EDTF, PDTF, CTF, SATF
10:20 – 10:40	Coffee break	
10:40 – 12:30	<i>Breakout sessions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussions respectively by IMTF and CSTF</li> </ul>	
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 – 15:00	<i>Breakout sessions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussions respectively by IMTF and CSTF</li> </ul>	
15:00 – 15:20	Coffee break	
15:20 – 17:00	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report back from group discussions</li> </ul>	IMTF, CSTF
17:00	End of Day 3	
Day 4: Friday, 18 November 2022 (9:00 – 12:30 CET)		
9:00 – 9:15	Housekeeping, Recap of Day 3 and objective of the day	FERG chair
9:15 – 10:20	<i>Plenary session to form consensus:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation on updated workplans</li> <li>Discussion on how timing fits together to bring results (reports, publications and major deliverables)</li> </ul>	FERG chair Taskforce chairs
10:20 – 10:40	Coffee break	
10:40 – 12:20	<i>Plenary session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued discussions</li> <li>Agreed actions and next steps</li> </ul>	
12:20 – 12:30	Closing remarks from WHO Department of Nutrition and Food Safety (NFS)	Dr Francesco Branca, Director, NFS
12:30	Meeting adjourns	
	Lunch	