



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**



**World Health
Organization**

JOINT FAO/WHO NUTRIENT RISK ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Call for Experts by FAO/WHO

**Workshop to Establish a Scientific Approach for International
Nutrient Risk Assessment**

▪ ***Background***

The need for a scientific process and related methodologies to address 'nutrient risk assessment,' particularly within the context of establishing upper levels of intake, has become increasingly apparent in the international arena. The scientific community has worked to develop general agreement on the scientific framework and process for conducting risk assessments for food additives as well as food contaminants and residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs. However, unlike the substances for which food-related risk assessments are commonly made, the process of setting upper levels of intake for nutrients and related substances requires some special considerations.

FAO and WHO are undertaking a project to address the special issues associated with nutrient risk assessment. Specifically, the two organizations will be convening an Expert Technical Workshop to Establish a Scientific Approach for International Nutrient Risk Assessment (hereafter referred to as the Workshop). Once the approach or model is established and validated by Workshop participants, it can be used to further specify upper levels of intake for nutrients and related substances including vitamins and minerals. As an initial step in developing the tasks related to an approach for nutrient risk assessment, FAO/WHO have created an informal background paper for the purposes of identifying potentially relevant questions to be addressed and to seek public comment on these issues. The background paper and the request for comments can be accessed online: <http://www.who.int/ipcs/highlights/nutrientproject/en/>. As described in detail in the background paper, nutrient risk assessment particularly as it relates to upper levels for vitamins and minerals is of particular interest to the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses as well as member countries.

▪ ***Description of the Expert Technical Workshop***

It is anticipated that the Workshop will be held for five continuous days, and is tentatively scheduled for May 2005. The Workshop will be conducted in English and all discussion papers prepared for use during the Workshop will be in English. FAO and WHO will meet the costs of Experts' attendance at the Workshop.

The tasks to be accomplished by participants during the Workshop will be:

(a) Within the context of existing risk assessment principles, participants will develop an approach and related criteria and methodologies to address risk assessment for nutrients and related substances. This task should take into account: (i) the special considerations needed when the substance of interest is a nutrient or related substance, and (ii) the need for the approach to be internationally relevant.

(b) Moreover, the development of the approach shall take into account the scientific challenges related specifically to (i) Criteria for data evaluation, (ii) Criteria for extrapolation of data to vulnerable groups, (iii) Criteria for determination and use of uncertainty factors, and (iv) Guiding principles for global versus regional applications.

(c) To test and demonstrate the application of the approach, Workshop participants will apply the approach to a subset of nutrients, specifically several selected vitamins and minerals. The selected vitamins and minerals will be those suited to illustrating the types of challenges encountered in conducting nutrient risk assessments including the need to make decisions in the absence of adequate and relevant evidence, how to deal with extrapolations of results (e.g., from adults to children; from animals to humans), special considerations when margins of "safe" intake are narrow, criteria for evaluating and weighing available study results, how to deal with "soft" endpoints, issues of bioavailability and different forms of nutrients in the food supply. To help in illustrating the challenges relating to nutrient risk assessment, several nutrients will be selected as case studies from among the following: vitamin A, vitamin B-6, Vitamin E, folic acid, iron, zinc and manganese. Through these evidence-based reviews and case studies the approach will be refined and finalized.

(d) Specify research gaps and needs.

Experts must be available for several scheduled telephone conference calls during the 3-month period prior to the start of the Workshop. Drafting Experts will need to have completed their work 6 weeks prior to the start of the Workshop. A Chairperson will be nominated by FAO/WHO and agreed to by Workshop participants. Unless otherwise specified and with prior agreement of the two organizations, all experts will be participating in their individual capacity and not as representatives of any organization.

▪ ***Categories and Definitions of Experts***

Members serve as full participants of the Workshop, who consider the discussion papers, develop and agree on an appropriate approach for nutrient risk assessment, and decide the content of the report of the Workshop.

Drafting Experts assess specific issues, as well as available data and documentation, and then prepare discussion papers for use during the Workshop. They are present during the Workshop and contribute to the discussions. According to WHO rules they are called *Temporary Advisers*, while FAO calls them *FAO Consultants*.

Resource Experts prepare on request of FAO/WHO specific documents which will support the discussions during the Workshop. They will not participate in the Workshop itself.

▪ *Application for Consideration as an Expert*

The application for consideration as an Expert has two components: a curriculum vitae and a completed Declaration of Interests form. Additionally, applicants should provide the names of two persons who may be contacted as references concerning their qualifications to serve as an Expert.

The deadline for submission of the curriculum vitae and Declaration of Interests is **7 January 2004**. As needed, applications may be accepted after this date.

To Make an Application:

In order to apply, interested scientists are invited to submit an application form with an attached curriculum vitae and Declaration of Interests. The application and instructions for submission are available online: <http://www.who.int/ipcs/highlights/nutrientproject/en/>. Applications can be submitted electronically or submitted by mail. FAO and WHO are seeking a variety of expertise including nutritionists, toxicologists and others as specified below (see Relevant Qualifications) including those who are able to provide general input on nutrient risk assessment and related questions for building the approach and identifying scientific principles as well as those who may have risk assessment expertise for the vitamins and minerals that may be used to test the approach.

The applicant should include in the curriculum vitae a description of education, work experience, and a list of peer-reviewed publications. Information should also be included regarding relevant remunerated or volunteer non-business relationships (professional organizations, trade associations, public interest groups) that have interest in the topic of the Workshop, as well as relevant service with international, national, or other bodies with interest in the topic of the Workshop. The applicant should indicate whether he or she considers his or her qualifications to be appropriate to serve as a Member, Drafting Expert or Resource Expert.

Relevant Qualifications:

Persons to be considered as Experts should have long-standing and broad experience, with national and international recognition of their expertise, in one or several of the scientific fields that are relevant to the multidisciplinary nature of nutrient risk assessment.

Successful candidates should meet most or all of the following qualifications:

- a. hold an advanced university degree(s) in, and have professional experience related to, nutritional toxicology, general nutrition, toxicology, physiology, food science, risk assessment, pharmacology, biochemistry, endocrinology, risk management (regulatory), epidemiology, food intake methodologies, or biostatistics.
- b. scientific excellence evidenced by publications in peer-reviewed journals
- c. practical experience in reviewing, analyzing, evaluating, and extrapolating scientific data
- d. experience in delivering scientific opinions at the national or international level
- e. ability to converse in and write documents in English
- f. ability to prepare documents in electronic format
- g. ability to work with people from different cultural backgrounds

▪ ***Selection of Experts***

The selection of Experts to participate in the Workshop is made by FAO and WHO only after a careful consideration of the scientific credentials of the various candidates, and a balance of scientific expertise and other experience is considered essential. The selection process respects FAO and WHO policies on regional representation and gender balance.

The curriculum vitae that are submitted will be reviewed by FAO/WHO who will determine whether the applicant meets the essential requirements outlined in this Call. Complementarity of scientific backgrounds and representation from various geographical regions will be taken into account in the selection process. Any potential conflicts of interest disclosed in the Declaration of Interests will also be considered in the selection process. Additionally, all participants will also be asked to disclose any relevant conflicts to other workshop participants.

▪ ***Further information***

International Programme on Chemical Safety
Nutrient Risk Assessment Project
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