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The Council of the European Union today adopted a €22 billion Innovation Investment Package. It includes the renewed Active Assisted Joint Programme (AAL JP2).

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The [AAL JP2](#) [1] receives €175 million from the European Commission under the new [Horizon 2020](#) [2] [#H2020](#) [3] research framework programme, €350 million from industrial partners and at least € 175 million from Member States: more than € 700 million for 7 years.

The aim of the AAL JP2 is to help Europe address the challenges and opportunities of the rapidly ageing population by supporting industry, and in particular SMEs, to bring innovative digital products and services for ageing well to the European market.

Building on success

In the previous [Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme](#) [4] ([@AAL_JP](#) [5], 2008 – 2013), 19 EU countries, plus Israel, Norway and Switzerland worked together. At least 3 Member States, one SME, a knowledge institute and a user organisation took part in each of the some 120 projects. Many SMEs joined: over 350, more than 40% of all project partners. The AAL JP showed an extremely efficient leverage of financial means. The national financial contributions for the first 4 calls on average were 36% above the required minimum of 50%, in spite of austerity measures. Many projects presented a real potential for market deployment e.g. by securing financing beyond project duration and some projects are actually being taken to market.

Some examples:

The [HELP project](#) [6] (Home-based Empowered living for Parkinson's Disease Patients) makes a breakthrough in the treatment of Parkinson's disease (PD) with two new products: a sensor that detects PD symptoms and an intraoral device to administer PD medication in a non-invasive way. A spin-off company of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain) has been created, [Sense4Care](#) [7], to commercialise the sensor.

[SOFTCARE](#) [8] is a monitoring system for older adults that gives real-time alarms to (in)formal carers and users in dangerous situations, and warnings on long-term trends that could indicate a future

problem. The business plan of the SOFTCARE project estimates that by 2018 there will be 100.000 users and €66 million revenues from the sales of devices and provision of services.

Achievements of the AAL JP were validated by an independent panel of high level experts in an evaluation [report](#) [9] published in December 2013.

What are the main goals of the initiative?

- To give older adults access to more and better products and services for ageing well. These will help them living independently in their own homes and participating in economy and society for more years.
- To create a larger market for industry and especially SMEs at European level and improve EU competitiveness in ICT based products and services for ageing well.
- To make researchers benefit from collaboration with other experts at European scale.
- To help governments gain cost efficiencies and increased sustainability of health and social care, while tackling the societal challenge of demographic ageing.

What is new about AAL JP2?

The name of the programme has slightly changed ('Ambient' became 'Active') to fit with the wider scope of the initiative.

The AAL JP2 will be further optimised for rapid decision-making and new types of support (like prizes and innovation grants) to ensure fast responses to new developments and even further lower entrance barriers, e.g. for web entrepreneurs and developers of mobile apps.

The new AAL JP will support the implementation of the [European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing](#) [10] [@EIP_AHA](#) [11] by aligning to its scope regarding ICT based innovation: from independent living and integrated care (including telehealth and telecare) to fall prevention, medication adherence and age-friendly environments and communities.

How will AAL JP2 be managed?

As under the original AAL JP, the participating countries manage the dedicated Ambient Assisted Living Association, which takes the strategic and funding decisions, while the European Commission is an observer. The EU provides financial support subject to at least 50% of the public funding provided by participating countries.

Why is action needed at European Level?

EU action is needed to counter fragmentation of research efforts, which is the present cause of a lack of innovative products and services for ageing well that really meet the needs of users across Europe. By joining forces between Member States and the EU a critical mass of investment can be mobilised to help turn research investments into growth and to help Europe develop a competitive edge in the international market.

What have been the contributions of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union to the proposal for AAL JP2?

Thanks to an excellent cooperation with the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, the adoption of the proposal took a very short time. The European Parliament and the Council endorsed the proposal and made extra recommendations to ensure optimum commitment of users in all stages of AAL JP2 projects, while safeguarding their privacy and taking into account the energy

efficiency of products and services under development.

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[1] <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/active-assisted-living-joint-programme-aal-jp>

[2] <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

[3] <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23horizon2020&src=typd>

[4] <http://www.aal-europe.eu/>

[5] https://twitter.com/search?q=%23AAL_Success_Stories&src=typd

[6] <http://www.aal-europe.eu/projects/help/>

[7] <http://www.sense4care.es/>

[8] <http://www.aal-europe.eu/projects/softcare/>

[9] <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/ambient-assisted-living-joint-programme-delivers-research-commercialisation>

[10] <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/eipaha/>

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