REPORT OF THE

Second meeting

OF THE

Technical Advisory Group on Food Safety:

Safer Food for Better Health

World Health Organization

Virtual meeting, 19 and 22–23 April 2021
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Acknowledgements

The World Health Organization (WHO) wishes to express its sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the success of the meeting, especially the members of the Technical Advisory Group on Food Safety, WHO Food Safety Regional Advisers, and representatives from the FAO, OIE and the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) for their valuable technical input. Sincere gratitude goes to Dr Gillian Mylea, Head, Standards Department, OIE and Dr Paul Cook working in the Food Standards Agency, United Kingdom of Great Britain, and Northern Ireland for chairing the meeting.

This report was developed by Dr Amina Benyahia, Scientist, and Mr Cheng Liang, Technical Officer, Multisectoral Actions in Food Systems Unit (AFS), WHO Department of Nutrition and Food Safety (NFS). WHO is most grateful to Professor Alan Reilly who is commissioned by WHO to provide the extensive technical and indispensable advice throughout the process of drafting and finalization of this report. Input was provided by Dr Francesco Branca, Director NFS and Dr Luz Maria De-Regil, Unit Head, AFS.

Declarations of interest

All experts participating in WHO meetings must participate in their individual capacity and declare any interest relevant to the meeting prior to their participation. All members of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) submitted a declaration of interests along with their application to join the TAG and before each meeting. The declarations were reviewed by the responsible technical officer and the relevant departments before their appointment and/or receiving an invitation to attend a TAG meeting. In addition, TAG members made a verbal declaration of their interest during the meeting. No conflicts affecting the outcomes of the meeting were identified for any TAG members.
The second Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting on the update of the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety was held on 19, 22–23 April 2021, from 12:00 to 15:00 CET each day. The meeting was attended by WHO headquarters staff from the Department of Nutrition and Food Safety, WHO regional advisors for food safety and 23 TAG members. Staff from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Codex Secretariat joined the meeting as observers.

The overall objective of the second TAG meeting was to review the first draft of the WHO Global Strategy Food Safety prepared by the WHO Secretariat based on the discussion from the first TAG meeting and comments received from TAG members, and to finalize the draft for public consultation.

During the second TAG meeting, members discussed each section of the draft strategy in detail and agreed on its overall structure and content. Amendments were agreed to in the section on drivers of change for food safety, as well as the strategic priorities and strategic objectives. It was also agreed to include new sections on Food Safety and One Health and Food Safety Systems.

TAG members also discussed the general guidance for Member States to implement the strategy and the role of WHO in providing support. TAG members agreed to include a new section entitled, “Enhancing international cooperation” under the chapter on implementation and noted that the section should further highlight the technical cooperation and knowledge sharing among countries.

Regarding the Monitoring and Evaluation section in the strategy, TAG members supported the aim to establish global food safety indicators and targets, however, further technical discussions are needed to better identify, select and define the most appropriate indicators and targets.

The consultation recommended the WHO Secretariat:

1. Revise the draft WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety in line with the comments and inputs provided during the second TAG meeting and the written comments received by 27 April.
2. Prepare for the public consultation and provide regular updates to TAG members regarding progress and any changes to the content of the strategy.

3. Share the draft workplan with the TAG members for written comment and organize follow-up meetings starting in September 2021.
1. **Introduction**

1.1 **Background**

In response to the 73rd World Health Assembly Resolution “Strengthening efforts on food safety” (WHA73.5), WHO established a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Food Safety: safer food for better health, to advise on updating the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety and any other matters (implementation, monitoring and evaluation) relating to the Strategy. The first TAG meeting was convened virtually on 8-10 February 2021. During this meeting, TAG members agreed on the structure of the new strategy to include the role of food safety in the global development agenda, the drivers of changes for the future of food safety, the strategy’s aim and vision, and the five proposed strategic priorities. The meeting also highlighted the need to foster global and regional cooperation. While recognizing the strategy should be Member States oriented, it was agreed to give more visibility to WHO’s leadership and to its role in supporting Member States in strengthening food safety and lowering the burden of foodborne disease.

Following the TAG meeting in February, the WHO Secretariat prepared a first draft of the Global Strategy for Food Safety which was circulated to TAG members for consideration and discussion at the second TAG meeting which was held over three days, 19 and 22–23 April 2021. The meeting was organized as an online event from 12:00 to 15:00 CET each day. For more information, please refer to Annex 1: Meeting Agenda.

1.2 **Meeting objectives**

The objective of the TAG meeting was to collect experts’ advice on the updating of the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety, specifically to follow up on discussions from the first TAG meeting, to discuss comments on the draft WHO Global Food Safety Strategy, and to prepare for the web-based public consultation and Member States consultation scheduled in May and June 2021.
Specific objectives were to:

1. Agree on the main content/structure of the strategy: all strategic priorities and objectives,

2. Agree on the respective roles of WHO and Member States in implementing the strategy, and

3. Suggest possible monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the strategy:
   - Theory of Change/logic model for the strategy
   - Possible global food safety indicators and targets.
Session 1: Welcome session

Dr Francesco Branca, Director of the Department of Nutrition and Food Safety, WHO, welcomed participants to the second TAG meeting and expressed his appreciation for their acceptance of the invitation from the WHO Director General to contribute to the development of the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety. He also welcomed observers from the CAC, FAO and OIE to the meeting. Dr Branca thanked TAG members for their contributions to date and for their inputs and feedback on the first draft of the new WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety.

Dr Naoko Yamamoto, WHO Assistant Director-General, delivered opening remarks and welcomed participants and observers to this second meeting of the TAG. Dr Yamamoto reminded the meeting participants that food safety is a key public health issue that is sometimes taken for granted by ministers and governments. The new WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety will provide a platform for WHO to advocate for a higher profile for food safety in the global public health agenda. Adopting a One Health approach to address public health risks emerging at the human-animal-environment interface will stimulate greater cooperation and collaboration between national agencies with responsibility for food safety. Food safety is a shared responsibility, and all stakeholders have a part to play in ensuring the safety of the food supply. The COVID-19 pandemic is a compelling reminder of the links between people and the interconnectivity of nations. Efforts to suppress the virus and protect public health rely on leadership, science, evidence, guidance, collaboration and cooperation across the globe and among countries. The same factors would apply to an emergence of a new foodborne pathogen in a world in which food and food ingredients, as well as the associated hazards and risks, traverse the globe. Dr Yamamoto hopes that this new strategy will open a new chapter for WHO’s work in food safety and serve as a model that will be referenced whenever a country’s food safety capacities are strengthened.
Session 2:
Update from the WHO Secretariat

Dr Luz Maria De-Regil, Head of Multisectoral Actions in Food Systems (AFS) Unit in WHO, chaired Session 2 which provided an update from WHO on the draft Global Food Safety Strategy. Dr Amina Benyahia, Scientist, AFS in WHO, presented an overview of the draft strategy. The strategy now includes a section on international cooperation as discussed at the first TAG meeting. It also includes general guidance on implementation and monitoring and evaluation. An overview of strategic priorities and objectives discussed by Dr Benyahia is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**
Overview of strategic priorities and objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic priorities</th>
<th>Strengthening national food control systems</th>
<th>Identifying and responding to food safety challenges resulting from the transformation and global changes in food systems</th>
<th>Increasing the use of food chain information, scientific evidence and risk assessment in making risk management decisions</th>
<th>Strengthening stakeholder engagement and risk communication</th>
<th>Promoting food safety as an essential component in domestic and international trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic objectives</td>
<td>Legislation/policy/standards</td>
<td>Early identification and evaluation</td>
<td>Promotion the usage of data</td>
<td>National consultation platform on food safety agenda</td>
<td>National liaison and coordination on food trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional framework</td>
<td>Adaptation and response</td>
<td>Collection of data • Across the food chain • Beyond the borders</td>
<td>Non-regulatory schemes</td>
<td>International food trade: Imports and exports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enforcement/verification/compliance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation and usage of data for risk management</td>
<td>Sharing responsibility</td>
<td>Domestic food markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring/surveillance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration with FBOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education and communication with consumers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**International cooperation**
The draft strategy also includes a section on guidance for Member States on implementation. This section highlights the need for Member States to conduct a baseline study and situation analysis of their national food safety systems using the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool. Based on the situation analysis, Member States should develop an action plan to guide the strategic direction for implementation of their revised national food safety system which should be closely aligned with the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety. Finally, for continuous improvement, Member States should include a system for regular review of implementation and to amend their national strategy or action plan as appropriate.

Besides the content of the strategy, Dr Benyahia also presented a tentative timeline for the development of the strategy. After the second TAG meeting, the revision of the draft strategy will take into account the comments received from TAG members and meeting observers. The new draft will be put online for a public consultation starting in mid-May. In the meantime, the WHO Secretariat will draft the executive summary of the revised strategy and prepare for the review process by the WHO governing bodies. The strategy is expected to be discussed at WHO's six regional committees between August and October 2021.

TAG members asked the WHO Secretariat whether the TAG will be involved in further steps regarding the Global Strategy content development. Dr Benyahia clarified that the TAG will be constantly updated and consulted throughout the entire process of the development of the strategy before the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly (WHA75) in May 2022.
Session 3:  
General comments on introduction and updates on FAO’s food safety strategy

This session was chaired by Dr Gillian Mylrea, Head, Standards Department OIE, and provided the opportunity for TAG members to discuss the draft strategy and provide specific comments and observations. As an introduction to the session, Dr Mylrea discussed the very successful collaboration between WHO and OIE, as well as FAO and the CAC in the area of food safety applied to the whole food production continuum.

Drivers of change section

During this session, TAG members discussed the drivers of change, internal and external factors that impact on food safety. TAG members requested the strategy include more detail on the food safety implications of each driver. For example, what are the likely impacts of the identified drivers on food safety? The following specific amendments were suggested for inclusion in the draft strategy:

- To change the term “Population Demographics” to “Demographic Changes”.
- To change “Stakeholder interests and demands” to “Interests and demands for safe food”.
- To change “Shifts in consumer preferences and expectations” to “Society: Changing expectations and behaviour”.
- To add the international sharing of data relevant to foodborne disease when discussing the genomics tools under the risks of new technologies.

One Health section

Members of the TAG were in broad agreement with the inclusion of the One Health section. Adopting a One Health approach to food safety will allow Member States to detect, prevent and respond to emerging diseases at the human-animal-environment interface and to address food-related public health issues more effectively. The TAG also suggested that the control and prevention of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) should be highlighted as a successful application of the One Health approach. The issues of plant health should also be included in the discussion on the
human-animal-environment interface. For instance, medically important antibiotics are used in some parts of the world to prevent and treat a bacterial disease that affects citrus trees. OIE colleagues recommended providing examples of diseases that are classically foodborne, such as neglected foodborne diseases (Foodborne parasitic diseases), instead of diseases that have been largely associated with human-human transmission (MERS, Ebola, and most notably COVID-19).

**A systems approach to food safety:**

TAG members agreed that the term “food safety system” should be included in the strategy document and that the food control system should be considered as a key contributor of the food safety system. TAG members recommended that an explanation is required of the different components of a food safety system and how it is linked to the food control system. They also recommended that Table 1 above should be replaced with a diagram or figure to illustrate how different

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Control System</strong></td>
<td>A national system of policies, processes, procedures and plans that includes a mandatory regulatory approach together with scientific, information and educational strategies that protect the whole food chain. This includes effective enforcement of food legislation, along with training and education, community outreach programmes and promotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually managed by National Competent Authorities appointed by national governments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Safety Management System</strong></td>
<td>A systematic risk-based approach utilizing HACCP principles to control food safety hazards within a food enterprise/operation to ensure that food is safe to eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually managed by Food Business Operators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foodborne Disease Surveillance System</strong></td>
<td>The systematic reporting, collection, analysis and interpretation of the morbidity and mortality data associated with foodborne illness and the timely dissemination of this information for public health action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually managed by Public Health Authorities and results utilized by Food Safety Authorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Safety Emergency Response System</strong></td>
<td>An integrated multiagency, multidisciplinary system for responding to a situation, whether accidental or intentional, that is identified by a competent authority as constituting a serious, and as yet uncontrolled foodborne risk to public health that requires urgent action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually consists of a coordinated multiagency response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Safety Research Systems</strong></td>
<td>Scientific research programmes that provide the evidence base to underpin food safety policy and food chain risk management. Such programmes provide the basis for risk assessment and data for risk communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually managed by academic bodies, government authorities, and research organizations, both public and private</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Chain Surveillance and Monitoring Systems</strong></td>
<td>Surveillance could include monitoring, surveys, baseline studies, etc. that involve sampling, processing and analysis of samples to provide profile information on the occurrence and/or levels of food safety hazards including antimicrobial resistance in different sample populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems may be statutory or voluntary, public or private. Examples – pesticide or veterinary drug residues monitoring; food chain chemical, biological or physical hazards monitoring, directed surveillance to identify an issue such as antimicrobial resistance, surveys to gather information on new food commodities and technologies, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
components of the food safety system (food control system, foodborne disease surveillance system, food chain surveillance and monitoring systems, food safety management system, etc.) are interconnected. The FAO and CAC suggested to delete this Table or to include the Table as an Annex in the strategy.

The WHO Secretariat will continue work on this section with the FAO to ensure the description of food safety systems will not create confusion and will not be contradictory to the agreed texts under the Codex and the joint FAO/WHO publication.

**Update on FAO’s food safety strategy**

Ms Catherine Bessy, Food Safety and Quality Officer, Food Systems and Food Safety, FAO presented a brief overview of initiatives underway at FAO to develop their new Food Safety Strategy (2022-2030). At its meeting in September and October 2020, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) tasked FAO with developing a new food safety strategy to serve as an international guidance, policy and advocacy instrument for decision-makers to encourage increased investments and integration of food safety into food security, as well as the development of sustainable food systems and agriculture development strategies. Developing a new FAO food safety strategy presents an opportunity to focus support on achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. A new food safety strategy should further address emerging and potential future issues, such as One Health, (AMR and emerging zoonotic diseases), climate change, agricultural intensification, new technologies, innovation, food fraud, digitalisation of food systems and circular economies. The COAG also encouraged FAO, in line with the principles of UN reform, to further increase inter-agency collaboration and partnerships in supporting the membership to develop capacities of national food control systems. Both the WHO and FAO strategies will be mutually supportive and complementary.

Work on the development of the FAO’s food safety strategy began in January 2021 and current progress involves internal brainstorming; an initial draft of the strategy is expected in May 2021 which will be submitted for consultation with WHO and Member States in June. A second round of consultation will take place during the second half of 2021 and the final draft will be submitted for endorsement by the FAO governing bodies in February 2022. The FAO Food Safety Strategy will guide the work on food safety over the lifetime of the strategy. Some anchor points upon which the strategy will be built are foresight, scientific advice, food safety control systems, support to value chain actors, food safety governance, a food systems approach, and awareness platforms. The FAO Food Safety Strategy is needed to align with the SDGs and reflect the ongoing major transformation in food systems.
Session 4: Overview of all strategic priorities and strategic objectives

This session allowed TAG members the opportunity to discuss the strategic priorities and objectives and to provide specific comments and observations. The session began with a recap of discussions from Day 1, which was presented by Dr Paul Cook, chairperson of the TAG.

Dr Benyahia presented an overview of all strategic priorities and strategic objectives. The overall aim of the strategy is to guide and support Member States in their efforts to prioritize, plan, implement, and regularly monitor and evaluate actions towards the reduction of the incidence of foodborne diseases by continuously strengthening food safety systems and promoting global cooperation.

Proposed Strategic Priority 6

The TAG agreed that an additional strategic priority (proposed SP6 from the first TAG meeting) should not be included in the strategy because many of the activities discussed under this proposed strategic priority are now included in the strategy implementation phase. It was also agreed that the terminology in the strategy should refer to Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC) rather than developing countries. In addition, the strategy should be valid for all countries regardless of the state of development.

Strategic Priority 1

The aim of this strategic priority is to establish and strengthen national food controls by evaluating and improving key components that will contribute to reducing foodborne diseases, ensuring food authenticity, and enhancing trade in food. The focus is on controlling existing and known risks in the food chain, while Strategic Priority 2 focuses on emerging food chain risks.

The TAG agreed to change the title of Strategic Priority 1 to “Strengthening national food controls” as this strategic priority mainly refers to developing and strengthening the official food control functions of competent authorities and national governments that establish national food safety policy and coordinate activities of all national agencies with responsibilities for food control. It includes developing a framework for food regulations and standards, verification of
compliance with regulatory requirements by food business operators, monitoring the safety of the food supply, and establishing incident management systems and emergency response planning.

**Strategic Priority 2**

The aim of this strategic priority is to encourage national governments or competent authorities to identify and proactively respond to global changes and transformations in food systems, as well as the movement of foods that have the potential to impact on food safety and foodborne disease. The TAG agreed to rewording Strategic Objective 2.1 as “To identify and evaluate food safety impacts arising from global changes and transformations in food systems and movement of food.”

The TAG also agreed to change the wording of Strategic Objective 2.2 to “Adapt risk management options to emerging foodborne risks brought about by transformation and changes in global food systems and movement of food”. In addition, the TAG noted that responding to emerging risks in the food chain requires national coordination between all agencies with responsibilities for food safety, as well as international connectiveness and involvement of all food chain stakeholders.

**Strategic Priority 3**

The aim of this strategic priority is to encourage national competent authorities to utilize food chain information, scientific evidence, and risk assessment to the greatest extent feasible in making risk management decisions and allocating resources. Food chain information includes all data associated with the food production, transport, manufacture, processing and marketing. For example, at the primary production level, this could include data and records on the use of pesticides in crop production or the use of antibiotics in livestock production. Other examples include food traceability data or data from food processing such as Critical Control Point (CCP) control. The TAG suggested that in addition to utilization of food chain information, other data sources such as foodborne diseases data, food consumption data, industry practice data should also be used where appropriate.
Strategic Priority 4
The aim of this strategic priority is to improve food safety throughout the food chain by fostering a food safety culture and generating an acceptance amongst all stakeholders of their individual and collective responsibility for food safety. The TAG suggested that the terminology in this strategic priority could be better aligned with that of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). As well, the TAG suggested that training and the development of food safety messages should be emphasized in Strategic Objectives 4.4 and 4.5.

Strategic Priority 5
This strategic priority aims to highlight the importance of promoting food safety as an essential contribution to the economic success of national food production in domestic and international trade. The TAG suggested that the strategic objectives should be reordered, placing Strategic Objective 5.4 as 5.1 and reordering others accordingly. The TAG also suggested to change “national food safety systems” to “national competent authorities” in the new Strategic Objective 5.3 which now reads “Strengthen engagement of national competent authorities with international agencies and networks that establish standards and guidelines for food in trade”. This strategic objective should also refer to e-certificates.
Session 5: Implementation

This session allowed TAG members the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the strategy and to provide specific comments and observations. The session began with a recap of discussions from Day 2 presented by the TAG chairperson, Dr Cook.

Dr Benyahia presented an overview on the strategy implementation and the respective roles of Member States and WHO. Following the first TAG meeting, a new section was added to the draft strategy on the role of WHO in supporting Member States; this section was placed in the implementation section.

The first step in implementation is for Member States to carry out a baseline study and situation analysis of their national food safety systems. The FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool can be used to facilitate this task. Based on the situation analysis, Member States should develop or strengthen their national food safety strategy and action plan as appropriate. Each Member State’s national food safety strategy and action plan should be closely aligned with the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety, while also reflecting the wider national situation. Once the action plan has been implemented, a regular review and evaluation of progress should be conducted with the aim of continuous improvement.

To facilitate the implementation of the strategy, WHO will provide global leadership and foster policy dialogues to promote food safety in the global public health agenda, and advocate for greater political commitment and investment in food safety. WHO will continue to work with FAO in the provision of scientific advice and the development of evidence-based guidelines, recommendations and codes of practice as part of the Codex Alimentarius programme. WHO will also continue to support Member States through technical cooperation to build stronger technical capacity in food safety and knowledge transfer. WHO will continue to work with international partners such as FAO, OIE, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Trade Organization (WTO) in the area of food safety, and will utilize and strengthen links with collaborating centres for food safety.
The WHO Secretariat asked the TAG whether the implementation section of the strategy was a good reflection of how Member States can adapt the strategy and whether WHO can assist Member States to implement it. TAG members considered that the addition of this section to the draft strategy was a considerable improvement. In addition to enhancing international cooperation, greater emphasis should be placed on interaction and collaboration between Member States. TAG members recognized that, depending on national circumstances, some Member States will adopt the strategy, while others may adapt it. TAG members also recommended including Figure 2 in the implementation section and the usage of the risk analysis framework, which should be referenced when developing national action plans.

**Figure 2**
General guidance for Member States for the implementation of the strategy

Linkages between the situation analysis and the development of a national strategy and action plan were discussed. As well, the TAG discussed whether the action plan should be based on the situation analysis or based on content of the global strategy. The WHO Secretariat clarified that the national strategy should be based on the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety; the tools that are listed under the situation analysis are resources that a country can utilize to conduct a situation
analysis. While acknowledging there are limitations of different diagnostic tools, the national strategy and action plan should relate to the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety. FAO mentioned that the focus of the FAO/WHO Food Control Assessment Tool is on both regulatory and non-regulatory activities of competent authorities. Other relevant stakeholders, such as consumers, academia and food business operators, are associated to the assessment as stakeholders to the systems, and their role is to provide views and feedback. The focus of the assessment remains on the capacities of competent authorities. Adopting a food safety system approach includes the contribution of all stakeholders in ensuring the safety of the food supply.

TAG members also discussed the practicality of developing guidance for Member States. The group agreed that as this is a global strategy, the recommendations should stay at a high level with the detailed activities better reflected in global implementation plans or even regional and national documents. The WHO Secretariat will also develop a template for a national action plan so countries can more easily implement the strategy based on their national context.
Session 6: Monitoring and evaluation

This session was chaired by Dr Branca who stressed the importance establishing global targets and identifying indicators of success. He noted that “what gets measured gets done”. In the case of the global strategy, this means that regular measurement and reporting will keep a focus on priorities and objectives and will facilitate continuous improvement. Effective management of food control programmes involves monitoring to ensure proper implementation, efficient operation, and continuous improvement. Knowing that expected outcomes are identified and that appropriate objectives are set, communicated and being achieved, are all key to success.

Ms Yuki Minato, Project Officer, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety gave a presentation on Theory of Change and establishing indicators for the strategy. A part of the management of any programme is to select indicators and set targets. These simplify performance management by allowing all participants to understand not just their roles, but those of others. Indicators provide information about progress towards an objective and targets, and also support decision-making at all levels of an organization so that appropriate actions can be taken. Indicators are important for achieving the objectives of national food safety systems because they keep the objectives at the centre of decision-making. Ms Minato introduced the following possible indicators:

- Indicator 1: Foodborne diarrhoeal disease incidence per 100 000 population
- Indicator 2: Surveillance system in place for the detection and monitoring of foodborne disease and food contamination
- Indicator 3: Multisectoral collaboration mechanism for food safety incidents

Indicator 1 (foodborne diarrhoeal diseases) is an example of the health outcome indicator while Indicators 2 and 3 are process indicators. In setting targets and indicators, it is important to ensure that they are realistic and achievable.

One of the challenges associated with using a foodborne diarrhoeal disease as a health outcome indicator is that not all national surveillance systems are at the same stage of development. Also, TAG members sounded a word of caution about
the interpretation of surveillance data, for example, the temptation of using the collected data to compare countries. TAG members suggested that foodborne disease outbreaks might be a better indicator to consider although there remain issues concerning comparability between countries due to differences in surveillance systems. The collection of data on the incidence of foodborne diarrhoeal disease is quite challenging, even for high income countries.

Additionally, using this indicator would overlook data on chemical contamination of food which impacts diet-related diseases, such as cancer and chronic diseases. It was also suggested to consider including sub-indicators under the main indicators. A sub-indicator could focus on countries’ testing capacity, for example, whether the country is testing for certain foodborne pathogens, etc. In this way, these sub-indicators can also be used to identify gaps within a country’s surveillance system which, if addressed, could further strengthen their food safety capacity. The WHO Regional Advisor from South-East Asia, Dr Gongal noted that the lack of capacity is the main bottleneck for setting indicators and targets. The sensitivity of trade implications might be highlighted by the indicators and targets, and could also be a reason that countries are reluctant to report data to international organizations. Dr Gongal also highlighted that the Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN) is a very powerful resource to build countries’ capacity in foodborne diseases surveillance. Rather than looking at all foodborne pathogens, it might be good to focus at least initially on a few key foodborne pathogens, such as Salmonella, Campylobacter, etc. Another challenge is that the foodborne disease surveillance in many countries is managed by the health sector and there is no or limited linkages with food safety competent authorities and food testing laboratories.

The challenge with setting targets is that there are limited baseline studies within countries which means that the target-setting experience in the regions is very subjective. Another important issue is that countries have different capacities, so it might be more reasonable to set different targets for different countries or regions.

FAO noted that specific indicators under the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool can be considered as useful inputs to this initiative, while acknowledging that the tool is primarily aimed a measuring specific national situation. Regarding the targets, Dr Branca also clarified that the global strategy would require global targets. In the meantime, it should be possible to adapt global targets at regional and country level. He also emphasized that by setting global food safety indicators and targets within the strategy, it will also encourage countries to invest more in their food safety systems and further strengthen the capacity.
Dr Cook, the chairperson of the TAG, summarized the discussion points raised over the three-day meeting. Dr Benyahia, of the WHO Secretariat, discussed the next steps regarding the strategy. These were:

- TAG members can submit the written comments on the draft strategy to the WHO Secretariat by 27 April 2021.

- The WHO Secretariat will revise the draft strategy based on all inputs from the second TAG meeting and the written comments.

- There is a public consultation on the revised strategy planned in May 2021. The WHO Secretariat will consolidate the comments from the public consultation and share the new revised draft with the TAG.

- Further meetings will be organized according to the detailed implementation plan and monitoring and evaluation for the strategy, and will take place in September and October 2021.

- The WHO Secretariat will circulate the draft TAG workplan for comments and for discussion at the next TAG meeting.

Dr Luz Maria De-Regil closed the meeting by thanking TAG members and observers for their participation and constructive inputs to developing the strategy. She also thanked the chairpersons for an excellent job done and the WHO Secretariat for organizing the meeting and ensuring a productive outcome of the event. Dr De-Regil concluded by saying that WHO wishes to remain engaged with the TAG and wants to build a bridge between the TAG and the Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) for the monitoring of the strategy and the development of indicators and targets.
# Annex 1
## Agenda for second TAG meeting

### Monday 19 April 2021, 12:00-14:45 CET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:30</td>
<td>Session 1: Welcome Session</td>
<td>Francesco Branca, WHO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:10</td>
<td>Opening address</td>
<td>Naoko Yamamoto, WHO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10-12:20</td>
<td>Introduction to the meeting and participants</td>
<td>Francesco Branca, WHO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:20-12:30</td>
<td>Declaration of interests</td>
<td>All participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-13:00</td>
<td>Session 2: Updates from WHO Secretariat</td>
<td>Luz Maria De-Regil, WHO</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-12:50</td>
<td>Presentation: Overview of the full draft</td>
<td>Amina Benyahia, WHO</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:50-13:00</td>
<td>Q&amp;A or comments</td>
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<td>13:00-13:10</td>
<td>Meeting Break</td>
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<td>13:10-14:45</td>
<td>Session 3: General comments on introduction and updates on FAO’s food safety strategy</td>
<td>Gillian Mylrea, OIE</td>
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<td>13:10-13:30</td>
<td>Drivers of changes (Modification)</td>
<td>Amina Benyahia, WHO</td>
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<td>13:30-13:50</td>
<td>Food safety and one health</td>
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<td>13:50-14:10</td>
<td>Food safety system and food control system</td>
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<td>14:10-14:30</td>
<td>Enhance global cooperation</td>
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<td>14:30-14:45</td>
<td>Updates from FAO on food safety strategy</td>
<td>Catherine Bessy, FAO</td>
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<td>14:45</td>
<td>Adjourn</td>
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### Thursday 22 April 2021, 12:00-15:00 CEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:10</td>
<td>Recap of Day 1 meeting</td>
<td>Paul Cook, TAG</td>
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<td>12:10-15:00</td>
<td>Session 4: Overview of all Strategic Priorities and Strategic Objectives</td>
<td>Amina Benyahia, WHO</td>
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<td>12:10-12:30</td>
<td>Proposed Strategic Priority 6</td>
<td>Amina Benyahia, WHO</td>
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<td>12:30-15:00</td>
<td>Overview of rearranged five strategic priorities and respective strategic objectives</td>
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<td>Recap of Day 2 meeting</td>
<td>Paul Cook, TAG</td>
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<td>12:10-13:10</td>
<td>Session 5: Implementation</td>
<td>Paul Cook, TAG</td>
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<td>12:10-12:40</td>
<td>- Reflection on general guidance for Member States</td>
<td>Amina Benyahia, WHO</td>
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<td>12:40-13:10</td>
<td>- Reflection on the role of WHO</td>
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<td>13:10-14:10</td>
<td>Session 6: Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td>Francesco Branca, WHO</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:10-13:40</td>
<td>- Presentation with Q&amp;A: Theory of Change and indicators</td>
<td>Yuki Minato, WHO</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:40-14:10</td>
<td>- Discussion on targets and indicators</td>
<td>All participants</td>
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<td>14:10-14:20</td>
<td>Meeting Break</td>
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<td>14:20-15:00</td>
<td>Session 7: Conclusion and closing</td>
<td>Paul Cook, TAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:20-14:50</td>
<td>- Overall structure and content of the draft strategy and next steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:50-15:00</td>
<td>- Closing remarks</td>
<td>Luz Maria De-Regil, WHO</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2
Meeting participants

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) MEMBERS

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