



IGHN Partnerships Programme Application Guidelines 2024



Grant Round Opening 26th Nov 2024
MEAL for Partnership Development



Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

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Introduction

The **IGHN Partnerships Programme** (formerly the **ESTHER Ireland programme**) is a well-established, cost-effective model for supporting Institutional Health Partnerships funded by Irish Aid and supported by the HSE Global Health Programme. The programme supports partnerships between Irish health institutions and counterparts in low- and middle-income countries to improve health outcomes and strengthen health systems. These long-term collaborations typically focus on capacity building, clinical service delivery, and operational research. A key feature of these institutional health partnerships is the provision of sustained peer-to-peer support, with the overarching goal of strengthening the health workforce and its institutions.

The institutional health partnership approach aims to make a significant contribution to health outcomes in the low- and middle-income countries by addressing inequities in access and coverage while improving the quality of services through capacity building and institutional development.

The model upon which our IGHN Partnerships Programme operates provides support and guidance for partnerships to improve their practice to achieve quality of partnership standards as contained within the [ESTHER Charter for Quality of Partnership](#). A range of tools have been specifically developed to support the achievement of these standards including the EFfECt Tool, that guides discussions about the quality of a partnership and identifies potential areas for improvement. An accreditation tool allows partners to self-assess their adherence to each key principles for quality of partnership and awarding accreditation acknowledges and showcases partnerships that have demonstrated the highest quality of partnership and reciprocity. These principles include locally-led objectives, mutual benefits, trust and equality, and long-term commitment, and are considered as the foundation for the activities of the partnership.

Between 2014 and 2023 through the ESTHER Ireland programme with funding from Irish Aid, health partnerships were supported with 79 grants amounting to over €570,000. The partnerships supported through these grants link health institutions in Ireland with counterpart institutions in 17 countries of the Global South. Funded partnerships linked

different types of health institutions, including hospitals, primary care services, public health departments, education and training organisations, universities and the HSE.

The Irish Global Health Network (IGHN) now continues the legacy of the ESTHER Ireland programme, building on established expertise, standards, and tools—including the accreditation process—that have been instrumental in creating quality partnerships, while also setting a new strategic direction. The renamed IGHN Partnerships Programme will focus on supporting sustainable, quality collaborations that can demonstrate measurable outcomes, ensuring a forward-looking approach to global health partnerships.

The 2024 grant round is in line with the IGHN Strategy, *Humanity And Health: Reimagining Equity for All*. It also supports the new strategic direction of the IGHN Partnerships Programme on supporting sustainable, quality collaborations that can demonstrate measurable outcomes (this strategy is being finalised as the 2024 Grant Round is announced after in-depth stakeholder consultation in 2024). The programme continues to be supported by funding from Irish Aid and it also responds to the Government's International Development Policy, *A Better World*, which was published in 2019.

Purpose and Scope of the 2024 grant round

The 2024 grant round aims to strengthen partnerships' capacity to demonstrate their impact by funding MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) activities. By prioritising MEAL, the IGHN aims to equip partnerships with the necessary support to assess their progress, quantify outcomes, and build a solid evidence base. Supporting partnerships capacity to measure impact, will equip partnerships with robust impact data so that they are better positioned to secure ongoing funding and demonstrate their value to stakeholders.

Applications are invited from Irish health institutions and organisations engaged in established health partnerships with institutions in low- and middle-income countries. 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 having previously received ESTHER Accreditation or highlight adherence to quality of partnership

principles.

Partnerships may apply for grants to:

- Build capacity within the partnership in MEAL
- Develop results frameworks
- Implement pilot studies or needs assessments in MEAL: Conduct small-scale studies or assessments to establish baseline data or evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions
- Conduct analysis on data gathered from the activities of the partnership
- Impact reporting and documentation: Produce reports or case studies that document the partnership's impact, capturing qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate success and lessons learned to funders and stakeholders
- Other MEAL related activities that support the partnership to demonstrate impact

The ceiling for grants is €3,000. Grants must be spent within 12 months of disbursement.

Eligibility Criteria

- Eligible applicants will be from established health partnership between institutions in Ireland and counterpart institutions in a low/middle-income country.
 - Eligible health institutions include hospitals, primary care services, public health units, education and training organisations, universities, and government health departments. NGOs are generally not eligible for grants unless they are part of a collaboration with an Irish health service or institution.
- 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)

- Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the proposed activity will strengthen the partnership's capacity to demonstrate impact.
- Preference is given to partnerships with overall greater potential to achieve impact such as those that:
 - 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
- Proposals should be jointly developed and led by priorities of "Southern" partner
- Coherence with Irish Aid development policy, *A Better World* is advantageous
- Grant funding should achieve value for money. Having co-funding is considered an advantage.

Timeframe

The grant application process will open on Tuesday 26th November 2024 through the Common Grant Application platform and will run for over 8 weeks, with applications accepted up to Friday 24th of January 2025. Late applications will not be considered. It is anticipated that applicants will be informed of the outcome of their submission in March/April 2025.

Application submission, review and approval process

- Eligible institutions may submit an online application using the Common Grant Application platform. Application guidelines and a link to the Common Grants system will be available on the Irish Global Health Network (IGHN) website on <https://globalhealth.ie/partnerships-programme/> from 26th November 2024. Please note that the application form will not be accessible before this date.
- Applications will be assessed by nominated reviewers from the Irish Global Health Network.
- The applications and the recommendations of the reviewers will then be reviewed by an external advisor.
- The final decision on awarding of grants will be made by the IGHN Board.
- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application. Letters of agreement

will be sent to successful applicants, and this document must be signed and returned.

- Unsuccessful applicants can request feedback.

Grant disbursement and reporting

- Successful applicants/grantees will be required to have an online information meeting with the Partnerships Programme team scheduled after the agreement has been signed. This meeting will allow the team to share information regarding support available, reporting requirements, and communications support. It will also be an opportunity to build relationships and for the team to better understand the needs of the partnership.
- Upon receipt of the sign letter of agreement and bank details, 90% of the awarded grant will be sent to the grantee.
- The IGHN will continue to support and monitor active partner participation at all stages of the grant implementation process.
- Partnerships are required to report within 12 months of the disbursement of the grant on activities implemented in narrative and budget.
- Final reports are reviewed by the team and upon approval the final 10% of the grant is transferred.

Application guidelines and a link to the Common Grants system can be found on the IGHN website on <https://globalhealth.ie/partnerships-programme/> from 26th November 2024. All queries should be sent to the IGHN at grants@globalhealth.ie.

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