

GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL TEAM (EMT) INITIATIVE

Version 6/02/2018 as endorsed by the EMT Strategic Advisory Group

Definition of an Emergency Medical Team

The term Emergency Medical Team or EMT refers to groups of health professionals providing direct clinical care to populations affected by disasters, outbreaks and/or other emergencies as a surge capacity to support the local health system. They include governmental (both civilian and military) and nongovernmental teams and can include both national and international EMTs.

Vision

The vision of the EMT Initiative is:

1. Saving lives
2. Preserving health
3. Protecting dignity

Mission

The mission of the EMT initiative is to enhance preparedness and promote the rapid deployment and efficient coordination of Emergency Medical Teams adhering to minimum standards in order to reduce the loss of life and prevent long-term disability as a result of disasters, outbreaks and/or other emergencies.

Overall purpose

The purpose of the EMT initiative is to improve the timeliness and quality of health services provided by national and international Emergency Medical Teams and enhance the capacity of national health systems in leading the activation and coordination of this response in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, outbreak and/or other emergency. Teams shall also include public health expertise and logistics support either included in the team or as specific public health or logistics rapid response teams.

Adherence to guiding principles, core standards and specific technical standards

The EMT initiative promotes adherence by all Emergency Medical Teams – be they for local, national, regional or international deployment – to a series of guiding principles as well as core and technical standards. The guiding principles and core standards are applicable to all Emergency Medical Teams and the technical standards apply to each team in accordance with its capacity, ie. type. They can be found in the “Classification and minimum standards of Foreign Emergency Medical Teams in Sudden Onset Disasters”¹, and are currently being updated.

Global objectives

The EMT Initiative aims to support member states, NGOs and international organizations by providing a platform for collaboration to jointly achieve the following objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Support and implement EMT capacity strengthening, preparedness and training activities at national, regional and international level, including by developing guidance and tools for response activation and coordination
- **Objective 2:** Promote and lead (or support, as relevant) the establishment of the EMT Coordination Cell for the efficient and timely activation and coordination the EMT response following a sudden-onset disaster, outbreak and/or other emergency
- **Objective 3:** Continuously develop, agree on and promote clinical, technical and operational minimum standards for EMTs, including adaption of these standards and coordination mechanisms in armed conflict settings, as well as identify and share best practices amongst EMTs and countries, based on research and lessons learnt
- **Objective 4:** Provide a framework for quality assurance of EMTs, manage the peer review and classification process of international EMTs and support countries developing their national EMT accreditation systems
- **Objective 5:** Ensure commitment and ownership of the EMT initiative by EMTs and their organizations and Member States as well as other relevant national, regional and international stakeholders.

Implementation

The main implementation of the objectives of the EMT initiative is done at the regional and country level, with dedicated support from the WHO Regional Offices and the global level WHO EMT Secretariat. Donor countries are encouraged to support the development of EMT capacities in less-resourced countries as well as to support WHO in fulfilling its functions as secretariat to the Initiative.

Governments and organisations are encouraged to designate EMT focal points to actively participate and act as main information contact point for EMTs at country level as well as the EMT community at regional and global level.

Regional Groups are being established by Governments and organizations in each of the regions to develop and agree on work plans that adapt the overall objectives to the regional and country context.

The **World Health Organization** provides the secretariat to the EMT initiative and receives guidance from a global level **Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)**. The SAG is charged with advising on policies and strategies for EMTs, ranging from workforce development, deployment, field coordination and operations, technical governance, and linkages and engagement between the WHO and the global EMT community. It is composed of representatives from a broad range of stakeholder groups including members states representing the regions, regional organizations, EMTs, donor states, partner networks, UN OCHA, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, the WHO and observers.

ⁱ These can be found on <https://extranet.who.int/emt/> The document refers to Foreign Medical Teams as it dates from 2013. In 2015, at the EMT Global Meeting in Panama, it was decided to change the term to Emergency Medical Teams clearly emphasising that there can be national and international EMTs, with the large majority in fact being national EMTs.