EUROPEAN
HEALTH FORUM
GASTEIN

Simmonds-Issler, Joe
CEPI



Joe Simmonds-Issler is the Executive Director of Governance, Strategy, Portfolio, and Biosecurity at CEPI.

Joe has been at CEPI since July 2017, first of all as Chief of Staff, and subsequently as a member of the Executive Team leading four departments which help set direction, drive progress, and drive decision-making and course correction throughout the organisation. This work includes overseeing strategy development and learning, portfolio management and annual portfolio reviews, CEPI's governance, and bespoke projects.

Joe has played a central role in CEPI's evolution (from an organisation size of 20 staff members when he joined to 320 staff in 2025), with particular focus on the interconnection between strategy and execution. Joe acted as incident response lead for CEPI during the 2019 Ebola outbreak in DRC and played a major role in CEPI's response to COVID-19, driving CEPI's early fundraising and designing rapid governance processes and being integral to the development and running of COVAX.

In 2023, Joe secured funding for CEPI to define its role in the biosecurity space. Biosecurity is a critical part of the 100 Day Mission, and CEPI has now integrated biosecurity as a core part of its work.

Before CEPI Joe worked at Wellcome working on governance and developing a new strategy with a focus on impact, completed an Emerging Leaders in Biosecurity Fellowship at Johns Hopkins University, and studied War Studies and History at Kings College, London (UK).