

COBATEST NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The COBATEST Network links community-based voluntary counselling and testing services (CBVCTs) across Europe. The COBATEST Network was established in 2009 within the HIV-COBATEST project under the European Union Public Health Programme. The purpose was to share a common data collection instrument to monitor the activity of CBVCTs in Europe and to promote HIV testing, early diagnosis and linkage to care among key affected populations such as gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers and people who use drugs. Since 2018, has been funded through a Framework Partnership Agreement 2018 - 2021 between Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe (hosting AIDS Action Europe) and the European Commission. CEEISCAT is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the Network. The work of the Network is coordinated in close collaboration between AIDS Action Europe and CEEISCAT. Each member of the COBATEST network owns their historical data set. Members are granted access to their own data.

The COBATEST Network is governed by a Steering Committee. This document describes the principles, functions, governance rules and profile of the Steering Committee. The terms of reference for the Steering Committee defined in this document will remain independently of the Framework Partnership Agreement between Deutsche Aidshilfe (hosting AIDS Action Europe) and the European Commission. Adoption of amendments to this document by the Steering Committee shall require a majority of at least three quarters of the valid votes cast at a meeting of the Steering Committee with a quorum of at least two thirds of the members of the Steering Committee present. If the required quorum is not present at said meeting, a new consultation of the Steering Committee shall be held, at the latest within three months, at which a resolution on the acceptance or amendment shall be adopted by at least three quarters majority of the votes validly cast, regardless the number of Steering Committee members being present.

Steering Committee Principles

- The Steering Committee acts as the governing body of the COBATEST Network on all programmatic issues concerning policy, strategy, finance, monitoring and evaluation.
- The Steering Committee should be composed by individuals from AIDS Action Europe, CEEISCAT and member organisations of the COBATEST Network. Two permanent seats at the Steering Committee are reserved, one for AIDS Action Europe and one for CEEISCAT as the coordinators of the network, and the latter as coordinator of monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, there are 4 - 6 seats on the Steering Committee reserved for the civil society organisations representing national testing facility networks and local testing facility . These 6 Steering Committee members are elected by the COBATEST member organisations for a term of three years. Accordingly, the minimum number of SC Member is 6, the maximum number is 8.
- The composition of the Steering Committee should be balanced in terms of gender, geographic representation, thematic diversity and key populations. In order to ensure the balance there can be only one Steering Committee member from each country and the Steering Committee reserves the right to review the election results .

- Steering Committee members attend on a personal title and in recognition of their personal expertise and secondly as representatives of the COBATEST member organisation. Therefore, seats at the Steering Committee are not transferable automatically from one person to another within organisations. If a Steering Committee member is unable to participate in the Steering Committee for a period of over three months (due to situations like maternity leave or health conditions), a temporary replacement can be proposed to the Steering Committee by the organisation to guarantee continuity. The replacement shall start three months after the notice of absence and can last up to the original term.

Steering Committee Functions

- To represent the COBATEST Network at global, regional and sub-regional meetings, including the interaction with multilateral organisations and regional political bodies.
- To facilitate representation of the COBATEST Network in governing bodies of other European or global networks and partnerships and their events according to principles, objectives and purposes; to promote the ideas of the COBATEST network and contribute to its expansion in the [WHO European Region](#)
- To (further) develop, implement and continuously monitor and evaluate the general policies and priorities for the COBATEST Network, in consultation with member organisations
- To coordinate and avoid duplication of activities in the COBATEST Network.
- To identify sources of funding and key stakeholders that could improve funding opportunities.
- To coordinate, shape and review COBATEST network activities, including the annual report, capacity building and advocacy activities among others.

Steering Committee governance

- A term always covers three calendar years. If a Steering Committee member is elected during the year, his/her term is shortened by the time that has already passed in the year. The Steering Committee member may re-apply for the vacancy, but the extension is not automatically guaranteed. The maximum period in office is two terms. Members are free to resign at any time. Steering Committee members who re-apply after their term ends will be part of an open election procedure.
- Vacancies in the Steering Committee will be announced via email to all members. Members who are interested can show their interest by applying for the position. The new Steering Committee members will be elected by the COBATEST members.
- The dates, agenda and minutes of Steering Committee meetings will be made available to all COBATEST members.
- Travel expenses for Steering Committee meetings will be reimbursed for Steering Committee members.

- A member of the Steering Committee may be suspended or dismissed by a majority of at least two thirds of the valid votes cast at a meeting of the Steering Committee with a quorum of two thirds of the members of the Steering Committee, for reasons deriving from the interest of the COBATEST network. This decision will only be taken after consultation of the Steering Committee member involved. The vote of the person who is the subject of the proposal of suspension or dismissal shall not be counted. The suspension of a member of the Steering Committee that is not followed within three months by the member's dismissal terminates at the end of that period.

- Although the Steering Committee works by the unwritten rule to decide by consensus, the majority principle prevails, meaning that decisions are taken by a majority of Steering Committee members, present or represented. The quorum consists of half plus one of the members of the Steering Committee.

- Steering Committee members can be represented by other Steering Committee members at conference calls and Steering Committee meetings. Members need to inform the Steering Committee prior to the meeting or conference call in writing if they appoint another Steering Committee member as their representative. The Steering Committee member appointed as representative has the right to vote on behalf of the appointing Steering Committee member. One Steering Committee member can represent only one Steering Committee member at one time.

Incompatibility of functions

The role of Steering Committee member may be difficult to combine with some other public functions or a personal relationship with a sponsor or another member of the Steering Committee. Steering Committee members should indicate to the Steering Committee if they foresee a possible conflict of interest. If more than half of the Steering Committee concludes there is a conflict of interest, the Steering Committee member's term could be ended by the Steering Committee according to the rules described in the procedure of suspension or dismissal of Steering Committee members.

Date, location