



ESTHER Ireland Programme, HSE Application Guidelines 2023

Joining Irish health institutions with institutions in
the Global South



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Scope of the 2023 Health Partnership Scheme.....	4
Band 1: New Partnership Grants	4
Band 2: Established Partnership Grants.....	5
Partnership Proposals	6
Application Process.....	8

Introduction

ESTHER Ireland is an initiative of the HSE Global Health Programme and was previously part of the European ESTHER Alliance for Global Health Partnerships. Under this initiative, the Global Health Programme facilitates and supports Irish health services and institutes to develop linkages and twinning partnerships with counterpart institutions in low and middle-income countries.

The operational rationale for ESTHER Ireland 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 principal modality of these partnerships is twinning between hospitals, primary care services, universities and other institutions with counterparts in partner countries.

The partnership approach aims to make a significant contribution to health outcomes in poor countries through addressing inequities in access and coverage, while improving quality of services 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 improved health outcomes.

Since 2014, with funding from Irish Aid, ESTHER Ireland has awarded €482,050.83 through 68 grants, to develop new partnerships or strengthen existing ones.

ESTHER Ireland grants accreditation to established institutional health partnerships which have demonstrated the highest quality of partnership and reciprocity. An online accreditation tool that provides instant feedback, ahead of applications being reviewed by ESTHER Ireland, was launched in 2021. Three partnerships were awarded accreditation status in 2022 having met the quality standards. This accreditation indicates that the partnership is committed to delivering a quality service, to influencing health policy and creating a sustainable partnership that will have a long-term impact on health outcomes.

Scope of the 2023 Health Partnership Scheme

The 2023 grant scheme is in line with the HSE Global Health Programme Strategic Framework 2022-2024 and part of the Global Health Programme implementation plan. The grants will be administered by the Irish Global Health Network under a service level agreement with the HSE. The programme is supported with funding from Irish Aid.

This round of grants reflects the current global and Irish context, with lessons learned after the COVID-19 pandemic. It also responds to the directions and priorities of the Government's International Development Policy, A Better World, which was published in 2019. The theme for the 2023 grant call is partnerships that are contributing to health systems strengthening.

As with previous calls, this round of grants will be of two types. Band 1 grants are to support new partnerships, and Band 2 grants are to support established partnerships. ESTHER Ireland welcomes applications from partnerships involving different types of health institutions, including hospitals, primary care services, public health units, education and training organisations, universities, and Government health departments.

NGOs are generally not eligible for ESTHER grants unless they are part of a collaboration with an Irish health service or institution.

The grant application process will run for 7 weeks, with applications accepted up to 7th July 2023.

Note: Funding is limited, and is subject to availability. Proposed dates for disbursement cannot be guaranteed and may be subject to delays or changes.

Band 1: New Partnership Grants

Irish health organisations and institutions are eligible to apply for a Band 1 grant to facilitate the development of a new link or partnership with a counterpart organisation or institution in a low- or middle-income country.

In the context of this programme, we consider a new partnership to be one that has recently started to work together or has not yet started working together but has taken preliminary steps. It should demonstrate a commitment to adhere to the ESTHER Principles of Quality of Partnerships.

Intended outcomes from activities implemented under this scheme could include:

- Formalising an agreement such as an MOU between partners
- Developing a shared vision and action plan.

Grants must be spent within 12 months of disbursement.

The ceiling for Band 1 grants is €8,000.

Criteria Band 1

- 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 (e.g. Zambia, Malawi, Uganda)
 - Countries in which HSE is engaged with through formal agreements (e.g. 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 will be invited to produce a case study.

Band 2: Established Partnership Grants

Applications are invited from Irish health institutions and organisations engaged in established health partnerships. We consider an established partnership to be one that has been working together for more than a year and has been formalised, such as through a Memorandum of Understanding. Partnerships must demonstrate clear evidence of quality of partnership, such as receiving ESTHER Accreditation for Quality of Partnership.

Partnerships may apply for grants to:

- Implement small scale innovations or pilot projects.
- 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).

Grants must be spent within 12 months of disbursement.

The ceiling for Band 2 grants is €8,000.

Criteria Band 2

- 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.
- 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)
 - Other Irish Aid key partner countries (e.g. Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, Sierra Leone)
 - Countries that the HSE engages with through formal agreements (e.g. Mozambique, Sudan, Zambia)
- Preference is given to partnerships with greater potential to achieve impact:
 - Contribute to health systems strengthening and resilience.
 - Aim to strengthen the capacity of health institutions to address local health priorities and unmet health service needs.
 - Coherent with 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 monitor their partnership using the ESTHER Pilot Effect Tool and produce a case study.

Partnership Proposals

According to the **WHO APPS Programme**, partnership can be defined as follows: *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.*

The following figure highlights the characteristics of strong and weaker partnership proposals:

<p>Characteristics of <i>strong</i> partnership proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Characteristics of <i>weaker</i> partnership proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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What the grant will fund and will not fund is highlighted in the figure below:

<p>The health partnership scheme <i>will</i> fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment. • Travel. • Accommodation. • Communications. • Workshops for partnership development. • Subsistence allowance at local rates. • Publication and development of webpages to enhance partnerships. • Monitoring and reporting costs. 	<p>The health partnership scheme <i>will not</i> fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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Examples of funded schemes

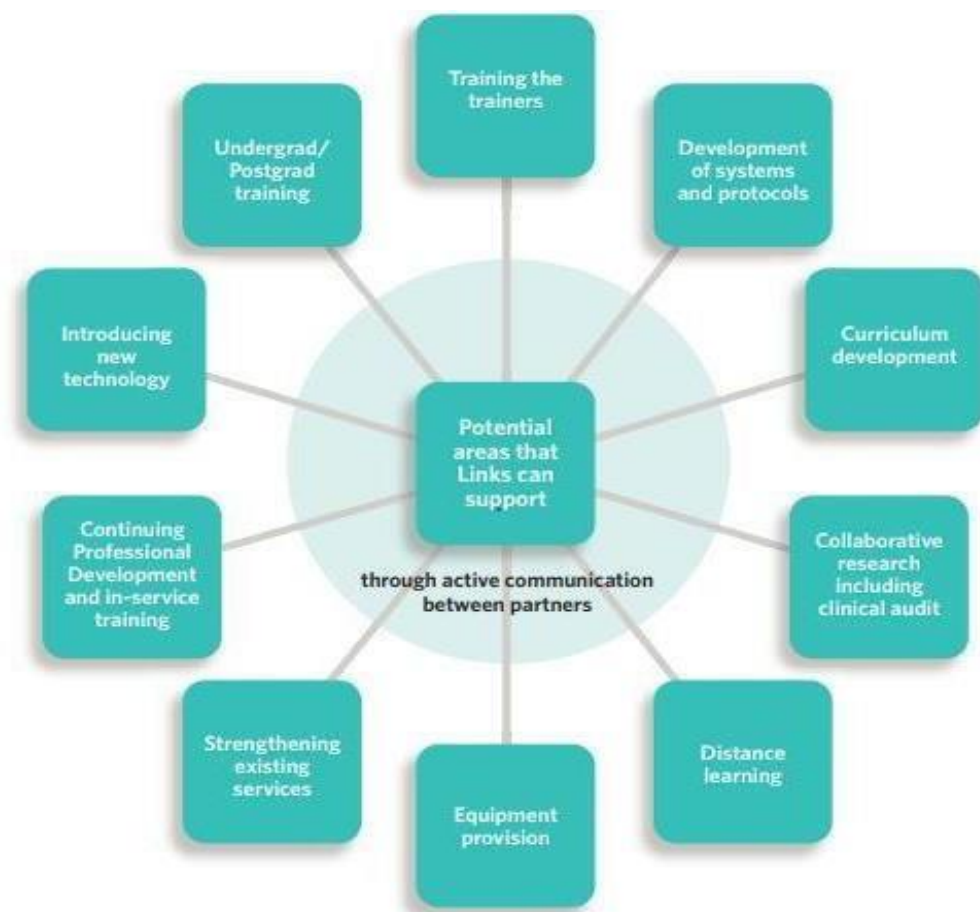
To date ESTHER Ireland has supported the development of partnerships in a variety of intervention areas, which include:

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Physiotherapy | 7. Leprosy |
| 2. Nursing & Midwifery | 8. Pediatric 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.

The following figure illustrates the potential areas that Health Partnerships can support:



Potential areas that Health Partnerships can support.

Source: Guidance for New Health Partnerships from THET Partnerships for Global Health

Application Process

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. 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, especially during 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.