The PICO Framework for developing objectives and guiding knowledge synthesis

The PICO headings will help you to breakdown your objectives and it will assist in devising the question that will guide your knowledge synthesis. PICO is not a rigid framework and there may be questions that do not need to cover all four aspects of PICO.

**Define your objective:** Describe your objective in as few words as possible

*e.g. To find a policy or intervention to reduce the burden of hypertension in China*

**Population:** Define in detail the population that you are interested in

*e.g. For Chinese urban populations*

*e.g. economic incentive measures such as increasing taxes of unhealthy food*

**Intervention:** Define the type of intervention that you are interested in

**Comparison:** What comparison group are you using to compare the outcomes from the inter- vention against?

*e.g. Controls (i.e. that receive no intervention)*

**Outcome:** What outcome measure(s) are you interested in?

*e.g. Reduction in the consumption of processed foods*

**Refine your objective:** Now rewrite your objective

*e.g. To find an effective policy for the reduction of consumption of salt from processed foods in ur- ban populations in China*

Using the refined objective above to guide your knowledge synthesis should produce a manageable amount of focused evidence.

The selection of the policy or intervention should be based on the results of a comprehensive situation analysis and/or conducted by expert advisors. Otherwise you may want to broaden your objective to identifying *any* policies or interventions (e.g. *any* policies or interventions for the prevention of hypertension in China). Similarly, if you are not satisfied with the quality and/or amount of evidence you identify, you may wish to broaden your search by using a less specific population (e.g. Chinese groups as a whole, or even other countries in the region)