Guideline Participant Orientation Tool (GPOT) (v6)*

1. Preparations – before you join a guideline development group meeting	
1.1	Be clear on the guideline group objectives, deliverables and timeline.
1.2	Commit to attending all conference calls and in-person meetings. If you are not able to attend, this should be explicitly mentioned to the guideline sponsor in advance.
1.3	Be clear on what role you are taking within the guideline group and how much time is required to fulfill this role on the guideline. Understand the experience, knowledge or training that is expected for the role you are filling. For more information on guideline group membership see GIN-McMaster Guideline Development Checklist and the Participant Roles document for your guideline group.
1.4	Accurately represent your content knowledge and methodological skills to the guideline sponsor (e.g., basic statistics, clinical epidemiology, assessing risk of bias, rating quality of evidence according to the GRADE process).
1.5	Familiarise yourself with guideline methodology that the group will use for moving from evidence to recommendations. Guideline sponsors may have specific preparation materials or handbooks for training. For GRADE methodology training, see McMaster GRADE Online Learning Modules. For World Health Organization guidelines, see the WHO Handbook for Guideline Development.
1.6	Complete the declaration/conflict of interests (DOI/COI) as requested by guideline sponsor in an honest, timely and transparent manner in advance of the meeting. For more information on DOI/COI Considerations, see GIN-McMaster Guideline Development Checklist.
1.7	If your DOIs should change at any point in the guideline development process, provide changes in writing as soon as possible.
1.8	Understand that participation in the guideline group may be made public as part of guideline transparency.
1.9	Ensure you have a firm understanding of the guideline question(s) addressed in the guideline – often in the PICO (Population, Intervention, Control, Outcome) question framing format. If you have any concerns about the question these should be clarified prior to the meeting. For more information on PICO question generation see GIN-McMaster Guideline Development Checklist.
1.10	Prepare for all meetings, including conference calls by reviewing distributed materials (e.g. minutes from previous meetings or terms of reference) in advance.
1.11	Review the evidence summarized in draft systematic reviews conducted. In particular, provide feedback as early as possible if you disagree with any evidence that has been included or omitted. For more information on the inclusion of evidence see GIN-McMaster Guideline Development Checklist.
1.12	If at this stage or at any other stage of the guideline development process you have any concerns, express these to the chair or co/vice-chair and/or the guideline sponsor so that they can be appropriately addressed according to the sponsor's rules. Refrain from hidden criticism that can undermine the group process.
2. Meetings – considerations during guideline group meetings	
2.1	Ensure that the process, methods, and agenda are clear to you. Ask any questions of clarification at the outset of the meeting. For more information on the guideline group process see GIN-McMaster Guideline Development Checklist.
2.2	The chair will conduct introductions at the beginning of each meeting. If there is any doubt about the role of any guideline group participants, you should seek clarification.
2.3	Avoid any undue interruption of the guideline development process. Arrive on time for all meetings and conference calls. Where extenuating circumstances arise, inform the guideline group sponsor/chair at the earliest opportunity. If you have any urgent business or phone calls that need to be attended to during a meeting, please step outside to avoid disrupting the group.
2.4	Adhere to methods that have been endorsed by the guideline sponsor, unless otherwise advised (e.g. GRADE).
2.5	Refer to the PICO question that is being addressed to ensure that you and the group stay on task.
2.6	Through the course of the meeting, adhere to the contribution rules for your specific role (e.g. if you are an observer do not contribute unless you are specifically requested to do so). See attachment with: participant role

Please contact Thomas Piggott & Holger Schünemann with any suggestions for improvement (double click and click again on one of the names) or copy emails: thomas.piggott@medportal.ca; schuneh@mcmaster.ca or complete the Guideline Participation Orientation Tool Feedback Survey

	definitions.
2.7	Unless specifically asked to represent an organization on the guideline group, your contributions should be made from your perspective not on behalf of an organization.
2.8	Contribute your perspectives to the discussions when appropriate. Remember that you were chosen specifically for your expertise or the perspective you represent. If you do not contribute, your perspective will be lost.
2.9	Speak only when the chair calls on you - avoid interrupting other members.
2.10	When you do speak, please ensure that you speak clearly so that everyone can hear you and to the point of the current topic of discussion.
2.11	When vocalizing an opinion, ensure you have the evidence and/or a clear rationale to back up your opinion. Speak only from the evidence reviewed during the meeting or explicitly referenced in the guideline process.
2.12	Contribute to the discussions in a fair and equitable manner. Be succinct and direct with your contributions, and be respectful to others so that all may have an opportunity to contribute.
2.13	Be attentive and mindful of meeting schedule. Assist the chair in keeping the discussions on time and topic. Where the guideline chair has indicated that a discussion on a topic is closed, abide by this request.
2.14	When there is no agreement by consensus for a topic, a vote may be carried out according to rules set out by the panel chair and/or sponsor. Participants with a DOI deemed in conflict for the topic should abstain from the vote according to the sponsor's rules.
2.15	If asked to present material to the guideline group, please consider the following presentation suggestions: prepare and submit slides or handouts ahead of the meeting to the responsible parties; adhere to this time allotted for the presentation; make your presentation brief and minimize the recounting of information that has already been reviewed by guideline panel members; present material objectively and do not make leading statements unduly influenced by your opinion on the evidence.
3. Follow-up – after guideline group meetings	
3.1	Maintain confidentiality as per agreed upon procedures, including abiding by data or content embargoes as relevant. Typically, the content of guidelines can only be discussed after formal publication or with explicit permission by the sponsoring organization.
3.2	Do not undermine the guideline development process by incorporating new evidence or attempting to change quality of evidence or strength of recommendation after the guideline group meeting without explicit permission of the guideline sponsor organization and guideline group members.
3.3	Review meeting minutes for discrepancies and provide feedback in timely a fashion.
3.4	If requested, conduct a thorough review of draft guideline documents.
3.5	If requested to contribute to the guideline writing process, please consider these suggestions: focus on the specific writing task given, meet deadlines requested, use written language and style for clear and effective communication to end-users (this includes avoiding the excessive use of acronyms/abbreviations). For guidance on wording and reporting in guideline publications see GIN-McMaster Guideline Development Checklist.
3.6	If requested, assist the sponsoring organization with the publication, promotion, dissemination and evaluation of the guideline. For more information see GIN-McMaster Guideline Development Checklist.

* *Note: This tool is designed to be comprehensive and modular. Three modules are designed to identify steps participants should consider or take in the 1) preparation phase, 2) during guideline group meetings and in follow-up. For specific guideline committees or at certain stages in the process, only relevant sections should be used. The online version of this tool is designed to filter based on the guideline contributor role.*

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