

Call for an Expression of Interest

ESTHER University and Hospital Partnerships in Africa

**for improving patient safety as a contribution to
strengthening health systems in African countries**

1) Background

The Ebola crisis in West Africa showed what devastating effects poor hygiene, a lack of standards and the absence of protective or response measures within existing health services can have for individual patients, the staff treating them, societies, countries and even the entire world. The 2014 Ebola epidemic in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, with more than 25,500 people infected and 11,300 deaths, spun totally out of control due to the weak health systems of the countries concerned.

However, weak health systems affect not only these three countries but also many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In order to improve the general situation of health services in Africa and boost the resilience of the respective countries in the face of future challenges, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has set up the special programme *Health for Africa*.

This year, Germany's Federal Development Minister Gerd Müller launched an initiative to promote hospital partnerships. The aim is to sustainably enhance the quality and capacity of patient care and health care in developing and emerging countries. This is to be achieved through peer-to-peer partnerships between health facilities in Germany and other countries on training and continuing professional development for health workers, and advisory services on optimising structures and processes in public health care institutions.

In this context, BMZ sees ESTHER hospital partnerships as an important contribution to strengthening health systems. It thus aims to reinforce its support of these partnerships under the new thematic focus of improving various aspects of patient safety. This should also be understood as a contribution from BMZ to the *European ESTHER Alliance* (Ensemble pour une Solidarité Thérapeutique Hospitalière En Réseau), which Germany joined in 2004.

2) Objective of ESTHER university and hospital partnerships

The aim of the new programme *ESTHER University and Hospital Partnerships in Africa* implemented by GIZ on behalf of BMZ is to contribute to improving patient safety and therefore to strengthening health systems in selected countries in Africa.

Patient safety is an essential factor in the quality of care. It includes all measures and processes that lead to a reduction in health risks arising from the treatment itself or from a stay in a medical facility providing treatment. Safety in health care facilities should be guaranteed by a range of measures including technical guidelines, standardisation and continuous improvement of processes relating to hygiene, quality and error management. Other important elements are ensuring that staff are appropriately qualified and educating patients. Safety for patients and staff is also enhanced by infection prevention, the licensing and prescription of medicines and blood

products, import controls to protect against counterfeit medicines, surgical and laboratory safety, waste management, safeguarding the quality of medical technology and ensuring maintenance of the technology and the quality of its use, and provisions relating to occupational medicine.

Taking due account of national strategies and the needs of the African partner institutions, the partnerships can decide themselves on how specific measures are implemented. Human capacity development should be at the centre of the partnership. The main focus should be on practicable solutions that contribute directly to improving quality standards.

3) Framework conditions, requirements and criteria for the planned partnerships

This call invites German health institutions and their African partners to formulate project proposals in line with the aforementioned objective.

The type, scope and scale of the interventions should be consistent with current expert knowledge of and international standards in patient safety, and support the purpose of the European ESTHER Alliance. Priority is given to the following aspects: quality training and exchange of professional experience with the aim of developing specific capacities, contributing to the harmonisation and coordination of activities, improving knowledge management, and the quality of services. The procurement of supplies and small items of equipment as well as relevant operational research activities can also be considered for funding.

a) Mandatory conditions for funding eligibility

- Partner institutions must be legal entities.
- The German partner institution whose head office is in Germany must have public-benefit status.
- Defined legal regulations (German law) for the funding that will become part of the financing agreement are as follows:
 - Allgemeine Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen zur Projektförderung [General Auxiliary Conditions for Grants for the Promotion of Projects] – 'ANBest-P' dated 1 January 2014 (Anlage 2 zur VV Nr. 5.1 zu § 44 BHO) [Supplement 2 to the administrative regulations no. 5.1 on Section 44 of the Federal Budget Code]
- A partnership 'of equals' is an essential prerequisite for support of a partnership and entails the sharing of responsibilities among the partners during design, planning, implementation and monitoring of the proposed intervention.
- The continuous implementation of the partnership by qualified personnel of the German partner must be ensured and may not be delegated to junior staff. However, this does not mean total exclusion of the participation of junior staff and PhD students.
- PhD students of African and German partner institutions must be supported equally.
- The management level of the German partner institution involved must actively support the partnership and sign the final partnership proposal.
- The proposed improvement measures for a specific situation must be evidence-based and may be developed within the partnership. Operational research activities as part of the partnership to complement core partnership interventions are eligible for funding to some extent.
- Partnerships focusing exclusively on operational research will not be considered for funding.
- Regional focus: As funding is tied to BMZ's special programme *Health for Africa*, only partnerships with African institutions can be considered.

- Partner countries must be selected priority countries of German development cooperation where health measures promoted by BMZ are being implemented.¹
- Gender aspects of the interventions must be considered in planning and implementation.
- Partnerships should build on, complement and coordinate with existing regional and national health programmes and strategies in the respective partner countries
- Partnerships should be planned and implemented in collaboration with German development cooperation health programmes.
- Partners must agree to support continuous monitoring on the basis of jointly formulated indicators and provide GIZ (German ESTHER Secretariat) with the necessary data.
- Partners must agree to contribute to harmonisation, coordination and networking activities as well as knowledge management (e.g. by compiling and presenting at least one technical paper/publication focusing on the improvement of patient safety).

b) Conditions that are an asset and increase the probability of funding

- Partnerships targeting different/alternative cooperation forms:
 - **North-South-South partnerships** – cooperation between one German institution and two (or more) health institutions in different African countries, supporting the process of mutual learning and networking.
 - **North-North-South partnerships** – cooperation between two or more German institutions and one health institution in an African country.
 - **North-North-South-South partnerships** – cooperation between two or more German institutions and two (or more) health institutions in different African countries, supporting the process of mutual learning and networking.
 - **ESTHER Alliance partnerships** – cooperation between one or more German partner institutions and one partner from another European ESTHER Alliance member state jointly supporting at least one African health institution.
- Partnerships with more than one hospital in an African country, increasing patient coverage.
- Partnerships that include the involvement of the German health care sector (additional funding, in-kind contributions, equipment supply, etc.).
- Partnerships that envisage co-financing possibilities through other donors (e.g. bilateral donors or foundations).
- Partnerships that incorporate the topic of e-health/digitalisation

4) Budget ceiling and funding term

The partnerships will be funded for a period of up to two years with a budget of €120,000 to €180,000. Eighty per cent of the budget should be spent on capacity development measures. The remaining 20% of the budget may be invested in the procurement of supplies. A maximum of 30% of the total budget may be allocated for operational research.

¹ Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia.

5) How to apply

The expression of interest must be written in German and signed by the German partner. It must be sent to the German ESTHER Secretariat (esther-germany@giz.de) by 16 December 2016. It must contain the following:

1. Title of the proposed partnership
2. Description of the German and African partner institutions (max. ½ - 1 page), including name and contact data of the contact person at the German partner institution
3. Description of the planned measures (max. ½ - 1 page)
 - a. Objective pursued
 - b. Intended impact
 - c. Fields of activity
4. Funding required/requested
5. The expression of interest must also contain the following additional information/ documents:
 - a. Proof that
 - o the partner institutions are legal entities
 - o the German partner institution has public-benefit status
 - o the planned activities were discussed with and agreed by the African partner institutions.
 - b. Information regarding planned/envisaged cooperation arrangements (if applicable; according to the aspects covered in the criteria and conditions described above)
 - i. with GIZ personnel in African partner countries
 - ii. with other ESTHER Alliance partners
 - iii. with private sector companies
 - iv. with additional co-financing organisations

Questions for further clarification may be submitted to the German ESTHER Secretariat (esther-germany@giz.de) until 9 December 2016.

6) Next steps – assessment and selection

- The German ESTHER Secretariat will carry out an initial assessment of the completeness and eligibility of the expression of interest by 13 January 2017.
- All eligible applicants will be invited to an initial ESTHER Germany Partnership meeting no later than 20 January 2017.
- The meeting will take place in Eschborn on 27 January 2017 (possible topics: get to know the German partners and the envisaged partnerships, additional information on patient safety, information on ESTHER meetings, information regarding the financing agreement).
- Comprehensive partnership proposals in German based on the format provided must be submitted by 28 February 2017 at the latest.
- GIZ will carry out an assessment (partly by external experts) of the submitted partnership proposals by 31 March 2017 at the latest. If a partnership proposal is approved by the German ESTHER Secretariat, BMZ and the German Federal Foreign Office, GIZ will draw up a financing agreement in German with the German partner institution taking the lead role for all partner institutions in the partnership.