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eHealth HUB turns 2! 550 SMEs approached and some insights from the European digital health market



Having approached a total of **550 SMEs**, the eHealth HUB designed and tested **7 new business support services**, which were delivered on line as well as through **27 events in 10 European countries**. The **initiative celebrates now two years of life**, spent in assisting European ehealth businesses to access the single market under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme. "It is very gratifying to see how the support we deliver helps European eHealth companies to improve and grow" states **Jorge Gonzalez**, Director at Ticbiomed, the coordinator of eHealth Hub.

How does it feel to support European startups and SMEs to get into the digital health market? How is the ecosystem responding to the latest legislative and regulatory requirements? Which are the most urgent needs emerging?

Despite of a consistent variety of programmes supporting **SMEs and startups** running all over Europe, **a need for a "specific support"** seems to clearly emerge. "It is not the

same to develop fintech than a product for healthcare. Get the right help. There are many programs to support entrepreneurs, but sector know-how is key. That's how eHealth Hub helped me the most", says **Ignacio Díaz**, a telecommunications engineer, a founder of a successful startup and a former participant in both the **eHealth HUB Business Model Clinic** and **eHealth Roadshow** services.

On their side, **investors** showed a relevant appreciation in those eHealth HUB services designed to ease their meetings with the most promising eHealth startups, namely the **eHealth HUB Investment Readiness and Pitch Competition** services.

"It was really, really great to take part in the eHealth HUB Investors Forum and the Pitch Competition here in Sitges, due to the high quality selected startups and the great debate with investors about the trend in the sector. It was also great to differentiate among early-stage and later-stages startups, as it is very useful for investors to gather the right expectations", Lluís **Pareras**, Director at Healthequity SCR says, after having attended the eHealth HUB events at HIMSS Europe Conference 2018, back in June.

Great interest from a variety of stakeholders – **pharma, healthcare providers, insurance, policy makers** - was gathered by the eHealth HUB Solution Match service, aimed at **matching specific needs with digital health solutions** available in the market.

The **eHealth HUB Solution Match** service also seems to be well linked to **public procurement of innovation**. The public demand driven innovation is a key issue, as remarked Mauro **Draoli**, Head of Procurement strategies and market innovation at AgID (Agenzia Italia Digitale), at the launch of eHealth HUB – Ospedale Pediatrico Bambino Gesù Solution Match in Rome (April 2018). *"A kind of public declination of b2b open innovation should be worked out for public organizations and the market, as made up of enterprises, SMEs and startups, in line with the Solution March approach."* In total, **7 Solution Match services** were so far delivered, in partnership with major public healthcare providers and private pharma and insurance companies, such as Chiesi, Pierre Fabre, Leo Pharma, Axa.

Legal and Regulatory issues are definitely a hot topic for the entire ecosystem. *"eHealth SMEs, legal advisors and other organizations struggle with the practical implementation of the GDPR rules. **GDPR came into force 25 May 2018** and national Privacy Authorities in Europe have started to check if organizations are compliant with this legislation. Our **eHealth HUB Legal Network** is in place involving **44 specialized legal nodes** through Europe to support them"*, Veronic Sisterman, from the eHealth HUB Legal Support remarks, announcing additional supporting tools soon available on the eHealth HUB website.

Compliance with regulatory requirements is a second major concern, when it comes to medical devices to be marketable within the European Union Member States. *"We realized during the last two years that this can be a difficult endeavor as many standards, guidelines and regulations are involved. Therefore our vision is to be able to provide Regulatory guidance through the entire spectrum of the EU countries, and we are getting there through our **eHealth Hub Regulatory and Reimbursement Network, currently counting 67 nodes**"*, Nicole Häusler, from eHealth HUB Regulatory Guidance says.

Las but not least, the eHealth HUB Platform (platform.ehealth-hub.eu) **was finally released**, with a view to providing an enabling tool for all stakeholders working in Europe. Over **600 profiles** are currently featured.

*"When they presented me the eHealth HUB Platform as **the yellow pages of digital health**, I thought it would be a good idea to register and have a look to the eHealth ecosystem, to identify new companies or experts we were not aware of. It **proved to be a very simple yet comprehensive tool to identify promising startups**"* Josep Cardona Bonet, Business Development Director & Future Innovation Strategies in Health Head Esteve Pharma states.

Great work seems to have been done there, so... happy birthday & ad maiora eHealth HUB team!

The eHealth HUB team is composed by TicBioMed (coordinator), APRE – Agenzia per la Promozione della Ricerca Europea, Clinic Law Incubator, Edito, Engage, Inno, META Group, Queen Mary University of London, Steinbeis.

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