

# Global network of WHO collaborating centres for occupational health

Ways of Working

# Introduction

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1. WHO collaborating centres (CCs) are defined as "...an institution designated by the Director-General to form part of an international collaborative network carrying out activities in support of the Organization's programme at all levels." The CCs are a highly valued mechanism of cooperation in which selected institutions are recognized by WHO to assist the Organization with implementing its mandated work. This is accomplished by supporting the achievement of planned strategic objectives at the regional and global levels; enhancing the scientific validity of its global health work; and developing and strengthening institutional capacity in countries and regions.
2. The functions of CCs typically include:
  - a. collection, collation and dissemination of information;
  - b. standardization of terminology, technology, methods and procedures;
  - c. development of evidence-based technical guidance tools and resource materials;
  - d. development and application of appropriate technology;
  - e. provision of reference substances and other services;
  - f. participation in collaborative research developed under WHO's leadership;
  - g. training; coordination of activities carried out by several institutions on a given subject;
  - h. capacity-building work at country level;
  - i. as well as provision of monitoring, preparedness and response services to deal with disease outbreaks and public health emergencies.
3. In January 2000, the WHO Executive Board encouraged CCs instead of collaborating with WHO one-on-one to develop working relations with other centres and national institutions recognized by WHO.
4. The global network of WHO collaborating centres for occupational health was created in June 1990 at a meeting in Helsinki, Finland. Its first meeting was held in 1992 in Moscow, Russian Federation. Since then the network has grown to more than 50 institutions from all WHO regions and country groups.
5. The global network of WHO collaborating centres for occupational health provided technical expertise and support to WHO to implement its tasks and priority goals under the WHO Global Strategy of Occupational Health for All (Resolution WHA 49.12 from 1996), the WHO Global Plan of Action on Workers' Health (Resolution WHA 60.26 from 2007), and the Regional strategies and actions plans in the area of occupational health.

6. The breadth of WHA resolutions on occupational health and the size of the network required organizing its activities into triennial workplans with groups of CCs working together on different priority areas.

7. This document outlines the ways of working specific to the global network of WHO collaborating centres for occupational health. It should be used in conjunction with the Guide for WHO collaborating centres.<sup>1</sup>

## Mission

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8. The mission of the global network of WHO collaborating centres for occupational health is to stimulate networking between participating institutions and international partners in supporting WHO to implement its mandated tasks in the area of occupational health and safety by concentrating technical expertise and international efforts towards meeting the needs of developing countries and countries in economic transition, promoting equity, justice and fairness in occupational health and safety and strengthening national and local health systems.

## Composition

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9. The network comprises:
- a. institutions officially designated by WHO collaborating centres for occupational health;
  - b. international partners of WHO in the area of occupational health and safety:
    - i. ILO Labour Administration and Occupational Safety and Health Branch, and
    - ii. NGOs in official relations with WHO working in the area of occupational health;
  - c. WHO occupational health programmes in the Headquarters and regional offices;
  - d. other international and national organizations as required by WHO.

## Planning

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10. The work of the network is carried out according to a global master plan (GMP) developed in consultation with the collaborating centres and partners and approved by WHO.

11. The plan is developed by WHO based on its programmatic needs for external expertise to carry out tasks and achieving objectives as requested by WHO governing bodies

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<sup>1</sup> Guide for WHO collaborating centres, World Health Organization, 2014, Geneva, available at [http://www.who.int/collaboratingcentres/Guide\\_for\\_WHO\\_collaborating\\_centres\\_2014.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/collaboratingcentres/Guide_for_WHO_collaborating_centres_2014.pdf?ua=1)

and according to the biennial operational workplans of WHO global and regional occupational health programmes.

12. The GMP contains priority areas, products and activities that require networking between several CCs.

13. The CCs contribute specific activities for implementing the WHO tasks and objectives under the GMP according to their individual capacities and expertise.

14. The specific activities under GMP to be carried out by each CCs are reflected in their individual workplans under the process of designation and re-designation as WHO collaborating centres. The workplans for designation and redesignation of CCs may contain other activities, as agreed by WHO, that do not require networking with other collaborating centres.

15. The implementation of GMP activities by individual CCs and NGOs in official relations with WHO are reflected also in their formal annual reports to WHO.

## Organization of work

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16. The activities in the priority areas of GMP are carried out by working groups comprised by experts from the institutions of network. WHO may invite other experts to participate in the working groups.

17. The work in each priority area is coordinated by one collaborating centre and an expert from WHO.

18. The activities of the working groups are carried out according to annual operational plan in line with GMP and WHO policies. These plans contain allocation of responsibilities for individual activities, timeline, milestones and deliverables.

19. The working groups prepare annual reports on their activities for review by the coordination group.

## Meetings

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20. Meetings of working groups are held primarily online. Face-to-face meetings are convened subject to availability of funds.

21. Technical meetings and workshops may be organized as part of, or back-to-back with, major congresses and conferences.

22. The network holds triennial business meetings of the member institutions to develop and update the GMP, to review progress made, to agree on major initiatives, strategies and structures as required by WHO.

23. The meetings of the network and their deliberations are organized according to the rules of WHO.

## Coordination group

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24. The heads (or their representatives) of the CCs responsible for coordination of the priority areas and the WHO responsible officers constitute a coordination group of the network. (see figure 1).
25. The overall coordination is carried out by the WHO Global Programme for Workers' Health with support from one collaborating centre.
26. The tasks of the coordination group are:
  - a. to coordinate the work of the working groups across the priority areas;
  - b. to monitor the progress in GMP implementation;
  - c. to stimulate content input from the network members and support the mobilization of human and financial resources for the implementation of the activities;
  - d. to facilitate communication between network members;
  - e. to plan and support the organization of network meetings;
  - f. to promote the work of the network externally.
27. The coordination group meets before and after the triennial network meetings and at least twice a year in the period between these meetings. As much as possible the meetings will use conference calls and online meeting facilities.
28. The records of the meetings of the coordination group are made available to all network members as agreed with WHO.

## Collaborative workspace

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29. The network uses online collaborative workspace established according to WHO policies (WHO Extranet)
30. The collaborative workspace contains:
  - a. GMP and workplans of individual CCs and NGOs;
  - b. meeting reports and documentation;
  - c. updated list of members of the network and contacts;
  - d. WHO guides for collaborating centres;
  - e. individual collaborative workspaces for working groups containing the most up-to-date information pertaining to their work, including:
    - i. operational plan;
    - ii. membership of the group;
    - iii. schedule of conference calls and meetings;
    - iv. agendas and minutes of meetings and conference calls;
    - v. annual reports;

- vi. technical documentation;
- f. communication facility, such as dashboard, picture gallery;
- g. archives.

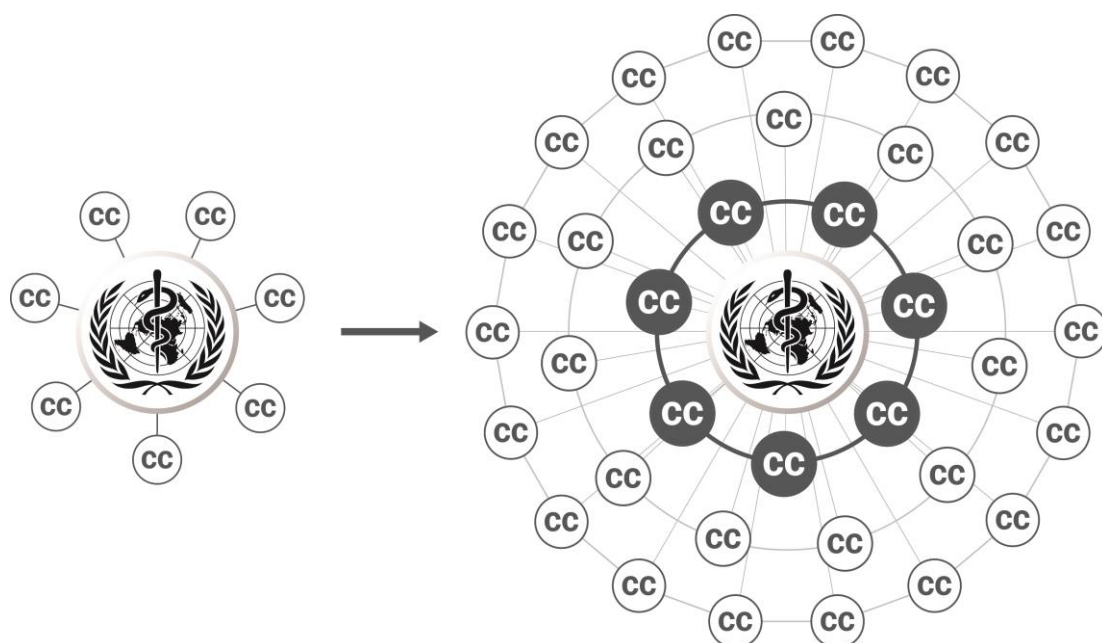


Figure 1 Ways of working of WHO collaborating centres – Moving from bilateral relations to networking

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