

WORKING GROUP ON CONTAMINATIONS

Terms of Reference

The WADA Working Group on Contaminations [WGC] is a specific Working Group¹ created by WADA Management at the request of the WADA Executive Committee (ExCo).

These Terms of Reference (ToR) are approved by the WADA ExCo, following consultation with the WADA Director General.

Background

The [August 2024 report](#) from the investigation carried out by independent prosecutor, Eric Cottier, in relation to 28 positive tests for Trimetazidine involving 23 Chinese swimmers between 1 and 3 January 2021 presented a recommendation that a holistic analysis of the issue of contamination with respect to public disclosure of no fault and negligence cases should be undertaken by WADA. To respond to this, late in 2024, WADA Management commenced the process of establishing a Working Group on contamination.

A group on contaminants known as the Contaminants Working Group was already in place but it had been deemed to be a solely technical working group composed exclusively of lawyers and scientists. It had therefore been deemed necessary to create a new group on Contamination to consider the matter more broadly, as opposed to expanding the scope and composition of the existing group. WADA Management reported to the WADA ExCo in December 2024, that the composition of the new group would reflect the multidisciplinary aspects of the contamination issue and would include athlete representation.

The intended outcomes of this new group, namely the WGC, are outlined below.

Purpose

To be responsible for conducting a global review on sources of contamination leading to Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs) and Anti-Doping Rules Violations (ADRVs) in sport and provide guidance and recommendations to the WADA ExCo on potential improvements of the anti-doping regulations and practice to further take into account the risk of such contaminations while maintaining an efficient anti-doping system.

The original mandate of the WGC will be from March 2025 to March 2026. This may be further extended if required. The necessary meeting timelines will be framed accordingly.

¹ WGs are created on an as-needed basis only, and generally with a defined mandate requiring deliverables within a set timeframe. Where the expected deliverables are not met, an extension of mandate is possible, however it is not expected that WGs continue indefinitely. If it is considered that their work should be ongoing in nature, whether WG should be elevated to an Expert Advisory Group would need to be determined.

Objectives/Key Activities

- 1) To identify the various situations at the origin of individual or collective contamination cases in sport that lead to AAFs and ADRVs under anti-doping rules*.
- 2) To assess the overall risks associated with contamination and reflect upon past, present and future trends of contamination issues affecting anti-doping in sports.
- 3) To define recommendations to the WADA ExCo on how best to address contamination situations, including any adjustments to anti-doping rules and policies.
- 4) To assess consequences of anti-doping and other policies and their eventual impact outside of the anti-doping sphere (e.g. food industry policies where applicable, regulation of veterinary treatments for cattle, dietary supplement industry).

*Such activity will be conducted in coordination with the [Taskforce on Unintentional Doping](#) established under the WADA Education Department.

The WGC should take into account the need to ensure an anti-doping system that:

- can adequately distinguish between cases of genuine contamination and intentional doping;
- is fair, proportionate, and transparent;
- promotes trust and confidence in the system for athletes and other stakeholders; and
- is sustainable from a practical and financial perspective.

Reporting Structure

The WGC reports to the WADA ExCo.

Membership/Composition

The composition of the WGC shall in principle not exceed a maximum of seven members; however, an exception may be applied if deemed necessary.

The WADA Director General, following consultation with the responsible Director/s in charge of the WGC, will recommend members to the WGC to be approved by the WADA ExCo.

Members are selected on the basis of their relevant background and experience (e.g. expertise in the areas of sport medicine, anti-doping science and law, analytical testing methods, food and medicine safety).

The membership of the WGC is published on the WADA website and is composed as follows:

- Expert from the Scientific and Medical field (acting as WGC Chair)
- Expert from the Legal field
- Athlete representative
- Expert from the National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs)
- Expert from the Sports field
- Expert from the Public organizations
- Expert from the WADA ExCo with relevant expertise

If required, additional experts and/or members of WADA Management or staff may be called upon on an ad-hoc basis for their contributions. In addition, the WGC may consult with the Contaminants Working Group and/or the Taskforce on Unintentional Doping, as necessary and appropriate.

Member terms reflect the mandate of WGC, i.e. until March 2026. If the work of the WGC is not completed within this timeframe, and is extended, the composition and terms of members will be reviewed to ensure their relevance remains.

Chair/Rapporteur

The WGC Chair shall act as the official rapporteur who is responsible for ensuring appropriate coordination with WADA Management, as well as reporting to the WADA ExCo.

WADA Liaison

The Senior Director, Science and Medicine, and the General Counsel will serve as the liaisons between WADA and the WGC.

The Senior Director, Science and Medicine, the General Counsel, as well as the Director of Education will be observers to the WGC in the sense that they contribute to and bring expertise to support the work of the WGC but do not have a voting position. Additional WADA staff may also participate in WGC meetings as WADA experts on relevant subject matters and to provide general support to the group where required.

Meetings and Working Norms

The WGC will generally meet virtually via video or teleconference as many times as is required to complete its mandate. If deemed necessary, an in-person meeting may be called.

The WGC normally operates on the basis of consensus and maintains as informal a manner as is possible or appropriate for the conduct of business. Consensus will be sought whenever possible. In the event of divergence of opinion or disagreement concerning recommendations, the absolute majority (determined by vote by hand) will rule. In the event of a tie, the Chair has the casting vote. There is presently no formal practice concerning a quorum. The Chair has the responsibility to determine if a quorum is present. Meeting notes will record any dissenting opinion on request.

The Chair may limit discussion of resurfacing issues by referring to previous recommendations or conclusions of previous discussions.

Meeting notes of the WGC meetings, reports and correspondence relative to the group's work shall be considered confidential and will be retained safely at the WADA Headquarters. To support collaboration, meeting notes of the WGC will be shared with the Contaminants Working Group and the Taskforce on Unintentional Doping, with the understanding that each of these Working Groups may provide comment if relevant. Both Working Groups will also share their respective meeting notes with the WGC.

Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Media

Upon their appointment and again annually, all WGC members are required to sign a document, pursuant to which they undertake (i) to comply with the Code of Ethics adopted by the WADA Foundation Board (as amended from time to time); (ii) to comply with the Conflict of Interest policy adopted by the Foundation Board (as amended from time to time); (iii) to keep all matters related to WADA confidential; and (iv) to comply with the WADA Media Relations Policy issued by the Agency (as amended from time to time).

A) Code of Ethics

The purpose of the WADA Code of Ethics is to establish clear ethical standards over the activities of WADA Officials (as defined in Section 2 of the Code of Ethics) to allow WADA to achieve its mission and protect its core values. WADA and all its Officials undertake to foster a culture of ethics, loyalty, and integrity within their respective areas of competence.

B) Conflict of Interest

WGC members will be bound by the WADA Conflict of Interest policy. They will be required to annually complete and sign a Statement of Absence of Conflict of Interest in accordance with the policy, and to update such statement if and as necessary during the year.

C) Confidentiality

All WGC members are required to sign a Confidentiality Declaration upon appointment and again annually. This ensures all members reflect on the confidential nature of their WADA work and confirm their adherence to such confidentiality rules.

D) Communications and Media

All WGC members must read and comply with WADA's Media Relations policy. If a member should receive a request for an interview in relation to their role in WADA, or WADA's work in the fight against doping in sport, they should first consult with the WADA Head of Media Relations or (if absent), with the WADA Communications Director.

Budget and Financial Support

WADA will provide budget for the WGC for the 2025-2026 year. Should an extension of the mandate be required, additional budget will need to be approved prior to final confirmation of the group continuing.

WADA shall provide the necessary administrative and operational resources for meetings. WADA will cover certain expenses and compensate members for meetings in accordance with its applicable indemnity policy.

It is acknowledged that some experts go above and beyond, including providing extensive advice throughout the year, outside of annual meetings. WADA offers a further indemnity to experts for such work carried out. The specific indemnity details are outlined in the "Overview of WADA Working Groups" document provided to Members each year.

Effective Date

These ToR came into effect in March 2025 and are published on the WADA website.