



Global Health  
Development



EMPHNET  
The Eastern Mediterranean  
Public Health Network

**Global Health Development (GHD)**

**Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET)**

# **Strategy 2020 - 2022**

## **Creating Opportunities for Change**

### ***GHD and EMPHNET: Working together for better health***

Global Health Development (GHD) is a regional initiative created to support countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and to strengthen their health systems to respond to public health challenges and threats. GHD was initiated to advance the work of the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) by building coordinating mechanisms with Ministries of Health, International Organizations and other institutions to improve population health outcomes. As an implementing arm to EMPHNET, GHD aligns its strategies with national policies and directions. Serving as a collaborative platform, GHD/EMPHNET is dedicated to serve the region by supporting national efforts to promote public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related services.

EMPHNET ■ 42 Abdallah Ben Abbas Street, Shmeisani, Amman, Jordan

■ Tel: +962-6-5519962 ■ Fax: +962-6-5519963

[www.globalhealthdev.org](http://www.globalhealthdev.org)

## Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<i>1.1 Background</i> .....	2
<i>1.2 Regional Context</i> .....	2
<i>1.3 Areas of Expertise</i> .....	4
<b>2. Strategy Development</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>2.1 Purpose and Rationale</i> .....	6
<i>2.2 Strategic Planning Methodology</i> .....	7
<b>3. Strategic Overview</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>3.1 Vision, Mission and Values</i> .....	8
<i>3.2 GHD/EMPHNET's Working Areas</i> .....	10
<b>4. Strategic Goals, Objectives and Approaches</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<i>Goal 1: Lead and advance applied epidemiology in the EMR</i> .....	14
<i>Goal 2: Strengthen public health programs and response to public health needs in the EMR</i> .....	16
<i>Goal 3: Promote knowledge transformation, information exchange and networking</i> .....	22
<i>Goal 4: Strengthen organizational development, sustainability and performance</i> .....	24
<b>5. Implementing and Monitoring the Strategy</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>6. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Annex 1: Results of the SWOT Analysis</b> .....	<b>30</b>

## Foreword

First and foremost, I would like to extend deep gratitude to the directors of the Field Epidemiology Training Programs, our stakeholders and experts who contributed to the development of this strategy. I also would like to acknowledge the efforts undertaken by our technical and management teams in developing this strategy independently and without relying on outside resources, believing that it is essential to develop our own strategy to meet our internal needs.

We consider this strategy as a cornerstone for the future of GHD/EMPHNET as it clarifies the concentration areas as well as the areas that we need to expand on in the next three years. This strategy will guide our work as it presents us with a roadmap that corresponds to the expansion and growth we had over the last ten years. Therefore, following thorough consideration and reflection, we agreed on four essential goals that encompass operational research, workforce development, exchange knowledge and networking, public health programs, in addition to management, fundraising and administration as core elements of our work.

We are looking forward to identifying key performance indicators that will allow us to measure progress as we work diligently to achieve what we agreed on under this strategy in the next three years. It is worth noting that we have included new topics that we started working on such as health promotion and protection and environmental health, which reflect clear and specific expansion.

We are proud of this strategy and consider it one of best documents that we produced over the last ten years. We look forward to successful implementation while working towards meeting the needs in the region with confidence, commitment and dedication.



Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour  
Executive Director

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

Established in 2009, the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) is a non-profit organization committed to achieving better health for the people in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). With consideration to the vast variation between the countries and within each country regarding the economic, development and emergency levels, EMPHNET remains dedicated to act as a source of knowledge and evidence-based solutions for all EMR countries. The organization's implementing arm, the Global Health Development (GHD), was established in 2015 to advance EMPHNET's work in the region by building coordinating mechanisms with ministries of health, international organizations, civil society, and other organizations and institutions. GHD and EMPHNET (GHD/EMPHNET) shares an obligation to support EMR countries in strengthening their health systems in response to various public health challenges and threats.

Since its establishment, GHD/EMPHNET worked through collaborative efforts to strengthen public health in the EMR focusing on building local capacities, fostering collaboration, strengthening program planning and implementation, supporting evidence-based decision making and promoting health and well-being. Further, and by considering the importance of accessibility to basic health services, GHD/EMPHNET realized the need for integrating services and joining efforts through building partnerships with governments, international agencies and local societies to ensure better health outcomes for populations in the EMR. Accordingly, GHD/EMPHNET upholds proactive communication with the government counterparts and relevant stakeholders to ensure effective and impartial health services by contributing to recovery plans for strengthening health systems, while focusing on identifying public health priority needs and developing corresponding capacity building plans. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET supports ministries of health to respond to public health threats to minimize health risks, while focusing on meeting the requirements of the International Health Regulations (2005) as part of the Global Health Security Agenda.

Today, as GHD/EMPHNET moves ahead with its strategic directions, it extends sincere gratitude to the ministries of health in the region for a decade of collaboration and partnership. The efforts in the coming three years will be directed at supporting countries to respond to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable communities with strategic focus on the lowest two quantiles to overcome the existing inequalities where the poorest are deprived from accessing basic health services.

## **1.2 Regional Context**

From a regional perspective, EMR countries are faced by increased health challenges attenuating the ability of health systems to respond to the complex disease burden. Several EMR countries are still suffering from the double burden of disease as well as the threat of public health events that result from emergency predicaments and fragility. In view of the current emergencies in many of the countries in the region, GHD/EMPHNET supports

humanitarian actions by contributing to global and regional efforts to alleviate the devastating burden affecting anguished communities as a result of war and political unrest as several countries in the region are challenged by unpredictable political unrest affecting the continuity of health care services, thus threatening sustainable health development efforts.

During the last two decades, health status indicators have generally improved in the region. However, disparities still exist between countries of the region and within communities in each country. The region's demographic and socioeconomic characteristics express an extended wide base and narrow top population pyramid with people under the age of 18 representing almost 50% of the total population. In addition, high population growth rates and the large average family size, together with the overwhelming economic constraints, increase the demand for jobs with limited job opportunities. On the other hand, urbanization and increased numbers of mega cities in the region and other priority countries negatively affect efforts for achieving sustainable growth and development and harmfully implicate the public health standards in relation to housing, water, food, energy and social protection. Alternatively, countries in the EMR range from very stable and rich states to less stable, conflict, fragile, poorly endowed and emergency affected. Nevertheless, EMR countries share many features relating to ethnic origin, language, values and customs.

Consequently, GHD/EMPHNET works on building national, regional and global partnerships as well as securing sustainable solutions as an innovative strategy to support countries build robust health systems to meet the overwhelming public health challenges. In this context, GHD/EMPHNET represents a resource solution for converting information into action and modeling best practices within well-identified demographic and geographic conditions. As such, and in view of the mounting concern for the double burden of disease prevalent in the region, GHD/EMPHNET gives special attention to health equity and contributes to the development and implementation of health policies in this domain. Subsequently, and with high commitment to supporting countries reach universal health coverage, GHD/EMPHNET recognizes health equity as one of its values and promotes for health as a human right, ensuring that everyone has the right to the highest attainable quality of health services.

Within this context, and centered around the belief that change and transformation are key elements for progressing towards ensuring health for all as a basic human right, GHD/EMPHNET contributes to the global efforts of promoting health and well-being for all ages consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, GHD/EMPHNET adopts a transformational function that guides its role and efforts towards assisting countries in responding to existing and potential challenges concerning health protection and disease prevention, emergency and health security, prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, environmental health and more. For such purposes, integration and coordination with relevant stakeholders within the health sector and with other concerned sectors is essential. Eventually, working with local authorities and other ministries like interior, education, information, agriculture, water and environment in addition to civil society organizations will improve health outcomes and support countries to achieve goals with more emphasis on the SDGs were SDG3 is interlinked to the 16 other SDGs.

GHD/EMPHNET will contribute to the global efforts in alleviating the impediments to basic health services, by directly engaging with ministries of health to translate recommendations into actions and developing cost-effective capacity building schemes and analysis tools to achieve SDG3's targets. Understanding the diversity in the region, GHD/EMPHNET will study the specific elements for each country in the region when planning and implementing interventions to assist countries in reaching better health outcomes. All things considered, GHD/EMPHNET will play a strategic role to leverage resources in the region through collaboration, information sharing, networking and knowledge exchange interventions, all of which have a significant effect in bringing "Better Health for People in the Eastern Mediterranean Region". Subsequently, and in response to the emerging priorities, *GHD/EMPHNET remains dedicated to serving countries in the EMR by positioning itself as a collaborative platform driven by the need to support national efforts achieve better health outcomes through robust health systems.*

As such, GHD/EMPHNET's approach to achieving better population health in the region is multifaceted and is guided by public health priorities and challenges facing the countries in achieving the SDGs. Therefore, GHD/EMPHNET supports countries in setting off sustainable measures that enable achieving better health outcomes. GHD/EMPHNET adopts a comprehensive approach process to health systems strengthening at different levels to identify and respond to health challenges. Working at regional, national and sub-national levels requires tailoring solutions to fit local context to trigger positive change with respect to each country needs, priorities and institutional set-up as required. GHD/EMPHNET uses a proactive learning approach to bring about effective problem solving and ownership, where a network of experts to foster and maximize a broad knowledge base transfer has been established. The commitment to support countries bring about change at the frontline level is supported by a bottom-up approach to health system strengthening where action planning and program management is transformed at the peripheral level, thus producing national-level change.

To-date, GHD/EMPHNET's ability to join public health efforts in the region helped in addressing population needs, linking countries, supporting MOHs and strengthening different components of public health systems in the region which is a central function of the organization. In this respect, GHD/EMPHNET will continue working with governments to enhance resource mobilization for priority actions and harmonization. Subsequently, redirecting available resources for efficient utilization will allow GHD/EMPHNET to address countries' needs to develop and maintain sustainable solutions. In addition, by establishing a regional network of public health officers and epidemiologists, GHD/EMPHNET optimizes performance to ensure availability of quality data to support countries in building strong public health systems, monitoring tools, regulations structures that can improve public health throughout the region, thus contributing to regional and global health security.

### **1.3 Areas of Expertise**

Since its inception in 2009, GHD/EMPHNET managed to secure prominence in many areas of expertise. These areas became the solid grounds and foundation for expanding

GHD/EMPHNET's work in contribution to achieving better health outcomes in the EMR. The following presents GHD/EMPHNET's areas of expertise that are the pillars that drive its forces:

- Capacity Building: GHD/EMPHNET supports countries meet the challenge of health system strengthening by empowering the public health workforce with knowledge and skills. It uses capacity building in a variety of context and works at customizing and tailoring training content to country context and language. GHD/EMPHNET uses an integrated approach by using field experience, tabletop exercises, and case studies. Further, GHD/EMPHNET uses a network of experts to foster and maximize a broad knowledge base transfer and engages policy makers and managers in capacity building as a means for securing sustainable outcomes.
- Data for Action: GHD/EMPHNET built a strong experience in applied research, data management and use, by partnering with public, private, academia, regional and global institutions. By acknowledging the need to build research capacity for the sake of promoting data for action, GHD/EMPHNET seizes every opportunity to invest in young researchers, by training national staff in data collection, data analysis, interpretation and use for action. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET engaging directly with ministries to support data for action and translate recommendations for improvements.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: GHD/EMPHNET supports countries in strengthening their public health programs by empowering the public health workforce with monitoring and evaluation knowledge and skills. It supports monitoring and evaluation of public health interventions and projects and assures integration of monitoring and evaluation activities in public health projects and field activities. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET supports countries in developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks for public health programs and conducts assessment and evaluation missions to support countries in appraising programs or surveillance systems. GHD/EMPHNET also designs and implements assessment and evaluation frameworks for various training programs.
- Technical Assistance: GHD/EMPHNET technically support countries in planning and managing programs to address public health challenges and meet gaps that hinder health system performance. This includes providing technical assistance in training, research, system development, monitoring and evaluation, digital solutions, health promotion, and more. In this regard, GHD/EMPHNET works at linking stakeholders and groups to maximize the advisory benefit of technical experts both nationally and regionally. GHD/EMPHNET also provides mentoring support tailored to country context, while partnering with public and private entities to maximize the uptake of technical services and maintaining a roster of technical experts.
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT): GHD/EMPHNET supports the development and use of ICT in learning through its Learning Management System and distance learning approach. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET provides assistance to countries in exploring and using ICT solutions that support addressing public health challenges and

gaps, developing and using innovative ICT applications to enhance monitoring performance, using innovative approaches in research and program management, using ICT in education and learning to ease access to knowledge and mentorship, gathering/managing real-time data and extracting information from datasets using mobile/digital data collection tools.

- **Professional Translation:** GHD/EMPHNET offers professional translation services to facilitate program implementation. It employs a network of professional translators who can translate content that includes reports, reviews, tools, presentations, educational and training material, and more. With Arabic and English being the two major languages, GHD/EMPHNET also provides French translation and uses a thorough review process to ensure the highest level of quality and accuracy in translation.
- **Logistics and Operations:** GHD/EMPHNET manages various types of activities in several countries in the EMR, which is facilitated by its strong links with ministries of health and relations as well as different stakeholders in the region. Employing in-country human resources to operate at the national and sub-national levels enables implementation of activities in countries that is usually supported by deployment of experts. Over the years, GHD/EMPHNET established partnerships with suppliers to facilitate timely and adequate delivery of commodities and equipment. The long and solid experience in arranging events regionally, play an important role in GHD/EMPHNET's ability to successfully provide logistics and operational support to stakeholders.

## **2. Strategy Development**

### **2.1 Purpose and Rationale**

The purpose of this strategy is to reshape GHD/EMPHNET's strategic directions with a focus on supporting countries in progressing towards meeting SDG3 targets, in addition to collaborating with key partners and stakeholders to make sustainable progress in public health action in the EMR. The strategy will allow GHD/EMPHNET to continue building on the gains achieved since 2009 and guide interventions that meet the challenges in the region, thus contributing to better health and wellbeing of the population. To improve performance and guide operation, GHD/EMPHNET decided to prepare a three-year strategy for years 2020 to 2022. The process echoed the need to develop a three-year strategy to meet the following:

- Include new areas of work that were developed or were being developed in response to the need in the region.
- Propose a structure for expanding work and for targeting partnership opportunities
- Provide direction for expanding the network while focusing on priority areas
- Provide a road map that will guide expansion and implementation of work, while aligning available and desired resources
- Capture the opportunity to revise accomplishments and identify issues and ideas that were previously planned but not implemented, to re-position these within the newly developed road map



In brief, GHD/EMPHNET aims to produce a clear and practical strategy that considers priorities in the region, input from stakeholders, internal review, while integrating the need to develop and enhance internal management system to match expectations.

## 2.2 Strategic Planning Methodology

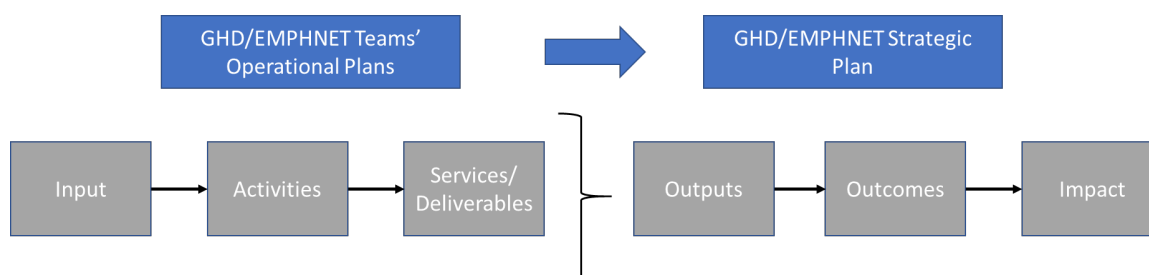
In the process of developing the current strategy, GHD/EMPHNET revised its previous strategic plans for years 2013 – 2017 and 2017 – 2020. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET used feedback collected from stakeholders, partners, supporters and experts, as well as input from internal reviews and discussions from various teams and senior management. A SWOT analysis was done to identify internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats, the results of which are presented in Annex 1. In addition, different teams at GHD/EMPHNET used the Strategic Planning model to identify the gaps between the current situation, the vision and strategic goals which they thought will lead to defining major issues for their working areas. An iterative process followed to develop the strategic goals and related strategic objectives. Collated input and results from analysis was later used to map the strategy, develop the strategic framework and draft this document (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Approach for Developing the Strategy

It is worth noting that a decision was made not to have SMART goals, as the identified strategic objectives were formulated to direct the work rather than measure performance and progress. When developing the strategic plan, GHD/EMPHNET used the results chain framework to derive outputs and targets based the approaches, thus facilitating the process of monitoring progress and achievements (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Results Chain



## 3. Strategic Overview

### 3.1 Vision, Mission and Values

GHD/EMPHNET is driven by the determination to identify and provide every opportunity for people in the EMR to lead healthy lives and well-being. As a prominent public health entity, GHD/EMPHNET is aware of the various health determinants and the contextual factors affecting the health status in today's world. GHD/EMPHNET is also aware of the importance and power of collaboration in meeting the public health needs and addressing the challenges, which becomes complicated when impoverishment, conflict and scarce resources emerge. GHD/EMPHNET believes that change and transformation are key elements for progressing towards the SDGs, and that health is a basic right for all human beings wherever they live. EMPHNET's work is driven by deep interest and belief in the importance of achieving universal health coverage, which influence its initiatives and strategies. Therefore, consistent with SDG3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", GHD/EMPHNET adopts a transformational vision that guides its role and efforts towards assisting EMR countries in strengthening their health systems. Such efforts will contribute to meeting key health priorities and gaps that cover various public health areas.

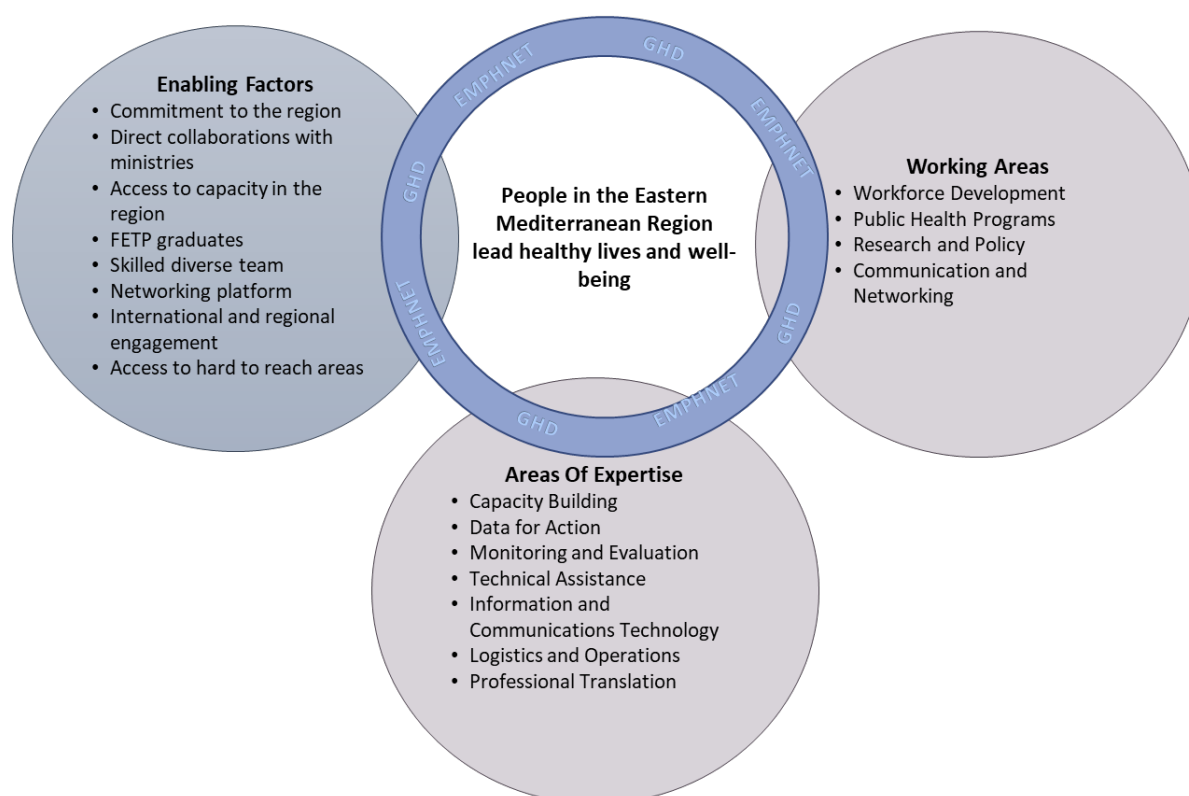
The Increasing demand from several EMR countries to develop their capacities in various areas of public health urged GHD/EMPHNET to expand its efforts in capacity building to address key health priorities and gaps that cover targeted public health functions, such as outreach and emergency, biorisk management, communicable diseases, and health protection and promotion. With that in focus, GHD/EMPHNET adopts a vision that is consistent with SDGs: "*See people in the Eastern Mediterranean Region lead healthy lives and well-being*". GHD/EMPHNET aims to achieve its vision through its mission that seeks to prevent and control diseases, to conduct and support operational research for priority public health domains, and to strengthen public health programs while working jointly with similar institutions associations, networks and organizations. We aim to achieve our mission by working in four areas: Applied Epidemiology, Public Health Programs, Research and Policy, and Communication and Networking.

***Our Vision*** is to enable people in the Eastern Mediterranean Region lead healthy lives and well-being.

***The Mission*** of GHD/EMPHNET is to prevent and control diseases, to conduct and support operational research for priority public health domains and to strengthen public health programs while working jointly with similar institutions associations, networks and organizations.

In supporting countries in their goals to address health priorities, GHD/EMPHNET puts emphasis on engaging and involving stakeholders. It considers stakeholder involvement as an effective strategy for identifying potential opportunities necessary for maximizing the use of resources needed to roll out broader actions to improve health outcomes. Further, GHD/EMPHNET's strength is generated by several enabling factors that contribute to better performing health systems in EMR countries. These factors stem from internal and external strengths and contextual factors that help maximize the effect and impact of opportunities sought to address challenges. Therefore, GHD/EMPHNET considers collaborating with governments and partners as well as employing a network of experts and professionals as essential for instigating transformation and deliberate actions. In summary, GHD/EMPHNET considers its vision as the core element that directs its core purpose or mission with an approach that focuses on its areas of expertise and working areas, which are enabled by several key factors (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: GHD/EMPHNET's Approach**



GHD/EMPHNET is guided by several guiding principles that are important for driving its work. These represent the core beliefs and ideas that drive the organization's strategy and guide it towards bringing about commitment, ownership and sustainability to its work.

## GHD/EMPHNET'S CORE VALUES

**Collaboration:** as a core asset for capturing excellence.

**Partnership:** to meet the needs of the countries it works in and to seek opportunities and enable their success.

**Competence:** to maintain the highest standards of performance and to adhere to the principles of continuous quality improvement.

**Excellence:** to serve as a force for productivity and the improvement of work quality.

**Innovation:** as a key element for attaining distinctive results.

**Accountability:** for delivering measurable results and creating positive impact.

**Health Equity:** as a principal element that inspires our productivity.

### 3.2 GHD/EMPHNET'S Working Areas

Over the past years, GHD/EMPHNET succeeded in partnering with over 12 countries and has worked in close collaboration with a wide range of partners and implementers. GHD/EMPHNET's deeply rooted collaboration with countries allowed it to drive and direct opportunities that corresponded with priority public health needs of countries, allowing it to expand its efforts and tailor new working areas that target essential public health functions. Therefore, in addition to focusing on applied epidemiology, which was the initial onset area of concern for the organization, new working areas emerged that remain in demand. Today, GHD/EMPHNET continues to have a critical role in strengthening public health systems by focusing on strong and integrated efforts that align with the public health needs of the populations, thus bringing about change needed to achieve its vision.

GHD/EMPHNET's strategy for 2020 – 2022 recognizes the interdependence between its strategy and operational plans commanding the need to make deliberate effort to continue increasing coordination, collaboration and integration in order to advance the strategy forward. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will focus on its working areas in addition to its internal infrastructure that supports operation. These areas are presented below.

**Workforce Development:** Investing in health workforce development is a key factor in strengthening health systems and in supporting progress towards reaching SDG targets. Building a stronger public health workforce improves health system performance by contributing to more effective service delivery. GHD/EMPHNET's Center of Excellence for

Applied Epidemiology (CEAE) focuses on building capacity in applied epidemiology with commitment to support Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) in EMR countries. These programs aim at applying scientific methods in the field, such as using epidemiologic methods to investigate public health problems or outbreaks, as well as run analysis on data gathered through

surveillance or other methods in order to generate evidence for decision makers. Core competencies gained by FETP training add value to meeting International Health Regulations (IHR) by building surveillance capacity and improving efficiency in monitoring disease incidence, prevalence, determinants, coverage, program evaluation, and expenditure data. In addition, FETP training plays a crucial role in strengthening the response to unexpected health problems or events, thus containing and preventing their spread. Today, GHD/EMPHNET works on integrating applied epidemiology concepts in strengthening a range of services as skilled field epidemiologists are core to a robust public health system.

**Public Health Programs:** Preventing and controlling communicable and non-communicable diseases are essential for assuring healthy living and well-being. GHD/EMPHNET supports countries in delivering effective public health programs by building capacity and conducting research to prevent and control emerging and reemerging diseases, vaccine preventable diseases and non-communicable diseases. Focus areas under this domain include disease control, public health emergency management center, polio eradication and strengthening routine immunization, health protection and promotion, environmental health. Since all health-related SDG targets cover health concerns that countries need to address by developing health programs and related interventions, GHD/EMPHNET supports EMR countries in developing and strengthening public health programs and in translating global initiatives, strategies and action plans. In doing so, GHD/EMPHNET offers special attention to factors that influence health and well-being, such as gender, culture, equity, sociopolitical, education, environment and the workplace. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET considers women, children, and adolescent wellbeing as crucial for promoting development and resilience when targeting SDGs. As a strong believer in the importance of intersectoral and

multidisciplinary coordination in promoting health within the context of sustainable development, GHD/EMPHNET will exhaust all opportunities to bring focus to the One Health approach, thus allowing for integrating environmental and animal health in actions that target preserving and promoting health and wellbeing.

**Research and Policy:** Monitoring progress and performance is important for assuring progress towards SDG targets. GHD/EMPHNET supports countries in building robust and reliable information to support translating information into policies. It works with a range of institutions and build research experience for field epidemiologists, public health practitioners and young researchers while highlighting data collection challenges and providing appropriate digital solutions. We collaborate with academic and non-academic institutions to generate evidence that can guide policies by focusing on operational research, assessments and surveys, secondary data analysis and information generation, public health program monitoring and evaluation studies and more.

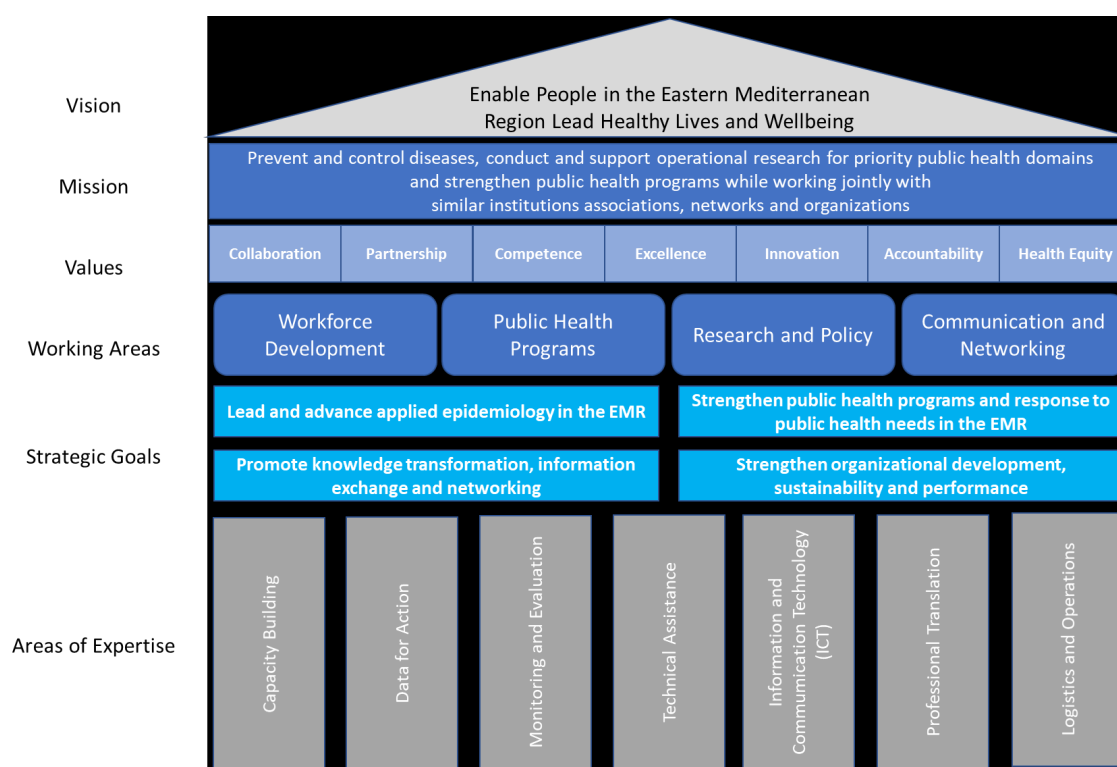
**Communication and Networking:** Effective communication and broad networking are important for assessing gaps and for planning and delivering different health programs. GHD/EMPHNET is a network of public health professionals and experts in the EMR created to support program development and service delivery. We invest in communication and use it to advance information sharing as we believe that it is a key element for assuring robust data systems that countries need to secure in order to monitor their progress towards SDG targets. GHD/EMPHNET's networking efforts allows it to integrate capacities when assisting countries to explore solutions for meeting the challenges. Over the years, GHD/EMPHNET remained committed to network regionally and globally in order to attract opportunities and partnerships that support investment in programs in support of the SDGs.

## 4. Strategic Goals, Objectives and Approaches

GHD/EMPHNET developed this three-year strategic plan to align priorities and direct resources towards improving operation and performance. Strategically, GHD/EMPHNET seeks to mobilize global and regional efforts by bringing together public health practitioners, researchers and policy makers through collaboration, exchange and development of effective public health programs and initiatives. The strategy allows GHD/EMPHNET to create opportunities for facilitating integration of research and policies and add value to public health programs in the region. The strategy will guide GHD/EMPHNET in defining the course of action needed to assist it in facing challenges and achieving results, while supporting countries in progressing towards the SDGs. The adopted strategy includes approaches that are central to the continued efforts of GHD/EMPHNET in progressing towards achieving its vision.

GHD/EMPHNET strategy focuses on four goals (directions) that were formulated in alignment with its working areas as well as the strengthening of internal systems and processes to facilitate operation. These goals were aligned with GHD/EMPHNET's mission that demands prioritization and focus to innovate and bring about solutions towards achieving the vision, while being enabled by its values. Such focus is reflected through GHD/EMPHNET's working areas which are viewed as the core domains for positively influencing change. Each of the four strategic goals are supported by a set of strategic objectives (SOs) and approaches that will guide execution of the strategic plan and monitoring its progress. GHD/EMPHNET considers its areas of expertise as the foundation for successful execution of its strategic plan as indicated in the below strategic framework.

**Figure 4: GHD/EMPHNET Strategic Framework**



The success of GHD/EMPHNET strategic plan will depend on the attainment of the strategic objectives as measured by the corresponding outputs and targets that are based on interventions planned to be executed over a period of three years in accordance with the approaches that rely heavily on the areas of expertise. Hence, the strategic goals were formulated to reflect strategic directions for GHD/EMPHNET's work. Outlined below, these goals include: 1) Lead and advance applied epidemiology in the EMR; 2) Strengthen public health programs and response to public health needs in the EMR; 3) Promote knowledge transformation, information exchange and networking; and 4) Strengthen organizational development, sustainability and performance.

**1. Lead and advance applied epidemiology in the EMR**

*SO1.1 Enhance workforce capacity in applied epidemiology in the EMR*

*SO1.2 Lead and advance high-quality operational research in support of innovative solutions and use of information and communication technology to improve public health in the EMR*

**2. Strengthen public health programs and response to public health needs in the EMR**

*SO2.1 Strengthen capacities of EMR countries in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery*

*SO2.2 Enhance infectious disease prevention, detection and control in the EMR*

*SO2.3 Ensure delivery and sustainability of high-quality vaccination services and immunization program in the EMR*

*SO2.4 Protect health and well-being in EMR countries by applying a multi-sectoral approach, high impact evidence-based and right-based strategies*

*SO2.5 Support EMR countries in implementing essential interventions to decrease morbidities and mortalities resulting from environmental exposures*

**3. Promote knowledge transformation, information exchange and networking**

*SO3.1 Develop and expand knowledge exchange and networking mechanisms and opportunities to facilitate the uptake of knowledge in public health policy and practice in the EMR*

**4. Strengthen organizational development, sustainability and performance**

*SO4.1 Optimize and align resources to increase financial stability and support GHD/EMPHNET mission*

*SO4.2 Strengthen organization's effectiveness to sustain its work in the region*

As noted above, and based on the results-based approach, GHD/EMPHNET will use outputs to measure contribution towards achieving impacts. Presented in Annex 2, these outputs were derived from approaches identified under each of the strategic objectives, which will be used to develop operational plans. Driven by relevant areas of expertise that position GHD/EMPHNET to bring about change, these approaches are listed below under their respective goals. The approaches define the scope and context that will guide business development to identify cooperation and direct opportunities.



## **Goal 1: Lead and advance applied epidemiology in the EMR**

GHD/EMPHNET plays an essential role in leading and advancing applied epidemiology in the EMR. In 2015, GHD/EMPHNET initiated the Center of Excellence for Applied Epidemiology (CEAE) with the aim of strengthening and enhancing capacities of EMR countries in epidemiological field investigation. Over a period of four years, the center grew to support the conduction of applied and operational research, building capacity in field epidemiology by using different modalities, and developing technological solutions to promote high quality and real time data collection. Over the next three years, the center will continue to direct its focus to learning and growth, availing trends in innovative technology, and strengthening and expanding FETPs in the region. Therefore, the center aspires to capture and enhance coordination mechanisms with key stakeholders and partners by maximizing external resources to compensate and support technical capabilities. In addition, the center will continue to hinge on its strong network to market and celebrate successes, thus increasing visibility and fundraising opportunities to sustain the center's competitiveness and uniqueness.

Through the CEAE, GHD/EMPHNET hopes to enhance entrepreneurial skills and human capacities and resources to create innovative approaches and provide services. Additionally, efforts will be geared towards building capacity of health workforce in operational research, conducting operational research to cover priority areas in applied epidemiology, integrating information technology tools in conducting operational research and in implementing public health program activities, providing technical assistance and support to public health entities to conduct operational research, and increasing publications in the field of epidemiology and other relevant public health areas. All efforts will be made to apply appropriate technology solutions to solve public health challenges, develop and design appropriate technology solutions (tools) to enhance applied epidemiology, and integrate technology to improve research and training in public health.

### **SO1.1: Enhance workforce capacity in applied epidemiology**

#### Approaches

- ***Establish new FETPs with its different modalities in the region.*** Relying on its recent experience in developing new FETPs for Tunisia, Sudan and Afghanistan, GHD/EMPHNET will establish new FETPs in the EMR by collaborating with the ministries of health in Lebanon and Libya. GHD will also work on supporting two current FETPs in getting their programs accredited. Specific focus will be given for considering ways to assist FETPs in increase the number of females joining the FETPs. This approach is bound to strengthen the health systems in these countries by investing in building workforce capacity that is essential for leveraging public health.
- ***Provide material and state-of-the-art learning opportunities to the FETP community.*** Believing in the need to make knowledge available and accessible at a larger scale, thus contributing to building a robust workforce in the region, GHD will work on enhancing its online learning management system with efforts geared to develop and offer its public health empowerment program (PHEP) and other short courses online. Efforts will also be



exerted at making educational material and resources available by establishing FETP library (E-based and paper-based).

- **Design and implement training modules to enrich the FETPs.** GHD/EMPHNET will design and develop resources and curricula for specialized modules to enrich the FETPs in the region, including but not limited to EPI-Info, case study development, scientific writing, and mentorship. Efforts will also be geared towards integrating the use of Calibrated Peer Review (CPR) in FETPs. This approach will assure increase in scientific publications of the FETP residents and graduates as well as availing new case studies and long-life learning opportunities for FETP graduates.
- **Establish internship, fellowship and exchange programs.** Believing in the power of GHD/EMPHNET will work at creating opportunities to enable learning by creating an environment that is supportive to learning and building knowledge through action (hands on). Therefore, GHD/EMPHNET will build on its experience in providing internship and fellowship opportunities to young scholars and researchers by establishing a well-rounded internship program that will systematically facilitate adaptation to learning in different working areas. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will work at establishing an exchange program in applied epidemiology where scholars are provided the opportunity to work in countries other than their own, thus scaling up their learning in with substantial adaptation to pertinent public health issues with special emphasis on field epidemiology.

## **SO1.2: Lead and advance high-quality operational research in support of innovative solutions and use of information and communication technology to improve public health in the EMR**

### *Approaches*

- **Shape the agenda for field epidemiology research in the region.** In an effort to affect progress towards more effective field epidemiology in the EMR, GHD/EMPHNET will determine field epidemiology research priorities and needs in the region using Delphi approach. GHD/EMPHNET will also conduct a systematic review on outbreaks research and public health surveillance research in the region to identify and suggest areas for improvement. Findings of the research priorities and systematic reviews will be published together with a position paper to improve research in outbreaks and public health surveillance. These products will pave the road to enhance field epidemiology in the EMR by highlighting priorities and presenting areas for future development.
- **Build the capacity in operational research.** Prompted by the need to build capacity in operational research that can influence the scope of projects proposed and implemented by different teams, GHD/EMPHNET will conduct informative sessions on operational research and relevant tools to its technical staff and other organizations, in addition to developing relevant online training courses. It will also expand the use of research assistive tools such as Mendeley and/or EndNote, RevMan, and one QDA software (e.g. NVivo) as an integral part of any literature review and qualitative data analyses for projects.
- **Develop and integrate appropriate technology solutions in conducting operational research.** To enhance applied epidemiology and leverage operational research, GHD/EMPHNET will intensify the use of digital research tools such as Kobo Toolbox,

Power BI, EpiInfo, QGIS, R/R studio, Excel macro-enabled evaluation tools, and other platforms in the conduction of operational research. Moreover, GHD/EMPHNET will integrate information technology solutions and tools (like mobile technology) into operational research projects and will introduce software packages for systematic use within the organization, paying specific attention to support the development of tools, methodologies, platforms, and new assets to enable data management and data-intensive research.

- **Develop strategic partnerships with research institutions, academia, practice, and policy spheres.** In seeking to identify new opportunities to implement research projects, GHD/EMPHNET will work on broadening its partnership base with national and international organizations. Such partnerships are bound to maximize the generation of knowledge in public health through the benefits gained from operational research. Efforts will be exerted towards increasing engagement with such organizations and will provide technical assistance in research implementation, data collection and analysis to different organizations. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will work on promoting secondary analysis and deeper exploitation of existing data sources, in order to deliver high-quality, high-impact evidence for public health policy and/or practice, for which accessible and existing data sources will need to be identified and made available for use by young researchers and FETP residents. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will provide technical assistance. Special consideration will be given to strengthening the internal capacity and skills in writing manuscripts while exerting efforts towards seeking funding opportunities to support conducting operational research including mini grants.
- **Leverage research translation and dissemination to support adoption of evidence in public health practice.** To leverage operational research in support of information generation, GHD/EMPHNET will accelerate the response to research opportunities and calls by forming a core proposal writing team and will maximize efforts to partner with international research institutions when applying for such opportunities. Efforts will be exerted to establish a core reference for publications and information dissemination that will leverage the use and implementation of operational research. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will work on increasing the number of scientific publications in field epidemiology and public health, with concentration on research findings and outcomes/results from projects implemented by the teams. GHD/EMPHNET will also develop a research dissemination plan to identify the tools and mechanisms necessary for disseminating research findings beyond publishing and presenting in peer-reviewed venues, and prepare and issue a biannual newsletter.

## ***Goal 2: Strengthen public health programs and response to public health needs in the EMR***

Since its establishment, GHD/EMPHNET placed emphasis on developing collaborative efforts to respond to priority public health needs and challenges in the region by supporting countries in strengthening their health systems. Taking into consideration that EMR countries differ in their health situation and needs, GHD/EMPHNET focused on providing technical assistance and capacity building services to targeted countries by tailoring these services to country profile

and needs. Therefore, and in alignment to national and regional strategies and action plans, GHD/EMPHNET worked at developing programs and interventions that target improvement of health outcomes by leveraging and scaling up capacities and solutions. Following are the public health areas that GHD/EMPHNET will address during the next three years:

#### **Public Health and Emergency Management Center (SO2.1)**

Following a course of action directed at building capacity in rapid response at the regional and national levels, GHD/EMPHNET established a Public Health Emergency Management Center (PHEMC) in 2017 to strengthen regional public health emergency management and response. Through the center's operational procedures and technical inputs, PHEMC will work along with partners, to support countries ensure optimal and comprehensive emergency management, including preparedness, prevention, timely response, and recovery. Under this category, GHD/EMPHNET will exert efforts in the coming three years to enhance countries' capacities in preparedness and response to public health emergencies by identifying risks, building capacities and coordinating responses to reduce the impact of public health emergencies.

#### **Disease Control and Prevention (SO2.2)**

Since 2013, GHD/EMPHNET exerted efforts to strengthen country capacities in lab-based surveillance, establishing disease specific surveillance system for priority diseases, developing tools and mechanisms for lab-based surveillance, improving networking between multi-sectoral laboratories, adopting the one health approach, applying the bio-risk management system, building biosafety and biosecurity workforce, and more. Under this category, GHD/EMPHNET will continue to utilize efforts in this direction to strengthen communicable diseases prevention, detection and control by coordinating efforts, identifying risks, raising awareness, building capacities and conducting research.

#### **Polio and Immunization (SO2.4)**

Since 2013, GHD/EMPHNET has been actively involved in strengthening Polio eradication initiative and routine immunization in the EMR. Today, GHD/EMPHNET continues to support priority countries in Polio/RI related activities including field assessment, grassroot level planning, community engagement, supervision and monitoring, enhancing surveillance and information quality and evaluating the interventions. With a focus on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), and new strategy/agenda for immunization (2021 – 2030) and Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) 2011-2020, GHD/EMPHNET will continue to contribute to improving the health status of the people in the targeted countries in an equitable and sustainable manner through a better evidence based prevention and control of VPDs by supporting the countries to timely maximize benefits from all available vaccines, strategies, tools and technologies to achieve the Global and Regional eradication, elimination and control targets.

#### **Health Protection and Promotion (SO2.5)**

GHD/EMPHNET will contribute to the EMR countries efforts to protect health and well-being through the life course using a multisectoral approach, applying high impact evidence-

based and right-based strategies. To do so, GHD/EMPHNET will work on Applying integrated, multisectoral approaches (health considered in all policies); advancing research and evidence generation, applying life course approach with a special focus on key stages in life; prioritizing vulnerable groups in humanitarian settings; mainstreaming gender and equity across life course programs; integrating life course approach in the functions of health system to comprehensively meet the population needs in a more sustainable manner; and strengthening partnerships, coordination, and networking.

### **Environmental Health (SO2.6)**

GHD/EMPHNET supports countries in identifying, monitoring and responding to environmental risk factors. To do so, GHD/EMPHNET will exert efforts to promote multidisciplinary approaches at local, national, and regional levels; strengthen environmental health entities in the different ministries; integrate environmental health interventions in relevant systems while considering crossing cutting issues; partner with organizations and networks to implement activities and contribute to sustainable development.

### **SO2.1: Strengthen capacities of EMR countries in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery**

#### Approaches

- **Enhance countries' emergency system in preparedness.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET will work to develop evidence-based and comprehensive multi-sectoral plans for emergency management; enhance workforce capacities in emergency management across relevant sectors; support countries develop necessary mechanisms and tools to finalize, implement and monitor relevant to emergency management; and enhance public health emergency operation center capacities (PHEOC). In the process, GHD/EMPHNET will work with countries to identify their needs and areas of improvement in emergency preparedness, deliver trainings nationally and support countries in rolling them out sub-nationally; equip countries with tools and mechanisms to improve their emergency management, link existing country emergency preparedness with SDGs targets, coordinate with relevant partners to ensure synergy of activities, and work with communities to assess their preparedness during emergencies.
- **Support countries' emergency response and recovery.** GHD/EMPHNET will contribute to supporting national, regional and global capacities for response to public health events; support vulnerable communities during emergency response and recovery, provide technical assistance to respond to public health emergencies, activate PHEMC's network of professionals and roster of experts, and facilitate logistical and supply support to emergency response. Efforts will be exerted to mobilize Rapid Response Teams at national and subnational level to respond to small scale public health emergencies at earlier stages, coordinate the mobilization of experts across countries through partners, and engage experts through community of practice on emergency management.

- **Support countries in strengthening data management and documentation.** Believing in the importance of data acquisition and documentation, GHD/EMPHNET will contribute to building country capacities in emergency data management and documentation, provide mechanisms for information sharing and improve documentation, and share productions on regional emergency management experiences. This will contribute to efforts exerted to promote the culture and practice of emergency management accountability and will encourage countries to manage their data in support of decision making. It will also facilitate organizing or participating in regional and international exchange activities, as well as ensure seed money to support the procurement and delivery of supplies.

## **SO2.2: Enhance infectious disease prevention, detection, and control in EMR**

### Approaches

- **Strengthen lab-based surveillance in EMR countries.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET will exert effort to strengthen country capacities in laboratory-based surveillance including the development of quality control tools for lab-based surveillance, support countries to establish disease specific surveillance system for priority diseases, assist countries to develop tools and mechanisms for lab-based surveillance, support countries to enhance surveillance data management and documentation, as well as assist countries to improve networking between multi-sectoral laboratories.
- **Enhance multi-sectorial collaboration between human and animal health under One Health approach.** GHD/EMPHNET will support countries to adopt One Health from concept to action, support sustainable partnership for multi-sectorial coordination and collaboration in zoonotic diseases such as Brucellosis and Anthracis, build public health workforce capacity of animal and human health sectors in multi-sectorial collaboration in detecting and controlling zoonotic diseases, and strengthen brucellosis surveillance, diagnosis and control under the umbrella of One Health.
- **Advocate lab quality management system (LQMS).** GHD/EMPHNET will support countries in strengthening LQMS operations, applying the BRM system, and building country workforce of biosafety and biosecurity for human and animal health sectors.
- **Support antimicrobial resistance (AMR) efforts.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET will exert efforts for raising community awareness toward AMR and enhance knowledge and clinical practices on AMR through building capacity and research. GHD/EMPHNET will also support national infection prevention and control programs, strengthen multidrug-resistant (MDR) surveillance, and promote AMR knowledge exchange and networking.

## **SO2.3: Ensure delivery and sustainability of high-quality vaccination services and immunization program in the EMR**

### Approaches

- **Enhance equity and quality of immunization services in the targeted countries.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET aims to institutionalize Public Private Partnership, with focus health service providers as well as with vaccine manufacturers to achieve the immunization outcomes; strengthen the monitoring and supportive supervision of the national EPI programs; improve demand for vaccine with focus on gender equity; increase

Ownership /Leadership of National, Sub-National and Local Health Staff on VPDs eradication, elimination and control, and Surveillance activities; enhance in-country capacity in the management & implementation of immunization services building on Polio Eradication experience; and bridge to stronger and more integrated immunization systems. To reach those objectives, GHD/EMPHNET will work to increase public demand and strengthening the political commitment for immunization; provide technical support to the countries including programmatic, information and logistical issues; involve and training of private sector in immunization; enhance knowledge of immunization among decision makers, local communities and beneficiaries; and identify the EPI challenges and applied innovative approaches to reach each child.

- **Contribute to global polio eradication, and other VPD elimination.** GHD/EMPHNET aims to support the targeted countries to streamline the polio eradication within routine immunization. It will also support in-country management and implementation of Polio Eradication and strengthen the integrated surveillance system in the targeted countries with focus on community surveillance. In aiming to achieve these objectives, GHD/EMPHNET will strengthen VPDs surveillance system; support the countries with their outbreak preparedness and response plans; enhance collaboration with countries and partners to reach the global eradication and elimination target; and maximize the use of new technology.
- **Build the capacity of EPI team in targeted countries.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET will collaborate and partner with educational institute; build the capacity of countries on planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities; support countries to establish modern management system for immunization at the national as well as at the sub-national level; and engage private sector in immunization. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will design educational learning recourses in applied epidemiology (case study, scenarios. Etc.) to enrich the FETPs training programs; enhance the functionality of the NITAG in the region; build the capacity of countries to minimize related outbreaks, and build the capacity of the country team on supervision, monitoring and evaluation. GHD/EMPHNET put emphasis on empowering the immunization coordination and assure enrolment of trained FETP network to develop and achieve the strategic objective.
- **Strengthen leadership, management and coordination for immunization.** GHD/EMPHNET aims to enhance EPI management capacity at the and sub-national levels, empower the immunization coordination, and strengthen coordination and partnership with public and private sector. To achieve these objectives, GHD/EMPHNET will build on existing and new alliance, improve vaccine management, and encourage political commitment.
- **Enhance evidence-based decision making.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET aims to strengthen data management (analysis, interpretation, use and exchange of information (including monitoring and evaluation), enhance operational research in priority areas to support immunization, build the capacity of the country to conduct operational research in collaboration with CEAE, and enhance publications in the field of immunization. To achieve these objectives, GHD/EMPHNET will improve coordination and collaboration with countries, international organizations, publishers and scientist; build internal and



external capacity in operational research; map existing potential partners and seek new partners for operational research; and develop and maintain rosters of experts in immunization.

#### **SO2.4: Protect health and well-being in EMR countries by applying a multisectoral approach, high impact evidence-based and right-based strategies**

##### Approaches

- **Improve sexual and reproductive health in the EMR.** GHD/EMPHNET will work to strengthen countries SRH/MH program management capacity, build the capacity of health workforce to improve quality of care for SRH/MH, enhance maternal / sexual and reproductive quality information systems for action, strengthen countries' capacity to respond SRH/MH needs during emergencies, support the establishment and functionality of national coordination platforms for maternal /SRH to engage the civil society, private sector, academia and development partners, and enhance public private partnership to serve maternal/SRH health.
- **Improve newborn and child health in the EMR.** GHD/EMPHNET will support countries in adopting and implementing early child development programs; promote appropriate technology and innovative solution to improve birth registration and newborn/stillbirth death review and response; strengthen countries' capacity to respond NCH needs during emergencies; build the capacity of health workforce to improve the quality of care for NCH. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will enhance public private partnership to serve child health and support the establishment and functionality of national coordination platforms for maternal /SRH including NGOs, the private sector, academia and development partners
- **Address the unmet health care and protection needs of elderly persons in EMR.** GHD/EMPHNET will advocate and mobilize support for old persons health and wellbeing; support countries in integrating elderly care at the level of households, communities, and primary care facilities; reorient national health information and surveillance system to enhance healthy ageing; support the creation of age-friendly environments at the community and health facilities; and strengthen responses geared towards elderly persons in humanitarian settings.
- **Strengthen gender equity to ensure human rights protection and social justice.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET will support gender mainstreaming in policies and coordination mechanisms at the national level; develop advocacy strategy that promote gender equity, strengthen national information systems to provide essential information for assessing inequities, and support national health programs to reduce inequities across life course.
- **Enhance national nutrition improvement efforts.** GHD/EMPHNET will assist countries to enhance efforts towards nutrition improvement by advocating to mobilize support for nutrition; strengthen countries' nutrition program management capacity; support countries to apply a multi-sectoral approach in planning, implementation and accountability for nutrition; establish /strengthen national nutrition surveillance; enhance nutrition research, evidence generation; and strengthen countries' capacity to assess and respond to nutritional needs in humanitarian settings.

- **Strengthen the prevention and control of NCDs including cardiovascular disease.** GHD/EMPHNET will enhance national health information systems to regularly track and monitor NCDs trends and their related risk factors; advocate for national policy changes that towards creating an enabling environment that promotes and reinforce healthy choices; build the capacity of national health care system to improve quality of care for NCDs in clinical settings; and support countries to implement community-based intervention for prevention, care, and management on NCDs.

### **SO2.5: Support EMR countries in implementing essential interventions to decrease morbidities and mortalities resulting from environmental exposures**

#### Approaches

- **Ensure a safe ecosystem and integrated environmental health services.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET will work towards improving the safety of air, water, food and commodities; increasing chemical safety; enhancing waste management and environmental health services; and strengthening environmental health services during emergencies. To achieve these objectives, GHD/EMPHNET will Identify with countries their needs to ensure safe ecosystem, build capacities in managing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), customize training modules on food safety, and assess environmental health services in health care facilities and waste management practices.
- **Protect health from climate change and contribute to the greening of the health sector.** GHD/EMPHNET will exert efforts to increase the engagement of health sector in sustainable development effort, improve health adaptations to climate change, and reduce the environmental burden of the health sector. To achieve these objectives, GHD/EMPHNET will assess health vulnerabilities and national adaptations to climate change in three countries and conduct regional workshop on greening the health sector.
- **Advocate for environmental health in public health policies and resource allocation.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET will work to support systematic and reliable collection of environmental and health data; promote planning and generating information for environmental health decision-making; and encourage data and information sharing across relevant sectors. To achieve these objectives, GHD/EMPHNET will establish a network for environmental health experts and engage them in controversial health issues, support environmental health studies such as the burden of air pollution on health, water and food borne diseases, and support projects incorporating climate data into national health information systems.

### **Goal 3: Promote knowledge transformation, information exchange and networking**

With emphasis on growing a public health support network, GHD/EMPHNET will promote mechanisms to enhance exchange of knowledge and experience between FETP graduates, public health experts, and partners. Therefore, approaches will be directed towards expanding networking and partnerships to enhance social influence, identifying and transforming knowledge to support public health program interventions, organizational capacity, and



achievements. By enhancing media and communication, GHD/EMPHNET aspires to develop its internal capacity by enhancing communication across programs, thus increasing visibility. Leveraging knowledge transformation and facilitating information exchange and transfer will be done by integrating technology to match needed networking expansion.

### **SO3.1: Develop and expand knowledge exchange and networking mechanisms and opportunities to facilitate the uptake of knowledge in public health policy and practice**

#### Approaches

- **Create new innovative knowledge expansion mechanisms and tools and update existing ones.** Believing in the importance of utilizing innovative solutions to develop and expand knowledge sharing tools, GHD/EMPHNET will update existing tools, such as EpiShares, FETP database, and EMPHNET Resource Engine (ERE), to accelerate their use as networking and knowledge platforms. GHD/EMPHNET will also invest in creating new channels for expanding and capturing knowledge exchange while ensuring technological innovation.
- **Expand knowledge sharing and transformation.** By supporting and conducting public health forums, conferences, and special scientific gatherings, GHD/EMPHNET will be putting emphasis on expanding knowledge translation and transformation to meet the need for promoting the advancement of public health practice. Improving knowledge sharing to serve information exchange and use of such information to advocate for better health services can impact public health policy and practice. Therefore, GHD/EMPHNET will initiate public health forums starting with the Jordan public health forum, which aims to connect experts from different sectors coming together to discuss public health priorities and recommendation.
- **Increase scientific publications and promotional material.** GHD/EMPHNET will Publish special issues/supplements on priority field epidemiology areas and findings from programs. Emphasis will be given to developing summary documents (briefs and Fact Sheets) that present clear and concise key findings and results from programs, field epidemiology, and others. It will also work on systematically preparing press releases for manuscripts that have been accepted for publication, create flyers, posters, and brochures about research projects and findings in a visually-appealing way to disseminate knowledge to broad audiences, develop policy briefs to advocate for legislative and policy change. GHD/EMPHNET will focus on developing success stories from the region for which it will develop a template and structure for success stories, write success stories from the region to be presented and disseminated on the website and other channels. GHD/EMPHNET will also develop an awarding system to recognize the regional achievements in field epidemiology research.
- **Collaborate with similar networks, associations and alumni.** An essential element when expanding knowledge exchange and networking is to invest in collaborating with similar organizations where experience can be exchanged, and knowledge shared for the sake of mutual benefit for participating organizations. In addition, collaborating with similar networks or entities can leverage development and management of technological innovations while bringing new ideas and lessons that can maximize the use of resources.

With such thoughts in mind, GHD/EMPHNET will collaborate with TEPHINET, CORDS, Epiet Alumni, AFENET and will identify new organizations or associations to network with, thus expanding its networking capacity and knowledge sharing premises.

#### **Goal 4: Strengthen organizational development, sustainability and performance**

Fostering and implementing organizational development and sustaining services that are required to maintain the integrity and efficient functioning of the organization are essential for enabling it to accomplish its mission and perform effectively. GHD/EMPHNET uses different approaches or tactics to achieve its strategic objectives, all of which are used to gain sustainability while constantly seeking innovative solutions and actions that can promote its stature as a reputable and resilient public health regional entity. In the coming three years GHD/EMPHNET will accomplish its objectives and capitalize on its performance by improving its internal functions and investing in developing its services. Emphasis on organizational development will be sought to ensure that essential systems and processes are developed and working effectively to meet accountability and quality. GHD/EMPHNET will focus on sustainability and will invest in developing its fundraising capability to meet the growing challenge of its strategic direction. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will work on building sustainable efforts by strengthening partnership and collaboration necessary for implementing its strategy.

#### **SO4.1: Optimize and align resources to increase financial stability and support GHD/EMPHNET mission**

##### Approaches

- **Increase business development opportunities and effective partnerships.** GHD/EMPHNET will expand and strengthen mutually beneficial strategic partnerships with similar organizations, governments and networks. Efforts will be geared towards learning about country public health priorities and pressing regional issues, articulating different ways to present cases for support for prospective partners on what and how GHD/EMPHNET plans to accomplish with the fund, actively seeking potential partners of mutual interests, matching country needs with stakeholders interest in funding and exploring the right mechanism to collaboratively act towards meeting these needs, while adopting efficient mechanisms to approach, manage, track and follow up on potential partnership and funding opportunities. A database and an application to facilitate proposal submission, contracting and partnerships will be developed and maintained in line with the partnership and fundraising plan, thus allowing for filtering and tracking new opportunities.
- **Align resources and fundraising efforts with strategy.** GHD/EMPHNET will identify areas and explore partnership and funding opportunities that match its strategic needs. Therefore, based on this strategy, GHD/EMPHNET will develop and endorse a partnership and fundraising plan that will be in harmony with the needs identified in its strategy. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will prepare a basic fundraising collateral package (templates) that will structure and standardize the process of fund raising.

- **Explore fundraising application to relevant solicitation.** GHD/EMPHNET will continue to seek funding opportunities through solicitations and announcements. A procedure for identifying and applying for such opportunities will be developed to assure efforts are utilized rationally and that in line with the expansion included in the strategy.
- **Promote and utilize income generating mechanisms and services.** To assure sustainability, GHD/EMPHNET will continue to seek new opportunities to generate income. It will work on accelerating promotion of service for fees incurred with translation, logistics, technical assistance, data analysis and more. A plan and approach for promoting these services will be developed together with standardized information packages that will allow for marketing these services. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will develop the micro-funding concept, business model and promote it in target countries in collaboration with donors and key partners. A package for promoting the micro-funding services as a new service will be prepared.

#### SO4.2: Strengthen the organization's effectiveness to sustain its work in the region

##### Approaches

- **Enhance financial management and accounting.** Aiming to improve and automate financial management and accounting policies and procedures for better outputs and efficient operations, GHD/EMPHNET will enhance and update all accounting and finance related policies, procedures and SOPs. More specifically, GHD/EMPHNET will Adopt the best-fit solution/application (ERP) for better management of financial and accounting transactions and integration with other systems (BAS, MENA-Tech, etc.) and departments (Operations, Procurement and Logistics and human resources). GHD/EMPHNET will also manage cash flow and financial resources efficiently and mitigate cost inflation (surplus and deficit). through a combination of better budgeting, efficiencies and economies of scale. Moreover, GHD/EMPHNET will develop and implement an annual budgeting mechanism (objectives-driven and bottom-up) that forecasts all operational expenses, programmatic expenses and expected funds in alignment with GHD/EMPHNET's strategy 2020-2022, and will also develop new budgeting mechanism that are aligned with its strategy, and work on exploring sustainable cost solutions.
- **Strengthen GHD/EMPHNET operation in the countries.** The expansion of projects and the exceedingly increase in the number of activities in EMR countries, both in number and scope, compelled GHD/EMPHNET to enhance its presence in these countries. In addition, working remotely in some of the countries, especially when there is lack of stability, becomes challenging especially considering the need to maintain efficient operation. Therefore, GHD/EMPHNET will work at identifying a country module framework that will guide operation and expansion.
- **Invest in long term organizational development, basic systems and sustainable solutions.** GHD/EMPHNET aims to improve and deploy best operations and procurement practices that contribute to cost effectiveness and best quality services. Accordingly, it will develop and improve all current and potential operational and logistics services with special focus given to developing and updating a purchasing and suppliers' database in EMR

countries. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will promote the uptake of digitization (technology advancement and innovative solutions) to efficiently support and enable delivery and operations, and will work to enhance and improve GHD/EMPHNET's IT infrastructure and security, including software and application.

- **Strengthen GHD/EMPHNET project management and reporting accountability.** GHD/EMPHNET will update and revise the SOPs and tools that will strengthen project management, including monitoring and evaluation, risk assessment, and quality control.
- **Lead media outreach efforts to highlight GHD/EMPHNET's influence and contribution.** GHD/EMPHNET will promote its achievements to boost its visibility through online and offline communication tools, including developing a communication plan for various mediums (social media, website, media, and print communication material), as well as printed and audiovisual material focusing on key messages and results from different working areas. In addition to strengthening its media and communication capacity to enhance its virtual presence, GHD/EMPHNET will develop and implement its branding guideline, style guide, and an internal communication platform (Intranet).
- **Improve the quality of work by fostering a growth enhancement environment.** Under this approach, GHD/EMPHNET will work on adopting a learning, development and knowledge sharing work environment based on a competency-based performance management and linked with team strategic plans. GHD/EMPHNET will also build and deploy a performance-driven rewarding and recognition program, review and improve the current compensation and benefits system to better attract and retain high calibers and to ensure internal and external equity. Efforts will be exerted towards enriching a talent acquisition process that will enrich retainment and performance, develop an orientation and induction package for new hires, as well as prepare a manpower plan to fulfill the recruitment needs and a CV bank that will serve as a recruitment tool over time. In addition, GHD/EMPHNET will develop an annual training plan (internal and external) according to appraisal results from the previous year and recommendations from senior management.
- **Promote sustainable organization leadership, structure and capacity.** GHD/EMPHNET will invest in developing strategic organizational elements to advance its mission, paying special attention to accelerating work towards achieving the strategic objectives while monitoring progress and fostering leadership and accountability.

## 5. Implementing and Monitoring the Strategy

Communicating this strategy, both internally and externally, is important for successfully implementing its respective plan. To move forward, GHD/EMPHNET will exert efforts to work with countries and partners to capture opportunities for leveraging implementation of activities guided by the approaches identified under the objectives covering the first two strategic goals, and will work on enhancing its capacity to support the delivery of high quality services by working towards achieving the objectives under the third and fourth goal.

GHD/EMPHNET will provide special emphasis to monitoring implementation of its strategy by working with different teams to assure pertinent products are delivered on time and in line with the outputs identified within the strategic plan. Monitoring will be facilitated by a strategic plan that will be developed based on this document. It is important to reiterate that the strategic objectives driving this strategy were derived to direct the work, hence progress towards achieving these objectives will be based on performance measures (indicators) that are a mixture of lagging and leading indicators (output based), with more emphasis put on the former due to the higher ability to control and predict. Therefore, monitoring will be done quarterly based on achieving targets based on indicators that will be identified in the strategic plan. This will allow measuring change and immediate progress, thus the likelihood of achieving the strategic objectives, noting that in strategic planning it is more important to focus on what is to be achieved<sup>1</sup>.

On another note, GHD/EMPHNET will make the necessary managerial changes to match the needed support required to address the adjustments needed to challenge the entailed growth, thus bringing focus to meeting desired organizational development needs. Additionally, GHD/EMPHNET will use the strategy as a management tool and will conduct quarterly strategy review meetings to ensure delivery of results and to reinforce accountability among the teams. During these meetings, owners of the strategic objectives will present progress towards the targets and will discuss with senior management risks and problems with the aim of getting decisions on any needed actions to mitigate those risks. Performance indicators and their respective targets will be tracked. Finally, GHD/EMPHNET considers the strategic plan as a live document, where activities will be visited quarterly with the ability to modify these activities based on anticipated risks and problems. Therefore, the strategic plan will be considered as a live document with caution exerted towards maintaining integrity of the approaches and objectives that will be visited in June 2021.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/4.5.1.6\\_Strategic%20Planning%20Guide\\_0.pdf](https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/4.5.1.6_Strategic%20Planning%20Guide_0.pdf)

## 6. Conclusion

GHD/EMPHNET's mission is to “prevent and control diseases, conduct and support operational research for priority public health domains and strengthen public health programs while working jointly with similar institutions associations, networks and organizations”. Public health challenges facing EMR countries vary in nature and complexity, thus making efforts to meet these challenges immense, specifically when resources are limited or when there is conflict or instability. To influence such efforts, GHD/EMPHNET works to avail opportunities while considering the evolving nature of public health that is usually dictated by country priorities confounded by the commitment of these countries to achieve SDG targets.

This strategy document presents GHD/EMPHNET's objectives and approaches (tactics) to be considered when planning and implementing initiatives and interventions during the coming three years. GHD/EMPHNET will maximize the use of its areas of expertise to make progress towards its four strategic goals: 1) Lead and advance applied epidemiology in the EMR, 2) Strengthen public health programs and response to public health needs in the EMR, 3) Promote knowledge transformation, information Exchange and networking, and 4) Strengthen organizational development, sustainability and performance. In taking responsibility to exert efficient and accountable work, GHD/EMPHNET will work towards fulfilling these goals by engaging in building partnerships and collaborations to achieve ten objectives underlying these four goals as presented in this document and summarized in the following table.

## GHD/EMPHNET Goals, Strategic Objectives and Approaches

<b>Goal 1: Lead and advance applied epidemiology in the EMR</b>
<b>SO1.1: Enhance workforce capacity in applied epidemiology in the EMR</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish new FETPs with its different modalities in the region</li> <li>- Provide material and state-of-the-art learning opportunities to the FETP community</li> <li>- Design and implement training modules to enrich the FETPs</li> <li>- Establish internship, fellowship and exchange programs</li> </ul>
<b>SO1.2: Lead and advance high-quality operational research in support of innovative solutions and use of information and communication technology to improve public health in the EMR</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shape the agenda for field epidemiology research in the region</li> <li>- Build the capacity of operational research</li> <li>- Develop and integrate appropriate technology solutions in conducting operational research</li> <li>- Develop strategic partnerships with research institutions, academia, practice, and policy spheres</li> <li>- Leverage research translation and dissemination to support adoption of evidence in public health practice</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: Strengthen public health programs and response to public health needs in the EMR</b>
<b>SO2.1: Strengthen capacities of EMR countries in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance countries' emergency system in preparedness</li> <li>- Support countries' emergency response and recovery</li> <li>- Support countries in strengthening data management and documentation</li> </ul>
<b>SO2.2: Enhance infectious disease prevention, detection and control in the EMR</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen lab-based surveillance in EMR countries</li> <li>- Enhance multi-sectorial collaboration between human and animal health under One Health approach</li> <li>- Advocate lab quality management system (LQMS)</li> <li>- Support antimicrobial resistance (AMR) efforts</li> </ul>
<b>SO2.3: Ensure delivery and sustainability of high-quality vaccination services and immunization program in the EMR</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance equity and quality of immunization services in the targeted countries</li> <li>- Contribute to global polio eradication, and other VPD elimination</li> <li>- Build the capacity of EPI team in targeted countries</li> <li>- Strengthen leadership, management and coordination for immunization</li> <li>- Enhance evidence-based decision making</li> </ul>
<b>SO2.4: Protect health and well-being in EMR countries by applying a multi-sectoral approach, high impact evidence-based and right-based strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve sexual and reproductive health in the EMR</li> <li>- Improve newborn and child health</li> <li>- Address the unmet health care and protection needs of elderly persons in the EMR</li> <li>- Strengthen gender equity to ensure human rights protection and social justice</li> <li>- Enhance national nutrition improvement efforts</li> <li>- Strengthen the prevention and control of NCDs including cardiovascular disease</li> </ul>
<b>SO2.5: Support EMR countries in implementing essential interventions to decrease morbidities and mortalities resulting from environmental exposures</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure a safe ecosystem and integrated environmental health services</li> <li>- Protect health from climate change and contribute to the greening of the health sector</li> <li>- Advocate for environmental health in public health policies and resource allocation</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3: Promote knowledge transformation, information exchange and networking</b>
<b>SO3.1: Develop and expand knowledge exchange and networking mechanisms and opportunities to facilitate the uptake of knowledge in public health policy and practice</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create new innovative knowledge expansion mechanisms and tools and update existing ones</li> <li>- Expand knowledge sharing and transformation</li> <li>- Increase scientific publications and promotional material</li> <li>- Collaborate with similar networks, associations and alumni</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4: Strengthen organizational development, sustainability and performance</b>
<b>SO4.1 Optimize and align resources to increase financial stability and support GHD/EMPHNET mission</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase business development opportunities and effective partnerships</li> <li>- Align resources and fundraising efforts with strategy</li> <li>- Explore fundraising application to relevant solicitation</li> <li>- Promote and utilize income generating mechanisms and services</li> </ul>
<b>SO4.2 Strengthen organization's effectiveness to sustain its work in the region</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance financial management and accounting</li> <li>- Strengthen GHD/EMPHNET operation in the countries</li> <li>- Invest in long term organizational development, basic systems and sustainable solutions</li> <li>- Strengthen GHD/EMPHNET project management and reporting accountability</li> <li>- Lead media outreach efforts to highlight GHD/EMPHNET's influence and contribution</li> <li>- Improve the quality of work by fostering a growth enhancement environment</li> <li>- Promote sustainable organization leadership, structure and capacity</li> </ul>



## Annex 1: Results of the SWOT Analysis

<b><u>Strengths</u></b>	<b><u>Weaknesses</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GHD/EMPHNET is strongly commended as an added value to delivering high-quality interventions.</li> <li>• A recognition by WHO's Director General, regarding GHD/EMPHNET's role in strengthening FETP.</li> <li>• Directly working with the ministries.</li> <li>• The establishment of PHEMC has been well received by key development partners.</li> <li>• Networking and providing knowledge and solutions to countries and improving health information system in priority countries.</li> <li>• Commitment and dedication to the strategy.</li> <li>• Trust and confidence presented as strengths to conduct its work under extremely difficult country realities was highlighted as a durable strength that should be further cultivated.</li> <li>• GHD/EMPHNET's ability to work effectively in countries with diverse levels of economic development, health system performance or operational circumstances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immensely growing public health needs dictate program expansion with a demanding increase in roles and interventions.</li> <li>• Increasing demand to meet the public health needs and challenges in the region require regular and frequent consultation with stakeholders and partners that when missed can reflect deliberate competition or duplication.</li> <li>• Some organizations and entities are not sufficiently aware of GHD/EMPHNET's role or work.</li> <li>• Despite commending GHD/EMPHNET's development of a strategy, some stakeholders see GHD/EMPHNET's work to be too donor-driven following resource availability rather than strategic focus.</li> <li>• Ongoing overwhelming emergencies in many countries of the region increase the hardships on populations and raising expectation.</li> <li>• Political instability, security concerns, internal and external displacements, deteriorated health conditions increase health risks and make the GHD/EMPHNET's mission more difficult.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Opportunities</u></b>	<b><u>Threats</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMR's persistent and emerging public health needs are consistent with GHD/EMPHNET's capacity and interest.</li> <li>• GHD/EMPHNET's areas of expertise are consistent with available opportunities for strengthening health systems in countries.</li> <li>• Potential to increase the collaboration horizon and depth with WHO EMRO's new leadership, UNICEF, World Bank and other development partners.</li> <li>• High level of needs and donor interest in EMR countries especially Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.</li> <li>• Perception that no other partner can bring the added value GHD/EMPHNET has in EMR region.</li> <li>• Strategic directions are support EMR countries as they work towards meeting their SDGs.</li> <li>• GHD/EMPHNET has the opportunity to engage directly with the private health sector, while serving as a facilitator between them and the government.</li> <li>• Some EMR countries have yet to know about GHD/EMPHNET's expertise and to partner with it to address common interests and priorities.</li> <li>• GHD/EMPHNET expanded collaboration to other sectors beyond health such as agriculture, environment, water authorities, etc.</li> <li>• Diversity of countries in the region provides GHD/EMPHNET with a comparative advantage and knowledge to better respond to public health emergencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable multi-disciplinary public health work needs long-term commitments.</li> <li>• FETP benefits are not sustainable without sufficient retaining strategies including financial sustainability.</li> <li>• Lack of added value when GHD/EMPHNET directly implements humanitarian programs with insufficient coordination.</li> <li>• Competitive advantage in expertise depends on ability to retain qualified human resources.</li> <li>• Sustainable external sources of revenue are extremely important to secure.</li> </ul>