



EU Health Hub – Investing in Resilient Health System

Context

EU health systems are facing multiple challenges: rising demand due to demographic changes, an increased chronic disease burden, workforce shortages, and fiscal pressure due to the impact of economic environment on public spending, as well as steep cost increases for certain cost drivers (particularly technological innovation in pharmaceuticals and medical devices). European health systems have been under enormous pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic which highlighted a number of shortages and need to increase their resilience.

The EU provides a wide range of funds and tools for supporting health system transformation (TSI, EU4Health, European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF), Horizon Europe, RRF, the InvestEU

programme, etc.).

Member States and project promoters struggle to efficiently combine the use of the different EU funds and national investment. The transformation of health systems to harness digitalisation and innovation, to accelerate the interoperability of health systems, in line with the European Health Data Space, as well as the greening of health systems requires a more strategic and efficient use of EU funds and instruments.

This flagship project will build on the results of the 2022 TSI on-going multi-country project with Austria, Belgium and Slovenia on a Resource Hub for Strategic Investments in Health (the EU Health Hub).

Supporting Member States to make larger and more strategic health reforms and investments through a more strategic use of EU funds and instruments, in line with the objectives of the European Health Union and the European Care Strategy, and to enhance the overall resilience and fiscal sustainability of their health systems by improving the quality of health spending.

Objectives

The flagship will strengthen the capacity of the Ministries of Health to:

- Design and implement, monitor and finance health reforms;
- Navigate the various EU funds and instruments to maximise EU support for health system reforms;
- Provide networking, knowledge sharing and guidance, as well as targeted services to build the capacity of public authorities for reform design and implementation of large-scale health system transformation projects;

Indicative support measures

To achieve these objectives, the proposed flagship would make available to all Member States – upon demand- the EU Health Hub- to test strategic investment solutions in health building on the experience accumulated so far with the multi-country project with Austria, Belgium and Slovenia. It would thus provide further lessons learnt on the services and value added that an EU Health Hub could bring. Member States can benefit from support on health reforms and investments at national or regional level.

The technical support will be organised around two complementary pillars. The below is an indicative list of support measures:

Work package 1: Strategic investments for future proof health systems

- Support the ministries of health to navigate the various EU funds and instruments to identify how they could best use EU support for health reforms, including through blending them;
- Test strategic investments in concrete areas: primary care, hospital care, digitalisation of health systems in line with the European Health Data Space, integrated care, in line with the Council Recommendation on Affordable and high-quality long-term care and the Commission Communication on a Comprehensive approach to mental health, greening of the hospitals, etc.
- Support the setup and/or strengthen the coordination of national contact points for EU funds that can be used for health;
- Conduct training and capacity building for authorities involved in health reform;

Work package 2: Quality spending for future proof health systems

- Analyse current procedures, guidelines, frameworks related to health spending;
- Analyse spending and data to estimate attainable effectiveness and efficiency gains;
- Review governance and formulate recommendations for improvement across all areas mentioned above;
- Support the drafting of action plans, strategies, and guidelines;
- Conduct training and capacity building activities for Member State authorities;
- Support the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the respective reforms.



This flagship will respond to the expectations set by the Council Conclusions on strengthening the European Health Union of December 2021, which invited the Member States to make use of the TSI to increase the resilience of their health systems, and the Commission to explore the provision of an advisory service with a single point of access to assist Member States in making a better use of EU funds to support health reforms. The flagship would also be in line with the ambition of the Belgian EU Presidency to initiate a reflection process on the future EU funding framework for health, with the potential establishment of an EU Health Hub, building on the results of the 2022 multi-country TSI project.