



EACTS
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
CARDIO-THORACIC SURGERY

Better **skills**
better **surgery**
better **patient**
outcomes

EACTS' five year strategy

March 2024

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01 Foreword



Patrick Myers,
EACTS Secretary General

Our specialty is evolving. Rapidly. Cardiothoracic care is changing right around the world. Our Association is dedicated to our members and supporting them to deliver better outcomes for patients. To do this effectively in this fast-changing world, it is our duty to adapt and change too. That imperative is even more important given that EACTS is one of the largest organisations meeting the needs of cardiothoracic teams.

At EACTS, change is already happening. In the last few years, we have strengthened governance structures, made some additional key staff and volunteer appointments, and taken steps towards creating a modern and efficient organisation with the capability to deliver the services and support that our members expect.

But we must continue to look forward to ensure EACTS is fit for purpose as our specialty changes, and so I am delighted to present our new five-year strategy for the Association.

Surgery has been male dominated for too long and associations have sometimes been perceived as akin to old boys' clubs. EACTS must continue the process of modernisation that has already achieved so much. We must ensure that all EACTS members can contribute to the Association and feel valued. This means enabling more women and minorities to take senior leadership roles. We already provide a great range of services to surgeons so that they can continually improve outcomes for patients. But are we doing enough to support other members of the surgical team? What else can we do to ensure our organisation is truly inclusive?

Our Association relies on generating income to meet our charitable purpose. Our Annual Meeting has traditionally been the main source of revenue, but the pandemic showed us the inherent risks in that approach. Change is needed here, too.

EACTS is ready for change and is already embracing it: the successful Innovation Summit that we inaugurated in 2023 showed the ambition to pioneer new techniques and devices. At EACTS, we have a duty to drive innovation because new methods and technologies will help us deliver better outcomes for our patients. So, there's work to do there as well.

Information is key – and EACTS is not short of high-quality scientific content: our publications, videos, sessions from the Annual Meetings and so much more. We need to rethink the way members can access this valuable content. By doing so, we will be making it easier for surgeons and other members of the heart team to improve their skills and deliver better surgery.

Surgery is evolving and so will EACTS. Our organisation was founded almost 40 years ago and has a proud heritage. During this time there have been many changes as we responded to the needs of surgeons, with new services and new systems of support.

Today we face new challenges in a very different world. Our landscape is being redrawn with innovations including artificial intelligence, minimally invasive and robotic surgery, and transcatheter approaches. Our five-year strategic plan sets out our vision for the future of EACTS. We believe this is the best way forward and we hope you will share our ambition.

Patrick Myers



02 About EACTS



The European Association for Cardio-Thoracic Surgery (EACTS) is a global membership organisation for the cardiothoracic surgical community.

EACTS exists to improve outcomes for patients with heart and lung conditions by supporting the global surgical community with education and learning opportunities and informing best practice with journals, clinical guidelines, a quality improvement programme and research. The organisation was established in 1986 by pioneering surgeons who shared a vision for a global community of cardiothoracic professionals with the goal of improving treatment outcomes for patients.

Today EACTS has a global membership of more than 4,000 members. The organisation works in collaboration with sister associations and societies around the globe, including the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the American Association for Thoracic Surgery, the Asian Society for Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery, Latin American Association of Cardiac and Endovascular Surgery and the European Society of Cardiology

The organisation's global reach enables it to tap into diverse internationally recognised surgical leaders, teachers and centres to support best practice within cardiothoracic surgical teams locally. EACTS members work with other associations to produce internationally recognised clinical practice guidelines, helping heart teams around the world to advise patients on the best treatment option. These guidelines are developed through collaboration with experts from various disciplines. This ensures that guideline committees consider a broad spectrum of perspectives, enabling clinicians to have full confidence to refer to the recommendations for best practice and guiding clinical decision-making. EACTS is trusted by heart and lung teams globally and is recognised as a key resource for education, innovation, research and quality improvement.

EACTS helps surgeons continue to improve their skills by providing specialist education courses through the EACTS Academy. The programme offers distinct levels of training in surgical skills in the areas of cardiac, thoracic and vascular interventions tailored to meet surgeons' experience. Courses are taught by highly regarded experts in cardiothoracic surgery who are great teachers, and high standards are maintained with rigorous assessment and examinations.

EACTS also offers the prestigious Francis Fontan Fund for Education, which provides international fellowship opportunities that enable surgeons to learn new techniques from recognised global experts, acquiring new skills to take back to their home centre.

The EACTS Annual Meeting takes place in a different European city every year, bringing the sector together to explore scientific innovations and advances in the field, discover new techniques and ways of working and learn from specialist experts. Exchanging knowledge, collaborating on new ideas and sharing challenges are key to supporting surgeons' personal and career development.

EACTS harnesses the knowledge and experience of member-led groups working across four EACTS Domains - Acquired Cardiac, Congenital Heart, Thoracic and Vascular Diseases - to drive forward the organisation's mission to advance education and promote research. These committees play an instrumental role across a range of projects and meetings, from Clinical Guidelines and Quality Improvement to Women in Cardiothoracic Surgery and the Annual Meeting.

We encourage and support members to contribute to the future of EACTS, help set the cardiothoracic surgery agenda and realise the EACTS vision: that with better skills and better surgery, we can deliver better patient outcomes.



03 Our five year strategic goals

1

12-18 Months

To be the best at what we do

Continue the modernisation of EACTS, delivering a well governed, fully functioning and efficient Association.

2

12-24 Months

To diversify our income

Develop new sources of income, to avoid being dependent entirely on the Annual Meeting. To better control our costs.

3

18-36 Months

To invest in research & innovation

Establish a research support infrastructure for members to support a new Innovation Strategy.

4

36-48 Months

To pioneer an information revolution

Innovate EACTS' publishing methods. Develop bespoke access to quality content for members.

5

60+ Months

To prepare the next generation of CT surgeons

Define and adapt our services to equip the cardiothoracic surgeons of the future with the requisite, minimally invasive, robotic, new technology and transcatheter skills and opportunities



1. To be the best at what we do

12-18 months

— **The goal** To establish EACTS as the leading membership organisation for the world's cardiothoracic surgical community. Continue the modernisation of EACTS, delivering a well governed, fully functioning and efficient organisation.

— **Context** Over the past five years we have made good progress towards modernising EACTS. We have strengthened governance structures and taken steps towards creating a modern and efficient organisation with the capability to deliver the services and support that our members expect.

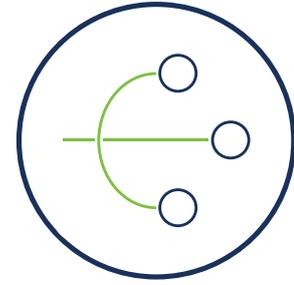
This process of modernisation and renewal will continue and accelerate over the next few years. Development programmes across areas including membership, education programmes, clinical databases and fellowships will bring increased benefits to members and provide better support for surgeons as they strive to improve patient outcomes.

— **Why this goal matters** Getting this area right will enrich EACTS members' experience and encourage more surgeons and other members of the heart team to join and to use our services. It will reinforce the sustainability of EACTS and secure its position as the leading membership organisation for the global cardiovascular community.

— **Deliverables** Membership will grow and members will feel positive about their engagement with EACTS. They will use a broader range of EACTS services more frequently and actively participate in EACTS events and committees.

— **How we will achieve the goal** There will be further investment in IT and management systems designed to make it easier for our community to interact with EACTS and use our services and provide seamless interaction through the EACTS experience. A new membership strategy, backed by a membership committee, will drive growth in the numbers applying to join the EACTS community.

2. To diversify our income



12-24 months

- The goal** Develop new sources of income, to avoid being dependent entirely on the Annual Meeting. Control costs.
- Context** EACTS is in a good financial position. We have significant financial reserves and can deploy funds to an exciting investment programme, which is generating additional income to fund core activities. But historically the organisation has relied financially on the EACTS Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting has been profitable, which has defrayed losses from other activities, including our educational courses and specialist publishing. As a charitable organisation we must adopt a prudent and responsible approach to our finances, to ensure we are not relying on one single source of income. Going forward we will ensure that activities meet a robust financial test as well as contributing to our goal of enabling our community to improve patient outcomes.
- Why this goal matters** Getting this area right will ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation, which is vital to fulfil our mission to improve patient outcomes. It will enable us to enhance services provided by EACTS which, in turn, will help us to increase our membership. A sound financial footing will strengthen EACTS' role in reaching policymakers and commissioners to ensure that the voice of our community is heard on behalf of patients.
- Deliverables** Over the medium term, we will diversify EACTS' income to minimise financial risk. Our investment programme will deliver long-term competitive returns as funds begin to mature.
- How we will achieve the goal** A review of fees and charges will create better alignment with the cost of delivering services, while ensuring that access to EACTS' services and support is not compromised. Operational efficiencies will be identified, with a focus on value for money for the EACTS membership. There will be greater emphasis on ensuring that, wherever possible, EACTS' activities make a neutral or positive financial contribution to the organisation.

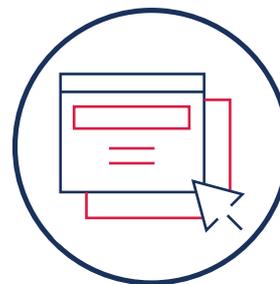


3. To invest in research & innovation

18-36 months

- **The goal** Harness the power of research and innovation to secure better outcomes for patients.
- **Context** EACTS members agree on the need for investment in research and development in cardiothoracic surgery to leverage the latest technologies for the benefit of our patients. Our inaugural and now annual Innovation Summit in Paris highlighted some of the exciting innovations already in development. But members also shared some of the challenges they face, particularly around regulation and the difficulty in raising finance. Going forward, EACTS intends to play a pioneering and innovative role as a provider of sound clinical research and innovative technologies. We shall support members to participate in the development of promising innovation through collaboration with businesses and academic research organisations. EACTS may retain a financial interest in innovative projects and ensure any profits that may accrue support our vision.
- **Why this goal matters** There is a strong desire among members for EACTS to use our collective experience and insight to accelerate innovation in cardiothoracic surgery. Bringing forward technological innovation to support new procedures and treatment will lead to better patient outcomes and contribute to the long-term sustainability of global health systems.
- **Deliverables** We will set out a clear strategy for this area and establish an Innovation Hub to champion this work. The surgery-led committee will report to members on the allocation of grants and provide updates on the operational and financial performance of research projects supported by EACTS.
- **How we will achieve the goal** EACTS' members will have the opportunity to seek methodological support in the design of trials, resources to secure funding, and limited funding to support research and innovation programmes. Funding requests will be considered by the Innovation Hub. Areas of clinical need will be identified, which will be reviewed annually, and which meet clearly defined criteria (for example, artificial intelligence, 3D bioprinting, minimally invasive techniques). As projects evolve, EACTS will encourage collaboration with members with relevant expertise and knowledge.

4. To pioneer an information revolution



36-48 months

- The goal** Ensure members have easy access to the scientific content and information they need, enabling them to further their knowledge and education to enhance their skills and improve outcomes for patients.
- Context** At EACTS we create, publish and curate a significant amount of information for our global community. Members connect to our organisation through a range of different content including research publications, our journals and our videos. Our library is growing all the time and there is real value embedded in our content that can enrich the learning experience we can offer. But significant reorganisation is needed to ensure that members can easily access the resources they need. We need to audit the content we hold and implement a new algorithm based approach to content management so that members can easily find what they are looking for and automatically be offered additional content that may be of interest to them. This approach will help us extract better value from the huge library of resources we have available. The implementation of a new system will provide members with access to the high-quality online information experience that they expect.
- Why this goal matters** Leveraging EACTS' wealth of published resources, while providing seamless access for members and external partners, will enhance our organisational reputation, helping to attract new members and strengthening partnerships that will consolidate our position as the leading membership organisation. Revenue from publishing will also strengthen, to the benefit of all EACTS members.
- Deliverables** In the future, members will be able to access information easily. EACTS will also provide bespoke recommendations for members based on their preferences and the previous content they have consumed. By innovating digital information methods, we will increase access to our expanding online publishing resources and enable members to access the information they need to continually improve the surgery that is available to patients.
- How we will achieve the goal** We will set out an action plan for this goal and work with partners to develop a state of the art content management system that meets our aspirations. We will explore opportunities to finance this goal through capitalising on the value of the information we hold.



5. To prepare the next generation of CT surgeons

60+ months

- **The goal** Define and adapt our education, information and advocacy services to ensure the cardiothoracic community is future fit, able to seize opportunities for better surgery and equipped with the knowledge and skills to carry out more minimally invasive, robotic and transcatheter procedures.
- **Context** The pace of change in surgery is accelerating. The clear trend towards transcatheter, robotic and AI-inspired procedures is creating new opportunities for heart teams but also new challenges. The future cardiothoracic surgeon will be qualified, competent and experienced in major surgical operations and minimally invasive procedures. EACTS must have the capability to support cardiothoracic surgeons and other members of the heart team through this rapid process of change.
- **Why this goal matters** Getting this area right will establish EACTS as the leading organisation to build a global surgical workforce able to provide effective and efficient treatment to patients while making a major contribution to the sustainability of healthcare systems. This will also increase EACTS membership and demand for our services and training.
- **Deliverables** We expect to see an increase in the number of training opportunities and publications dedicated to evolving cardiac surgery and the supporting workforce, as well as additional events with a focus on the next generation and the skills they will need.
- **How we will achieve the goal** There will be a continuous dialogue with members and committees to create new educational and training resources. We will leverage our global reach to monitor trends in innovation, with an impact assessment to keep members informed of developments.



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