



ESTHER Ireland Programme, HSE Application Guidelines 2020

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Introduction

ESTHER Ireland is a joint HSE-Irish Aid health development cooperation initiative and a part of the ESTHER Alliance for Global Health Partnerships (EA). This alliance of European countries was initiated by the French Government in response to the AIDS crisis in Africa in 2002. Today Members of the Alliance seek to mobilise and create partnerships that facilitate health interventions across a wide range of areas of need with the world’s poorest countries.

Ireland’s participation in the ESTHER Alliance was guided by the 2010 MoU between Irish Aid and the HSE, culminating in Ireland joining the Alliance in 2012. ESTHER Ireland operates under the MoU and its Secretariat is hosted by the Irish Forum for Global Health. Since May 2018, responsibility and governance for the ESTHER Ireland programme sits within the HSE Global Health Programme.

The operational rationale for the ESTHER Alliance is grounded on the centrality of partnerships and their potential to achieve more through working as institutions rather than individuals. The theoretical basis behind this approach is that robust partnerships working collectively and collaboratively can contribute to improved health services for poor and disadvantaged communities and with a “multiplier effect” on health outcomes. The principle modality of these partnerships is twinning between hospitals, primary care services, universities and other institutions with counterparts in partner countries. A variety of geographical arrangements are supported by ESTHER that may include North-South and South-South cooperation.

The partnership approach aims to make a significant contribution to health outcomes in poor countries through addressing inequities in access and coverage, while strengthening service delivery through capacity building and institutional development. Human resource capacity is strengthened through peer to peer relationships between personnel working in the partner institutions. Accordingly, ESTHER supported partnerships are “agents of change” in a multiplicity of intervention areas that focus on the creation of sustainable and

resilient partnerships with positive changes at all stages of the results continuum. Self-mobilisation and financial leverage are considered key output performance indicators from a quality partnership and are expected to make a contribution to an improved health outcome.

ESTHER Ireland works closely with its European Partners and collaborates with WHO and the Tropical Health Education Trust (THET) in the UK. As well as making a contribution to the health outcomes in developing countries these partnerships have also been shown to have advantages and benefits for developed countries.

Since 2014, with funding from Irish Aid, ESTHER Ireland has awarded funding to 27 institutions to develop new partnerships or strengthen existing ones. To date five of these institutions have achieved accreditation as ESTHER partners, having an established partnership and demonstrating adherence to the [ESTHER Charter for Quality of Partnerships](#)

Scope of the Health Partnership Scheme

Irish Aid has provided funding to the HSE in 2019 for ESTHER grants, as part of its funding under the HSE-Irish Aid MoU. The grant will be administered by the Irish Forum for Global Health under a service level agreement with the HSE.

The scope of the grants has been modified from previous years. This is based on five years of learning from Irish-South health partnerships, findings from an internal evaluation of ESTHER Ireland in 2017 as well as an external evaluation of IFGH and its hosting of the ESTHER Ireland programme, along with a new strategy for ESTHER Ireland developed in January 2019. The revised scope addresses HSE and Irish Aid priorities for the programme.

The focus of this round of grants is primarily for increased support to established health partnerships. There is also some scope to support the strengthening and development of new partnerships. It is intended to support a variety of partnerships from national-level Ministry-to-Ministry type partnerships to multi-institution and single-institution north-south partnerships.

Band 1 Innovation Grants

Applications are invited for *established* health partnerships that fall within any or all of the following categories:

- Implement small scale innovations or pilot projects.
- Undertake activities that strengthen the working relationship between the partners (eg; exchange visits, stakeholder meetings, communication systems).
- Build capacity within the existing partnership to enable it to initiate and implement projects and programmes (eg; skills building workshops).

Minimum requirements

- Partnerships must demonstrate clear evidence of quality of partnership, as positively assessed by the ESTHER Accreditation process
- Eligible institutions are Irish hospitals, hospital groups, other service-delivery institutions, primary care facilities, public health institutions, training bodies and research institutions that have an *established partnership* with a counterpart overseas institution in a low-or middle-income country.

Band 1 Grant Criteria

- Partnerships should demonstrate a clear theory of change for how they will improve health services and health outcomes. Change pathways may include one or more of a range of interventions areas such as education, training, mentoring, exchange visits, technical support, service quality improvement and research. For further information visit [Developing a Theory of Change](#).
- Higher priority is given to partnerships in countries with official Government links through Irish Aid and/or the HSE:
 - Irish Aid key partner countries providing bilateral support to the health sector (Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Liberia)
 - Other Irish Aid key partner countries (eg Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, Sierra Leone)
 - Countries in which HSE is engaged with through formal agreements (eg Mozambique, Sudan, Zambia)
- Preference is given to partnerships with greater potential to achieve impact:
 - Aim to strengthen the capacity of health institutions to address local health priorities and unmet health service needs
 - Contribute to health systems strengthening and universal health coverage

- Grant funding should achieve value for money. Having co-funding is considered an advantage.
- Successful partnerships should be willing to monitor their partnership using the ESTHER Pilot Effect Tool and produce a case study.
- Coherent with Irish Aid Development Policy [A Better World](#)

Band 2 Development Grants

Irish health organisations and institutions are eligible to apply for a Band 2 grant to facilitate the development of an institutional partnership with an institution in a low-or middle-income country, to strengthen an existing partnership or to explore development of a new or emerging partnership. Grants must be spent within 12 months of disbursement. Intended outcomes from activities implemented under this scheme could include formalising an agreement such as an MoU between partners or developing a shared vision and action plan.

Applications are invited for health partnerships that fall within any or all of the following categories:

- Undertake activities that strengthen the working relationship between the partners (e.g exchange visits, stakeholder meetings, communication systems)
- Build capacity within the existing partnership to enable it to initiate and implement projects and programmes (e.g skills building workshops)
- Explore development of a health partnership

Criteria Band 2

- Higher priority is given to partnerships in countries with official Government links through Irish Aid and/or the HSE:
 - Irish Aid key partner countries providing bilateral support to the health sector (Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Liberia).
 - Other Irish Aid key partner countries (eg; Zambia, Malawi, Uganda).
 - Countries in which HSE is engaged with through formal agreements (eg Mozambique, Sudan, Zambia, Sierra Leone).
- Coherent with objectives of Irish Aid Development policy [A Better World](#).
- Grant funding should achieve value for money. Having co-funding is considered an advantage.

- Successful partnerships should be willing to produce a case study.

Funding Levels

- Band 1 ceiling: €10,000
- Band 2 Ceiling: €8,000

Partnership Characteristics

Partnership Defined;

A partnership is a collaborative relationship between two or more parties based on trust, equality and mutual understanding for the achievement of a specific goal. Partnerships involve risks as well as benefits, making shared accountability critical.

Definition from the WHO APPS Programme.

Characteristics of *strong* partnership proposals.

- ✓ Built on existing links with institutional commitment.
- ✓ Demand-driven and needs based.
- ✓ Country-owned, and aligned with country partner priorities.
- ✓ Clear goals, results focused with a strong potential for impact.
- ✓ Guided by the need for sustainability.
- ✓ Evidence of mutual accountability, and transparency in the intended use of available resources.

Characteristics of *weaker* partnership proposals

- ✗ One-sided benefits, reciprocity unclear.
- ✗ Unclear partner capacity and experience.
- ✗ Institution involvement not well articulated.
- ✗ Over ambitious with little attention to sustainability.
- ✗ Overly project focused rather than partnership focused.
- ✗ Inconsistent budget with weak focus on goals or results.
- ✗ Many applications are not supported by the necessary documents.

The partnership scheme will fund;

- ✓ Needs assessment
- ✓ Travel
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Communications
- ✓ Workshops for partnership development
- ✓ Subsistence allowance at local rates ([ESTHER Website](#) for guidelines)
- ✓ Publication and development of webpages to enhance partnerships
- ✓ Monitoring and reporting costs

The Partnership scheme will not fund;

- ✗ Salaries or “top ups”
- ✗ First class business travel
- ✗ Fundraising activities
- ✗ Backstopping other grants
- ✗ University fees
- ✗ Volunteer funding
- ✗ Consultants
- ✗ Office Space
- ✗ Sitting allowances (for training attendees)
- ✗ Entertainment costs

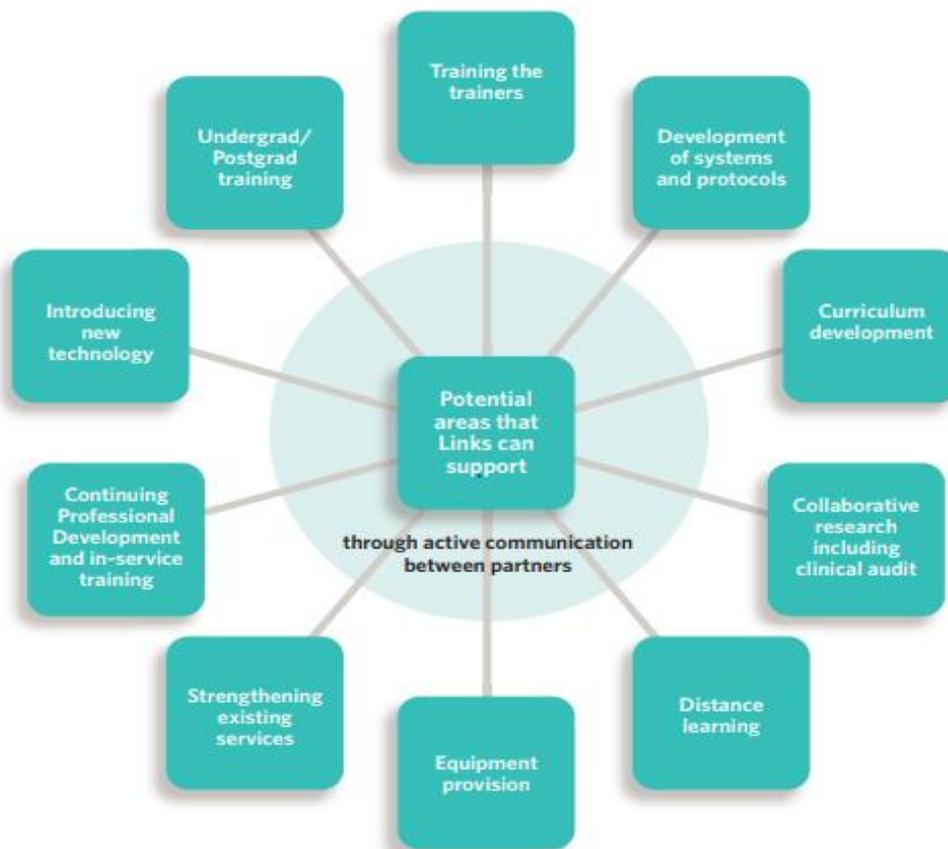
Examples of funded schemes

To date ESTHER Ireland has supported the development of partnerships in a variety of intervention areas, which include:

1. Physiotherapy	7. Leprosy
2. Nursing & Midwifery	8. Paediatric Cancer
3. Children’s Palliative Care	9. Cancer Research & Education
4. Health care education & research	10. Mother & Child Health
5. Health care equipment	11. Community Health
6. Health Systems Research	12. Surgical Training

There are many areas that a partnership might focus on including learning, training, exchange visits, research, and teaching.

Ultimately, the creation of a sustainable partnership should aim to make a contribution to achieving a particular health outcome which has been identified as a priority by the southern partner and their National Health Plan.



Source: THET International Health Links Manual

Application Process

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis over the period of one year. To apply visit the [ESTHER Ireland Website](#). Incomplete applications will not be considered. All applications and queries should be sent to the ESTHER Ireland secretariat at grants@esther.ie

If successful in your application ESTHER Ireland will continue to support and monitor active partner participation at all stages of the grant implementation process in particular at the grant planning and reporting stages. Applicants are encouraged to be as clear and succinct as possible in their proposals and ensure all background documentation, including that outlined in the introduction has been consulted.