



## NATIONAL CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL (NCDC)

Directorate General of Health Services, Government of India



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### Frequently asked Questions- India Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Training Programme

Q1. What is the India EIS Training Programme?

Ans. The India EIS Training Programme is a competency-based specialized training in epidemiology in which EIS officers develop epidemiological skills while working under field conditions in a public health programme or a state health department for two years under the technical guidance of a placement supervisor and experienced mentor. It is modeled on the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Program, operational since 1951. The US CDC EIS Program has successfully trained more than 3000 epidemiologists, many of whom are at the forefront of public health at the US CDC, WHO and other international organizations.

Q2. Why is an India EIS Training Programme needed in this country?

Ans. At present India has numerous didactic postgraduate residency programmes such as MD Community Medicine/ Preventive and Social Medicine. These programmes provide a good understanding of public health but are unable to equip trainees with skills in field epidemiology necessary for public health action including surveillance and effective and rapid response to a public health event or crisis. The India EIS Training Programme provides an opportunity to develop these skills in epidemiology under practical conditions through an apprentice model of “learning by doing” to address real time public health problems under the technical guidance of a mentor.

Q3 How is India EIS different from existing FETP programmes in the country

Ans. The India EIS Training Programme differs from existing FETP programmes in terms of the nature of training imparted and the profile of trainees. In the EIS Training Programme, there is an emphasis on hands-on, experiential training under the guidance of a mentor available to assist 24/7 rather than didactic training linked to an academic setting. The EIS officers work in a placement site which is a national or state health programme or a central programme, under the supervision of a senior officer called a placement supervisor, and a subject matter expert called a mentor. Potential officers are postgraduates with experience in public health who, once trained, will readily be able to use their skills in the existing Govt. health system.

Q4. Why should the states recommend a candidate for the India EIS Training Programme?

Ans. It is an investment for the future. Although the candidate, if accepted, will be assigned elsewhere during the 2 years of the programme, s/he will return to the state department/ organization after completion of the training as a highly competent epidemiologist who is equipped with the skills to address challenges of priority issues of emerging and reemerging diseases, enhance visibility of the program, and offer support in mobilizing resources.

Q5. What is the application process?

Ans. The intake for candidates for this two-year Programme will be once a year. NCDC will announce the call for applications on the web and through print media. Candidates are required to submit applications in a prescribed format. Through preliminary screening, the candidates fulfilling the eligible criteria will be shortlisted and will be interviewed by a selection committee. The candidates recommended by the selection committee will undergo further evaluation by the experts during an epidemiology training workshop. The report of the experts will be examined by the selection committee to finalize the final list of candidates. The training of the finally selected candidates will begin in September with an inception course of one month in NCDC.

Q6. What type of training will be imparted?

Ans. The India EIS Training Programme will span over two years and will include activities to cover core activities of learning (CALs). The initial month will comprise classroom training and problem solving case studies. Several other weeks of classroom training will occur throughout the two years. The remaining learning is through on-the-job activities in field epidemiology in a public health programme or a state health department for two years under the technical guidance of an experienced placement supervisor and mentor.

Q7. What is training under mentorship?

Ans. Training under mentorship is a form of training in which EIS officers learn while working under the technical guidance of a senior epidemiologist/ public health personnel who guides the officers in performing specific real time epidemiological tasks and core activities of learning (CALs), provides intuitive feedback on the public health problems at hand, and aids in technical and professional development. Mentors are epidemiologists or public health professionals with experience and expertise in epidemiological analysis and the ability to translate evidence into policy. The mentor should demonstrate expressed available desire and time to dedicate to EIS officers.

Q8. Where EIS officers are placed and how are placements decided?

Ans. EIS officers will be placed in a national or state public health programme or central project for the entire two year period of the India EIS Training Programme. During their period in these assignments/ placements, the officer will work closely with their placement supervisor and mentors to develop work and scientific plans, complete the CALs, and accomplish the other objectives of the Programme. Extended period of travel to the field may be required for the same,

and officers may be pulled from their placement site for short periods to assist in outbreak investigations.

Q9. How are assignments/placements identified?

Ans. Assignments/placements will be in central/state health programmes/projects that have the availability of a potential placement supervisor/mentor to train under, active existence of public health related data, opportunities to fulfill core activities of learning, and commitment to offer logistical support to EIS officers for a period of two years.

Q10. After completion of EIS training will EIS officers be awarded a degree?

Ans. Upon successful completion of the training, the officers will be awarded a certificate jointly by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Delhi and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA.

Q11. Who will bear the cost of payment of salary of candidates during the two year training period?

Ans. The India EIS training is a two year competency based “learning by doing” training. State-sponsored candidate will continue to draw their salary from the organization from where they have been sponsored. The self sponsored candidates will be paid an honorarium of Rs. 45,000/- per month. The candidates both state-sponsored and self-sponsored are required to meet their living expenses on their own, however a housing stipend of Rs. 5000/- per month will be paid. No training fee will be charged from the candidates. In addition, the candidates will be supported for procuring course material and meeting their travel cost during field visits. Further details can be seen in the compendium available at our website [www.ncdc.gov.in](http://www.ncdc.gov.in).

Q12. If names of interested candidates are recommended from a state, is it certain that they will be selected into the Programme?

Ans. No, recommendation of a candidates’ name from states / organizations does not ensure automatic selection. The selection process is very stringent which includes preliminary screening of the applications, the candidates fulfilling the eligible criteria will be shortlisted and will be interviewed by a selection committee. The candidates recommended by the selection committee will undergo further evaluation by the experts during a two day epidemiology training workshop. The report of the experts will be examined by the selection committee to finalize the final list of candidates.

Q13. Which are the likely placements for those completing the India EIS Training Programme?

Ans. Since India EIS is a much sought after training, the recommending agency/institute must also guarantee placement of the trainee after completion of the Programme into a position suitable for someone who has acquired competencies in applied field epidemiology.

Q14. How can an organization/state be enrolled as a potential placement site?

Ans. Any public health organization or state department that fulfills the above mentioned criterion, and is interested in having an EIS officer, may write to the Director, NCDC expressing interest and possible projects for the officer. NCDC, after examining the merits of the site,,may enlist the organization/state as a potential site for the placement of EIS officers. While the organization/state health department will have the benefit of having an EIS officer contribute to the public health activities, it will be the responsibility of the concerned organization/state to provide all appropriate facilities and environment conducive to the competency-based EIS training.

Q15. What will an organization/state gain by accepting an EIS officer for placement?

Ans. The India EIS Training Programme is a flagship training programme of Govt of India in joint collaboration with USA under the Global Disease Detection initiative. India is the only country, other than USA, to initiate EIS training. Apart from being part of this prestigious venture, the receiving institution will gain an officer who can contribute substantively to public health activities. Additionally, the organization/state department will be partners in the national commitment to meet the threat of emerging and reemerging infections.

Q16. How will the EIS officers be assigned to various placement sites?

Ans. A process of matching interests of the officers with the available assignments/placements will be conducted by NCDC. This will depend on the number of assignments/placements identified by NCDC and the number of officers available for placement. An officer will not be placed in the same state or organization from where he/she has applied.

Q17. How is India EIS Training Programme expected to contribute to the public health system in India?

Ans. The EIS Training Programme is conceptualized keeping in mind India's acute shortage of trained public health manpower. The training is expected to contribute towards developing a cadre of highly qualified epidemiologists in the country. Such individuals will take a leading role in health departments at various levels from national to district level.