

ISN Regional Training Centers

Practical details for interested organizations
2026 edition

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1. OBJECTIVES OF ISN REGIONAL TRAINING CENTERS

Capacity building amongst healthcare professionals has been central to the ISN mission of working towards a future with high quality kidney health worldwide. In recent years, high-quality training programs have developed in several emerging countries.

Increasingly, the relevance of appropriate training within the geographic region has been identified as a key priority. To address this, and to recognize the excellent contribution to nephrology education and training being made by centers in low- and middle-income countries (low, lower-middle and upper-middle income countries according to World Bank classification), the ISN has established a network of ISN Regional Training Centers (RTCs).

RTCs are institutions that have demonstrated a passion and capacity for training doctors and health professionals in kidney care from surrounding low resource areas, a high standard of training capabilities in nephrology, and continued involvement in ISN capacity-building activities.

The primary objective of ISN Regional Training Centers is to provide locally relevant nephrology training to doctors and health professionals in low, lower-middle, or upper-middle-income countries from their region through the ISN Granting Programs. In addition, ISN Regional Training Centers are expected to promote ISN activities in their region and to act as a hub, for example by:

- Hosting ISN Fellows
- Serving as ISN Mentors
- Holding educational meetings and workshops on topics considered as a priority by the ISN (such as AKI, CKD and ESKD) and relevant to the region
- Providing Continuing Medical Educational (CME) speakers and Educational Ambassadors (EAP)
- Organizing Scientific Writing Courses
- Supporting Emerging Centers from low resource areas through the ISN Sister Renal Centers (SRC) and Sister Transplant Centers (STC) programs
- Contributing to the ISN Academy
- Developing and engaging in advocacy activities and collaborations with their local and regional health authorities

This initiative recognizes institutions that demonstrate a passion and capability for training doctors and health professionals in kidney care from surrounding low-resource areas and who manifest continued involvement in ISN capacity-building activities.

2. BENEFITS OF BEING AN ISN REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER

Selected centers will be recognized as ISN Regional Training Centers for a period of 5 years, at the end of which they will have the option to re-apply to keep their status as ISN Regional Training Center. They will be required to produce a progress report of training activities after two years, which will be presented to the ISN Core Programs Committee.

- Selected centers will be given priority consideration when they are identified as training centers/collaborators on applications to the ISN Programs, and thereby will increase their chances of funding by the ISN
- They will benefit from increased visibility at national, regional and global levels: ISN Regional Training Centers will be advertised on the ISN website and all other ISN communication channels. They will also be promoted through the Matching initiatives for the Fellowship and SRC/STC programs
- The application fee to have events [endorsed by the ISN](#) is waived for RTCs.
- They will be provided with a certificate; and may state that they are an '*ISN Regional Training Center 20XX-20XX*' (with the ISN logo alongside this statement) on their letterhead and other communications

Note that:

- ISN recognition does not provide certification according to the criteria of any existing postgraduate training organization.
- ISN recognition does not provide evidence of completed and certified specialist training in nephrology for any individual who spends time in an ISN Regional Training Center.

3. HOW TO APPLY

The application process opens in July 2026 and the deadline to apply is on **October 1, 2026**.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- **Each year, the ISN recruits new Regional Training Centers from certain regions. In 2026, we are only considering applications from centers in Eastern & Central Europe, and NIS & Russia.**
- The center should be located in a low, lower-middle or upper-middle income country
- The center main representative and senior staff should be full ISN members
- The center should have proven capabilities to provide a quality training in nephrology, and track record of training people from the region (especially from surrounding low and lower-middle income countries) through the ISN Granting Programs (Fellowship, SRC/STC, CME, EAP, etc), or outside ISN activities
- The center should show commitment to contribute to various ISN Granting Programs, sustain relationships with returning trainees to help them grow as local leaders and foster interaction between regional, national and international experts as a way to promote individual and inter-institutional networking

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications must be submitted via the [ISN Programs Application Portal](#). Your application dossier must include:

- **Application form**, which includes questions on:
 - Topics they can provide training on;
 - Involvement in research (clinical, lab and epidemiology/registry);
 - Language of training;
 - Local accreditation (by professional organization or government);
 - Adequate governance, planning, staffing and quality assurance.
- **5-Year Plan (PDF upload)**, which can be formulated in the most convenient format for each applicant. It should describe how applicants envision their involvement in the ISN Programs over the next 5 years (as a training center and/or with representatives attending regional events), and the impact on kidney care at a regional level that they would like to achieve. This 5-year plan will be used to assess the candidate training capabilities and motivation to become an ISN Regional Training Center, but also to track their progress if they are selected, and if they decide to re-apply to remain an ISN Regional Training Center after 5 years.
- **Letter of Support from Local or Regional Society of Nephrology (PDF upload)**, which should be a statement from an executive representative from the local or regional society of nephrology highlighting the strengths of the Center, how it could influence kidney care in the region, and its relevance to the regional needs.
- **Letter of Recommendation from ISN Regional Board (PDF upload)**, which should be a statement from the [ISN Regional Board Chair or Deputy Chair](#) providing a rationale for their recommendation. Please contact the ISN Programs Team at isnprograms@theisn.org if you do not know your ISN Regional Board Chair or Deputy Chair's contact details.

If you have any questions about your eligibility, or require assistance with the application process, do not hesitate to contact isnprograms@theisn.org.

GENERAL TIPS AND COMMENTS

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The application is a lengthy process, and we recommend you allocate enough time for it before submission. The ISN will select a limited number of ISN Regional Training Centers each year and only candidates with a strong application file will be accepted.

FORMS:

Your application must be submitted via the [online application system](#). Applications sent by email, fax or post will not be considered.

LETTERS:

Make sure all letters are written under official letterheads and duly signed. They will not be considered valid otherwise.

ISN MEMBERSHIP:

Regional Training Centers serve as ISN beacons within a region. Senior staff at these centers are expected to be **active members of the ISN community** with [full ISN Membership](#). Explore different ISN

membership opportunities for your colleagues and become part of the ISN community. If membership fees are not paid, the application will not be submitted to the ISN Core Programs Committee.

LANGUAGE:

The application and all enclosed documents must be written in English. Documents submitted in any other language will not be submitted to the ISN Core Programs Committee. No exception to this rule will be made.

TRAINING TOPICS

Regional Training Centers are expected to provide comprehensive nephrology training, including general nephrology, hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis, transplantation, and pediatric nephrology. For centers that offer some, but not all, of these topics, their application may be strengthened and if trainees at their center would have the opportunity to do short-term rotations at other nearby centers to complete training in all aspects of Nephrology. While individual trainees may focus on specific areas, the center (on its own or through partnerships) should be able to offer training across the full spectrum of nephrology. In this case, please provide details about the other center, what training they can provide, and how your two centers collaborate.

Example: Hospital A offers overall high-quality training in nephrology and wishes to become an RTC, but doesn't perform kidney transplants because Hospital B is the primary transplantation center in the area. Arrangements are therefore made for Hospital A trainees to do a transplantation rotation at Hospital B.

INTRA-REGIONAL TRAININGS:

Applications should preferably involve training of doctors and health professionals from the same region rather than just from the same country.

4. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

The ISN Core Programs Committee will review applications and consult with the Regional Boards for additional comments. Assessment will be based on the criteria listed below:

- Center is located in a low, lower-middle or upper-middle income country
- Evidence of ISN membership of senior staff members in the last 5 years
- Alignment of 5-year plan with ISN vision, mission and strategic framework
- Relevance of 5-year plan as compared to regional needs
- Involvement in ISN Programs (in ISN SRC or STC pairs/trios, organization of CME meetings, representatives involved as CME speakers or Educational Ambassadors, etc)
- Facilities available at the training center (in terms of staff, equipment and procedures undertaken)
- Available curriculum and possibility of hands-on training
- Appropriateness of proposed topics, quality and capability of training, research, governance and accreditation.

Other indicators will be taken into account in the review process:

- Topics applicants can provide training on
- Digital training opportunities
- Involvement in research (clinical, lab and epidemiology/registry)
- Language of training
- Local accreditation (by professional organization or government);
- Adequate governance, planning, staffing and with quality insurance.

The names of centers selected by the ISN Core Programs Committee will be submitted to the ISN Executive Committee for final approval.

The outcome of applications will be announced in early 2027.

5. ROLE OF ISN REGIONAL TRAINING CENTERS

The primary objective of ISN Regional Training Centers is to provide nephrology training to doctors and health professionals in low, lower-middle, or upper-middle-income countries from their region through the ISN Granting Programs. In addition, ISN Regional Training Centers are expected to promote ISN activities in their region and to act as a hub for ISN grants and programs.

ISN Programs

In order to maintain their status as a recognized Regional Training Center, RTCs are expected to participate in a minimum of five ISN programs over their term (on average, around one per year). *Please see Annex I of these guidelines for detailed information on the expected benchmarks.*

In general, all participants in ISN programs must be ISN members. For activities funded by ISN grants, eligibility is reserved only for individuals and centers in low, lower-middle, or upper-middle income countries, according to World Bank classification.

Full program guidelines are available for each program on the ISN website. Centers or individuals interested in taking part in a program should be sure to carefully read the guidelines in full before submitting an application.

ISN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

ISN Fellows travel from their home center to spend between 3 and 12 months at a host center, training in a topic of their choosing. Fellows can train at any center, but get priority consideration if they apply to train at an ISN Regional Training Center. Applications from Fellows are collected by October 1 each year.

Note: Host centers, including RTCs, are not permitted to charge tuition fees to ISN Fellows training there. Each host center is permitted to host no more than two ISN Fellows simultaneously, and no more than four applications to each host center will be considered each application round. Host mentors supervising ISN Fellows must be ISN members.

ISN SISTER CENTERS

[ISN Sister Renal Centers](#) and [ISN-TTS Sister Transplant Centers](#) provide educational support and guidance to centers in need within the developing nephrology community by pairing them with established centers to form supportive partnerships. Funding is provided at different levels as the partnership progresses. RTCs can take part as an emerging center, as a mentoring center for another emerging center in the region, or, for graduated emerging centers, as a supporting center in a sister center trio. Application deadlines are in October each year.

EDUCATIONAL AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

[ISN Educational Ambassadors](#) spend up to four weeks at a host center in an emerging country to provide expert guidance and hands-on training to advance new initiatives, skills or services, and community-based research or screening programs.

RTCs can apply to host an Educational Ambassador to receive training; faculty from RTCs can also act as Educational Ambassadors to visit other emerging centers in their region. Applications are considered year-round.

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

Through the [Continuing Medical Education \(CME\) Program](#), ISN supports faculty to present talks and workshops at regional nephrology-related meetings, bringing expert speakers together from around the world to share knowledge and experience in clinical care and research. Regional Training Centers are encouraged to request CME support for meetings that they host, and for RTC faculty to take part in the program at other meetings in the region. Applications are considered year-round.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Through the [ISN Mentorship Program](#), ISN members connect with the ISN global community and build mutual learning partnerships raising understanding of the global nature of kidney health and care and the various contexts in which they occur. Mentees can work on their specific professional goals together with a mentor, while Mentors can develop their coaching and leadership skills. RTC faculty are encouraged to apply to be Mentors within this program. The deadline for mentors is April 1; for mentees is July 1. Note: The mentorship program is a non-funded program and open to ISN members from all countries.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Regional Training Centers can also take part in other ISN activities, such as Saving Young Lives, webinars and other activities on the ISN Academy, or organizing meetings and workshops. RTCs are also invited to give input on how ISN training opportunities can be made more effective and relevant in their region.

6. REPORTING AND RENEWAL

ISN Regional Training Centers will be required to provide a progress report after two years, to allow the ISN to assess their progress in comparison with the objectives outlined in the 5-year plan.

After five years, ISN Regional Training Centers will be required to provide a term report. Provided that objectives and benchmarks are met, they will then be invited to reapply for another term.

ANNEX I: BENCHMARKS FOR ISN REGIONAL TRAINING CENTERS

As ambassadors and hubs for ISN activities in their region, each RTC is expected to take part in a minimum of one ISN program per year, i.e., at least five activities over a five-year term. Centers taking part in longer-term commitments (such as acting as a Sister Center or hosting a long-term Fellow) may understandably have less involvement with other ISN programs as a result.

To understand how different activities are weighted, please see the outline below. With this metric, each Center is expected to have a minimum of five “points” by the end of their first five-year term.

- Hosting an ISN Fellow = 0.5 points for every 3 months, so 2 points for a full-year Fellowship
- Taking part in a Sister Center (either SRC or STC) pairing = 3 points
- Hosting an event supported by the Continuing Medical Education Program = 1 point
- RTC faculty acting as an Educational Ambassador = 1 point
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- RTC faculty acting as a mentor in the ISN Mentorship Program = 1 point

The ISN appreciates and would like to know about all training, research, and advocacy activities your Center takes part in as an RTC. Please don’t hesitate to share any further information in your progress reports beyond the activities listed. Please note that these are minimum guidelines, rather than strict rules for continued recognition as a Regional Training Center.