

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

European Procurers Platform – eHealth Transforming the market for eHealth Solutions

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Product innovation in highly complex and technological areas, such as medical technology, puts high requirements on the innovation capability of an organisation. The public healthcare system and the medical technology industry share a need and have a common concern to develop innovative products. In public healthcare this need is due to the increasing costs of healthcare at an unsustainable rate, which calls for more efficient and effective products. In the medical technology industry this need has grown out of increased competition.

Traditionally, the way of purchasing goods and services is based solely on the price of the product. Life cycle costing, supply chain analysis or group purchases are rarely used, which means missing some opportunities to get innovative products that would give purchasers competitive advantage. Contrary, Innovation Procurement (PPI) is a way of buying goods and services that stimulates the supply chain to invest in developing better and more innovative solutions to meet the needs of an organisation. PPI aims to 'close the gap' between cutting-edge technology and processes and the public sector customers or users who can benefit from them. Risk, costs, partnership and sharing gains are all important parts of PPI.

Procurement of Innovation (PPI) is then a crucial challenge for public bodies to be implemented during next years. European public authorities have a responsibility to favour innovation when producing and consuming goods and services. Public procurement is one of the essential tools for stimulating new technological or service solutions while helping to create jobs and boost the competitiveness of European industry and SMEs. It also encourages more efficient public services. Therefore, it is time for action. Public procurers in Europe have a significant role to play in this societal transformation.

The European Commission (EC) has decided to support the efforts of those who want to buy otherwise and boost the use of Innovative Procurement. An example is the EPP-eHealth project, which has been funded by the EC under the H2020 framework programme. EPP-eHealth aims to transform the market for eHealth solutions through dialogue and Innovation Procurement.

The importance and relevance of eHealth for society has been largely documented and explained. It is one of the main challenges to achieve during the next decade. This has been

portrayed for instance by initiatives such as the Global Observatory for eHealth, created by the World Health Organisation. Beside other advantages, eHealth:

- Enables faster, safer, better health care by placing medical information in the right hands at the right time.
- Improves patient safety – a complete overview of clinical and medication history helps to avoid potential errors and complications.
- Provides better access to specialist care in all geographic areas of the province through the increased use of technology and information systems.
- Reduces travel time allowing care closer to home.

The project is making progress towards this aim by creating a network of procuring organisations that understand the opportunities that eHealth can offer and have competence in Innovation Procurement and the capacity to pioneer new approaches to collaborative procurement. As well as stimulating demand for eHealth goods and services and creating a robust framework for practical procurement outcomes, it also serves as a leading procurers group for the wider population of some 15,000 hospitals in Europe. The infrastructure of the project enables the stakeholders to come to a common understanding of the barriers to widespread take up and replication of eHealth solutions and determine how these needs will be overcome through practical policy and procurement actions. The network begun with a core group of leader hospitals and stakeholders, and widen through advocacy, engagement and regular web-based dissemination actions.

To achieve the project objectives a set of 4 workshops aimed at potential stakeholders will be developed. Three of these workshops will train attendees in public procurement while a fourth workshop will be used as market test.

The outcome will be the identification and communication of common unmet needs and the development of a practical implementation plan for PPI projects addressing these needs.

Keywords: innovation procurement; ehealth; unmet needs; Network of procurers; market sounding
