



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



**World Health
Organization**

Ad hoc Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Food Allergens – guidance for qualitative risk assessment

Call for experts and data

FAO and WHO are issuing an open call for experts and data in relation to the future work of ad hoc Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Food Allergens – guidance for qualitative risk assessment.

Background

At the request of Codex¹, FAO and WHO held a series of expert meetings on the risk assessment of food allergens since 2020 and published the meeting reports, including Part 1: Review and validation of Codex Alimentarius priority allergen list through risk assessment²; Part 2: Review and establish threshold levels in foods for the priority allergens³; Part 3: Review and establish precautionary labelling in foods of the priority allergens⁴; Part 4: Review and establish exemptions for the food allergens⁵; Part 5: Review and establish threshold levels for specific tree nuts (Brazil nut, macadamia nut or Queensland nut, pine nut), soy, celery, lupin, mustard, buckwheat and oats⁶.

In response to the recent request from Codex for scientific advice on guidance for qualitative risk assessment and to address the concerns on the burden to small food business operators to conduct risk

¹ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/ae0817e6-6507-481e-ad8f-5bfaf849f817/content> and <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/ad-hoc-joint-fao-who-expert-consultation-on-risk-assessment-of-food-allergens>

² <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/94f20662-e4cb-4836-a1ac-9985b24b5268> and <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240042391>

³ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/ef22e408-e924-4ac1-9b19-3e7caa7a651c> and <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240065420>

⁴ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/2ed0849b-cd11-4c94-881f-d1b41dbc215f> and <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240072510>

⁵ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/2674e59c-59ce-484c-9b57-cbaa32275778> and <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240088924>

⁶ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/163bd3e3-da95-4ad1-b724-7b2e7c5b76dd> and <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240083332>

assessment⁷, FAO and WHO are convening an expert consultation to provide recommendation on qualitative risk assessment.

The meeting will be convened in FAO Rome Italy from **16 to 20 June 2025**.

Scope and objectives of the meeting

Create guidance to help implement food allergen risk assessment, control measures, mitigation, and other activities based on the risk assessment methodology previously employed in the five reports listed above.

The objectives of the meetings will include:

- To review publicly available literature and guidelines from competent authorities and industry associations (e.g. compliance guidelines, code of practices, etc.) to assess the current state of the knowledge in guiding qualitative and/or quantitative risk assessment of food allergens.
- To develop qualitative risk assessment strategies and frameworks that include when and how qualitative risk assessment can be used, with the goal of facilitating and harmonizing the international trade of foods affected by with food allergen issues.

⁷ https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/de/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FMeetings%252FCX-714-48%252F%25E2%2598%2585Final%252520Report%252FREP24_FLe.pdf

Call for experts

FAO and WHO are currently in the process of identifying experts to participate in future work of FAO and WHO in the area of food allergens. All applicants should meet the following general criteria:

- advanced University/College degree in food science, food technology, immunology, epidemiology, public health, or related fields
- experience in food safety/risk analysis related to food allergens
- at least five years of experience in relevant fields, including clinical experience on allergen, production and processing control for cereals containing gluten or gluten, assessment and application of relevant interventions in this sector, etc.
- scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals, in particular, relevant 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 FAO or WHO. A small number of accomplished individuals will be invited to participate in the proposed upcoming meeting on food allergens. Selected experts may be required to assist in the preparation of background papers and report drafts (in English). In selecting experts, FAO and 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 meetings only in their individual scientific capacity. An expert will not represent the government of the country of which he or she is a citizen, or the institution with which he or she is associated. The experts designated will not receive any remuneration, however, where a physical expert meeting is held, travel costs and a subsistence allowance will be the exclusive responsibility of FAO and WHO.

Applications

Interested applicants should submit their curriculum vitae (CV) by email to FAO and WHO Secretariat to the addresses below.

The CV should include a description of education, relevant work experience, evidence of national or international expertise on the topic, including a list of peer-reviewed publications relevant to the factors indicated above (please do not include reprints in your submission unless specifically requested at a later date). 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 topic of the meeting. 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 an 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 the Joint Secretariat and a summary of declarations will be included in the report of the work. In addition, a confidentiality undertaking must also be completed prior to appointment to ensure proper handling of dossiers and proprietary information.

Deadline

Please submit nominations and CVs at your earliest convenience. Selection of participants will begin on **24 March 2025** and continue until suitable candidates are identified.

Submissions in response to the call for experts should be sent to both:

Kang Zhou

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
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Rome, Italy
Telephone: + 39 06 570 50319
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20, avenue Appia 1211
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Email: food_allergens@who.int

***As we are having two Calls on the Risk Assessment of Food Allergens, please specify which one or both you are responding to.**

Call for data

FAO and WHO desire that all relevant information and data about qualitative risk assessment on food allergens are considered in their assessment and are thus issuing this international call to raise awareness about data needs and invite all interested parties to provide any relevant information/data, particularly data that may not be readily available in the public domain.

Objectives

The data will serve as inputs to the development of scientific advice, which shall be provided through an expert consultation that will take place in 2025, and will guide the elaboration of appropriate Codex texts and advise Member States.

Request for relevant information

FAO and WHO want to ensure that all available and relevant information and data are collected, and are requesting governments, private sector, the food industry, academia, consumer groups, laboratories, and any other interested organizations and individuals to submit any available data on the specific areas indicated above. These data may be published or unpublished. Reference should be made to related published studies, where applicable.

List of data and information requirements

Data and information on the following aspects are requested:

1. Data on the prevalence and characteristics of food allergy cases and food allergens.

- Food allergy case studies:
 - time (year and month) and location (region, country, and city) of case occurrence;
 - age, sex and medical status;
 - case confirmed or suspected to have resulted from the exposure to food allergens;
 - implicated type of food allergen (if identified), and how this was determined (e.g. diagnosis, laboratory confirmation, investigation, etc.);
 - source attribution of the food allergen, including origin (e.g. local, imported);
 - clinical presentation, pathophysiology and outcome of the allergy;
- Epidemiological data on food allergies:
 - number and age and sex distribution of individuals with diagnosed food allergies, as well as acute cases, hospitalizations, and deaths associated with food allergens;
 - susceptibility characteristics and medical history of diagnosed food allergic individuals (e.g. pregnancy, nutrition, health and medication status, immune status and previous exposure history or any other risk factors identified);
- Clinical, chemical and biological data on food allergens, including clinical presentation of reactions to respective allergens (cutaneous, respiratory, gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, etc.);

- pathophysiology of food allergens; immunogenicity of food allergens; dose-response studies (in particular minimum eliciting dose); immunotoxicity studies;
- Occurrence data on food allergens in unrelated food commodities, including possible sources (formulation mistake, product reuse, inadequate clean, allergen cross-contact, etc.);
 - Any other relevant data.
2. Analytical methods for food allergen detection along the value chain.
 - DNA-based;
 - protein-based;
 - others.
 3. Dietary exposure assessment data
 - levels and patterns of human exposure from all relevant sources of identified food allergens;
 - food consumption patterns and population groups.
 4. Risk management measures
 - current food allergen monitoring and surveillance, as well as commodity-specific programmes;
 - national, regional and international guidance relating to food allergen risk assessment;
 - summary of risk management programs in place for food allergens, and evidence for their success or otherwise.
 5. Risk communication strategies
 - risk communication approach with different stakeholders
 - information and data sharing manners

Data provider: Please provide name, title and full contact details of the contact person for follow-up and further details if needed.

Confidential and/or unpublished data

FAO and WHO recognize that some of the information and relevant data which are now required may be unpublished or of a confidential nature. With regard to unpublished information and data, this remains the property of the author for subsequent publication by the owner as original material. Unpublished confidential studies that are submitted will be safeguarded in so far as it is possible to do so without compromising the work of FAO and WHO. Specific issues relating to confidentiality should be discussed directly between the information and data owners and FAO/WHO. For these and other issues please contact FAO and WHO at the contacts provided.

Deadline

Please submit any relevant information electronically either via e-mail (if not too large) or on a USB stick, in any official United Nations language (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish), and with title and short description of the content in English, to the addresses below at your earliest convenience, but no later than **19 May 2025**.

Submissions in response to the call for experts should be sent to both:

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United
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