



Multi-Annual Work Plan 2015-2018

Adopted by the eHealth Network, 13 May 2014, Athens

Document versions

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| 21 February 2014 | 0.1 | Template and overview. |
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New Multi-Annual Work Plan 2015-2018

1. Preamble

During the 4th eHealth Network meeting in November 2013, it was decided that a sub-group of the Network should be formed to draft the new Multi-annual Work Plan (MWP). Nine members of the Network volunteered to join this subgroup, which is chaired by Dr Clemens Auer, and supported by the eHealth Network Secretariat.

The first sub-group meeting took place on 18 February 2014. During this meeting the main chapters of the Multi-Annual Work Plan 2015-2018 were discussed, as well as some specific content. This document is based on the discussion during this meeting.

2. Introduction

The main purpose of the Multi-Annual Work Plan 2015-2018 is to reach agreement on the task of the eHealth Network for the coming years. The MWP should make clear, to both the Network Members and external eHealth stakeholders, what the next steps are in European eHealth policy development. The MWP 2015-2018 will also serve as the main outline for the new supporting mechanism of the eHealth Network. This new supporting mechanism will be financed under the Public Health Program through a Joint Action¹.

This document will consist out of three parts. The first part contains **background information** concerning the content of the MWP 2015-2018. It focuses on the most relevant documents used to draft the proposal and explains the main chapters. The second **part lists the actions of the eHealth Network** during the period 2015-2018. This is to be considered to be the actual Multi-Annual Work Plan 2015-2018. The third part focuses on the **operations of the eHealth Network**, and the suggested approach for the eHealth Network to operate in the period 2015-2018.

All the three parts together will be put forward for discussion and adoption by the eHealth Network during its meeting on 13 May 2014 in Athens. Adoption of the Multi-Annual Work Plan during this meeting is important because it is necessary to start the preparatory work on the new supporting mechanism.

During the last two years the eHealth Network showed that it is able to lead the cooperation on EU eHealth policy developments. It has shown to be able to agree on concrete technical agreements, for example on the Patient Summary Guidelines, and also set the agenda for further developments, like on the eID and data protection debate. The MWP 2015-2018 should build further on these achievements.

¹ The Public Health Program 2014/2020 was adopted on 26 February 2014:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/2014-2020/state_of_play_en.htm

3. Background

Information about the documents used to construct the new MWP. The explanation of the main chapters in the MWP.

Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare – Article 14

The eHealth Network was established in the Directive on patients' rights, and it is undeniable that the main focus of the work should derive from the provisions of Article 14, which institutes the legal policy cooperation on eHealth at EU level.

Article 14 sets the following objectives of the eHealth Network:

- (a) work towards delivering sustainable economic and social benefits of European eHealth systems and services and interoperable applications, with a view to achieving a high level of trust and security, enhancing continuity of care and ensuring access to safe and high-quality healthcare;
- (b) draw up guidelines on patient summaries and effective methods for enabling the use of medical information for public health and research;
- (c) support Member States in developing common identification and authentication measures to facilitate transferability of data in cross-border healthcare.

The objectives mentioned in sub (b) and sub (c) focus on relatively concrete deliverables. The guidelines on the electronic exchange of patient summaries, which the eHealth Network has adopted in November 2013 are a good example. And during 2014 it is anticipated that the eHealth Network will adopt two further guidelines, one on ePrescription and one on the re-use of medical information.

The objective as mentioned in Article 14 sub (a) states that the eHealth Network also has responsibilities in a broader context concerning eHealth policy development. The eHealth Network should in general work towards sustainable and interoperable eHealth systems within the EU, and should in this context take into account eHealth developments which can increase the coordination, sustainability and quality of health systems in the EU. The Multi-Annual Work Plan 2015-2018 will contain tasks which are based on a combination of the three abovementioned sub-paragraphs of Article 14.

Key inputs

Besides Article 14 of the Directive, the MWP 2015-2018 was developed on a series of key documents. These key documents are listed hereunder.

- Digital Agenda for Europe, especially Actions 75, 76 and 77
- eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020
- eHGI – Policy Papers on interoperability and eID
- epSOS – Policy and Strategy Recommendations
- Calliope – eHealth Interoperability Recommendations

- eHealth Task Force Report – Redesigning health in Europe for 2020
- eHealth Network Multi-Annual Work Plan 2012-2014
- EU-US Memorandum of Understanding on eHealth
- Horizon 2020
- eHR-QTM conclusions and recommendations
- Hitch roadmap
- Reports of the eHealth Stakeholders Group

4. eHealth Network Multi-Annual Work Plan 2015-2018

This chapter explains the main areas of work of the eHealth Network between 2015 and 2018.

Main chapters as defined by Sub-Group

During the first meeting of the eHealth Network sub-group (18 February 2014), four main chapters of the MWP 2015-2018 were agreed upon. A short description of these chapters can be found below.

| | |
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| Interoperability & standardisation | Exchange of knowledge |
| Monitoring & assessment of implementation | Global cooperation & positioning |

Interoperability and standardisation

Interoperability of eHealth systems has been the core focus of the EU eHealth policy agenda for the last few years. Even though good steps were taken, the eHealth market remains fragmented. As a result, the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) solutions provided are tailored only for a specific location or service provider and thus risk being more expensive, closed, non-reliable and non-interoperable elsewhere. For patient and professionals receiving or providing cross-border care, or cross-regional care, still this remains a challenge.

An EU eHealth interoperability framework should integrate 4 dimensions: technical, semantic, organisational and legal. On the technical dimension the last years several actions have resulted in increased interoperability assets, for example the patient summary data-set, as mentioned in the guidelines. Concerning the other 3 dimensions preparatory work has been done within different projects and work packages. However, this work has so far not resulted

in sustainable policy assets which were adopted by the eHealth Network. The eHealth Network MWP 2015-2018 should therefore broaden its scope to the other three dimensions of interoperability. The MWP should reflect this shift.

Exchange of Knowledge

The vast majority of Member States prefer a better way of exchanging information about national eHealth Plans, lessons learnt, effectiveness studies, et cetera. The next MWP should focus more on this learning through sharing, with a specific emphasis on the use of the yearly eHealth conferences, and digital tools to share the information. Exchange of knowledge and experiences should however not only be about reporting. The MWP should create room for further cooperation between Member States by exchange experience and expertise on the choices made at national level.

Assessment of implementation

The eHealth Network has adopted (and is expected to adopt) several guidelines on eHealth topics. These include the guidelines on patient summary, ePrescription and patient registries. Also the eHealth Network adopted several recommendations and policy papers on interoperability issues, mainly on eID, semantic and legal issues. It should be assessed what the state of play of the implementation of the guidelines is, and which recommendation and policy papers have resulted in a positive effect on the interoperability of eHealth systems.

Global cooperation and positioning

eHealth is not only a topic which is addressed at national- or EU-level, it is a topic addressed worldwide. The cooperation at EU level should also ensure the alignment with ongoing developments outside the EU, so that the agreements made within the eHealth Network are compatible with global standards. Also, the eHealth Network could benefit from studies and research done by global organisations on eHealth developments, such as the WHO and the OECD.

5. Suggested Activities 2015-2018

This chapter contains a list of topics and deliverables to be addressed by the eHealth Network in the years 2015-2018.

Section on 'Interoperability and standardisation'

| <i>A. Trusted eHealth National Contact Points</i> | |
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| eHealth National Contact Points (NCP's) have been a central pillar of the electronic exchange of patient summaries and electronic prescriptions in project environments and tested through the epSOS project. The eHealth Network guidelines on patient summaries and ePrescription (expected 2014) also refer to the eHealth NCP as essential elements for the electronic transfer of clinical data. The eHealth Network will support and secure the structures of these eHealth NCP to promote the trust and security of cross-border sharing of electronic medical information. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | eHealth Network opinion on relationship between eHealth National Contact Points, and the NCP as mentioned in the Directive on Patient Rights. |
| 2 | Adopt organisational framework of eHealth NCP which states the role, task and responsibilities of the eHealth NCP. |
| 3 | Adopt guidelines on legal and/or contractual arrangements between eHealth NCP, providing a minimal set of agreements between the Contact Points. |
| 5 | Report back and prepare for funding support for eHealth NCP, and other services, from the Connecting Europe Facility. |

| <i>B. Electronic Identification for eHealth</i> | |
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| A strategic priority of the eHealth Network is to agree on a set of common identification and authentication measures based on national solutions to allow trusted electronic transfer of patient data in cross-border healthcare settings. In the work plan 2012-2014 the eHealth Network already identified some specific actions to take. These will need to be further developed. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | Adopt of an <u>eID specific framework for eHealth</u> : an agreement – primarily under the scope of the eID Regulation- on a set of common identification, authentication and authorisation measures based on national solutions to allow trusted electronic transfer of patient data in cross border care |
| 2 | Guidelines on the interoperability of Electronic Professional Registries |
| 3 | Report on notification of national eID under the scope of the Regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market |

C. Update & revision of EU eHealth Guidelines

The adopted guidelines by the eHealth Network need to be updated and further developed, on a regular basis to reflect the evolution of the EU legal framework, technological advances and lessons learned from their use by the Member States.

| # | Components: |
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| 1 | Update guidelines on Patient Summary |
| 2 | Update guidelines on ePrescription |
| 3 | Update guidelines on Patient Registries |

D. Alignment of standardisation activities in eHealth

One of the barriers for the large-scale implementation and adoption of eHealth comes from the lack of clarity around the adequate standards and specifications for interoperability of eHealth systems. There is a need to align the relevant organisations parties that have a role in eHealth standards and specifications, and promote the use of the standards.

| # | Components: |
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| 1 | Agree upon a platform consisting of the relevant Standards developing organizations to provide input to the eHealth Network on actions to promote the coordination and acceptability of standards and technical specifications in eHealth. |
| 2 | Agree on actions to promote the use of common standards or technical specifications in eHealth within the EU. |
| 3 | Report on standardisation developments in eHealth and on the effective use of common standards or technical specifications in eHealth within the EU |

E. Semantic Interoperability

Semantic interoperability is critical for cross-border access to health information. However, the divergence within the healthcare field is great. Building on the work of previous programs, the eHealth Network should continue the work on to achieve progressive and practical semantic interoperability.

| # | Components: |
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| 1 | Agree on a European Strategy for semantic interoperability, based on research project deliverables under Horizon 2020 |

Section on 'Monitoring & assessment of implementation'

| <i>A. Implementation of eHealth guidelines</i> | |
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| The eHealth Network is expected to adopt three guidelines before 2015. The guidelines should be considered as the golden standard for transferring medical data across borders. Member States are not obliged to implement these guidelines nationally, but several Member States have expressed the intention to use the guidelines for national level. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | Report on implementation of patient summary guidelines |
| 2 | Report on implementation of ePrescription guidelines |
| 3 | Report on implementation of interoperability of patient registries guidelines |

| <i>B. Implementation of data protection Regulation in eHealth</i> | |
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| Data protection is one of the core issues within the electronic transfer of health data. The data protection Regulation is expected to be adopted in 2015. If further work is necessary within the field of eHealth, the eHealth Network could be one valid body to be consulted on the specifications or on the delegated acts of the Regulation. It should be assessed what the Member States are working on to promote data protection and data security in the field of eHealth. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | Agreement on the eHN involvement in the implementing provision of the new data protection regulation |
| 2 | Report on the national practices on health data security |

| <i>C. Implementation of recommendations on legal interoperability</i> | |
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| A European study giving an overview of the national laws on electronic health records in the EU Member States and their interaction with the provision of cross-border eHealth services, will be ready end 2014. This study, together with the lessons learnt from the epSOS project on legal aspects, will describe the legal steps that are necessary to promote cross-border eHealth services. The eHealth Network should assess these results and issue recommendations on legal interoperability. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | Discussion and adoption of recommendations on the legal interoperability of EHR systems |
| 2 | Report on the follow up of the recommendations on EHR systems in Member States |

Section on 'Exchange of knowledge'

| <i>A. Sharing of National eHealth Strategies and Action plans</i> | |
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| All Member States are working on eHealth and the majority has an eHealth Strategy which aims at the policy work done in this field. The eHealth Network should make more use of the information that exists within the Member States, and the National Strategies should be shared within the eHealth Network. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | Report on new eHealth Strategies and Actions within the eHealth Network |
| 2 | Create an platform for the sharing of National eHealth Strategies |
| 3 | Report on the implementation of National eHealth Strategies |
| 4 | Exchange of mechanisms to increase eHealth literacy of healthcare workforce |
| 5 | Report on the uptake of telemedicine services within the EU, and recommendations on the lessons learnt by Member States that have already deployed these services |
| 6 | EU-eHealth online training tool to increase awareness and knowledge of health professionals concerning cross-border health care activities |

| <i>B. Secondary use of Health Data</i> | |
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| With the growing possibilities to use the huge amounts of data stored in health data-bases and health records, questions regarding how to make effective use of this data and how public authorities will protect the information of patients, have emerged. Several Member States already see the public discussion rising, and there is a push for new legislation. The eHealth Network Members should exchange information and experiences on the approach public authorities are taking. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | Discuss study on secondary use of health data within Member States |
| 2 | Report on strategies for the secondary use of health data |
| 3 | Opinion on the use of cloud computing in health |
| 4 | Code of conduct on how to handle secondary use of health data |

| <i>C. Research on added value eHealth Tools</i> | |
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| In cooperation with the HTA-network, the EU cooperation on eHealth should provide trusted documentation on the added value of eHealth services and investments. The eHealth Network will present a report on the most up-to-date studies on the added value of eHealth services and will cooperated with the HTA-Network to bring together experience on eHealth assessments. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | Report on studies concerning added value of eHealth/mHealth services, as a follow up measure of the green paper on mHealth |
| 2 | Agreements with HTA-network about eHealth assessments cooperation within the EU. |

| <i>D. Patient access to Electronic Health Records and health data portability</i> | |
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| The level of patient access to the information in the Electronic Health Records differs per Member State. Individuals have the right to portability of their health data. This principle is outlined in EU law and European jurisprudence but is rarely fully implemented in health systems. By exchanging experience and best practices, the eHeath Network will support the transition to eHealth systems that place patients in the driving seat. | |
| # | <i>Components:</i> |
| 1 | Report on state of play in the EU on patient access and portability of health data. |
| 2 | State of play of patient digital literacy and effective ways to increase patient digital literacy |
| 3 | Recommendations on best practices to provide patient access to health data and health data portability. |

Section on 'Global positioning & cooperation'

A. Positioning eHealth Network as contact point for EU eHealth cooperation

eHealth policies are not only being developed within Member States and the EU. To secure that the main eHealth policies prepared by the eHealth Network align with the actions of other non-EU members and international organisations, this eHealth Network should position itself more visible as the contact point for EU eHealth cooperation.

| # | <i>Components:</i> |
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| 1 | Information paper on main eHealth activities outside of the EU |
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| 2 | Decision on eHealth Network representative at WHO eHealth meetings |
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| 3 | Overview of OECD studies on eHealth and core outcome. |
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| 4 | Prepare for preparatory convergence meetings to coordinate input before WHO and OECD meetings on eHealth. |
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B. Follow eHealth chapters in trade negotiations.

eHealth services are part of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and of other bilateral trade negotiations for which the EC has been given a mandate to negotiate. The actions and follow-up of these negotiations should be reflected in the Work Plan of the eHealth Network

| # | <i>Components:</i> |
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| 1 | Report on outcome of negotiations on eHealth |
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| 2 | Recommendations on outcome of negotiations |
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| 3 | Evaluation on eHealth specifications |
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6. Operations of the eHealth Network

Description of the changes suggested to the eHealth Network's working methods.

The ending of the Multi-Annual Work Plan 2012-2014 also offers a good time to reflect on the work process and methods of the eHealth Network. Even though the first two years of the eHealth Network have resulted in several important deliverables, both the sub-group Members and the European Commission see possibilities to improve the efficiency of the eHealth Network. The information below offers a first insight in possible alterations to the working process of the eHealth Network in years to come.

The work of the eHealth Network has a strong legal base in the Directive on patients' rights in cross border healthcare. The objective is however rather broad, ranging from specific goals (e.g. adopt guidelines) to more general tasks (e.g. work towards sustainable European eHealth systems).

In general, the Network is seen as the leading EU policy body in the field of eHealth, focusing not only on strategic cross-border eHealth developments but also on the uptake of eHealth services at national level. It is clear that when the eHealth Network adopts a decision, further steps at EU and national levels need to be done taken. After a decision is made, the eHealth Network should also follow its implementation, deployment and adoption. Only then it can be fully assessed what the outcomes of the eHealth Network are. The work process of the Network, and the supporting Joint Action, should take this into account.

Because the eHealth Network has such a rich and complex agenda, the principal role of the Network can be different according to agenda topic. Some decision for example might need additional political and financial consultation at national level, while others are clearly within the competence of the Network Members to decide upon. To facilitate the decision making process in the Network, the Commission will propose different 'types of decisions' in the working procedures of the eHealth Network.

Over the last two years, the eHealth Network was supported in its operations by the eHealth Governance Initiative. The Initiative will end June 2014, leaving the eHealth Network without a preparatory body. The Commission has therefore proposed a new Joint Action on eHealth to fill this gap. The Commission has proposed a Joint Action of €2,4 million in the Third Health Programme (2014 – 2020)². The work plan of the Joint Action will be based on the eHealth Networks' MWP 2015-2018, and the tasks within the Joint Action will be aligned with the needs of the eHealth Network. Member States willing to participate are requested contribute (in kind) to the Joint Action at 40%. The Joint Action will focus on bringing together bodies that are responsible for implementation of eHealth at national level, and also the ministries, who are represented in the eHealth Network.

² Updated after the adoption of the 2014 Work Programme of the Third Health Programme (2014-2020)

In line with the preferences of the eHealth Network, it is proposed that more emphasis will be placed on Member States participation in sub-groups of the Network. During the last 6 months two sub-groups were formed, one on the MWP 2015-2018 and one on the CEF. The setting up of these sub-groups gave the eHealth Network flexibility to tackle the necessary items and a possibility for Member States to either join the sub-group themselves, or give other Members the possibility to work on their behalf. This working method is proposed to be increased in the following years.

The eHealth Network's role in the governance of large scale deployments, such as services under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) but also in the European Innovation Partnership for Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA), is growing. It is already playing a role in planning the CEF deployments for 2015, but it should also plan the launch of new services in addition to the ones which were foreseen for the start of the CEF. The eHealth Network should also be properly consulted and incorporated in the governance structure of the CEF, and should investigate the possible links with the outcomes of the EIP.

Finally, in cooperation with the Member States that will participate in the new Joint Action on eHealth, setting up an online portal to support the work of the eHealth Network needs to be studied. Especially in the field of 'Knowledge exchange' the online communication is key. Several references have been made to an eHealth Wiki which is currently being developed by the eHealth Governance Initiative. This portal should be one of the first focus points of the new Joint Action.

Concerning the areas listed above, the eHealth Network secretariat will make several proposals. These proposals will be discussed during the eHealth Network meeting on 18 November 2014. Leading up to this discussion, an evaluation survey will be carried out among the eHealth Network Members. The results of this evaluation will be taken into account in the proposals.