

This Chapter was approved by PHM Steering Council on 27 April, 2022 during its annual meeting held in Madrid, Spain.

Chapter 2: Principles/Broad Framework of PHM Governance Structure

(This section is taken from a 2010 internal paper titled “Restructuring of PHM’s Governance Mechanism: Principles and Process” labeled A1)

“While developing a global governance mechanism for the PHM, we need to be sensitive to the nature of the PHM. The PHM is *both* a network and a movement. The requirements as regards the two can be different.

As a *network* the PHM needs to be sensitive to the needs of partners (including affiliated networks and country circles) who may come with different experiences, strengths and weaknesses. The challenge is to balance these differences while ensuring that all partners find a way to contribute and feel confident that their views are heard and respected. Given the large diversity among the partners this is not an easy task. Networks, in order to survive and expand, thus need relatively “flat” structures of governance with minimum of hierarchy. Such structures do not always lend themselves to easy and fast decision-making processes, as many decisions have to be carefully “negotiated” between different partners with varying positions. But at the same time such a seemingly cumbersome mechanism is needed to keep a network together.

As a *movement* the PHM is often required to take positions and react to immediate concerns. The PHM, as a movement, is also required to present a concrete strategic vision on many issues. Such requirements would need decision making structures that are capable of taking quick decisions that best reflect the consensus within the constituents of the movement.

There is a third dimension that needs to be kept in mind as regards a functioning decision-making structure for the PHM. If the structure is too large then logistical constraints can make it dysfunctional. Thus, for example, a large steering council may appear more “democratic” but its size can mean that it becomes impossible to meet and discuss issues and lack of resources could further constrain the ability for such a structure to actually meet and discuss. This then defeats the entire purpose, and in the name of better democracy we can end up with a few people taking all the decisions because the decision-making structure is unable to function. Partially, this problem has been addressed in the present governance structure by having the Co-ordination Commission act as the executive body of the Steering Council.

These then are the challenges that require to be addressed while we consider restructuring of the PHM's governance structure. If we go back to the four categories that require representation, we will see that finding a place for all of them in the formal governance structure would mean a structure that is too large to function. Proceeding logically then, we need a mechanism to choose from the four categories those who would be part of the

decision-making mechanism – a process that ensures that all partners participate in the selection of those who would be part of the formal governance structure. At the same time we need a principle and a process for rotation, so that all partners find a place in the structure at different points of time.

Given the uneven nature of development of PHM's work – geographically and in thematic areas – we have a further challenge. We also need a mechanism and principles to identify partners (affiliate networks, country circles) and processes (global programmes, thematic circles) that we think have the capability and interest to be part of the governance system of PHM. This is necessary for two reasons. One, to make the process more compact in terms of numbers. More importantly, this would be designed to ensure that the governance structure reflects concerns articulated by those who are contributing to (or have the potential to) the expansion and consolidation of the work of the PHM – both as a movement and a network.”

Any governance structure that we look for needs to reflect the present reality. To recapitulate from above, it needs to incorporate representation from the following:

1. Affiliated networks
2. Country Circles
3. Global Programmes
4. Thematic Circles¹

¹ Explanatory Note: The Thematic circles are represented in the SC through the Health for all Campaign representative. This explanatory note was added in April 2022.