

Intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Programme (I-FETP) at NIHFW

Strengthening India's Public Health Workforce through Field Epidemiology

National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), New Delhi, in collaboration with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, is implementing the Intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Programme (I-FETP) as part of the national expansion of field epidemiology capacity. The programme is supported technically by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Under PM-ABHIM, the expanded national I-FETP network is being implemented through 14 partner institutions (hubs), significantly increasing the country's capacity to train field epidemiology professionals. The expanded network enable the training of more than 900 field officers, compared with approximately 250 officers trained per year under the earlier model. This substantial expansion aims to develop a larger, geographically distributed cadre of skilled field epidemiologists capable of strengthening disease surveillance, outbreak investigation and evidence-based public health response across India.

About the Programme

The I-FETP is a competency-based, field-oriented training programme designed to strengthen the practical epidemiological skills of public health professionals working at the state and district levels. The programme focuses on developing the capacity to detect public health threats early, analyse surveillance information, investigate outbreaks, generate epidemiological evidence and support timely public health action.

The programme follows the principle of "Learning by Doing", with emphasis on application of epidemiological knowledge to real-world public health problems. Core areas include disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, epidemiological analysis, field investigation, programme evaluation, scientific writing, presentation of findings and evidence-based decision-making. The I-FETP model in India combines contact-based learning with field activities and mentorship.

Objectives

The NIHFW I-FETP aims to:

- Strengthen field epidemiology competencies among public health professionals.
- Improve the use of routine surveillance data for early detection of signals and trends.
- Build capacity for systematic outbreak investigation and response.
- Develop skills in epidemiological analysis, field investigation and programme evaluation.
- Promote generation and use of evidence for public health decision-making.

- Strengthen scientific writing, presentation and communication skills.
- Establish a sustained network of trained public health professionals and mentors.

Training Approach and Programme Structure

The NIHFW I-FETP adopts a competency-based, practice-oriented and “learning by doing” approach, integrating structured contact sessions with mentored field-based activities throughout the training period. Participants apply epidemiological methods to real public health problems through surveillance and programme data analysis, outbreak and field investigations, epidemiological studies, programme evaluation, scientific writing and presentation of findings. Regular mentoring and technical guidance support participants in completing competency-based field assignments and translating learning into public health action. The programme comprises five structured contact sessions, complemented by continuous field-based learning and mentorship at the participants’ respective work settings.

Contact Session Timeline

Contact Session	Schedule	Status
1st Contact Session	13–17 July 2026	Held
2nd Contact Session	5–9 October 2026	Scheduled
3rd Contact Session	January 2027	To be confirmed
4th Contact Session	April 2027	To be confirmed
5th Contact Session	June 2027	To be confirmed

Expected Public Health Impact

The I-FETP contributes to strengthening India’s surveillance and response systems by developing professionals who can:

- Detect public health threats early through surveillance.
- Conduct systematic outbreak investigations.
- Analyse and interpret epidemiological data.
- Generate evidence for programme improvement.
- Communicate scientific findings to support public health action.

By building field epidemiology capacity across districts and states, the programme supports a stronger, more responsive and resilient public health system aligned with India’s national health security goals.

Way Forward

Through the collaboration of NIHFW, NCDC, WHO and CDC, the NIHFW I-FETP provides a structured platform for developing a skilled and practice-oriented public health workforce. By

combining formal learning, field experience and continuous mentorship, the programme seeks to enable public health professionals to transform surveillance information into evidence and evidence into timely, effective public health action.