Call for experts to serve as members of an expert advisory group:
Guidelines for drinking-water quality: 5th edition
(Guidelines for drinking-water quality Guideline Development Group)

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Application Deadline: 2 June 2024

The World Health Organization (WHO) is seeking experts to serve as members of an expert group, the Guideline Development Group (GDG) to advise WHO on matters related to drinking-water quality and health, to inform the development of the 5th edition of the Guidelines for drinking-water quality (GDWQ).

This call for experts for the GDWQ GDG provides background information on the GDWQ, the role of the GDG, the expert profiles being sought, and the application and selection process.

1. Background
The WHO Guidelines for drinking-water quality (GDWQ) provide the recommendations of the World Health Organization for managing the risk from hazards that may compromise the safety of drinking-water, and assist water and health regulators and policymakers in the development of national regulations and standards for water safety in support of public health. The GDWQ are recognized as representing the position of the United Nations system on issues of drinking-water quality and health.

Since 1995, the Guidelines have been kept up to date through a process of “rolling revision” to ensure the GDWQ continue to present the latest available evidence and scientific consensus, and to address key concerns raised by countries. New editions usually introduce major new recommendations and are published following comprehensive review. The GDWQ was last updated in 2022, published as the Guidelines for drinking-water quality: fourth edition incorporating the first and second addenda. WHO is currently finalizing the third addenda of the GDWQ and there is a need to initiate the next edition of the GDWQ, the fifth edition.

2. Objective of the call
The objective of the call is to identify qualified experts for the GDWQ GDG. Terms of reference of the group are to:

- Support the development of a prioritized workplan for the fifth edition of the GDWQ and beyond, including identifying where WHO should re-review the evidence, major knowledge gaps and emerging issues on water quality and health.
- Oversee the process of development of the GDWQ fifth edition with a view to ensuring that the products reflect the highest quality evidence and scientific consensus, and/or the recovery and critical evaluation of experience.
- Identify areas in which WHO should develop or revise derivative documents to assist in the interpretation and implementation of the GDWQ.
- Contribute to the development of the GDWQ and select derivative documents.
- Assist WHO to address queries from Member States, including on technical issues and emergency situations.
• Contribute operational perspectives to ensure the GDWQ are relevant and can be implemented at the regional and country level.
• Advise on “enabling environment” determinants of water quality management, such as policy frameworks, institutional arrangements and capacity development.

In addition, a roster of experts will be retained by the WHO Secretariat to be considered for other roles to support GDWQ development and other responsibilities of the WHO Secretariat including:
• Conduct systematic reviews.
• Develop background papers supporting the water quality guidelines.
• Lead development of derivative documents to assist in the interpretation and implementation of the Guidelines.
• Provide rapid advice to WHO on technical enquiries and during emergency situations.

3. Basic and essential qualifications of experts
Successful candidates should meet many or most of the following qualifications:
• Hold an advanced university degree(s) in a relevant field of study (e.g. chemistry, toxicology, microbiology, risk assessment, hydrology, epidemiology, public health, water supply, engineering, environmental management;
• Scientific excellence evidenced by publications in peer-reviewed specialized journals, government publications or similar;
• Professional experience and professional recognition in drinking-water (for both urban and rural systems), with specialization in one or more of the following areas:
  o Chemical aspects with a view to establish a chemical working group covering: naturally occurring contaminants, industrial contaminants, disinfection-by-products, emerging contaminants, toxicology, pesticides, materials and additive chemicals, essential elements, toxicology
  o Microbial aspects with a view to establish a microbial working group: bacteria, viruses, protozoa and parasites, microbial indicators
  o Radiological aspects
  o Water quality management aspects: including source protection, water treatment, water storage, risk management approaches, surveillance and monitoring
  o Environmental epidemiology
  o Risk analysis processes, in particular as it relates to chemical, microbial and radiological hazards associated with drinking-water
  o Public health regulatory aspects
  o Climate change, particularly as it relates to impacts on water quality
  o Equity, gender and human rights aspects
• Familiarity with other WHO related programmes of work (e.g. JECFA, JMPR, chemical risk assessment network, vector control, radiation and health, nutrition);
• Familiarity with WHO’s requirements for developing normative publications including methodology experience;
• Experience in contributing to scientific assessments at the national or international level;
• Ability to converse in and write documents in English;
• Ability to participate in virtual and in-person expert consultations (first consultation anticipated to take place in the Q4 2024/Q1 2025);
• Ability to work with people from different cultural backgrounds as well as with scientists from various disciplines.
4. Application
Interested applicants are invited to submit their curriculum vitae (no more than 10 pages in A4 format), a filled Declaration of Interest (DoI), and a list of publications, no later than 2 June 2024. An applicant shall be made available by his or her employer for engaging in this WHO work and be released for an international in-person meeting at least once a year and ad hoc virtual meetings.

5. Criteria and process for selection of experts
WHO uses procedures for the selection of experts that assures excellence, independence, and transparency. The criteria for the selection of experts are the basic and essential qualifications together with the proven competence and expertise in the various areas as described above. The curriculum vitae of the applicants will be reviewed on the basis of the criteria listed above by a selection panel of three or more individuals. In selecting experts consideration will also be given, in addition to scientific and technical excellence, to diversity and complementarities of scientific backgrounds to ensure that the expert group as a whole, adequately cover the expertise in the areas under consideration, representation from all geographic regions including developing and developed countries, gender balance and minimizing conflicts of interests.

6. Appointment of experts
Experts will be selected in their individual capacity on the basis of their expert knowledge to give advice on specific topics. The term "personal capacity" means that the expert is expressly expected to serve in his/her capacity as an independent expert rather than a representative of his or her employer. The views of the independent expert would not necessarily be reflective of any views and positions of his or her employer. All experts will be required to complete a Declarations of Interest form which must be assessed by the WHO Secretariat before confirming appointment in the expert group and undertaking any work. Experts will also be required to sign a confidentiality undertaking.

Experts do not receive any remuneration from the Organization. However, when attending meetings by invitation of WHO, they shall be entitled, in accordance with the administrative regulations of the Organization, to reimbursement of travelling expenses and to a daily living allowance during such meetings.

Due to the potential size of the GDWQ GDG and selected focus areas of the meetings (e.g. microbial, chemical or radiological aspects), not all members will be invited to each meeting. The selection of experts including specific working groups from the GDWQ GDG for each meeting will be made by WHO taking into account the scientific expertise and experience that is considered essential for the items on the agenda. Accordingly in some cases, additional experts outside of the GDWQ GDG may be invited to meetings.

The appointment is anticipated for 2024 up to the fifth edition of the GDWQ, with possibility of extension depending on expertise required for needed follow up work and previous contributions. The names and affiliations of those scientists who are part of the expert group will be made publicly available.

Applications should be submitted by 2 June 2024 to:

gdwq@who.int
WHO Water, Sanitation Hygiene and Health Unit
Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health
World Health Organization