Process for the Election of the Director-General 2026-2027

Member State Information Session

20 July 2026

DG Election Process: Timeline

24 April 2026: Invitation by the DG to submit candidatures

24 September 2026: Deadline for submitting proposals, and opening of the proposals by the EB Chair

On/shortly after 29 October 2026 : Dispatch of proposals to all Member States

EB160: Nomination of up to 3 candidates

WHA80: Appointment of the Director-General

April 2026	September 2026	October 2026	November/ December 2026	January 2027	March 2027	May 2027

Posting of DG election-related documentation on the WHO website

18 – up to 20 November 2026: First Candidates' Forum

23 Nov to 20 Dec 2026: Web Forum

15 March 2027: Second Candidates' Forum

DG Election Process: April 2026

- Circular Letter sent to all Member States, including:
  - Deadline for submitting candidatures – 24 September 2026;
  - Standard form for CV
  - Reminder regarding the pledge to observe the Code of Conduct
  - Posting of information about candidates
- Posting of DG election-related information on the WHO's website



DG Election Process: August – October 2026

- **From 25 August**: regional committees - provision for prospective candidates to attend on request by nominating governments. Campaigning permitted in the margins only

- **24 September**: deadline for the **submission of proposals** to be sent under confidential sealed cover to the EB Chair, including:
  - Proposal
  - Pledge to observe the Code of Conduct
  - Candidate's CV (standardized form; max 3500 words; hard and electronic format)

- **25 September**: EB Chair opens the proposals

- **On or shortly after 29 October** (after the closure of the last Regional Committee):
  - Dispatch of all proposals, CVs and supporting information received by the deadline to all Member States;
  - Posting of proposals on the WHO's website

- Invitation to candidates to undergo a **medical examination** and have a completed medical examination form

DG Election Process: Prospective candidates

- Prospective candidates are:
  - individuals who have been acknowledged as candidates by WHO before 29 October 2026
  - whose names as candidates have been published on WHO's website

- Acknowledgement of a person as a prospective candidate takes place:
  - any time, at the request of the proposing Member States
  - on or shortly after 25 September 2026, for internal candidates only (if not already acknowledged)

DG Election Process: First Candidates' Forum (November 2026)

- To be held in Geneva starting on 18 November for a maximum of 3 days (exact duration to be decided by the EB Officers)
- Non-decision-making platform for candidates to present themselves on an equal basis
- Structured around interviews of candidates:
  - 10 minutes presentations
  - 50 minutes Q&A
- Open to Member States and Associate Members, chaired by the EB Chair and broadcast
- Only held if there is more than one candidate

DG Election Process: Web Forum (November 2026)

- Password-protected IT platform for questions and answers
- Open to all Member States and candidates
- The web forum will open from 23 Nov to 20 Dec for Q&A
- Last two weeks are for answers only
- The platform will remain available until the end of the election period
- Supported by the Secretariat
- Only held if there is more than one candidate

DG Election Process: Code of Conduct for the Election of the DG

- WHA-adopted Code to promote "an open, fair, equitable and transparent process for the election of the Director-General"
- Not legally binding, but "Member States and candidates are expected to honour its contents"
- Sets out principles that guide the whole election process and electoral campaign activities, such as fairness, equity, transparency and good faith
- Contains provisions on:
  - Disclosure of campaign activities, as well as grants or aid funding to other Member States;
  - Behaviour expected of Member States and candidates, including during the nomination and appointment phases
  - Official travel and campaign activities
  - Internal candidates

DG Election Process - EB160: Four Stages

1. Initial screening of candidates
2. Short-listing of five candidates
3. Interviews: presentation and questions from EB members
4. Nomination of up to three candidates from the short list

Consideration of proposals at private meetings, except for the interviews:

- Members of the Board, their alternates and advisers (up to three persons each)
- Member States not represented on the Board and Associate Members (one representative each - without the right to participate)
- Secretariat (essential staff only)

DG Election Process - EB160: Initial Screening

- To determine whether any candidate does not meet the criteria set by the Health Assembly in resolution WHA65.15:
    - a strong technical background in a health field, including experience in public health; exposure to and extensive experience in international health; demonstrable leadership skills and experience; excellent communication and advocacy skills; demonstrable competence in organizational management; sensitivity to cultural, social and political differences; strong commitment to the mission and objectives of WHO; good health condition required of all staff members of the Organization.
- Decision taken by consensus
- To inform the process, the result of the medical examination of the candidates will be provided verbally by the Chairman of the Board

DG Election Process - EB160: Short-listing

- The short list will be composed of five candidates in accordance with decision EB100(7)
- Determined by secret ballot
- Members of the Board must vote for five candidates in the first round
- The candidate receiving the fewest votes, as well as any candidate not receiving a minimum proportion of the votes cast (set at 10 % of the ballot papers), is eliminated
- In the case of a tie, which would otherwise lead to a short list of fewer than 5 names, a further ballot takes place between the tied candidates

DG Election Process - EB160: Interview modalities

- The order of the interviews is drawn by lot as soon as the shortlist is determined

- In accordance with decision EB146(22), each interview will last not more than 60 minutes divided between:
  - an oral presentation of no more than 20 minutes; and
  - a question-and- answer session of no more than 40 minutes

- Interviews are broadcast on WHO website

DG Election Process - EB160: Nomination

- The list of nominees will comprise up to three candidates
- It will be drawn up by secret ballot
- Members of the Board must vote for the number of candidates equal to the number of places to be filled, i.e. three candidates in the first ballot
- Candidates must secure a simple majority of the members present and voting

DG Election Process: Second Candidates' Forum (15 March 2027)

- To be held on 15 March 2027
- Non-decision-making platform for candidates to present themselves on an equal basis
- Format of the meeting will be discussed at the EB160 in January 2027
- Open to Member States and Associate Members, chaired by the EB Chair and broadcast
- Only held if there is more than one candidate

DG Election Process: Second Candidates' Forum - Potential Format

For consideration:

- Interactive debate involving all candidates simultaneously
- Moderated by individuals to be selected by the EB officers in accordance with the following principles:
  - Representing a diversity of geographical representation, gender, age and professional backgrounds
  - Demonstrated experience in facilitating high-level fora
  - Strong understanding of current global health issues, including the mandate, functions and governance of WHO and other parts of the global health ecosystem
- Questions to be chosen by the moderators

DG Election Process: Appointment by WHA80 (May 2027)

- Consideration of nominations at a private meeting, except for candidates' statements
- Statements by candidates before the vote for the appointment
- Appointment by secret ballot
- Contract of appointment to be approved by the WHA, and signed jointly by the DG and WHA President
    - Term of office: 5 years; eligible for reappointment once
    - Taking of office: mid-August 2027

DG Election Process: Additional Information

- Information material, including a Handbook and a FAQ document, is available at the following link:

  https://www.who.int/about/governance/election-of-the-who-director-general/documents

- Please direct any additional inquiries related to the Director-General election process to the following:

  dgelection@who.int

THANK YOU