



Charter of the Global Field Epidemiology Partnership

1. Background

Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) have been one of the most successful interventions aimed at strengthening global public health workforce and are currently operational in more than 85 countries. During the more than 40 years of FETPs, multiple stakeholders have been involved in field epidemiology training, either directly or indirectly, yet their efforts were often focussed on individual countries or a specific professional group. In addition, there was increasing recognition that the creation of successful, sustainable FETPs required not just didactic training, but also multi-disciplinary and trans-sectoral coordination and holistic support to capacity building within public health institutions and systems.

Recognizing these needs, in 2023, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC), the Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET), the World Health Organization (WHO), and other stakeholders established The Global Field Epidemiology Partnership (GFEP). GFEP is a network of national, regional and global organizations representing government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic, philanthropic and private sectors, bilateral and multi-lateral partners with tangible objectives, deliverables, performance measurement, governance, and day-to-day coordination mechanisms to fulfil its Vision and Mission.

2. Vision & Mission

2.1. Vision

All countries have robust field epidemiology capacities embedded in their public health systems.

2.1. Mission

GFEP convenes a network of national, regional, and global stakeholders, mobilizes technical and financial resources, and advocates for the expansion and integration of field epidemiology capacities into the national public health workforce.

3. Structure

Key components of the GFEP structure are:

- Members
- Steering Committee
- Secretariat
- Secretariat's Advisory Group,
- Technical Working Groups

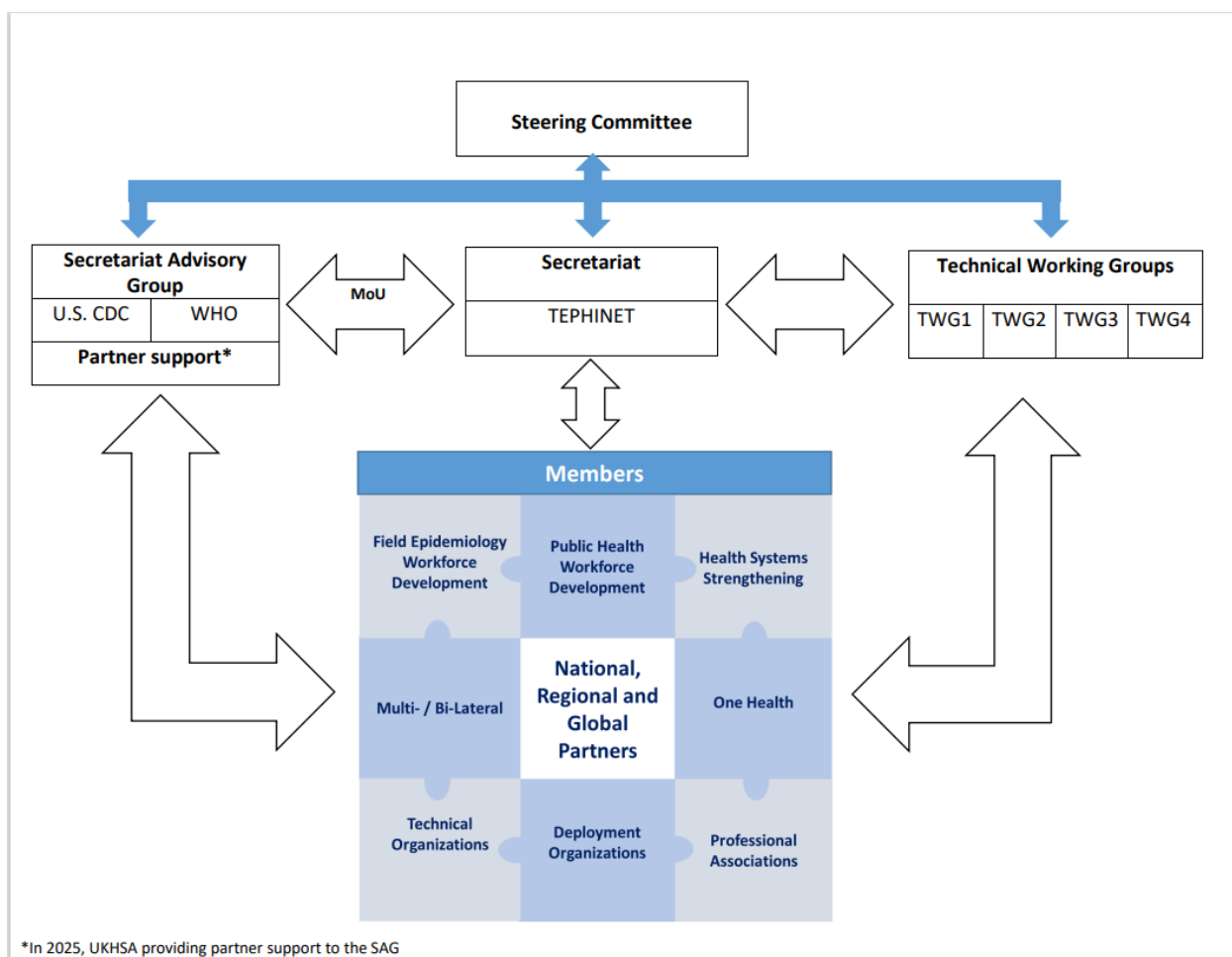


Figure 1: GFEP Structure

3.1. Members

Any organization that shares GFEP's mission and vision and contributes to its strategic objectives may become a GFEP member. Membership is institutional. Organizations willing to join GFEP should submit an Application for Membership to the Secretariat. The application form can be obtained from the GFEP's website or from the Secretariat. The Secretariat will inform membership candidates on the approval or rejection of their applications within 6 weeks after receiving the application form.

3.2. Governance and management

During the first year after approving the governance and management structures described below, the Secretariat will assess them and will propose suggestions for revisions, if any, to the Steering Committee.

3.2.1. Steering committee

The steering committee provides oversight to the strategic direction of the GFEP, supporting it to achieve its mission and objectives. The steering committee is not engaged in the day-to-day

operations of GFEP, delegating this function to the Secretariat. Only GFEP member organizations can be represented on the steering committee. Steering Committee members are senior level global health leaders, holding management/decision-making-level positions in their organizations, with technical background relevant to GFEP's vision, mission and strategic objectives. The steering committee includes up to 12 members and is co-chaired by representatives of WHO and CDC. More details on responsibilities, composition and membership of the steering committee are outlined in the steering committee terms of references.

3.2.2. Secretariat

GFEP's Secretariat is housed at TEPHINET. Secretariat ensures the financial management and accountability and day-to-day operations of GFEP, drawing on the legal statutes that govern TEPHINET. Since GFEP is not a legally established entity, TEPHINET representing its Secretariat, serves as GFEP's organizational structure and provided its legal address and bank account for GFEP's needs. TEPHINET is responsible for appointing the GFEP Coordinator, who is jointly managed by the Director of TEPHINET and the co-Chairs of the GFEP Secretariat. Formal communication on behalf of GFEP is directed from the Secretariat's email address: info@GFEP.info Financial resources mobilized for GFEP's activities are deposited at TEPHINET's account and administered by the Secretariat. The Secretariat submits regular financial and programmatic reports to the SC on how the money is spent. The money should be spent according to the operational work-plan approved by the SC. If any deviation is needed, Secretariat should get permission from SC. Officers working for the Secretariat are TEPHINET's staff members or are recruited by TEPHINET as consultants. The Secretariat receives strategic guidance from Steering Committee. GFEP's Coordinator, leading the Secretariat, is reportable to the Steering Committee, and the SC have the authority to approve or dismiss the Coordinator. Secretariat members are reportable to the Coordinator. More details on responsibilities and composition of the Secretariat are outlined in the Terms of References.

3.2.3. Secretariat's Advisory Group

The Secretariat works closely with the Secretariat's Advisory group (SAG) composed of subject matter experts from WHO, CDC, UKHSA (and other technical partners as needed). SAG supports the Secretariat on decision-making related to GFEP's strategic, policy, technical, and partnership-related matters by providing evidence-based and data-driven advice. WHO's support to the Secretariat is provided in accordance with WHO's rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. WHO reserves the right not to implement any recommendation or activity by the GFEP, including its governance and operational mechanisms, which it determines gives rise to undue financial, legal, or reputational liability or is contrary to WHO policies, regulations, and procedures. More details on responsibilities and composition of SAG are outlined in the Terms of References.

3.2.4. Technical Working Groups

Technical Working Groups (TWG) are composed of representatives of GFEP member organizations, and external subject matter experts as needed. TWGs provide technical and analytical input to ensure evidence-based recommendations and data-driven implementation

of GFEP's strategy. TWG members are selected based on expressions of interest and relevant qualifications. Each TWG develops its modus operandi, including the frequency of meetings, voting procedure, and other regulations as relevant to their objectives. Thematic foci of TWGs are determined by GFEP's strategic priorities. New TWGs may be formed and existing TWGs may be dismissed by the steering committee based on GFEP's needs and developments in the global health landscape. More details on responsibilities and composition of TWGs are outlined in the TWGs' Terms of References.

4. Meetings

Meetings of the steering committee are held twice per year. GFEP also convenes one General Assembly meeting per year open to the participation of all its members. The General Assembly meeting can be convened either in conjunction of one of a steering committee meeting, or separately. Efforts will be made to convene at least one of the annual meetings (i.e. either a steering committee meeting or a general assembly meeting) face-to-face. The others can be convened electronically. In years where TEPHINET organizes their Global FETP Conference, the GFEP Forum will be organized in parallel, and shall include the general assembly and steering committee meetings. The location of face-to-face meetings will be contingent upon the best use of resources and take advantage of situations where many members would already be together for other meetings or conferences. The Secretariat shall give the meeting time, date, and place with reasonable notice.

Special meetings of the steering committee may be called by or at the request of either of the co-chairs. The Secretariat shall give notice of the time, date, place, and purpose of the special meeting with reasonable notice. No business other than that stated in the notice shall be transacted at such special meetings.

At the steering committee meetings, a minimum of 60% members then in office, including co-chairs, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. When a steering committee member is unavailable to attend a meeting, the member may identify a representative from his/her organization to serve in their stead. The representatives will be counted toward determining a quorum and will have voting rights similar to the person they represent.

Decisions of the steering committee shall be made by consensus whenever possible. In the absence of consensus, decisions shall be made by majority vote. At least two-thirds of the attending steering committee members must participate in any vote for it to be considered valid.

The co-chairs shall determine the order of business at all steering committee meetings, subject to the approval of a majority of the members present at such meeting and entitled to vote therein.

Each co-chair has one vote when present. In case of a tie, the co-chairs shall make the decision; in the event that the co-chairpersons cannot come to a decision, the item in question will be deferred to allow for further discussion and a re-vote at a future date.

5. Minutes Reporting, Signatures, and Availability to the Public

All meeting notes, minutes, and recordings will be kept in designated files at the Secretariat by year, month, and meeting date. Final approved Executive Summaries will have the word FINAL at the beginning of the naming protocol. All other supporting documents will be held in an Archive file for historical purposes. Any public person can receive a copy of the executive summary by submitting a written request stating the meeting date and allowing for at minimum ten (10) working days for delivery.

Any meeting's executive summary, notes, and minutes that contain confidential information will be kept as a special report.

6. Adoption and Review of the GFEP Charter

The GFEP's Secretariat, in collaboration with SAG, has drafted this charter. It has been reviewed by the co-chairs. The charter will be presented to the steering committee at its first meeting for approval. Upon steering committee's approval the document is considered GFEP's valid charter.

This charter will be reviewed bi-annually by the steering committee until the dissolution of the GFEP.

The following language will be used at every revision: "This charter was last updated on {day of the week}, {day} {month } {year}." Once revised and approved, the signatures of steering committee co-chairs will be required.