



**25TH EHEALTH NETWORK MEETING 28 NOVEMBER 2023,
BRUSSELS
COVER NOTE**

14.2. Cancer Imaging Initiative Milestone (*for information*)

1) Introduction

The European Cancer Imaging Initiative launched in December 2022 aims to foster innovation and deployment of digital technologies in cancer treatment and care, in order to achieve more precise and faster clinical decision-making, diagnostics, treatments and predictive medicine for cancer patients. It is implemented by the EUCAIM project, which will establish the Cancer Image Europe infrastructure to federate cancer images data and linked clinical information across Europe.

2) Issue at stake

Cancer imaging datasets exist for different cancer types, but they are scattered among many repositories and clinical centres in Europe, and they are not easily accessible to clinicians, researchers and innovators. Besides geographical fragmentation, the datasets are established based on different standards, ontologies, technologies and legal frameworks. A cross-border, interoperable, and secure infrastructure that will preserve privacy and data sovereignty of data holders is essential to speed up the development of innovative AI-based technologies for cancer diagnosis and treatment.

The European Cancer Imaging Initiative is working towards linking up resources and databases to an open, available and user-friendly infrastructure of cancer images for all stakeholders. This will be achieved through an integrated approach designed with major European research organisations, institutions, and companies. The infrastructure will federate cancer images data from research repositories from different European countries and research infrastructures, as well as from hospitals and clinical centres. It will support the development and benchmarking, testing and piloting of tools for personalised medicine, including AI-based solutions, essentially offering a backbone for next generation cancer diagnostics and treatments.

The cornerstone of the Initiative is a federated European infrastructure for cancer images data, developed by the EUropean Federation for CANcer IMages (EUCAIM) project funded under the DIGITAL programme (€18 million co-funding). The project started in January 2023 with 21 clinical sites from 12 countries and aims to have at least 30 distributed data providers from 15 countries by the end of the project in 2026.

3) Summary

The first version of the digital infrastructure (Cancer Image Europe) was delivered by the EUCAIM project on 29 September 2023. It features a public catalogue of cancer imaging



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datasets from the repositories of EU-funded projects on big data and Artificial Intelligence in cancer imaging, as well as a search tool to understand the information available at the data providers' sites across the EU. Access to data can be requested from data providers in line with applicable ethics and data protection rules. A first version of the rules for data providers and users and the operational procedures for the Cancer Image Europe platform have been also published on the EUCAIM project website <https://cancerimage.eu>.

The EUCAIM project is also exploring ways to align and connect the Cancer Image Europe platform with the proposed EHDS framework infrastructure. Several EU Member States have expressed interest in establishing a European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC) to ensure sustainable operation of the Cancer Image Europe platform beyond the EUCAIM project end. This solution would also enable alignment and connection with the EHDS infrastructure as an Authorised Participant. A working group with Member States has been launched by the European Commission (CNECT) to further explore this idea. The Working Group is open for all Member States interested in supporting this solution.

4) Format of procedure in the meeting

This agenda point is for information. If you have specific questions, please flag them so they can be addressed under AOB.