

Expert Consultation on Trans-Fatty Acid Assessment

WHO HQ, Geneva, Switzerland, 11 – 12 October 2018

28 August 2018

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Background

Eliminating *trans*-fat (TFA) is a key to protecting health and saving lives: globally more than 500,000 deaths were attributed to increased intake of TFA. Elimination of industrially-produced TFA from the global food supply has been identified as one of the priority targets of the 13th General Programme of Work (GPW13) which will guide the work of WHO in 2019 – 2023, adopted at the 71st World Health Assembly in May 2018.

On 14th May, 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) released the REPLACE action package, a step-by-step guide for the elimination of industrially-produced TFA from the global food supply.

Industrially-produced TFA are contained in hardened vegetable fats, such as margarine, and are often present in snack foods, baked foods, and fried foods. Manufacturers often use them as they have a longer shelf life than other fats. But healthier alternatives can be used that would not affect taste or cost of food.

One of the key steps identified in the REPLACE action package is the assessment and monitoring of TFA content in the food supply and of changes in TFA consumption in the population.

Objectives and expected outcomes

The goal of this consultation is to develop TFA surveillance approaches and laboratory methods for generating accurate and globally comparable TFA data in humans and food to track changes over time.

The specific objectives of this consultation are to:

- 1. Discuss and agree on surveillance approaches, including sampling frame, for measuring TFA exposure in humans and TFA content in food;
- 2. Review and develop laboratory protocols for measuring TFA exposure in humans and TFA content in food;
- 3. Discuss and agree on analytical performance criteria and laboratory result reporting formats for measuring TFA exposure in humans and TFA content food;
- 4. Identify opportunities for multisectoral collaborations to build capacity for TFA measurements in selected countries.

The expected outcomes are:

- 1. Laboratory protocols for measuring TFA exposure in humans and TFA content in food;
- 2. Surveillance tools for countries to use in monitoring TFA intake in the population and TFA content in food supply with a view to increase comparability of TFA data to monitor the impact of public health interventions.