

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Agriculture, Nutrition and Health (ANH) Academy Technical Working Group on Sustainable Diets

Technical Working Groups of the ANH Academy are established to synthesise experience in methods and metrics in order to facilitate their greater use and accelerate research on measuring impacts of agriculture and food system change. The Technical Working Group on Sustainable Diets is a group of experts in agriculture, environmental or physical science, nutrition and/or health research, with a particular focus on methods and metrics in sustainable diets.

Sustainable diets research is a relatively new field, and as yet there has been little synthesis of evidence or sharing of knowledge as to best practices. Metrics used tend to focus on greenhouse gas emissions as a means of quantifying environmental impacts, but other measures such as land use change and water footprints have also begun to emerge. Methods for devising or modifying diets tend to involve variations on optimisation models such as linear programming, and these methods have their limitations.

The Working Group will assess these metrics and methods in detail, with the aim of producing a technical brief that will serve as a guide to research in this area.

I. SCOPE

The Group will focus its work on the development, synthesis and sharing of innovative research methods and approaches to sustainable diets.

I.1. Aim

To advance knowledge and scientific understanding among the global research community of methods and metrics relating to sustainable diets.

I.2 Objectives

- To review the metrics, tools, definitions and software platforms currently used in sustainable diets research.
- To produce a summary of current gaps and challenges related to these metrics.
- To suggest additional metrics that might help quantify the impacts of diets on the environment, and new/refinements to existing methods that would help make research in this area more robust and/or replicable.
- To identify needs and opportunities for extending research on sustainable diets in low and middle income countries

I.3. Activities

The group will meet regularly over the period of one year at the end of which it will produce a technical brief, to be presented at the Annual Conference in June.

1.4. Outputs and outcomes

The group will produce, with support from IMMANA, a technical brief and a journal publication on measuring sustainable diets aimed at identifying best current approaches and important future issues for new researchers in this area, with a particular focus on encouraging research in LMICs.

IMMANA will use these outputs to encourage and support development of new research through the ANH Academy.

II. MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Working Group:

- Are recognised experts in agriculture, nutrition, environmental or physical science, and health research, in particular sustainable diets methods and metrics
- Participate in the Working Group for a period of one year
- Participate in the Working Group in their personal capacity
- May, as appropriate, bring other experts to provide additional information and share experience in the meetings of the Group.

The total membership of the Group shall not exceed 10 members (but please note that travel funding will only be available for up to four members).

The Group may from time to time invite additional members and/or observers on an ad-hoc or continuing basis.

IV. ROLES

Each Working Group will consists of:

Coordinator – mid-career expert in the area of sustainable diets. The Coordinator will be responsible for identifying other Group members, chairing meetings and/ or leading the delivery of outputs, supported by the IMMANA Research Uptake Manager and IMMANA Research Assistant.

Chairperson – a senior expert in the area of sustainable diets. The Chairperson will help identify group members and provide general strategic direction.

Core Group Members – 3-4 experts in sustainable diets who will be actively involved in the production of the technical brief.

Associate Members/ Advisors – a small group of high-level experts in sustainable diets who will advise the Working Group and review the technical brief.

IMMANA Research Assistant – a part-time junior researcher working under the supervision of the Group Coordinator. The RA will help produce literature reviews and draft the technical brief.

IMMANA Research Uptake Manager – a full-time staff member who will support the Coordinator with day-to-day coordination of the group, and who will help produce and promote the technical brief.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Within available resources, LCIRAH/ IMMANA will provide administrative and technical support required by the Working Group, including meeting facilities, an online platform for virtual meetings, and maintenance of records and distribution of documents.

The IMMANA Research Uptake Manager will support the group with general meeting coordination, and the production and dissemination of outputs.

Limited research support, if required, will be provided by the IMMANA Research Assistant.

VI. METHODS OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The Group will determine its own methods of work, including time for consideration of requests, preparation of its agenda, establishment of special groups, keeping of records and other documents and report on its activities and findings.

The main deliverable of the Group will be one technical brief, to be presented at the Annual Conference. A suggested structure of the technical brief is as follows:

- Review of current methods and metrics in sustainable diets research
- Summary of gaps and challenges related to these methods and metrics
- Research toolkit for use by researchers considering work in this area (including sources of data, software platforms available and guides to metrics/methods)
- Recommendations for development of new metrics and methods

Additionally, the Group will be requested to support other activities of the ANH Academy, for example by offering a webinar for Academy members, contributing a blog post, or offering training at the Annual Conference.

VII. MEETINGS

The Group will meet at regular intervals – ideally four times in a year. It is recommended that the Group holds two face-to-face meetings a year, supplemented by two or more virtual meetings.

VIII. COSTS

Membership in the Working Group is voluntary and non-remunerated.

ANH Academy will cover the cost of up to four Group members' travel to the Annual Conference and to one preparatory meeting to be held in London.

ANH Academy will provide modest funds towards the production and dissemination of the technical brief.

Administrative and research support will be provided to the Group in-kind.