

# Strategic Plan Summary Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network 2021-2025

**EPN**

Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network  
Réseau Pharmaceutique Ecuménique



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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EPN is a Christian non-profit organization comprising of healthcare providers and professionals. The majority of our members are Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) that provide healthcare to communities in the most marginalized and remote areas where national government health services are limited.

Our network has grown over time to a total of 133 members in 38 countries: 31 Christian Health Associations (CHAs), 24 Health Systems Strengthening organizations (HSSs), 17 Church Health Institutions (CHIs), 18 Drug Supply Organizations (DSOs) and 43 Individuals. More than 300 million people rely on health care provided by our Network.

## 2. STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 - 2025

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The Strategic Plan was designed to help EPN fulfil its mission and support members to deliver just and compassionate quality pharmaceutical services. Therefore, EPN has chosen a new vision to be realized by 2025. The new vision focuses on meeting the needs of members, especially of those that are in the bottom 25% in terms of capacity and performance of their pharmaceutical systems. All members will benefit from EPN, but the priority of this strategic plan will be on the members which have less than 25% of the facilities staffed by qualified staff. So far, six members of about 50 institutional members fall in that group and will be prioritized.

The 2021-2025 strategic plan includes five programs that will be implemented.

These programs are as followed:

1. **Training and Capacity Development**
2. **Pharmaceutical Systems Strengthening**
3. **Supply Chain and Quality Assurance**
4. **Member Engagement**
5. **Donor Partnerships and Sustainability**

The five-year strategy is a guide to the Board, the Secretariat and their members to implement a selected number of programs and activities to advance the network's mission.

EPN's values guide all its activities in this strategic period:

1. Integrity
2. Compassion
3. Respect for others
4. Conscientiousness
5. Continuous learning
6. Professionalism
7. Fairness

The mission of EPN has been and will always be to empower members to provide just and compassionate quality pharmaceutical services. This mission will continue until every child of God has access to quality and compassionate pharmaceutical services. Guided by their Christian faith and the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, EPN members strive to serve with compassion and fulfil this mission.

### 3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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To achieve this vision, EPN will focus on three strategic objectives (SOs):

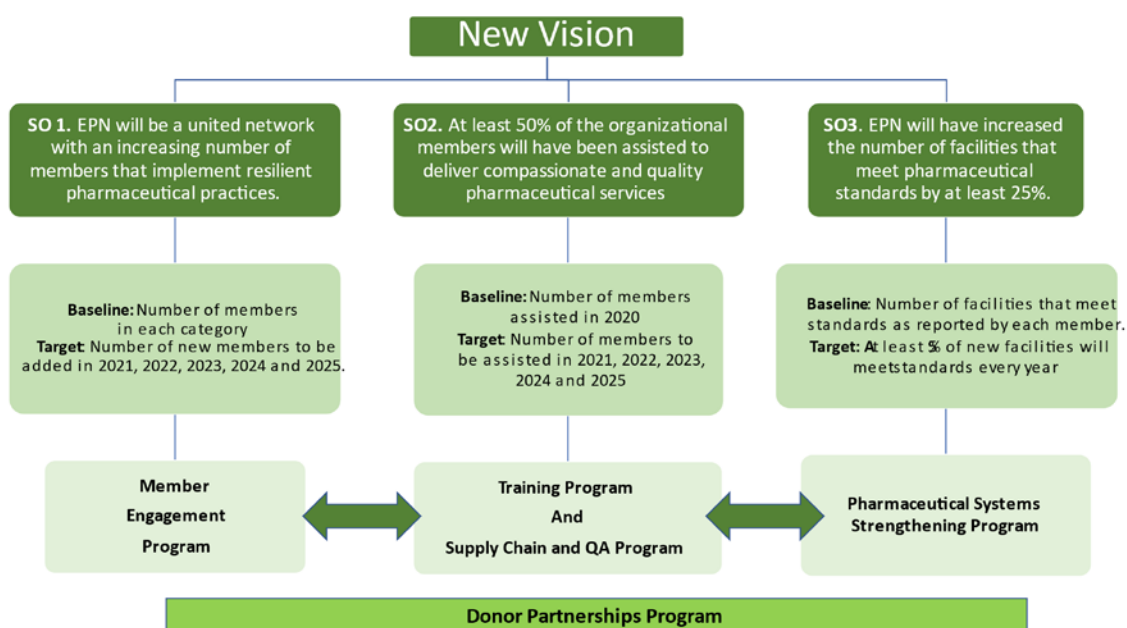
- By 2025, EPN will be a united network with an increasing number of members that meet pharmaceutical standards and have resilient pharmaceutical systems.
- At least 50% of the organizational members will have been assisted to deliver compassionate and quality pharmaceutical services.
- Together, we will have increased the number of facilities that meet pharmaceutical standards by at least 25%.

#### 3.1. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The chart below (see figure 1) shows how the three SOs will contribute to achieve the 2025 vision and advance EPNs mission, how a baseline will be estimated and how annual targets will be set every year for each of the five programs. EPN Secretariat will be in charge of managing the implementation of the programs. We will measure the progress of the three strategic objectives every year as part of the annual planning

process to set new annual targets. In its annual report, EPN Secretariat will include the number of members they have and how well EPN members, especially those in the bottom 25%.

Figure 1. Strategic Objectives, Baseline, Targets and Programs for the 2021-2025 Strategic Period



## 4. THE FIVE PROGRAMS

The Board and the Secretariat approved five programmatic areas in the 2020 Board Meeting. Five programs were developed to achieve the new vision and objectives and better meet the needs of EPN members. These programs build on the existing programs and the lessons learned from the previous evaluation.

### 4.1. TRAINING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

This program intends to increase the percentage of members' facilities that have trained pharmaceutical staff. To achieve this objective, a few specific objectives are planned. Annual targets will be set for each objective in terms of the numbers of scholarships and courses to be offered, numbers of course participants, and members that will benefit first.

Based on the baseline set in 2021, by 2025 EPN will have:

- Increased the number of members' staff that participate in in-person and online programs
- Increased the number of scholarships awarded to members in most need
- Increased the number of church leaders that are aware and support the training and development of pharmaceutical staff
- Increased the number of CHA members that include at least one pharmaceutical training in their annual capacity building plans
- Increased the number of courses offered by EPN and by accredited training schools

#### **4.2. PHARMACEUTICAL SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING**

This program intends to improve the performance of members' pharmaceutical systems. The following specific objectives are set for the 2021-2025 period. Based on the baseline set in 2021, by the end of 2025, EPN will have:

- Assisted all members to assess their pharmaceutical systems and identified and prioritized areas for improvement
- Assisted all members to have and use an essential medicine list and STGs, at least for the most common and priority conditions
- Assisted all members, especially those in most need, to implement SOPs in their facility pharmacies. This program will start with hospitals and then EPN will assist hospital staff to assist lower-level facilities that depend on them to implement SOPs
- Assisted all members to monitor and report stockouts and the availability of selected 'tracer' products

#### **4.3. SUPPLY CHAIN AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

This program intends to support members to access affordable and quality essential medicines. The specific objectives are:

- Increase the number of DSO members that implement Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and meet supply chain standards
- Increase the number of members that use a list of qualified suppliers to procure essential medicines
- Increase the number of members that benefit from the Minilab project and have access to QA information

- Increase the number of members that participate in pooled procurement programs

#### 4.4. MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

This program intends to have more than 150 various members of EPN fully engaged in its programs and activities and ensure they all benefit from their membership. By 2025, EPN will have achieved the following specific objectives:

- All church leaders of member organizations will be able to report at least three benefits of their EPN membership and will report supporting their pharmaceutical staff to implement EPN guidelines for effective and efficient pharmaceutical services
- Increase the number of members in all categories

#### 4.5. DONOR PARTNERSHIPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

This program intends to initiate and strengthen donor ties. In this way, EPN will be able to have continuous funding and progressively achieve and demonstrate improvements in the pharmaceutical performance of its members that benefit millions of people worldwide. To continue growing and expanding its benefits, new partnerships and the expertise of more technical leaders are required to support existing members. Therefore, EPN will expand its member category to attract experts as well as students and young professionals that are aligned with its mission. These professionals will be able to share their expertise and assist members to solve problems and provide distance education and coaching and consulting services.

By 2025, EPN will have:

- Created partnerships with several new donors that contribute to funding the above programs
- Strengthened partnerships with existing donors to support continuous support to selected programs, members, and countries

## 5. HEALTH PRIORITIES

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EPN's approach to implementing the Strategic Plan will focus on implementing the strategic programs through a series of well-planned and monitored activities. The

strategic programs are in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG3) that calls for universal health coverage by 2030 and also responds to the current needs of members. Therefore, engaging members to assess their needs and assist them to improve their pharmaceutical supply will be the main focus of EPNs Approach.

This also includes implementing several cross-cutting core functions and focus areas that allow the Board and the Secretariat to fulfil their role. The core and strategic programs will allow EPN to fulfil its mission and support members to deliver just and compassionate pharmaceutical care through effective systems and services and improve access to medicines for the following health priorities, which will be adjusted after the members' assessment is completed:

- Maternal, New-born, Child Health and Reproductive Health (MNCH/RH)
- Infectious diseases, Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) activities including AMR and pandemic response
- Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)
- Selected neglected tropical disease (NTDs)



## 6. CORE CROSS-CUTTING FOCUS AREAS



Figure 2. The Interconnected Five Strategic Programs and Cross cutting Areas

### 6.1. ADVOCACY

Advocacy will be part of every project. Board Members, Secretariat and every member of EPN should know what the mission of the network is and what the vision for 2025 is and should be able to advocate for just and compassionate quality pharmaceutical services to donors, government authorities, church leaders and other partners. An advocacy checklist and other tools will be provided to ensure consistency in sharing messages and to help members learn how to advocate for increased access to medicines.

## 6.2. COMMUNICATION

Communicating with the members, donors and facilitating communication among members is an integral part of EPNs work. Various publications, newsletters and social media channels including EPNs own social learning platform will enhance the visibility of EPN.

## 6.3. RESEARCH

EPN will conduct research and share information on the research to network members to improve pharmaceutical systems and services and access to medicines. EPN will especially prioritize research to address the challenges among those most in need along the four technical areas mentioned above.

# 7. WORK FOCUS OF THE EPN SECRETARIAT

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To facilitate successful implementation of the Strategy the Secretariat will put special emphasis on the following aspects:

### **Operational and Financial Management**

Efficient operations and financial management of EPN will allow it to fulfil its mission and maximize its impact. This function will ensure the network has strong and committed partnerships with donors and sustainable funding of all priority if not all program activities.

### **HR Succession Planning and Management**

We understand that staff sometimes move on for various reasons. However, to ensure the continuity of the important work that EPN does and to ensure that its intellectual assets are sustained, it is essential that every position has a succession plan and all activities of program managers are documented so the next person can take over as smoothly as possible. At least a week's overlap with the new person would be desirable.

### **Proposal Development**

EPN programs are funded through donor programs that require the submission of proposals and budgets. Every year, the EPN Board and Secretariat will approve a pipeline of proposals to be submitted to secure funding from various new donors and existing donor partnerships. Therefore, each EPN program will have standard up-to-

date documentation to allow for efficient proposal development. A proposal development process and guidelines and training of EPN Secretariat team members will ensure the timely submission of proposals and a high winning rate.

### **M&E and Reporting**

Documentation of progress and results is essential to make corrections and to disseminate what works and lessons learned. EPN will have a simple and efficient M&E system to keep track of progress and to report to donors and members

## **8. STRATEGIC INDICATORS**

The main priority is to measure whether EPN activities are **increasing the number of members' facilities that meet minimum pharmaceutical service standards**. This is the number 1 indicator (in bold in the table below). If nothing else could be monitored, at least, that single indicator would be the most desirable indicator to monitor. This indicator would measure that what EPN is doing is working because it is supporting members to deliver just and compassionate quality pharmaceutical care.

It is expected that by 2023, the EPN Secretariat will have developed and implemented a fully functional M&E system that will allow it to make sure its programs are being implemented according to plan and yielding the desired results. The M&E system will help program managers to manage their activities, make corrections where necessary and report progress.

The new M&E system will include strategic and programmatic indicators. It is recommended that EPN starts by defining a baseline so it can monitor strategic indicators that cover more than one programmatic area first. The table below presents a small number of strategic indicators to help inform the launch of the new strategy and the development of its new M&E system. The strategic indicators go across programs and do not necessarily monitor each of the activities of each program. They monitor the overall strategy.

Program indicators are more indicators specific to each program. Program managers will be empowered to prioritize what is essential to monitor to be able to report that their activities are producing the desired outcomes.

Strategic Indicators Table

Strategic Indicators	Baseline	Target
<b>Number of members' facilities that meet minimum pharmaceutical service standards</b>	Members report total number of facilities that have a trained staff	Every quarter this number should increase
Number of members that have self-assessed their pharmaceutical system and identified staffing needs and have a HR Development plan in place.	Percentage of active members that report to have used the EPN checklist to self-assess training and pharmaceutical system strengthening needs	Bottom 25% identified, contacted, training and pharmaceutical strengthening plan in place for each member
Number of members that have an essential medicine list and an annual procurement plan.	As of 2021, number of members that have an annual procurement plan and those that do not	A selected number of members to be assisted to develop their first procurement plan
Number of members that have planned and procured essential MNCH medicines to meet their annual needs.	List of CHAs that report to have planned to procure essential MNCH medicines to meet their annual needs	A selected number of members have prioritized essential MNCH-Medicines and can track availability
Number of members that have antibiotic use guidelines in place to prevent antimicrobial resistance (AMR)	List of members with AMR guidelines in use	Selected number of members that will be assisted to implement ATB use and AMR guidelines
Number of members that have a system in place to meet the therapeutic needs of long-term and chronic	List of members that are able to meet chronic therapeutic needs	List of selected members that will be assisted to develop pharmaceutical therapeutic program for chronic patients

patients: TB, paediatric and adult HIV/AIDS, Diabetes, etc.		
Donors that commit support to new strategy	List of existing donors and % of annual budget covered	List of new donors with whom to develop new partnerships and new partnerships initiated (WHO, USAID, Global Fund, etc.)
Proposal winning rate or new partnerships identified	Pipeline of proposals to be developed in 2021 and 2022	Percentage of winning proposals

## 9. THE EPN BOARD

The EPN Board has the ultimate responsibility for the success of this strategic plan. In each of its meetings, the Secretariat should provide the Board with the latest information on the strategic indicators and programmatic indicators (where applicable). The Board and the Secretariat should be able to review and discuss the above indicators and other information available and interpret what the indicators mean by answering these questions:

- Is EPN meeting its quarterly objectives and targets for each year of the 2021-2025 strategic plan?
- Is EPN contributing to help members increase access to essential medicines, especially the bottom 25%?
- Is EPN meeting the needs and expectations of its members, both in anglophone and francophone countries to deliver quality and effective pharmaceutical services, especially the bottom 25%?
- Are member organizations increasing the number of facilities that meet minimum pharmaceutical standards?

- Is EPN increasing the access to quality medicines by type of member organizations?
- Is the number of individual members that benefit from training and professional development opportunities increasing?
- Is EPN Secretariat and its 5-year strategy fully funded?
- Is the succession and institutional strengthening plan progressing as planned?

## 10. DISSEMINATION AND REPORTING ON THE NEW FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY

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The EPN Board has approved the new 2021-2025 strategy. This will be disseminated to each member. Each institutional member will be participating in the strategy by committing to the improvement of their pharmaceutical systems. Individual members have been invited to participate in a number of activities to share their expertise as trainers in the training program and by providing consulting and problem-solving assistance to other members as necessary and requested by the Secretariat.

The EPN annual report will report the main highlights and achievements as well as challenges of implementing the new strategy in the COVID and Post-COVID era.