



GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Abstract

Health & Family Welfare Department – Strengthening of Public Health Surveillance System in the State – Implementation of Field Epidemiology Training Programme (FETP) in association with ICMR–National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE), Chennai – Permissive sanction- Accorded – Orders issued.

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (FW) DEPARTMENT

G.O.(Rt)No.952/2026/H&FWD Thiruvananthapuram, Dated,07-03-2026

Read: Discussion with NIE Chennai at the Government level regarding strengthening epidemiological capacity in the State - decisions- submission of the proposal by DHS.

ORDER

Kerala has a strong public health surveillance system and health indicators comparable with international standards. However, the State continues to face emerging and re-emerging public health challenges including infectious disease outbreaks and the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases. In order to effectively address such challenges and to strengthen the surveillance and response mechanisms within the public health system, it has become necessary to enhance the epidemiological capacity of the public health workforce.

2. In this context, discussions were initiated with the Indian Council of Medical Research – National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR–NIE), Chennai for establishing structured Field Epidemiology Training Programmes (FETP) in the State. The programme aims to strengthen the field epidemiology workforce by providing specialized training to public health personnel currently working in the State health system and engaged in disease surveillance and response activities.

3. The proposed training programme envisages combining the academic framework developed by ICMR–NIE, Chennai with the public health expertise available within the State. The programme will equip field-level officers with the necessary competencies in surveillance data analysis, field investigations and evidence-based decision making, thereby enabling

effective public health interventions at different levels of the Panchayath Raj system in Kerala. The training programme will also align with the competencies and learning framework followed under the Field Epidemiology Training Program initiatives implemented by ICMR–NIE, including health situation analysis, outbreak investigation, programme evaluation, epidemiological methods and scientific communication.

4. The programme shall consist of the following training components:

I. Intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Programme (IFETP)

The Intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Programme shall be implemented as a one-year in-service training programme for Programme Officers, Assistant Surgeons, District Epidemiologists and Block Epidemiologists working in the State health system. Each batch shall consist of approximately 20 participants. The programme will include contact sessions, webinars and field-based learning activities carried out along with the routine responsibilities of the participants. Certification of the programme shall be issued jointly by ICMR and CDC.

II. Training of Trainers for Competency-based Epidemiology Training Programme (ToT-CETP)

A Training of Trainers (ToT) programme shall be conducted for developing a cadre of State-level mentors in epidemiology. Eligible officers from the regular health services with sufficient experience and service tenure at least 10 years shall be selected for the programme. A cadre of 30–40 mentors shall be developed at the State level who will subsequently train epidemiologists working at the Block level.

III. Competency-based Epidemiology Training Programme (CETP)

The Competency-based Epidemiology Training Programme (CETP) shall be implemented as a one-year certificate training programme for Block Epidemiologists with the objective of strengthening the core capacities of surveillance, data analysis and outbreak investigation. The programme shall be conducted by State-level mentors with technical support from ICMR, and three parallel batches shall be conducted during each cycle.

5. Government have examined the matter and permissive sanction is hereby accorded for implementation of the Field Epidemiology Training Programme in association with ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai as given below and as per the course details annexed to this order. The programme shall be implemented in a time-bound manner and the candidates shall be selected as given below

Stream	Category of Personnel	Basic Qualification	Additional Criteria
IFETP	8 slots shall be reserved for Programme Officers from regular cadre including District Surveillance Officers, NCD Nodal Officers, RCH Officers, District TB Officers and JAMOs who satisfy basic qualification criteria 2 slots shall be reserved for Assistant Surgeons who satisfy the basic qualification criteria and agrees to work in program divisions. 10 slots shall be reserved for District and Block Epidemiologists who satisfy the basic qualification criteria	Post-Graduate degree in Community Medicine or Public Health with at least 5 years of remaining regular service or (for the contractual epidemiologist) who can assure a contractual obligation of at atleast 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submission of an operational research or programme management initiative already completed in their current responsibility ● Specific contributions made to the LSG level, Block level or District level Pandemic Preparedness Plans in their respective jurisdictions ● Contribution done in enhancing quality and outcome of any of the Health Programs
ToTCETP (State level mentors)	Public Health experts from State service divided among the North, Mid and South Zones	Regular cadre officers with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FETP trained (Advanced or Intermediate), OR • MBBS with MD Community Medicine / Master of Public Health with 5 years of experience, AND • At least ten years of service remaining at the time of joining the course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submission of the Conduct of Training program details for any health program and contribution in developing course module
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submission of an operational research or programme management

CETP	Block Epidemiologists	Post-Graduate degree in Community Medicine or Public Health who can assure a contractual obligation of at least 3 years	initiative already completed in their current responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific contributions made to the LSG level, Block level or District level Pandemic Preparedness Plans in their respective jurisdictions
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** If any slots are not available in a category, it shall be shifted to other categories*

- The expenses related to the contact sessions such as travel, food and accommodation shall be borne by the State Government from XV FC Health Grant / other funds for capacity building for the expenses other than those met from ICMR funds
- The programme shall be conducted within Kerala at suitable locations.
- There shall be no course fee, but the candidates shall be obliged to serve the State Health Services Department for 3 to 5 years as the case maybe, failing which appropriate cost recovery shall be initiated.
- The field level data collection and related activities by the selected candidates shall be aligned with their current job responsibilities. Secondary data in the public domain shall also be used if necessary.
- ICMR-NIE, Chennai will coordinate and implement the course, provide curriculum, sessions, webinars, study materials, and collaborate closely with the Kerala State Health Department. They will also support logistics for faculty mentors and resource persons.
- Candidates shall be identified by the State Government for the different programmes as given below

The programme shall be implemented as an in-service capacity building initiative for eligible public health personnel engaged in disease surveillance and response activities in the State health system in accordance with the guidelines and course framework appended as Annexure to this order.

6. It is also ordered to constitute a Steering Committee for monitoring the implementation of the programme with the following members:

- ACS/Prl Secretary/Secretary Health and Family Welfare - Chairperson
- State Mission Director, National Health Mission – Co-Chairperson
- Director of Health Services – Convener
- State Surveillance Officer, DHS Thiruvananthapuram
- Additional Director (A&T), DHS Thiruvananthapuram – Member
- Director, ICMR–NIE – Co- Chairperson
- Dy Director (Public Health), DHS Thiruvananthapuram– Member
- Asst Director (Public Health), DHS Thiruvananthapuram – Member
- Scientist, ICMR–NIE Chennai – Member
- State Nodal Officer (Training), NHM – Member

7. The Committee shall meet once in two months to review the progress of the programme and suggest necessary course corrections and amendments in any of the stipulation. Directorate of Health Services and the National Health Mission shall provide necessary administrative and logistical support for the implementation of the programme. The detailed programme structure and operational framework of the training programmes are appended as Annexure to this order.

8. The Director, ICMR – National Institute of Epidemiology shall furnish the MoU to be entered into between the Department of Health and Family Welfare represented by SMD NHM and ICMR-NIE.

(By order of the Governor)
Dr. Rajan Namdev Khobragade I A S
ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY

To:

The Director of Health Services, Thiruvananthapuram.

The State Mission Director, National Health Mission.

The Director, ICMR – National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai. (with C/L)

The Accountant General (A&E/Audit), Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram.

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Signed by

Vipin Kumar. S

Date: 07-03-2026 13:43:32

Section Officer

Annexure-1 – Detailed Programme Plan for FETP Programme in Kerala in association with ICMR-NIE, Chennai

A) Intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Program (IFETP)

Name of Course	I FETP Kerala
FETP Level	Intermediate
Certificate	CDC + ICMR NIE
Targeted learners	In-service model for State or District level Programme Officers, Assistant Surgeons , District Epidemiologists or Block epidemiologists with a Post-graduate degree in Community Medicine or Public Health
Total trainees per batch	15-20
Age limit and Service Conditions	No age limit Minimum 5 years of remaining service for regular staff Min three years of bonded obligation for contractual staff
Duration of the course	12 – 15 months
Schedule of the course	5 Contact Sessions of one week each every two to three months, Total of 35 days (maximum) of Class and a Total duration of 12 -15 months.
Core Activities of Learning (CALs)	Surveillance Data Analysis – 1 Outbreak Investigation – 1 Group Program Evaluation – 1 Group Epidemiological study – 1 Abstract writing – 1
Deliverables from the scholars	80% attendance in Contact Session 80% attendance in Weekly webinar Complete all Core Activities of Learning (CALs)
Teaching & Learning Methods	Theory, Case study Discussions and Practical Hands-on Field Mentoring for Learning by doing
Mentoring	NIE Mentors - One mentor for 5 mentees Field mentoring + Support for completing CALS
Course Fee	Free
Support from State	Course venue Travel and accommodation support to trainees to attend training
Support from ICMR NIE	All logistic support to ICMR – NIE faculty and mentor during training and mentoring CAL logistic support to the trainees Lunch and Refreshments during training

B) Training of Trainers program for-Competency-based Epidemiology Training Program (ToT - CETP) for state trainers by ICMR-NIE

Name of Course	YoT - CETP Kerala
Certificate	ICMR NIE
Targeted learners	Kerala health system staff, who are in Regular cadre with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FETP trained (Advanced or Intermediate), OR • MBBS with MD Community Medicine / Master of Public Health with 5 years of experience, AND

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least ten years of service remaining at the time of joining the course
Total trainees per batch	20 – 30
Age limit and Service Conditions	No age limit At least ten years of service remaining at the time of joining the course
Duration of the course	Two Contact Sessions of one week each
Schedule of the course	Two Contact Sessions of one week each Total of 15 days (max) Contact sessions will be two months apart
Focus Areas	Contact Session 1: Surveillance Data Analysis & Outbreak Investigation Contact Session 2: Program Evaluation & Research Methods
Deliverables from the scholars	100% attendance in Contact Session Getting 80% on the Post-session assessment Getting 75% in the Pedagogy assessment
Teaching & Learning Methods	Theory, Practical Hands-on sessions, Case Study discussions handled by ICMR-NIE Trainers
Course Fee	Free
Support from State	Course venue in North, South and Central Kerala Travel and accommodation support to trainees to attend training Lunch and Refreshments during training
Support from ICMR NIE	All logistic support to ICMR – NIE faculty and mentor during training and mentoring

C) Competency-Based Epidemiology Training Program (CETP) for block epidemiologists by State Trainers

Name of Course	CETP Kerala
FETP Level	Intermediate
Certificate	ICMR NIE
Targeted learners	Block Epidemiologists
Total trainees per batch	30 to 40 per batch Three concurrent batches – North, Central, South Kerala
Age limit and Service Conditions	No age limit Min three years of bonded obligation for contractual staff
Duration of the course	12-15 months
Schedule of the course	5 Contact Sessions – three days each every two to three months (Total of 15 days (max)) Weekly Webinar
Core Activities of Learning (CALs)	Surveillance Data Analysis – 1 Group Epidemiological Study - 1
Deliverables from the scholars	80% attendance in Contact Session 80% attendance in Weekly webinar Complete all Core Activities of Learning (CALs)
Teaching & Learning Methods	Theory, Case study discussions and Practical hands- on handled by ICMR NIE Faculty, and Field Mentoring & Learning by doing by State Trainers
Mentoring	Group State Mentors - No designated mentor per mentee ICMR NIE Faculty Coordinator Field mentoring + Support for completing CALS
Course Fee	Free
Support from State	Course venue in North, South and Central Kerala Travel and accommodation support to trainees to attend training Lunch and Refreshments during training
Support from ICMR NIE	All logistic support to ICMR – NIE faculty and mentor during training