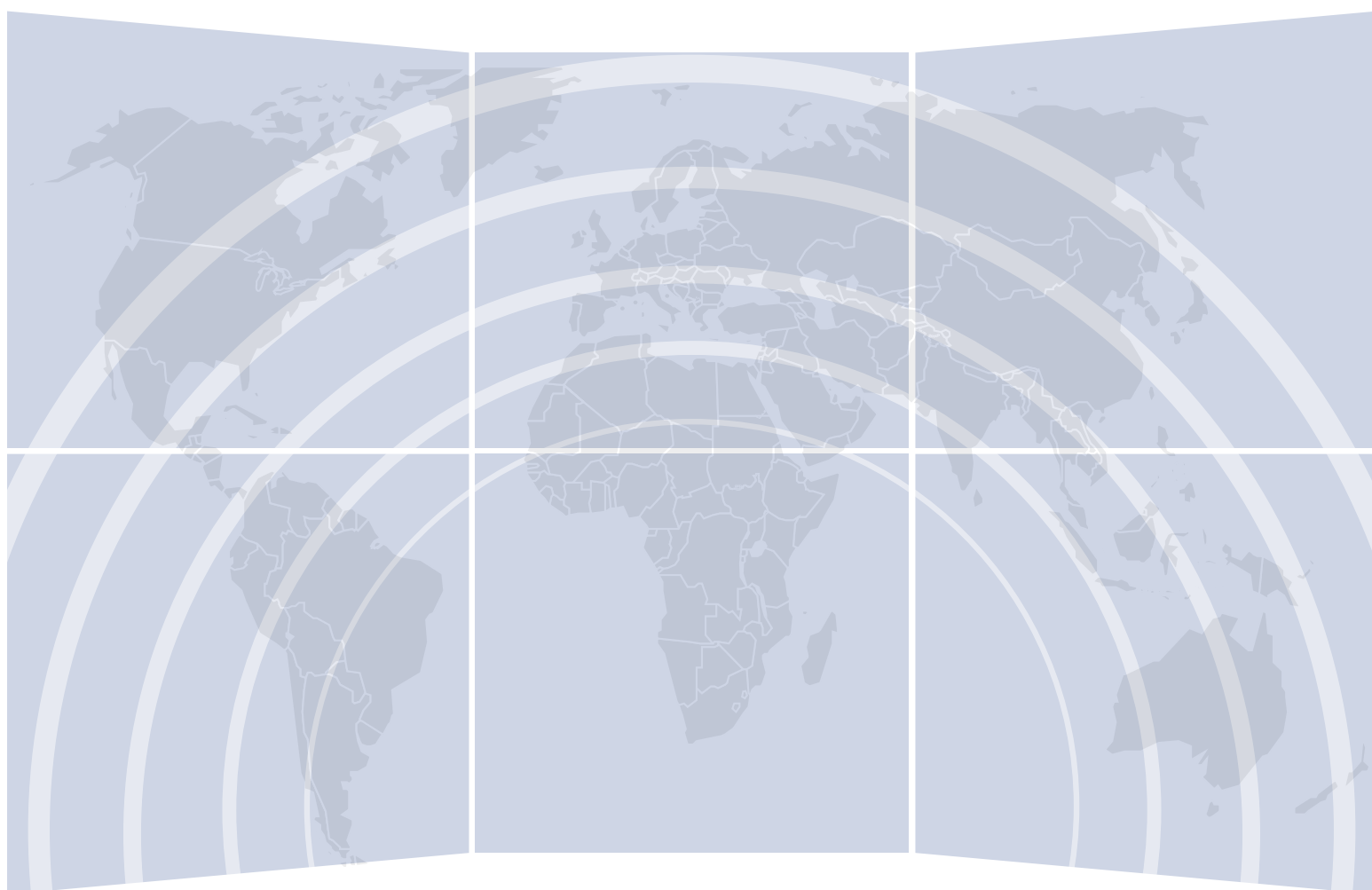


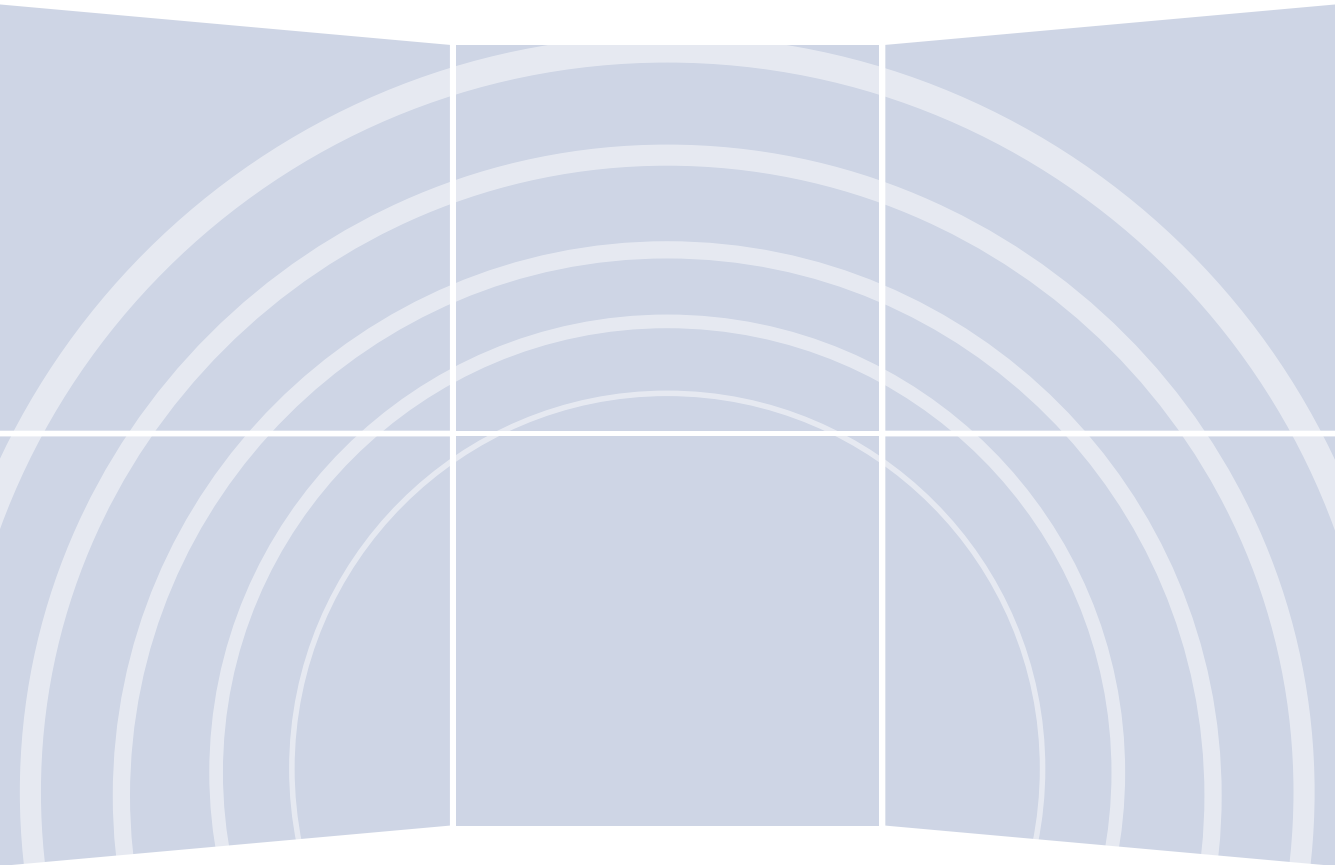
# Public Health Emergency Operations Centre Network (EOC-NET)



CONSULTATION MEETING | 19–20 November 2012 | Geneva, Switzerland



**World Health  
Organization**



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# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>AFRO</b>	WHO Regional Office for Africa	<b>IMS</b>	Incident Management System
<b>AMRO</b>	WHO Regional Office for the Americas	<b>ITT</b>	Information Technology and Telecommunication
<b>ARO</b>	Alert and Response Operations	<b>MDE</b>	minimum data elements
<b>CDC</b>	US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<b>MoH</b>	ministry of health
<b>CEO</b>	chief executive officer	<b>NCP</b>	National Centre of Public Health
<b>DSE</b>	Disease Surveillance and Epidemiology	<b>NDOC</b>	National Disaster Operations Centre
<b>DSR</b>	Disease Surveillance and Response	<b>NECC</b>	National Emergency Coordination Centre
<b>EC</b>	European Commission	<b>NIMS</b>	National Incident Management System
<b>ECDC</b>	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	<b>NIR</b>	Aileen Plant National Incident Room
<b>EMRO</b>	WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean	<b>OCHA</b>	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>EOC</b>	Emergency Operations Centre	<b>OSOCC</b>	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
<b>EOC-NET</b>	The Public Health Emergency Operations Centre Network	<b>PED</b>	Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief
<b>EPR</b>	Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response	<b>RO</b>	Regional Office
<b>ERF</b>	Emergency Response Framework	<b>SEARO</b>	WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
<b>EURO</b>	WHO Regional Office for Europe	<b>SHO</b>	Strategic Health Operations
<b>EWRS</b>	early warning and response system	<b>SHOC</b>	Strategic Health Operations Centre
<b>GCR</b>	Global Capacities, Alert and Response	<b>SITREP</b>	situation report
<b>GDACS</b>	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System	<b>SOC</b>	Secretary's Operations Center
<b>HERCC</b>	Health Emergency Response Command Center	<b>SOP</b>	standard operating procedure
<b>HERM</b>	Health Emergency Risk Management Framework	<b>TC/AC/VC</b>	teleconference /audio conference/video conference
<b>HHS</b>	US Health and Human Services	<b>TOR</b>	terms of reference
<b>HPA</b>	Health Protection Agency	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>HQ</b>	headquarters	<b>UNITAR</b>	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
<b>IAEA</b>	International Atomic Energy Agency	<b>UNOSAT</b>	UNITAR Operational Satellite Applications Programme
<b>ICS</b>	Incident Command System	<b>WG</b>	working group
<b>ICT</b>	information and communication technologies	<b>WPRO</b>	WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
<b>IEC</b>	Incident and Emergency Centre		
<b>IHR</b>	International Health Regulations		

# Executive summary

Public health emergency operations centres (EOC)<sup>a</sup> play critical roles and are becoming more and more important for effective international collaboration and coordination in preparing for and responding to the increasing occurrence of public health emergencies.

World Health Assembly Resolution WHA65.23 *Implementation of International Health Regulations (IHR)*, requests the Director-General to build and strengthen the capacities of the Secretariat to perform fully and effectively the functions entrusted to it under the IHR, in particular through strategic health operations that provide support to countries and to regional and trans-regional networks in detection, reporting and assessment of, response to, and capacity strengthening in public health emergencies.

To ensure that all public health EOCs have the capacity to perform core supporting functions for effective responses to public health risks and emergencies, especially those of international concern, the World Health Organization (WHO) Department of Global Capacities, Alert and Response (GCR) established the Public Health Emergency Operations Centres Network (EOC-NET) and organized a consultation meeting on public health EOC collaboration on 19–20 November 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting brought together 38 stakeholders from nine States Parties, seven regional and international organizations, WHO headquarters and all six WHO Regional Offices to share experiences and lessons learned, and to launch the EOC-NET.

The meeting participants identified the major roles and challenges of public health EOCs, validated the need for EOC-related data and information standards, and agreed on the EOC-NET objectives and key working areas.

## The major roles of public health EOCs

Public health EOCs play critical roles in preparedness and responses to public health emergencies. A competent EOC can support the collaboration and coordination of many preparedness and response activities and be the centre for the coordination of activities during any multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional response.

Public health EOCs in States Parties to the IHR and in regional and international organizations use different terminologies, structures, procedures, information communication tools, and have various ranges of functions. The common components of an EOC include effective

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<sup>a</sup> Public health emergency operations centres (EOC) are central locations where strategic management of public health emergencies (or events that may constitute public health emergencies) is conducted. EOCs provide support functions to coordinate responses and resources during major events or emergencies. EOCs are also referred to as strategic health operations centres, command centres, situation rooms, and crisis management centres

communications equipment and facilities, information management systems and standards, competent staff, effective command systems, appropriate procedures, as well as tools, training and exercises. The major roles of an effective public health EOC include:

- Managing, coordinating and collaborating with emergency responses through provision of information and communication technology (ICT) tools and services, the provision of a central meeting space and the coordination and direction of strategic and technical meetings and/or teleconferences.
- Conducting information management and sharing functions such as information collecting, integrating, coordinating, displaying, distributing and storing, providing situation reports, and managing information flow.
- Enabling response-related decision-making, operations, liaison, risk communication, deployment management, emergency personnel staffing, logistics and planning functions.
- Preparing for future emergency responses through the carrying out of daily functions such as surveillance, risk assessment, early warning, emergency team and resource management, development of standards, guidance and tools, preparation of plans and technical protocols, and the carrying out of emergency preparedness reviews, exercises and training.

## Major challenges facing public health EOCs

It is crucial to ensure that public health EOCs are capable of providing effective communication and information tools and management systems, in order to support decision-making and implementation during emergency responses as well as during preparedness phases. The meeting participants identified the following challenges in building a competent public health EOC:

- Effective, timely and accurate operational information flow between EOC and field teams, between WHO Country Offices, States Parties, other UN agencies, and other partners during emergencies.
- Optimal ICT, funding, maintenance, staffing, networking levels, standard procedures for EOC activation, conducting evaluation and introducing best practices.
- EOC-related standards, procedures and tools available to support information management and

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