



# EUROPEAN ESTHER ALLIANCE CHARTER

## Preamble

The European ESTHER Alliance is a network of Governments and their institutions and organizations. It mobilizes health expertise and health institution partnerships to contribute to the global health agenda as part of international development cooperation involving low-income countries.

Originally established in 2002 to face the emergency represented by HIV/AIDS in developing countries and to counter the blatant inequalities between the global North and South in access to treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS, the initiative gradually expanded its mandate and fields of intervention.

The European ESTHER Alliance is consequently involved in several Global Health priorities (MDG 4 – Child health, MDG 5 – Maternal health, MDG 6 – HIV, TB, Malaria and other diseases) and beyond: health systems strengthening, hygiene and patient safety, etc.

This represents a broadened agenda for the European ESTHER Alliance, matching the international agenda in health.

Each member country ratified a ministerial Declaration and committed to develop the ESTHER Initiative by implementing capacity building activities and developing partnerships between hospitals of the North and hospitals and health structures in country partners.

From this initial framework, the European ESTHER Alliance has included additional and complementary approaches: partnerships with other institutions than hospitals (research institutes, universities), Civil Society Organizations partnerships, Extra Hospital Technical assistance, Information and Communication Technologies, operational research, monitoring and evaluation.

This represents the evolution of the ESTHER modus operandi and the definition of a new business model that reflects member country development cooperation in health priorities and the development cooperation in health landscape 10 years after the launch of the ESTHER Initiative.

*Adopted in Rome, June 15, 2012*

**This Charter serves as a common reference framework for current and future ESTHER stakeholders**

1. The ultimate objective of the European ESTHER Alliance is to contribute to health systems strengthening through country partners to improve health outcomes.
2. The ESTHER Alliance builds on the WHO concept that a health system comprises six building blocks: service delivery; health workforce; information; medical products, vaccines and technologies; financing; and leadership and governance.
3. The ESTHER Alliance focuses on:
  - a. Improving health services to deliver effective and safe quality care.
  - b. Strengthening health workforce through capacity building interventions.
  - c. Improving health information systems to increase health system performance, guide policy makers in priority setting and support health professionals for quality patient care and follow up.
  - d. Strengthening drug procurement system management to ensure equitable and affordable access for all to essential medical products.
  - e. Supporting health authorities in health policy design, implementation and evaluation.
4. The ESTHER Alliance aims at contributing to country partners and the international community health agenda, and particularly in the health Millennium Development Goals:
  - a. Goal 4: reduce child mortality.
  - b. Goal 5: Improve maternal health.
  - c. Goal 6: Combat HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
5. Whenever possible, the ESTHER Alliance will develop a combined MDG 4, 5 and 6 approach to ensure a greater impact on the MDG health targets. For example, each ESTHER Prevention of HIV Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) project should aim at integrating PMTCT interventions in maternal and child health interventions.
6. For post 2015 and post MDGs, any new guiding global health objective(s) that may replace or reformulate the MDG goals will constitute a similar ESTHER focus as the present one described above.
7. Vulnerable and most at risk populations are a priority for the ESTHER Alliance interventions.
8. The gender dimension (in accordance with the MDG 3: promote gender equality and empower women) remains a key priority for the ESTHER Alliance.

9. Any ESTHER intervention respects the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, and particularly:
  - a. Adherence to national policies and strategies.
  - b. Recognise country ownership.
  - c. Close partnership with national authorities and institutions.
  - d. Support for partner country sustainable capacity.
  - e. Align with country system and procedures to the maximum extent possible.
  - f. Align with country systems for procurement to the maximum extent possible.
  - g. Work together to harmonise external support towards a coherent response.
  - h. Enhance results orientation, mutual accountability and transparency in the use of available resources.
  
10. The hospital partnerships remain the most common mode of action of the ESTHER Alliance that enables ESTHER to work in health facilities with the health professionals and other hospital staff. However any additional and complementary North/South or South/South partnership exchange is encouraged, mainly between:
  - a. Universities.
  - b. Other research institutions.
  - c. Other academic institutions (health worker education).
  - d. Civil Society Organisations and their communities.
  - e. Other potential institutions (e.g. prison).
  
11. Each ESTHER country member will develop its national ESTHER initiative according to the foregoing articles and fields of intervention mentioned, with room to flexibly to determine its exact mandate and modus operandi according to its financial means and technical capacity.
  
12. Each country is expected to mandate its main focal point or focal institution as its representative to the European ESTHER Alliance. Country representatives are the governance body and will seek to make decisions by consensus.
  
13. Each ESTHER country member commits to strengthen the European Alliance, notably by:
  - a. Supporting joint events organisation.
  - b. Developing joint projects at local level.
  - c. Securing its ESTHER communication and visibility.
  - d. Advocating for and positioning the European ESTHER Alliance as a European platform for development cooperation in health.
  
14. Each ESTHER country member commits to respect the European ESTHER Alliance's Quality of partnership charter principles, and to share it with ESTHER current and future stakeholders in Europe and with country partners.
  
15. Each ESTHER country member commits to support the European Secretariat to fulfil its missions and mandate.