



Expert consultation on the WHO report on human health risks resulting from the exposure to microplastic from the environment 2-3 March 2020, Geneva, Switzerland

Background

Microplastic in the environment is an emerging contaminant that has generated intense public concern, questions to WHO from Member States and recurring queries from the media. Questions have been asked about the human health impacts of the exposure to microplastic particles, from the polymers themselves, to the monomers as well as additives used to make the plastic material, adsorbed chemical contaminants and associated biofilms.

Recognizing this, WHO has reviewed the state of evidence on microplastic in drinking-water and published a report assessing the risks to human health in August 2019¹. To continue WHO's effort to assess the potential health risks associated with exposure to microplastic, this project is to widen the scope of the assessment from a drinking-water focus to the environment, including exposure via food, water and air. With this expert consultation, WHO wishes to assess human health risks arising from exposure to microplastic particles from the environment, identify research needs and define the scope of the future work of WHO on microplastic particles.

Scope of the report:

- Summarize data on the occurrence of microplastic in the environment (including food, water, soil, air) and respective human exposure pathways (including ingestion, inhalation).
- Assess the feasibility of and an approach to a human health risk assessment on the basis of available data.
- Where possible, assess the human health risk resulting from exposure to microplastic from the environment.
- Identify data gaps and research needs.

Objectives of the expert consultation:

- Ensure the completeness of the report and data reviewed.
- Discuss and resolve any divergence of data interpretation and/or expert opinion included in the scope of the report.
- Set the scope of the future work of WHO on microplastic

¹ World Health Organization. (2019). Microplastics in drinking-water. World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/326499>.

CALL FOR EXPERTS

WHO is currently in the process of identifying experts to participate in the expert consultation on **the WHO report on human health risks resulting from the exposure to microplastic from the environment**, held at the **WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland on 2-3 March 2020**.

All applicants should meet the following general criteria:

- advanced University/College degree in toxicology, chemistry, microbiology, biology, medicine, food science, food technology, immunology, epidemiology, public health, or related fields.
- at least five years post-graduate experience as a toxicologist, polymer chemist, microbiologist or in human health risk analysis, either as an academic or as part of employment.
- at least three years of experience in working with plastic / microplastic or a closely related fields such as other nano-/microparticles, including particle, occurrence, or adverse effect studies.
- understanding the key elements of human health risk assessment
- scientific publications within the last 10 years
- good knowledge of the English language, both written and oral
- evidence of leadership or invited participation in national or international scientific bodies, committees, and other expert advisory bodies pertinent to the scope of this work

Selection of experts

Applicants' curricula vitae (CV) will be reviewed based on the criteria listed above by a selection panel appointed by WHO. A small number of accomplished individuals will be invited to participate in the proposed upcoming meeting on the report on human health risks resulting from the exposure to microplastic from the environment. Selected experts are required to review the report in detail before attending the meeting. In selecting experts, WHO will consider, in addition to scientific and technical excellence, diversity and complementarities of scientific backgrounds, and balanced representation from geographic regions, including developing and developed countries, as well as gender. Unsuccessful candidates are not routinely notified.

Appointment of experts

Selected experts will be invited to contribute to the meeting only in their individual scientific capacity. An expert will not represent the government of country of which they are a citizen, or the institution with which they are associated. The experts designated will not receive any remuneration, however, travel costs, subsistence allowance and other related expenses will be the exclusive responsibility of WHO.

Applications

Interested applicants should submit their CV. The CV should include a description of education, relevant work experience, evidence of national or international expertise on relevant topics and a list of relevant peer-reviewed publications (please do not include reprints in your submission). Applicants must have a good working knowledge of English as correspondence and meetings will be in English only.

Before participating in any related activity, all the selected experts will be required to declare any potential interests associated with the subjects and substances that will be evaluated. Experts will be asked to indicate, in writing, all interests (financial and intellectual) on their part or that of their spouse that may affect, or be perceived to affect, their scientific independence as experts, including one or more of the

following conditions: employment (past or present) by any commercial enterprise or private or civil sector association; receipt of research or other study grants from such enterprises or associations; shareholdings in commercial enterprises active in fields related to food safety. Identification of an interest does not necessarily indicate a conflict nor automatically exclude an individual from participation. For example, as expert, it is expected that many, if not all, will be employed in some capacity related to the subject matter. These declarations must be completed and evaluated before a formal invitation will be issued. Declaration documents will be retained by WHO and a summary of declarations will be included in the report of the work. In addition, a confidentiality undertaking must also to be completed prior to appointment to ensure proper handling of dossiers and proprietary information.

Deadline

Please submit nominations and CVs at your earliest convenience, but no later than [19 January 2020](#).

Applications in response to the call for experts should be sent to (preferably by E-mail):

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