



TropNet

TropNet Rules of procedure

TropNet is a spontaneous network of sites rather than a formal, legal entity. Therefore, the network does not have a statute, but a few internal rules to make its operation as smooth as possible.

1. Network Membership

There are two levels of membership for sites in the network: **members** and **observers**.

Full members meet membership criteria as set out in section 3 below and are represented by a coordinator and a maximum of three deputy coordinators.

Member sites have the following privileges:

- Right to vote in network elections (one vote per site)
- Send at least two delegates to the annual network meeting, more delegates can be accepted depending on capacity as determined by meeting organiser and are given priority over observer sites
- Membership in network core e-mail list and communication. All members of the member institution named by the site coordinator can subscribe to the list.
- Participation in all network working groups and research activities
- Listed as member site on TropNet website in public area with name of coordinator and deputy coordinator

Observers are sites or other external organisations which do not meet membership requirements, but contribute to the network by other means, e.g. by contributions to clinical case discussions, research or participation in working groups. An observer site is represented by one person acting as coordinator.

Observer sites or organizations have the following privileges:

- Send delegates to the network meeting depending on capacity as determined by the meeting organizing site
- Membership in observer e-mail list and communication
- Participation in all network working groups and research activities

2. Network structure and elections

The structure of the network consists of the **Assembly** of the **Member sites** and the **Steering committee**. The **Research Committee** and the **Policy Development Committee** are other permanent Committees.

Other committees and working or interest groups support the development of the network.

Steering Committee, the Research Committee and the Policy Development Committee members are all elected by the Assembly (by secret ballot, one vote per member site) at the TropNet annual meeting.

The Assembly has no minimum quorum and is always valid; a simple majority of those voting is required for any vote. For committee meetings (both in person and virtual) the majority of the members must be present. A simple majority of voters is required for any vote.

Voting by electronic communication is permitted

3. Membership requirements and membership application

Any institution offering services for returning travelers as a referral centre for clinical tropical and/or travel medicine can apply for membership in TropNet. Applications for membership must be addressed to the designated member of the Steering Committee and must be approved by its members.

The minimum requirements to maintain a full membership are:

- Responding to the annual survey on the number of selected infections seen in the last year

AND / OR

- Participating in the annual workshop

Member sites not meeting membership criteria will receive the status of observers.

To apply for membership, the head of the institution or department has to submit a letter of interest to the designated member of the steering committee. The letter shall describe the applicant site as a referral centre for clinical Tropical and/or Travel Medicine in detail, include reasons for application and potential contributions to the network and/or network activities in which the site intends to engage.

4. Permanent Committees

4.1. Steering Committee (SC)

SC is composed of 9 members. The term of office of a member is 4 years. A member can be elected for a second term of 4 years, then s(he) to step out for at least 2 years.

Main tasks

- Decisions concerning the structure and direction of the network
- Recruitment and approval of new member sites
- Deciding on membership status
- Decision on collaborations and partnerships
- Final decision on network implementation of research project

Each SC members takes a defined role and tasks in network organisation:

- **Membership management** (handling requests for membership, maintaining the member directory, management and assigning membership status (member / observer)
- **External communication (two SC members)** (coordination of team updating external section of website, news and events posts, social media, first point of contact for external requests)
- **Internal communication** (coordinates work on internal member area of website, first point of contact for internal requests, approves e-mails for distribution on the e-mail list)
- **Liaison SC member to meeting organizer** for next annual meeting, including organisation and communication of committee elections, coordination of meeting agenda with session leaders, meeting logistics together with organizing site
- **Interim meeting (e.g. clinical cases session) organiser**
- **SC management** (organize SC meetings and documentation of meeting)
- **Annual member survey organiser**

- **Support role 1** (supports any SC member on request in times of increased workload or absence)

4.2. Research Committee (RC):

It consists of a maximum of 5 members plus a coordinator. The term of office of the coordinator and members lasts 4 years. Both the members and the coordinator can be elected for a second term of 4 years, then have to step out for at least 2 years.

Main tasks

- Defines the SOPs for research projects conducted within the network
- Reviews proposed research projects
- Proposes on adoption or rejection of research proposals to the Steering Committee.
- Acts as a contact for the different working groups on research related issues (incl. authorship criteria for joint publications within the network)

4.3. Policy Development and Education Committee (PDEC):

It consists of a maximum of 5 members plus a coordinator. Election criteria are the same as for the RC.

Main tasks

- Develops policies to be endorsed by the network on relevant issues related to TropNet mandate
- Actively proposes policies for adoption by national or regional bodies (such as, but not limited to, on malaria prophylaxis, travel vaccines, screening policies)
- Prepares drafts for TropNet statements on relevant issues (such as, but not limited to, drug availability, diagnosis and treatment protocols)
- Policies and statements proposed by the PC will be reviewed by the SC and then approved by the Assembly, after which they can (if deemed appropriate) be submitted for publication.
- Organizes educational events and training courses

5. Non-permanent groups

Research platforms, interest and expert groups can be established within the network and use its resources. For presenting activities as an official TropNet group or activity, approval by the Steering Committee must be obtained.

6. Annual workshop

Member sites can offer to host the annual workshop. The selection is made by assembly vote or electronic voting.

A maximum number of five participants per site is allowed, except for the organizing site (no limit). Exceptions to the maximum number of participants require approval of the steering committee and the organizing local member site.

In addition to the annual workshop, other network meetings are highly encouraged and can be offered by any TropNet site, either as face-to-face, hybrid or mixed, or as virtual meetings.

7. Network research and publication policy.

A new research project proposal should be proposed to the coordinator of the research committee (see details in separate regulations of the Research Committee). Based on the evaluation, the SC will decide if the proposal can qualify as a TropNet project. Only after approval the investigator may directly contact the member sites and seek participation in network research. Any approved network research shall include the name “TropNet” either in the publication title or in other sections of the manuscript and clearly describe the role of the network in the methods section.

7.1. Authorship criteria

For each TropNet publication, authorship rules should be defined before the onset of the project, according to ICMJE requirements (for details see <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>)