

TMA-Bridge

A Bridge Towards Coordinated eHealth Implementation

The TMA-Bridge project is aimed at promoting the creation of a European eHealth Area, favouring the mobility of citizens and patients in the European Union. To this end, a set of concrete recommendations has been addressed to the EC and to the governments of the EU Member States.

Objectives of the project

The **Telemedicine Alliance (TMA)**, in its first phase of work, formulated a Vision for citizen-centred eHealth services by 2010⁷. A key outcome of this study shown that the issue of interoperability was a major obstacle to the implementation of eHealth.

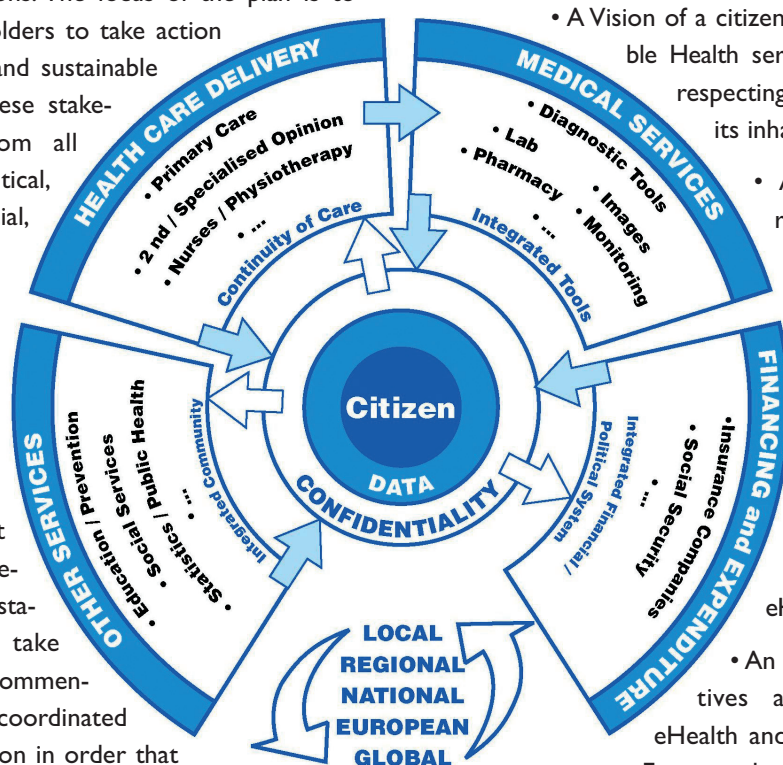
The overall goal of **TMA-Bridge**, the second phase of work of the TMA, was to provide a **Strategic Plan** for transnational eHealth interoperability with creative, citizen-centred, action-oriented, strategic actionable recommendations. The focus of the plan is to enable the stakeholders to take action to achieve actual and sustainable interoperability. These stakeholders came from all areas, including political, organizational, social, and technical.

The Strategic plan and its recommendations to the European Commission and the EU Member States are in fact relevant for all stakeholders. Indeed, all stakeholders must take heed to these recommendations, and take coordinated and concerted action in order that the immense investment in eHealth now being expended in the individual Member States to contribute to improved healthcare in those States, will also facilitate interoperable trans-national services across Europe. This will help the mobile patient and health professional and could have far-reaching implications for ICT development in Europe: the full invest-

ment and creative forces of industry can be unleashed in this lucrative market, thus improving the economic health of European industry, as well as that of its citizens only with established and interoperable standards across Europe.

Project Description

The TMA proposes concrete recommendations for action within a concise and consistent strategic framework. These recommendations are based on:



- A Vision of a citizen centred interoperable Health service across the EU respecting the civil rights of all its inhabitants
- An analysis of the requirements for interoperability which would support trans-national eHealth within the European Union
- Recommendations for action to improve transnational eHealth interoperability
- An analysis of the initiatives and strategies for eHealth and its implementation at a European level or internationally

- The results of a 2nd international workshop to make recommendations on appropriate actions to foster trans-national eHealth in Europe
- Feedback from presentations given by the **TMA-Bridge** team at a number of international conferences on eHealth

⁷"Telemedicine 2010: Visions for a Personal Medical Network", TM Alliance, ESA BR-229.

- Direct input received from the participating organisations, being ESA, ITU and WHO.

This strategy is supported by a series of recommended actions, which, if carried out across Europe, should facilitate progress on the road towards coordinated implementation of interoperable trans-national eHealth across Europe, bringing closer the realization of the TM Alliance Vision, as illustrated below.

Expected Results & Impacts

A set of recommendations were formulated and presented to the European Communication:

- Take Legal and Regulatory Action
- Create and implement a framework for monitoring and evaluation to measure progress towards meeting trans-national citizen's needs.
- Develop a workflow model which will incorporate organisational and social models into trans-national systems
- Create an environment for sharing knowledge of proven (good) practice and build the knowledge and capability of health professionals
- Create the facilities and the content to ensure that eligibility to receive treatment, and reimbursement, can be known at the point and time of care, by the patient and the care provider
- Ensure that relevant data in electronic form is available to the treating healthcare professional and citizen
- Ensure that language and cultural differences are incorporated into the system and available at the point and time of care
- Create a European telecommunications infrastructure as part of the eEurope initiative
- Incorporate a set of value-added applications into the infrastructure
- Develop a central access point for health information standards
- Increase awareness of the importance of existing interoperability-related standards for eHealth

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Partners:

- ESA, European Space Research & Technology Centre (ESTEC), Noordwijk, (NL)
- WHO - Regional Office for Europe, Office for Integrated Health Care Services, Barcelona, (ES)
- ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, Geneva, (CH)

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