

eHealth ERA

Towards the Establishment of a European eHealth Research Area

eHealth ERA contributes to the coordination of Member States' eHealth strategy formulation and implementation as well as related Research and Technology Development (RTD). The project surveys and analyses eHealth roadmaps and RTD programmes across Europe, identifies common priority issues, and develops a roadmap for joint actions.

Objectives of the project

While health care remains a national responsibility, it is more and more recognised that European cooperation can become a powerful tool in supporting Member States to achieve their respective health system objectives.

A clear and stable policy framework for eHealth and the development of eHealth programmes in and across Member States are expected to provide substantial added value, leading to the accelerated uptake and implementation of ICT-based services by health care providers and industry.

The overall goal of the project is to also support implementation-oriented eHealth RTD in European states, identify opportunities for multilateral joint activities, and support steps towards further integration of eHealth deployment across countries.

“eHealth ERA supports joint eHealth activities between EU Member States”

Project Description

eHealth ERA starts out by developing a concise analytical framework. Second, an information gathering instrument and methods for analysing the information are designed.

The analysis of national eHealth priorities makes current activities and plans more transparent and leads to the definition of two priority topic clusters for which more in-depth knowledge is urgently required. These topics are closely related to the eHealth Action Plan and focus firstly on various types of clinical messages like patient summary or ePrescribing, and secondly on patient empowerment. **eHealth ERA** assesses also RTD programme structures, actors, stakeholders and cooperation processes as well as the complementarity of actions across the Union.

Through these analyses, the project identifies and supports strategic opportunities for joint activities between EU Member States, in the context of RTD programmes and roadmap development, and in liaison with European level activities like the IST Programme and the eHealth Action Plan. The information is dissemina-

Scenario : Germany as an example of strategy development

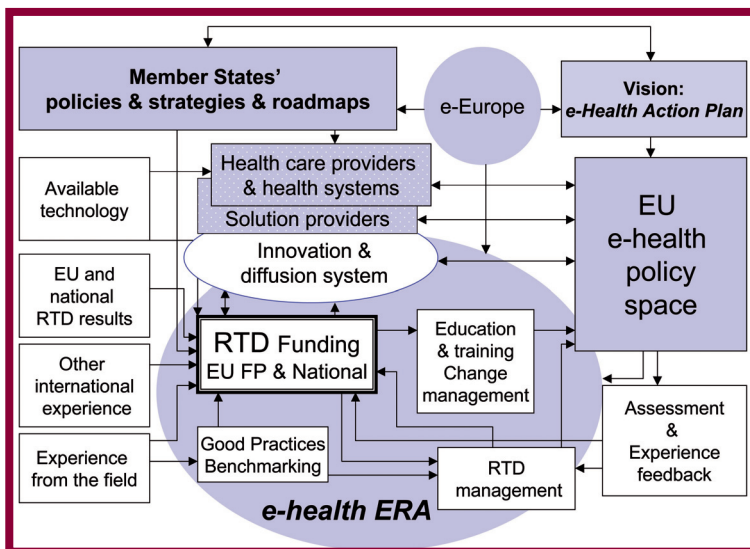
First initiatives to develop a national strategy started in 1997, involving all relevant health sector stakeholder. In 2003, the results of these initiatives became a key element of a Health System Modernisation Law, and in 2005, the German Ministry of Health summarised its approach towards eHealth in a paper entitled “The German eHealth Strategy”. The goal is to establish by 2006 an ICT infrastructure based on one key application that offers a quick return on investment: electronic prescribing, involving about two million transactions every day. Other applications will then build on this infrastructure without having to carry the basic costs. The strategy has been developed around the concept of an electronic patient card carrying administrative as well as health-related data. In order to further deal with specific technical challenges, the German Ministry of Health has initiated co-operation activities with other Member States.

ted through a web-based knowledge base. Ultimately, the project will develop a roadmap for further joint activities.

This process takes place with the guidance of a Coordination Committee, which - in the framework of the eHealth Working Group - brings together representatives of national health authorities and delegate bodies in Member and other participating States.

Expected Results & Impacts

Initial outputs of this coordination action include identification and improved knowledge of key policy actors in Member States and at the Union level, transparency of ongoing strategy development and implementation activities, as well as information on RTD organisations and stakeholder associations. Specific outputs include the following:



- A comprehensive European eHealth policy report, presenting a structured overview of programmes, initiatives and roadmaps, synthesising policy as well as RTD topics with priorities in multiple Member States.
- Reports on two topic clusters (patient summaries and patient empowerment) detailing priority strategic opportunities for joint activities of Member States.
- Functional description of national institutional structures, RTD programmes and relationships essential to achieve a high degree of cross-Union eHealth planning and cooperation.
- Action plan for joint RTD and deployment activities in eHealth.
- Proposal for sustainable mechanisms to promote trans-national coordination.
- Launch of a public eHealth website on national eHealth strategies, implementation activities, and RTD programmes.

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 - Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR), (IT)
 - Centre of Innovation, Technology Transfer and University Development (CITTRU), Jagiellonian University, (PO)
 - Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo, Instituto de
 - Salud Carlos III (ISCIII), (ES)
 - Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Swindon, (UK)

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