



## **Technical Advisory Group on NCD-related research and innovation**

### **Terms of Reference**

The Technical Advisory Group on Non-Communicable Diseases-related Research and Innovation (TAG-NCDRI), will act as an advisory body to WHO to further its efforts and work in promoting NCD-related research, innovation and its translation. This includes to (1) promote international and national investments and strengthen national capacity for quality research and development, for all aspects related to the prevention and control of NCDs in a sustainable and cost-effective manner, while incentivizing innovation and (2) support and facilitate NCD-related research and its translation to enhance the knowledge base for ongoing national, regional and global action .

The TAG-NCDRI will act as an advisory body to WHO in this field.

#### **I. Functions**

1. In its capacity as an advisory body to WHO, the TAG-NCDRI shall have the following functions related to research and innovation in the area of non-communicable diseases:
  - a) To identify and describe current and future challenges;
  - b) To advise WHO on strategic directions to be prioritized;
  - c) To advise WHO on the development of global strategic documents; and
  - d) To propose other strategic interventions and activities for implementation by WHO.
2. The priority areas of focus will be aligned with the three strategic shifts set out in the GPW13, i.e. stepping up leadership, driving public health impact, and focusing public goods on impact. In particular, the Technical Working Group will consider the following priority areas:
  - a) Providing advice on how to update the global agenda for NCD-research & innovation and promoting translation of knowledge into action through collaboration with partners in the context of low- and middle-income countries.
  - b) Providing advice on how to support low- and middle-income countries in building capacity for high quality research required for implementation and evaluation of intervention, guidelines, technical packages and programmes in the areas of NCDs.
  - c) Providing advice on how to encourage WHO Collaborating Centres to incorporate the research agenda into their plans and facilitate collaborative research through bilateral and multilateral collaboration and multicenter projects.

- d) Providing advice on the development and utilization of implementation research methods in low- and middle-income countries.

## **II. Composition**

1. The AG shall have up to **12** members, who shall serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of disciplines relevant to research on non-communicable diseases including but not limited to NCDs researchers (health research including public health and clinical research, risk factors and social determinants), public health, epidemiology and implementation research (public health policies and prevention, epidemiology and disease burden, implementation research), health governance and health service delivery (health system and primary health care, essential economics and finance). In the selection of the AG members, consideration shall be given to attaining an adequate distribution of technical expertise, geographical representation and gender balance.
2. Members of the TAG-NCDR, including the Chairperson, shall be selected and appointed by WHO following an open call for experts. The Chairperson's functions include the following:
  - to chair the meeting of the TAG-NCDR;
  - to liaise with the WHO Secretariat between meetings.

In appointing a Chairperson, consideration shall be given to gender and geographical representation.

3. Members of the TAG-NCDR shall be appointed to serve for a period of two years and shall not be eligible for reappointment beyond 2025 (i.e. the four high-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of NCDs). A Chairperson is eligible for reappointment as a member of the TAG-NCDR but is only permitted to serve as Chairperson for one term. Their appointment and/or designation as Chairperson may be terminated at any time by WHO if WHO's interest so requires or, as otherwise specified in these terms of reference or letters of appointment. Where a member's appointment is terminated, WHO may decide to appoint a replacement member.
4. TAG-NCDR members must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO. In performing their work, members may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to the Organization. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. To this end, proposed members/members shall be required to complete a declaration of interests form and their appointment, or continuation of their appointment, shall 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. Following a determination that a proposed member's participation in the TAG-NCDR would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest, the proposed member will be sent a letter inviting them to be a member of the TAG-NCDR. Their appointment to the TAG-NCDR is subject to WHO receiving the countersigned invitation letter and letter of agreement. Notwithstanding the

requirement to complete the WHO declaration of interest form, TAG-NCDR members have an ongoing obligation to inform the WHO of any interests real or perceived that may give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

6. As contemplated in paragraph II.4 above, WHO may, from time to time, request TAG-NCDR members to complete a new declaration of interest form. This may be before a TAG-NCDR meeting or any other TAG-NCDR-related activity or engagement, as decided by WHO. Where WHO has made such a request, the TAG-NCDR member's participation in the TAG-NCDR activity or engagement is subject to a determination that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
7. Where a TAG-NCDR member is invited by WHO to travel to an in-person TAG-NCDR meeting, WHO shall, subject to any conflict of interest determination as set out in paragraph II.6 above, issue a letter of appointment as a temporary adviser and accompanying memorandum of agreement (together 'Temporary Adviser Letter'). WHO shall not authorize travel by an TAG-NCDR member, until it receives a countersigned Temporary Adviser Letter.
8. TAG-NCDR members do not receive any remuneration from the Organization for any work related to the TAG-NCDR. 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.

### **III. Operation**

1. The TAG-NCDR shall normally meet [at least once] each year. However, WHO may convene additional meetings. TAG-NCDR meetings may be held in person (at WHO headquarters in Geneva or another location, as determined by WHO) or virtually, via video or teleconference.

TAG-NCDR 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.3 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-NCDR and essential WHO Secretariat staff.

2. The quorum for TAG-NCDR meetings shall be two thirds of the members.
3. WHO may, at its sole discretion, invite external individuals from time to time to attend the open sessions of an advisory group, or parts thereof, as "observers". Observers may be invited either in their personal capacity, or as representatives from a governmental institution / intergovernmental organization, or from a non-state actor. WHO will request observers invited in their personal capacity to complete a confidentiality undertaking and a declaration of interests form prior to

attending a session of the advisory group. Invitations to observers attending as representatives from non-state actors will be subject to internal due diligence and conflict of interest considerations in accordance with FENSA. Observers invited as representatives may also be requested to complete a confidentiality undertaking. Observers shall normally attend meetings of the TAG-NCDR 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 their personal views and/or the policies of their organization. Observers will not participate in the process of adopting decisions and recommendations of the TAG-NCDR.

4. The TAG-NCDR may decide to establish smaller working groups (sub-groups of the TAG-NCDR) to work on specific issues. Their deliberations shall take place via teleconference or video-conference. For these sub-groups, no quorum requirement will apply; the outcome of their deliberations will be submitted to the TAG-NCDR for review at one of its meetings.
5. TAG-NCDR 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-NCDR.
6. Reports of each meeting shall be submitted by the TAG-NCDR to WHO (the Assistant Director-General of the responsible Cluster). All recommendations from the TAG-NCDR are advisory to WHO, who retains full control over any subsequent decisions or actions regarding any proposals, policy issues or other matters considered by the TAG-NCDR.
7. The TAG-NCDR shall normally make 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.
8. Active participation is expected from all TAG-NCDR members, including in working groups, teleconferences, and interaction over email. TAG-NCDR members may, in advance of TAG-NCDR meetings, be requested to review meeting documentation and to provide their views for consideration by the TAG-NCDR.
9. WHO shall determine the modes of communication by the TAG-NCDR, including between WHO and the TAG-NCDR members, and the TAG-NCDR members among themselves.
10. TAG-NCDR members shall not speak on behalf of, or represent, the TAG-NCDR or WHO to any third party.

#### **IV. Secretariat**

WHO shall provide the secretariat for the TAG-NCDR, including necessary scientific, technical, administrative 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 determined by the WHO Secretariat. The meeting agenda shall include details such as: whether a meeting, or part thereof, is closed or open; and whether Observers are permitted to attend.

**V. Information and documentation**

1. Information and documentation to which members may gain access in performing TAG-NCDR related activities shall be considered as confidential and proprietary to WHO and/or parties collaborating with WHO. In addition, by counter signing the letter of appointment and the accompanying terms and conditions referred to in section II(5) above, TAG-NCDR members undertake to abide by the confidentiality obligations contained therein and also confirm that any and all rights in the work performed by them in connection with, or as a result of their TAG-NCDR-related activities shall be exclusively vested in WHO.
2. TAG-NCDR members and Observers shall not quote from, circulate or use TAG-NCDR 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 TAG-NCDR, including deciding whether or not to publish them.

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