



# Development of the GIN- McMaster Guideline Development Checklist Extension for Engagement

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September 18, 2025

Joanne Khabsa, on behalf of the MuSE Consortium



# Disclosure

- Member of the MuSE Consortium and co-author of several MuSE publications
- Aligned with the movement that engaging interest-holders is valuable in science and policy



# What is the MuSE Consortium?

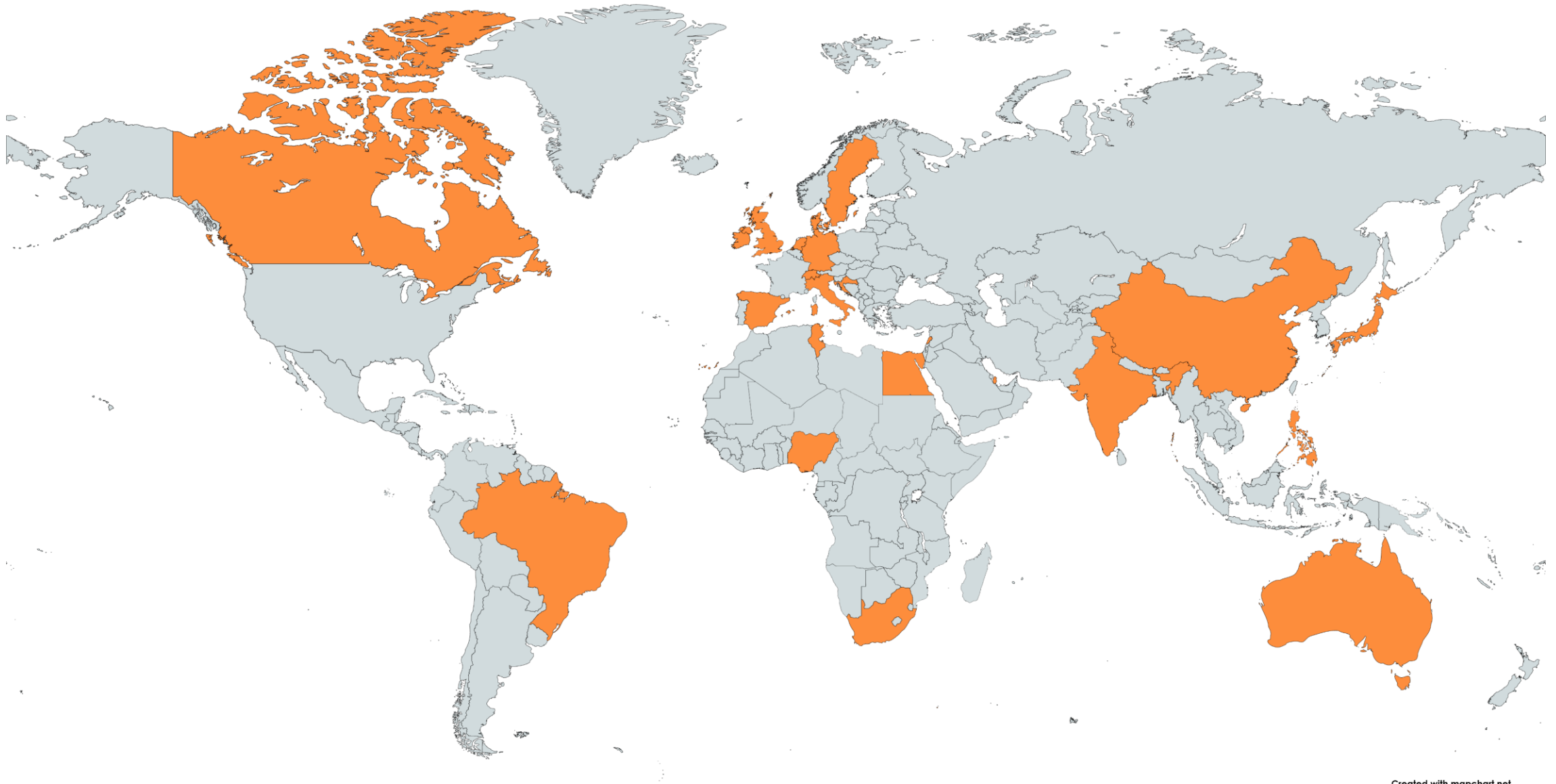
- Established in 2015
- Has grown to a 180+ member international team across 26 countries from diverse contexts and backgrounds
- Common interest in advancing methods for engagement in research and guidelines



Engagement in guideline  
development (2018-2024)

Engagement in evidence synthesis  
(2021-2026)

# MuSE Consortium



# Stakeholders → Interest-holders




- Continued use “stakeholder” can be disrespectful
- The MuSE Consortium proposes “interest-holder” instead
  - Informed by survey and extensive discussion

DOI: 10.1002/cesm.70007

COMMENTARY



## “Interest-holders”: A new term to replace “stakeholders” in the context of health research and policy

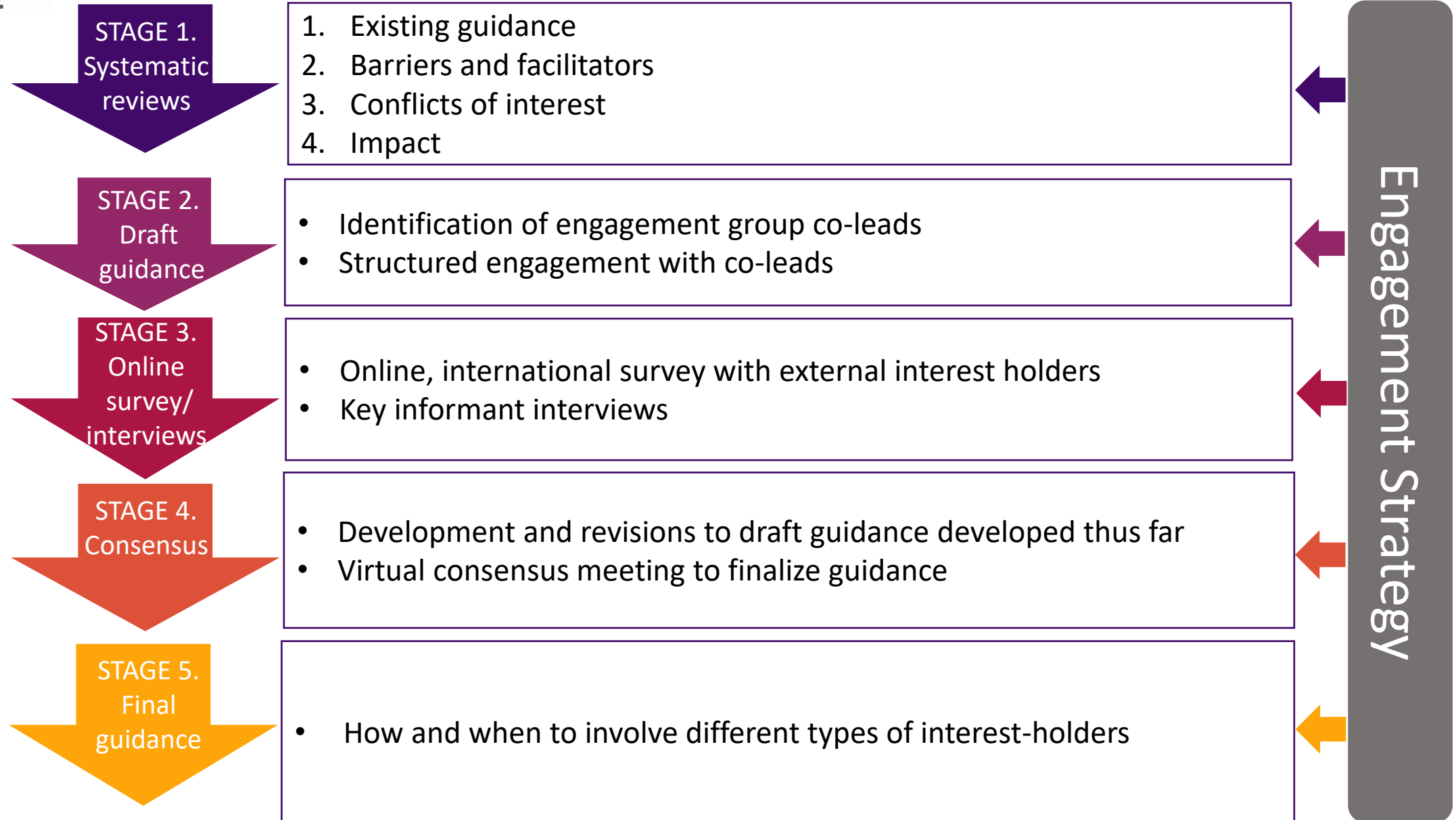
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# Objective

- To describe the methods for the development of the Guidelines International Network (GIN)-McMaster Guideline Development Checklist (GDC) Extension for Engagement

# MuSE-Guidelines Project Overview



# Interest-holder Categories



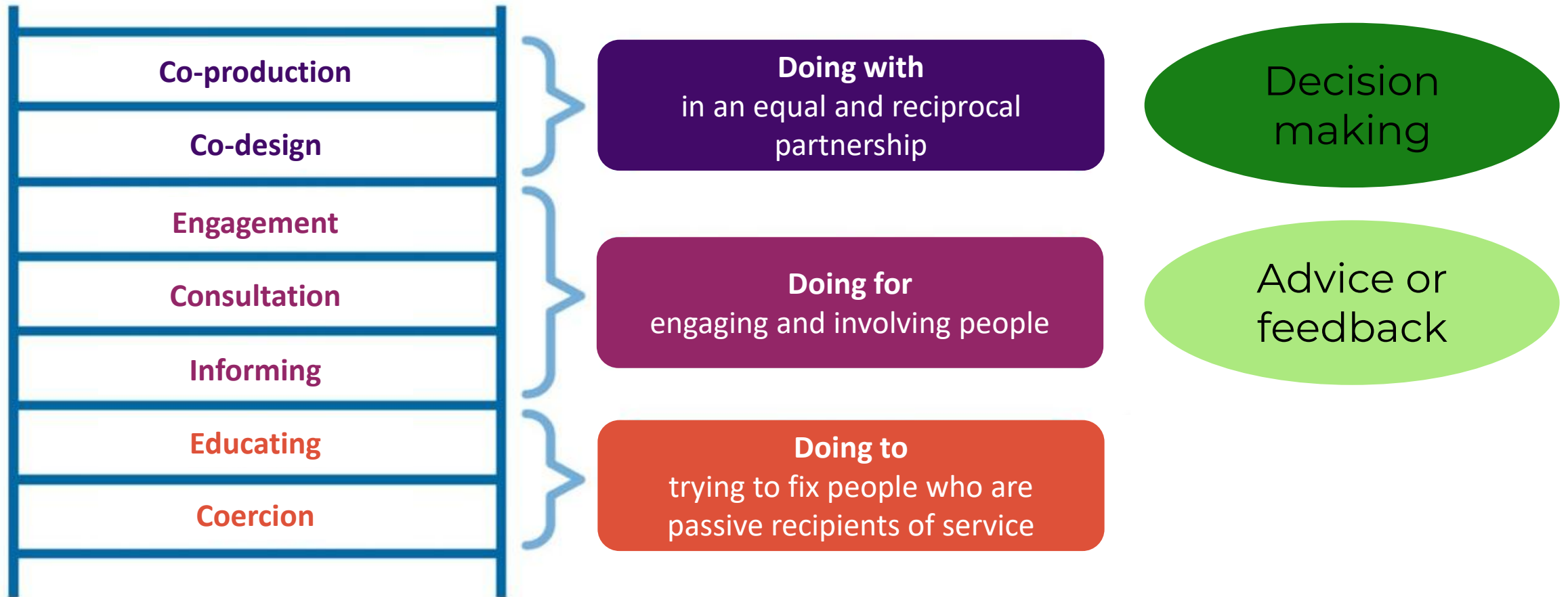




# Levels of engagement

- Defining **engagement** = an approach intended to gather input or contribution from partners toward the development of a guideline, completion of any stages of a guideline, or dissemination, uptake or evaluation of a guideline and its recommendations

# Levels of Engagement



Arnstein's ladder of participation



# Levels of Engagement

Decision  
making

Interest-holders actively contribute as an “equal voice” with other members of the Guideline Panel in decision-making about guideline activities

Advice or  
feedback

Opinions, perspectives, experiences, or values are sought and considered by the guideline development team

# Key issues

- Definitions, roles, and settings
- Stakeholder identification and selection (Roses Parker et. al)
- Levels of engagement
- Evaluation of engagement
- Documentation and transparency
- Conflict of interest management

Petkovic et al.  
*Research Involvement and Engagement* (2023) 9:27  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40900-023-00433-6>

Research Involvement  
and Engagement

RESEARCH

Open Access

## Key issues for stakeholder engagement in the development of health and healthcare guidelines



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# Engagement Strategy in MuSE

## Feb 2020

1<sup>st</sup> meeting with core team, including guideline developers and other interest-holders  
(Ottawa, Ontario)

## Feb 2021

Large group meeting to discuss overall plan and any key issues  
(online)

## 2022-2023

Interview guides for interest-holders developed with co-leads; interest-holders interviewed about draft guidance

## 2020-2021

Recruited co-leads  
Individualized meeting  
Invited to larger group meetings

## Sept 2022

Meeting with core team and co-leads during GIN  
(Toronto, Ontario)

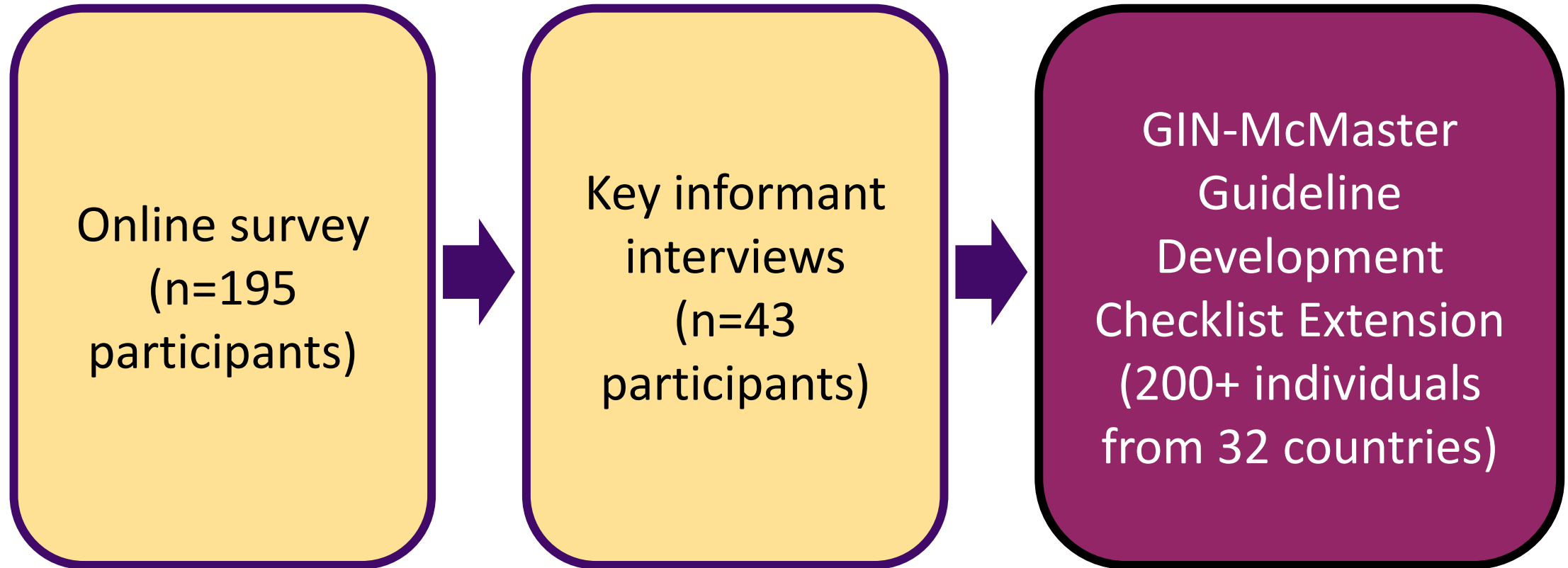
## May 2023

Consensus meetings to ensure alignment and consistency across groups and any discrepancies and key issues  
(online)

Open callouts to MuSE consortium to:  
Join systematic reviews, participate in surveys and interviews



# MuSE Guidelines Project Overview



Engage with interest-holders throughout the project (feedback & decision-making)



# Engagement Strategy Challenges

- Considering all 10 interest-holders
- Thoroughness vs pragmatism
- 10 interest-holders and 18 topics framework in the survey
  - Poor completion rates of the survey due to the length → difficult to complete, difficult to analyze
- Some interest-holders may not have had extensive guideline development experience, and the 18 topics are very detailed
- Product makers: COI
- Program managers: Hard to define, different scopes of practice depending on context
- Policy makers: Not readily available

# Strengths

- Multiple reviews (methods, barriers and facilitators, COI, impact) and multiple processes to obtain input (interviews, surveys, meetings)
- Interest-holders gave direct feedback on how and when they wanted to be involved
- Purposive sampling of co-leads (international, high and middle/low income settings)





# Limitations

- No formal evaluation of engagement strategy we used to develop the guidance
- Difficult to engage certain interest holders due to access and timing (2020-2022)
- Consortium participants were committed to engagement, and may not represent those interested in engagement; critical perspectives may be missing





# Key messages about the development

1. Consider the 10 interest-holder groups
2. Developing a consortium takes time
3. Ongoing connection is important
4. Use multiple sources to fill gaps in published literature
5. Multi-group processes require time and being adaptable



# Thank you!



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